

BELFALLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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

You've Got Power, And It's Not Just Electricity!

Cooperatives are examples of democracy in action. Cooperatives succeed due to the power of people working together. As a member of a cooperative, you join one out of every four Americans who belongs to these consumer-owned organizations. A cooperative is formed when a group of people joins together to accomplish a goal that cannot be done as well individually. In our case, this started with providing central station electric service and has since branched out into a variety of other services.

At your electric co-op, you are not “just a customer.” Instead, you are a member-owner of this private, nonprofit business. Unlike customers of investor-owned utilities, you, as a cooperative member, have a say in determining the leadership of the cooperative, how it will operate, how it will spend its revenue, and which services it will provide.

The members elect fellow members to serve as directors of the cooperative. Each member has one vote in the directors' election. The directors set policy and oversee the general operation of the cooperative. They also hire the general manager, who implements the policies and is responsible for the daily operation of the cooperative through the actions of its employees. The employees provide service to the members, thus completing the “circle of cooperation.”

THE SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

1) Voluntary and open membership. Because cooperatives are voluntary organizations, membership is open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2) Democratic member control. Cooperative members have equal voting rights. It doesn't matter how much electricity a member consumes. When electing directors, each member has one vote.

3) Member economic participation. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that

capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4) Autonomy and independence. Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations, controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

5) Education, training and information. New challenges and new technologies affect your cooperative and the entire utility industry. Ensuring our continuing effectiveness can only be accomplished by providing information and training to the members and public, our employees, staff and directors.

6) Cooperation among cooperatives. We are “working together, working for you,” on many levels. Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-op movement by participating in local, state, regional, national and international cooperative organizations.

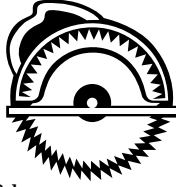
7) Concern for community. This principle focuses on members' needs and prompts cooperatives to work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

Belfalls Electric Cooperative provides electric distribution to all or part of Belfalls and Milam counties. The cooperative operates and maintains more than 1,434 miles of electric line, providing power to more than 5,166 services. Your cooperative averages 3.6 service locations per mile of line. Approximately 74 percent of our services are to residential customers.

Beware of Counterfeit Power Tools

A scam that began in Europe is traveling across the United States: People claiming to work for tool manufacturers are selling power tools from the trunks of their cars for bargain-basement prices.

The problem: The tools, often marked to appear that they came from a legitimate manufacturer, are fakes without safety features and have not been approved by Underwriters Laboratories or another safety testing agency.



The counterfeit rotary hammers, grinders and cordless drills do not operate well and cannot be repaired by the manufacturers' service centers.

If the price of a power tool appears too good to be true, the Power Tool Institute (PTI) warns, it probably is. PTI recommends that consumers buy power tools only from reputable dealers. The institute also is asking consumers to tell police about anyone they suspect of selling counterfeit tools.

Power tool knockoffs, PTI says, can malfunction and electrocute or otherwise harm the user.

Utility Poles Are for Climbing, Not for Posting Signs

Having a yard sale? Advertise it someplace besides the nearest utility pole.

Cluttering utility poles with signs advertising yard sales, open houses, parties and lost pets puts repair crews in peril because they have to fight nails, staples and tacks when they climb them. If a protruding object tears a lineman's glove or protective clothing, the crew could be delayed or the worker could risk injury. Nails and staples can catch on a boot, causing a climber to lose his balance and fall.

Utility poles have a single purpose: to support the lines that bring electricity, cable TV and telephone service to your home. They weren't meant as posts for advertising.

And they surely weren't meant as a jungle gym for children to climb. One teenager suffered burns over most of his body when he climbed up a utility pole and onto a transformer.

Your electric cooperative urges parents to keep their children at least 10 feet away from power lines and not to bring kites, ladders, poles or other tall objects near them.



Help Your Office Become Environmentally Friendly

A few simple steps can turn an energy-inefficient, environmentally unfriendly workplace into an eco-employer.

- Make two-sided prints and copies so you use your printer and copier less often. Copy and paste information into a word processing document that you can store on the computer rather than printing it out.
- Recycle paper, bottles, cans, phone books and anything else your local authorities will haul away.

- Return print and copy cartridges to the manufacturer for recycling. Buy recycled paper for office use.

- Buy computers, printers, scanners and copiers that bear the federal government's Energy Star label. The label guarantees that the machine uses electricity efficiently.

- Buy multi-function machines rather than stand-alone copiers, faxes and scanners. Some scanners, for instance, can be used to copy and fax.

IN EMERGENCIES

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

Josh Darden(254) 721-9712