

# URECC NEWS



urecc.coop

MARCH 2023

## What is an Electric Cooperative ?

### A Not-for-Profit, Self Sustained, Owned by its Members

An electric cooperative is a private, not-for-profit company whose purpose is to safely deliver electricity to its members at the most affordable price possible. Being a non-profit organization, the company receives no government funding. All expenses are paid by the cooperative members. As a cooperative, we are required to fulfill two requirements including reinvesting revenue into our service area communities through stable rates and infrastructure or returning it to members through capital credits, as well as operating as a democracy. Members votes elect the Board of Directors, who make business decisions with the members best interest in mind.

### Member Owned and Operated

Because electric cooperatives are member-owned and operated, the democratic process allows members a vote in annual cooperative board elections in which elected trustees are nominated from among the members. Cooperatives also encourage members to voice their thoughts and ideas within the cooperative. Members maintain equal status and work together for the good of the community and adhere to the seven guiding principles.

### The Advantage of Electric Cooperatives

*-Upon joining an electrical cooperative, you are considered a member and/or an owner rather than a customer.*

*-Electric cooperatives are service focused. We are dedicated to providing electricity to rural areas unlike investor-owned utility companies that can make more profit on urban areas and businesses.*

*-Cooperatives follow democratic processes and allow each of our members to vote in board member elections, participate in policy making, and influence the cooperative in sharing their ideas and concerns.*

*-Cooperatives are community focused and work to improve the sustainability and well-being of local and surrounding communities.*

*-Electric cooperatives may return revenues or margins to cooperative members in the form of capital credits.*

### The Seven Cooperative Principles

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training, and Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

Read more about the 7 cooperative principles at:  
<https://www.urecc.coop/cooperative-principles>

## 2023 Virtual Annual Meeting



The Upshur Rural Electric Cooperative Board of Directors has set the URECC Virtual Annual Meeting date for 2023 as **Thursday, April 6th**.

An official notice of the meeting will be mailed to each member of URECC, as required by the Bylaws. Members will also receive their Annual Meeting booklet and ballot for Board of Director voting in March. The booklet will contain the co-op financial information for 2022 and information on how to access this year's virtual meeting, ask questions to the CEO, and enter for prize drawings online.

Along with financial reports and discussion of URECC business operations, three of the URECC Directors will be up for re-election. Those Directors and their districts are:

**Frankkie King, Distric #1**

**Jonathan Hunt, District #2**

**J.P. Abernathy, Distric #3**

If you would like more information as to Director qualifications and how they are nominated, please see the URECC Cooperative Bylaws online at [urecc.coop](http://urecc.coop).

# Members Helping Members

*Because there are times in life when we could all use a helping hand.*



*There comes a time when we all could use a helping hand. There are members of URECC that need assistance. Whether these families and individuals are elderly, unemployed, sick, single parents, or just those needing a hand to get by for awhile, they could use your help.*

**STATE AND PRIVATE AGENCIES THAT PROVIDE ASSISTANCE ARE LOW ON FUNDS TO HELP THESE NEIGHBORS. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP THOSE IN NEED, THERE ARE 2 OPPORTUNITIES TO DO SO:**

- 1. Donate your capital credits to the utility assistance organizations** URECC works with year-round. Please follow the link below to help with assistance. Funds donated by you will be forwarded to the agencies that help Upshur Rural Electric Cooperative members in the county in which you live.
- 2. You can make monetary donations directly to these utility assistance agencies.** Please see the list of agencies directly to the right contact them for details on donating to help your neighbors.

***Fill in the online form submission or download the mail-in form here.***



## Utility Assistance Programs-Donations

### Community Services of Northeast Texas:

Accepts individual donations, cash, check or money order, & tax deductible. No online donations.

Mailing address - P.O. Box 427  
Linden, TX 75563

Accepts individual donations, cash, check or money order, & tax deductible. No online donations.

Mailing address - 214 Nacogdoch 4es Street,  
Center, TX 75935

### Salvation Army:

Accepts individual donations, accepts cash, check, or money order, & tax deductible, On-line donations can be made at <https://southernusa.salvationarmy.org/texas-longview>

Address-504 E Cotton St, Longview, TX 75601

### Diana United Fund:

Accepts individual donations, accepts cash or check, & tax deductible, Online donations can be made at [dianaunitedfund.org](http://dianaunitedfund.org)

Mailing Address-PO Box 327, Diana, TX 75640

### Greater East Texas Community Action Program:

Accepts individual donations, accepts cash or check, & tax deductible, Online donations can be made on their website

Mailing Address-Project SOS, P.O. Box 631938, Nacogdoches, TX 75963

### East Texas Veteran Resource Center:

Accepts individual donations. Online donations can be made at <https://www.helpforvets.com/individual-giving> Physical

Address-402W.Front Street Tyler, TX 75702

### PATH Agency:

Accepts individual donations, accepts checks by mail, & tax deductible, Online donations can be made on their website: <https://www.pathhelps.org/donate/>

### SAFE-T:

Accepts individual donations, accepts cash or check or cryptocurrency, & tax deductible, Online donations can be made on their website: <http://www.safe-tagency.com/donate>

### Harleton Area Ministerial Fellowship:-

Accepts individual donations, cash or check or online donations to [paypal.me/abcharleton](https://paypal.me/abcharleton).

Mailing address-P.O. Box 656 Harleton, TX 75651

### Gladewater Ministerial Alliance:

Accepts cash, checks or money order by mail No online donations

Mailing address-P.O. Box 1167 Gladewater, TX 75647



### **Hecate Solar Farm:**

**The Hecate solar farm lies at the northwest corner of the intersection of Highway 259 and Highway 155. It is owned by Hecate Energy. Power produced at the Hecate solar farm is sold to URECC as part of our energy portfolio, which currently includes power produced by solar, wind, hydro-electric dams, natural gas, and coal. In 2016 URECC sent out member surveys. The collected data from the survey results stated that URECC members wanted URECC to include solar as part of our energy portfolio, but did not wish for URECC to spend the investment to build our own solar farm. The URECC Board of Directors and executive staff began inquiries following the survey to honor the members preferences with a solar farm. After many negotiations and possible projects, in 2020 URECC began negotiating with Hecate Energy, which builds solar farms nationally and internationally. URECC secured the land at the intersection of State Highways 155 and 259 and Hecate began the building of the 3 megawatt solar farm. The project was completed in the summer of 2021. Although the 3 megawatt system is a very small portion of the power used by URECC members, the cost of power comes in at a much smaller percentage of the power cost bought wholesale from the other generation companies in the URECC energy portfolio.**

## **After the Storm**

### **How URECC is Paying the Debts for the 2021 Winter Storm URI**

#### **Current Debt Update**

Amount of bill URECC received for power for the week of URI = \$30 million+

Amount of loan obtained by URECC for payment of bill = \$29 million  
Years Financed = 7 years

Balance of loan still owed as of February 2023 = \$23 million

Winter storm Uri caused a disaster for the State of Texas. Record breaking low temperatures and ice enveloped the state for a week. The president's restriction of the use of coal, forced the state to look to other means to generate enough electricity. Wind and solar were virtually useless, as the wind turbines froze, and the overcast skies limited the output of solar energy. The state turned to natural gas. Many of the gas wells froze. This left a minimal amount of gas to generate an incredible amount of power to supply the state. The grid neared collapsing, a collapse that could have left the entire state without power for weeks.

The limited amount of power available and the statewide demand caused gas prices to soar astronomically. When those power bills for that month were delivered to the electric companies and cooperatives that buy power for their customers, the amounts were simply devastating.

URECC's bill for all its members on an average month is in the ballpark of \$8 million. The URECC power bill for the one week of the storm - **\$30 million**. Being a non-profit, stand-alone business that does not receive government funding, the URECC Board of Directors and executive staff faced two options: 1. Send out outrageous bills for thousands of dollars to every URECC member, or 2. Borrow the money and finance it over the longest term possible. Option 2 was the obvious choice.

URECC borrowed \$29 million to be financed over a 7 year period. There is a small addition to each member's monthly bill to repay this loan. Once again, there was no government assistance available to offset this bill, leaving the entire debt of the loan to URECC members who received power from URECC during Winter Storm URI.

**\*\*\*Note to members.** The amount added to bills for **payback is NOT** Power Cost Recovery Factor (PCRF). **PCRF** is a direct reflection of the fluctuation of the cost of electricity purchased **by URECC**.

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## URECC Senior Citizen Members

At URECC, if you are 65 years of age or older and have no outstanding account balance with the Co-operative (or another utility for the same service) during the past two years, NO DEPOSIT is required on NEW or EXISTING accounts! Call Member Services at 903-843-2536.

Seniors age 65 and older, do not require a deposit on new or existing accounts (as long as there is no outstanding balance with the cooperative or another utility for the same service during the past two years). Our deposit policy has not changed. We are simply trying to let our seniors know they may qualify for a deposit exemption, because we have recently had some questions from members about this.

URECC also has prepay (Power2Go) available to ALL members that never requires a deposit. Please contact Member Services if you need to request a deposit exemption or if you would like to go on prepay (Power2Go) with no deposit required.

## “Power Pay - Free E-check” is now available on the SmartHub app and at the top of the page at URECC.coop

URECC representatives have listened to much feedback from members concerning convenience fees, and has set up an additional FREE method of payment available directly from the SmartHub app and on our URECC website.

URECC works hard to control costs and will continue to work on ways to lower costs to benefit our members, while also providing as many free payment options as possible. If you have any questions on the best way for you to pay your bill, and how to avoid convenience



*Members can now pay their bill on the SmartHub app or at URECC.coop with no convenience fee.*

### With URECC you have payment options!

#### PAYMENT METHOD

Is there a fee to the member?

Can I pay by SmartHub App?

PAYMENT METHOD	Is there a fee to the member?	Can I pay by SmartHub App?
Bank Draft	No	No Need
PowerPay Free E-check	No	Yes, or at URECC.coop
Cash	No	No
Paper Check	No	No
Credit/Debit	Yes	Yes
E-Check / IVR Phone	Yes	Yes
MoneyGram	Yes	No
Kiosk	Yes	No



## St. Patrick's Day Trail Mix

### Ingredients:

- 1 box golden graham cereal
- 1 box mini marshmallows
- 1 bag peanut m&m's green
- 1 box Lucky Charms Cereal



### Directions:

Simply combine the 4 ingredients into a large bowl, and mix until evenly combined.

### Bank Draft Saves You and Your Co-Op Money!

Pay your bill by

**Bank Draft**

with Upshur Rural Electric Co-Op



**Bank Draft is Safe, Secure... and it's Easy!**

[Details](#)