

Home Is Where Our Heart Is



MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT/CEO RYAN BARTLETT

THE DIRECTORS AND EMPLOYEES AT TAYLOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

want to see our community succeed. Why? Because we live here, too. We're local people working for local good. That's the essence of Cooperative Principle No. 7, Concern for Community.

First and foremost, we strengthen our community by doing what we do best: providing reliable electricity at a reasonable cost. We are a dynamic part of our community. As the area grows, so does our distribution system.

At Taylor EC, we pursue policies and projects that are good for the community because what's good for our community is good for our cooperative.

We have strong roots in this community. Taylor EC has been in business here for more than 75 years. Part of the benefit of this stability is the assurance that we are not going anywhere. Our business began here, and we won't pull up stakes to pursue greener pastures elsewhere.

We pay our employees fair wages, which helps strengthen the economy when they spend that money here. And by providing well-paying jobs, we keep our towns healthy because employees and their families don't have to move away to make a living. The more people we have here paying taxes and patronizing local businesses, the more vibrant our community will be. Strengthening our local economy makes sound business sense.

But the benefits to the community aren't just financial. We open doors for our young people with scholarship programs and the annual Youth Tour trip to Wash-



ington, D.C. We teach children safety through programs in schools and online. We help our members save money and reduce their environmental impact by recommending energy efficiency measures. We enrich the community by supporting local charities. We help our members and neighbors in need by contributing to efforts like food drives and Relay For Life.

The co-op is made up of people who care. Our employees go out of their way to better their communities. They coach youth sports teams, serve on school committees and participate in church activities. They are co-op members like you, and like you, they want to make their hometowns stronger.

Remember—when it comes to Taylor EC, our community is where our hearts are.



Keep Dad Safe for Father's Day

YEARS OF POWER SHOPPING

For past Father's Day gifts have probably yielded the dad in your life a garage or shed full of handy gadgets. On June 17, give him the tools he needs to use his stockpile safely.

For table saws and other large tools, give your dad a motor safety switch with a large stop paddle or switch. It allows him to use his hip or foot to immediately cut power to a tool without removing a hand from the work piece, helping him to keep his work safe and steady. For about \$30, you can buy a switch that easily mounts to most 120-volt machinery.

If he spends full weekend days near his workbench, pick a pair of supportive steel-toe boots to protect his feet from knocked off or dropped work gear. Good work boots also will reduce fatigue and keep his knees and back comfortable even after a full day on his feet.

Toss in classic safety gear: Sporty safety glasses styled like sunglasses offer a snug fit and wraparound protection in both clear and tinted styles. Choose a snug pair of work gloves with extra gripping strips to help your dad keep a firm hold on tools and work materials. And don't forget his ears—a simple pair of earplugs will keep that ringing noise at bay after he works around loud machinery.

Take the Sizzle Out of Summer With a Slow Cooker

AS THE SUMMER HEAT RAMPS UP, COOKING DINNER with an oven or on a stovetop becomes less and less appealing. Sure, most of us enjoy a home-cooked meal, but introducing heat from a range into your home while trying to keep from lowering the thermostat excessively can be counterproductive. Plus, there's the general unpleasantness of standing over a hot stove when it's 100—or more—degrees outside.

Salads are a favorite alternative during summer's swelter, but it's nice to have the option of a more substantial meal without sacrificing comfort or pushing utility bills sky-high.

A slow cooker presents an elegantly simple solution to this dilemma. It takes a bit of planning, but once you've mastered that small step, the rewards are plentiful.

What slow-cooked meals lack in quickness, they make up for in affordability and convenience. After a modest bit of prep and before heading out to work in the morning, you can throw a few basic ingredients into a slow cooker, turn it on, and, voilà, dinner will be waiting when you get home. Or choose a recipe with a shorter cook time for a lazy weekend supper.

Speaking of relaxed weekend meals, in honor of Father's Day, here are a couple of savory, hearty recipes to celebrate the dad in your life.

Easy Cheesy Barbecue Chicken

FROM *CROCK-POT: THE ORIGINAL SLOW COOKER RECIPE COLLECTION*

- 6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 bottle (26 ounces) barbecue sauce
- 6 slices bacon
- 6 slices Swiss cheese

1. Place chicken in a 4½-quart slow cooker. Cover with barbecue sauce. Cover and cook on low 8–9 hours. (If sauce becomes too thick during cooking, add a little water.)

2. Before serving, cut bacon slices in half. Cook bacon in microwave or on stovetop, keeping bacon flat. Place 2 pieces cooked bacon on each chicken breast in slow cooker. Top with cheese. Cover and cook on high until cheese melts. ▶ Serves 6.

COOK'S TIP To make cleanup easier, coat the inside of the slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray before adding ingredients. To remove any sticky barbecue sauce residue, soak the stoneware in hot, sudsy water, then scrub it with a plastic or nylon scrubber—don't use steel wool. Or use a slow cooker liner for easy cleanup.



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Cheesy Buffalo Chicken Soup

NINA MARTIN | CENTRAL TEXAS EC

- 1 rotisserie chicken or whole roasted chicken
- 8 ounces cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1 red onion, diced
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 1 bunch cilantro, chopped
- 32 ounces chicken broth
- ½ cup hot wing sauce
- Garlic powder to taste
- Optional garnish:
 - Avocado
 - Cilantro
 - Cheddar cheese
 - Green onion

1. Remove meat from chicken and shred.
2. Put meat, cheeses, onions, cilantro, chicken broth and wing sauce in a 6-quart or larger slow cooker. Stir in garlic powder.
3. Set on low 4–6 hours. Then garnish as desired. ▶ Serves 8.



Friends, Neighbors Gather for Taylor EC Annual Meeting

THE LAYOUT MAY HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT, BUT THE SMILES AND fellowship were the same at Taylor Electric Cooperative's annual meeting, April 19 at the Abilene Convention Center. Outside, a Taylor Electric bucket truck signaled the location. "It looks so much taller in person!" a group of people said in unison as they walked toward the entrance of the convention center.

The full agenda for members and their guests included a large exhibit fair in the lobby of the convention center, a barbecue lunch, the business meeting and lots of door prizes. Lunch was served by students from member schools Merkel, Hawley, Wylie and Abilene Christian.

One of the more noteworthy parts of the meeting was the recognition of retiring board member Parks Thomas, who

served more than 22 years.

"It has been such a blessing to be a part of this board for so many years," Thomas said. "I can't thank y'all enough. It's just one big family, and it's great."

Board President Cecil Davis presented Thomas with a leather-bound plaque and a unique chair for his decades of dedicated service. "You are a really special guy," Davis said. "And we're going to miss you a lot. And we want to give you something to retire in." Davis motioned for two staff members to lift a cloth to reveal a dark wood rocking chair for Thomas.

Another big story at the meeting was the rebranding of the co-op. Everywhere one looked, the old logo, which included Willie Wiredhand, had been replaced with a clean, modern logo



1. Members visit employee booths.
2. Taylor EC's fiber team answers members' questions about new fiber internet service.
3. Members enjoy the health fair prior to the annual meeting.
4. Employee Randy Davis provides gifts for members visiting his booth.
5. Board Secretary-Treasurer Parks Thomas presents ECCA Volunteer Fire Department with an Operation Round-Up donation.
6. Members settle in for the membership meeting and meal.
7. Taylor EC President/CEO Ryan Bartlett presents a plaque to retiring director Thomas thanking him for more than 22 years of service.
8. Thomas receives a standing ovation for his years of service.



featuring a circle of colors. "I still want people to know that we'll still have Willie Wiredhand," said Ryan Bartlett, Taylor EC president and CEO. "He'll just be a part of our history."

Elizabeth McVey, director of communications, said the new logo represents the future of the co-op. "It better aligns with the products and the new things we have coming in 2018 and moving forward."

The exhibit fair in the lobby of the convention center was filled with a variety of vendors. Various departments from the co-op also were set up throughout the exhibit hall, educating members about member services, construction projects and the co-op's new fiber internet service, which is currently being implemented. The fiber internet pilot program was one of the most talked-about projects at the meeting.

"We heard what the members wanted," Bartlett said. "They don't have access to fast, reliable internet—and at a good price!" He said the response from both the board of directors

and the membership has been very positive.

"When I pitched [the] idea to the board, they were excited to bring the service to our members," Bartlett added. "They said, 'How fast can we get it out there?'"

McVey added, "Just like the co-op first brought electricity to our area in 1939, we're doing the exact same thing with fiber. It's so wonderful to offer a new service that our membership so desperately needs. It's no longer an option these days, it's a must-have."

Also in the exhibit hall was Golden Spread Electric Cooperative, which provides the power that Taylor EC distributes. Golden Spread EC presented a video during the business meeting, highlighting its recent accomplishments. One of the cooperative's proudest feats was a switch to generating 100 percent of its own power. Previously, Golden Spread EC had to purchase power to make up for gaps in its load. With the completion of construction of its gas-powered generation facilities



1. Employee Chris Jenkins speaks with members about engineering services.
2. Grand prizewinner Barbara Allen
3. Ryan Holmes awards door prizes.
4. Grand prizewinner Tina Haskins
5. Students from Abilene Christian School lead members in the Pledge of Allegiance.



and its portfolio of wind assets, Golden Spread EC makes its own power 100 percent of the time. This change keeps costs down, and Golden Spread EC passes those savings on to its member cooperatives, including Taylor EC.

During the business portion of the meeting, results of the election for the board of directors were announced. Cecil Davis, Zone 1, and David McFall, Zone 2, were re-elected to three-year terms by acclamation. In Zone 3, Gayla Simons was elected to the seat vacated by Thomas.

Bartlett highlighted the co-op's line maintenance program. "We are stepping up our game," he said. "We've actually formed our own tree-trimming crew." Testing of poles, relays and other infrastructure helps the co-op have the most reliable system possible. "One of our core values is system reliability," Bartlett said. "It changes people's lives how we focus on maintaining that service, and we've got a plan to go forward on that maintenance."

Electric cooperatives have long been known for their commitment to the communities they serve and for providing help in times of need. Taylor EC sent crews to the Texas coast after Hurricane Harvey decimated several co-ops' systems along the Gulf Coast.

"Texas Electric Cooperatives reached out, asking for help to restore power to their members. Taylor Electric answered the call," Bartlett said. "That's what it means to be an employee of Taylor Electric, answering the call when it's the most important. And I believe we made a difference."

In another show of community support, Operation Round-Up checks were presented during the meeting to local volunteer fire departments. The program is funded by members who voluntarily round up their electric bill to the nearest dollar each month. More than \$700,000 has been raised since the program started in 2006.

Ryan Holmes, Taylor EC key accounts manager, said the co-op's membership is the reason the co-op exists. "We're here. Our money goes back into the communities we serve," he said, "and so I feel like the big difference is we're making a difference in the communities we serve."

Bartlett said he and the board want to be the best cooperative in the nation. "Our board has big aspirations," he said. "We're focusing more on a culture of excellence. We are a team of high performers. And we want to look at what we've done great in the past and be excited about the future. And that excitement is what drives me every day."

Hazards Lurking in the Laundry Room?

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT LAUNDRY ACCIDENTS, YOU'RE PROBABLY MORE LIKELY TO picture a stubborn stain that won't come out than real danger. But there are some real hazards lurking in your laundry room.

Water Hazards

We all know water and electricity don't mix, so the outlets in your laundry room should have ground-fault circuit interrupters. If your home doesn't have these, have an electrician install them. To help keep water and electricity from mixing, inspect hoses for cracks and replace them at the first sign of wear.

Also be sure to clean up any spills quickly. Liquid laundry detergent and other cleaning fluids can be super slippery. Don't store cleaning products on top of the washer or dryer as the machine's vibrations can cause them to fall to the floor.

Dryers

The most important safety step for your dryer is to regularly and thoroughly remove all lint. This means cleaning the lint filter every time you use the dryer and periodically inspecting the outside vent to make sure it is clear of lint and any other debris. Never operate the dryer without a lint filter. More than 20,000 house fires each year are caused by clothes dryers, most commonly due to lint buildup.

Use rigid or flexible metal venting material to help maintain proper airflow and drying times. Plug the dryer directly into a proper wall outlet—do not use extension cords or adapters.

Keeping Kids Safe

Big machines, colorful detergent bottles and detergent pods that look like candy can be attractive to kids. Keep all laundry products out of the reach of children. Always close the laundry detergent container immediately after each use and put it away. In 2015, laundry packets were the third most common cause of unintentional poisoning in children under 5. Curious little hands can get into a dangerous situation quickly! Keep Fido safe, too. Dryer sheets are toxic to pets.



10 Tips for Energy Savings

CLEAR THE AIR. OPEN WINDOWS TO allow fresh (free!) air to circulate.

Cook outside. Enjoy a few hours of sunshine by using your grill or smoker to add festive flavors to meals.

Search and seal. Cracks and spaces let conditioned air outside. Caulk and weatherstrip to seal leaks.

Use natural light. Open blinds and curtains, and turn off lights to save energy.

Be fan-friendly. Use ceiling fans to circulate airflow.

Adjust settings. Remember to adjust your thermostat settings during milder months.

Tune up. Schedule an appointment with your HVAC technician to identify any potential problems with your system.

Reap savings. Think about supply and demand. Tackle household chores that require electricity during off-peak hours (when energy demand is low).

Take charge. Consider disconnecting electrical devices you don't use regularly until you need them. Plugged-in devices use energy even when not in use.

Move outdoors. Time spent outdoors offers opportunities to turn off lights, TVs, computers and home appliances. You'll be more active, have more fun and save some money.

Not All Air Filters Are Created Equal

THE AIR FILTER IN YOUR HOME'S HEATING, ventilation and air conditioning system has an important job to do: improve the air quality in your home.

The air inside our homes is full of particles originating from inside and outside sources. This junk-laden air flows through a filter before encountering the HVAC equipment. Without a filter, the cooling coils would get clogged and the heating side would burn off whatever was in the air. Ah, the smell of burnt hair in the morning ...

Air filters trap a lot of debris that otherwise would end up back in the house, stuck in ductwork, clogging HVAC equipment—or in our lungs.

But enough with the HVAC and air quality primer. Let's tackle types of air filters.

There are more filter choices than you can shake a stick at. Fortunately, they can be broken down into two nicely defined categories, making the selection process manageable. **The two are:**

- ▶ Permanent or disposable
- ▶ Flat or pleated (with a handy

MERV rating)

Disposable filters are the most prevalent. Some in the flat group look like they will stop only particles larger than a golf ball. They have flimsy cardboard frames and a thin, flat mesh you easily can see through. They're cheap, but don't waste your money. Your HVAC system and lungs deserve better.

Made of stronger, opaque fibers, pleated filters perform better. While they look impervious, air can move through under pressure, leaving airborne cargo trapped as it should be.

Remember MERV? Minimum efficiency reporting value is a rating system that tells you how effective a filter is at trapping particles—a measure of efficiency. The scale runs 1–16 (higher is more efficient) and is based on trapping particles 3–10 microns in diameter. Research shows that residential filters with a MERV rating of 7–13 are likely to be as effective as true high-efficiency particulate air, or HEPA, filters. This class of filter is used in cleanroom manufacturing and, at the extreme end, can trap particles much finer than the diameter of a human hair, as small as 1 micron.

So, should you run out and grab a supply of high-MERV filters? Not without some research. All filters increase resistance



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to airflow, but higher MERV values come with greater levels of resistance—making the system work harder. A system working too hard loses efficiency and increases wear on operating components. HVAC systems are designed to operate at a particular pressure and all should support MERV ratings of 1–4.

How do you decide which level of filter to use? If you have your system's operating manual or can find it online, check for recommendations. Otherwise, go with a decent (MERV 3–5) pleated filter, either disposable or permanent, and check it once a month to see how it is performing. Change or clean it whenever it looks dirty. Factors such as pets that shed, the amount of carpeted versus hardwood floors and the presence of cigarette smoke in your home will affect how often filters need to be changed.

Invest a little more and breathe a lot easier with a quality air filter and regular replacement—a simple change that pays big dividends.



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Give Your Home an Electrical Safety Checkup

JUST AS REGULAR WELLNESS CHECKUPS ARE CRITICAL FOR MAINTAINING YOUR health, routine safety checkups are critical for the safety of your home. Use this checklist to ensure that you can identify and correct potential electrical hazards around your home.

Switches and Outlets

Are any switches or outlets warm to the touch or discolored? Unusually warm or discolored switches or outlets may indicate an unsafe wiring condition.

Do any switches or outlets make cracking, buzzing or sizzling sounds? Unusual noises from a switch or outlet may indicate an unsafe wiring setup such as a loose electrical connection.

Do plugs fit snugly into all outlets? Loose-fitting plugs can cause fires.

Cords

Is any cord cracked, frayed or otherwise damaged, or attached with staples? Damaged cords may have exposed wires that can be a fire and shock hazard.

Do you use extension cords on a permanent basis? Extension cords are designed to be used only temporarily. Extended use may damage the cord, creating a fire and shock hazard.

Are cords kept wrapped up while being used? Wrapped cords trap heat, which can lead to melting or weakening of the insulation.

Are all appliance cords placed so they will not come in contact with hot surfaces? Cords can melt or burn from excessive heat. This can expose wires and lead to a fire or electric shock.

Electric Panel

Do you have recurring tripped breakers or blown fuses? Fuses and circuit breakers are safety devices that help prevent fires caused by overloading of your home's electrical system. They stop the electrical current if it exceeds the safe level for some portion of your home's system.

Do you have arc-fault circuit interrupters and do you test them?

AFCIs are advanced circuit breakers that provide greater protection from electrical fires. You should have them and test them monthly as they can stop working without showing signs of failure.

Taylor Electric Cooperative

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PRESIDENT/CEO

Ryan Bartlett

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cecil Davis, Board Chairman, Zone 1

Leland Robinson, Board Vice Chairman, Zone 1

David McFall, Secretary-Treasurer, Zone 2

Garland Carter, Zone 2

Richard Petree, At-Large

Kathy Rainey, Zone 3

Gayla Simons, Zone 3

HANDY WAYS TO PAY YOUR BILL

Online

taylorelectric.com

Taylor Electric App

Available on your Apple or Android product

By Phone

(325) 793-8500

Visa, MasterCard, checks accepted

Payments credited immediately

In Person

Main office hours:

7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m., Monday–Friday

226 CR 287, off I-20, west of Abilene Wells Lane exit 274 between Tye and Merkel

Abilene office hours:

7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Monday–Friday

7966 Hwy 83, Abilene 79602

Visa, MasterCard, checks, cash and money orders accepted

Payments credited immediately

Drop Box

Main office drop box at front gate: 24/7

Abilene office drop box (next to middle door): 24/7

Checks and money orders accepted

Payments credited next business day

Pay Stations

- **United Supermarket**, 521 S. Access Road, Clyde
- **Food Plaza #4**, 109 S.E. Fifth St., Cross Plains
- **Cash Saver**, 155 Sayles Blvd., Abilene
- **United Supermarket**, 2160 Pine St., Abilene
- **Check Express**, 906 E. Broadway Ave., Sweetwater

Cash, checks, money orders

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Payments credited next business day

