Co-op News

COLEMAN COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

How We’re Special

Cooperative principles guide co-ops to be stewards of their communities

MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MANAGER CLINT GARDNER

EVERY OCTOBER SINCE 1930, NOT-FOR-PROFIT cooperatives of all kinds have recognized National Cooperative Month as a way to appreciate their many members and educate the public about how co-ops work.

This year, Coleman County Electric Cooperative highlights the beliefs that guide all co-ops: the Seven Cooperative Principles. These principles lead electric cooperatives such as Coleman County EC to do business in a better way every single day.

Principles No. 1: Voluntary and Open Membership, and No. 2: Democratic Member Control. Co-ops are open to anyone who is able to use their services, which means that any person who moves into Coleman County EC’s service territory is eligible for membership. Annual meetings allow members to get to know the people who run their co-op. The meetings also are where members learn about co-op business matters.

Every year in July, Coleman County EC convenes for its annual meeting, where members elect directors to serve on the board that governs the cooperative.

No. 3: Members’ Economic Participation. Because members own their electric cooperatives, co-ops do not create profits for distant shareholders. Instead, any excess revenue—called “margins”—is allocated back to the membership in the form of capital credits, or patronage capital. The co-op uses these allocated funds as working capital until the board of directors determines that returning the funds to members makes financial sense. When capital credits are retired, members are paid based on how much electricity they purchased from the co-op for a given year.

Allocating and retiring excess revenue to members distinguishes cooperatives. We’re proud to support our communities by putting money back into the local economy—and into the wallets of those we serve.

No. 4: Autonomy and Independence. Electric cooperatives form a vast network across America. They’re in 47 states, and cooperative-owned electric lines cover 42 percent of the nation’s land mass. Yet each cooperative is an autonomous, independent business. We work with our co-op neighbors, but our members are the sole governors of Coleman County EC. Our member-elected board of directors approves policies and resolutions that guide the way we do business.

No. 5: Education, Training and Information. Cooperatives have a charge to keep their members informed—not just about cooperative business but also about topics like energy efficiency, safety and community contributions.

Coleman County EC keeps its members up to date on relevant news every month through Texas Co-op Power, which aims to educate, inform and entertain our members. You also can stay informed via our website, colemancountyelectric.org.

No. 6: Cooperation Among Cooperatives. Although co-ops are independent entities, they still rely on one another to share resources, information and, in some cases, manpower.

Electric co-ops have long relied on one another to get power restored more quickly after severe weather emergencies using a mutual-aid agreement. It works just as it sounds: When Coleman County EC needs extra hands after a disaster, such as a wildfire or tornado, co-ops from surrounding towns and states help out. When neighboring co-ops need help, Coleman County EC sends crews to them.

No. 7: Concern for Community. Possibly the most visible of all the cooperative principles, this is what drives electric co-ops to be good stewards of the communities they serve.

Coleman County EC and its employees undertake a variety of projects, including supporting local charitable organizations, volunteer fire departments, schools and businesses.
TOGETHER, LET’S CELEBRATE THE POWER OF HUMAN CONNECTIONS

As a national network for more than 730 co-ops, Touchstone Energy cooperatives value the people who elevate and energize our communities.

That’s why we are launching a contest to honor inspirational community members across the country.

Winners will be selected by a panel of judges based on the impact they have on the community. All entries must be submitted by November 4. Winners will be announced in December. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED.

VISIT WHOPOWERSYOU.COM FOR FULL CONTEST RULES