



# Calling All Young Explorers:

## The Contest for the 2025 Youth Tour is Here!

We are asking for your help spreading word amongst our community about the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, an all-expenses-paid trip to the nation's capital. BCEC will send three local students on this incredible journey, scheduled for June 15–22, 2025. Students' parents or guardians do not have to be members of BCEC to compete in and win the Youth Tour contest.

### What Is Youth Tour?

The Youth Tour is an action-packed adventure to Washington, D.C., with around 150 students and chaperones from Texas and over 1,700 from across the U.S. Participants will explore iconic sights like the Washington National Cathedral, Arlington National Cemetery, Mount Vernon, and the Smithsonian Institution museums. Students will also learn about rural electrification, enjoy a performance at the Kennedy Center, take a dinner cruise on the Potomac River, and meet congressional leaders.

This tradition began in 1965, inspired by then-Senator Lyndon B. Johnson, who encouraged youth to experience their American heritage and government in action. Since then, over 4,000 Texans and 50,000 young Americans have become Youth Tour alumni.

### How to Participate?

We encourage all sophomore, junior, and senior students to seize this amazing opportunity! Applications are due by 5 p.m. on January 23, 2025, and videos on the topic—Understanding the Electric Grid: Explain how the electric grid works, and the role cooperatives play in maintaining it—must be uploaded by 8 p.m. on January 30. Winners will be announced by February 13.

Additionally, Big Country EC will donate \$500 to the school with the most student submissions!



# BIG COUNTRY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## Membergram

October is National Cooperative Month, a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the spirit of cooperation and community that defines us. This month, we honor the cooperative business model, which empowers individuals to come together for mutual benefit.

Cooperatives are unique in that they are owned and governed by their members, ensuring that everyone has a voice in decision-making and shares in the success of the organization.

On that note, we want to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who attended our Member Appreciation Open Houses this September. We enjoy having the opportunity to meet and mingle with our members. Your presence and participation made these events truly special, and we are so thankful for your continued support. It is a true embodiment of the cooperative ideals.

We are proud to have such dedicated members who contribute to our collective success. Your involvement not only strengthens our co-op but also enriches our community.

Be sure to check inside the newsletter for the names of our door prize winners! And don't miss the back page, where you can find more photos from our recent gatherings. You can also still view the videos from our Virtual Annual Meeting online at [bigcountry.coop](http://bigcountry.coop).

*Thank you for being a part of our co-op family!*



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

## October 2024

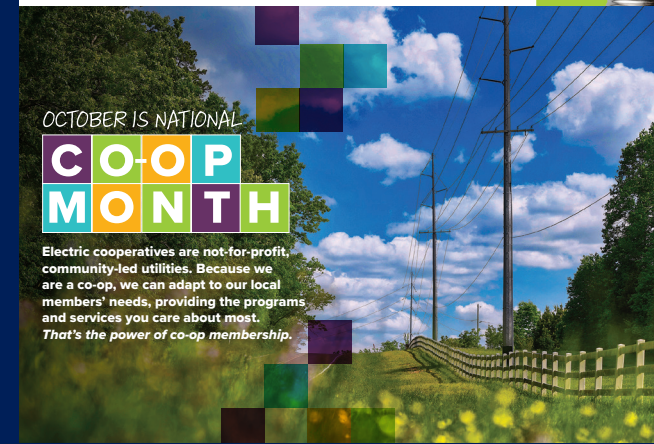
**🎃 Calling All Little Ghouls and Goblins! 🎃**  
Get ready for a spooktacular Halloween! Bring your kiddos in their favorite costumes to your local district office for some delightful treats on Thursday, October 31st! Our doors will be open until 5:30 PM, so stop by and celebrate with us. We can't wait to see all the creative costumes!



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

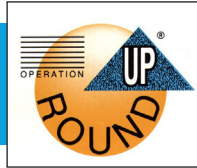
If you recently made or plan to make energy efficiency upgrades to your home, you may be eligible for federal tax credits. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 empowers homeowners to save up to \$3,000 annually to lower the cost of efficiency upgrades by up to 30%. A few upgrades covered through the IRA include new exterior doors, windows, insulation, heating/cooling equipment and other major appliances. If you have completed or are considering an efficiency upgrade, visit [www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits](http://www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits) to learn if you qualify for tax credits.

Source: [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)



## OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, community-led utilities. Because we are a co-op, we can adapt to our local members' needs, providing the programs and services you care about most. That's the power of co-op membership.



### 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).

## Operation Round Up Helps the Big Country

In September, the following organizations were approved for Operation Round Up grants:

First Baptist Church of Haskell	\$1,000
Fluvanna Volunteer Fire Department	\$1,500
Hamlin Community Food Bank	\$1,000
Haskell Ministerial Alliance	\$1,000
Post Independent School District	\$3,000
Roby Volunteer Fire Department	\$500

### 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: Borden, Fisher, Garza, Haskell, Jones, Kent, Mitchell, Nolan, Scurry, Shackelford, Stonewall, and Throckmorton. 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.

Grants are awarded quarterly, with the next application deadline set for 5:30 p.m. on November 12, 2024. For more information about the Operation Round Up program or to opt out of participation, please visit [bigcountry.coop](http://bigcountry.coop) and navigate to the Service Beyond Electricity dropdown menu.

## Member Appreciation Open Houses Door Prize Winners

### Energy Credits

\$200 Snyder Credit: Ann Everett, \$200 Stamford Credit: George Stovall, \$200 Roby Credit: Cave Double Rafter Ranch

### Gift Cards

**\$100 Gift Cards** provided by North Plains EC: James Jenkins and Anita Dozer  
**\$100 Gift Cards** provided by Texas Electric Cooperatives: Douglas Vahlenkamp, Ada Zilio, Andy Moore, Michael Browning, Gary Sorrells, Jimmie Hughes, Curtis Tates and Helen Diers

**\$100 Gift Cards** provided by Primary Utilities: Ruben Vaughan, Fred Cross, Judy Gordon, Lothar Bartels, Wanda Horton, Kay Walters

**\$50 United Gift Cards** provided by Wall Construction Company: Veronica Vasquez, Larry Schwarz, Huelane Ray, Jerry Upshaw, Cherry Benavidez, Derwayne Rasco, Ernest Hill, Glen Murphree, Iva Stinson

### Smart TVs

LG 75” provided by Reynolds Utility: Martha Lopez

LG 55” provided by SGS Engineering, LLC: Joseph Pechacek

LG 50” provided by Golden Spread Electric Cooperative: Lyla Cantrell

LG 43” provided by Anixter: Paul Jordan and Riley Jenkins

### Soundbars

Bose Solo Soundbar II provided by Anixter: Olen Fryar and Emiliano Cisneros

### Other Prizes provided by BCEC

Ninja Creami Ice Cream Maker: Clifford Lemond

Shark Petpro Vacuum: Colton Coker

MM12 Sheet Document Shredder: Russell Pippin

4’ Light Folding Table: David Castillo

Kidde 2PK Smoke Detector & Extinguisher: Mike Valadez

River Rock Digital Photo Frame: Jerald McLemore

3 in 1 Steamer: Ignacio Castillo

Enbrighten NL Electric LED Nightlights: J Harrell

Ice Maker: W. Ferdie Walker

Chest Freezer: Gay Hickman

Brumate Cooler provided by Wall Construction: Matt Cross



## Beware of Energy Vampires this October!

As the weather cools and we begin to see pumpkins and costumes around every corner, it’s a great time to think about spooky things lurking in our homes – like “energy vampires.” While these energy suckers aren’t hiding under your bed, they may be lurking in plain sight, quietly draining your power and increasing your electric bill.

### What is an Energy Vampire?

Energy vampires, also known as standby power, refers to the electricity used by appliances and electronics even when they’re turned off but still plugged in. Devices like phone chargers, gaming consoles, coffee makers, and even televisions consume small amounts of electricity while not in use. Over time, these little drains add up, potentially costing you an extra 5-10% on your electricity bill each year!

### How to Slay the Vampires

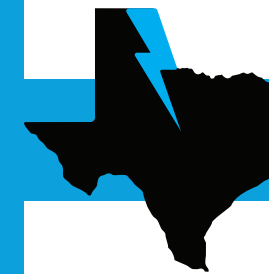
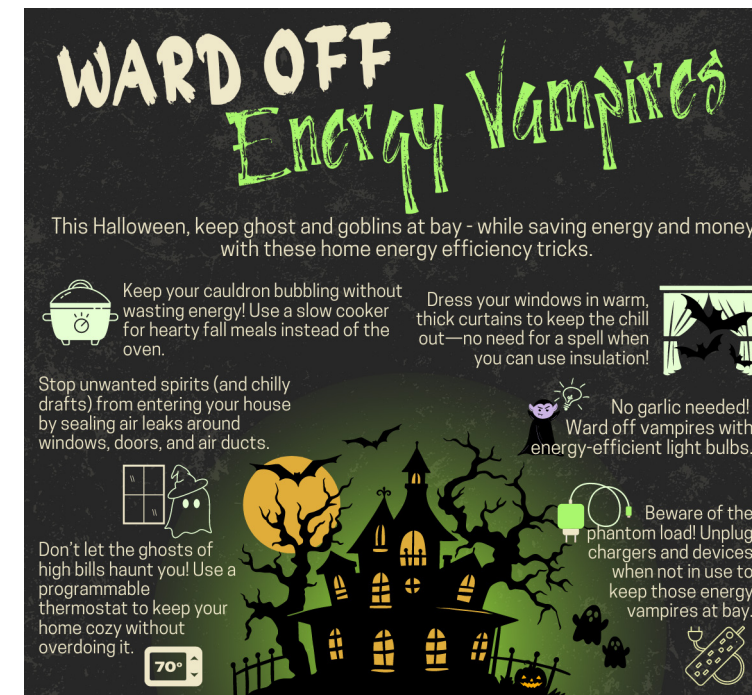
Don’t worry – you don’t need garlic or stakes to stop energy vampires. A few simple tricks can help:

- **Unplug devices:** When not in use, unplug items like phone chargers, coffee makers, and microwaves.
- **Upgrade to smart power strips:** These handy devices automatically cut power to items in standby mode, ensuring you aren’t wasting energy.
- **Switch to energy-efficient models:** Many newer appliances are designed to minimize standby power consumption. Look for ENERGY STAR® labels when purchasing new devices.
- **Turn off security lights during the day:** If your outdoor security lights are left on during daylight hours, they’re needlessly consuming energy. Consider using timers or daylight sensors to ensure these lights only run when they’re needed.

### Real Savings, Real Impact

Being mindful of energy vampires doesn’t just save you money – it also helps reduce strain on the power grid and contributes to a more energy-efficient home. During October, when nights are longer and the lights stay on longer, every bit of saved energy counts.

So this Halloween season, be sure to slay the energy vampires lurking around your home. Your wallet – and your cooperative – will thank you!



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

### Office Hours

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

Friday: 7:30-11:30

### Contact Us

Toll Free: 1-888-662-2232

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.getreadytexas.org](http://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.