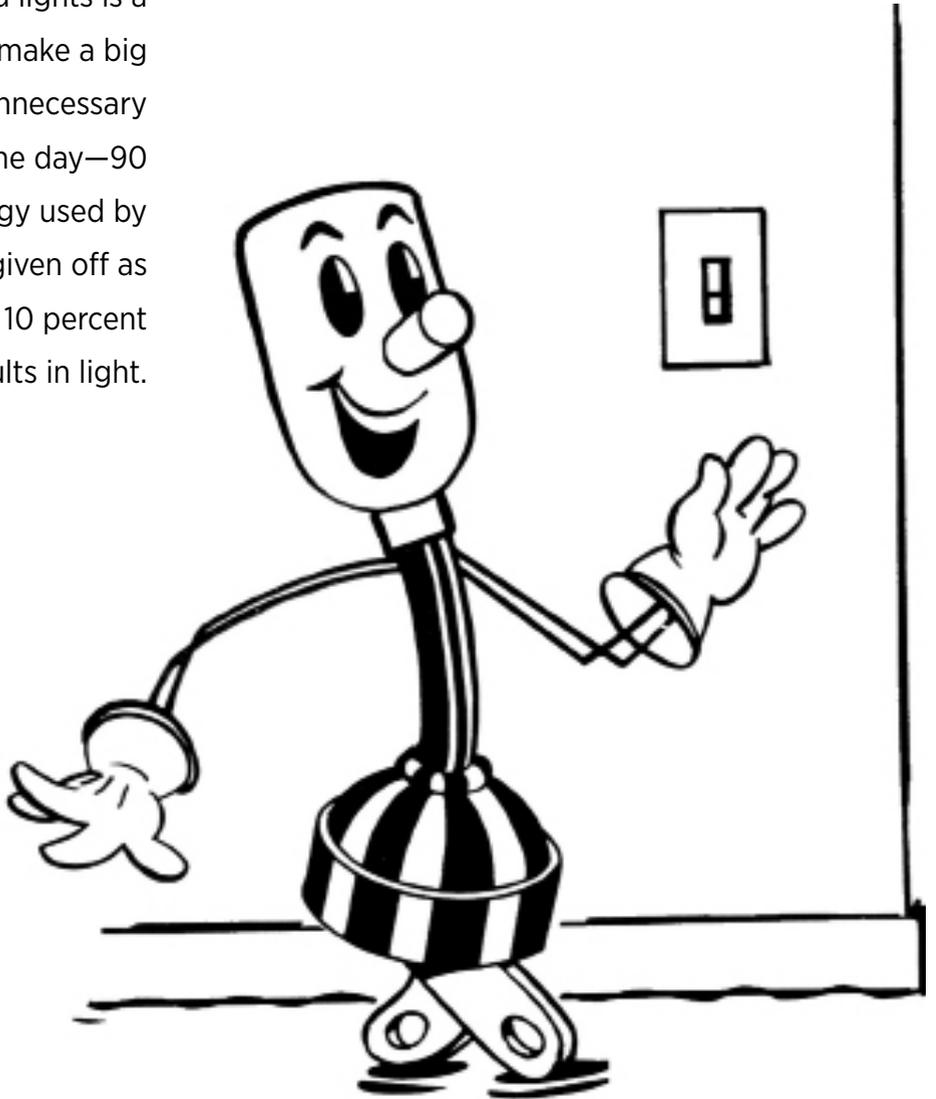


Turn off unused lights.

Turning off unused lights is a small change that can make a big difference. Don't leave unnecessary lighting on during the day—90 percent of the energy used by incandescent lights is given off as heat and only about 10 percent results in light.



Sam Houston
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

www.samhouston.net



A Cooperative Day in YOUR Life

Co-ops are all around us



So how did you spend your day? Chances are cooperatives were a big part of it from dawn until bedtime. Every October, we celebrate National Cooperative Month. To get us all ready for the celebration, take a moment to read this quick overview of how co-ops impact you every day.

Your morning orange juice might have come from Florida's Natural, a producer-owned cooperative based in – you guessed it – Florida, but distributing throughout the U.S. If your morning coffee came from Equal Exchange (www.equalexchange.coop), you get bonus points because they source their coffee from farmer-owned co-ops in developing countries, and they are a worker-owned co-op. If you like milk in your coffee or cereal, check this out: more than 86 percent of all fluid milk flows through a co-op!

The wheat in your muffin or toast was most likely processed through a farmer-owned grain elevator in the Midwest. If you had cranberries in that muffin, they likely came from Ocean Spray, or maybe you used Land O'Lakes Butter or Welch's Concord Grape Jam—all producer-owned co-ops that make the products we love. After that big co-op breakfast, it is time to start the day. Working parents might drop off their young children at one of the more than 1,000 pre-school co-ops that operate throughout the U.S.

Perhaps this is the day to make some improvements to your home. Ace Hardware, True Value and Do it Best Corp. are all examples of purchasing co-ops. These are small businesses that come together to form a co-op so that they can compete with big box retailers that are not owned by people in the local community.

You might need to stop by the credit union for a loan or pick up some cash for that home project from one of the 25,000 ATMs in their network. More than 100 million people in the United States are members of a credit union, and yep, you guessed it, credit unions are cooperatives.

Purchasing Co-ops

On your way home, you may stop at one of the 300 community-owned cooperative grocery stores in the country. Many of the meat products and vegetables are also sourced from co-ops. If you are in a hurry, maybe you swing by KFC, Taco Bell or Pizza Hut to pick up dinner. The franchise owners of these fast food restaurants are all members of a purchasing cooperative, just like the hardware stores mentioned earlier. So are the owners of Dunkin Donuts and many other franchises.

After dinner, perhaps you are watching TV from one of the more than 1,000 small cable companies that serve rural America. They have come together to form a co-op that helps keep costs as low as possible. Or maybe you are surfing the Internet through services provided by your local telecommunications co-op. Travel plans? If you are on a business trip or vacation and staying in a Best Western—that is also a purchasing co-op!

And when it's time for "lights out," you can flip that switch knowing you're receiving safe, reliable electricity from your local electric cooperative, your friends at Sam Houston Electric Cooperative. From morning until night, you can have a very cooperative day.



Co-op Named Pole Program Winner



[Left to right] Sam Houston EC Engineer Kabe Murphy, Construction Inspector Greg Goertz, Osmose Supervisor Jerold Stewart and Sam Houston EC Construction Manager Bill Townley.

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative won the 2014 Wood Pole Management Award presented by Osmose, the Cooperative's pole inspection contractor. This award recognizes outstanding pole inspection and treatment programs.

"The Wood Pole Management Award recognizes utilities who have successfully implemented wood pole inspection and treatment programs that contribute to positive financial, structural reliability, and operational outcomes, including effective risk management and enhanced safety," said Nelson Bingel, vice president of product strategy for Osmose.

Sam Houston EC began its pole inspection program in 1977, and is in the fifth review of the entire electrical distribution system. Since completion of the first cycle, the Co-op has consistently had a passing rate of over 98 percent—meaning less than two percent of poles need either attention or replacement.

"We're taking care of the Cooperative's assets," Sam Houston Electric Cooperative Chief Operations Officer David Babcock said. "We're being good stewards."

Construction Inspector Greg Goertz has managed the Cooperative's program for the past 15 years. In addition to his other duties, he reviews reports of the pole conditions and shares the information with the operations and engineering departments for system planning and improvements.

"This program keeps our system in good shape, and it helps to keep the lights on for our members as well," Goertz said.

Poles that need to be replaced are first evaluated for restoration. Those that can be rehabilitated are restored to code-mandated strength for less than the cost of their replacement.

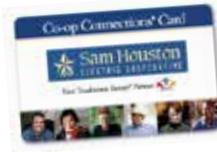
"By staying in a constant inspection cycle, Sam Houston EC has a less than 2 percent reject rate [poles that need to be replaced]," Osmose Supervisor Jerold Stewart said. "This is significant because we are in the highest decay zone in the United States."

The wood pole inspection includes visual inspection, sounding the pole, boring holes in potentially weak spots, and excavating below ground level. For a full explanation of the process, visit the Cooperative's new blog at www.samhouston.net/blog.

"Accurate inspection, decay assessment, and remedial treatment are key components of effective wood pole maintenance programs," said Lauren Glass, Osmose marketing manager. "Successful programs not only improve the safety and reliability of the pole, they extend the useful life of the poles, creating both financial and environmental benefits."

Osmose Utility Services is a leading service provider safeguarding North American utility infrastructure, providing a wide variety of inspection, maintenance and rehabilitation services.

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.

Carol Bond Health Foods

334 Main Street
Liberty, TX 77575
www.carolbond.com
Hours: M-F, 8-6; First Sat, 9-5
Offer: 20% discount off supplements.

Chic Boutique

154 Mockingbird Lane
Livingston, TX 77351
936-327-9100
Hours: M, T, Th, F, Sat, 10-6
Offer: 10% discount on any purchase of \$20 or more.

Colvin Auto Parts / NAPA

520 West Church Street
Livingston, TX 77351
936-327-NAPA
Hours: M-F, 7-5:30; Sat, 7-2
Offer: 10% discount (excludes commercial accounts).

Conservation Corner



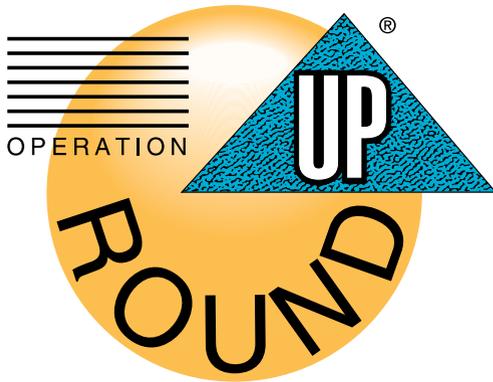
Looking for an easy efficiency upgrade? Additional insulation can make a difference! The Department of Energy estimates

you can reduce heating and cooling needs up to 30 percent by properly insulating and weatherizing your home.

For more energy saving tips for your home or business, go online and visit www.TogetherWeSave.com.



Join Operation Round Up



If you haven't yet, take just a few minutes and join your fellow Cooperative members in making a big difference with a little change.

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative is proud to provide Operation Round Up as an opportunity for the Cooperative and its members to partner in strengthening our communities.

Members who choose to join Operation Round Up will have

their bill rounded up to the next whole dollar each month. For example, a bill of \$87.68 would be rounded up to \$88. On average, \$6 per member is donated each year. While that may sound like a small amount, the potential for positively impacting our communities is tremendous with a Co-op membership of more than 53,000.

The Sam Houston Electric Cooperative Charitable Foundation, represented by a board of volunteer members, guides the program and will determine how to distribute the funds in our communities.

Palmetto Electric Cooperative of South Carolina created the first Operation Round Up program in 1989. Their program has distributed more than \$5.7 million in grants, which have made dramatic impacts in improving quality of life in the communities they serve.

To participate in Operation Round Up, call Sam Houston Electric Cooperative at 1-800-458-0381, or visit our website at www.samhouston.net.

\$3.16 Million in Capital Credits to Members



The Sam Houston Electric Cooperative Board of Directors recently voted to approve the return of nearly \$3.16 million to Co-op member-owners. Returned as capital credits, these refunds will be issued as a credit on members' September electric bills.

Capital credits are allocated from revenues collected in excess of operating

expenses during the previous year. Once the determination has been made that the financial condition of the Cooperative is stable and adequate to meet operating costs, debt covenants and emergency expenses, the Board can elect to return a portion of excess capital in the form of capital credits to Cooperative members. Capital credits are proportionate to individual electric use. To date, Sam Houston EC has returned more than \$33 million in capital credit refunds to its member-owners.

Think Safety.

In the wake of severe weather...

Thunderstorms, tornadoes, hurricanes and flooding can leave more than damage in their wake—they can leave hidden dangers as well. Watch for downed or visibly damaged poles, lines or transformers. For the safety of everyone, report these hazards to Sam Houston Electric Cooperative immediately.



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 

MINGUS

1926

UNDISPUTED CHAMPS

FOR MOST OF ITS HISTORY, the North Texas town of Mingus in Palo Pinto County was famous, or infamous, for bare-fisted barroom brawls in its cluster of whisky joints that were the only establishments of their kind within an hour's drive in any direction. In some cases, that hour's drive was a pedal-to-the-metal escape in full flight. As one Texas newspaper suggested in 1975, "Mingus holds a place dear to the hearts of cowboys with broken noses and oil field roughnecks with missing teeth."

In those days it was an ill-advised stop to wet your whistle if you weren't a bona fide scrapper, and many of the scrappiest bona fides got broken-bone humbled. The population of the small town increased dramatically with the population in the bars every Saturday night. And the local jail, located in nearby Strawn, filled to capacity almost as quickly. Mingus was known far and wide across the country as one of the meanest towns in Texas, and, like Luckenbach or Gruene, it enjoyed mythical allure in longneck bottled Lone Star lore.

But fisticuffs weren't the only game in Mingus, and cowboys and roughnecks weren't the only scrappers.

The community no longer supports a school—local children attend the Gordon Independent School District, located just five minutes east on State Highway 193—but if you walk through the Mingus City Hall or Gordon High School gymnasium, an 89-year-old photograph of the 1926 Mingus girls basketball squad is likely to draw your attention. The image features seven teenage girls with flapper haircuts, knee socks and uniforms with bloomers. One holds a basketball with "M.H.S. 26" written on it, and three others hold up a pennant.

The caption below the photograph reads "1926 State Championship Mingus Girls Basketball Team" and features Marie Biondini Scopel, Delores Krajcar Raffaele, Vera Kenney Hanks, Eda Tiblets Bertino, Juanita Viean Green, Elizabeth Hare Jackson and Dottie Marine Shultz. Cursory literature on the team indicates that, at a time when public high school athletic competition classifications were not based on the size of the school's enrollment, this Mingus team beat a Houston squad to claim the state crown.

Nonagenarian Leo S. Bielinski, a passionate proponent for the creation of Tarleton State University's W.K. Gordon Center for Industrial History

By E.R. Bills



[PHOTO] THIS PHOTO OF MINGUS' 1926 CHAMPIONSHIP TEAM HANGS AT MINGUS CITY HALL AND THE GORDON HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM. COURTESY CITY OF MINGUS.

of Texas and an acknowledged expert on area history, says that during those years, the Mingus girls contested all takers, playing local high school, college and semipro teams. Their opponents often were sponsored by commercial enterprises such as Nehi Bottling Company. "They played against legends like Babe Didrikson [Zaharias]," Bielinski says, "but local townfolk drove [the basketball team] around for the games."

Though the members of the 1926 team have all passed on, Bielinski knew a few of them and noted their modesty. "They didn't brag about it or anything," he says. "It was just something they did." Some of the girls on the 1926 Mingus team were recruited to play at bigger high schools, and some went on to play on semipro teams.

The University Interscholastic League (formed to provide leadership and guidance to public school academic and athletic competitions) began organizing boys athletic championships at the state level in 1921 but didn't get involved in girls sports until 1951. During the 1920s, the high school girls basketball competition was loosely organized and generally unofficial, but the American Athletic Union did hold state high school basketball tournaments dating back to 1925.

In the AAU's 1926 tournament (in which the Mingus High School girls team might not have participated), Breckenridge won the championship, and Cisco was named runner-up. In 1927, the

Mingus girls finished in the top five in the AAU tourney. In 1929, they placed third behind Breckenridge and Cisco (cities many times larger than Mingus at the time); and, in 1931, they were runners-up to Dimmitt.

Seventy years after the 1926 Mingus girls won their state championship in basketball, the 1996 Gordon boys won a state championship in six-man football and then repeated the feat again in 1999.

"Folks around here still have a deep-rooted competitive spirit," says Gordon High School principal (and alumna) Holly Campbell. "We're aware of who came before us and what they accomplished, and we try to remember that when we compete. And like that 1926 girls team, we still look at ourselves as underdogs."

There are no records left to verify the 1926 Mingus girls' high school basketball state championship in another league or tournament, so official recognition of their championship basketball season cannot be substantiated; but it's clear the community was home to a 1920s-era, girls hoops dynasty, and the 1926 squad presumably started the trend.

And considering Mingus' fabled reputation for melees, attempts at disputing the accomplishments of the teenage basketball stars in the 1926 photograph might get you a knuckle sandwich.

E.R. BILLS IS A WRITER FROM ALEDO.

Casting Cash Away

The outdoors experience can come with whopping price tags, but it doesn't have to be that way

Anytime we hear someone start a sentence with, "When I was a kid..." we can expect a lament on the decline of Western civilization and how kids today just aren't as tough as they should be.

Those among us who grew up eating dirt for lunch—on the good days, we might get a side of rocks—are accustomed to these laments. It's hard, after all, to see past an HD screen on a \$1,000 computer to the hard times of past generations.

And somewhere along the way from the fantastic '50s of my youth to the "too much is not enough" teens of today, we've slowly acquired an attitude that if an item costs more, it must be better. Perhaps nowhere is that skewed mental state more apparent than the world of hunting and fishing—the world in which I've lived and made my living for most of my adult life.

Here's an example: I paid \$1,100 for my first bass boat. It was an olive green Terry, 14 feet long, with a MotorGuide electric motor and a 20-horsepower Evinrude engine—state-of-the-art in the mid-1970s.

Actually, my very first bass boat was a mangled aluminum johnboat nobody else wanted. I paddled that around lakes for years until I got a job and decided to splurge on new hardware.

My first rod and reel was a \$12 gift my dad bought mail-order from the Gadabout Gaddis television show that was popular in the 1950s. I loved that outfit. Later

I managed to scrape together enough money to buy two rods and reels that collectively might have cost \$75. With that gear, I put thousands of bass into my little green boat.

I now have a rod and reel, a custom rod fitted with a Shimano Calais reel that would exceed the cost of all of that 1970s equipment. I actually won it in a casting bet with my little brother, and I use it proudly but cautiously lest I lose it overboard.

Folks who hunt and fish have foregone the \$100 deer lease and the rickety old Jeep for \$10,000 hunting estates. They drive there in \$60,000 trucks and shoot \$1,000 rifles fitted with \$1,500 scopes. They aim at quail with \$3,000 shotguns, firing shells that cost \$15 a box at game birds that may run to \$20 each.

It's insane. We're insane. We tell ourselves inflation strikes everywhere and thus it's fine to shell out a little more, and then a little more after that. More is better and better is best.

I keep telling myself this, pretending not to be insane because of my pursuit of new and better equipment. After all, a caught fish and a dead dove are just as caught or dead with a \$100 reel or a \$300 shotgun, but I've convinced myself it feels better if I've paid more for my tools.

I try to stay in the mid range, but right now there are at least a dozen rods and reels in my equipment room. Average price: \$400. And that's not counting

maybe 10 fly rods of every weight and at every price point.

Truth is, I never, ever use more than three—the same three—on any fishing trip. I tell myself I'm holding them for my grandkids, but I only have seven of those, so some will have to double up on equipment when I shuffle off this earth.

Still, I think nowhere has the "never enough" chigger sunk his teeth into our flesh more than in the field of food storage. I'll be glad to tell you how.

Some of the hardest times we had were keeping food fresh and drinks cold. Try doing that with a Styrofoam ice chest that cost \$6 and was as brittle as a dry cedar twig. First, the lid blew off when you got out on the highway, and a deer rib bone was for sure going to poke a hole through the side before you got home.

Most of us aspired to a Coleman or Igloo hard-sided cooler. That's what we called them, "hard-sided," to enhance our cooler ownership status. You could throw one onto a boat to carry drinks and sandwiches or to keep fish from spoiling on a stringer and get home with it intact.

But something has happened in the cooler market in the past decade. We are now in the age of the high-dollar megacooler—heavy, tough, tested on grizzly bears, hot- and cold-conveying behemoths that my grandfather would have looked at with wonder.

A person wearing a white cap and a yellow jacket is fishing on a boat. The scene is set against a bright sunset or sunrise, with the sun low on the horizon, creating a strong lens flare effect. The person is holding a fishing rod, and the background shows a calm body of water and distant land.

BY MIKE LEGGETT

Take to the Internet, and you'll find a list of these coolers, an even more amazing array than I thought existed. At least four of these brands—Yeti, Brute, Pelican and Icehole—have Texas ties. (Trying saying “Icehole” five times fast.)

Others include K2, Irp, Orca, Grizzly, Galaxy and Engel. There might be more, but you're going to run out of money long before you strike the end of the list. They all claim to keep ice longer, up to a week in some cases.

Some models sell for close to \$200; others are well over \$1,000. That's what I said: ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS. You could use that one as a coffin, I suppose, and come out to the good.

Every manufacturer recommends you chill the ice chest first, by putting it in a cooler or filling it with ice, then adding your load plus ice to keep it cold for several days. Don't open it or you'll let in warm air, and your ice will begin melting.

But what good is an ice chest you can't open without losing your cool? Don't ask me. And isn't the freezing point of water still 32 degrees? Beer is still cold whether the ice chest costs \$50 or \$500.

Trust me. I have two of the expensive ones—combined cost about \$700—and a \$50 model in my pickup right now. The ice has melted in every one of them.

LEGENDARY OUTDOORS WRITER MIKE LEGGETT LIVES IN BURNET AND IS A MEMBER OF PEDERNALES EC. KEEP UP WITH HIS BLOG, “MIKE LEGGETT OUTDOORS.”