



# Cooperative Principle Number Two: Democratic Member Control

## AFTER ALL, IT'S YOUR COOPERATIVE

“Democratic Member Control,” one of seven principles that govern cooperative operations, has different meanings to different people. But in the co-op world, it means just one thing—you, as a member of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, ultimately select who represents you on the Co-op’s board of directors and determines the strategic direction of our local, not-for-profit business.

One of the main duties of directors involves hiring a CEO, who is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day affairs of running the Cooperative and ensuring our members receive a safe, reliable and affordable supply of power.

But hiring a CEO is not where the directors’ duties end—by no means. Your directors must constantly consider policies affecting the Co-op. For example, how much must we spend on maintenance? If we need a new substation, how will we build it? How will we finance it? How often do we update our technologies and facilities to stay efficient?

It’s not an easy task. Responsibilities stack up, and time commitments are considerable. Besides attending hours of meetings every month, each director must continuously educate himself or herself about the complex business of electricity production and distribution.

Directors also spend lots of time boning up on the intricacies of strategic planning and financial decision-making. On top of that, our directors take a series of courses and receive their Credentialed Cooperative Director Certification.

But the learning doesn’t end there. Numerous other seminars and meetings cover topics that must be part of each director’s pool of knowledge. And after all of that education, sorting through difficult choices remains an ongoing responsibility.

Like any successful organization, this decision-making process does not operate in the dark. We keep you informed about the financial condition of the Co-op, tell you when

situations arise that could affect your bill or service, and educate you about the issues involved. We do this through these pages in *Texas Co-op Power* magazine, in letters, in newspaper articles and even communication included with your bills. Most importantly, we educate our members during face-to-face conversations, whether at our annual meeting or other events, or even just a conversation in the local supermarket.

Member participation is crucial. That’s why it is important for you to vote for your board of directors and attend the Co-op’s Annual Meeting of Members. Make your voice heard, and let us know when issues arise that need our attention.

Co-ops are different than other forms of business because of you, our members, and because of the way decisions are made. We welcome and encourage your involvement. After all, it’s YOUR co-op.

Watch for your board of directors election ballot in the mail this month. Also, make plans to join us at the Alabama-Coushatta Multipurpose Facility for our Annual Meeting of Members, Nov. 9, 2010, at 2:30 p.m.





### SAVE WITH CO-OP CONNECTIONS

Need a little help running errands? Call P&L Errands in Cleveland for a 10 percent discount. Chem-Dry of Montgomery County offers a \$20 discount with minimum purchase. Show your Card at B&B Stake Company in Livingston for a discount as well.

Using your Co-op Connections® Card is easy. Simply show your Card at any participating business and receive valuable discounts on everyday purchase items and services, including pharmacy discounts.

You may find a list of participating businesses, both local and nationwide, at [www.connections.coop/samhoustonec](http://www.connections.coop/samhoustonec). Or, look for more ways to save in upcoming issues of *Texas Co-op Power*.



## CONSERVATION *Corner*

Saving money can be as easy as changing the way you use electricity.

A significant amount of the average home energy bill pays for heating water. Take five-minute showers instead of baths and make sure your water heater is set no higher than 120° F.

For even more tips to help improve the energy efficiency of your home and reduce your energy use, visit Sam Houston Electric Cooperative's [www.dowattsrigh.net](http://www.dowattsrigh.net)—your easy online source for conservation and energy efficiency information.

### JOIN US AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

Look for your official Sam Houston Electric Cooperative election ballot in the mail this month.

Be sure to vote and take part in the election of your board of directors. As a member-owner of Sam Houston EC, remember, your vote is important.

Cooperative membership is something special because of you, our members, and because of the way decisions are made. We all work together to provide reliable service at a fair price.

Also, mark your calendar for the Sam Houston EC Annual Meeting of

Members, Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2010, at 2:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe Multipurpose Facility, located at 571 State Park Road 56, off Highway 190 about halfway between Livingston and Woodville.



For more information, contact a Cooperative member service representative at 1-800-458-0381 or visit [www.samhouston.net](http://www.samhouston.net).

### AN OLD REFRIGERATOR CAN EAT UP ENERGY AND MONEY

Does this sound familiar? You bought a new ENERGY STAR-qualified refrigerator and moved your old fridge to the garage or basement to keep a few drinks cold. Here's a tip from Sam Houston Electric Cooperative that can help you save energy and money.

Old refrigerators, especially those more than 17 years old, tend to use a lot of energy. A refrigerator bought before 1993 uses more than twice as much energy as a new ENERGY STAR refrigerator. So you're spending a lot of money to keep that refrigerator running. What's more, refrigerant wears out and seals start to leak over time, causing a decline in the performance of an older refrigerator.

If you have moved your old refrigerator to an uninsulated location, such as a garage, it will use even more energy during hot weather. A fridge in a 90 degree environment, for example, uses nearly 50 percent more energy than one in a 70 degree environment. And if the temperature falls below about 40 degrees in the winter, the refrigerator's

thermostat may not run its cooling and defrost cycles for the appropriate amount of time.

So just by pulling the plug on that old refrigerator, you can save \$146 a year.

For other tips on how to save energy—and money—visit Touchstone Energy's energy-saving website or call the energy experts at Sam Houston Electric Cooperative. Find out how the little changes add up at [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com).





## OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

# LOCAL. TRUSTED. SERVING YOU.™

Every October since 1930, not-for-profit cooperatives of all stripes have celebrated Cooperative Month. During this time, it makes sense to highlight the qualities that make electric cooperatives different from other types of utilities and businesses.

For starters, electric co-ops are owned by those they serve. That's why those who receive electric service from us are called members, not customers. Without members, there would be no Sam Houston Electric Cooperative.

Members maintain democratic control of our Co-op, which means they elect fellow members to represent them on the board of directors. As a bonus, Co-op members receive special benefits through programs like our Co-op Connections® Card Program. We

also return margins ("profits") to our members in the form of capital credits just as we did in September.

One principle that sets us apart from other businesses is our concern for community. As a cooperative, we have a special responsibility to support the areas in which our members live and work. From sponsoring local youth sports leagues to supporting new jobs and industry through our economic development efforts, we stand as a driving force in our community.

Of course, co-ops span all industries, including credit unions, dairy operations, health care, housing and much more. There are more than 29,000 co-ops across the nation. And not all are small or rural. Just look at nationally-known co-ops like Sunkist, Ace Hardware and Land O' Lakes.

Overall, co-ops are more accessible than other types of businesses. We give our members a voice, and we are local—living and working alongside those we serve. For co-ops, it's more personal. It's a critical part of where we work, what we do and why we do it. We're owned by our members and committed to our communities.

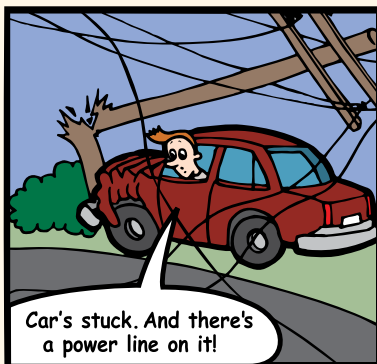
That's the cooperative difference.



### CO-OPS FIRST DELIVERED AFFORDABLE POWER TO RURAL AMERICANS 75 YEARS AGO. WHY STOP NOW?

October is Cooperative Month. And even though electric co-ops have been around for awhile, we're still finding new ways for you to save money. Find out how the little changes add up at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).

## Stay Put and Steer Clear of Shock





# Making It Through the Winter

“I grew up in East Texas in the 1940s in a family whose income was very limited. In order for us to have enough food to make it through the winter months, my family had to endure two grueling activities—‘puttin’ up’ food and hog killin’.”

*By Jim S. Powell*



## “Puttin’ Up” Food

On our small farm, we grew an abundance of vegetables in the spring, summer and fall. Families like mine planted gardens for survival rather than to impress our neighbors. We spent a great deal of time and effort planning, preparing soil, planting, growing, harvesting and preserving food for our family to eat during the winter months ahead.

Using our horse and a plow, my daddy began the gardening process in early spring by preparing the soil. For fertilizer, he distributed chicken and cow manure over the plowed ground because we could not afford commercial fertilizer. The planting process began as soon as freezing temperatures subsided. Because the fruits and vegetables matured at different times, harvesting occurred during the spring, summer and fall months. We called the process of preparing and canning the harvested produce “puttin’ up” food.

We had to remove the kernels from the sweet corn and the field corn to process them into corn relish, hominy and just plain canned corn. Our family shelled bushels of black-eyed, purple hull, crowder and cream peas to can. Pea shelling time was a family affair. Sometimes Mama told me to close my ears

because local gossip was often discussed among the pea-shelling adults. We also shelled pinto beans and butter beans and snapped Kentucky Wonders to be “put up.” We canned new potatoes to be a great accompaniment to the green beans.

From the cucumbers we grew, Mama made pickle relish and three kinds of pickles—bread and butter, sweet and dill. She also canned pickled beets. From the cabbage, she made sauerkraut by chopping the cabbage into small slivers and adding pickling salt. She then placed the cabbage in a large stone crock, weighting it down with a plate and a brick. It took several days for the cabbage to ferment before it could be “put up” in jars.

Our family canned whole tomatoes, tomato juice and ketchup. To seal the ketchup, we had a bottle capper apparatus. The only way I was allowed to help in the kitchen during canning season was to pull the lever on the capper that pressed metal caps onto the ketchup bottles.

In the summer, we picked wild fruits like blackberries, dewberries, muscadine grapes and plums, from which Mama and Grannie made

jams, jellies and preserves. In the fall, our pear tree furnished pears for pear preserves, pear relish and pear halves. We also had a huge fig tree from which we made fig preserves, my favorite. We didn't have peach trees or raise strawberries; so we bartered with neighbors for these two items.

Mama canned in pint, quart and half gallon jars. The same canning jars were used year after year, but with new lids. She also "put up" foods in tin cans, which we sealed with a hand-operated tin can sealer that attached to our kitchen table. This unique device clamped the lid down on the can. Then, someone turned the handle, rotating the can, until it was completely sealed.

A pressure cooker was a handy item to have for sealing and sterilizing the jars and cans of food. Mama often told me not to go into the kitchen while the pressure cooker was on the stove. She

tiring chore. However, the fruit and vegetables had to be preserved when the crops were ready for picking.

## Hog Killin'

Daddy and our neighbor anxiously waited for hog killin' day. It came after the first cool spell blew in, usually in late November. This change in the weather, accompanied by a frost, lowered the temperature, preventing any bacteria from contaminating the fresh meat. After all, in the 1940s, natural cold was our only refrigeration for butchered pork. I was excited because hog killin' day was a huge event, and I knew my parents would allow me to skip school to observe the day's ritual.

Before our neighbor arrived with his hog, Daddy had already heated three big wash pots of water over roaring fires. He had also secured a large metal



was afraid it would explode—It must not have been too dangerous because I have read that more than 315,000 pressure cookers were sold in 1943.

Almost all of our processed foods had to be stored under our beds because we had limited storage space in our house. When Mama asked me to get certain jars for supper, I felt as if I were on a treasure hunt. Locating a particular item among the countless jars under the beds was like trying to find a hidden treasure!

When I first married my city-bred wife, I remember my little brother looking under our bed and saying with amazement, "Golly, there's nothing under here." He, too, had grown up with jars and cans of food under his bed! "Puttin' up" food was a hot, time-consuming and

barrel to put the boiling water in and had set up a makeshift table to use in cutting up the meat.

After the men killed our hog, they placed it into the barrel of boiling water to be scaled, softening its hair. Then using a hog scraper they removed the coarse hair from the hog's skin.

With a block and tackle, they hoisted the hog by its back feet onto the rafters of our barn. Next they gutted the hog and butchered it into large sections. Using well-sharpened knives, they cut and trimmed the meat as it lay on the table. This process they repeated later with our neighbor's hog.

Daddy placed the hams, shoulders and bacon sections from our hog on our back porch overnight

to cool. The next day, he salted and rubbed the meat with his special mixture and placed it in our backyard smokehouse to cure. He built a hickory wood fire in the center of the smokehouse so that the smoke from the slowly burning fire would give the meat a hickory-smoked flavor and help preserve it.

After supper on hog killin' day, Mama set up a sausage-making operation—a meat grinder and stuffer—on our kitchen table. The meat trimmings, both lean and fat, were cut into small chunks. My job was to turn the handle on the meat grinder as Mama filled it with the trimmings.

After adding Daddy's special mixture of spices, we used a hand-operated stuffing machine to force the ground sausage into casings made out of sheep intestines from the local butcher and cloth sacks made by Grannie.



The next day, Mama took the hog's skin with fat attached, cut it into strips and cooked it in a large black wash pot over a hot fire. The fried strips of skin became cracklings, which we ate in cornbread or as snacks. The melted fat was rendered and placed into buckets to harden and later used for frying foods.

The second day, Mama and Grannie made and canned mincemeat using some meat from the cooked head, dried peaches, dried apricots, pecans, ribbon cane syrup and a variety of spices. They canned the mincemeat in glass pint jars to use during the winter in their tasty mincemeat pies.

In addition to the mincemeat, meat from the hog's head was used to make souse, a pickled pork. The brains were scrambled with eggs, and the feet were

usually pickled. Mama boiled the tongue and sliced it for sandwiches. The intestines, called chitterlings, or "chittlins" as my Grannie said, were boiled and fried. Almost everything from the hog was eaten in some way. I recently heard a friend comment that most non-East Texans think we lived on beef, but pork is what really sustained us.

The hog killin' process continued early the third day with the making of lye soap. Grannie and Mama started the soap-making process by placing a certain amount of lard and lye into a large cast iron wash pot over an open fire. It was extremely important to have the correct amount of each ingredient and to maintain the proper temperature.

The mixture had to be constantly stirred with a wooden paddle while it cooked—a strenuous and tiring duty for women. Even though it was hard

[PHOTOS, from left to right] Photo 1: A hand-operated tin can sealer uses a "hand crank" to rotate the can and seal the lid.

Photo 2: A great deal of time and effort went into planning, preparing soil, planting, growing, harvesting and preserving food to eat during the winter months. A pressure cooker was used to preserve many foods from sauerkraut to jams and jellies.

Photo 3: Lye soap was often used for scrubbing wooden floors, laundry, chigger bites, insect stings and even shampoo.

*Photos by Jim S. Powell*

work, Grannie and Mama would anxiously wait for the exciting moment when the wooden paddle would stand straight up in the mixture, proclaiming their soap to be ready. They removed the pot from the fire for the cooling to begin, a process that took several days.

Later they cut the soap into bars to be used for scrubbing our wooden floors, laundry, chigger bites, insect stings and poison ivy. Occasionally, Daddy used lye soap for shampoo, declaring it was good for dandruff!

At the time, it was hard for me to realize how important canning food and hog killing were. I considered them as long, busy activities and hard work. But in reality, our family needed these two efforts to make it through the winter.



# WE'RE KEEPING AN EYE ON THE FUTURE, TOO.

Caring for our members today with an eye on the future is a priority at Sam Houston Electric Cooperative. As demand for electricity grows with the next generation, so will the capacity of our system. We're planning today for the service we'll deliver tomorrow.



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

[www.samhouston.net](http://www.samhouston.net)