



77TH ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, November 3, 2016 • Crockett Civic Center, Crockett

**POWER FOR
YOUR WAY
OF LIFE**

Each November, HCEC members, directors and employees gather to discuss important cooperative business. It is important that a quorum is present at the meeting, either through your attendance or your submission of a signed proxy card.

If you are unable to attend this year's meeting, please sign, date and return the postage-paid proxy card below.

By returning your signed proxy card, you authorize the board of directors to represent you at your cooperative's annual meeting and cast a vote on your behalf. Use the proxy card if you choose not to attend or if you do not plan to vote by written ballot at the annual meeting.

Don't forget to sign, date and return the proxy card if you WILL NOT be attending the annual meeting.

PROXY

As a member of Houston County Electric Cooperative, Inc. ("the Cooperative"), I hereby appoint the board of directors of the Cooperative as my agent and proxy to represent me at the Cooperative's annual meeting of the members to be held at the Crockett Civic Center on Loop 304 in Crockett, Texas, at 6 p.m. Thursday, November 3, 2016. I authorize the Cooperative's board of directors, as my agent and proxy, to cast my vote on all matters coming before the Cooperative's annual meeting of the members.



If you **WILL NOT** be attending the HCEC annual meeting, please

**FILL OUT
AND RETURN
THIS CARD!**

*Must be received by
2 p.m., November 3.*



SIGNED Signature of HCEC member must be the same name as printed above.

DATE

PHONE NUMBER

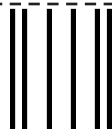


POWER FOR
YOUR WAY
OF **LIFE**

MAKE YOUR VOICE COUNT!

IF YOU **WILL NOT** BE ATTENDING THE ANNUAL MEETING,
PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THE PROXY CARD BELOW.

Simply sign and date the card on the reverse side and return it to HCEC by 2 p.m., November 3.



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 7 CROCKETT TX

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

HOUSTON COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
PO BOX 52
CROCKETT TX 75835-9977



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POWER FOR
YOUR WAY
OF **LIFE**



BIG THINGS ARE COMING ...

See for yourself on November 3



OFFICIAL NOTICE OF 2016 **ANNUAL MEETING**

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Houston County Electric Cooperative, Inc.,
will be held at the Crockett Civic Center on Loop 304 in Crockett
at 6 p.m., Thursday, November 3, 2016. Registration will begin at 4 p.m.

PROGRAM

Registration 4:00 p.m.

Catered Catfish Dinner 4:30 p.m.

Business Session 6:00 p.m.

IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND THE MEETING IN PERSON

It is the responsibility of each member to attend this annual meeting so that a quorum will be available to transact the business of the cooperative. To attend the meeting, you should be present at the Crockett Civic Center in Crockett on Thursday, November 3, at 6 p.m. To be eligible for the prize drawings, you must register before the meeting begins.

IF YOU DO NOT PLAN TO ATTEND THE MEETING

It is still important that you participate in your cooperative's annual meeting by returning the proxy card on the front of this dust cover. The proxy card ensures that you are represented at the annual meeting. It authorizes the board of directors to cast a vote on your behalf if you are not going to attend the annual meeting or if you choose not to vote by written ballot at the annual meeting. To do this, you must sign and date the proxy card with prepaid postage on the front of this dust cover and mail or deliver it to Houston County EC by 2 p.m., November 3. All you need to do is sign it, date it and put it in the mail.

**YOUR COOPERATIVE ... YOUR BUSINESS
PLEASE MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND.**

On the Line With Co-op Linemen



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER KATHI CALVERT

IMAGINE SEEING A CLASSIFIED AD for a job that reads like this: “Lineworker Wanted: Long and unpredictable hours, hazardous working conditions. Requires weekend and holiday work. Must be able to learn complex technical operations, work under extreme pressure and deal with people under difficult conditions—all with a smile.”

You’d think a job description like this would scare people off, wouldn’t you? But not all people. These demanding jobs attract dedicated people. Highly skilled people. People who know that they’ll be out in the middle of the night, working long hours in driving storms, all to make our lives better. These intrepid people are Houston County Electric Cooperative linemen.

To be ready to respond no matter the situation or weather conditions, electric cooperative lineworkers in Texas take advantage of dozens of training opportunities and safety courses offered annually by our statewide association, Texas Electric Cooperatives, and other accredited training organizations. Our lineworkers go

through regular training to ensure that they can work safely and proficiently with specialized equipment. The equipment gets tested regularly, too.

Lineworkers also focus on safety; the lives of co-workers are on the line. For linemen, there can be no slip-ups or careless actions on the job. Mistakes can cost a limb or a life. That’s one of the reasons linemen form a brotherhood. When you put your life in the hands of co-workers every day, they become more than colleagues. They’re family.

That sense of family extends throughout the co-op’s service area. Like the rest of the co-op’s employees, linemen are generally fellow members of your co-op; they’re neighbors and friends, and

they look out for their community. Your comfort and safety are big reasons that our linemen take such pride in a tough job.

Houston County EC lineworkers are the heart of Co-op Country. If you agree, give our hometown heroes a big thumbs-up when you see them at work—or shake their hands and thank them when you see them in the grocery store or at our annual meeting on November 3.

They expect no special recognition. It’s reward enough for them to know your family is safe and warm, regardless of the weather. Nevertheless, we’d like to thank our lineworkers for their hard work and dedication.



Help keep Halloween festivities full of smiles by keeping safety first.

Beware of Small, Strange Creatures After Dark

YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS around here on October 31: Small, strange creatures dot our roads at night. They creep up to homes with large bags and dash from one place to another, often forgetting about the cars and trucks passing them on the road.

Halloween is one of the most fun nights of the year for kids. But in their excitement, they don’t always think about safety—which means that grown-ups need to do some thinking for them.

If you’re sending out your little ghouls or goblins to trick-or-treat, make sure they carry a flashlight. Or fasten reflective tape to their costumes to help drivers more easily see them. Remind kids to keep basic traffic rules in mind: Use sidewalks and crosswalks, and look both ways before crossing streets.

If you’re doing the driving on Halloween night, keep an extra-sharp eye out. Not only can the quest for candy make kids forgetful about traffic safety, but also dark-colored costumes can make them even more difficult to see.

Houston County Electric Cooperative reminds you to take greater care than usual to keep Halloween a special treat for all of our small, strange creatures.





Come Celebrate With Us!

Houston County Electric Cooperative

77TH ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, November 3

Crockett Civic Center

1100 Edmiston Dr., Crockett 75835

Doors open at 4 p.m. • Business meeting at 6 p.m.

Houston County Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 52, Crockett, TX 75835

GENERAL MANAGER

Kathi Calvert

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dan Courmier, President
Kennon Kellum, Vice President
Mitchell Huff, Secretary-Treasurer
Mary L. Pearl Adams
William Emmons
Kay Reed
Charles "Chuck" Siems
Grady Wakefield
David Whittlesey

Contact Us

**TO REPORT A POWER OUTAGE,
CALL OUR 24-HOUR HOTLINE**

1-800-970-4232 toll-free

BUSINESS HOURS

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

*For general information
during business hours*

(936) 544-5641 local

1-800-657-2445 toll-free

To report an outage or other problem with electrical service, press 1.

To make a payment over the phone or speak with a member services representative in the billing department, press 2.

For electrical connects, transfers and disconnects, press 5.

For directions to our office, mailing address or fax number, press 6.

For satellite Internet services, press 7.

For staking and construction, press 8.

FIND US ON THE WEB

houstoncountyelec.com



FIND US ON FACEBOOK

CALENDAR: ROMAN SHIGERBAKOV | ISTOCK | THINKSTOCK



If you have any concerns about your home's wiring, don't attempt to fix it yourself. Contact a licensed electrician to get the job done safely.

Don't Overload Your Home

ABOUT 47,700 HOME FIRES IN THE U.S. are caused by electrical failures or malfunctions each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association. Overloaded electrical circuits are a major cause of residential fires. Help lower your risk of electrical fires by not overloading your electrical system.

Warning signs of overloaded circuits include:

- ▶ Flickering, blinking or dimming lights
- ▶ Frequently tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses
- ▶ Warm or discolored wall plates
- ▶ Cracking, sizzling, popping or buzzing from outlets
- ▶ Burning odor coming from outlets or wall switches
- ▶ Switches that lean to one side or feel loose when flipped
- ▶ Mild shock or tingle from appliances, receptacles or switches

A few vigilant measures can help prevent electrical overloads in your home:

Never plug major appliances into extension cords or multi-outlet converters. All major appliances should be plugged directly into wall receptacle outlets. Plug only one heat-producing appliance into a receptacle outlet at a time.

A heavy reliance on extension cords is an indication that you have too few outlets to address your needs. Power strips only add additional outlets; they do not change the amount of power being received from the outlet. Have a qualified electrician inspect your home and add new outlets.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that more than half of the electrical fires occurring every year in the United States can be prevented by arc-fault circuit interrupters. Whenever an arc fault is detected in a circuit, these devices interrupt the flow of power, preventing sparks and fires in the wiring. If your home is older than 40 years and its outlets are not equipped with AFCIs, consider having these installed.

All electrical systems should have an inspection conducted if the home is older than 40 years, or has undergone a major addition or renovation, or has had a large appliance added.



Veterans Appreciation Day

OCTOBER 15

Leon County Expo Center

3637 CR 305, Buffalo

11 a.m.–3 p.m.

RSVP: (903) 907-1181

ANDREICKA | DOLLARPHOTOCLUB.COM



CHONESS | ISTOCK.COM

Power Tip

An average household dedicates 5 percent of its electricity budget to lighting. Switching to energy-efficient lighting is a quick way to conserve. By replacing a home's five most-used light fixtures or bulbs with Energy Star-rated models, the average home can save \$75 each year.

Co-ops Build Celebration for National Co-op Month

BEING PART OF A COOPERATIVE MEANS being part of something special. To celebrate National Cooperative Month in October, Houston County Electric Cooperative is celebrating along with 30,000 other cooperative businesses serving more than 120 million people nationwide.

“Cooperatives Build” is the theme of this year’s National Cooperative Month, spotlighting the advantages that cooperatives offer to their members and the communities where they live and work.

Across the U.S., cooperatives provide 850,000 jobs that collectively pay \$74 billion in yearly wages. They also generate more than \$650 billion in sales and other revenue annually.

Rural America is served by a network of more than 900 electric cooperatives, most of which were formed in the 1930s and ’40s to deliver electricity to farms and communities that large, investor-owned power companies had no interest in serving because of the higher costs involved with electrifying broad areas with small populations.

Your co-op’s board, staff and management direct all of our efforts toward enhancing quality of life for you, the members. This goes beyond the delivery of reliable and affordable electricity to include expanded services, support for community service endeavors, and scholarships and educational opportunities for youths.

Our cooperative delivers electricity to 15,000 members in our service area. Revenue generated last year, beyond what is required for salaries and expenses, was either returned to members as capital credits or is reinvested to make system upgrades that improve the delivery of electricity to our members. Either way, our co-op revenue goes back to Main Street, not Wall Street.

Consider these ways that co-ops build:

Cooperatives Build Trust

Co-ops strive to adhere to the Seven Cooperative Principles, which combine to help build trust between the co-op and its

members. Through the fifth principle—Education, Training and Information—we enable members to learn about the way co-ops work and contribute to the development of our cooperative.

Cooperatives Build Community

The seventh cooperative principle is Concern for Community. Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through employee involvement in local organizations, charitable contributions to community efforts and support for schools.

Cooperatives Build Jobs

Houston County EC is also a major employer in the region, with a full-time workforce of 61. Through the property taxes it pays, the co-op is a major contributor to the tax base of local government, helping to support schools, police and fire protection and other vital community infrastructure.

Cooperatives Build Democracy

The second cooperative principle, Democratic Member Control, gives members a voice in the co-op’s policies and decisions. Members control the co-op by voting on candidates for the board of directors.

The democratically elected directors keep members’ well-being in mind each time they make a decision on behalf of the co-op. This arrangement keeps local communities strong and stable while showing how combined effort can improve conditions for everyone.

Cooperatives Build a Better World

When people talk about “the cooperative difference,” they’re referring to the advantages that co-ops offer their members. With the Seven Cooperative Principles binding these unique and diverse businesses, co-ops truly can build a better world.

For more information, visit coopmonth.coop.



ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BUILD A BETTER WORLD

FROM LEFT: STEVE DEERENPORT | ISTOCK.COM; SOMERSET RURAL ELECTRIC; PHOTOS.COM



Utility Poles Are Not Bulletin Boards

Help us keep our linemen safe.

Electric cooperative workers find all kinds of no-nos on utility poles such as yard sale signs, basketball hoops, deer stands, satellite dishes, lights and birdhouses.

These obstructions are dangerous for lineworkers. Unwelcome clutter on utility poles can compromise linemen's safety equipment, leaving them vulnerable to electrocution.

Anyone posting items on utility poles also is at risk of exposure to thousands of volts of electricity pulsing overhead. Always stay at least 10 feet away from utility lines.

Think before you post that sign!

Houston County
Electric Cooperative
encourages you
to always practice
safety.

Common Energy Myths Debunked

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ENERGY USE are hiding around every corner of your home, and they can take a toll on your utility bills. Don't be fooled by common energy myths.

MYTH: The higher the thermostat setting, the faster your home will heat.

REALITY: You might think that walking into a room and raising the thermostat to 85 degrees will make the room warm up quickly. Not true. Thermostats direct a home's heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system to heat or cool to a certain temperature. Drastically adjusting the thermostat won't make a difference in how

quickly you feel warmer—or cooler—than if you set it at a more reasonable level.

The Department of Energy recommends setting your thermostat to 78 degrees during summer months and 68 degrees during winter.

MYTH: Opening the oven door to check on a dish doesn't really waste energy.

REALITY: Although it can be tempting to check the progress of that dish you're cooking in the oven, opening the oven door does waste energy. Every time the door is opened, the temperature inside the oven is reduced by as much as 25 degrees, delaying the progress of your dish—and costing you additional money. Try using the oven light and peeking through the window instead.



CATHERINE LANE | ISTOCK.COM

Little steps add up. Turning off lights when you don't need them saves energy and money.

MYTH: Leaving lights, computers and other electric devices turned on is a good idea. Switching them on and off wears them out more quickly and produces sudden power spikes that negate any energy savings.

REALITY: If there were ever any legitimacy to this idea, there isn't anymore. Switching modern appliances and electrical devices on and off frequently will not reduce their life span, and any power surges that might occur are likely to be miniscule. The bottom line is that if you aren't using an electrical device, it should be turned off.

MYTH: Reducing my energy use is too expensive.

REALITY: Many people believe that reducing energy use requires expensive up-front costs, such as purchasing new, more efficient appliances or making construction upgrades to an older home. The truth is, consumers who make small changes to their efficiency habits—like turning off lights when not in use, sealing air leaks and using a programmable thermostat—can see a significant reduction in energy consumption.

REMEMBER: Energy efficiency doesn't have to be difficult. Focus small to save big. To learn more ways to save energy, visit houstoncountyelec.com.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



RICK PATRICK

White Chili

- 1 pound lean ground turkey
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) navy beans
- 1 can (4 ounces) green chiles
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch

1. In a small pot, brown turkey in olive oil. Add beans, chiles, spices and broth. Bring to a boil, then remove from heat.
2. Remove 1/2 cup broth and add cornstarch, stirring until lumps dissolve. Pour back into chili and stir well.
3. Serve with chopped tomatoes, avocado, corn, jalapeños and cilantro, as desired.

Find this and more delicious recipes online at
TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM