New Headquarters Building Beginning to Take Shape

EXPECTED SPRING 2011 COMPLETION

Passersby are seeing the face of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative beginning to change at its headquarters site on Highway 190 in Livingston.

The doors of the current headquarters building were first opened to members in 1951. After several years of carefully considering all aspects of the project, the Cooperative made the decision to build a new facility to meet current needs and future growth.

Nearly 60 years ago, Sam Houston EC served just over 7,500 members. Today, the Cooperative provides electric service to more than 67,000 accounts across parts of 10 counties.

After six decades, several remodels and growth of nearly 900 percent, a new headquarters building is being constructed to serve the Cooperative’s growing membership.

Over this past summer, the new headquarters building has begun to take shape on the west side of the current building. Sam Houston EC opted to utilize the current headquarters property as a cost-saving measure. Because the new facility is immediately adjacent to the Cooperative’s existing building, the construction process is carried out by a systematic process with careful precision and a constant emphasis on safety.

Early in July, the rear section of the current headquarters building was demolished—allowing for construction of the new building to begin in its place. After construction, the front section of the existing building will then be removed.

Earthwork to prepare the building site began in early August. By September, concrete trucks were lined up at the construction entrance gate to pour the foundation. With a little help from favorable weather near the end of summer, structural steel made an early entrance to the building site.

Designed to meet the latest energy-efficiency standards and promote efficient workflow, the new headquarters building is expected to be complete in April 2011.

Did you know? Each month, more than 20,000 transactions are processed through Sam Houston EC’s Livingston headquarters office. They include everything from requests for new electric service to bill payments. Whether these transactions are via the call center or walk-in service, the new building is designed to serve our members’ requests more efficiently than ever.

During construction, the front lobby and counter will remain open at the current headquarters location. The drivethrough lanes, however, will not be available. Members are encouraged to take advantage of Sam Houston EC’s convenient payment options, such as online payments, mail-in payments and payments by phone until the new drivethrough opens in a few months.

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SAVE WITH CO-OP CONNECTIONS

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.

Looking for an Avon representative? Call Rhonda Adcock for a 10 percent discount. If you have computer problems, visit Computer Rx in Cleveland for a 10 percent discount as well. Davis Doors, also in Cleveland, offers a five percent discount on labor.

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

JOIN US AT OUR ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

Cooperative membership is something special because of you, our member-owners, and because of the way decisions are made.

Join us for the Sam Houston Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting of Members, Tuesday, Nov. 9, 2010, at 2:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe’s Multipurpose Facility. There is plenty of parking close to the Multipurpose Facility, which is located at 571 State Park Road 56, off Highway 190 between Livingston and Woodville. Shuttles from the parking lot to the facility will be available.

All Sam Houston EC members who attend the Annual Meeting will be eligible to win one of dozens of great prizes in our door prize drawing. But, you must be present to win!

For more information, contact a Co-op member service representative at 1-800-458-0381.

LOSS CONTROL TROUBLESHOOTING

Opportunities for line technicians to learn new skills and polish up old ones are everywhere in the electric utility industry. But the learning doesn’t stop with skill development.

Safety starts with training as well—that’s why Texas Electric Cooperative, the Austin-based statewide organization of electric cooperatives, partners with co-ops throughout the state to host training events on a regular basis.

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative joins TEC in hosting many of those opportunities right at its own training field in Livingston. From the annual “Hotline” class to pole-top rescue training, the Cooperative takes advantage of learning opportunities to continually improve efficiency, safety and reliability.

By combining participants from several cooperatives, line technicians are able to share successful ideas and best practices.

Last month, Sam Houston EC and TEC hosted 15 participants from cooperatives around the state for the “Loss Control Troubleshooting” school.

Sam Houston EC’s Justin Stewart, Woodville, and Michael Fassler, Coldspring, along with the rest of the class, covered topics ranging from identifying and correcting line service issues to understanding all systematic switching procedures to isolate faulted energized equipment and services.

[Photo, above] Danny Williams (center), Texas Electric Cooperative instructor, looks on as class participants work through a demonstration representing a pole with a transformer and service wire.
HomE SaFety ChecKliSt for OldEr AdUltS

Last year, more than 1 million people 65 years and older were treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries associated with accidents at home. Since most of these episodes resulted from a lack of maintenance, walk through your home and use the following checklist to spot possible safety hazards. If you notice a potential problem, arrange for it to be fixed immediately to prevent accident or injury.

• Kitchen: Make sure all of your appliances carry an Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL) seal, which means the item was tested and found safe to use. Check electrical cords for fraying or cracking; step stools for splitting or cracking; and throw rugs for tripping hazards like bumps and turned-up corners.

• Living room: Check rugs and runners, electrical cords, lamps, and other lighting. Inspect the fireplace and chimney for fire hazards, and make sure all passageways are clear.

• Bathroom: Make sure small appliances are marked with a UL seal. Check the bathtub, shower, rugs and mats for slipping hazards, and inspect cabinets for safe storage of medications.

• Bedrooms: Examine rugs, runners, electrical and telephone cords, and make sure the area around the bed is clear of items that could cause you to trip.

• Basement/garage/workshop: Make sure all power tools bear the UL mark. Check fuse and breaker boxes for possible malfunction and shock and fire hazards. Inspect extension cords and power cords on lawn and garden tools. Check for proper ventilation and make sure flammable liquids are stored properly.

• Stairs: Make sure there's proper lighting on and around stairways. Examine handrails and steps for possible defects or weaknesses, and test stair coverings for possible tripping hazards.

| Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. |

Install GFCI Devices to Help Prevent Shock

What’s GFCI mean?

“GFCI” stands for ground fault circuit interrupter.

How does it work?

GFCIs save lives by stopping the current when electrical contact occurs.

GFCIs are installed on electrical outlets to help prevent shock.
In autumn, the green pigments in leaves fade away revealing colors that were always there. Sugars and other compounds help to create the vibrant colors seen in fall foliage.
With the hint of winter chill, millions of East Texas deciduous trees and shrubs begin to blaze beneath the shadows of the giant pines. One by one, each deep-green leaf - on every twig and bough - transforms itself, sometimes putting on a multi-color splash so intense and intricately patterned that the eye can’t find words to describe it.

Revealing the secret of this miraculous change, the science of botany illuminates the curious life cycle of deciduous plants that grow, then shed, a new set of leaves each year. When the warmer days of early spring awaken these trees from winter’s slumber, deciduous trees begin to bud out during March and April.

Their new, lime-green leaves act as powerful solar collectors, creating sugar for the tree’s long season of growth. Over the next several months, most trees also produce flowers, whose developing seeds will become the next generation of offspring. In summer, the leaves reach their full size, continuing to make glucose (sugar) for fruit and seed development, as well as the growth of woody tissue. Extra glucose is transported to the roots to store food for the following winter. As the heat of summer wears on, the leaves begin to look a bit ragged and tired, but still they labor, turning sunlight and carbon dioxide into glucose needed for the tree to survive its winter dormancy.

Then, as the days grow shorter and the nights cooler, the leaves undergo an amazing chemical change. Their verdant greens of summer give way to canary yellow, fiery orange and crimson red; a captivating metamorphosis that is not exactly what it appears to be. For these vibrant colors are actually pigments, active and present in the leaves all along, yet overpowered - until now - by the more abundant, green chlorophyll in the leaves.

As summer gives way to autumn, a small cork-like structure develops at the base of each leaf, closing it off from the stem and preventing the transfer of sugar to the rest of the plant. Yet, even in this condition, the

By Stephan Myers

[Above] Sumac is a small tree (or shrub in most cases) that can produce spectacular foliage in November.

Foliar Fireworks

East Texas

By the time mid-October comes around, most folks in East Texas say a grateful adios to the long, dog days of summer. Beaten down by months of incessant sun and hot, muggy air, the change of seasons - and the cooler temperatures it brings - offers welcome relief. Before long, warm jackets re-emerge from the depths of bottom drawers and hall closets, lending swatches of new color to the landscape as people enjoy cooler daily walks. But these aren’t the only vibrant hues to emerge from hiding this time of year.
leaves remain alive for a few weeks and continue to produce glucose and other chemicals.

When temperatures drop, the chlorophyll begins to bleach away, giving the leaves’ red, yellow and orange pigments a chance to rise and shine in the autumn sun. Some trees, like maple and sweet gum, trap more sugar in their leaves and consequently produce more vibrant colors. Other trees, such as oak, tend to generate a lot of tannin, which usually causes them to turn a mousy brown.

Mirroring life itself, the autumn foliage of East Texas foils all attempts to predict just how colorful and varied it will be. A wide assortment of phenomena determine the photo-op outcomes; summer temperatures and rainfall, early autumn sunshine, cold-front timing and intensity and autumnal rainfall each factor into the color equation. And then there is the mysterious “X” factor, an unexplained influence or event that can often defy even the most expert predictions.

Blessed with a diverse selection of deciduous trees, the highways and neighborhoods of East Texas can offer a simply spectacular palette of color in the fall. Fortunately, because Texas is such a large state, the hue intensity of local regions can vary widely, resulting in excellent as well as poor displays, depending upon the region.

The northern part of East Texas (Tyler northward) usually puts on a good show, since genuine cold fronts pass through the area by mid-October. Sometimes, however, subsequent cold fronts, with strong winds, can blow even the best foliage off the trees overnight, leaving the limbs barren.

Central East Texas areas (Tyler south to Huntsville/Livingston/Jasper) offers a nearly equal number of great seasons as poor ones, with peak colors appearing between Thanksgiving and the first week of December. The southern part of East Texas (south of the Huntsville-Jasper line) suffers from two dilemmas; thick clay-ridden soils that won’t support many of the colorful trees such as maple and dogwood, and - located so close to the coast - a tendency to experience only milder cold fronts, triggering little color change. However, this region does occasionally get colorful autumns, an event highly celebrated by local residents.

The most reliable indigenous tree species for eye-popping, autumn foliage in East Texas include red and sugar maple, sweet gum, sumac, black gum, bald cypress, black willow, dogwood, beech and white oak (a rare, colorful foliage oak). Though pines are not considered good foliage trees, under the right conditions, the previous year’s needle growth from long-leaf pine can turn yellow, offering a pleasant surprise for East Texas leaf-peekers.

Sweet gum, probably the most widespread East Texas species, is an autumn foliage favorite, with its five-pointed leaves reminiscent of multi-hued stars. Red and sugar maple are perennial people-pleasers, with leaves that can vary dramatically in color from season to season. Bald cypress, with its feathery, ruddy colored leaves, grows in ribbons along creeks and

[Photo, below] It doesn’t produce colorful leaves, but yaupon holly seeds add vibrant accessory colors to the forest.

[Photo, right] Red maple is an East Texas favorite, but its color varies widely from tree to tree and year to year. Its vibrant colors are a result of large amounts of sugar trapped in the leaves.
bayous, while black willow – skirting the margins of streams and ditches – yields canary yellow.

Though most oaks turn grayish brown, white oak is a welcome exception, with its rounded, lobed leaves yielding cardinal red in good years. Noted for its large white blooms in spring, dogwood is a surprisingly colorful tree in late November; its foliage punctuated with scarlet red seeds.

Not technically foliage, a variety of colorful mushrooms also peak during the same time period as tree leaves and lend a compelling accent to the vibrant overstory. Even wildflowers bloom in late autumn along the roadsides of East Texas, luring the eye down from the multi-colored tree-tops to the sunny faces of sunflower species and the blue hues of aster growing among the grasses.

As December’s frosty winds cast away the last few leaves from limbs and branches, the withering leaves have a final service to perform; providing food for microbes and fungi in the soil, which – in turn – recycle nutrients to fuel next year’s tree growth. An essential part of the rhythm of life, the leaves’ decay gives way to rebirth. In a few short months, the trees will reawaken and sprout afresh with new growth, setting off the foliar fireworks for yet another splendid autumn promenade in East Texas.
Many devices in your home, like TVs, gaming consoles, toasters and almost anything that has a plug, consume electricity even when they appear to be off. Flip a switch or pull the plug on phantom loads in your home.

One small change can make a big difference.

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