

Electrical Safety Month

KEEP THESE TIPS IN MIND TO PROTECT YOUR HOME AND YOUR FAMILY!

- 1 Never overload outlets or circuits
- 2 Call 811 before digging to avoid underground lines
- 3 Check cords for cracks or damage
- 4 Use surge protectors for electronics and appliances
- 5 Unplug appliances when not in use
- 6 Replace light bulbs with the correct wattage
- 7 Keep space heaters at least 3 feet from anything flammable
- 8 Install tamper-resistant outlets if you have young children
- 9 Avoid using extension cords as permanent wiring
- 10 Don't touch downed power lines—always assume they're live
- 11 Schedule regular professional electrical inspections for older homes
- 12 Test smoke detectors regularly
- 13 Keep electrical items away from water



Load Shed Procedures

The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) manages the flow of electric power to more than 26 million Texas customers. As the independent system operator for the region, ERCOT schedules power on an electric grid that connects more than 46,500 miles of transmission lines and more than 710 generation units. This grid delivers about 90% of the electricity used by Texas consumers.

During times of high electricity use, energy emergencies or major events, ERCOT may request that Big Country Electric Cooperative alert its members and ask for energy conservation.

Energy conservation measures include: setting thermostats to 68 degrees in winter, closing shades and blinds to retain heat, turning off and unplugging nonessential lights and appliances, avoiding use of large appliances during peak hours, minimizing electric lighting and equipment use at businesses, and reducing or pausing nonessential production processes at large electricity consumers.

Curtailment Priorities and Procedures

As a last resort during grid emergencies, ERCOT may direct utilities to reduce demand by shedding load—implementing rolling outages.

BCEC will only curtail power in emergency situations to prevent widespread grid failure or equipment damage. Load will be shed in the following order: outdoor, flood and street lighting; oil field and irrigation loads; schools and churches (except those used as emergency shelters); industrial loads (gins); commercial loads; residential loads; and finally, medical priority accounts and critical loads as defined under Senate Bill 3, Section 38.076.

When rolling outages are possible, efforts will be made to limit residential curtailments to around one hour, though this cannot be guaranteed. BCEC will try to notify members in advance, but notice may not always be possible.

Restoration Priorities

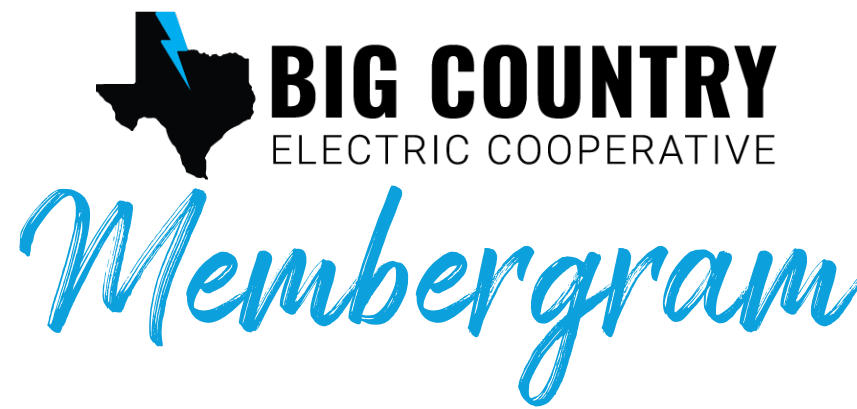
The first priority in restoration is to clear electrical hazards that pose immediate danger.

Restoration then follows this order: transmission systems, substations, main distribution feeders, distribution laterals, medical priority and critical loads, and individual loads.

Vital community services will be prioritized in this order:

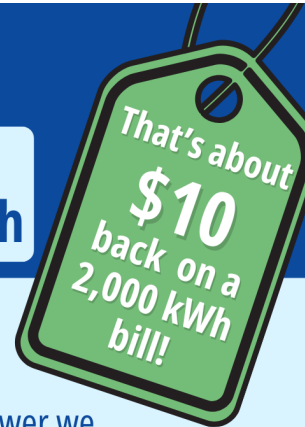
hospitals and nursing/assisted living homes; municipal water, sewer and fire departments; shelters, clinics and other medical facilities; radio and television stations; telephone central switch stations; drugstores and grocery stores; FAA navigation facilities; and other essential health and welfare institutions.

Remaining member loads will be restored in the following order: medical priority and critical loads, residential, commercial, industrial, schools and churches (except shelters), oil field and irrigation loads, and outdoor, flood and street lighting.



MAY PCA

-\$0.005 per kWh



What is the PCA?

The Power Cost Adjustment reflects the changing cost of power we purchase from our provider, Golden Spread EC.

The cost of power fluctuates due to things like: **fuel prices, weather, market conditions and demand.**

Our team monitors power costs closely to help keep your electric rates stable.

Got questions about your bill?

Give us a call, we're happy to help!

www.bigcountry.coop

May 2025

OUR COMMITMENT TO RELIABILITY

Reliability doesn't happen by accident—it takes planning, maintenance, and year-round effort. One of the ways we protect our system and reduce outages is by keeping the right-of-way (ROW) clear of overgrown trees and brush.

Starting soon, you'll see contractors working east of Anson to trim trees and clear vegetation along power lines. This important work helps maintain safe access for our crews and reduces the risk of weather-related outages caused by limbs or overgrowth.

Routine ROW maintenance like this is just one of the many ways we're working behind the scenes to keep your power reliable, no matter the season.

SAVE the date

SEPTEMBER 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

September 16, 2025

Member Appreciation Open House 4-7:00 p.m.
Virtual Annual Meeting online all day!

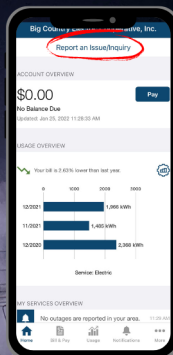
Power Outage? Report it!

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



Committed to Community

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

Quarterly Deadline Approaching

What is Operation Round Up?

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!

Who can apply to Operation Round Up?

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.

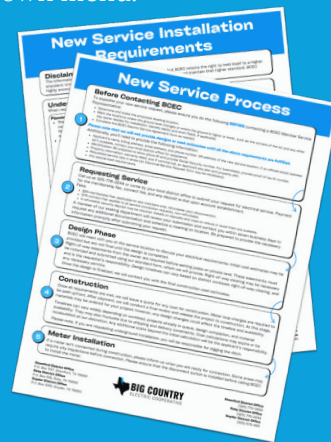
2025 Quarterly Deadlines

May 20, 2025
August 19, 2025
November 11, 2025

For more information about the Operation Round Up program or to opt out of participation, please visit bigcountry.coop and navigate to the Service Beyond Electricity dropdown menu.

Need a new service installed?

Visit the “New Service” page under the “About Us” tab to find the process and installation requirements for setting up a new service.



Protecting Your Power: Why Proposed Texas Legislation Matters to Co-op Members

As a cooperative, we exist to serve you – not shareholders or out-of-state investors. We’re guided by local decision-making, focused on reliability and affordability, and committed to improving life across the communities we power. But this legislative session, several bills under consideration at the Texas Capitol could change that.

These proposals threaten to impose new, far-reaching regulations on electric cooperatives – shifting costs, reducing local control, and complicating our ability to keep your lights on affordably and safely.

It’s not just us saying this. Co-ops across Texas – including our statewide association, Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC), and our power supplier, Golden Spread Electric Cooperative (GSEC) – are voicing deep concerns, especially about proposals that affect wildfire risk, infrastructure safety, and pole attachment regulations.

Pole Attachments: Who Pays, and Who Decides?

One of the biggest concerns comes from House Bill 3448 (HB 3448) and related measures like HB 3445, HB 5604, and SB 1251. These bills would subject electric cooperatives to a sweeping new regulatory regime that:

- Allows state regulators to intervene in every rate, make ready cost, or reliability study requirement, creating a flood of contested cases that are costly and can take years to resolve.
- Mandates an artificially low pole attachment rate, meaning telecom companies wouldn’t have to pay the full cost of using our poles – and that cost would instead fall to electric members like you.
- Removes our ability to deny pole access in situations where safety or reliability is at risk.
- Unravels the balanced agreement made in 2021 – when cooperatives and broadband providers worked together on a law that expanded access while preserving cost-sharing, safety protections, and fair dispute resolution.

These proposals don’t just add red tape – they shift costs onto co-op members while giving for-profit telecom companies broad access to co-op infrastructure.

Wildfire Bills: Good Intentions, Risky Outcomes

We all want to reduce wildfire risk, especially in West Texas. But several wildfire-related bills, while well-intentioned, could create unfunded mandates and overlapping oversight that impact how we maintain and operate the electric grid.

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GSEC, which supplies power to BCEC and 15 other member co-ops, has identified bills like HB 143, SB 2980, HB 145, and SB 2025 as especially concerning. These would:

- Give state agencies the power to require inspections or shut off electric service to oil and gas sites if violations are suspected – even if the electric co-op isn’t at fault.
- Require wildfire mitigation plans with strict, complex conditions in order for co-ops to qualify for limited liability protection.
- Add costly new reporting requirements for pole inspections and system maintenance – with no added funding or flexibility.

These bills may be aimed at safety, but they risk disrupting service and raising costs if not thoughtfully implemented.

Why This Matters – and What You Can Do

Taken together, these proposals represent a major shift in how electric cooperatives are allowed to operate. They reduce local flexibility, increase regulatory and legal burdens, and shift telecom and compliance costs to co-op members.

Your Voice Has Power

That’s where Voices for Cooperative Power comes in – a grassroots network of co-op members just like you who are ready to stand up for affordable, reliable power in their communities.

Visit <https://voicesforcooperativepower.com/stop-the-attack-on-affordable-power-for-rural-texans> to learn more and find ways to contact your legislators. You are more than a customer – you’re a cooperative member. And your voice makes a difference.

BCEC Awards Annual Academic Scholarships to Local Students

Francis and Karl Patanpatan, twin seniors from Hawley High School, have been awarded this year’s BCEC Academic Scholarships.



Each year, two scholarships are awarded to outstanding local students through a competitive application process reviewed by an outside committee—not BCEC employees or individuals from our area. Applicants are evaluated on academic performance, financial need, future goals, application completeness, and letters of reference.

We’re proud to support these future leaders and wish all area seniors the best as they begin their next chapter.



www.bigcountry.coop

Office Hours

Monday - Thursday: 7:30-12:00, 1:00-5:30
Friday: 7:30-11:30

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 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 for details.



Call 811 at least 2 working days before you dig. Visit 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.getreadytexas.org. 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.