

Along these

LINES

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2020




The Heart of DEMCO

Employees load donations into the St. Vincent de Paul van for distribution to those in need. From left, Dusty Guarino, Mark Phillips, Scot Carraway, Matt Gibson and Carl Westbrook.



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It's All About Powerful Relationships

It has been a little more than a year since I accepted the CEO position at the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives. I walked into ALEC with zero electric cooperative experience. A move like that can make even the most experienced professional nervous.



Jeff Arnold

Fortunately, I'm surrounded by a staff that inspires me every day, as well as a board of directors and membership that want nothing more than to help me succeed at this position. For that I'm grateful.

Working in the public sector for 21 years and serving as a state representative for 14 years groomed me to lead the efforts of the statewide association, and taught me the value and importance of building strong relationships.

ALEC is a relationship-driven organization and a powerful force that brings Louisiana co-op leaders together to share ideas and solve common challenges.

Our mission is to help our electric cooperatives provide safe, affordable and reliable electrical service to their members, be a collective voice, be on the cutting edge of our industry and represent our great state while promoting the great work we do for our members.

Working together, ALEC members accomplish things that would be costly, difficult or impossible to do alone. That is the cooperative way.

We at ALEC strive to be the trusted resource, champion the cause and inspire the future of the electric cooperative movement every day.

2019 brought a lot of changes and challenges to the statewide association. Regulatory control overstepped its boundaries and attempted to take away your rights as an owner of your electric co-op and a ratepayer. Competition remains fierce with large investor-owned utilities that have deep pockets to gain access to decision makers. Those adversities challenged us to find opportunities to improve the way we do business.

Louisiana electric cooperatives have seen their fair share of political battles, regulatory issues, power cost negotiations and natural disasters. During these moments, electric cooperatives shine their brightest by banding together to offer each other a helping hand and reinventing themselves.

Our metamorphosis is just beginning. In the next several months, you will see many changes from ALEC. Our staff has

embraced the changes and brought to the table several fresh ideas. ALEC has a modernized logo that represents our great state. We are also strategically partnering with firms and service cooperatives to offer our members new and exciting opportunities.

ALEC has partnered with Pioneer Utility Resources to convert Louisiana Country and Along These Lines from 12-page tabloid newspapers to sleek, modernized, 24-page magazines. Your issues will arrive in the mail every other month. Your loyal readership to the statewide publication has been impressive in a day where all you hear is, "Print is dead." You, our valued members, have proven this wrong. We hope you enjoy the new format and content.

2020 promises to bring additional challenges: the RURAL Act on the federal level, 64 new state legislators and negotiating with power suppliers to find the best wholesale price for our members.

ALEC staff, together with your local electric cooperatives, will meet those challenges by strategically placing you, the member, first.

We hope you have a safe, prosperous and healthy New Year!

— ALEC CEO Jeff Arnold

Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives Inc.

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The Thrill of Tammany Trace

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Mission

DEMCO is focused on enhancing the quality of life for members by providing safe, reliable and competitively priced energy services.

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Manager's Report

Randy Pierce
CEO & General Manager



Welcome to a new year and a new Along these Lines magazine! While we promise to maintain the longstanding tradition of local content, the updated glossy publication now includes more stories that highlight and reflect Louisiana's heritage. The lagniappe is threefold: improved legibility, better photo resolution, and a lower cost to print and distribute.

Although we've changed the format of this publication, some things will remain constant. Specifically, I reference the characteristics of your DEMCO co-op and the character of the employees who work here.

As an electric cooperative, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to co-op members. However, we know it takes more than poles, wires and kilowatt-hours to make the co-op strong. It takes time, money, and a lot of heart and spirit to enrich the lives of our members and the communities we serve. At DEMCO, our employees, pictured below, are the heart of the co-op because they are devoted to the mission of the co-op and consistently demonstrate their commitment to the community.

Annual giving has always been an important belief and practice for DEMCO employees to show their commitment and concern for our co-op friends, families and neighbors. (Account number 01658909002)

Each year, DEMCO employees voluntarily contribute to two local organizations: Dream Day Foundation and Capital Area United Way. In 2019, DEMCO employees contributed more than \$64,000 to these organizations. I know you will agree it is no small gesture to withhold money from a hard-earned paycheck for the benefit of someone less fortunate.

Another remarkable effort that shows how much DEMCO employees care for the community is reflected in our cooperative's annual holiday giving project. In 2019, employees donated blankets, pillows and personal items to The Society of St. Vincent de Paul. In 2018, employees donated one ton of food to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank.

I am grateful to be part of a team of such excellent employees who care for and contribute to the communities we serve. I hope you continue to find comfort in knowing that DEMCO employees have and always will be powerful and generous resources you can count on.





You Light Me Up!

You pay your electricity bill every month and more than likely think, “That’s done.”

But the truth is, DEMCO is more than just your electricity provider. Everyone here is committed to building strong connections with you, our members, and the local communities we serve.

Electric cooperatives are organized around their commitment to make a difference in the community and to provide excellent service to our members. To do that, we must continually provide ongoing reliable and useful information about co-op resources and services.

We use many methods to communicate because our members are diverse—they enjoy and rely on a variety of resources to gather intel. Our goal is to connect with our members. Depending on the information, our methods vary.

Some members enjoy going into their district office to talk with a member service representative. Some prefer email communications. Others use the DEMCO mobile app. Many enjoy Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, so we use social media channels, too. (Account number 80017070001)

We schedule phone calls with a recorded message whenever we have a scheduled outage for maintenance or right-of-way work, and we also use door-hanger cards. This publication, *Along these Lines*, is another tried and true resource for our members.

Recently, DEMCO staff hosted coffee and cookies in the district offices. This provided a fun opportunity to visit and chat with members who walk in or drive through to pay their bill. We want members to know there are many ways to pay their bill, and some may be more convenient than walking in or driving through each month!



Forty-year DEMCO member Maude Wascom, center, is one of the co-op’s newest members to sign up for auto-draft. DEMCO Marketing Specialist Penny Fruge, left, and Member Services Representative Mystery Hester helped Mrs. Wascom set up her new payment process.

Pictured above is Mrs. Maude Wascom, a DEMCO member who visited the headquarters office October 30. She was greeted with coffee, cookies and several staff members who were delighted to meet her. Mrs. Wascom explained she has been a DEMCO member for 40 years, and this was her first time in the office because she never had a need to.

Recently widowed, Mrs. Wascom was concerned she may miss paying the bill that her husband had always taken care of.

“I noticed she came in to pay with a check, so we asked if she’d like to set up an automatic bank draft for her convenience,” says Mystery Hester, a DEMCO member services representative. “We helped her set up bank draft payment and she can now rest assured that her bill will get paid each month.”

“You light me up,” Mrs. Wascom exclaimed, thankful for the help. ■

Lucky Account Number Contest

Four lucky co-op members will win \$25! Before you continue looking through this edition for your winning number, find for your account number printed above your mailing address. If you locate this number anywhere in this issue, call 225-262-2160 to claim your prize.



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By Colette Boehm

Tammany Trace: More Than a Walk in the Woods

Though only 31 miles long and, at times, just steps from downtown activities, the Tammany Trace gives guests the feeling of being a world away.

Originally a corridor for the Illinois Central Railroad, Tammany Trace is now a popular hiking and biking trail stretching from downtown Covington through Abita Springs, Mandeville and Lacombe and into Slidell. In some sections, an equestrian trail is a part of the route.

What was an abandoned railroad corridor in 1992 has become an integral part of the north shore communities of St. Tammany Parish. Parish government, municipalities and nonprofit efforts have combined to create a recreational treasure.

The 31 miles of asphalt, remodeled railroad trestles and repurposed depots have connected communities to each other in new ways. They've also given residents new opportunities to enjoy and get involved in those communities. Travelers also have new reasons to visit and, in turn, businesses have new avenues for success.

Tammany Trace is part of the nationwide Rails-to-Trails network, which encourages creating trails from out-of-service rail corridors. The trace was named a Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Hall of Fame trail in 2017. The honor came after a popular vote pushed the trail to the top among fellow nominees.

"The trace is a five-star trail that attracts more than 300,000 visitors from around the world," says Keith Laughlin, RTC president. "Clearly, the public showed overwhelming support for their love of this treasured community resource, and we are pleased to honor it as part of the Hall of Fame."

RTC notes that hall-of-fame trails are recognized for their "outstanding scenic value, use, amenities, historical significance and community value."

The trail's value and popularity continue to increase. No matter the season, locals and visitors alike enjoy it. Near downtown areas, baby strollers and skateboards join cyclists and hikers more commonly seen on remote portions of the trail.

For locals, easy access makes the trail an obvious choice for enjoying the outdoors. For visitors, the combination of the scenic route with a host of farmers markets, playgrounds, a wildlife refuge, breweries, nearby Lake Pontchartrain's beaches and other fun features makes it a choose-your-own-adventure experience.

"It's safe to say it's our No. 1 tourist attraction for our parish," says Lisa Maddox, operations manager for Tammany Trace.

It's estimated more than 400,000 people used the trace in 2019. Lisa is one of many locals proud of what the trail has become.

"I've been here 18 years and I've seen a lot of it take shape," she explains. "It's been a dream come true, with a lot of volunteers, a lot of hard work and some grant money."

Each town along the trace has found ways to make it its own. Trailheads have become gathering places, local businesses cater to cyclists and neighboring attractions promote the trace.

"We encourage everyone to build something of their own," Lisa says of the communities along the route. "The trace is a way to connect us all. We're all good neighbors."

In Covington, a converted depot serves as a trailhead and visitor center, as does one in Mandeville. Each location has a park, including covered areas that host weekly community markets as well as interpretive displays and comfort

stations, with easy access to downtown restaurants and shops.

Also in Mandeville, at the Koop Drive Trailhead, is the Kids Konnection Playground. A green caboose, which serves as the trail's headquarters, sits on





a preserved piece of railroad track and is surrounded by a playground built with inclusion in mind. Special features allow children of all abilities to play together (see page 16).

The remote trailhead in nearby Lacombe provides one of the trail's most scenic locales. A converted railroad trestle—complete with drawbridge to

accommodate boat traffic below—spans Lacombe Bayou. The comfort station—with its covered picnic areas on the bayou— offers a picturesque spot for a relaxing break. Travelers should note that bridge traffic is limited to daylight hours, which change seasonally.

The terminus of the trail is the Slidell-Carollo Trailhead in Slidell. Plans are underway for new facilities to be added, with the trail stretching to the city's downtown Heritage Park.

“The trace will continue to evolve,” Lisa says. “We’re never going to stop growing. The parish, they are the ones that had the vision to acquire the land. A lot of the amenities aren’t built with public funds.”

Instead, amenities are built through a cooperative effort with the nonprofit Tammany Trace Foundation—an active partner along the trace.

Through fundraising efforts of the

Continues on page 16

Lighting the Way DEMCO Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to these co-op member-students, who each received a one-year \$2,500 academic scholarship from DEMCO!

Awarded to DEMCO-member eligible students who attend a Louisiana public college or university, funds can be used by the student as needed.

Each year, DEMCO receives hundreds of applications. The co-op holds a random drawing at its annual membership meeting.

In 2019, 17 scholarships were awarded to DEMCO co-op member-students for a total of \$42,500.

Not pictured are Robert Chedville, Joshua Lachney and Balin Rogers, all attending Louisiana State University.



Benjamin Bateman
Louisiana State University



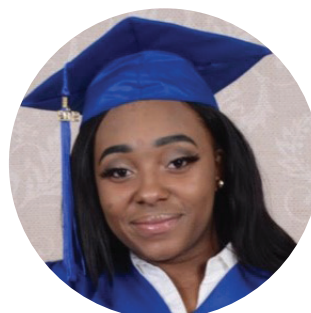
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SnapPower Guidelight 2 outlet covers create enough light to help you find your way in the dark without taking up valuable space. PHOTO BY SNAPPPOWER

Small Gadgets, Big Convenience

By Brandon Pomrenke

SnapPower offers a variety of LED night light outlet covers. Different models include those with enhanced safety to protect young children and those with USB charging ports.

The SnapPower Guidelight 2 serves the same function as its predecessor, but the light is now diffused for softer lighting. The new model also is easier to install over different outlet types. There are no batteries or wires to worry about, and it is easy to swap out your old outlet cover quickly. Once power to the outlet is turned off, remove the old cover, screw on the new one, and you're all set.

SnapPower Guidelights are great for small spaces where a lamp won't quite fit, or a hallway that needs a little extra light.

The underside lights turn on only when sensors detect low light. Depending on local electric rates, the combination of sensors and high-efficiency LEDs means each Guidelight 2 costs less than 10 cents a year to run.

Guidelight 2 outlet covers are available in two different

styles—duplex and decor—and come in white, light almond, ivory and black.

The Guidelight 2 series offers two additional options: Guidelight 2 Plus and Guidelight 2 Plus for GFCI. The 2 Plus has the same features as the original, but adds dimming settings and a manual off switch. The 2 Plus for GFCI includes the 2 Plus features, but adds room for important ground-fault circuit interrupting outlets. GFCI outlets decrease the likelihood of electric shock around outlets near water, such as the kitchen and bathroom.

For those looking to upgrade outlets, but not in need of a lighted outlet in every space, check out SnapPower's other outlets and switches. Switchlights can be bought for traditional switch or rocker styles. Both include underside lighting and sensors.

Also available are SafeLight and SafePlate options, which include child safety covers.

SnapPower also makes outlet covers with USB charging ports so you don't need to fill a much-needed outlet with a charger. ■

SnapPower products are available at snappower.com or at Amazon for about \$17.



Furbo Dog Camera

The Furbo Dog Camera includes a 1080p camera that allows pet parents to check on their pet day or night. The 160-degree view means not much is missed.

The device informs you when there is movement in the home, including when your dog decides to chew on furniture or dangerous cords. Furbo says the dog motion sensor also lets the owner see if their pet is suffering from separation anxiety.

Furbo's device also includes two-way audio with a barking sensor. When your dog starts barking, the device sends a push notification right to your smartphone.

If the dog is having a rough day or you just want to give a tasty reward, you're in luck. The Furbo dog camera has a treat-tossing feature. Simply use the app on your smartphone to have your device feed your pet.

The Furbo Dog Camera is available at Shopusfurbo.com and Amazon for \$199.



Wemo Insight Smart Plug

Wemo Insight Smart Plugs turn any outlet into a smart outlet. The device, which is compatible with Amazon's Alexa and Google assistant, can be controlled from anywhere using the Wemo app.

Users can control lights and appliances right from their phone. The smart plug also helps monitor costs by providing up-to-date reports about energy consumption. Wemo highlights the away mode feature, too, which can turn lights on and off at random intervals to deter criminals.

The Wemo Insight Smart Plug can be combined with other smart devices, such as Wemo's Wi-Fi enabled light switch and the Wemo Mini Smart Plug, which is compatible with Alexa, Google assistant and Apple HomeKit.

The Wemo Insight Smart Plug is available at Amazon, Belkin.com, or Walmart for as low as \$29.99.

Hamilton Beach Open Ease Automatic Jar Opener

Hamilton Beach's automatic jar opener—model 76800—makes opening even the toughest jar lids child's play.

Powered by two AA batteries, the opener can be used for glass jars with lids ranging from 1 inch to 4 inches. Because the device isn't on a stand like many other automatic openers, there's no jar too tall to open.

The automatic jar opener is great for those with arthritis or other dexterity issues. Instead of wrestling with a stuck lid or banging the edges against a corner, simply attach the opener to the lid and press a button.

The opener should be used only on glass jars with screw-on lids.

The Hamilton Beach Automatic Jar Opener is available for \$36.79 at Amazon.



New Year, *New Ideas for a Healthy Breakfast*

Start the New Year off right with one of these healthy, but delicious, breakfast treats.

Weekend Brunch Casserole

8-ounce can refrigerated crescent rolls	4 eggs, beaten
1 pound sausage	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk
2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
	$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon black pepper

Heat oven to 425 F.

Crumble and cook sausage in a medium skillet over medium heat until browned. Drain.

Line the bottom of a greased 9-by-13-inch baking dish with crescent roll dough, firmly pressing perforations to seal. Sprinkle with sausage and cheese. Combine remaining ingredients in a medium bowl until blended; pour over sausage.

Bake 15 minutes or until set. Let stand 5 minutes before cutting into squares; serve hot.

Courtesy of Bob Evans

Apple-Cinnamon Oatmeal

3 cinnamon sticks	3 large crisp sweet apples, halved and cored
$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt	Pinch ground cinnamon
2 cups old-fashioned oats	Pure maple syrup, optional
Golden raisins, optional	
1 cup reduced-fat milk	

Bring 8 cups of water and cinnamon sticks to a boil in a saucepan. Remove from heat, cover and let steep for 1 hour. Discard the cinnamon sticks.

Add salt and oats to the water. Bring to a boil, uncovered. Lower heat and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring frequently to prevent sticking. Add 1 cup milk and simmer for an additional 15 minutes, until creamy.

When the oatmeal is ready, use the large holes of a box grater or shredder to shred the apples directly into the pan and stir well.

Serve in individual bowls. Add more milk if a thinner consistency is desired. Sprinkle with cinnamon and sweeten with maple syrup. Serve garnished with raisins, if desired.

Courtesy of MilkPEP

Blueberry Avacado Bowl

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup blackberries	1 teaspoon organic wildflower honey
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup blueberries	2 teaspoons lime juice
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt	Flax seed, optional
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup unsweetened plain almond milk	Chia seeds, optional
$\frac{1}{2}$ avocado	Sliced almonds, toasted, optional
$\frac{1}{2}$ frozen banana	Additional blackberries and blueberries, optional
1 teaspoon pure vanilla	
Lime zest, optional	

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Transfer to a serving bowl and add garnishes, as desired. Makes one serving.

Courtesy of Chef Audrey, Aldi Test Kitchen

A top-down view of a white bowl filled with overnight oats. The oats are topped with several slices of bright yellow mango, a generous amount of shredded white coconut, and a drizzle of dark chocolate. The dish is garnished with a mix of toasted quinoa, almonds, and other grains. The background is a light blue textured surface.

Morning Oasis Overnight Oats

- 1½ cups quick oats
- 1 teaspoon chia seeds
- 2 cups unsweetened vanilla almond milk
- ⅛ teaspoon iodized salt
- 3 tablespoons organic wildflower honey, divided
- ¼ cup quinoa, toasted
- ¼ cup whole almonds, toasted
- 1 mango, sliced
- ¼ cup chopped coconut
- .45 ounces dark chocolate 70% cocoa, shaved
- .45 ounces dark chocolate 70% cocoa, melted

Heat oven to 400 F.

In a large Mason jar, combine oats, chia seeds, almond milk, salt and 2 tablespoons of honey. Refrigerate overnight.

In a medium bowl, combine quinoa, almonds and remaining honey. Spread onto a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes. Remove, cool completely and crumble. Store in a resealable bag overnight.

The next day, stir oats and pour desired amount into a serving bowl. Top with mango, coconut, shaved chocolate and candied quinoa. Drizzle with melted chocolate.

Recipe courtesy of Chef Michelle, Aldi Test Kitchen



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A Special Place to Play

When traveling Tammany Trace, Kids Konnection Playground in Mandeville is a site to remember.

It's also an amazing place to play.

This specially designed area is the result of the efforts of a group of mothers of children with disabilities. They had a vision of children of all abilities playing safely together.

In 2004, the women formalized their group as Kids Konnection, with the intent of building an inclusive playground. In 2007, their vision was realized when Kids Konnection Playground became Louisiana's first totally inclusive playground.

The fenced play area sits on a piece of donated land adjacent to the trace. Features include soft, latex-free surfaces; slides made for adults and children to use together; "sway fun," which allows children in wheelchairs to experience the feel of swinging; a "roller slide" sensitive to cochlear implant issues; a sand play area; and other calming sensory experiences.

The playground was built with more than \$400,000 in cash and in-kind donations. More than 500 volunteers gathered for three weekends to build this playground, now valued at \$1 million.

21490 Koop Drive, Mandeville, LA 70471
985-867-9490

Hours of operation:

Monday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tuesday through Sunday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Continued from page 7

foundation and the parish's commitment to providing dedicated maintenance personnel, the trail is noted as one of the most well-kept trails in the rails-to-trails system, Lisa says proudly.

Whether as a cycling destination or a morning stroll, the trace is a great place to explore the north shore. Manicured parks and natural habitats, downtown breweries and remote bayous, lively playgrounds and quiet spaces each have a spot on the trail. And each are part of the Tammany Trace. ■

Tammany Trace offers more than bike trails. Riders, walkers and guests can stop to enjoy the view, play games and relax with friends.

Before You Go

When planning a trip to the trace be sure to check the out the annual events list for St. Tammany at louisiananorthshore.com. There is always a reason to celebrate, whether its Slidell's all-you-can-eat Crawfish Cookoff in April, the eclectic Louisiana Bike Festival in Abita Springs each summer or the Covington Three Rivers Art Festival in November. Events such as these give visitors plenty of reasons to stop and stay a while along the trail.

DEMCO Annual Meeting Calendar of Events

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, May 9, 2020—Registration and Expo at 8 a.m., Meeting at 10 a.m.

February 17, 2020—March 9, 2020

Publish the calendar of events in the official journal of each parish, including the date, time and place of the Nominating Committee meeting.

March 16, 2020—March 18, 2020

Prequalification period. Pursuant to DEMCO bylaws, members interested in seeking a board position must appear in person between these dates to determine eligibility as prescribed by the corporation's bylaws. Candidates not prequalified are not eligible to seek a position on the board of directors.

March 19, 2020

DEMCO board meeting at 6 p.m. Nominating Committee is appointed.

March 19, 2020

Nominating Committee meeting at 6:05 p.m. at DEMCO headquarters, 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, Louisiana 70739. Meeting results posted March 20, 2020.

March 24, 2020

DEMCO Annual Meeting and Bylaws Committee meets at 4:30 p.m., if needed, to determine eligibility of candidates who have prequalified. Only prequalified candidates are considered.

March 27, 2020

Starting today, prequalified candidates may obtain a petition to run for a seat on the board of directors. DEMCO bylaws require 50 signatures for the petition to be valid.

March 27, 2020

This is the record date for the 2020 Annual Membership meeting. A final list of members eligible to vote at the annual meeting will be prepared.

April 8, 2020

Petitions must be returned to DEMCO headquarters by 4:30 p.m. and received by the CEO and general manager's office.

April 9, 2020

The Annual Meeting and Bylaws Committee, if needed, will validate each petition and post the results as required by the corporation's bylaws on this date.

April 14, 2020—April 24, 2020

The official notice of the 2020 Annual Meeting is mailed to all members of the cooperative.

April 15, 2020

Ballots for the 2020 Annual Meeting are mailed to members. Members should receive their ballots by Saturday, April 18, 2020. Vote and mail your ballot immediately.

May 1, 2020

The deadline for receiving ballots for the 2020 Annual Membership Meeting is 4:30 p.m. Do not delay. Vote!

May 4, 2020—May 6, 2020

Ballots are counted during this period by the certified public accountants selected by DEMCO to conduct the annual meeting. Candidates will be advised as to the time and place ballots will be counted.

May 9, 2020

Annual meeting and election results announced at 10 a.m. at North Park Gym. The address is 30372 Eden Church Road, Denham Springs, LA 70726.

The deadline for
DEMCO Scholarships
is May 1.

Applying online is EASY at DEMCO.org





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Richie Culotta



Zach Dustin

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But they aren't just cats and dogs.

They are Beans and Mr. Buttons. Princess and Barkley.

They are Lulu who is afraid of the vacuum cleaner, and George who loves cheese.

They are impromptu serenaders and accidental stunt men.

They snore. They play. They hate baths, but love the hose.

They like car rides and drooling on the window.

They are three-legged race champions and curtain ninjas.

They are tail-waggers and sloppy kissers.

They are close talkers and belly rub collectors.

They are blanket hogs and entire bed hogs.

They are individuals. And they just want to be someone's best friend.

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The Zinger folds to a mere 10 inches.

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More and more Americans are reaching the age where mobility is an everyday concern. Whether from an injury or from the aches and pains that come from getting older—getting around isn't as easy as it used to be. You may have tried a power chair or a scooter. The *Zinger* is NOT a power chair or a scooter! The *Zinger* is quick and nimble, yet it is not prone to tipping like many scooters. Best of all, it weighs only 47.2 pounds and folds and unfolds with ease. You can take it almost anywhere, providing you with independence and freedom.

Years of work by innovative engineers have resulted in a personal electric vehicle that's truly unique. They created a battery that provides powerful energy at a fraction of the weight of most batteries. The *Zinger* features two steering levers, one on either side of the seat. The user pushes both levers down to go forward, pulls them both up to brake, and pushes one while pulling the other to turn to either side. This enables great mobility, the ability to turn on a dime and to pull right up to tables or desks. The controls are right on

the steering lever so it's simple to operate and its exclusive footrest swings out of the way when you stand up or sit down. With its rugged yet lightweight aluminum frame, the *Zinger* is sturdy and durable yet convenient and comfortable! What's more, it easily folds up for storage in a car seat or trunk—you can even gate-check it at the airport like a stroller. Think about it, you can take your *Zinger* almost anywhere, so you don't have to let mobility issues rule your life. It folds in seconds without tools and is safe and reliable. It holds up to 275 pounds, and it goes up to 6 mph and operates for up to 8 miles on a single charge.

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A Clear Path for Your Power

Vegetation management in rights-of-way improves reliability.

Rural living is a way of life for an estimated 60 million Americans. For DEMCO, it's the reason we exist.

In the late 1930s, investor-owned utilities did not provide service in rural areas because it was too expensive and less profitable. Thus, electric co-ops formed. (Account number 80276741026)

Back in the day, it was necessary to clear the way for the installation of poles and lines across America. Anyone living along the path of power lines was asked to grant access to their property. Clearing trees and vegetation was integral to the process so everyone living along the power lines could get connected.

This right to continual access along power lines remains a requirement of co-op membership. Getting electricity to people in 1938 and now, neighbors helping neighbors is a foundational premise of America's electric co-ops.

Today, DEMCO maintains and services 8,679 miles of line—enough to stretch back and forth across America from east to west three times. Our co-op provides power to about half-a-million rural and city dwellers—our members—each with

equal rights to reliable, safe and affordable power.

With so many miles of line and a hearty mix of members living in the city and rurally, our vegetation management program still calls upon neighbors to help neighbors.

For our members and their families, initial clearings and subsequent regular maintenance ultimately improve reliability and safety for everyone.

The program requires preventive maintenance along co-op rights-of-way every five years. This maintenance includes the clearing and trimming of trees and other vegetation that threaten the transmission and distribution systems.

The vegetation management program sometimes requires that large trees on and around properties be pruned or removed to keep them from threatening DEMCO's electric service and equipment.

In addition to improving reliability, the vegetation management program creates safer working conditions for DEMCO crews. Clear rights-of-way give line crews easier access, which translates to quicker maintenance and repair for our members. ■



BEFORE & AFTER



A before and after picture of a right-of-way shows a safer, more reliable and accessible right-of-way.



Frequently Asked Questions DEMCO Right-of-Way (ROW) Program

Why is a clear right-of-way important?

A clear right-of-way improves power quality, reliability and safety. We all enjoy trees, but when they interfere with power lines, reliability and safety are compromised.

How are trees, branches and vegetation in the right-of-way problematic?

- ▶ Cause power outages.
- ▶ Cause lights to blink.
- ▶ Obstruct visual inspections, making repairs difficult and costly.
- ▶ Block access for maintenance and repairs, causing delays.
- ▶ Waste electricity by drawing electricity into the ground.
- ▶ Become a fire hazard when trees are near power lines.
- ▶ Become a safety hazard for lineworkers and members.

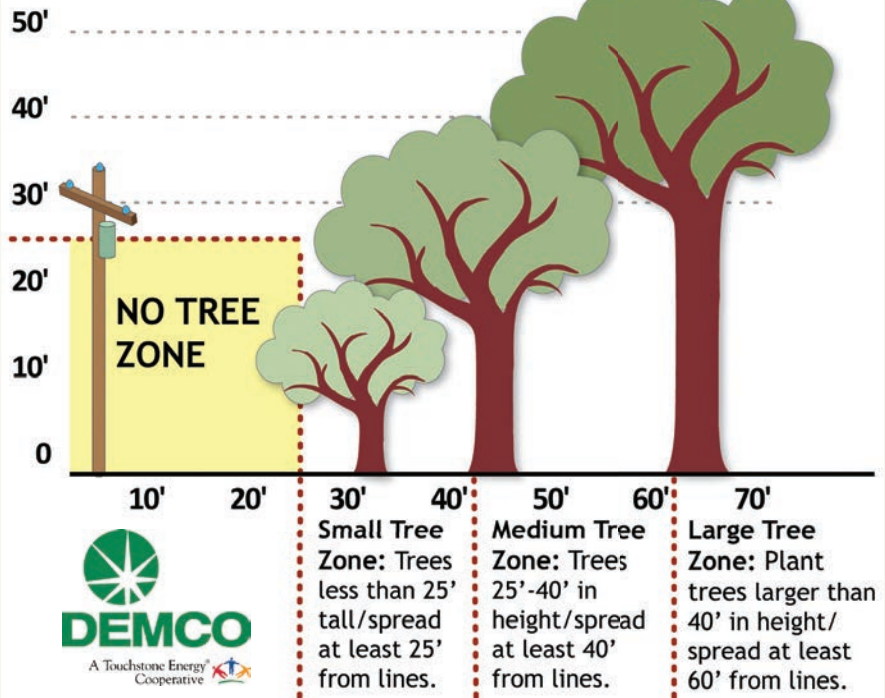
Why do you clear trees and shrubs so far from the lines?

- ▶ The standard clearing width is 40 feet—20 feet on each side of power line—for overhead distribution lines.
- ▶ Service reliability is improved when trees and brush are far enough away from lines to prevent contact.
- ▶ Work crews need adequate access to power lines for safe, quick repairs.

Can DEMCO switch to underground lines?

- ▶ DEMCO members already have a significant investment in the existing overhead system.
- ▶ The cost of running lines underground throughout rural areas is prohibitive.
- ▶ The reliability of underground lines has yet to be proven. Many underground lines installed in the 1970s have begun to fail, which leads to additional expense to replace them.
- ▶ Underground lines have half the useful life of overhead lines.
- ▶ Because we cannot see underground lines, maintaining and restoring power can often take longer than overhead lines. (Account number 80296834001)

Planting Guide Along Distribution ROW



How is brush selected for clearing?

Generally, all standing vegetation within the designated clearing zone is removed.

Do DEMCO crews perform ROW work?

Cutting and trimming is done by trained professionals contracted by DEMCO. Contractor vehicles will have signage stating "DEMCO authorized contractor" and include the DEMCO logo.

How will I know what will be removed or trimmed, and when work will be done?

- ▶ Before any right-of-way work is done in your area, DEMCO will call you.
- ▶ Before any right-of-way primary line work is done on your property, you will receive a door hanger notification from DEMCO that states a contractor will soon be doing routine maintenance.
- ▶ If the contractor determines that ROW work is routine, this door hanger will serve as your only notification.
- ▶ If the contractor determines that tree removal and/or major trimming is necessary, the contractor will make up to three attempts to speak with the property resident—either face to face,

by phone or door hanger notification—before work begins.

What happens to the cut trees, limbs and brush after crews complete their work?

- ▶ Within the five-year cycle of right-of-way schedule maintenance work, the contractor is responsible for all debris disposal.
- ▶ Any storm-related debris is the responsibility of the resident.

What can I plant and where?

As you landscape, look up and keep these tips in mind:

- ▶ Plant the right tree in the right place: Read the tree tag to determine its height at maturity.
- ▶ Never plant vegetation too close or directly under power lines.
- ▶ Follow all instructions posted on electrical equipment.

What should I do if I think I have a tree threatening a co-op line?

If you have a tree on your property or within view that could cause a power outage, or for questions about planting vegetation near power lines, call DEMCO at 1-844-MyDEMCO (1-844-693-3626).



St. Jude patient Santiago
brain cancer
pictured with his dad, Omar

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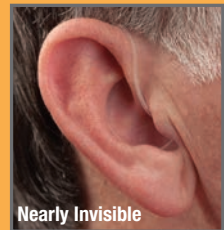
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