

What You're Missing at the Annual Meeting



MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT/CEO RYAN BARTLETT

DID YOU KNOW THAT EVERY COOPERATIVE IS REQUIRED TO CON-duct an annual meeting of its membership? The purpose is to hold the election for the board of directors, share important financial information, occasionally vote on other matters such as bylaw changes—and, of course, give away great door prizes! There's another purpose, though; it's not laid out in the co-op's mission statement, but it's just as important.

Taylor Electric Cooperative's annual meeting is a community gathering where neighbors can meet new neighbors or catch up with old acquaintances. As our lives get busier with the "errands of life," and more of our interactions with others occur online via social media, we need to renew the value of face-to-face human connections. Very few organizations are as uniquely positioned as your co-op to bring together all the members of our local communities.

Rural Americans might do a better job of staying connected to our neighbors (in part because we need to), but it is not something we should take for granted. The simple acts of smiling, saying hello and shaking someone's hand truly lift both parties.

Our country and community face many challenges. It feels like our economy has been stagnant for years. Students leave for college and don't return to the area, or businesses close and cut local jobs. Overcoming these challenges will only happen if we come together.

Taylor EC's annual meeting is designed to take care of the important business of your co-op and the equally important business of building a sense of real community. All cooperatives serve economic and social purposes. Although safe, reliable and affordable electric power is crucial to our mission, improving the quality of life for all members is at the core of what we do every day.

If you have not attended the annual meeting in the past, or if it has been a few years, we urge you to take the time to be with your fellow co-op members.

We get out of life what we put into it. Your electric co-op is connected to you by more than just power lines. We are your neighbors, and we look forward to seeing you at 10 a.m. on April 19 at the Abilene Convention Center, 1100 N. Sixth St., Abilene 79601, for your annual meeting.

Traveling? Let Electricity Keep Your House Safe

IF YOU RESOLVED TO TRAVEL MORE THIS year, it's high time to get your house ready before you go.

Traveling is more fun and relaxing when you don't have to worry about whether your home is safe and secure. Here are five ways to prevent mishaps—and save some energy—during your absence.

1. Create the illusion that someone is home. Ask a trusted neighbor to pick up newspapers, mail and deliveries that might arrive while you're away. A pile of newspapers in the driveway is an invitation to an intruder looking for an empty house to break into.

2. Connect your outdoor lights to timers. Instead of leaving them on day and night while you're gone, install a timer that will switch the lights on when it gets dark and off when the sun comes up each day.

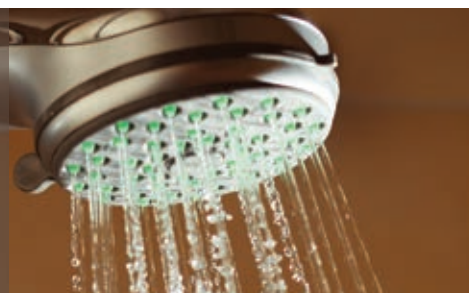
3. Plug indoor lamps into programmable timers set to "random" so the lights turn on and off throughout the day and evening. That will make your home look lived-in. You also can plug a TV or stereo into a timer so your house sounds lived-in, too.

4. Motion detectors not only light your property when your neighbor stops by to check on it but also serve to deter intruders. They save energy because you won't have to pay for light that no one is around to benefit from.

5. Unplug electronic devices such as your TV, computer, printer and small kitchen appliances before you leave. Left plugged into a wall socket, those items continue to draw small amounts of electricity that show up on your energy bill.

Power Tip

Consider insulating your hot water pipes. Doing so can reduce heat loss, allow you to lower the temperature setting and save an additional 3–4 percent per year on water heating.





79TH ANNUAL MEETING

APRIL 19TH

10:00 A.M. - NOON
AT THE ABILENE
CONVENTION CENTER



10:00 - 11:00 A.M.
EDUCATIONAL BOOTHS
HEALTH FAIR

11:00 - NOON
PRIZE DRAWINGS
BUSINESS MEETING
LUNCH

Members will have the chance
to vote for their representative
on the Taylor Electric
Board of Directors

taylorelectric.com | 793-8500

Don't Fall Victim to a Hack Attack

Keep your identity, money and information safe

MORE AND MORE, TAYLOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE members have smart devices that require Wi-Fi. Controlling garage doors remotely, turning on air conditioners from afar and recording TV shows from the dentist's office are just a few conveniences our members enjoy thanks to the "internet of things."

Remotely turning on your lights may sound like a tempting upgrade, but have you considered the potential drawbacks? An experienced hacker could view your daily habits through your internet-connected security cameras and look in on your spouse, children or grandchildren. They could identify times when you're away from home and let themselves in through remote-access door locks. Hackers also could monitor your online habits, bypass your passwords and log in to your private accounts. YIKES! These are scary thoughts.

There are a few ways to thwart hackers before they even have a chance. No method offers 100 percent guaranteed protection against criminals, but there are a few things you can do to protect yourself from hack attacks.

First, secure your Wi-Fi. If it doesn't require a password, change the settings and implement one immediately. If you aren't sure how to do this, do a quick internet search or call your internet service provider and ask. Without a password, any average Joe driving by could hop on your connection and inflict damage.

Second, keep your devices up to date. Yes, required updates can take forever to download, install and reconcile with your previous settings—but they really do help. Not only do they provide fixes for bugs and other issues discovered over time, they also repair security and hacking vulnerabilities that a hacker could use to get into your system and wreak havoc.

Third, ensure anti-virus software protects your computer. This software functions as an immune system for your computer. Just like your body's immune system, it won't catch every infection or virus, but it will greatly improve your defenses against hackers.

Fourth, use common sense. A prince from Nigeria doesn't need your help in smuggling money out of his country. You didn't magically win that contest you never entered, and you didn't get that job you didn't apply for. DO NOT give out your bank account information carelessly.



Also, don't click on links or open email attachments that look the slightest bit suspicious, or even unfamiliar. A "Trojan" virus can sneak onto your computer through an email purporting to be from a reputable company—your bank or a familiar shipping service, let's say.

When you open an attachment in the email to see a "statement" or "shipping details," the virus begins to download to your computer. It overtakes your email account, sending bogus emails to your friends and family. If they click the links or download the attachments, the virus spreads like wildfire.

Lastly, use strong passwords—not your dog's name and your anniversary date; anyone can find that out by looking at your Facebook page! Instead use a sequence of letters, numbers and characters that is difficult to guess. A password with more than eight letters and numbers that includes special characters (such as @, \$, * or &) is typically a strong one. The more critical the information you are trying to protect, the sturdier your password should be.

Hackers are typically after one thing: data. They want your passwords, files and personal information. If a hacker learns enough about you, they could steal your identity. Smart devices are fun and convenient, but only if you know the risks when connecting your life to Wi-Fi and take the necessary precautions.



CHRIS BURROWS | TCP

Join Us for Your Annual Meeting

Here's why you should attend

ON BEHALF OF TAYLOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, WE'D LIKE TO PERSONALLY INVITE YOU to join us April 19 at the Abilene Convention Center.

Each year, we look forward to getting together with our co-op community to hear what you have to say, enjoy fellowship among friends and family, and give everyone the chance to win prizes.

The co-op's annual meeting is not only a chance to visit with loved ones, though. It's also a great opportunity to learn about programs offered by the cooperative and get to know our staff. For us, the annual meeting provides an important forum for gathering feedback about how we can better serve you and your family.

It's also an opportunity for you to exercise one of the greatest rights of electric co-op membership: voting for the board of directors.

Your cooperative is not owned by faraway investors nor run by a board of directors appointed by such investors. It's owned by you, the members, and run by a democratically elected board of directors—made up of fellow members afforded the privilege to serve because of your votes.

A democratic and open election is one of many elements that sets our electric cooperative apart from other kinds of utilities. Having a voice in who makes the major decisions that directly affect your life and family is a right we all share as Americans. We all vote for our state and federal representatives, but not every American has the right to vote for those who represent community interests within their electric utility. You have that right, so why not exercise it?

Our directors are members of the community. They are concerned with the issues you face every day because they face them, too. And don't forget: All co-op members—including you!—are eligible to run for the board.

Rest assured, no matter what happens, we remain dedicated to providing you with safe, reliable and affordable electric service. We encourage you to take part in deciding how we deliver that service. So circle April 19 on your calendar and make sure to join us at the annual meeting. We'll save you a seat!



Taylor Electric Cooperative

226 County Road 287 • P.O. Box 250
Merkel, TX 79536

PRESIDENT/CEO

Ryan Bartlett

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cecil Davis, Board Chairman, Zone 1

Leland Robinson, Board Vice Chairman, Zone 1

Parks Thomas, Secretary-Treasurer, Zone 3

Garland Carter, Zone 2

David McFall, Zone 2

Richard Petree, At-Large

Kathy Rainey, Zone 3

HANDY WAYS TO PAY YOUR BILL

Online

taylorelectric.com

Taylor Electric App

Available on your Apple or Android product

By Phone

(325) 793-8500

Visa, MasterCard, checks accepted

Payments credited immediately

In Person

Main office hours:

7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Monday–Friday

226 CR 287, off I-20, west of Abilene

Wells Lane exit 274 between Tye and

Merkel

Abilene office hours:

7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Monday–Friday

7966 Hwy 83, Abilene 79602

Visa, MasterCard, checks, cash and money orders accepted

Payments credited immediately

Drop Box

Main office drop box at front gate: 24/7

Abilene office drop box (next to middle door): 24/7

Checks and money orders accepted

Payments credited next business day

Pay Stations

• Food Plaza #4

109 SE Fifth St., Cross Plains

• Check Express

906 E. Broadway Ave., Sweetwater

Cash, checks, money orders and debit cards accepted

Payments credited next business day



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