

SAM HOUSTON EC MAKES THE FUTURE BRIGHTER FOR 22 GRADUATES

This spring Sam Houston Electric awarded \$22,000 in scholarships to 22 ambitious graduating seniors residing within the Sam Houston EC service area. Each student was awarded \$1,000 to apply towards a higher education at a Texas college or university. Since the Cooperative's Scholarship Program beginning in 1994, Sam Houston EC has awarded over \$100,000 in scholarships to more than 120 local students.

A total of 96 students competed for Sam Houston's scholarship funds this year. The 22 winners were selected based on the criteria of grades, character, need and goals. Each applicant was required to submit an application outlining their current class standing, work experience, extra curricular activities and a short essay entitled, "My Future Life Plans." Recommendations from teachers, counselors, principals and others were also required.

A Sam Houston Electric representative presented a certificate of achievement to each of the 22 recipients during awards programs and graduation ceremonies at the students' respective schools. Sam Houston EC General Manager and CEO H.E. Striedel said, "We are proud to support the youth of the communities we serve in their pursuit of higher education. After all, today's youth are our future leaders."

The Sam Houston EC Scholarship Program is open only to students whose parents or legal guardians are Cooperative members. The program is funded entirely by unclaimed capital credit payments returned to the Cooperative by the state of Texas, and scholarships are awarded annually on a funds-available basis.

Sam Houston EC congratulates this year's winners and encourages them to aim high in working toward achieving their dreams for the future with the words of U.S. philosopher and educator John Dewey: "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself."

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative 2002 Scholarship Winners

Nazia Awan, *Livingston High School*
Joshua Bowden, *Coldspring Oakhurst ISD*
Kara Ann Bratton, *Livingston High School*
Sherray Brooks, *Coldspring Oakhurst ISD*
Brian Clark, *New Waverly High School*
Taurean Bobby Eugene Collins, *Leggett High School*
Alecia Cuervo, *Goodrich High School*
Aundrea Cathleen Dabill, *Woodville High School*
Jennifer Gentz, *Livingston High School*
Matthew J. Hensarling, *Woodville High School*
Jana Higdon, *Livingston High School*
Jaycie Johnson, *Groveton High School*
Faisal Khan, *Dayton High School*
Misty Lee, *Kountze High School*
Chelsea Lain Mizell, *Tarkington High School*
Darin Murphy, *Big Sandy High School*
Christina Dianne Perkins, *Corrigan-Camden ISD*
Tisha Marie Shepherd, *Tarkington High School*
Jodie Smilie, *Conroe High School*
Emily Smith, *Coldspring Oakhurst ISD*
Emily Jane Tucker, *Coldspring Oakhurst ISD*
Amanda Williams, *Corrigan-Camden ISD*



My first experience with Sam Houston Electric Cooperative was long before I was a member. As a senior in high school, I applied for a scholarship from Sam Houston Electric by writing an essay on the importance of electricity. I found out I won a scholarship when they announced it over the loudspeaker at school. I will never forget that moment. It was so exciting!

I put the scholarship to good use. I got my degree and a teaching certificate in three years and came back to Chester to teach English at the same high school I attended. I love it here. My grandparents and parents all went to high school here too. And it's a real honor to be here now teaching with some of the same teachers that taught me.

As a teacher, I encourage my students to understand the importance of electricity, develop solid writing skills and take advantage of the scholarship opportunities the Cooperative offers; all things that became important to me as a result of my scholarship. I am also proud to say I am now a member of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative. I think they provide a great electric and community service."

Kimberly Woodrome Parker, Chester Graduate and Teacher, Chester High School

Committed to
the Future of
the Community

**and growing with a new
generation of members.**

In addition to providing electricity and related services, Sam Houston Electric Cooperative services the community. From funding scholarships to supporting community events and businesses, we provide a variety of services designed to better our communities. As a result, we're more than an electric provider in the hearts of many of our members. Kim Parker is one of those people.



Sam Houston

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Energizing Communities Since 1939

Safety is Priority One a



Line Technician prepares hot sticks for use in training exercises.

As a Sam Houston Electric Member, you've more than likely been exposed to some of our safety tips. In fact, if you read this magazine, you're probably familiar with our monthly feature, "Safety Matters." And that's just one of the things we do to educate our members of the "domestic dangers" electricity poses and ways to avoid serious accidents or injury.

From articles to education programs in schools, we believe a big part of our service to you, our member-owners, is to help keep you safe from electric dangers. BUT—that's just part of the story. There's a second side to the Cooperative's commitment to safety, and that is our commitment to the safety of our employees; the folks who are out in the field each day working with high voltage.

The line technicians that serve our members, many of whom you may know by face or name, are highly trained individuals who risk life and limb every day. In order to reduce that risk and ensure their safety, the Cooperative as a whole operates under specific and stringent safety standards.

A Q&A Discussion with our Training & Safety Instructor

Jimmy McDonald, a 30-year employee with the Cooperative, has been Training & Safety Instructor for the past 10 years.



Q. What is the history of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative's safety program?

A. About 15 years ago the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) started a premier safety accreditation program. When we reviewed the program's requirements to begin preparations to comply, we realized that Sam Houston Electric's safety practices were already pretty well in line with what national was specifying. So we were a little ahead of the game. But safety has always been a priority at Sam Houston Electric. The accreditation was just a bonus.

Q. What does it take to become accredited by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)?

A. Well, it's a process that requires a really big commitment throughout the Cooperative. First, we conducted detailed inspections of our equipment

and materials - our lines, poles, substations, trucks, etc...even our grounding reels and the grounding chains that our linemen use to make sure the line is dead have to be certified! After that we did comprehensive documentation on those inspections and our procedures.

Q. How many co-ops in Texas are accredited?

A. You'd be surprised at how many co-ops aren't accredited. There are 66 electric cooperatives in Texas, and only 18 of them are nationally accredited.

Q. How does the Cooperative monitor compliance with the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)?

A. I'm in charge of training all field personnel to make sure that all Sam Houston employees are in compliance with required OSHA and state and federal regulations. Just keeping up with the OSHA and new state and federal regulations is staggering - you always have to be on the lookout for new regulations. What's OSHA coming out with tomorrow? If they do come out with this new law, how would it affect us? Every day something new is coming out.

Q. Aren't there some instances where the Cooperative's rules and regulations are, in fact, stricter than even OSHA's requirements?

A. That's true. For example, OSHA says you have to wear special rubber gloves anytime you're within two or three feet of a high-voltage line. We require our line technicians to wear rubber gloves from the ground up. When they take their first step on that pole, they better have on rubber gloves. And we require them to wear rubber gloves when they first lift the bucket off its cradle to go up in the air - which is stricter than OSHA. We require a lot from our people, and they have come through. I think it has to do with our pride in our men and their pride in their work. No one wants to get hurt. So we all follow the rules and regulations.

Q. What kind of training do you conduct to ensure safety codes are met and that your linemen have the skills to do their job safely?

A. We have a safety and training field and a classroom. The field is fairly unique. A lot of cooperatives don't have an on-site place to train their crews in fieldwork. We do all sorts of exercises out there. For example, we teach all of

at Sam Houston Electric

This includes special accreditations, intense training and on-the-job measures designed to ensure safety isn't just talk, but a way of life for the people who work at Sam Houston EC.

As a result of these programs, accidents are kept to a minimum at the Cooperative. And ironically enough, for that very reason, our internal safety procedures often go unnoticed. So, we thought we'd give them the credit they're due and expose some of the intricate internal operations that go into delivering and maintaining your electric service.

In the following Q&A session, Mr. Jimmy McDonald, the company's Training and Safety Instructor, shares some of the key components to Sam Houston Electric's safety operations. We hope you find the insight of interest and that it will serve as a strong reminder of how important electric safety is; whether for a lineman or for you at home!

Line Technicians changing out suspension bell insulators on 138,000 Volt transmission line.



our linemen to climb poles. The first step in becoming a lineman is getting certified to climb poles. The classroom curriculum is also very important. We have transformers, voltage regulators, meter bases and other equipment in the classroom that have the capability to "go live" for training purposes. We also train in repair of transmission line of up to 138,000 volts. In order to do such training, we constructed a simulated transmission line at our training facility.

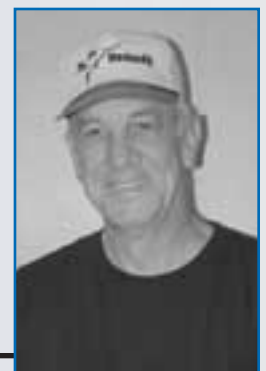
Q. Who trains the students?

A. I do a lot of the training. I have a degree in teaching from Sam Houston State. And our employees also help. We have some exceptional employees at Sam Houston Electric. Scott Ferguson teaches all of our technical training. Some retired line technicians

have also returned to help us with training. That's a really great feature of our program! Mr. Kuntz, our Assistant Manager, walked in here one day four or five years ago and said, 'Jimmy, I want you to use some of our retired people.' We have some of the best linemen in the world that have retired. And we hired them back to help train our new guys and assist us with the accreditation process.

Bill Holley is one of those people. He plays a big part in our safety accreditation, because all of our hot sticks have to be tested on an annual basis. So before every accreditation, we bring Bill back. He tests every hot stick, all of our substations and all of our trucks. So when a lineman gets in his truck, he knows his hot stick is safe, and they have faith in Bill.

Bill Holley was a Cooperative employee for 31 years. Now officially retired, Bill continues to assist the Cooperative in maintaining their equipment and keeping line technicians safe.



Q. After all the training is done and rules written, how does Sam Houston EC ensure safety measures are followed day-to-day in the field?

A. Our supervisors are actually out in the field with the men. The supervisors are former line technicians who've worked their way up through the ranks. They're really the backbone of our safety program. They know what should and shouldn't be done in the field. And they go out and do random, unannounced inspections on the crews. OSHA requires inspection once a year, but we do it a whole lot more. We try to get by each crew at least once a month. Sometimes two or three times a month. It just depends.

Scott Ferguson explains a safety fact to student Justin Mitcham in Sam Houston EC's training classroom.



Q. What are the benefits of all the effort that goes into implementing this kind of program?

A. Well, of course the most important benefit is our low accident rate. We do have accidents. It's a dangerous job. But most of our accidents are more along the lines of somebody stepping in a hole and twisting an ankle. As far as electrocutions go - where's some wood I can knock on? - we've cut them down to almost zero.

If I'm not mistaken, the national average is about seven accidents a year. We're far below that - I think a couple years we had zero, and one year we had one, and one year we had two. In fact, we recently received a rebate on our workers comp insurance for having below the national average for accidents.

Q. What besides inspections helps the Cooperative maintain such rigorous safety standards?

A. There may be quicker ways, but we teach safer ways. That is one of the things that is so great about Sam Houston Electric. Safety counts more than productivity and that commitment to safety starts as high as the board of directors. That's what makes it work. Safety is a real commitment here for everyone. It's not just one or two people.

We also have a safety meeting once a week and a safety committee meeting once a month. We discuss accidents, work to find a reason why it happened and decide if we need to change a safety rule or implement a new program.

Q. How do Sam Houston Electric Cooperative's linemen compare to other linemen?

A. Of course, I am going to say they're better. But it's no lie. We do a lot of training. We probably do more training than most electric utilities.

Other people tell us our linemen are

good, too. A few years ago, a hurricane came through Jeanerette, Louisiana, and we sent 20 or 30 people out there. The manager of the co-op commended and thanked us. He couldn't believe our linemen were so well trained. We are very fortunate to have the facilities and resources to be able to train our linemen in all facets of the job.



Q. What is the most rewarding thing about heading up this program?

A. For me, the most rewarding thing is seeing a lineman come in after a days work the same way he left out in the morning - healthy, not cut up, not hurt. This program allows our men to go home to their wives and families each night. That's my satisfaction. It's a great one!

Line Technicians hoist heavy insulators up to Technicians working on the pole.

CARDINAL RULES SAVE LIVES



At Sam Houston Electric, we take the safety of our line technicians as seriously as the safety of our members. So seriously in fact, that a set of "cardinal rules" has been established by the Cooperative to be followed at absolutely all times while performing work on the job. If any of these rules are broken, the line technician is reprimanded and sometimes even suspended from his job for a period of time.

1. A safe work procedure must be established before starting any job.
2. All conductors must be considered energized until properly grounded.
3. Rubber gloves must be worn from the ground up on all structures that support energized conductors.
4. Head protection must be worn in areas where falling objects, electric contact or other head hazards exist.
5. Poles must be thoroughly inspected prior to climbing.
6. Cover-up materials must be used when working near exposed energized lines.
7. When operating near energized lines, vehicles or equipment must be properly grounded to the system neutral, or barricaded and considered energized.
8. Persons who handle butts of poles near energized lines must wear rubber gloves.
9. Appropriate and approved eye protection must be worn when an employee is engaged in any activity that creates the possibility of an eye injury.

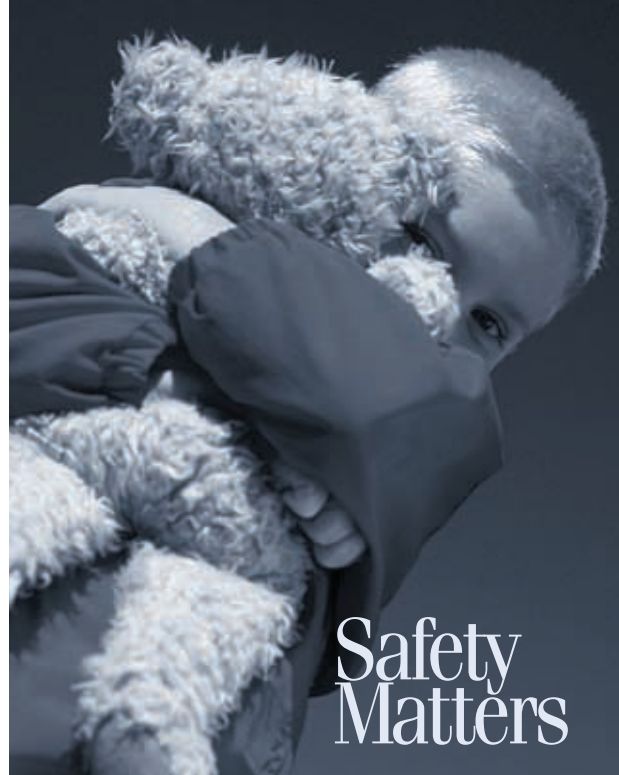
ReMember This

Chill Out Your Air Conditioning Bill

In the summertime, your air conditioner accounts for a whopping 55 percent of summer energy use in the average home. A few simple steps can help keep your budget from overheating:

- **Match your unit to the size of the room.** If an air conditioner is too large, it will cool down the room and turn itself off before it has removed the humidity, which makes a room feel cold and clammy. Visit Consumer Reports website at www.consumerreports.org to find an interactive air conditioner capacity calculator that will help you figure out what size unit you should buy.
- **Buy a unit with programmable controls.** You're actually wasting money by turning your air conditioner off and throwing open the windows when you're not around or at night when you go to bed. Air conditioners remove heat, but they also work hard to remove humidity. Programmable controls allow you to use a lower setting when you're not at home and program the unit to turn itself up just before you walk in the door.
- **Replace filters more often.** A clogged system works harder and can overheat, even burn out the air conditioner. Filters on your window units should be replaced once a month. If you have central air, clean the evaporator coils once or twice a year.
- **Clear the pathway.** Clear weeds and debris away from your central air conditioning base unit to keep it running efficiently. And check inside, too, for drapes, furniture or plants blocking the vents. Obstructions - inside or out - can reduce efficiency by 5 to 10 percent.

If summer is still scorching your bank account, Sam Houston Electric can help. Our **Energy Audit Service** is designed to give members a better understanding of how their energy dollars are spent and to pinpoint ways to reduce their energy usage and save money. When you request an energy audit, a Sam Houston Electric Cooperative representative will personally visit your home to discuss your energy usage patterns, inspect your home for energy inefficiencies and recommend ways to improve energy efficiency. To learn more about the energy audit service, call 1-800-458-0381 or visit www.samhouston.net. We're always glad to help.



Safety
Matters

Home Safety Inspection Keeps Guests Safe

Summer vacation means you'll likely have the neighbors' kids at your house and maybe even some overnight. Follow these tips to ensure your home is safe from electrical accidents waiting to happen:

- **Extension cords are not for permanent use.** Make sure you read the ratings labeled on the cord and appliance and that yours carry no more than the proper load.
- **Furniture resting on electric cords can damage them,** causing fire and shock hazards. Never run a cord under a carpet.
- **Warm or hot electrical switches and outlets signal a problem.** Unplug cords from hot outlets and call an electrician.
- **Replace light bulbs with the correct wattage for the lamp.** Proper wattage labels are usually on the lamp. If it's not, use a bulb no more than 60 watts.
- **Install good lighting in guest rooms and guest bathrooms.** Put a light switch near the door of each room so nobody has to walk into a dark room.

Do you have other questions about electrical safety? Call Sam Houston EC at 1-800-458-0381 or visit www.samhouston.net. The safety of your family and friends is important to us. After all, we live here, too.