

# FEC® POWER

## Source

Vol. 21 No. 6

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## Wildfire Safety Tips

Unlike many natural disasters, most wildfires are caused by people – and can also be prevented by people. Meteorologists are not yet able to forecast wildfire outbreaks, so people in fire-prone areas like ours should plan ahead and prepare to evacuate with little notice.

Here are some tips on how to prevent wildfires and what to do if you're caught in the middle of one:

### How to Prevent a Wildfire

- Contact 911, the Sheriff's office, or your local fire department if you notice an unattended or out-of-control fire.
- When camping, take care when using and fueling lanterns, stoves, and heaters. Make sure lighting and heating devices are cool before refueling. Avoid spilling flammable liquids and store fuel away from appliances.
- Do not discard cigarettes, matches, and smoking materials from any moving vehicles.
- Use fireworks responsibly and follow local laws and ordinances. Always have a water source ready.
- When pulling a trailer, make sure the slack on the emergency chain is not dragging. A chain being drug on asphalt will cause sparks to fly and could start a fire. Also, the catalytic converter, part of your exhaust system on your car, gets very hot. During normal operation, the catalytic converter routinely reaches temperatures of 1200 degrees F. If you pull over to the side of the road, make sure the underside of your vehicle is not touching tall, dry brush.
- Follow local ordinances when burning yard waste. Avoid backyard burning in windy conditions, and keep a shovel, water, and fire retardant nearby to keep fires in check. Remove all flammables from yard when burning.

### Evacuation Tips

- If advised to evacuate, do so immediately.
- Know your evacuation route ahead of time and prepare an evacuation checklist and emergency supplies.
- Wear protective clothing and footwear to protect yourself from flying sparks and ashes.

### Before you leave, prepare your home (if time permits)

- Remove combustibles, including firewood, yard waste, BBQ grills, and fuel cans from your yard
- Close all windows, vents, and doors to prevent draft.
- Shut off natural gas, propane, or fuel oil supplies.
- Fill any large vessels – pools, hot tubs, garbage cans, or tubs – with water to slow or discourage fire.



### If Caught in a Wildfire

- Don't try to outrun the blaze. Instead, look for a body of water such as a pond, river, playa, or cattle tank in which to crouch.
- If there is no water nearby, find a depressed, cleared area with little vegetation, lie low to the ground, and cover your body with wet clothing, a blanket, or soil. Stay low and covered until the fire passes.
- Protect your lungs by breathing air closest to the ground, through a moist cloth, if possible, to avoid inhaling smoke.

## Manager's Message...

**Lance Adkins, GM**

when you go from worry and apprehension to real peace of mind. And that comes from the family and employees of the Steve Trigg Ranch.

I am referring to the excellent rebuilding of our power line coming out of Logan. When you drive along our part of that line now, you see a lot of new poles, new bracing, and all new insulators. All of the old poles that might have caused concern are gone. (We never enjoy being out of power, even though it hardly ever happens.)

The best thing is the new line coming over the mesa from the old McQuiston place to our old Trigg Ranch headquarters. This brand new line will better weather the storms and also be easier to patrol for your linemen. I understand we also have twice the voltage we used to have. Although I don't understand all the benefits of that voltage increase, I have seen a direct benefit to me. Our lights in the house no longer dim when someone is welding in the shop, a mile and a half away. Your guys always said that shouldn't happen, they even put up a meter to check it, but all I had to do was call over there and ask who was welding to know I was right. Anyway, it ain't happenin anymore! Thanks for that!

We realize that our nine meters will never consume enough juice to come even close to paying for all the improvements you made to our line. We also understand you didn't really have to do it either. A simple thank you letter doesn't seem like enough, unfortunately, that's all you're going to get. (We aren't billionaires!) Come to think of it, I could stop turning off certain lights in the house when I leave a room. (Every drop helps, said the old lady, as she peed in the sea!)

Yours Sincerely,

Kristen and Richard Holmes

President and Vice-President of Trigg Cattle Co.

Receiving a "thank you" for a job well done is always appreciated and I certainly appreciated the humor. I want to touch on an excellent point from their letter, "our nine meters will never consume enough 'juice' to pay for the upgrades." This very fact was the primary reason electric cooperatives were formed in the first place, existing utilities could not make the economics work to extend service in rural areas.

As Farmers' Electric (FEC) celebrates 79 years of service this year, it also means there is a significant amount of aging line and infrastructure out there. FEC has almost 4,300 miles of line, spread out over 11,000 square miles of service territory, serv-

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## An Attitude of Gratitude

I received a very nice "thank you" letter from one of our ranching families, served out of the Logan Service area. I read this letter to the members attending the Cooperative's Annual Meeting in Logan and wanted to share it with the rest of the membership.

April 9, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express an emotion that you may, or may not, hear very often from your customers. That emotion is gratitude, sincere gratitude. The kind of gratitude you feel

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### POWER SOURCE

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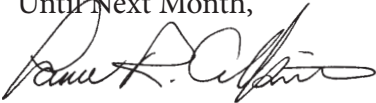
LETTER from PAGE 2

ing an average of 3 meters per mile of line. In some parts of our service territory it is more like 3 or more miles of line to serve one meter. As time goes on one of our challenges is the ever-increasing time and expense necessary to replace aging poles and infrastructure, in our effort to provide safe, reliable electricity at an affordable cost.

At an average cost of \$2,000 per pole for materials, transportation, and labor, that is \$1 million dollars for every 500 poles replaced. Currently, we are replacing more than 500 poles each year. Fortunately, we don't seem to have a great deal of trouble with pole-rot in our dry climate, mostly mechanical damage from time and weather events. Surprisingly, damage caused by woodpeckers are a real challenge, particularly in areas close to the caprock.

Historically, steady growth in the number of members served and kilowatt hours sold has provided sufficient revenues to offset this increasing expense. Since 2011, growth in kWh sales has been relatively flat in most rate classes and are down significantly in our irrigation rate class. Managing this work and expense will certainly be a big challenge in the years to come.

Until Next Month,



**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Attention residents of the **Conchas Dam, New Mexico area:**

**F**armers' Electric Cooperative, Inc. of New Mexico (FEC) will be holding a meeting on June 30, 2017 starting at 1:30 p.m. at the Conchas Water Dept., 299 Big Mesa Ave, Conchas, NM. Topic of discussion will be FEC's tree-trimming policies. FEC is planning tree-trimming in the area and wanted to alert all interested parties of our plans and considerations. Questions regarding this meeting and its content should be directed to: FEC, Attn: Thom Moore, Director, Member Services, PO Box 550, Clovis, NM, 88102, (800) 445-8541.

**Summer Sizzler!**

**Charbroil Patio Bistro Electric Infrared Grill**

**\$149**

**Save \$40!**

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**Too Close for Comfort**

**I**f your home is served by underground electric cable, you may be tempted to plant flowers or shrubs to disguise the transformer cabinet on your property. Please don't do it!

Line crews need easy access to those cabinets to perform routine maintenance and repairs. Shrubs, trees, and flowerbeds can block access – and after utility work is done, you may be unhappy about the condition of your plants.

It is dangerous to plant or work close to transformer cabinets, which contain high-voltage lines. Please avoid the cabinets at all times – and teach children to stay away too.

Only trained personnel are qualified to work around these cabinets. Additionally, when not being serviced by our line crews, these cabinets should be padlocked. If you ever notice a cabinet missing a lock or a lock not fully engaged, keep everyone a safe distance away and call Farmers' Electric immediately.



## Garage Door Safety: An Open and Shut Case

**T**ry this riddle: What weighs 600 pounds, deters intruders, and goes up or down at the push of a button? It's your automatic garage door, the largest moving piece of equipment in many homes.

Automatic garage doors may be a routine part of leaving and arriving home, but you should be aware of the potential for serious injury. Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., recommends these tips to make safety an open and shut case when it comes to your home's garage.

- 1. Always keep automatic garage doors fully open or fully closed.** Some folks may leave a small opening at the bottom for pets to get in and out for food or shade. But a small opening could also be an invitation for a child to try to crawl through and get stuck. Another push of the button could send the heavy door down – causing injury – instead of bringing the door up when trying to free anyone stuck underneath. If you encounter anyone stuck in an automatic door, call your local fire department.
- 2. Read instructions on how to operate and maintain your garage door properly.** Check your automatic door monthly to be sure safety precautions are working. Many garage doors boast a safety feature that triggers an automatic reversal if anything is encountered while closing. To check, place a 1.5 inch object, (like a flat two by four) in the path of the door to make sure the door correctly reverses when contact is made. Instructions should also advise on

maintaining a properly balanced door. Call a qualified repair company for service or maintenance.

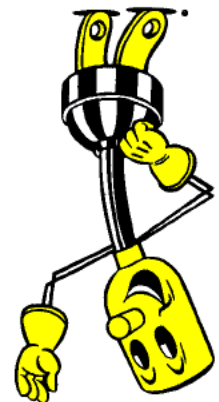
- 3. Don't allow children to operate a garage door.** It may seem like a harmless, simple task to allow children to push the garage opener, but activating heavy equipment should be taken seriously.



- 4. Avoid walking under a door that is opening or closing.** You never know when a malfunction may take place. Steer clear of a moving door.
- 5. Know when and how to use the emergency release.** You'll find a cord with a handle hanging along the track of your garage door. Always use caution when using this release, and only use it when the door is fully closed.

*An automatic garage door is a common convenience powered by electricity. Just as electricity demands safety and respect, so does the equipment it operates.*

**“Owned By Those We Serve”**



**FARMERS' ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.**  
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