December snowfall brings winter beauty, power outages for DEMCO members.

Snow covered rooftops in Pecan Creek Subdivision in Denham Springs and throughout DEMCO’s seven-parish service area. The winter weather also caused power outages to nearly 20 percent of DEMCO’s membership.
Manager’s Report

By John Vranic
DEMCO CEO and General Manager

Turning the calendar page to 2018 with a spirit of renewal and optimism

Frankly, I could do without the chill of winter, and I certainly could have done without the five inches of snow we received in December that caused thousands of power outages for our members. But I do favor this time of year for a variety of other reasons.

After the holiday frenzy has settled down, the turn of another page on the calendar prompts us to pause for a moment and re-center ourselves and reflect on the successes and failures of the previous 12 months.

The promise of a new year inspires us to set our sights on the opportunities that lie ahead, to learn and to grow and commit to becoming an even better version of ourselves. Unfortunately, this spirit of enthusiasm and rejuvenation is difficult for most of us to sustain over an extended period of time.

According to social scientists, only 10-15 percent of us are able to fulfill our personal pledges to exercise more, to improve our health and fitness, to set our sights on the opportunities that lie ahead, and to be kind, happier, nicer and more productive.

On my route to work I pass one of those 24/7 fitness facilities that seem to be on every block these days. I have always noticed that the parking lot is chock full of vehicles during the months of January and February. But without fail, the lot is half-empty come May and June.

Those who study the phenomenon of New Year’s resolutions tell us that the reason we so often fail is that we put too much pressure on ourselves to succeed, our goals are too lofty, our list of goals is too lengthy and our approach is too poorly organized.

To achieve a better outcome, we are told to set realistic goals, create an environment for success, chart our progress, have a system of accountability, keep a positive attitude and do not be so hard on ourselves when we fail.

This sounds to me much like the formula we follow for success here at DEMCO.

Keeping the lights on 24/7 - even if it is so that some highly motivated soul can exercise at their local Anytime Fitness facility at 3 a.m. – is no small task. It requires that we follow the aforementioned steps for achievement.

We make sure that our goals are clear and attainable and we create an environment for success by training our workforce and making safe operations a priority.

We monitor our progress daily - and even hourly as we make sure the power flows without interruption to the best of our ability - and we have the ultimate built-in system of accountability as we answer to those we serve.

That system of accountability not only includes you, our member-owners, but it also includes the board members you elect to represent your interests. It even includes a number of governing bodies, lending partners, insurance providers and both state and federal regulatory agencies.

We foster a positive spirit by encouraging our employees to become involved in the community and supporting the causes and programs that are dear to their hearts, and we strive to learn from any errors or missteps we make.

As we look back on 2017, we are reminded of the challenges presented by two mammoth hurricanes in our region and the continuing hardships brought by the devastating flood of 2016.

But we also take into consideration how our people, our community and this organization responded. DEMCO was there to provide power recovery assistance to our fellow cooperatives in need after both storms, and we were there to deliver supplies to cooperative members in our neighboring state of Texas.

Locally, we continued to assist scores of families struggling to recover from flood damage. I take a great deal of pride in pointing out that through the generosity of our members and their participation in DEMCO’s Operation Round Up program, the DEMCO Foundation was recognized by the Baton Rouge Chapter of the Association of Fund-Raising Professionals as the organization’s Outstanding Philanthropic Foundation for 2017.

By all measures, 2017 was a year of success for your cooperative. But we understand there is always room for improvement.

I have tremendous confidence that with the board leadership we have in place, with the management team we have to chart our course, and with our dedicated and dependable employees ready and eager to carry out our day-to-day operations, we can look forward to even greater things ahead.

On behalf of DEMCO, we wish you and your family a bountiful and prosperous 2018.

Along these LINES

January/February 2018

ALONG THESE LINES is an official publication of Dixie Electric Membership Corp. It is written for and distributed to members of the cooperative nine times each year. Dixie Electric Membership Corp. is a non-profit rural electric cooperative providing service to 100,000 consumer-owners in seven Louisiana parishes. The Cooperative headquarters is located at 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA. All comments, suggestions and requests for information concerning this publication should be addressed to ALONG THESE LINES, Dixie Electric Membership Corp., P.O. Box 15659, Baton Rouge, LA 70895, (225) 261-1221.

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DEMCOLinenmen participate in training program

Six DEMCO linemen recently completed the Louisiana Lineman Training Program (LLTP). Pictured above are Kaleb Lee, Nick Carruth, Cade Felps, Chase Broussard, Derrick Willis and Jacob Parker. The LLTP is a fully accredited program that teaches linemen the most up-to-date safety practices in the industry.

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ON THE COVER - South Louisiana experienced an unusual snow storm in December, causing roughly 18,000 outages on DEMCO’s system. For more on this story, see page 4.
Quick and useful tips to avoid high winter power bills

This winter has brought cold weather to south Louisiana earlier than normal. Frigid temperatures can cause heating systems to work over time, and since heating and cooling your home can make up nearly half of your monthly electric bill, you may experience sticker shock when you open that bill.

Additionally, the billing cycle for that particular bill may be a few more days longer than usual. And remember that the bill you receive in January or February will reflect the power you used to stay warm several weeks earlier.

This winter has brought cold weather to south Louisiana earlier than normal. Frigid temperatures can cause heating systems to work over time, and since heating and cooling your home can make up nearly half of your monthly electric bill, you may experience sticker shock when you open that bill.

But you can be proactive. There are many things you can do to help ensure you are managing your energy use wisely:

• Wrap exposed pipes and water heaters that are in unconditioned spaces in your home.
• Make sure to change your air filter once a month, even in the winter.
• Keep drapes closed at night and keep those that don’t get direct sunlight closed during the day, too.
• Keep the fireplace damper closed when it is not in use. Keeping it open can bring cold air into the room.
• Caulk around the fireplace hearth, and caulk or weather strip around doors and windows.
• Dress for the weather, even if you are inside. Wearing proper clothing like long sleeves and pants, or wearing up in a cozy blanket will help combat the temptation of bumping up the thermostat.

So, whenever the temperatures fall this winter and you hear your weatherman talking about bringing in pets and plants, take the steps above to help manage your use.

• The weather makes a big impact on electric bills, accounting for nearly half of your bill.
• Even those homes with the most efficient HVAC systems will see more use in extreme weather.

Using the tips above can certainly help you manage your energy use, but your bill may still be higher than normal in winter months.

Why?

• When extreme cold temperatures hit south Louisiana, our heaters work overtime.
• For example, even if you set your thermostat to our recommended 68 degrees in the winter, when it is 19 degrees outside as it was here in early January, your system has to work hard to make up that 49-degree difference.
• Your heater works harder and cycles on and off more often, making your use much higher. That means your bill will be much higher.

Remember, there is value in comfort. For us to be comfortable in our homes, our heaters are going to work harder, but it may be worth the additional cost to you.

• Call DEMCO and see what kinds of options might be right for you, such as levelized billing.

Notice to DEMCO director candidates

Annual Meeting
DEMCO’s Annual Membership Meeting will take place on Saturday, May 12, 2018, beginning at 10 a.m. The meeting will be held at DEMCO’s headquarters facility, 16262 Wax Road.

DEMC0 Bylaws
Article IV, Section 4.04 of the bylaws of Dixie Electric Membership Corporation (DEMCO) provide that “no person shall be eligible to become or remain a director, who:
1. Is not a member and bona fide resident in the district from which he is elected and whose principal place of residence is served by DEMCO; or
2. Is in any way employed by or has a significant financial interest in a competing enterprise; or provides services or supplies to DEMCO; or
3. Is an elected public official, or is the spouse of an elected public official, in connection with which a salary or compensation in excess of $100.00 per annum is paid, it being the intent of the members of DEMCO that the board of directors of DEMCO be free from the influence of political officials; or
4. Is a close relative, as defined in Article IV, Section 4.09, of any board member, or any employee of DEMCO; or
5. Is a convicted felon; or
6. Is a current employee of DEMCO, or has been terminated from employment by DEMCO.”

Principal place of residence defined
To define the term “principal place of residence,” as used in the corporation bylaws, Article IV, Section 4.04, Board Policy 111.003 shall be the following:
The principal place of residence of a DEMCO member shall be his or her habitual residence in accordance with the laws of the State of Louisiana. A determination of principal place of residence of a DEMCO member shall be a finding of fact to be made by the Board of Directors of Dixie Electric Membership Corporation. In evaluating where a member’s principal place of residence exists, the Board of Directors shall consider the following:
1. Where the member usually sleeps; (Acct. No. 80184891-001)
2. Where most clothing, toiletries, household appliances, and similar personal property regularly used by the member are located;
3. Where the member is registered to vote;
4. Where the member, or a spouse with whom he or she lives, has a telephone in his or her name which is not usually on call forward to another residence;
5. Where the member directly receives most mail addressed to him or her; and,
6. Whether the member is free to enter the premises without notice to, or permission from others.

Close relative defined
Article IV, Section 4.09, of the bylaws of Dixie Electric Membership Corporation (DEMCO) provides the following:
A close relative shall mean the husband or wife, child, mother or father, step-mother or step-father, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister or brother, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, aunt or uncle, niece or nephew, grandparent or grandchild.

Pre-qualification period
To establish an annual membership meeting pre-qualification period during which DEMCO shall have adequate time to investigate potential director candidates and determine eligibility, as prescribed in the corporation’s bylaws, prior to the issuance of a nominating petition, the following bylaws shall be followed:
A. A pre-qualification period for director candidates shall be established by the Board of Directors prior to the issuance of a nominating petition to ensure compliance with the corporation’s bylaws with reference to director eligibility.
B. The pre-qualification period shall be a three (3) day period during regular business hours, no more than 60 days, nor less than 45 days, prior to the date of the annual membership meeting as established by the Board of Directors.
C. Written notice of this policy shall be given to the membership annually in the corporation’s official newsletter, Along These Lines, and by inclusion in the “Calendar of Events,” published in the Official Journal of each parish where the corporation maintains service.
D. To prequalify, director candidates must appear in person, at the office of the Chief Executive Officer & General Manager, 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, Louisiana, during the established pre-qualification period.
E. Director candidates shall complete and sign a Director Eligibility Information form and Qualification Certification in order to pre-qualify. The following information must be provided and certified as true by the director candidate and spouse, if applicable.
1. Date of Birth
2. Louisiana Driver’s License Number
3. Social Security Number
4. Employer
5. Job Title
6. Telephone Number
7. DEMCO Account Number
8. Certificate of Qualifying Certification
F. Director candidates who fail to pre-qualify will be declared ineligible to seek a position on the Board of Directors and will not be issued a nominating petition.

You have a Voice
THE ELECTRICITY THAT POWERS YOUR lights, heater and appliances comes from a cooperative, owned by the members who use its services. (That’s you!)
Because each consumer is an owner and a member of the co-op, each has a voice when it comes to how the utility conducts its business. That means you get to vote for the members of your cooperative’s board of directors, which sets policies and makes decisions for the corporation. This process ensures cooperative consumers that their opinions count and are taken into account when decisions get made.

These elected directors also are consumer-members of the cooperative. They’re your neighbors, friends and family members. So when you vote for the directors who represent you with the co-op, you’re voting for consumers just like you.

As a member of your electric cooperative, you not only have the right to vote for directors. You also have the right to run for election to the board, if you choose. And you have the right to assert your opinion in the business affairs of your cooperative. We welcome your input anytime.
An unusual winter storm dropped as much as five inches of snow throughout DEMCO’s seven-parish service area and caused scattered power outages throughout the cooperative’s electric distribution system.

Those DEMCO linemen and contractors who were on standby as the storm front moved in were dispatched into the frigid weather to restore power to approximately 18,000 members over the course of two days.

The co-op also implemented its mutual aid agreement with fellow electric cooperatives across the state and received assistance from other co-op crews.

The snow and the low temperatures caused some sensitive equipment at substations to malfunction and also caused tree limbs to fall and damage power lines and poles.

DEMCO CEO and General Manager John Vranic said that fortunately the early winter storm did not cause ice to build up on the power lines, a condition that can lead to widespread and sustained damage.

“Relatively speaking, we had a lot less damage compared to some of the ice storms that have come through our area in the past,” Vranic said. “Ice can be aesthetically appealing - especially for those of us who don’t see it too often - but it can really create a lot of problems with our system.”

Vranic said the early winter storm could indicate more harsh conditions ahead.

When inclement conditions arise, Vranic encouraged DEMCO members to report outages through the cooperative’s website (www.DEMCO.org), mobile app or outage phone line (1-800-262-1160). Additional information is posted as it becomes available on DEMCO’s Facebook page at www.facebook.com/DEMCOLouisiana.

He said outage reporting by members is important even though operations personnel are able to monitor damage to the system using the latest in computerized technology and have the ability to reroute power around trouble spots when necessary.

Vranic added that while the cooperative is always prepared for emergencies and always has an updated emergency plan in place, consumers should also have a plan of their own.

“One of the most important tips we can pass on to our members is that proper planning begins with awareness of the dangers and effects resulting from weather of this nature,” he said.

Vranic offered the following suggestions for preparing for winter weather:

• Never go near or touch a downed power line.
• If you plan to use a generator be sure to operate according to the manufacturers guidelines. Always operate a generator in a well-ventilated space, and never attach a generator into the home wiring without a proper transfer switch. Improper use of a generator can lead to serious injury or death.
• If the power goes out, do not use candles - they are a fire hazard. Have battery operated flashlights or lanterns available, as well as warm clothes and blankets.
• Stay off of roadways if there is sleet or ice. Do not travel if you do not have to. You have a much greater chance of being involved in an accident and you could be stranded away from home if roads are closed due to ice. If you must travel you should have a warm blanket and drinking water in your vehicle in case you are stranded.
• Pets should be brought indoors. Do not put portable heaters where pets or children can knock them over or knock something onto them. They will start a fire.
• Residents should closely monitor the news and weather for any changes in the forecast and for other emergency information.

DEMCO responds quickly and safely to early winter storm
Emergency work plan implemented to restore power to nearly 18,000 members
Mueller steel buildings can be customized to meet your agricultural needs. Whether it’s a storage space or a multi-functional ranch facility, we can help design and manufacture a barn that goes beyond your expectations.

www.muellerinc.com
877-2-MUELLER (877-268-3553)
February 18, 2018 – March 4, 2018
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, 2018
DEMCO Special Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m. at DEMCO Headquarters. The Committee on Nominations will be appointed at this meeting.

March 15, 2018
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 16, 2018.

March 20, 2018 – March 22, 2018
Pre-qualification period. Members interested in seeking a position on the board of directors are required pursuant to DEMCO Board Policy to appear in person between these dates to determine eligibility requirements as prescribed in the corporation's bylaws. Candidates must be qualified prior to the issuing of a nominating petition. Candidates not pre-qualified will not be eligible to seek a position on the board of directors.

March 27, 2018
DEMCO's Annual Meeting and Bylaws Committee will meet at 5:00 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 28, 2018
Beginning on this date, pre-qualified director candidates may obtain a petition to run for a seat on the board of directors. Louisiana law requires 50 valid signatures for the petition to be validated.

April 11, 2018
Petitions must be returned to DEMCO's headquarters office by 4:30 p.m. and received by the CEO and General Manager's office.

April 12, 2018
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 13, 2018
This is the Record Date for the 2018 Annual Membership Meeting. A final list of those members eligible to vote in DEMCO's 2018 Annual Membership Meeting will be prepared.

April 19, 2018 – May 1, 2018
The Official Notice of the 2018 Annual Meeting will be mailed to all members of the cooperative during this time.

April 19, 2018
Ballots for the 2018 Annual Meeting will be mailed to members of the cooperative on this date. Members should receive their ballots by Saturday, April 21 – VOTE and mail your ballot immediately.

May 4, 2018
The deadline for receiving ballots for the 2018 Annual Membership Meeting is 4:30 p.m. on this date – DO NOT DELAY – VOTE

May 7, 2018 – May 9, 2018
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 12, 2018
Annual meeting and election results announced at 10:00 a.m. at DEMCO Headquarters.

DEMCO offers scholarships to area students

One-year scholarships to students attending a Louisiana public college or university will be awarded in a random drawing highlighting DEMCO’s annual membership meeting on May 12, 2018.

According to David Latona, Manager of Member and Public Relations, several scholarships will be awarded. “The number of scholarships awarded will be determined by the budget. This budget fluctuates from year to year as funds permit,” he said.

The scholarships awarded by DEMCO provide assistance to help students with academic tuition to a Louisiana public college or university for both the fall and spring semesters of the academic year. Students will be awarded $1,250 cash award to be used by the student as needed.

DEMCO is allowed to use unclaimed deposits, refunds and other monies owed to former members to provide funding for the scholarship program. Complete eligibility requirements are listed below.

2018 Scholarship eligibility requirements

1. Applicant must be a DEMCO member, child or the legal ward of a DEMCO member who has been a member in good standing for at least 12 consecutive months as of the application deadline, May 4, 2018. Only one scholarship will be awarded per family per academic year.

2. A student can receive the DEMCO scholarship one time. It is not renewable.

3. The scholarship money can be used by an undergraduate student to attend, on a full-time basis, any Louisiana public university. The scholarship will not be awarded to a student attending a private university or vocational/trade school of any kind.

4. A first-time college student applying for the DEMCO scholarship must: a) have graduated from high school with at least a B average (3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale, or the equivalent); or, b) have graduated from high school and received a minimum ACT score of 21. High school applicants must be seniors.

5. An undergraduate college student seeking the scholarship must have achieved a minimum of 2.5 (on a 4.0 GPA scale) on all prior college work.

6. A scholarship application must be completed and returned to DEMCO.

7. Scholarship recipients will be chosen in a random drawing at the annual meeting of the DEMCO membership.

8. The scholarship recipients will be required to provide DEMCO with an official transcript verifying his/her eligibility within 10 days after the drawing.

9. The scholarship funds will be paid to the recipients at the beginning of each semester (or quarter) upon presentation of an official receipt for the payment of full-time undergraduate tuition (see No. 10 below). To receive the second semester (or quarter) payment, the student must provide evidence that he/she successfully completed at least 12 semester hours (or 9 quarter hours) and that he/she maintained a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale).

10. The scholarship provides a limited scholarship award of $1,250 per semester.

11. Members of the DEMCO Board, employees of DEMCO (including part time employees, students, and temporary employees) and children of the Board of Directors and employees are not eligible for this scholarship.

Application for Scholarship Program

Students Name: _____________________________
Parents Name: _____________________________
Address: _________________________________
E-mail Address: ___________________________
Telephone No.: ____________________________
DEMCO Account #: ________________________
Do you qualify for TOPS Assistance? Yes____No____
School you will attend: ____________________________

(Complete this form and return it to DEMCO by May 4, 2018)
DEMCO employees recognized for reaching service milestones

Congratulations to those DEMCO employees who have reached significant milestones in the service to co-op members. Employees are pictured here with Esther Tapia, Vice President, Human Resources.

5 years: Frank Fowler and Marc Aucoin.

10 years: Todd Chauvin, Anita McNeal, Sam Rosso and Haley Meadows.

15 years: Rusty Todd, Blake Sullivan, Josh Conley, Rachel Roule, Kevin Commander and Linda Sanders.

20 years: Pernell Miles and Phillip Pace.

25 years: Lori Broussard.

30 years: Rickey Cummings.

35 years: Raymond Mizell, Melvin Parker, Fred Dabney, Jan Landry, Andrea Johnson, Norman Engler and Tim Berringer.

40 years: Dale Johnson.

DEMCO reminds its consumers of the importance of adhering to all local, state and national safety codes when performing electrical work in and around the home or office.

With more than 108,000 meters served by DEMCO across seven parishes, linemen occasionally encounter electrical work at homes and businesses that are not up to regulatory and statutory standards.

DEMCO’s policy is to deliver a letter of notification to the member as a reminder to have the necessary work performed within 15 days of the date of the letter or the electrical service will be disconnected.

Sub-standard electrical work can create an unsafe condition for both members and DEMCO employees, according to DEMCO Manager, Marketing and Member Services David Latona. (Acct. No. 6964703-001)

“We invest a lot of effort and resources in our safety program with the ultimate goal of keeping both our employees and our members safe from harm,” he said. “But sometimes our linemen in the field see wiring that is clearly a safety hazard and must be addressed without delay.”

Latona said problems can include well-intentioned members simply performing poor “do-it-yourself” electrical work to others who illegally tamper with meter seals in an attempt to steal power.

Still other situations involve members attempting to hook up two residences through a single meter (see photo at right).

Latona said that while power theft is not a widespread problem in DEMCO’s service territory, any attempt to steal power is not only causing a potential safety hazard for the individual but is also cheating other DEMCO members who are part of the non-profit cooperative.

“When you’re stealing power, you’re stealing from everyone on the system. We understand nobody really likes to pay for power and there is sometimes a temptation to cut corners, but the results can be beyond dishonest - they can be deadly,” Latona said.

Anyone who sees a potential problem is encouraged to call DEMCO.
It was Christmas Eve during my freshman year of college and our family’s annual gift exchange was winding down to a close.

I had one last present to open before we commenced cleaning up all the bows and ribbons and crinkled wrapping paper littering the brown shag carpet on our living room floor.

The box was apple red and a little bit larger than the size of my fist. Going on the theory that good things come in small packages, I ripped it open but was crestfallen to find a single shotgun shell.

Drats! I’d been zonked! What was I supposed to do with a shotgun shell? Especially when I didn’t own a shotgun and really wasn’t much of a hunter. Sitting in a deer stand on a cold winter morning watching my breath waft through the air or sitting in a wet duck blind waiting for birds to fly over was near the bottom of my list of favorite things to do at that time in my life.

I’d rather be hanging out with the fellas on a Friday night cruising around in my friend’s light blue Pinto and heading over to Skate City to…well, let’s just say I was a hunter, but the targets in my crosshairs weren’t ducks and deer.

Anyway, just as I began to put 2 and 2 together on that Christmas Eve back in the ‘80s, my dad stepped in from the hallway carrying a long brown leather case. Inside was a shiny new Winchesters 12-gauge shotgun.

It’s the same shotgun that sits in my closet today as a prized possession from father to son, though as someone who never really contracted the hunting and fishing fever, I have to admit I’ve only fired it a few dozen times.

While I don’t unsheathe that Winchester very often, I did one sunny afternoon last spring when an intruder entered my family’s private space.

I was out on the back patio in our Denham Springs subdivision rolling up a garden hose after working out in the yard. As I was about to twist the nozzle off the hose, I heard a buzzing noise overhead, as if someone had taken a baseball bat to a beehive and the swarm was bearing down in my direction.

I looked overhead and saw the curious source of the noise…it was a quad-corder drone. At first I wasn’t alarmed. I mean, heck, things fly over your house all the time…satellites, airplanes, helicopters, ultralights, alien spaceships en route to Area 51…but then I noticed that the drone stopped and hovered about 40 feet over my back lawn.

The aircraft was too high for me to determine if there was a camera on board or if this was just a kid’s toy. But then I figured I’d go under the assumption that the only reason anyone would stop an aircraft over my back yard would be for observational purposes.

That’s when I headed straight to my closet to go fetch that old Winchester.

No, I didn’t really intend to shoot it out of the air, but I was definitely going to send a message to the pair of eyeballs peering through the camera lens that it would probably be best to move on.

By the time I could grab the 12-gauge and get back to the patio, the drone was gone. I was left with the imaginary satisfaction of blowing that thing to smithereens and teaching the former drone owner a lesson about privacy rights.

That incident led to a lot of research on the ramifications of actually shooting down a drone hovering over your personal property. As a journalist who thought I knew about defamation, libel and privacy law, I was shocked that in most states at that time (many laws have changed and continue to evolve) the person flying a drone had more rights than a landowner.

I was informed by a parish official that I could be standing in the middle of my yard in unrestricted FAA airspace and that if the drone was staring me right in the face and was more than 4 feet off the ground, I couldn’t touch it. And if I went ahead and smashed it with a sledgehammer I could be sued for destroying that person’s property. Furthermore, if I took the stock end of my shotgun and cracked him across the noggin for entering my property and retrieving the wreckage of his mangled contraption, I could go to jail.

In any event, as it stands today I am - in an ironic twist - the owner of both a shotgun AND a drone. After seeing too much sparkling 4K footage taken from drone-mounted cameras, I decided to ramp up the quality of my Youtube channel by purchasing a DJ Mavic Pro.

And to legitimize my foray into drone photography, while you were out Christmas shopping, I was slogging through hundreds of pages of FAA gobbledegook preparing for the Remote Pilot Unmanned Aircraft Systems certification examination (FAA-G-8082-22).

Ugh! Much of this is the same stuff I studied to earn my single-engine, fixed-wing private pilot certification after I graduated from college, but of course that was about 10 billion destroyed and age-degraded brain cells ago.

Typical of the federal government, the only thing not included in the drone certification process is a practical test demonstrating that you actually know how to fly a drone.

So, if I do something stupid and violate FAA regulations by flying my drone over your back yard and hovering over your head, go get your shotgun and shoot it down Elmer Fudd style.

I’m old school. I promise to bear responsibility in that incident, unlike many folks today who never want to accept any of the blame for anything bad that happens to them.

I’ll accept the fact that - as they used to say - I had it coming.

The next meeting of the DEMCO Board of Directors is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 15, 2018, at 6 p.m. Board meetings are held at DEMCO’s headquarters facility located at 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, La.

Don’t Hang that Sign

There are more than 130 million wooden utility poles in the United States, according to recent estimates by the North American Wood Pole Council.

That wooden utility pole may look appealing when you need some airborne debris, like dust, dirt and even bugs. A dirty filter forces your furnace to work harder to keep your home comfortable. And the harder it works, the more energy it uses.

Most filters are disposable, but if yours is not, rinse it with water and brush away the dirt at least every three months.

Lucky Account Number Contest

The Lucky Account Number Contest continues this month with four winners included in this edition of Along These Lines. Before you continue looking through this edition for your winning number, look for your account number printed above your mailing address. Locate this number anywhere in this issue and win the $25 prize. To claim your prize, please call 225-262-3072.
The DEMCO Foundation was recently named Outstanding Philanthropic Foundation for 2017 by the Greater Baton Rouge Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP).

DEMCO Foundation Board President Karen Overstreet accepted the award on behalf of the Foundation, the cooperative and its members throughout the co-op’s seven-parish service area.

“We’re humbled by this recognition, but we wouldn’t really be able to do much without the contributions of our members,” Overstreet emphasized.

Sarah Cortell Vandersypen, vice president of philanthropy at AFP, said the local nonprofit cooperative was recognized for its efforts to help the community recover after the flood of 2016.

The Foundation was also recognized for having reached the $5 million mark in contributions to the community over its 20-year history.

“The DEMCO Foundation has been a sustaining source of outstanding charitable work for our citizens over many years,” she said. “Our community is fortunate to have the Foundation involved in helping those in need.”

Overstreet said the Foundation was created in 1997 as a non-profit charitable subsidiary of DEMCO. She said the Foundation is endowed through the cooperative’s Operation Round Up program in which members “round up” their bill to the next whole dollar.

“It just shows how much our members embody the spirit of giving and the spirit of helping out others in their time of need,” she said.

DEMCO sponsors 2018 Washington Youth Tour contest

Now is your chance to be a part of history! You could be one of four students to win an all-expense paid trip to WASHINGTON, D.C.!

You’ll get to tour the capital, meet with your congressman, visit historical sites, see your government working and make lots of new friends from all around the country!

All you have to do to qualify is enter an essay in the 2018 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour Essay Contest, sponsored by DEMCO.

Contest Rules

High school juniors *who are DEMCO members in Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Livingston, St. Helena, Tangipahoa and West Feliciana are eligible to enter (*home schooled students of DEMCO members are also eligible).

*Please note that although only DEMCO members are eligible for the trip to Washington D.C., ALL entering students are eligible for prizes to be awarded for the best written essays.

Children, grandchildren, brothers or sisters of DEMCO employees or directors are ineligible.

This year’s essay topic should be in the form of a letter to a political leader (President of the United States, Governor of Louisiana, Mayor, Secretary of the Department of Environmental Quality, etc.; just to name a few). The letter should address any topic that inspires the student/author’s passion.

Essays should not exceed 750 words.

Each essay must be accompanied by a cover sheet including:

- Student’s name, address, telephone number, email address, and age
- Name(s) of parent(s) or guardian(s)
- Name of school
- Name of English teacher
- Student’s school and community activities, achievements and extracurricular activities
- Date submitted

Essays may be submitted in one of three ways: in person to any DEMCO office; by mail to DEMCO Marketing Department/YT, P.O. Box 15659, Baton Rouge, LA 70895; OR entries can be emailed to davidl@demco.org.

Deadline for entries is Friday, Jan. 19, 2018. All essays submitted in this contest will become the property of DEMCO and will not be returned.

Judging

Essays will be judged on originality, composition, how well they address the subject and neatness.

Twelve semi-finalists will be selected for final judging. Final competition will consist of an oral presentation of the written essay and a brief test on rural electrification knowledge. Four winners will travel to Washington, D.C. in June, 2018.

Now is your chance to be a part of history! You could be one of four students to win an all-expense paid trip to WASHINGTON, D.C.!
Meeting of November 16, 2017
The board of directors of DEMCO held its regular meeting Thursday, November 16, 2017. Board President Richard Sitman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The board then approved the minutes of the previous meetings, new member list, Treasurer’s report and Operations Committee report as written.

As committee chairman of the Purchasing Committee, Randy Lorio presented the committee’s report. The board then resolved to approve contracts for the following: RES Systems 3, LLC for the 2018 Transmission Annual Unit Contract with Chain Electric as the alternate; and Linetec for the 2018 Distribution Annual Unit Contract with CaPar, Chain Electric and RES Systems 3, LLC as alternates; S & C Electrical Company/Curtis Stout for the 2018 S & C Hardware Bid; Desoto Poles for the 2018 Wood Pole Bid. The board next approved the 2018 Mechanical ROW Retrimming of Pride Substation North, all circuits of Vignes Substation, and the NW circuit of the Walls Crossing Substation. Then the board approved the 2018 Vehicle (Large and Small) and Equipment purchases.

From the Finance Committee report Steve Irving, committee chairman, reviewed the Interest, Fuel Cost Adjustment and Financial Summary reports. The board approved a resolution reclassifying those accounts disconnected in July 2017 as uncollectable.

The board then approved a resolution to authorize management to cancel the CoBank line of credit (Restated Promissory Note and Committed Revolving Credit Supplement). The board then resolved to authorize management to prepare required document(s) to transfer monies from the CoBank line of credit for a term of one year. The board then approved a resolution to authorize management to prepare required document(s) to transfer monies from the CoBank line of credit renewed on March 28, 2017, to a separate line of credit dedicated for emergency storm expenses. Next the board approved a resolution to authorize management to establish a regulatory asset for the August 2016 Flood restoration and repair expenses; also for recovery of unbilled penalties and fees included within the LPSC’s Special Order No 09-2017 Section III. E., “Utility Recovery of Lost Revenue.”

Steve Irving reported on the Annual Meeting and Bylaws Committee meeting as the committee chairman. The board then authorized counsel to review and propose changes to the current DEMCO Bylaws (or by other means necessary) to allow directors (in extenuating circumstances) to attend board and committee meetings via remote conference means; and that the extenuating circumstances in which such attendance is allowed be defined and approved by counsel, moreover to authorize the board to approve minutes of Annual and Special Membership Meetings based on a quorum of the DEMCO Board of Directors attending such meetings.

Next the board approved all forms associated with the 2018 Annual Membership Meeting process; a small stipend and mileage at the standard IRS rate for members of the 2018 Nominating Committee; the 2018 Annual Meeting being conducted by mail ballot, the awarding of the DEMCO Scholarship(s) at the 2018 Annual Membership Meeting; and, the 2018 Calendar of Events with an Annual Meeting date of May 12, 2018. (Acct. No. 6199801-001) Danny Berthelot gave the ALEC report with no action taken.

Leslie Falks presented the Dixie Business Center and DEMCO Foundation reports with no action taken.

John Vranic presented the Manager’s report with no action taken. Jim Ellis presented the Attorney’s report with no action taken.

Meeting of December 7, 2017
The DEMCO Board of Directors held its regular meeting on Thursday, December 7, 2017. Board President Richard Sitman called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m. Director Freddy Metz and Director Joseph Self, Sr. were unable to attend the meeting.

The board approved a resolution not to disburse capital credits payments for 2016 based on current RUS guidelines. The board then approved resolutions to re-appoint current members of the DBC and DEMCO Foundation Board of Directors.

Like us on Facebook today!
Mardi Gras is French for “Fat Tuesday.” The “fat” in the name comes from the ancient custom of parading a fat ox through Paris on this day. The ox was to remind the people that they were not allowed to eat meat during the time of fasting known as Lent. Lent runs from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday.

Since “Mardi” means “Tuesday,” you can tell the holiday is always celebrated on that day of the week. The date can fall between February 3 and March 9 depending on the lunar calendar, used by the Catholic Church to determine the date of Easter. Mardi Gras is always 47 days before Easter Sunday.

French people who came to the United States brought the custom of Mardi Gras with them.

Mardi Gras parades happen throughout the world. Some of the most famous celebration centers are: New Orleans and Lafayette in Louisiana, Biloxi in Mississippi, Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Nice in France and Viareggio in Italy.

Do the math to discover where these Mardi Gras customs take place.

7 + 8 + 5 + 9 = Southern Italy
4 + 3 + 5 + 5 = Rio de Janeiro
37 - 9 = Nice, France
31 - 6 = New Orleans

The Colors of Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras in the United States has three official colors. To find out what each of these three colors means, cross out the letters M-A-R-D-I G-R-A-S in each of the lines below. Write the remaining letters in order to learn what each color symbolizes.


Find the identical Mardi Gras masks.

Extra! Extra!

Photo Fun

Clip a photograph from the newspaper and glue it to a piece of paper. Next to the photo write five adjectives that describe the photo. Next to each word, write its antonym. Use the adjectives and the antonyms to write a paragraph about Mardi Gras.

What a Character!*

Joy is ...

…the feeling you have when you’re celebrating with friends.

Write On!

Safety Poem

Write a poem that includes three safety rules.
DO YOU HAVE THE WRITE STUFF?

the 2018 DEMCO YOUTH TOUR ESSAY CONTEST

ALL-EXPENSE PAID TRIP TO Washington, D.C.

FOUR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS WILL WIN

Essays due Jan 19!

VISIT demco.org FOR RULES AND ELIGIBILITY

KEEPING CURRENT: TIP #1

DEMCO awards college/university scholarships each year at our annual membership meeting. Learn more at our website today.

facebook.com/DEMCOLouisiana
demco.org