

**Supporting Borden County Volunteer Fire Department**



BCEC recently presented a donation to the Borden County Volunteer Fire Department on behalf of Golden Spread Electric Cooperative (GSEC)—our wholesale power provider—and its employee-led fundraiser supporting volunteer fire departments across its service territory.

Each year, GSEC employees raise funds through a Casual Jean Day initiative, with donations directed to local volunteer fire departments that serve our cooperative communities. The contribution presented to the Borden County VFD is part of that ongoing effort to support the first responders who play a critical role in rural areas.

BCEC representative, Krysha Burlison, had the opportunity to visit with Fire Chief Stout and Lt. Massingill during the presentation. Jackson Cooley and Dylan Squires were also in attendance.

During the visit, the department presented BCEC with a challenge coin featuring a quote from Theodore Roosevelt: "The only man who never makes a mistake is the man who never does anything." The gesture served as a meaningful reminder of the dedication and service provided by volunteer firefighters.

We are grateful to GSEC for its continued support of local volunteer fire departments, as well as to the Borden County VFD for their dedication and service in our community.

**Sonja Hampton Promoted to Senior Staff Accountant**



Sonja Hampton was recently recognized during the March Board of Directors meeting for her promotion to Senior Staff Accountant. She is pictured with Vice President of Finance & Accounting, Latrice Baucom.

Sonja joined Big Country Electric Cooperative in March 2020 as an Accounting Assistant and was promoted to Staff Accountant in May 2021.

Since then, she has continued to grow in her role, demonstrating strong technical proficiency, dependability, and a commitment to high-quality work. Her knowledge and experience have made her a trusted resource across the organization, supporting a wide range of accounting responsibilities.

Her dedication to professional growth reflects the cooperative's commitment to excellence and to supporting employees as they develop their skills and serve the membership.

Sonja recently earned her Certified Financial Professional Certificate (CFPC) through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). This credential is highly regarded within the cooperative industry and reflects both technical expertise and the successful application of that knowledge.

In addition to her professional contributions, Sonja brings a positive energy to the workplace. She is known for her friendly attitude and contagious laugh, making a meaningful impact on those around her.

Congratulations to Sonja on this well-deserved promotion.

# OPERATION ROUND UP

**Deadline: May 19, 2026 by 5:30 PM**

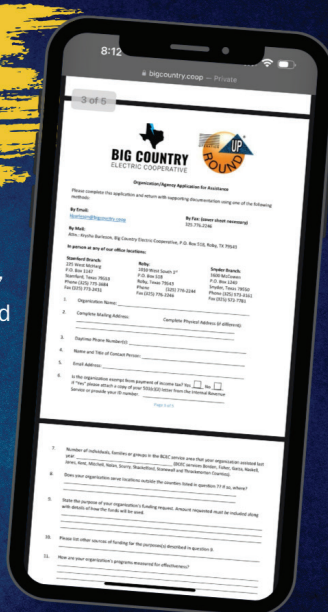
The Operation Round Up program is supported by BCEC members whose electric bills are "Rounded Up" to the nearest dollar. The "Rounded Up" amounts fund Operation Round Up for distribution to individuals and organizations with demonstrated financial need in the counties we serve.

**Every penny stays right here at home!**

Operation Round Up welcomes applications from: **Local organizations** that provide essential community services, including food banks, shelters, medical assistance, rescue organizations, educational projects, childcare programs, and more.

**Families and individuals** facing financial hardships due to life-altering circumstances.

Visit [bigcountry.coop/Operation-Round-Up](http://bigcountry.coop/Operation-Round-Up) or contact Krysha Burlison at [kburlison@bigcountry.coop](mailto:kburlison@bigcountry.coop).



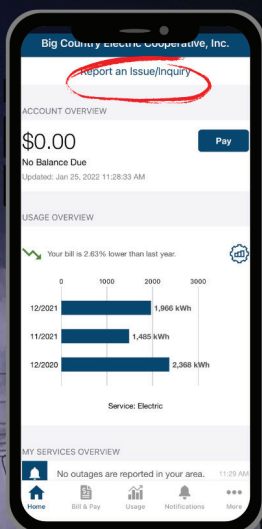
## Power Outage? Report it!

**Use SmartHub or Call Us!**

During widespread outages, our phone lines can get busy. If you can't get through right away, please keep trying or leave a message if prompted.

### Want to skip the phone call?

Use the handy outage reporting feature in your SmartHub app! It's quick, easy, and sends your report straight to our system—no waiting required.



### Every report helps.

Even if we're already aware of an outage in your area, your report gives us valuable information. It helps confirm the scope, isolate trouble spots, and ensure no one is missed.

When you report an outage—by phone or through SmartHub—it's logged and sent to our crews. We work to restore power as quickly and safely as possible and will share updates when we can.



# BIG COUNTRY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## Membergram

**In observance of Memorial Day, our offices will be closed Monday, May 25.**



**As we pause to honor and remember the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country, we also extend our deepest gratitude to all who have served.**

**From all of us at Big Country Electric Cooperative, thank you.**

## WE'RE HERE FOR YOU.

We offer **variable budget billing** for residential accounts. Variable budget billing uses an actual average for a rolling twelve-month period.

Members on fixed incomes or those who prefer to have an average monthly electric bill for their residential meter could benefit from our Budget Billing option.

Instead of seeing large swings during high-use months, your bill is adjusted to reflect a more consistent monthly amount based on your usage history. Because it uses a rolling average, your monthly amount may adjust gradually over time as your usage changes.



To qualify, the account must have at least 12 months of usage history at the service location so an accurate average can be calculated, and the account must be current.

If you're having difficulty paying your BCEC bill, please call during regular business hours. We will work with you as much as possible to make payment plans.



[www.bigcountry.coop](http://www.bigcountry.coop)

May 2026

### OUR COMMITMENT TO SAFETY



At Big Country Electric Cooperative, safety is at the core of everything we do—and that includes making sure our crews are continually trained and prepared in the field.

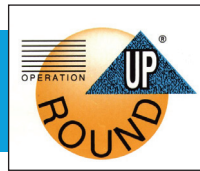
Recently, our linemen participated in training led by Altec Sentry instructor James Lewis, beginning with classroom instruction and ending with hands-on equipment training. The training focused on key safety practices such as daily inspections, proper setup, understanding load capacity, and effective job planning.

While our crews are already experienced in these areas, ongoing training and refreshers are an important part of maintaining a strong safety culture. These sessions help reinforce best practices and ensure every crew member is confident in their work.

Because our fleet includes equipment of varying ages, each office operates slightly different digger derrick trucks. This training also gave crews the opportunity to work across multiple units, share knowledge, and build familiarity with different equipment and controls.

Investing in training like this helps ensure our crews are prepared, safe, and ready to respond—no matter the situation.



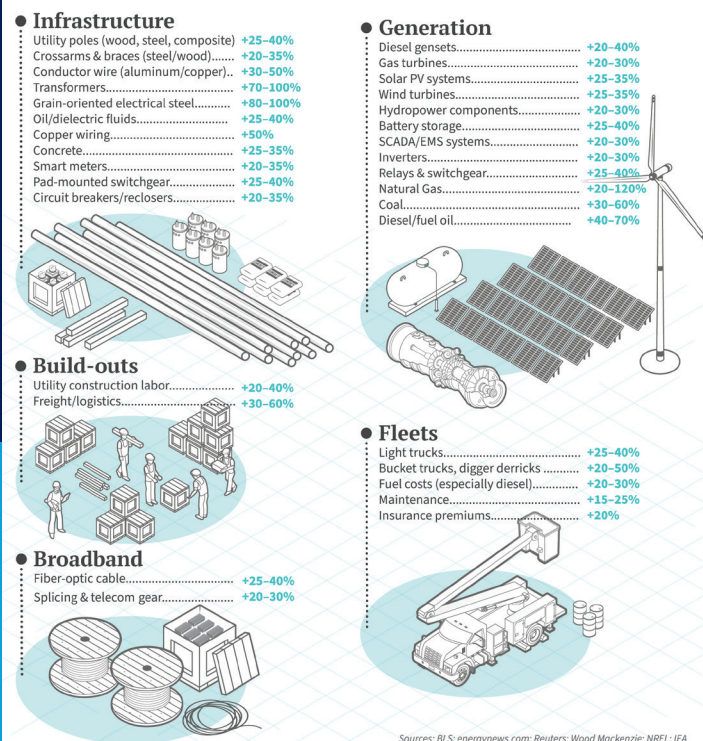


### Committed to Community

For complete information about our Operation Round Up program or to opt out of participation, visit [bigcountry.coop/operation-round-up](http://bigcountry.coop/operation-round-up).

## Infrastructure Costs

The past five years have been a period of exploding costs for the electric utility industry and for broadband providers, pushed by soaring demand, supply chain challenges, raw materials shortages, increased labor costs and tariffs. The impact has been rapid increases in the cost of producing power, longer and more unpredictable project timelines and the need for more financing, all of which have driven electric rates up for residences, businesses and other end-users. Here's a look at what's contributing to the trend. **Percent increase since 2020:**



Sources: BLS, energynews.com, Reuters, Wood Mackenzie, NREL, IEA

## How Electric Cooperative Rates Are Reviewed

One of our most important responsibilities is making sure we can continue providing safe, reliable and affordable electric service to the members and communities we serve. That responsibility involves much more than restoring outages and maintaining power lines. It also means regularly reviewing the cooperative's financial health and carefully planning for the future.

To support that planning, BCEC conducts a professional rate study every few years to evaluate the cost of providing electric service across our system. These studies help determine whether our existing rates align with the actual cost of serving members. Rates are not set casually or based on guesswork—they are part of long-range planning and responsible financial management.

BCEC works with the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corp. to complete this analysis, looking at the co-op's financial picture, system needs and broader trends that impact electric service—including usage patterns, economic conditions and even weather. The study also considers the different types of service across our membership, including residential, commercial and irrigation because each has unique demands and costs. The goal is to understand what it truly takes to build, maintain and operate the system today, and what will be needed to continue doing so reliably in the years ahead.

Rate studies help the cooperative evaluate how to continue providing reliable service in a financially responsible manner. When a study indicates adjustments may be needed, BCEC works to implement changes in a way that helps minimize the impact on members, such as timing them during shoulder months when usage is generally lower. In the coming months, BCEC will continue sharing more information about the results of our recent rate study and what it may mean for members. As always, the cooperative remains committed to transparency and open communication throughout the process.

That matters because the electric system is not static. Costs change. Materials and equipment change. Member needs change. Infrastructure ages. New growth occurs. All of these factors play a role in what it costs to deliver power safely and reliably throughout BCEC's service area.

Utility materials and construction costs have risen significantly in recent years. The poles, wires, transformers, meters, trucks, equipment and substation components needed to operate a rural electric system cost far more than they did just a few years ago. Inflation has touched virtually every part of the electric utility industry, from materials and maintenance to labor and long-term construction planning.

At the same time, electric cooperatives must continue investing in the system. Waiting too long to make improvements is not a strategy for reliability—it can create greater challenges over time. That's why BCEC continues to make thoughtful investments in infrastructure that support the service our members expect and depend on.

BCEC serves more than 6,000 members, more than 13,600 meters and more than 5,300 miles of line across the Big Country. That requires maintaining an extensive network to power homes, farms, ranches and businesses throughout our service territory.

In recent years, BCEC has built the Camp Springs, Sylvester and North Hamlin substations, and the cooperative is currently working on a new substation, Nowlin, along with several other planned projects. This year, the TP metering point will be incorporated into the North Hamlin substation, and the new Nowlin substation will replace the Rotan metering point as part of ongoing system improvements. These recent substation and metering point projects are just one part of BCEC's broader systemwide plan to strengthen reliability.

In addition, BCEC has engaged its work plan engineering firm to help develop a long-term plan focused on system reliability. This proactive approach helps ensure the cooperative is not only meeting today's needs but also preparing for continued growth and system demands in the years ahead.

But maintaining a reliable system goes beyond major construction projects. BCEC also continues ongoing work across the system, including pole inspections, replacing aging poles and equipment, vegetation management, and other improvements that help reduce outages and strengthen service for members. Together, these investments support the long-term reliability of the electric system.

Because BCEC is a member-owned cooperative, decisions about these types of investments are not driven by profits for outside shareholders. Your cooperative's board of directors and management team work carefully to balance affordability with the responsibility of maintaining reliable service. That means rates are designed to reflect the actual cost of providing electric service while keeping the co-op financially strong enough to continue meeting member needs.

BCEC has not implemented a rate update in seven years. The last phased rate update began in 2019, following a cost-of-service study and board approval, and was structured over three years to help minimize the impact on members. That history reflects the cooperative's effort to plan ahead, manage costs carefully and avoid more frequent adjustments whenever possible.

Electricity remains one of the best values in everyday life, but maintaining that value requires ongoing investment, planning and thoughtful decision-making. While rising costs are never ideal, Big Country EC approaches these decisions carefully, with a focus on keeping the system strong and continuing to serve our members reliably for years to come.



[www.bigcountry.coop](http://www.bigcountry.coop)

### Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 7:30-5:30

### Contact Us

Toll Free: 1-855-940-3872  
Roby: (325) 776-2244  
Stamford: (325) 773-3684  
Snyder: (325) 573-3161

### Report Outages

Please **call** your local BCEC office to report power outages.



## We're Mobile!



Access your BCEC account anytime with SmartHub! Download the app for your mobile device today by visiting [www.bigcountry.coop](http://www.bigcountry.coop) or searching for SmartHub in the app store.

### Ask about our partnerships with:



Rural Development Assistance Available Through BCEC  
BCEC is an Equal Opportunity Lender.

Big Country Electric Cooperative, Inc. has a limited amount of funds available for low-interest loans to qualified applicants to stimulate rural development. Applicant does not have to be a member of Big Country Electric Cooperative. Please contact Sarah McLen at [smclen@bigcountry.coop](mailto:smclen@bigcountry.coop) for details.



Call 811 at least 2 working days before you dig. Visit [www.texas811.org](http://www.texas811.org) for more information.

Agricultural Tax Exemptions - In order to claim an exemption from Texas sales and use taxes on electricity and other items used in agricultural and timber operations, you are required to provide us with a registration number on Texas Agriculture Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certification Form 01-924. All water wells should be exempt if used for irrigation or watering livestock. The Texas Comptroller's Office issues the registration number and those wanting to claim the exemption must fill out an application. Registration numbers must be renewed every four years. Applicants can request a paper application to mail in by calling 1-800-252-5555 or download a copy from the comptroller's website, [www.comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/ag-timber](http://www.comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/ag-timber). The generic exemption certificate, Form 01-339, cannot be used to claim the agricultural exemption. Accounts that do not have the new required form on file will be subject to taxation. Commercial Tax Exemption Records - A completed and signed exemption form is required for each commercial tax exempt account. Accounts that do not have current exemptions on file will be changed to taxable accounts. Any refunds for taxes must be claimed from the State of Texas. Thank you for your help.