

I'M THE MASCOT OF THIS GREAT NATION.

“Perched high above this **LAND** of ours, I stand at the ready. I use my talons to fish and my **WINGS** to fly. I can almost stretch from sea to shining sea with my **IMPRESSIVE** 96-inch wingspan. I feel **CROWDED** up on this pole, but the view is worth it.”

When it comes to being good stewards of our environment, we believe that includes protecting the critters that share East Texas with us. At Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, we take proactive measures to keep animals safe from electrical hazards. And by protecting our furry and feathered friends, we're also providing more reliable service for you, our members.



 **Sam Houston**
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

www.samhouston.net | 800-458-0381
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What Would Life Be Like?

A look at life without electric cooperatives



In the holiday movie classic, “It’s a Wonderful Life” the lead character, George Bailey (played by Jimmy Stewart), wishes he had never been born due to financial troubles he is experiencing. Through the help of an angel, he sees how many lives would have been negatively affected if he didn’t exist. George comes to realize that, even with his problems, he has a wonderful life with great friends and family.

So what do you think life would be like if community leaders had not founded Sam Houston Electric Cooperative nearly 77 years ago?

Living in the U.S. in 2015, it is nearly impossible to imagine life without electricity. So many of our modern conveniences that improve the quality of our lives are dependent on electricity as the “fuel” to make them work. From the alarm clock that wakes us up, to the refrigerator that keeps our morning milk cold and fresh. From the HVAC unit that keeps us cool in the summer and warm in the winter, to the vacuum that lets us clean more efficiently and all those kitchen appliances that save us time and physical energy.

Of course, so much of our entertainment, whether it comes from the TV, radio or computer, depends on the kilowatt-hours that Sam Houston Electric Cooperative provides. Just think, there would be no smartphones or cell phones if there were no electricity.

Businesses of all kinds rely on electricity to produce and sell the products we need. So, it is no wonder that many electric co-ops feel that, while our primary product is electricity, we are really in the quality of life business. Last month, Sam Houston

Electric Cooperative celebrated National Co-op Month with a host of community service projects, including a park lighting and beautification project and numerous school and civic presentations—showing how our employees serve beyond our power lines.

As we celebrate the season that reminds us to be thankful for all that we have, it is important to remember the 1.3 billion people in the world that still live without reliable electric service. That is equal to about four times the U.S. population!

Bringing Light

Many of the things we take for granted living in the U.S. are much harder and more time consuming for people in developing countries around the world. We are proud members of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association that is working through their affiliate, NRECA International, and the NRECA International Foundation to help bring power to people in developing countries like Haiti and Liberia. To learn more, go online and visit: www.nreca.coop/it-starts-with-power.

We are thankful that our community ancestors right here had the vision and foresight to do for ourselves what needed to be done, gathering our friends and neighbors to form Sam Houston EC.

As the electric business of the 21st century continues to evolve, you can count on Sam Houston EC to meet all of your electric energy needs. More importantly, we are here to help improve the quality of your wonderful life.



Scholarship Applications Available



Sam Houston Electric Cooperative scholarship applications are now available for the 2015-2016 academic year.

High school seniors, including public, private, parochial and home school,

whose parents or legal guardians are active members of Sam Houston EC may apply. Applications are available online at www.samhouston.net, or at any one of the Co-op's office locations.

Students may also visit their high school counselor for an application.

Completed applications must be received by Sam Houston EC no later than Feb. 1, 2016, to be considered.

Both \$3,000 and \$1,500 vocational scholarships will be awarded in May 2016.

Pay Your Bill Easily with a Credit Card



Sam Houston Electric Cooperative provides a variety of payment options designed to simplify bill paying. Credit card payments are one of the easiest and most convenient ways to pay your bill.

1. Make a credit card payment by phone through our automated system. Have your credit card and account number ready.
2. Go online and visit www.samhouston.net and login to your *mySamHouston* account.
3. Set up automatic payments and we'll make sure your bill is paid every month. Just give us a call.

There are even more ways to pay your bill. Payments can be made in person at one of our office locations, online by

logging in to your account or via phone 1-800-458-0381 by calling with a credit card number. Visa, MasterCard and Discover cards are accepted. Payments can also be made via check-by-phone. There's no check to write, and no waiting for the mail to deliver your payment.

Qualifying accounts can divide anticipated annual electric costs out evenly over the year, ensuring that your bill doesn't fluctuate from month to month. **Budget billing** is a great way to combat the impact fluctuating energy use can have on your monthly budget.

When you enroll in our **automatic payment program**, Sam Houston EC will draft your bank account or charge your credit card in the amount of your electric bill each month. Sign up for this safe and free program. We'll take it from there.

Sam Houston EC has teamed up with **Fidelity Express** to offer members the ability to pay their bills with cash, check or money order at conveniently located payment stations in stores and businesses throughout the Cooperative's 10-county service area. There is a \$1.50 fee per transaction for this service.

Co-op Connections Deals



The Co-op Connections Card is a member benefit program that delivers

discounts from participating businesses, both local and nationwide. Visit www.connections.coop for more deals.

Denim and Diamonds Pre-School

9309 State Hwy 75 South
New Waverly, TX 77358
936-344-2747

Facebook: [denimanddiamondspreschool](https://www.facebook.com/denimanddiamondspreschool)
Hours: 6 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Offer: 10% discount for oldest child (or) 1 free week for one child with paid monthly fee and registration fee.

Downtown Treasures

312 N. Washington
Livingston, TX 77351
936-327-7740

www.downtown-treasures.com

Hours: M-Sat, 9-5; Sun, 9-4

Offer: 10% discount of non-sale items.

EASCO Total Comfort

2815 Montgomery Road
Huntsville, TX 77340
936-295-3333

www.eascoair.com

Hours: M-F, 8-5; 24-hour emergency

Offer: \$15 discount on spring and fall check.

Conservation Corner



Reduce energy for water heating. Take simple steps like lowering your heater's temperature and installing low-flow

showerheads to reduce your water heating bills. For more, visit www.TogetherWeSave.com.



Fighting Winter Chills



Cooler weather is quickly approaching. Frigid temperatures cause heating systems to work overtime, and since heating and cooling can make up nearly half of your electric bill, you may experience sticker shock when you open your bill. Instead of waiting until after a high bill is in your mailbox, be proactive. There are things you can do now to help manage your energy use and spend less.

These simple steps can help you manage your use:

- Wrap exposed pipes and water heaters in unconditioned spaces.
- Make sure to change your air filter once a month.
- Keep drapes closed at night and keep those that don't receive direct sunlight closed during the day, too.
- Keep the fireplace damper closed when not in use.
- Caulk around the fireplace hearth, doors and windows.
- Dress for the weather, even if you are inside. Wearing clothing like long sleeves and pants, or wrapping up in a cozy blanket will help combat the temptation of bumping up the thermostat.

Using these tips can certainly help you manage your energy use, but your bill may still be higher in winter months. Why is this the case? The weather makes a big impact on electric bills, and when cold temperatures hit, our heaters work overtime. Even the most efficient HVAC systems will see more use in extreme weather. Your heater works harder and cycles on and off more often, making your use much higher. That means your bill will be much higher. Remember, there is value in comfort. For us to be comfortable in our homes, our heaters are going to work harder, but it may be worth the additional cost to you.

Holiday Office Closings



The holidays will soon be upon us! All Sam Houston Electric Cooperative offices will be closed the following days:

- Nov. 26, 2015—In observance of Thanksgiving Day
- Dec. 24-25, 2015—In observance of Christmas Day
- Jan. 1, 2016—In observance of New Year's Day
- Jan. 18, 2016—Sam Houston EC All-Employee Meeting

As always, Sam Houston EC crews will be on-call to respond to any unexpected power outages while our offices are closed. Cooperative members may still access many of our services, including account balances, bill payment and service requests online at www.samhouston.net or through our toll-free number, 1-800-458-0381. If you experience a power outage, please report it by calling 1-888-444-1207.

May we be the first to wish you and your loved ones a happy holiday season!

Think Safety.

Potshots at Transformers are Dangerous

Target practice and electrical equipment are a dangerous combination. Shooting at power transformers or insulators is not only risky; it's also illegal. If you see someone shooting at power line equipment, please call your local law enforcement or Sam Houston EC.



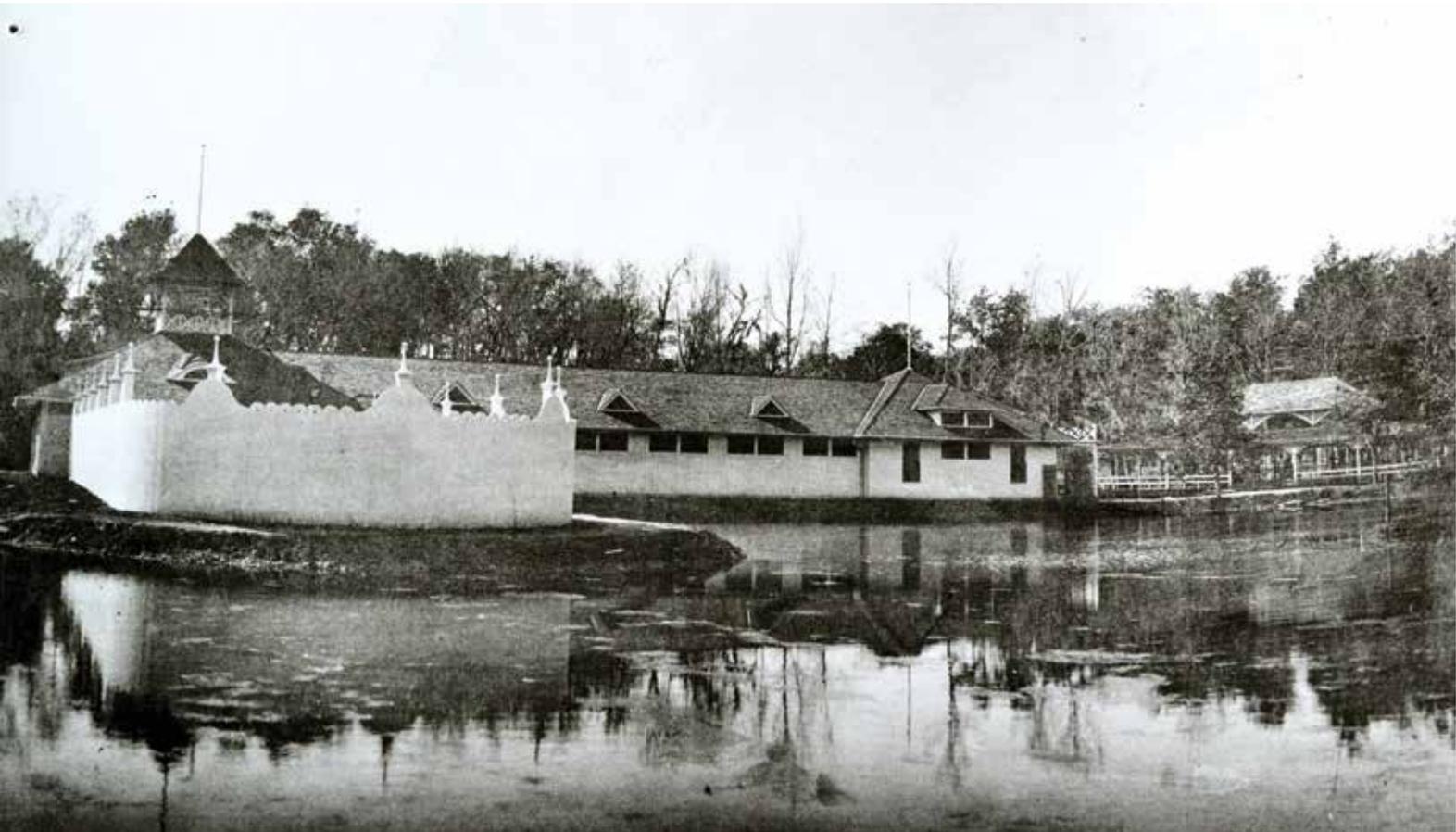
SAFETY DOESN'T STOP HERE.

At Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, we believe one of our most important roles in the community is to educate our members and neighbors about what to do in order to stay safe around electric power. Visit www.samhouston.net and click on "Safety Sense."



Sam Houston
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



“The group could do nothing but wait for Jackson to become ill. But nothing happened. Jackson didn’t feel sick, but instead felt refreshed. He presently realized that the lake they had accidentally discovered held medicinal properties.”

By Janet Ruth Myers



WHERE OIL AND WATER MIX

The small, southeast Texas town of Sour Lake, situated about 17 miles northwest of Beaumont, has historically been known for two things; smelly water and oil. On the surface, this combination might seem like strange bedfellows, but they have actually served the community well since the early days of Texas founding.

The oldest surviving town in Hardin County, Sour Lake was first settled around 1835 when the Mexican State of Coahuilla y Tejas authorized a land grant to businessman Stephen Jackson. Originally one league of land covering over 4,000 acres, the grant gave rise to the town—but not before Jackson discovered some interesting qualities of a lake on his property.

According to the Houston Daily Post of Jan. 25, 1904, (as recorded in W.T. Block’s book “Sour Lake: From Mud Baths to Millionaires”) “Jackson was herding some broomtail ponies to pasture... and came upon a beautiful, small lake of sparkling

water...Jackson and his companions were mystified when their horses took a sip or two of the water, sniffed and then waded ashore without drinking.

“Himself thirsty, Jackson dismounted and laid down on the bank to drink. After taking a deep swallow, he...called to the men

vital supply of sulfuric acid for wet batteries for telegraph lines during the Civil War. Sulfuric acid, an import from northern states, was in short supply and Sour Lake water proved to be an adequate substitute.

Originally known by a variety of names, including Sour Lake

“All manner of folks...in respect to size, color and political cast are here...lunging into the baths like a battalion of puddle ducks.”

that he had been poisoned. Having no antidote for poison...the group could do nothing but wait for Jackson to become ill. But nothing happened. Jackson didn't feel sick, but instead felt refreshed. He presently realized that the lake they had accidentally discovered held medicinal properties.”

Several tribes of native Americans, including the Caddo, Bidai and Deadose Indians, had also probably taken advantage of the lake water and its mud for their curative benefits and may have used petroleum deposits in the mud to soften dried rawhide. But by the 1860s the Caucasian settlers had discovered a new and equally unusual use for Sour Lake's waters.

According to W.T. Block, Sour Lake citizens provided a

Springs, the Glade and Sour Springs, the town's population today is around 1,800, according to the 2010 census. Despite it's small size, few Texas towns can boast a past as colorful as Sour Lake's.

“All manner of folks...in respect to size, color and political cast are here...lunging into the baths like a battalion of puddle ducks...joking and yawning and dancing,” wrote Henry R. Green, Jefferson County District Clerk, in 1859 and recorded in Block's book. “The hotel and cottages are crowded; the lake is surrounded by tents and shanties...people come for the cure of all diseases...from a desire for devilment down to devotional worship in the deep shades of this confoundedly beautiful scene of scenes.”

Initially, only the wealthy could afford

the long journey by boat and stagecoach to Sour Lake, due to its relatively distant location. But when the railroads between Houston and Beaumont and Houston and Galveston came in during the mid

to late 1800s, visitation increased, particularly after Joseph Smith built the first hotel at Sour Lake in 1848.

“People came from many distant places to bathe in Sour Lake,” says Sheila Williford,

local historian and life-long resident of Sour Lake. “The waters and different kinds of muds around the lake were believed to heal all kinds of freckles, sores, ulcers, boils, burns and bruises. So popular was the Sour

[PHOTO, opposite] Rear view of the Natatorium—bath house at the Sour Lake Springs Hotel.

[PHOTO, below] Sour Lake Springs Hotel. In 1909 after Well #3 came in, a stream of oil surrounding the area caught fire and burned the hotel.

[PHOTO 2] Guests playing croquet at the cabins near the Springs Hotel, circa 1877.





Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

[PHOTO 1] Pump jacks dot the community of Sour Lake. Some still operate, while others don't and are abandoned like this jack seen here.

[PHOTO 2] Sour Lake's largest downtown building, the "Carpenter Building." The building was established in 1903, the same year that oil was first discovered in Sour Lake. This time period is considered to be the peak for the interest in the lake's "mineral waters." Not long after, the economy shifted to oil.

[PHOTO 3] An actual five-gallon water jug used to ship Sour Lake's mineral waters throughout the United States. The jug is on display at the Bertha T. Cornwell Museum, located inside the library in Sour Lake.

[PHOTO 4] The Sour Lake sink hole opened up in 1929. The 15-acre hole shortly thereafter filled with water. Today, there are even fish in the lake, although no one knows for sure how they got there.

[PHOTO 5] Crude oil floating on water. At the interface, sulphur compounds migrate from the oil to the water causing the water to become very acidic and smelling of sulphur.

Lake water that it was shipped to Houston and Galveston."

"Though pregnant women were not allowed to drink the water, other people consumed it in hopes of recovering from indigestion, stomach, liver and

what did Sour Lake actually look like in those early days?

"I consider this to be the greatest curiosity in the state," wrote Henry R. Green in 1904 about Sour Lake. "All over the lake's surface, there is an escaping gas that ignites as

"In 1929, over a span of three days, a sinkhole formed in the Sour Lake oil field. Covering 15 acres of land, now filled with water, this hole can still be seen today."

kidney complaints, chronic diarrhea, malaria, paralysis and nervous disorders. Inhaling the vapors was thought beneficial for pneumonia, bronchitis and colds. Sam Houston came here several times to get relief from his war injuries. Will Rogers also visited here," Williford says.

The lake has long been bulldozed over and filled in with dirt many decades ago and no longer exists. But

quickly as gunpowder the moment a match is applied to it. And sometimes it spreads like wildfire over the whole surface and presents one living sheet of fire...There are some wells whose waters produce a sediment just like tar."

As it turned out, these sediments actually were tar; visible evidence of a substance underground so valuable that it pulled investors' attention away from the health

benefits of Sour Lake and its mud.

"Spindletop oil well, which was drilled in 1901, was, of course, the first big oil strike in Texas," says Rebecca Hill, curator for the Bertha T. Cornwell Museum in the town's public library. "But for Texaco (originally called the Texas Company), its first big, long-term producing strike was pump number three at Sour Lake in January 1903. This, along with other wells in the area, was the strike that made Texaco an oil powerhouse."

A lack of permanent living quarters left newcomers, attracted to jobs available in the Sour Lake oil fields, forced to live in tents and shanties in the middle of town, swelling the local population from less than 100 to some 20,000 residents almost overnight.

Charles Jeffries, an oil derrick operator during those boom-town years and whose memoirs appeared in the Southwestern Historical Quarterly, wrote, "After pay day, when a gang of roughnecks came along, the sidewalks would always be filled with jabbering men pouring into the saloons...The saloons also served as recreation centers where men talked, played dominos and transacted business."

Almost everyone with enough cash on hand tried to set up a drilling rig, sometimes on tiny amounts of land as small as 1/32 of an acre. With heavier than normal rains during the winters and springs between 1902 and 1904, the Sour Lake oil field was a deep quagmire of mud, especially the "Shoe String," a parcel of land 69 feet wide and 3/5 of a mile long.

It was called "Shoe String" because of the row of wooden drilling rigs built so close together they had to be interlocked by long wooden planks to keep them from pushing each other over. In fact, a person could walk between rigs for half a mile or more without stepping on the ground.

In 1929, over a span of three days, a

sinkhole formed in the Sour Lake oil field. Covering 15 acres of land, now filled with water, this hole can still be seen today. Chances are it formed as a result of the large quantities of crude oil and water pumped out of the geological formations lying on top of an underground salt dome.

Today, Sour Lake's sulfur-laden waters, wooden oil derricks and crowded tents are gone, but some of the oil that produced the sulfurous properties of the lake's medicinal waters still remains.

For years to come, pump jacks will continue their rhythmic strokes, reliably bringing forth the black gold that still powers so much of our modern, high-tech world.

