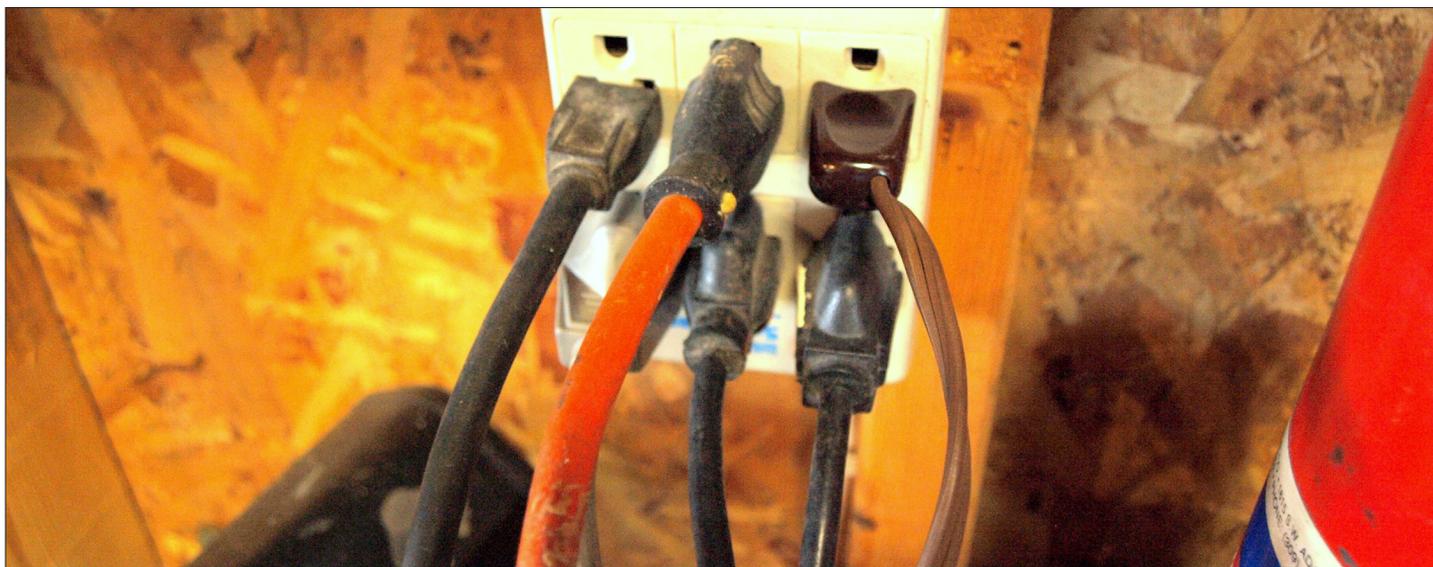


May 2021

# URECC news

for the members of Upshur Rural Electric Cooperative Corporation



## May is Electrical Safety Month

**W**e use electricity every day. This invisible force has become so commonplace that it can be all too easy to overlook possible electrical hazards, even in the safety of our own homes. May is Electrical Safety Month, and a good time to put the most important safety tool you have—your brain—to work.

Knowing what to be on the lookout for and knowing the safe steps to take can make all the difference in preventing accidents. Safe Electricity offers the following home safety tips to help arm you with the knowledge to stay safe and help others stay safe.

- Always read and understand the operator's manual before using an appliance or tool.
- Make sure recognized safety laboratories, like UL, ETL, or CSA have certified the electrical appliance, tools, and cords you plan on using.
- Never use a product with a damaged electrical cord.
- Never use extension cords on a permanent basis.
- Only use extension cords properly rated for the devices you plan to plug into it.
- For the safety of children in your home, install tamper-

resistant outlets or protective coverings.

- If your outlets are warm to the touch, immediately shut them off at the circuit breaker, and contact a qualified electrician to make repairs.
- Install ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCIs) in areas that may be wet or damp. GFCIs help protect against electrical shock. Use the test and reset button monthly to ensure they are working properly.
- Never use power tools outdoors if it is raining or the ground is wet.
- If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or has given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced.

While you can see, smell, or hear some electrical hazards — outlets that are warm to the touch or lights that constantly flicker, for example — many others are invisible and undetectable. It's important to always respect electricity and the potential danger that comes with its distribution and use. We hope these tips help keep you and your family safe.

*To learn more about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).*



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**(800) 259-2536**  
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OFFICE HOURS:  
Monday-Friday,  
8:00 am - 4:30 pm.

POWER OUTAGE  
HOT LINES  
**903-680-2100**  
**866-804-1674**

#### FORMS AVAILABLE AT URECC.COOP

If you or your company needs official forms from URECC, those can be downloaded in PDF format at **URECC.coop/Reports-Forms**.

All forms and documents, and signatures needed can be scanned and emailed to URECC, or faxed to our offices, or the majority of our documents can be signed digitally through Docusign.

If you do not have internet access the forms may be mailed of faxed to you by request.

#### PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Pay through our URECC App available for iPhones or Androids
- Pay online at **urecc.coop**
- Pay by phone by calling **888-223-2056**, available 24 hours a day. Visa, Mastercard, Discover, or American Express.
- Pay in person at our office or use any of our four Kiosks.
- Pay via automatic draft of your checking or savings account. To sign up, please visit **urecc.coop/ways-to-pay**.



**S**ometimes people need a helping hand. For those members who qualify, special utility assistance programs are available. Thousands of dollars have been designated for distribution in our URECC service area.

Listed below are the utility assistance providers in our service area. Please contact these providers directly to determine if you need and qualify for assistance on your electric bill. The full list of contact information can be found on our website, [www.urecc.coop](http://www.urecc.coop).

- Aid Bank- Upshur/Wood County
- Neal McCoy's East Texas Angel Network
- Community Services of Northeast Texas- Rusk County
- Greater East Texas Community Action Program-Wood County
- Veteran's Resource Center
- Community Services of Northeast Texas- Camp County
- Community Services of Northeast Texas- Cass/Morris County
- Greater East Texas Community Action Program- Gregg County
- PATH Agency (All counties)
- Tri-County Community Action- Harrison County
- Ore City Ministerial Alliance
- Greater East Texas Community Action Program- Smith County
- Tri-County Community Action- Upshur County



### Socialize with us!

Stay up-to-date with your co-op and your community by following us on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Get the latest news on co-op events, services, energy saving tips, and more. During a power outage, stay connected with us for updates on the restoration process.



### LIGHTS OUT? REPORT IT HERE

If the power goes out, be sure to keep URECC's Outage Reporting information handy. You can report outages through URECC's Smarthub app, which is available in your phone's app store.

Members are also able to report outages by phone by calling 903-680-2100 (local) and 866-804-1674 (long distance.)



# The Impact of Winter Storm Uri and what it means for URECC members.

By Robert Walker, URECC CEO

**F**ebruary's Winter Storm Uri created a different situation for power supply costs. It may not show up in the reports until next year, but we're feeling the effects now.

While it's a complicated matter, Winter Storm Uri impacted supply to a degree never seen. Extreme temperatures and ice forced every generator type available in the system, offline. The units most severely affected were wind turbines whose blades iced over, but even "Old Faithful" coal, whose fuel froze solid, had a hard time and natural gas wells froze as well, leaving only stored gas.

As supply fell, the natural law of supply and demand kicked into full gear as demand for electricity rose to new heights in the market. Prices for electricity and stored gas skyrocketed and any unsecured purchases became incredibly expensive. URECC's suppliers saw market prices for gas to run their natural gas units go from \$3.00/therm to over \$60.00/therm, only to have the pipelines cut back as pipe pressures dropped. Market prices for power shot up from \$35-50 per Mwh to over \$9,000 in some markets.

When the storm passed, URECC's supplier's saw \$100 million spike in power cost. To that end, URECC has a share in those costs. Our commitment is to remain affordable. To do so, we are working to spread these costs out over time so to not wreck "kitchen table" economies. It will mean slower capital spending on our part and a tighter belt, but we will only slowly drain off that cost to our membership.

Some may wonder what that means to power bills going forward. Certainly there will be an increase. We are still working to determine the degree of increase. We do believe that we can keep the increase in the range of \$5-10 per month for the average user. At that rate, it will take quite some time to pay off the winter storm bill, but this is the most realistic and affordable solution.

As a rural electric cooperative, we understand that money doesn't grow on trees, this is why we are working to keep costs as low as we are able to help you- our members.

*For more information on the impact of Winter Storm Uri, members can visit: [urecc.coop/winter-storm-news-update](http://urecc.coop/winter-storm-news-update).*

## URECC Board Member Receives Recognition



**T**uesday, April 20th, URECC Board of Directors' member representing District 7, Dr. Charles Whiteside, was honored with a dedication ceremony by Kilgore College. Dr. Whiteside, who has strongly supported Kilgore College and education throughout East Texas for many years, recently made a sizable contribution to Kilgore College to support the training of linemen through Kilgore College's KCEPT (Kilgore College Electric Power Technology) program. The 10-week course of study will award those who graduate with an electrical power certificate which will allow them to go right to work for an electric power company or contractor. The KCEPT facility and program is sponsored by 8 electric cooperatives in East Texas.

Dr. Whiteside was recognized and thanked during the ceremony today by Kilgore College President Dr. Brenda Kays and other KC staff and board members, as he was shown the plaque that will permanently placed at the facility, as the program continues to produce quality future linemen for many years to come.

URECC is proud of Dr. Charles Whiteside and the other Board of Directors that work continuously not only for the good of URECC members, but for all rural East Texans.

## Military Appreciation Month



**M**ay is Military Appreciation Month, and in the words of John F. Kennedy, “As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

At Upshur Rural, we are grateful to have several veterans within our ranks, and we are proud to serve veterans and their families within our local community. In addition to providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we care for the veteran community and show our appreciation through our actions and ongoing commitment to them and their families.

Not only do we pause on Memorial Day to remember the sacrifice and service of those who gave all, but the month also holds several other military anniversaries and events, including Military Spouse Appreciation Day on May 7, and Armed Forces Day on May 15.

URECC is proud to honor and support veterans of all ages, ranks and branches of the military. Please join us in taking a moment to show your appreciation to a veteran—not just this month, but every month.



## Please Make Room for Roadside Crews

**W**hen the power goes out, so do URECC’s line crews. Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities we serve.

If you’re traveling and see one of our crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask that you move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work. We deeply care about the safety of all, and this extra precaution ensures just that.

If you approach a crew while traveling on a two-lane road, moving over to the next lane might not be an option. In this case, we simply ask that you slow down when approaching roadside crews. If you approach a crew while traveling on a four-lane road, and safety and traffic conditions allow, we

ask that you move over into the far lane.

Utility crews aren’t the only ones who could use the extra space. Emergency responders, such as police officers, firefighters and emergency medical technicians, often find themselves responding to emergency situations near busy roadways.

Texas “Move Over” law requires any driver approaching a parked maintenance, law enforcement or emergency vehicle to move over into another lane, if possible. So we ask that you follow the same procedures mentioned above to help keep these crews and our crews safe.

There’s plenty of room for all. Let’s work together to keep everyone safe on our local roadways.

**PLEASE MOVE OVER FOR EMERGENCY AND UTILITY CREWS**

If you see police, firefighters, utility crews or other emergency personnel on the side of the road, please slow down and move over when possible.

**Together, we can keep our crews safe.**



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



©iStockphoto/chrisgramly

# Home Cooling Systems

When it comes to cooling your house, there are a number of options beyond air conditioning. *from Energy.gov*

**A**lthough your first thought for cooling may be air conditioning, there are many alternatives that provide cooling with less energy use.

A combination of proper insulation, energy-efficient windows and doors, daylighting, shading, and ventilation will

usually keep homes cool with a minimum of energy use in all but the hottest climates. Although ventilation should be avoided in hot, humid climates, other approaches can significantly reduce the need to use air conditioning. Before choosing a cooling system, you may want to familiarize yourself with the principles of heating and cooling.

## Cooling Tips

- Set your programmable thermostat as high as is comfortable in the summer, and raise the setpoint when you're sleeping or away from home.
- Clean or replace filters on air conditioners once a month or as recommended.
- Turn off kitchen, bath, and other exhaust fans within 20 minutes after you are done cooking or bathing; when replacing exhaust fans, consider installing high-efficiency, low-noise models.
- During summer, keep the window coverings closed during the day to block the sun's heat.
- Select energy-efficient products when you buy new cooling equipment. Your contractor should be able to give you energy fact sheets for different types, models, and designs to help you compare energy usage. See the efficiency standards for information on minimum ratings, and look for the ENERGY STAR when purchasing new products.

*For more cooling and energy efficiency tips, visit [urecc.coop](http://urecc.coop) or [energy.gov](http://energy.gov).*

## 7 Cooperative Principles

**C**ooperatives around the world operate according to a core set of principles. These principles, along with the cooperative purpose of improving quality of life for their members, make electric cooperatives different from other electric utilities.



### VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

of membership, regardless of race, religion, gender or economic circumstance.

Membership in a cooperative is open to all persons who can reasonably use its services and stand willing to accept the responsibilities



### DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

are elected from among the membership and are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote); cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Elected representatives are



### MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

capital remains the common property of the cooperative. members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative; setting up reserves; benefitting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that

## Working for Reliability



**U**RECC works year-round to ensure the delivery of safe and reliable electricity to our members.

Some of the ways we do this is by making system improvements. Our line crews have been busy putting up stronger poles and changing out the line in certain areas across the territory. Traditionally we use a point four line; a number four line, and now they're using a one-aught line, which is a thicker line. The weight of this type of line will help prevent lines from snapping as easy.

Another improvement in the works involves adding more poles within a span of line and also adding metal poles to help strengthen the span and overall system.

These improvements will help our system last longer and stand up stronger to whatever Mother Nature throws at us.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



When streaming online content, use the smallest device that makes sense for the number of people watching. Avoid streaming on game consoles, which use 10 times more power than streaming through a tablet or laptop.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Outdoor Safety during a Thunderstorm

**L**ightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area in which it is raining and you do not have to see clouds. This means that if you can hear thunder, you're within striking distance, and it is time to take safe shelter. When the storm is over, wait 30 minutes after the last lightning strike you see before going back outside.

- If caught outdoors during a thunderstorm and unable to take shelter in an enclosed building, take the following precautions:
- Try to take shelter in a vehicle with a solid metal roof. Close the windows, and avoid contact with electrical conducting paths—such as the steering wheel, ignition, gear shifter, or radio.
- Do not seek shelter under tall, solitary trees; canopies; small picnic or rain shelters; or in any open-frame vehicles such as jeeps, convertibles, golf carts, tractors, or mowers.

- Avoid water, high ground, or open spaces.
- Do not stand near power, light, or flag poles; machinery; fences; gates; metal bleachers; or even other people. If you are in a group, spread out so that you are at least 20 feet apart.
- If your skin tingles or your hair stands on end, lightning may be about to strike. Squat down low to the ground with your head between your knees making yourself the smallest target possible.

If a person is struck by lightning, call 911 and care for the victim immediately. You are not in danger of being electrocuted by the victim.

More information on lightning safety can be found at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration website at [www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov](http://www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov). Additional information on storm safety can be found at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## Hawaiian Baked Chicken



### Ingredients:

#### For the Marinade

4 chicken breast halves  
1 can (20-oz) pineapple chunks, juice reserved  
3 garlic cloves, minced  
salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1 teaspoon lemon zest  
1/8 teaspoon paprika

#### For the Pineapple Topping

2 tablespoons butter  
1 tablespoon dijon mustard  
1 tablespoon honey  
1 can (20-oz.) pineapple chunks

### Directions:

Lightly pound chicken just enough to even it out; do not pound it thin. In a large plastic ziploc bag, combine chicken breasts, pineapple juice, minced garlic, salt, pepper, lemon juice, lemon zest, and paprika. Seal bag and place in fridge for 3 to 4 hours. Preheat oven to 400. Lightly grease a baking pan with cooking spray. Remove chicken from bag and shake off any excess; discard marinade mixture. Transfer chicken to prepared baking pan; set aside. In a frying pan, melt butter over medium-high heat. Add mustard, honey, and pineapple chunks; stirring occasionally, cook for 2 minutes, or until bubbly and fragrant. Remove from heat, spoon pineapple mixture over chicken. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes, or until chicken is tender. Remove from oven & serve.