

*Big Country Electric Cooperative*  
**MEMBERGRAM**

December 2011

**Our offices will be closed Monday,  
December 26th and Monday, January 2nd  
for the Christmas and New Year's Holidays.  
Staff will be on-call to respond to outages.**

**We wish you and yours a safe and Merry  
Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

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**IMPORTANT NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR  
AGRICULTURAL AND TIMBER TAX EXEMPTIONS**

Beginning January 1, 2012, Texans wanting to claim an exemption from Texas sales and use taxes on electricity and other items used in agricultural and timber operations must provide a registration number to the supplier on *Texas Agriculture Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certification Form 01-924*.

House Bill 268 adding this requirement passed during the 2011 legislative session. The Texas Comptroller's Office issues the registration number and those wanting to claim the exemption must fill out an application. Registration numbers must be renewed every four years. Applicants can apply online at [www.getreadytexas.org](http://www.getreadytexas.org) or request a paper application to mail in by calling 1-800-252-5555 or downloading a copy from the comptroller's website, <http://c750820.r20.cf2.rackcdn.com/ap-228.pdf>.

The generic exemption certificate, Form 01-339, cannot be used to claim the agricultural exemption. Blanket exemption certificates issued to suppliers on the old form must be replaced with new certificates for purchases made on or after January 1, 2012. Accounts that do not have the new required form on file will be subject to taxation. For more information, go to [www.getreadytexas.org](http://www.getreadytexas.org).



## Meet New Employee Robert Bohall

Robert Bohall joined the staff in BCEC's Roby office early in November as a Meter Reader. Robert grew up in Sweetwater, where he still lives, and is married to Lisa. They have two boys, Blayne, 4 and Blake, 1. Robert has also served our country as a Marine in Afghanistan and is currently active in the Marine Reserves.

He enjoys sports and in his spare time, gets to be Mr. Mom while his wife is in nursing school. He says he has learned a new appreciation for her and all that she does! Brownie points for him! We're proud to have Robert on our team.

## SNYDER HIGH SCHOOL CAREER DAY

Jayson Steelman, Kevin Bennett, Gabriel Vasquez, and Richard Powell of our Snyder district office attended Snyder High School Career Day on October 27 and presented two sessions to students interested in the Lineman career. Pictured at the right is Gabriel Vasquez, 3rd Class Lineman and a graduate of Western Texas College's Electrical Lineman Technical Program, discussing his training and career choice with students.



## ENJOY SAVING WITH YOUR CO-OP CONNECTIONS CARD!

In October, BCEC Members saved \$1,267.87 on 107 prescriptions filled using their Co-op Connections Card. That's over 23% savings! Since the program's inception, Texas Co-op Members have saved over \$4 Million using their Co-op Connections Card! The card is a free perk of being a co-op member. If you don't have yours, give us a call!



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# SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

If you have a college-bound student, chances are you're got more than visions of sugarplums dancing through your head. Visit our website, [www.bigcountry.coop](http://www.bigcountry.coop), and click on the Scholarships link for more information and applications for each of the below listed scholarship opportunities. If you have questions or need help, contact Sarah Dickson at (325) 776-3803 or [sdickson@bigcountry.coop](mailto:sdickson@bigcountry.coop).

**TEC (Texas Electric Cooperatives) LOSS CONTROL PROGRAM SCHOLARSHIP** - Amount varies. Applicant must be a son or daughter of an electric cooperative, electric municipal or contractor employee participating in TEC's Loss Control services, such as BCEC. Must also be a graduate of a Texas high school or receiving a GED equivalent the same academic year the scholarship is awarded. Applications due January 13, 2012.

**BIG COUNTRY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP** - Three (3) scholarships of \$1,000 each (\$500 per semester) will be awarded. Applicant must reside with a parent or guardian who is a member of Big Country Electric Cooperative (BCEC) and must be a current year graduating senior. Applications due January 20, 2012.

**GOVERNMENT IN ACTION YOUTH TOUR**

- Applicants must deliver a 6 to 8 minute speech in a contest format. Up to 3 winners will be selected to win an all-expense paid 9-day trip to Washington, D.C. in June 2012. Each winner and one runner-up will receive \$1,500 scholarships. Applications due February 10, 2012.

**GOLDEN SPREAD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE DIRECTORS' MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP** - \$2,000 payable \$500 for each of four semesters through the sophomore year. The scholarship is available to an entering freshman college or university student who is a member, or spouse or child of a member, or child whose guardian is a member of a rural electric cooperative (Big Country Electric Cooperative), which is an owner (member) of Golden Spread Electric Cooperative. Applications due March 15, 2012.

**TREWA (Texas Rural Electric Women's Association) Scholarship** - Fifteen (15) TREWA scholarships, of \$1,500 each, will be awarded to CURRENT TREWA members and their children. Applicants must also be a current member or an employee of a Texas electric cooperative or an employee of Texas Electric Cooperatives. Applications due April 1, 2012.



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## SHARE WARMTH WITH THOSE IN NEED THIS CHRISTMAS!

All BCEC offices are drop-off locations for winter items such as coats, blankets, gloves, etc., which we will donate to local charities. Help someone in need this holiday season by cleaning out your closet! We will also accept non-perishable (canned) food as well. Don't forget that you can also drop-off used eyeglasses at our offices. The eyeglasses are given to Lions Clubs who update lenses and refurbish frames and provide glasses for those who cannot afford them.

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# The Lineman's Christmas Eve

by KEVIN HUGHES

*'Twas the night before Christmas  
And all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring  
'Cause the power was out.  
How could this happen?  
What trouble could be?  
The house is all dark,  
Even the lights on the tree.  
The lineman's asleep  
All cozy and warm,  
His power apparently  
Was spared by the storm.  
Deep into slumber  
But soon to awake,  
'Cause a tree on the line  
Has caused it to break.  
The calls swamp the office  
"MY POWER IS OUT!  
Get them here quickly because I carry clout."  
The dispatcher calls  
and with a hint of despair  
He informs the lineman  
The lines need repair.  
In three or four hours  
The trouble is found,  
You see the road didn't pass  
Where the tree went down  
After walking through snow  
And fighting the storm,  
The line is now clear  
And the power is on.  
And now it's the morning  
The kids shout with glee  
And their eyes shine as bright  
As the lights on the tree.  
The lineman goes home now,  
As tired as can be.  
The storm just ignored  
It was his Christmas Eve.  
He's not asking for praise  
Or for you to applaud,  
'Cause according to him,  
It's just part of the job.  
But please just remember,  
As you pick up the horn,  
And you call to the office  
He may be out in the storm*



## Light up holiday savings with LEDs

Decorating with lights this holiday season? Consider light-emitting diodes (LEDs). They cost more initially but last twice as long as traditional lights, and you'll recover the difference in three to four years.

- **Efficient.** LEDs use between 1 kWh and 3 kWh of energy, compared to between 12 kWh and 105 kWh for traditional lights, saving \$11 every holiday season.
- **Durable.** LEDs last about 4,000 hours. They're also made of plastic and less likely to break.
- **Don't want to use LEDs?** Consider trimming back the number of hours your traditional lights are on to six hours or less each day.

Sources:  
Consumer Reports,  
Alliance to Save Energy

