



Apprentices Complete Stages of Training

NAVARRO COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE would like to congratulate Guillermo “Willie” Valdez and Jahaziel Luviano on completing stages in the co-op’s lineworker apprenticeship program.

Valdez completed the first step of the five-year apprenticeship program. He attended Texas State Technical College in Waco for one year to study basic electrical theory, transformer theory and connections, and basic pole climbing before starting work for NCEC in February 2021. He is working on the overhead construction crew, learning how to frame poles and sag wire and set members’ electrical service meters as well as responding to service interruption calls after hours.

Luviano completed the second level of the apprenticeship program in August. To complete this level, he has attended classes and training that cover basic electrical theory and transformer connections and using rubber gloves to work on energized power lines, among other skills and topics. He has worked on the cooperative’s overhead and underground construction crews, building new lines and services to members, and on the service buckets to maintain existing power lines. ■



POWER TIP

Heating can amount to about 40% of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades, you can reduce electricity use by about a third.

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Inspect Outdoor Electrical Equipment

IT’S LEAF-BLOWING SEASON. Is your blower in good shape?

Don’t wait to find out until you use it. Same goes for your lawn mower, bush trimmers, rakes and shovels.

Check for:

Worn parts and power cords. If you find them, don’t try to eke out one final season. Have the parts repaired or replaced.

Caked-on dirt or sap on blades. A blast of water from your garden hose should loosen and remove it. A stiff-bristled brush can take care of the rest.

Rust. That might take a bit more elbow grease and some steel wool to remove.

Splintered wood on handles and shafts. A light sanding can remove splinters and an application of linseed oil can prevent the handles from drying out as quickly.

Once you finish your fall chores, clean the tools so they’ll be in good shape next year. And store them in a dry, clean place. The electrical parts of tools that get wet while in storage can corrode. ■



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Don't Fuel the Fire

Wildfires start unexpectedly and move quickly and unpredictably, destroying everything in their path.

If fire is reported nearby:

Place vital records and small items of value in your car and park it facing the direction of escape. Heed evacuation orders.

Clear a firebreak around buildings.

Shut gas off at the meter and turn off propane tanks.

Leave the electricity on, especially if it powers a well.

Turn on sprinklers. Wet down the house and shrubs close to structures.

Before wildfire season:

Mow grass short. Rake leaves. Clear away debris.

Keep hay bales and firewood away from structures and electric lines.

Make a family evacuation plan. Keep an inventory of home valuables in a fireproof box.

Navarro County EC encourages you to always practice safety.



Navarro County Electric Cooperative

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24/7

Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and to report outages, please call us.

LOCAL
(903) 874-7411

TOLL-FREE
1-800-771-9095

ABOUT NAVARRO COUNTY EC

NCEC owns and maintains more than 3,000 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 12,000 members in Ellis, Freestone, Hill, Limestone and Navarro counties.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

BILL PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Online at navarroec.com
- Through the SmartHub app
- By phone at 1-855-385-9975
(Phone payments are not accepted on the NCEC office line.)

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

NCEC provides *Texas Co-op Power* and TexasCoopPower.com to give you information about events, safety, special programs and other activities of your cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the co-op office.

VISIT US ONLINE

navarroec.com

Make Up for High Pandemic Bills With Wise Energy Use

YOU ZOOMED, you teleworked, you ate dinner at home every night, and you stayed in on weekends. And you have your energy bill as proof.

Americans spent 10% more on energy at home from April to July 2020 than they did during those same months during pre-pandemic years, according to a report from the National Bureau of Economic Research. That trend remained fairly steady through the lockdown months.

That's about to change. With businesses open again and many workers back in their offices, energy use could gradually shift back to normal.

That means homeowners have a chance to make up for some of the energy-heavy months they spent at home.

While you're spending more time away from home, set your thermostat a few degrees higher to save a little energy while the house is empty. Draw the blinds on especially hot days to stop the sun's heat from warming up your rooms. Run appliances that produce heat after dark.

Those small energy-saving steps could help your "back-to-normal" energy bill drop even more once your family returns to its regular routine. ■



SOMPOTE LEE | MD | ISTOCK.COM

Energy Savings for Fall

IT MIGHT NOT seem like it now, but colder weather is on its way, even if it takes a while to get to Texas. September is a good time to start planning how you're going to save energy in your home during the colder months.

During the fall and winter, keeping cold air out is the goal. To maintain a warm indoors, there are simple steps you can take to increase energy efficiency.

There's no better time to examine seals on doors and windows to check for air leaks. Caulk and weatherstrip as needed to seal in warm air and energy savings. Similarly, examine electrical outlets for air leaks, and where necessary, install foam gaskets behind them to prevent drafts.

During the day, open curtains or drapes on south-facing windows to let sunlight heat your home naturally. Close window treatments at night for an added layer of insulation.

As the temperature drops, schedule a service appointment for your heating system to ensure that it can operate at an optimal level.

Low-cost or no-cost steps for energy savings include taping or affixing heavy, clear plastic to the insides of your windowpanes to create an additional barrier against cold air. Ensure that the plastic is sealed tightly to the pane to help reduce infiltration.

Use a programmable thermostat to set the temperature as low as is comfortable when you are home (ideally around 68 degrees). When you are asleep or away, turn the temperature down. A downward adjustment of 10–15 degrees over long stretches of time can save 10% a year on heating and cooling costs, according to the Department of Energy. ■



Fall Checklist: Address Safety, Maintenance Issues

THE BLISTERING SUMMER heat isn't far behind us, but it won't be long until heating season arrives and the house is full of family for the holidays.

Head off any potential problems by scheduling maintenance and safety checks now for your home's heating and electrical devices. Here's where to start:

Furnace. Before you turn on the heat, make sure your furnace is in good working condition. A qualified technician should do a biannual check of your system—once in the fall for heating and again in the spring for air conditioning. The tech can spot small problems before they become major repairs.

Thermostats. If your home doesn't have a programmable thermostat, you could be paying more to heat and cool your home than you need to. Programmable thermostats automatically turn the heat up or down—helpful when you're sleeping or away for a few hours.

Ground-fault circuit interrupters. A licensed electrician can install GFCI outlets in your bathroom, kitchen and laundry room; around hot tubs and pools; and under windows—all areas that have the potential to get wet. A GFCI will shut off the electricity to an appliance that short circuits and circuits that are overcharged—a safety must.

Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. If you don't have them near all bedrooms in your home, it's time to

install them. Then check them twice a year to make sure they're still working and that they have fresh batteries.

Overloaded outlets. You can overload an electrical circuit by connecting an appliance that draws a lot of electricity—like a range, dishwasher, refrigerator or even some entertainment systems and exercise equipment—to a circuit that is designed for a smaller load. You can also overload a circuit by using a power strip to plug too many appliances into a single outlet. Ask a licensed electrician to inspect your home for potential circuit overloads, which can cause fires.

Extension cords. Extension cords can become frayed and damaged with use over time. If you're planning on using them to provide power to holiday decorations, give them a safety check and be sure to use cords that are rated for the outdoors.

Yard tools. Winterize and stow away warm weather tools such as lawn mowers and trimmers. Check cold weather tools like leaf blowers and snow blowers, along with their power cords, if they have them. Repair and replace worn tools and components. ■