

Along these **LINES**

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DEMCO


A Touchstone Energy
Cooperative 

PHOTO BY GLENN EYMARD



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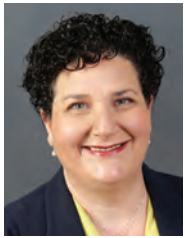
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Louisiana's Electric Co-ops Pioneer New Ways



Addie Armato

It is not hard to recognize the many challenges, shortages and changes in the way business has been conducted the past two years.

Inventories have dwindled due to supply chain issues. Materials and equipment readily available in the past are no longer obtainable at a moment's notice. Our workforces and how we staff our offices are different.

This magazine has been affected by paper supply shortages. You may have noticed the magazine is no longer printed on the same quality of paper. We hope to have this corrected by this summer.

Electric cooperatives are having a hard time getting transformers, meters and wire. There are also issues replacing equipment and trucks due to microchip shortages.

Some days, cooperatives have been forced to close access to their lobbies or have had a hard time keeping up with calls due to staff shortages. In some cases, more than 50% of the workforce has been out due to COVID-19.

Your electric cooperative faces the same—or a variation of the same—challenges you face in your everyday life.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a pioneer as a person who helps create or develop new ideas, methods, etc.

Your Louisiana electric cooperatives have always been pioneers.

When rural areas were underserved in the 1930s, communities came together to form your electric cooperative. When copper prices were on the rise in the 1950s, your electric cooperative joined the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives to work together to buy copper in larger, more cost-effective bulk.

We always seek better, more cost-effective ways to provide you with reliable, affordable and safe electricity.

Louisiana electric cooperatives and the Louisiana Public Service Commission are pioneering a new method to buy wholesale power. Those contracts are scheduled to take effect in 2024 and 2025. They promise costs savings on your electric bills.

Electric cooperatives are also seeking creative solutions to supply chain issues. Partnering with vendors and using the mutual-aid network established among electric cooperatives help us communicate, problem solve and buy materials that are

in short supply.

Unlike most businesses in corporate America, electric cooperatives are not in competition with one another. Instead, we work together to help each other out. We call it Cooperation Among Cooperatives. It is one of our founding principles.

As corporate America struggles to retain or replenish its workforce, electric cooperatives figured out years ago that their workforce is a key component of their business model.

Electric cooperatives have always treated their employees like family—caring for their well-being, providing them with educational opportunities and offering them enriching environments that inspire them to make careers within the electric cooperative industry.

We always put our people first and have always known that without our dedicated staff, we cannot meet the day-to-day challenges this industry brings to us.

Your Louisiana electric cooperatives are stepping up to face the uncertainty tomorrow brings knowing we serve the best members, employ the best people and partner with the best resources.

We are pioneers lighting the way and making sure your future is brighter. ■

Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives Inc.

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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.

Volume 37, Issue 2

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DEMCO is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



While DEMCO strives to provide reliable electricity to our members, there are times when Mother Nature has other plans. Most of us can ride out a storm from the comfort and convenience of our homes. However, there is a group of professionals who spring into action when the weather takes a turn for the worst—our co-op linemen.

Braving stormy weather and other challenging conditions to restore power, linemen often must climb 40 or more feet in the air, carrying heavy equipment. Listed as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S., linemen must perform detailed tasks next to high-voltage power lines. To help keep them safe, linemen wear specialized protective clothing and equipment when on the job. This includes fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated rubber gloves are worn to protect them from electrical shock. While the gear performs a critical function, it also adds weight and bulk, making the job more complex.

In addition to the highly visible tasks linemen perform, their job today goes far beyond climbing to the top of a pole to repair a wire. They are also information experts who can pinpoint an outage from miles away and restore power remotely. Line crews use their laptops and cellphones to map outages, take pictures of their work and troubleshoot problems.

In our community, DEMCO linemen are responsible for keeping 8,886 miles of lines across seven parishes working to deliver power to your home and the community 24/7, regardless of the weather, holidays or personal considerations.

While some of the tools linemen use have changed through the years—specifically the use of technology—the dedication to the job has not. Being a lineman is not a glamorous profession. It is dangerous, requiring them to work near high-voltage lines in the worst of conditions, at any time of the day or night. During hurricanes and storms, crews often work around the clock to restore power.

In this issue, we take an in-depth look at DEMCO linemen: their training, work, team approach, safety culture and more. These are well-trained professionals who have big hearts for service. They are committed to being the best, doing the best and making sure they are all safe—so at the end of every shift, they return home to their loved ones.

They will tell you they love the job and recommend it to anyone, but it isn't a job for just anyone.

I hope you join me now and in the future with prayers of thanks and safety for these important members of our team: your DEMCO linemen.



**DEMCO BOARD ELECTION
DIXIE ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION
CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**2022 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Saturday, May 14, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.**

**LOCATION OF MEETING
DEMCO Headquarters Facility, 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA 70739**

February 14, 2022 – March 7, 2022

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

March 15, 2022 – March 17, 2022

Pre-qualification period. Members interested in seeking a position on the board of directors are required pursuant to DEMCO bylaws to appear in person between these dates to determine eligibility as prescribed in the corporation's bylaws. Candidates not pre-qualified will not be eligible to seek a position on the board of directors.

March 24, 2022

DEMCO Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m., at DEMCO Headquarters. The Committee on Nominations will be appointed at this meeting.

March 24, 2022

The Nominating Committee meeting begins at 6:05 p.m. at DEMCO Headquarters, 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA, with results of the meeting to be posted March 25, 2022.

March 24, 2022

DEMCO Governance Committee will meet at 4:30 p.m. on this date, if needed, to determine eligibility of director candidates who have pre-qualified. Only candidates who have pre-qualified will be considered.

March 25, 2022

This is the Record Date for the 2022 Annual Membership Meeting. A final list of those members eligible to vote in DEMCO's 2022 Annual Membership Meeting will be prepared.

March 28, 2022

Beginning on this date, pre-qualified director candidates may obtain a petition to run for a seat on the board of directors. DEMCO bylaws require 50 valid signatures for the petition to be validated.

April 8, 2022

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

April 21, 2022

The Governance Committee, will meet at 4:30 p.m. on this date if needed, to validate each petition and post the results as required by the corporation's bylaws on this date.

April 19, 2022 – April 29, 2022

The Official Notice of the 2022 Annual Meeting will be mailed to all members of the cooperative during this time.

April 25, 2022

Ballots for the 2022 Annual Meeting will be mailed to members of the cooperative on this date. Members should receive their ballots by Saturday, April 30, 2022 — VOTE and mail your ballot immediately.

May 6, 2022

The deadline for receiving ballots for the 2022 Annual Membership Meeting is 4:30 p.m. on this date — **DO NOT DELAY — VOTE**

May 9, 2022 – May 11, 2022

Ballots will be 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 that the ballots will be counted.

May 14, 2022

Annual meeting and election results announced at 10:00 a.m., at 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA 70739.



 What is the DEMCO Scholarship Program? | →

One-year scholarships of \$1,250 for each of two consecutive semesters awarded to member-students in a random drawing at the DEMCO annual membership meeting each May.

For eligibility requirements and to enter, visit DEMCO.org.

DEADLINE is May 9, 2022.



DEMCO

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A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

STATEWIDE NEWS



DEMCO crews headed to Laurens Electric Cooperative in South Carolina to help repair damage and restore power after a major winter storm. From left are Kenneth Bailey, George Fage, Jamie Berry, Nick Carruth, Maderis Trout, Jeremy Jett, Andy Graham, Jimmy Holden, Justin Terrell, Daniel Watts, Chase Wascom, Kelvin Haymon, Danny Delatte and Brian Merritt.



Beauregard Electric Cooperative sent seven crew members to South Carolina. They are, from left, Anthony Poirier, Clayton Truitt, Aaron Burch, Trent Johnson, Ty Durbin, Mark James and Jonathan Lunsford.

Answering a Call for Help

A winter storm blanketed South Carolina with freezing rain, sleet and snow in mid-January, bringing down trees and power lines. Louisiana's electric cooperatives responded to calls for help restoring power, with Beauregard Electric Cooperative, DEMCO and Jeff Davis Electric Cooperative sending crews to help.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives is one of the seven core principles of all electric cooperatives. When hurricanes pummeled Louisiana the past two years, help came from co-ops around the country. This was a chance to repay that kindness. Helping our brethren in their time of need is the cooperative way. ■



Traveling to South Carolina to lend a hand were Jeff Davis Electric's Mark Manuel and Justin Northcutt, above, and Kollan Richard and Sage Benoit, below.



More than 100,000 power outages were reported throughout South Carolina on January 16 following Winter Storm Izzy. Cooperative crews descended on the region to help repair lines and restore electricity.

Is Your Water Heater Wasteful or Wise?

To save money on your power bill, reduce how much hot water you use

It can wake you up, prepare you to face the day, relax you and wash your cares away, clean a whole load of dishes after a big meal—even preserve your home from the potential damage of muddy children.

Hot water is essential and a luxury at the same time, but it can come at a high price if not used wisely.

DEMCO knows how important a reliable hot water supply is to your family, as are your energy dollars.

Water heating is the second-largest user of electricity in the average home. It consumes 15% to 25% of household energy depending on tank capacity, climate and lifestyle.

The average household uses 3,500 kilowatt-hours of electricity to heat water annually.

Though some components of the cost of electricity are beyond our control, you control one big factor: use.

Your electric bill is based on

how much power you use each month, so lowering your bill is easy. It is all about conservation.

You can implement simple, free or low-cost conservation methods to reduce your monthly household electric use. Take action and lower your water-heating costs by following these easy tips:

- Lower your water heater thermostat setting to 120 F. For each 10-degree reduction in water temperature, you save 3% to 5% in energy costs. Reducing the temperature also slows mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes,

promoting longer use and more efficient operation.

- Wash clothes in cold water. Use warm water only when necessary. Cold-water detergents are available, so you don't have to sacrifice cleanliness to save money.
- Install low-flow fixtures.
- Promptly repair leaky faucets and pipes.
- Once a year, drain a bucket of water from the bottom of your water heater. This removes sediment buildup that can waste energy by impeding the water element from heating the water properly.
- Insulate hot water pipes. That reduces heat loss and can raise water temperature 2 degrees to 4 degrees compared with non-insulated pipes. Insulate accessible hot water pipes, especially within 3 feet of the water heater. It is a good idea to insulate the cold-water inlet pipes for the first 3 feet.
- Install a timer and save 5% to 12% on water heater energy. Program the time to turn off your water heater at night when you do not use hot water.
- Use energy-saving settings on dishwashers, washing machines and dryers.
- Do not leave water running if you wash dishes by hand. Rinse dishes in groups rather than one at a time. ■



Only use warm water for heavily soiled clothes. Cold-water detergents allow you to get your laundry clean and also save money. PHOTO BY COTTONBRO/PEXELS

Auto Pay Winners

DEMCO members enrolled in the Auto Pay Program are eligible to win a \$50 gift card! To be eligible, sign up in your MyDEMCO account portal to Auto Pay your bill by bank draft, e-check, debit or credit card. Four members are randomly selected and announced in the DEMCO Along these LINES magazine, published six times a year.

Congratulations to these members: Keith J., Angela B., Vickie F. and Daryl T.

The Bradford Exchange presents the
Disney Once Upon a Slipper
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*"Cinderella—
 A Timeless Treasure"*

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A new way to treasure your favorites!

The Bradford Exchange is proud to present the *Disney Once Upon a Slipper* Ornament Collection—wonderful sculptural ornaments that celebrate the magic of Disney.

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Don't Miss This Unique Ornament Presentation!

Order now at the issue price, sold in sets of 2 for \$29.99*, payable in two installments of just \$14.99 each, the first billed before shipment. Our 365-day money-back guarantee assures your satisfaction; you may cancel at any time by notifying us. Please order today!



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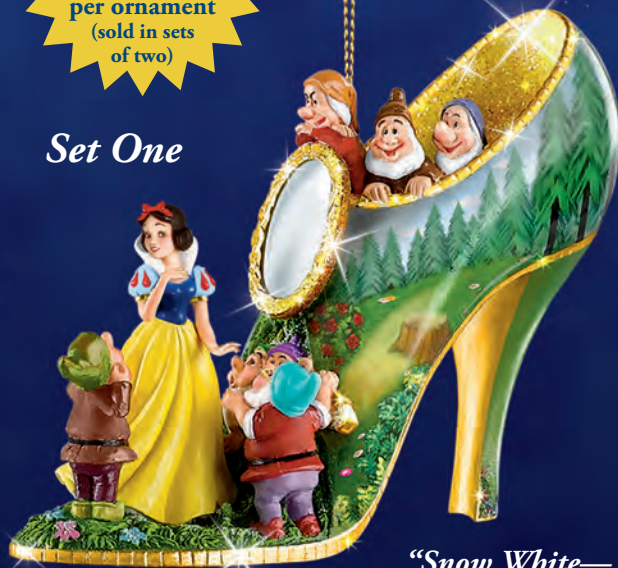
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YES. Please reserve the *Disney Once Upon a Slipper* Ornaments Collection for me as described in this announcement.
 Limit: one per order. **Please Respond Promptly**

*Plus \$6.99 shipping and service per set of two (see bradfordexchange.com). Please allow 4-8 weeks for delivery after initial payment. Subject to product availability and order acceptance.

Premiering
 at only
\$14.99*
 per ornament
 (sold in sets
 of two)

Set One



*"Snow White—
 The Reflection of
 Beauty"*

Shown larger than actual size of about
 2¼ inches tall.
 Golden hanging cords included.



Coming Soon! Set Two
*"Tinker Bell—Starlight
 Dreams" and "Belle—True
 Love's Blossom"*



Beautiful Disney
 artwork abounds
 from every angle!

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902168-E39801

SEAFOOD

Differently



Orange Shrimp Quinoa Bowls

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 cup quinoa | ¼ cup butter |
| 1 cup orange juice | ¼ teaspoon salt |
| 1 tablespoon hot sauce | ⅛ teaspoon pepper |
| 1 tablespoon honey | 1 cup mushrooms, sliced |
| 1 tablespoon soy sauce | 1 red bell pepper, diced |
| 4 tablespoons vegetable oil | 1 cucumber, sliced into half circles |
| 1 tablespoon lime juice | 5 green onions, sliced |
| 1 tablespoon white miso | 1 avocado, sliced |
| 1½ pounds shrimp, peeled, deveined, tails removed | 1 teaspoon sesame seeds |
| | 2 tablespoons cilantro, chopped |

Cook quinoa according to package instructions. Set aside.

In a medium bowl, whisk together orange juice, hot sauce, honey, soy sauce, vegetable oil, lime juice and miso. Pour ¼ of the liquid into a separate bowl. Set aside.

Add shrimp to remaining mixture. Marinate for 15 minutes.

Heat a large skillet over medium heat with butter. Add shrimp, salt and pepper. Cook for 2 minutes on each side until pink. Add mushrooms. Cook until tender.

In two serving bowls, divide quinoa, bell pepper, cucumber, onions, avocado and shrimp. Sprinkle sesame seeds and cilantro over both bowls. Drizzle with reserved dressing.

Serves 2

Recipe and photo courtesy of culinary.net

Bacon-Wrapped Halibut

4 6-ounce halibut fillets
Salt
Pepper

8 slices bacon
1 tablespoon canola oil
Rice or salad

Remove skin from halibut. Season with salt and pepper. Wrap each fillet with two bacon slices, tucking ends underneath.

In a large, nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add fish and cook, turning once, until bacon is crisp and fish is cooked to desired doneness, about 5 minutes on each side. Serve fish with rice or salad.

Serves 4

Source: Coleman Natural Foods

Salmon With Romesco Sauce and Aioli

2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
2 5-ounce pieces salmon
Salt
Pepper
1 red pepper, cut into long strips
2 cups small potatoes, cooked and cut in half
1 teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
½ cup garden peas
1 tablespoon chopped tarragon
Romesco sauce:
½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 slice white bread, crust removed

2 cloves garlic, smashed
¼ cup slivered almonds, toasted
¼ cup hazelnuts
Large roasted red pepper
¼ cup tomato puree
1 teaspoon sherry vinegar
Salt
Black pepper
Aioli:
1 cup mayonnaise
1 to 2 cloves garlic, crushed
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 lemon, zest and juice
Salt
White pepper
Lemon wedges, for garnish

Heat oven to 400 F.

Place a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil. Season salmon portions with salt and pepper, to taste. Place skin side down in pan. Cook 2 to 3 minutes, until skin is crispy. Place on a sheet pan, skin side up, and bake 6 to 7 minutes. Remove from oven and let rest.

In the same skillet, add remaining olive oil. Add peppers and potatoes. Cook 6 to 7 minutes, until peppers soften and potatoes start to caramelize. Add paprika, cayenne and peas. Stir and cook for 2 minutes. Add tarragon.

To make romesco sauce: In a clean pan, heat olive oil. Gently fry bread, garlic and nuts until toasted. In a blender, process red pepper, tomato puree and vinegar until smooth. Add toasted nuts and bread. Process to desired consistency.

To make aioli: In a bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, garlic, olive oil, lemon zest and juice, salt and pepper.

Place several spoonfuls of aioli on a plate. Top with potatoes, peppers and salmon. Top with romesco sauce. Garnish with lemon wedges.

Serves 2

Recipe courtesy of MOWI

Baja Fish Taco Bowls

24 ounces quinoa
2 tablespoons olive oil
4 white-fleshed fish fillets, 5 to 6 ounces each
1 teaspoon Cajun seasoning
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup plain Greek yogurt

1 tablespoon lime zest
1 teaspoon lime juice
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
4 cups packed baby kale
1 ripe avocado, halved, pitted, peeled and thinly sliced

Prepare quinoa according to package directions.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Season fish with Cajun seasoning and salt. Cook 2 to 3 minutes per side, or until fish is lightly browned and starts to flake. Set aside.

In a small bowl, stir together yogurt, lime zest, lime juice and cumin.

In a medium bowl, toss quinoa with kale. Divide among four bowls. Top each with fish, avocado and a dollop of yogurt and lime mixture.

Taco seasoning or chili powder may be used in place of Cajun seasoning. Arugula or baby spinach may be used instead of kale.

Serves 4

Recipe courtesy of Success Rice

Japanese Salmon With Sweet Potato

1 tablespoon sesame oil
¼ cup tamarind sauce
½ tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons sesame seeds
1 tablespoon honey
1 sweet potato, cut into rounds

2 tablespoons coconut oil, divided
1 tablespoon sesame seeds
Sea salt
8 spears Broccolini
2 4-ounce salmon fillets
Brown rice

Heat oven to 400 F. Line a tray with baking paper.

To make marinade, whisk sesame oil, tamarind sauce, mustard, sesame seeds and honey in a bowl until combined.

Place sweet potato on a baking tray. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon coconut oil. Toss to coat. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and sea salt. Roast for 25 minutes.

Remove tray from oven and add Broccolini. Drizzle with remaining coconut oil and sea salt. Place salmon fillets in middle of the tray. Drizzle with marinade. Bake 12 to 15 minutes, or until cooked to desired doneness. Serve with brown rice.

Serves 2

Recipe courtesy of Aquaculture Stewardship Council

Going Wild in the

Why and how to create a wildlife-friendly landscape

By Katie Jackson

Anyone who gardens—or even putters in the yard—knows the simple act of gardening provides many benefits, including fresh air, exercise, stress relief and access to fresh foods. But they may not realize those simple acts also can help save the world—especially the wild world.

By using sustainable wildlife-friendly practices, gardeners can positively impact the planet and its interconnected inhabitants, including humankind.

Entomologist and conservationist Doug Tallamy has explored and explained those connections for more than three decades in his job as a University of Delaware professor and researcher. His work includes studying issues such as the impact of native versus nonnative plants on interconnected wildlife species—caterpillars and chickadees, for example—and led Doug to write “Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants.”

Since its publication in 2007, this award-winning book that focuses on the whys and hows of gardening for nature has made Doug a guru in the growing movement toward more nature- and wildlife-friendly gardening. That movement is increasingly important.

“We are in a global wildlife extinction crisis,” says naturalist David Mizejewski, author of the how-to book “Attracting Birds, Butterflies and Other Backyard Wildlife” and spokesperson for the National Wildlife Federation’s Garden for Wildlife program. “More than a million wildlife species worldwide are endangered. In the U.S. alone, some 12,000 animal species are experiencing

rapid population declines, and one-third of all native wildlife species are at an increased risk of extinction in the coming decade.”

Among endangered species are beloved yard and garden visitors such as birds, butterflies and native bee species, which play essential roles in crop pollination. The statistics are disturbing not only because they represent the loss of irreplaceable wildlife populations, but the species’ plight may be a harbinger for the future of humankind, which also relies on healthy ecosystems.

Humans are also connected to nature cognitively, says Michelle Bertelsen, an ecologist with Lady Bird Johnson Wildlife Center in Texas.

“We have evolved and learned to think by interacting with the natural world forever and ever and ever,” she says. “That doesn’t stop just because we may live in cities.”

It is a connection many humans have come to appreciate during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

“People have sought solace in nature during these tough times,” David says, noting many found it in their own yards, especially at the peak of pandemic shut-downs and stay-at-home orders.

But concerns about and connections to nature are a source of frustration.

“Everybody on the planet requires healthy ecosystems,” Doug says, “but most people feel absolutely powerless. The Earth is huge, and what can one person do?”

A lot, the experts agree. They say it

Planting with an eye toward wildlife brings color—not just through flowers and leaves, but a stunning array of birds, butterflies and other creatures that come to feed on these plants, such as this goldfinch feasting on purple coneflower seeds. PHOTO BY KATHY DIAMONTOPOULOS/AMERICAN MEADOWS





Garden

begins in the landscapes that surround us.

“How we choose to manage and care for our own piece of the Earth is a powerful way to help out these declining populations,” David says. “Sure, what we do in our backyards is not going to save polar bears, but it can make a huge difference for the endangered monarch butterflies and the birds and wild bee species that really need our help.”

While public parks, preserves and wilderness areas provide vital wildlife habitat, Doug says they alone cannot save these species.

“There is a central role that Joe Public can play because Joe Public owns the country,” he notes.

Doug says wildlife-friendly management

can have huge impacts on the 78% of U.S. land that is privately owned—from large rural fields to medium-sized suburban yards to tiny urban green spaces.

Studies show putting small strips of pollinator habitat between rows or on the edges of agricultural land can greatly help pollinators, which benefits the crops, Michelle says, adding the same can happen in our yards.

“A little bit really does go a long way,” she says.

When numerous people in the same vicinity and eventually across the globe provide wildlife habitats, such as pollinator gardens, the impact grows exponentially.

Doug says a wildlife-friendly landscape

contributes four components to the local ecosystem: It supports a diverse population of pollinators, supports the greater food web, sequesters carbon, and protects and manages watersheds.

David notes many of these functions can be accomplished by providing wildlife with food, cover, water and places to raise young.

“All wildlife, whether they’re in the wilderness or in our gardens, need these things,” David says. “It’s a circle-of-life thing.”

The foundation of any ecosystem is the thing that makes a garden a garden: plants. But not just any plants.

“The most important thing is to pick

ADOBE STOCK IMAGE BY COBRACZ

ABOVE: Monarch butterflies—one of some 12,000 U.S. wildlife species experiencing alarming population declines—benefit greatly from wildlife-friendly gardening practices. By providing monarchs and other insects, birds, reptiles, amphibians and mammals with four basic needs—food, cover, water and a place to raise their young—even home gardeners in big cities can help avert a wildlife extinction crisis. In the process, these landscapes become living, thriving ecosystems that benefit all life on the planet. PHOTO BY VAL BUGH/LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER

Plants form the foundation of a wildlife-friendly garden, especially when a diverse selection of densely spaced native plants is used. Every region of the country has plants unique to its local environment—plants that evolved in conjunction with the insects and other animals native to the area. Depending on which plants are chosen, wildlife-friendly gardens can range from formal, manicured gardens to more natural designs, such as this nectar garden. PHOTO COURTESY OF LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER



Moths and less showy butterflies are underappreciated pollinators. Moths are often the sole pollinators of night-blooming flowers and visit the greatest variety of flowers of any group of pollinator species. PHOTO BY KATIE JACKSON

Small Changes Make Big Impacts

When it comes to gardening for nature, big changes come in small packages and work best through baby steps.

That's the message emphasized by ecologist Michelle Bertelsen, naturalist David Mizejewski and entomologist/conservationist Doug Tallamy when they share their passion for nature-friendly gardening—especially when talking to folks new to the concept.

"Developing a wildlife-friendly landscape only becomes scary and undoable if you think you have to do it all by tomorrow," Doug says.

He suggests approaching it with an eye toward one or two of the four components of a healthy ecosystem: supporting pollinators, supporting the food web, sequestering carbon and managing the watershed.

"Look at your property and ask yourself, 'Which one of these can I do better?'" Doug says. "Think of it as an ecological hobby: I'm going to improve the ecological integrity of my property a little bit each year."

The experts encourage starting in a small, specific area of the yard or garden rather than an entire makeover. This saves time and money, and allows gardeners to learn as they go.

They also agree the basis of any nature-minded landscape is use of native plants suited to local environments. Because these plants evolved with local wildlife species, they provide almost everything local wildlife needs to thrive.

"There's no garden in the world that is 'no maintenance,'" Michelle says, "but you shouldn't have to water and fertilize native plants as much as you do nonnative species."

Plant natives densely and diversely, filling space with compatible but different plant species.

"The more plants you have, and the bigger the

grouping of them, the more likely you're going to support wildlife," David says.

Reducing the amount of land dedicated to a lawn can open more space for wildlife-friendly native plants and lower lawn care maintenance. However, lawns are happy places for many homeowners, so there is no need to eliminate them entirely. Instead, replace under-utilized areas with native plants.

It is important to assess a site's growing conditions, including its soil profile, moisture levels (whether naturally wet, dry or somewhere in between) and lighting conditions (shady or sunny).

"The key to all native gardening is matching the plant to the conditions rather than matching the conditions to the plant," Michelle says. "It's the same as it would be for any kind of gardening."

Armed with an understanding of local conditions, homeowners can explore the choices of native plant species suited for their sites, and select ones that appeal to both their goals and styles.

"If you choose the right plants, your yard can look just like your neighbor's, only yours will be supporting nature and wildlife whereas your neighbor's yard might not," David says. "That's something to aspire to."



Structures such as this bee house provide protection and nesting sites for beneficial insects and add interesting design elements to wildlife-friendly landscapes. PHOTO BY BRIANNA CASSELMAN/LADY BIRD JOHNSON WILDFLOWER CENTER

the right plants," David says, "and those are going to be plants that are native to your region, plants that have co-evolved with wildlife and that wildlife needs to survive."

Native plants can provide three of the four basic circle-of-life needs: food, shelter and nesting/birthing sites. Add water, and you have a wildlife-friendly habitat.

Going wild does not mean yards and gardens must look wild.

"It's a common misperception that a wildlife-friendly or natural garden equals a messy garden," David says. "You can have a beautiful, magazine photo-worthy garden space that is also extremely beneficial to wildlife. It's a design choice, and there is a continuum."

That continuum ranges from a formal, manicured look to an informal natural look, and it can be accomplished one small step at a time. Replacing a portion of lawn—which provides little to no support for wildlife—with a small bed of wildflowers or a single oak tree can make a huge difference and set an example for others.

Doug notes folks living in high-rise apartments and concrete jungles with no access to so much as a postage-stamp-sized patch of land can help by donating to—or volunteering with—conservation groups, public gardens, and national, state or local parks.

City dwellers also can grow native plants on balconies, rooftops, vacant lots and any open strip of land, or help establish wildlife-friendly beds or entire gardens at local schools, community centers or assisted-living facilities.

Simple acts can result in beautiful landscapes that help save at least a little part of the world. ■

The Invention of the Year

The world's lightest and most portable mobility device

Once in a lifetime, a product comes along that truly moves people. Introducing the future of battery-powered personal transportation . . . The Zinger.

Throughout the ages, there have been many important advances in mobility. Canes, walkers, rollators, and scooters were created to help people with mobility issues get around and retain their independence. Lately, however, there haven't been any new improvements to these existing products or developments in this field. Until now. Recently, an innovative design engineer who's developed one of the world's most popular products created a completely new breakthrough . . . a personal electric vehicle. It's called the **Zinger**, and there is nothing out there quite like it.

"What my wife especially loves is it gives her back feelings of safety and independence which has given a real boost to her confidence and happiness! Thank You!"

—Kent C., California

The first thing you'll notice about the **Zinger** is its unique look. It doesn't look like a scooter. Its sleek, lightweight yet durable frame is made with aircraft grade aluminum. It weighs only 47.2 lbs but can handle a passenger that's up to 275 lbs! It features one-touch folding and unfolding – when folded it can be wheeled



Available in Green, Black (shown) and Blue



The Zinger folds to a mere 10 inches.

around like a suitcase and fits easily into a backseat or trunk. Then, there are the steering levers. They enable the **Zinger** to move forward, backward, turn on a dime and even pull right up to a table or desk. With its compact yet powerful motor it can go up to 6 miles an hour and its rechargeable battery can go up to 8 miles on a single charge. With its low center of gravity and inflatable tires it can handle rugged terrain and is virtually tip-proof. Think about it, you can take your **Zinger** almost anywhere, so you don't have to let mobility issues rule your life.

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Meet the Watch That Shook Up Switzerland

A watch that revolutionized timekeeping at a price equally as radical.

In the history of timepieces, few moments are more important than the creation of the world's first Piezo timepiece. First released to the public in 1969, the watch turned the entire industry on its head, ushering in a new era of timekeeping. It's this legacy that we're honoring with the *Timemaster Watch*, available only through Stauer at a price only we can offer.

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“[Piezo timepieces]...it would shake the Swiss watch industry to its very foundations.”
—Foundation For Economic Education

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Upgrade Your Home with Technology

Choosing smart home technology can increase convenience and efficiency

By DeAnna Greene

Smart home technology is on the rise. This type of technology includes devices that are able to be controlled remotely by a phone or computer, which offers convenience to its user. Using smart home technology can help you save time, add enhanced safety features and enable more energy-efficient opportunities.

Convenience

Adding smart home technology to your house gives you the convenience of using one device to control many aspects of your home. These technologies can help you regulate and monitor your home from anywhere you have an internet connection.

Most smart home appliances can be controlled by one device. This allows you to control your home from one central location, like your smartphone or tablet. Smart home applications are made to be fast, easy and convenient. This gives the user total control over these devices anywhere, anytime.

Save Time

Using one device to control your home saves time as you can control these devices without having to go directly to the device, even allowing you to do so remotely.

Have you ever forgotten if you locked your front door? With a smart lock entry system, you can check without having to go back home. Need coffee made in the morning? Start your brew with ease from your bed with your smart phone. These are just a couple examples of the benefits of smart devices throughout your home.

Added Safety

Smart home security systems have several benefits that help better protect the user. Smart home security cameras are more proactive than traditional security systems. They can alert you to activities around your home as well as inside it.

Unlike traditional home security



systems that you have to turn on and off as you come and go, smart home security systems are always monitoring your home. There is no more forgetting to arm your home because it is always on. Most home insurance companies recognize the benefits of smart home security systems and often give lower premiums for those who use them.

Energy Efficiency

Appliances with smart home capabilities are built to be more energy efficient, as well as easier to operate.

The most direct energy savers are smart thermostats. Different from traditional thermostats, smart thermostats adjust to your energy needs. With more sensors, it can better regulate the temperature of the entire home, not just one area. These thermostats can lower or raise the temperature depending on the season and if someone is home.

Another example of where energy-efficient smart devices can help is with lighting. Not only are smart bulbs more energy efficient in general, the smart devices can turn lights on and off automatically or remotely. For instance, with a smart home lighting system you can turn lights on and off from another room, or while you are away, to give the look of someone being home.

Independent Living

Smart home appliances can make it easier

for the disabled and elderly to live more independently. People who may not be able to get around easily can use automated smart home gadgets to accomplish simple tasks like turning on lights and changing the thermostat. Some smart home devices can even meet needs with verbal commands, such as simply telling a light to turn on and off.

Smart home features can help caregivers and families monitor those living at home. There are even devices that can help the user make phone calls and ask for help. If someone falls, they can ask the device to either call family or emergency services. This can give caregivers, as well as the users, the ability to feel more confident with those at home.

Customize Your Needs

Having a smart home is not an all-or-nothing type of service. The range of options for smart devices is extensive. You don't have to have all of them. Just the ones that work for you. You can also add smart home features as you go. You might decide that you don't need some of them at all. You can purchase the ones that work for your lifestyle.

There are many types of devices that can help you automate your life and become more efficient. Security cameras, door locks, blinds, TVs, speakers, thermostats, lighting and appliances are just a few of the most common. You can get one piece at a time and choose the ones that work best for you. ■

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The blade is full tang, meaning it doesn't stop at the handle but extends to the length of the grip for the ultimate in strength. The blade is made from 420 surgical steel, famed for its sharpness and its resistance to corrosion.

The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers — a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

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— H., Arvada, CO



Rating of **A+**



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The comfortable handle is made from pakkawood—moisture-resistant and more durable than hardwood. If hunting is your life, then the Whitetail™ Knife was designed to make your life easier.

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Not shown actual size.



Rating of A+

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PHOTO BY GLENN EYMARD

Specialized Training for a Dedicated Workforce

By Colette Boehm

They are often the face of the electric cooperative. They are the heroes who restore power after a storm—and they are the eyes and the ears, the muscle and the hustle, and the backbone of DEMCO's operation.

They are DEMCO linemen.

They have one of the most visible jobs at DEMCO—arguably one of the most important—and are extremely well-trained in an impressive array of subjects.

From day one, linemen are instilled with a culture of safety, knowledge and teamwork. Their commitment to that culture is what keeps power flowing across DEMCO's 8,887 miles of lines in seven Louisiana parishes.

"Here at DEMCO, any time a lineman is hired and they begin as a helper, each is put through a six-month in-house lineman training program, which consists of classroom work and hands-on field training," says Field Training Specialist Chad LaCost.

"The classroom is where they learn

about safety, basic electricity, conductors, connections and how transformers work. Coursework is designed to give them a strong foundation of the technical side of linework that they will encounter throughout their career as a lineman."

Classroom time is followed by extensive field training—climbing more than 200 poles, replacing assemblies, de-energizing lines, performing pole-top rescues and more—all while wearing protective gear and carrying specialized equipment.

The extensive program ensures DEMCO linemen receive the best training available.

DEMCO's in-house lineman training program started in 2015 when management recognized that, due to so many baby boomers retiring, much of the institutional knowledge and appreciation of their safety culture was at risk of being lost. Managers developed a program to ensure perpetual quality and consistency of training for DEMCO linemen.

"The question to be answered was, 'How does DEMCO build a safe, professional and educational foundation for

its new young workforce?'" says Safety Supervisor Jacob Overhultz. "The safety department, with the lead of DEMCO's Safety and Loss Control Manager Rickey Cummings, implemented a progressive skills test as part of the training program and process to evaluate the trainees on knowledge, skills and ability. This allowed us to get a true read on skill levels of each lineman, and to identify education and training proficiencies or deficits."

After building a technical training partnership with the community college and taking advantage of training offered by industry experts, DEMCO's management team was still not satisfied. So they committed to developing a robust in-house training program that is still in place today.

"We noticed the students were missing a certain aspect," Jacob notes. "They were not being taught the 'DEMCO way.' This sparked further discussion that ultimately led to the beginning of DEMCO's very own apprenticeship program."

DEMCO's management team

developed its first in-house lineman training school led by Arthur Hurst, a retired district line supervisor, with the assistance of the safety department, managers, supervisors and crew leaders.

“Our in-house program has exceeded our expectations and is always being adjusted and built for the needs of a DEMCO lineman—for our DEMCO system,” Jacob says.

Chad was chosen to succeed Arthur in leading the program. Jacob says the program is thriving.

“Chad had the experience of an industrial, commercial and residential electrician before he came to work for DEMCO,” Jacob says. “His experience with DEMCO ranged from lineman helper, lineman, serviceman and finally, district line supervisor of our largest service district. He was selected to shape the role and train DEMCO’s future linemen. There is no one better fit to do so.”

Student linemen spend a lot of time in the field, with training that includes a rigorous combination of safety requirements, technical knowledge and real-life understanding of DEMCO’s system, Chad says.

“The hands-on training is designed to develop these men into strong linemen who can complete any climbing task effortlessly,” Chad says. “We also spend a great deal of time learning how to safely de-energize lines to make them safe to work on.

“The students also visit key locations of DEMCO’s system. This way, they get to see the entire area that DEMCO serves. After the six-month course, the students have a very good foundation for their next promotional opportunity to third-class lineman.”

The linemen also complete the Northwest Lineman College curriculum provided through the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives—coursework that takes about five years to complete.

“From the time these men are hired as helpers, it usually takes around five to seven years to become a topped-out first-class step three lineman,” Chad says. “DEMCO takes training very seriously



DEMCO Lineman Training Program Graduates, Class of 2021

The class is a six-month course designed to teach the fundamentals of linework. Coursework and training include pole-top rescue and safe work practices. Written exams are taken at the end of each month. Each lineman has climbed more than 200 poles in this six-month time frame. From left, Instructor Arthur Hurst, Cody Hanna, Alex Newman, Jonathan Beland, Mike Welborn, Jordan Lee, Ryan Reed, Jacob Moore, Zack Herring, Dale Wolfe, Cody Harper, Bubba Morgan, Adam Aime, Cole Holden, Traymond Benton, Instructor Chad LaCost, Matthew Michael and Jaymis Kenney. Not pictured: Luke Patterson and Tommy Hodges.

and also provides professional development training to employees.”

The compliance training provided by ALEC includes specialized programs valuable for day-to-day operations, with training modules on Louisiana State Certified Right of Way, Underground Residential Distribution, Electrical Metering, Regulator and Apparatus, and Bucket Truck and Live Line.

“This gives our workforce another layer of specialized training that is specific to our industry,” Jacob says.

These courses are supplemented by in-house CPR/AED training and online executive certification courses.

“DEMCO has a strong culture of safety that supports our co-op mission and values,” Jacob says. “The support from DEMCO’s board of directors and CEO and General Manager Randy Pierce instills in us that failure is not an option.”

In 2021, the entire DEMCO workforce achieved a safety milestone of one million man-hours worked without a lost-time accident. This tremendous accomplishment demonstrates the daily effort

and safety mindset of each DEMCO employee.

“Working across the DEMCO system requires strict adherence to safety practices,” Jacob says. “Every lineman knows they must maintain sharp focus and practice patience with each task they perform—for their safety, for the safety of the crew and, ultimately, for the safety of our members.”

As linemen carry out their daily duties—extending service to new members, re-energizing downed lines, upgrading and repairing equipment—they are truly the face of DEMCO in the community.

They are, however, much more than that. These well-trained linemen—who are highly committed to their profession—are also our friends and neighbors. These men put their lives on the line every day, and we are grateful for their service.

Please join with us to thank a lineman as we acknowledge and celebrate these men who serve the co-op with excellence and keep us in safe power. ■

STATEWIDE NEWS

Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives and member co-op representatives recently visited with U.S. Rep. Garret Graves to discuss issues important to Louisiana's electric cooperative members. From left are Addie Armato, ALEC; Danny Berthelot, DEMCO; Mitch Andrus, Royal Engineers & Consultants LLC; Johnny Bruhl, Washington-St. Tammany Electric; Randy Pierce, DEMCO; Keli Williams, ALEC; Rep. Graves; and Mike Heinen, Jeff Davis Electric.



Putting Skills to the Test

Corey Sharpe from DEMCO practices pole-top rescue during an Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives training exercise. ALEC offers regular sessions on a variety of topics.



Lineworker Appreciation Day

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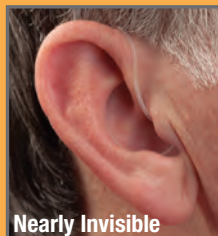
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Qualification: Advertised price requires credit qualification and 24-month commitment. Upfront activation and/or receiver upgrade fees may apply based on credit qualification. Offer ends 4/13/22. 2-Year Commitment: Early termination fee of \$20/mo. remaining applies if you cancel early. Included in 2-year price guarantee at \$69.99 advertised price: America's Top 120 programming package, local channels, HD service fees, and Hopper Duo Smart DVR for 1 TV. Included in 2-year price guarantee for additional cost: Programming package upgrades (\$84.99 for AT120+, \$94.99 for AT200, \$104.99 for AT250), monthly fees for upgraded or additional receivers (\$5-\$7 per additional TV, receivers with additional functionality may be \$10-\$15). Regional Sports: RSN Surcharge up to \$3/mo. applies to AT120+ and higher packages and varies based on location. NOT included in 2-year price guarantee or advertised price (and subject to change): Taxes & surcharges, add-on programming (including premium channels), DISH Protect, and transactional fees. Premium Channels: 3 Mos. Free: After 3 mos., you will be billed \$30/mo. for Showtime, Starz, and DISH Movie Pack unless you call or go online to cancel. Remote: The DISH Voice Remote with the Google Assistant requires internet-connected Hopper, Joey, or Wally device. Customer must press Voice Remote button to activate feature. The Google Assistant Smart Home features require Google account and compatible devices. Google is a trademark of Google LLC. Other: Netflix streaming membership required. All packages, programming, features, and functionality and all prices and fees not included in price lock are subject to change without notice. After 6 mos., if selected, you will be billed \$9.99/mo. for DISH Protect Silver unless you call to cancel. After 2 years, then-current everyday prices for all services apply. For business customers, additional monthly fees may apply. Free standard professional installation only. Indiana C.P.D Reg. No. – 19-08615. ©2021 GoDISH.com. All rights reserved. Internet speeds, prices, and providers vary by customer address. \$40 price refers to widely available plan from multiple providers. Restrictions apply. Nationwide availability of 25 Mbps plan is subject to change without notice. The application of "Unlimited Data with no Hard Data Limits" varies by provider, but commonly mean that your access to the internet will not be stopped by going over a data limit, but that speeds may be lowered. Call for details. Internet not provided by DISH and will be billed separately.