

# BELFALLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

P.O. Box 598 • Rosebud, TX 76570 • Phone (254) 583-7955

## LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

The presidential election rolls around every fourth year whether we like it or not. If you're like me, you're ready for all the campaign hoopla to end. Only a small percentage of Americans—those who get out and vote—choose our country's leadership. If everyone voted, we would be truly represented. But I guess that's just wishful thinking

If you're among those who think, "Why should I vote? What difference could one vote make?" then you'd better think again: Your single vote can and does make a difference! A single vote has repeatedly set the course of American history. Consider:

1800—Thomas Jefferson was elected President by one vote in the House of Representatives after receiving a tie in the Electoral College. That one vote prevented Aaron Burr, later convicted of treason, from becoming President.

1824—John Quincy Adams was elected President by the U.S. House of Representatives over Andrew Jackson when one representative from New York changed his vote. The election had been thrown into Congress because no candidate received a majority of votes in the Electoral College.

1845—The U.S. Senate vote to annex Texas was originally tied at 26-26. Henry Johnson of Louisiana, originally opposed to the resolution, changed his vote; his single vote broke the stalemate and allowed the passage of the annexation resolution under which Texas became a state.

1868—One vote saved President Andrew Johnson from conviction and removal from office. The tally was 35-19, just one vote shy of the two-thirds majority needed to oust him.

1911—An average of only one vote per precinct passed women's suffrage in California.

1912—One vote per precinct, in one state, elected Woodrow Wilson as President.

1948—Lyndon Baines Johnson, who would go on to become the 36th President of the United States, became a U.S. Senator by a margin of only 87 votes.

1960—John F. Kennedy's margin of victory over Richard Nixon was less than one vote per precinct.

2000—George W. Bush won the presidency by one Electoral College vote.

The bottom line is that the single greatest equalizing factor in American politics is the ballot box. No amount of money in the world matters to a campaign if the candidate does not get the votes to win. And this is exactly why your opinion—and your vote—makes a difference. So exercise your right to vote on November 2. And if you don't vote, don't complain.

## WARNING LABELS RANGE FROM CRITICAL TO CORNY

Appliances come with lots of useful safety instructions—and some really funny ones.

A Lucent Technologies telephone instruction manual tells owners to "dial the desired number" if they wish to make a call.

Some Nintendo GameCube manuals warn users not to put their heads inside the machine because they might get injured.

A few air conditioner manufacturers strongly urge owners not to drop their units out of windows.

A warning label on a Dremel electric rotary tool reminds people the device was not designed to be used as a dental drill.

The label on a Komatsu floodlight says, "This floodlight is capable of illuminating large areas, even in the dark."

An RCA remote control warning sticker says the device is "not dishwasher safe."

So, when you buy new appliances, check out the warning labels. They could make your day by making you laugh.

And, of course, they could save your life.



## IN EMERGENCIES

During regular business hours, call:  
(254) 583-7955.

These are telephone numbers to call to report outages after business hours and on weekends and holidays.

- Kenneth Fikes .....(254) 583-4556
- Larry Koslosky .....(254) 583-4555
- Doug Matous .....(254) 583-2957
- Bobby Skala.....(254) 583-7219
- Ernest Martin.....(254) 583-2219
- Joe W. Marek .....(254) 583-4016
- James Campbell .....(254) 583-2786
- Jeremy Tepe.....(254) 583-2557
- Jennifer Balboa.....(254) 583-1161
- Rosemary Pomykal..(254) 869-2526

# AUTOMATIC SET-BACK THERMOSTATS SAVE ENERGY

Some heating unit installers are still telling customers that setting the thermostat back before leaving the house or going to bed won't save any money because the furnace will use excess fuel when they crank it back up.



They're wrong.

Years of testing have shown that the energy you gain by cooling your home down is equal to what you use when you warm it back up—and you save energy while the house is at a lower temperature.

Investing in a thermostat that automatically lowers the temperature at times when you won't be home or when your family is sleeping, the research shows, will save you money in the long run.

An automatic set-back thermostat will never forget to lower the temperature when it's supposed to. Most units cost from \$30 to \$100 and pay for themselves in energy savings within four years.

Before buying a set-back thermostat, make sure it will be compatible with your home's wiring.

If you have a heat pump and want

to install an automatic set-back thermostat, you'll need to buy one that's designed specifically for heat pumps. Lowering the thermostat of a heat pump can, indeed, cause it to operate inefficiently, which cancels out any savings. Choosing a moderate setting on a heat pump and leaving it there all day and night is the best way to save money.

## TAKE WINTER BY STORM

It's hard to predict the weather, but it's easy to prepare for it. Plan ahead for power outages that can accompany winter storms.

- Listen to weather forecasts every day so you'll know when high winds or ice/snow are on the way. That kind of winter weather is most likely to topple power lines and leave you temporarily in the dark (and cold!).

- Prepare an outage kit that contains: a battery-powered radio, fresh batteries, a flashlight, candles, matches, a wind-up clock, bottled water, paper plates and plastic utensils.

- Keep a stock of canned food in your cupboard, along with a manual can opener. Consider buying a camp stove and fuel that you can use (outdoors only, please) if you can't cook on your electric stove.

- Tape your electric cooperative's phone number onto your refrigerator so it will be handy when it's time to report an outage.

- Pile a few extra blankets and sweaters together so you can easily find them if the heat goes off. To stay warm, dress in layers.

- Teach children to stay away from fallen power lines. They could be energized and dangerous, even if the power is out.

Just in case the weather doesn't spare your neighborhood from outages this winter, it's better to be prepared than to shiver in the dark.

## CLEAN THE TURKEY, CLEAN THE OVEN

More fires occur between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day than at any other time of the year—and half of them start in the kitchen.

One easy way to prevent a kitchen fire while you're counting your blessings this Thanksgiving is to clean your oven before you start baking that bird.

OK, so it's not that easy.

If you don't have a continuous-cleaning or self-cleaning oven, pull on your rubber gloves and get ready to scrub. Open a window to ventilate the kitchen, and follow the directions on the oven cleaner.

Many oven cleaners work overnight. Spray the oven before you go to bed. After six to eight hours, wipe the oven clean, using as much elbow grease as you need.

Don't forget to clean the inside of the oven door. Scrub it with a cleanser and spray window cleaner on the oven window.

Rinse all signs of the cleansers from the oven; you don't want any residue in the oven when you fire it up to roast your Thanksgiving turkey.

Most new ovens are equipped with a continuous-clean mode. If you're in the market for a new appliance, do yourself a favor and buy one that cleans itself.



Still, it's important to maintain the cleanliness of the oven's interior—even if the appliance is self-cleaning. Here are some suggestions:

- Wipe up all spills as they happen before they get baked on.

- To save on cleanup time when you know you are cooking something that could overflow, cover the bottom of the oven with aluminum foil or place a cookie sheet on the lowest rack. The foil should not touch the electric element.

- Sponge the outside of the oven door and the stove top each time you use it.

- Soak burner racks in warm, soapy water.

- Clean your oven once a month so it's not such a chore the next time you do it!

A clean oven is a healthy oven. Excessive spills can cause smoke, offensive fumes and even fires.