

CEO CORNER



Ryan Bartlett,
President / CEO

Honoring Our Educators

August marks the transition from summer break to the new school year for many in our community. Back-to-School is often, however, met with mixed reviews. While people enjoy the less demanding summer schedule, many are ready to get back to a consistent routine that the school year brings. As the Summer heat eventually gives way to cool Friday night lights and marching bands, all can agree that this is always an exciting time of year. Schools are the heart of many of our smaller communities, and the teachers, students, administrators, and staff who don their halls are the caretakers to the precious children of our communities. To show our appreciation, each August Taylor Electric Cooperative (EC) employees and board members pay tribute to our area educators.

During in-service week, Taylor EC employees visit Abilene Christian, Hawley, Merkel, Trent, and Wylie ISD member schools to offer our thanks and support. We serve a hot meal and provide a small break during their busy week of planning. In our short interactions with them, we get to hear about projects they are planning and see their excitement in beginning another school year. We also get the opportunity to share with them our gratitude and offer our encouragement. We understand that the strength and success of our community lies within the success of our schools, directly attributed to the teachers in our schools. The amount of love and care they put into preparation is an inspiration and we are honored to support them and help start their school year off on a good note.

Honoring our schools in this way embodies our seventh Cooperative Principle: Concern for the Community. Taylor EC is more than an electric provider; we are called to care for those we serve and seek ways to better their lives. By engaging with our educators, we can hear their needs and find ways to assist them in projects big or small. We live in the communities we serve and see firsthand the impact our schools have on the community. We are grateful for our educators' service and want to honor those who teach, care for, and lovingly educate our children.

So, whether if you have the back-to-school blues or if you are counting down the days in excitement and anticipation of a new year, we hope that the 2021-2022 school year is the best one yet! As classes begin, I hope you take a moment to thank a teacher or administrator for all that they do and wish them a successful new school year.



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Beware of Solar Scams

IN SOME AREAS in the U.S., authorities are warning against impostor scams taking advantage of consumer interest in the solar power industry.

The scheme goes like this: A solar power company falsely claims to be some kind of state agency for clean energy or a government-affiliated entity. They use this fraudulent identity to falsely convince consumers that their business's services are being performed on behalf of a state, county or city.

In a recently reported scam, solar sales representatives provided a company name that appeared to be connected with a state government to gain access to a resident's home. Once inside, the scammers took pictures of the residents' appliances and energy meters and aggressively marketed vague solar products to them. These scammers disparaged other legitimate solar companies in an attempt to persuade the residents to purchase would-be solar power systems from them.

Consumers may be more likely to believe these sales representatives because they present themselves as employees of official government offices. However, these scammers are simply misleading victims to gain entry to homes.

Government impostor scams are prevalent and may increase during the hot summer months.

Always think twice and do your homework to check references and reviews before inviting someone into your home or purchasing any services. A government entity will not go door to door to sell you solar power equipment.

Always verify the legitimacy of the company that a sales representative says he or she is affiliated with.

Ask for proper verification before letting any sales representative into your home. If you are suspicious of their identity or the sales representative refuses to provide it to you, do not hesitate to ask them to leave.

Remember, you can always consult with an attorney and your electric co-op before signing a contract. ■

Taylor Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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5 Home Energy Hogs

EVEN THOUGH TWO HOMES may have many similarities, there may be hidden energy hogs causing one home's utility bills to be higher. Here are five energy hogs that increase energy use.

1. An old fridge or freezer in the garage. That second refrigerator or freezer may be costing more than you think. If the model was produced prior to 1990, it's likely using twice as much energy (or more!) than a newer Energy Star-rated model. If it's located in the garage, it may run constantly in the summer, which leads to higher electric bills.

2. Cooling or heating an uninsulated area. Cooling or heating an uninsulated workshop or garage can be expensive. If you really want to heat or cool these types of spaces, insulate them.

3. Hot tub. The cost to operate a hot tub can be exponentially higher if it's an older, less efficient model. A smaller hot tub with better insulation, a cover and a pump that runs on a lower voltage will use less energy. In the end, getting a "good deal" on a used hot tub may cost more in energy bills in the long run.

4. Swimming pool. If you have a pool, consider installing a smaller, more efficient pump and reducing how often it runs. You can also look at installing a larger filter and maximizing the flow of water through the pipes by making them larger. These measures could cut your electric use for the pool pump by as much as 75%. Consult with a pool installation specialist to find the most efficient setup that will still keep your pool clean.

5. Pumps. If you live on acreage or a farm, you probably have several pumps, including irrigation, well, septic and sump. You probably use those pumps until they break down. Consider replacing the oldest and most-used pumps over time with more efficient ones that are sized correctly for their task. ■

Mama's Watermelon Salad

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar

Salt and pepper, to taste

½ medium watermelon, diced

1½ cups baby greens

1 cup diced cucumber

½ cup chopped mint leaves

¼ cup crumbled feta cheese

¼ red onion, sliced very thin

1. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, vinegar, and salt and pepper. Set aside.

2. In a large bowl, combine watermelon, greens, cucumber, mint, feta and onion. Drizzle the salad with the vinaigrette and toss gently to coat evenly.

SERVES 6

TCP Find this and more delicious recipes online at TexasCoopPower.com.

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Go Electric for Outdoor Grilling



WHEN YOU THINK of grilling burgers, steaks and veggies outdoors, the debate usually is between gas and charcoal. But a third option is the right one for a lot of grilling fans: electric.

Some of the electric grill's most attractive features include:

- ▶ No fire or flame, so it's not necessary to keep it a safe distance from your house. This is a major benefit for those who live in apartments or townhouses.
- ▶ Quick heat. Just plug it in and start cooking. There's no waiting for charcoals to turn white-hot.
- ▶ It's easy to clean. Because the grill does not create any charcoal ash, it creates very little mess while cooking.
- ▶ The ability to make hot sandwiches. Gas and charcoal models can't do that.
- ▶ All-season cooking—so long as you buy an indoor-outdoor model.

If you decide to buy an electric grill, consider these tips:

- ▶ If you plan to shuttle your grill between the kitchen and the patio, buy a portable model that fits on a tabletop.
- ▶ Choose a model made from commercial-grade stainless steel so it will resist corrosion—especially if you plan to grill outdoors.
- ▶ Look for a brand that offers a lifetime warranty. The least expensive models come with warranties as limited as 90 days.
- ▶ Electric grills are powerful and should be the only appliance plugged into an outlet. If they have to compete for power, preheat times lengthen.
- ▶ Plug electric grills into outlets with ground-fault circuit interrupters in accordance with local codes to prevent risk of shock or fire.
- ▶ Unplug electric grills when not in use and before cleaning.
- ▶ Most electric grills are designed for outdoor use only, so if you want to use it inside, choose a model that directs fat runoff outside of the unit as a fire safety measure. ■

Security Tips for Connected Devices

THERE IS A PLETHORA of gadgets and devices that claim to make our homes smarter, safer and more efficient. But as with any new technology, consumers should take extra precautions to keep their data safe.

Get creative with passwords. Consider creating the longest password permissible, and use familiar phrases you'll remember, like the lyrics to your favorite song.

Keep tabs on your apps. Most connected devices are supported by a smartphone application. Your smartphone could be filled with apps running in the background or using default permissions you never realized you approved, gathering personal information without your knowledge, which compromises your privacy and can put your identity at risk. Check your app permissions and deny requests that don't make sense.

Secure your network. Properly secure the network you use for connected devices. Consider placing these devices on a separate and dedicated network.

Connect and protect. Whether it's your computer, smartphone, game console, camera or other connected device, the best defense is to stay on top of things by updating to the latest security software, web browser and operating system. ■

