



Farmers' Electric Board of Trustees Appoints Nominating Committees

The Board of Trustees in their January 28, 2020 meeting appointed the 2020 Trustee Candidate Nominating Committees as follows:

District No. 3 (Fort Sumner), will meet at FEC's Fort Sumner Office, Fort Sumner, NM, on March 10, 2020, beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Committee Members:

Randel Mansell
Wayne Sleep
Becky Harris

District No. 5 (Tucumcari), will meet at Del's Restaurant, Tucumcari, NM, on March 12, 2020, beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Committee Members:

Doyle Frasier
David Hale
Robert Lopez

The Cooperative's Bylaws state, "A nominating committee consisting of three members from each district from which a trustee is to be elected shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees not less than 60 days (March 10, 2020) or more than 120 days (January 10, 2020) before the Annual Meeting. Each committee shall meet no less than 45 days (March 25, 2020) before the annual meeting and select one nominee for trustee from their district. The nomination shall be posted at the principal office of the Cooperative immediately following the committee meeting."

In order to be eligible to become or remain a trustee, a person must:

- (a) Be a member of the Cooperative.
- (b) Be a bona fide resident of his trustee district and a permanent occupant receiving electrical service from the Cooperative at his primary residential abode.
- (c) Not be in any way employed by a major supplier of electric energy or merchandise to the Cooperative.
- (d) Not be employed by or have a close relative employed by the Cooperative in any position.

These Positions Are For Three-Year Terms

Furthermore, in accordance with the Bylaws of the Cooperative, any qualified member of the Cooperative residing in Districts 3 or 5 wishing to be on the Annual Meeting ballot as a candidate, may do so by petition. Article IV, Section 3(d) reads: "Any fifty (50) members, in good standing with the Cooperative, residing in a district from which a trustee is to be elected may make nominations by petition for a trustee from that district, providing such nominating petition is filed in the principal office of the Cooperative not less than 20 days prior to the annual meeting."

The filing deadline this year is April 17, 2020. If you have any questions, call Lance R. Adkins at 1-800-445-8541 or 762-4466 in Clovis.

Manager's Message...



Lance Adkins, GM

Even in Washington, Things Still Getting Done

Farmers' Electric (FEC) and electric cooperatives across the nation have been working to address several issues, through federal legislation, that impact the cost of providing service to the membership. FEC participates in this process through our affiliation with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). It is easy to focus on media reporting of events in our nation's capital, decide that congress is focused only on the impeachment process, and not realize that congress continues to work on other

important issues. NRECA has been working the halls of congress on four specific issues over the past few years, issues with strong, bipartisan support in congress, including support from our New Mexico congressional delegation. In late December congress passed, and the president signed, a "spending package" that included resolution of several issues we have been working on including the Rural Act, Secure Act, Cadillac Tax Repeal, and Parking Lot Tax Repeal.

Changes under the Rural Act address unintended consequences of federal tax reform passed two years ago, the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which required that any funds/grants received by a cooperative from state or federal agencies be counted as income for tax purposes. While electric cooperatives pay significant taxes, including property, sales and employment related tax, as a not-for-profit entity, cooperatives are generally exempt from paying income tax so long as revenues received from non-members is less than 15 percent of total revenues during the year. One example of where this could impact FEC if not addressed would be receipt of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds, or similar state funding, to help defray the cost of repairing electric system damage after a major disaster. FEC has received state funding for disaster relief in the past.

Changes under the Secure Act reduce FEC's exposure to insurance premiums paid through NRECA to the federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC). Most electric cooperatives jointly pool/fund employee retirement plans to manage the cost of and enhance the benefit of employee retirement plans. Several years back the PCGC was hit hard with the bankruptcy of several large corporations including an airline and an automobile manufacturer. Retirees of those bankrupt companies turned to the PBGC for continued access to the retirement benefits they had earned. While the PBGC does not fully replace the lost benefit, it is better than suffering the loss of all benefits. Historically, the PBGC has considered the NRECA plan as one single plan and assessed the risk of failure (insurance premium) as such. In truth, the NRECA retirement assets are comprised of nearly 900 cooperatives, and while there is always some risk of individual bankruptcy, the likelihood of large numbers of cooperative bankruptcies are remote. This one change will save participating cooperatives more than \$30 million dollars per year in PBGC premiums and reduce plan expense for FEC in the future.

With the repeal of the Cadillac Tax provision in the Affordable Care Act (ACA), sometimes referred to as Obama Care, employees covered by employer provide health

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To Report An Outage

We are on-call 24 hours each day, 365 days each year, to serve **your** electric power needs.

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Carbon Monoxide: The Invisible Killer

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that often goes undetected, striking victims caught off guard or in their sleep.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 400 people in the U.S. die from unintentional carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning every year. More than 20,000 visit the emergency room, and more than 4,000 others are hospitalized.

This “invisible killer” is produced by burning fuel in cars or trucks, small engines, stoves, lanterns, grills, fireplaces, gas ranges, portable generators, or furnaces. When the gas builds up in enclosed spaces, people or animals who breathe it can be poisoned. Ventilation does not guarantee safety.



How Can I Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning?

Anyone can be at risk. The CDC says infants, the elderly, and people with chronic heart disease, anemia or breathing problems are more prone to illness or

death, but CO doesn't discriminate.

Winter can be a prime time for CO poisoning as people turn on their heating systems and mistakenly warm their cars in garages. So during times of cold weather, it's important to take extra precautions.

The National Safety Council recommends you install a battery-operated or battery backup CO detector in the hallway near each separate sleeping area in your home; particularly if you heat with natural gas or propane. Check or replace the battery at the time change in the spring and the fall and replace the detector every five years.

The CDC offers these additional tips:

- Have your furnace, water heater, and any other gas or coal-burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year
- Do not use portable flameless chemical heaters indoors
- Have your chimney checked and cleaned every year, and make sure your fireplace damper is open before lighting a fire and well after the fire is extinguished
- Never use a gas oven for heating your home
- Never use a generator inside your home, basement or garage or less than 20 feet from any window, door or vent; fatal levels of CO can be produced in just minutes, even if doors and windows are open.
- Never run a car in a garage that is attached to a house, even with the garage door open; always open the door to a detached garage to let in fresh air when you run a car inside

When the Carbon Monoxide Alarm Sounds

The Consumer Product Safety Commission warns that you should never ignore a CO alarm, and do not try to find the source of the deadly gas. Instead, follow these steps:

- Immediately move outside to fresh air
- Call emergency services, fire department or 9-1-1
- Do a head count to check to account for everyone
- Do not reenter the premises until emergency responders have given you the go-ahead to do so

Attention

Protection from winter shut-off begins November 15, 2019. To avoid potential disconnection of services, please contact the Human Services Department for eligibility information for the Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) at 800-283-4465. Your service will not be disconnected from November 15, 2019 through March 15, 2020, if you qualify for LIHEAP and have no past due amount or are making the agreed upon payments.

Atención

Protección contra la interrupción de servicio de invierno comienza el 15 de Noviembre del 2019. Para evitar la posibilidad de desconexión. Favor de ponerse en contacto con el Departamento de Servicios Humanos para informarse acerca de los requisitos de elegibilidad para el Programa de Asistencia Energética de Bajos Ingresos (LIHEAP) al 1-800-283-4465, Su servicio no será desconectado 15 de Noviembre del 2019 a 15 de Marzo del 2020 si califica para el Programa de Asistencia Energética de Bajos Ingresos y no tiene saldo atrasado ni a fallado con su acuerdo de pagos fijos.

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care plans will no longer be under the threat of additional tax liability for insurance plans that cost more than the federal government determined threshold. Most electric cooperatives are located in rural areas where insurance premiums are often higher, access to healthcare limited, and require more travel expense and time away from work than people who live in urban areas. Originally slated for implementation in 2018, delayed twice by legislative action, it is good to see the Cadillac Tax fully repealed.

Many readers may not be aware of the Parking Lot Tax, intended to tax the benefit of employer provided parking at tax exempt and nonprofit entities. A provision in the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, most of the attention on this issue was raised by churches, but also applied to other nonprofit entities including cooperatives. In my estimation, the intent was to tax an employer paid parking benefit at third-party parking spaces, such as parking expense in large cities where parking is at a premium. Unfortunately, the interpretation of the law has applied more broadly, and for the past two years FEC has had to calculate the total parking spaces available at our office locations, factor in the number of employees using those spaces, to see if FEC or FEC employees have additional tax liability for those parking spaces. In general, if less than half the parking spaces available are used for employee parking, there was no tax liability.

Until next month,

Paul A. Collins

Pole Inspectors in Area

Continuing through the end of September and into October, weather permitting, GLS, Ground Line Services out of San Antonio, Texas, will be testing poles for Farmers' Electric Cooperative (FEC) out of the Melrose Substation. Additionally, another crew will be inspecting our transmission loop which covers a great deal of the FEC service area.

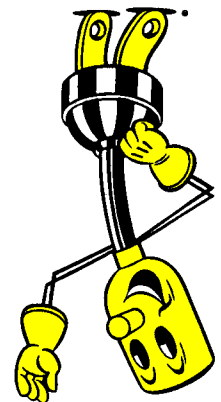


Pole testing is a yearly maintenance program that FEC performs, however, every pole is not tested each year, rather, FEC strives to test each on a ten-year rotation.

This type of maintenance program helps to ensure that FEC can continue to supply the very safest, reliable electricity to our members.

All FEC contractors should be marked as such, "FEC Contractor" on their trucks. They should also, have a letter from FEC on their vehicle dash when parked and working. You may also see some four wheelers in and around these areas as GLS crews use these to get to most of our poles. If you have any questions about pole testing or the pole testers, please feel free to contact the office at (800) 445-8541 and ask for Member Services or Engineering.

"Owned By Those We Serve"



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