





**State Energy Conservation Office (SECO)  
Municipally Owned Utility (MOU) or Electric Cooperative (Co-op)  
SB-924 Energy Efficiency Report  
Data Entry Form**

MOU or Co-op: Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
 County: Incorporated in Polk County. Also serves parts of Angelina, Hardin, Liberty, Montgomery, Trinity, San Jacinto, Tyler, Walker and Jasper counties.  
 Contact: Keith Stapleton  
 Contact Title: Chief Communications Officer  
 Address: PO Box 1121  
 City: Livingston  
 Zip: 77351  
 Phone: 936-328-1290  
 Fax: 936-328-1244  
 E-mail Address: kstapleton@samhouston.net

1) Is your MOU or Co-op hereby reporting on energy efficiency as required by SB-924, PURA Sections 39.9051 and 39.9052?  Yes  No

**2) Energy Efficiency Goals: Please tell us about the goals that your MOU or Co-op has related to energy efficiency:**

Instructions: Provide a brief description of your MOU or Co-op's energy efficiency goals for the previous calendar year. Examples may include information about energy efficiency for MOU or Co-op customers or utility facilities. Supplemental information may be provided at your option on any long-term energy efficiency goals that your MOU or Co-op might have. Please use a separate sheet of paper if you need more space.

A. In 2014, Sam Houston EC performed 324 on-site energy audits for members. These audits are performed at no cost by specially trained Sam Houston EC personnel. Audits include a building inspection to pinpoint energy leaks and other areas of concern. A summary of audit results is provided to the consumer, along with written recommendations for specific improvements.

B. Sam Houston EC members now have online access to Home Energy Suite via [www.samhouston.net](http://www.samhouston.net). By entering data about their home's construction and appliances, members are able to receive a report detailing where their energy dollars are being consumed, as well as a list of suggestions for home improvements that will help them save money. Home Energy Suite uses actual climate data, which results in very accurate reporting.

C. Sam Houston EC member service representatives (MSRs) utilize a special module of Home Energy Suite, which interfaces directly with actual member billing information. This allows MSRs to assist members who call or come into the office, with extremely accurate and pertinent reporting and cost-saving suggestions.

D. Sam Houston EC's online version of Home Energy Suite is interfaced with the Cooperative's CIS system, which provides members with even more detailed reporting via a Billing Insights module, reflecting their actual historical electricity consumption data.

E. For many years, Sam Houston EC has conducted an extensive member education program related to energy efficiency. Radio, newspaper print ads, *Texas Co-op Power* magazine, press releases and speakers at civic groups and annual meetings are just some of the vehicles used to educate members about energy conservation and efficiency. As an example, the Cooperative's *Texas Co-op Power* magazine, which is distributed to 52,000 members, includes a "Conservation Corner" section that highlights ways to conserve energy and save money on electric bills.

F. Sam Houston Electric Cooperative also uses Facebook ([www.Facebook.com/SamHoustonEC](http://www.Facebook.com/SamHoustonEC)) and Twitter (@SamHoustonEC) to disseminate energy saving tips.

G. Sam Houston EC is a member of the Touchstone Energy (TSE) Alliance, a national organization of electric cooperatives, which provides branding, education, and energy efficiency education to cooperative members nationwide. Sam Houston EC continues to leverage TSE's resources, including energy efficiency campaigns ("Together We Save"), community outreach, economic development and employee engagement tools.

H. Sam Houston EC distributes compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) periodically. In 2014, to commemorate Earth Day, the Cooperative distributed CFL bulbs to walk-in customers at all three office locations.

I. Through their Generation & Transmission cooperative (G&T), Sam Houston EC is part owner in a 49-megawatt biomass facility in Woodville, Texas, which went online in late 2014. Secondly, the development of a 24-megawatt hydroelectric facility on Lake Livingston is underway. Construction of the facility will begin in summer 2015. Many press releases, public presentations and printed materials have been, and will be, distributed throughout the Cooperative's 10-county service area.

J. Over the past few years, Sam Houston EC has interconnected eight consumer-owned solar distributed generation facilities, as well as one consumer-owned wind generation facility. A 3-megawatt landfill gas generating facility is also interconnected. Sam Houston EC has standard guidelines in place to facilitate the development of consumer-owned distributed generation.

K. Perhaps one of the most significant indicators of Sam Houston EC's commitment to energy efficiency and conservation is the fact that in 2014, more than \$70,000 was budgeted for print, radio and other efforts directed toward educating members and the general public on how to save energy dollars, as well as the importance of being good stewards of our natural resources.

L. Through the Touchstone Energy partnership, Sam Houston EC offers to area schools the "Get Charged! – Electricity and You" educational program. The "Get Charged!" kit includes videos and printed materials that teach principles of electricity, along with energy conservation.

M. The Sam Houston Electric Cooperative board of directors has elected to provide a renewable energy charge for those members choosing to pay a premium rate for energy generated utilizing resources classified as renewable.

**3) Your MOU or Co-op's Energy Efficiency Programs:**

Instructions: Input information as applicable; add fields as necessary. For the previous calendar year, please list energy efficiency programs and provide applicable estimated achieved savings – energy and/or demand, or other program performance metric (for example participation.) Add additional lines as needed.

Energy Efficiency Program	Estimated Energy Savings or	Estimated Demand Savings or	Other Program Performance Metric
Home Energy Audits per request	324 in 2014		
Energy efficiency & conservation campaigns – Radio	Six radio stations. \$38,000 budget. Approx. 900 spots.		
Energy efficiency & conservation campaigns – Newsprint & Magazine	Ten newspapers & Texas Co-op Power magazine (52,000 readers)		
CFL distribution	1,000 in 2014		
Energy efficiency public presentations	Reached audiences of approximately 500		
Facebook conservation tips	Nearly 3,000 page “likes”		
Customer owned generation – solar	Eight installations		
Customer owned generation – wind	One installation		
Customer owned generation – landfill gas	One 3 MW landfill gas generator		
<b>Totals</b>			

**4) Program Materials / Additional Information**

Instructions: Public information about your energy efficiency programs (brochures, website information, etc.) may be attached and provided with this form.

**5) Please submit this form to SECO at: [SB924.Reporting@cpa.state.tx.us](mailto:SB924.Reporting@cpa.state.tx.us)**

## Energy Audits

At the request of members, Sam Houston Electric Cooperative offers free Home Energy Audits. Sam Houston EC's energy audit service, by appointment, is designed to give members a better understanding of how their energy dollars are spent and to pinpoint ways to reduce their energy usage and save money.

In order to conduct an energy audit, a Sam Houston EC representative will personally visit your home to discuss your energy use patterns and inspect your home for energy inefficiencies, such as inadequate caulking, insulation and weather stripping. The representative will use the findings to develop a personalized list of recommended actions for maximum efficiency.

Give us a call at 1-800-458-0381, or submit an [online request](#).

### Log On For Home Energy Savings!

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative knows there are members who want to understand the real story behind their home's energy use. Now Sam Houston EC members can find these answers and more with a couple clicks of a computer mouse.



The [HomeEnergySuite](#) offers residential consumers a complete analysis of energy use based on simple information they provide. With easy navigation, indicate your home's square footage, age, number of occupants and a few other variables. You are also asked to input types of appliances, windows, even TVs (yes, it makes a difference!). The calculation takes less than 10 minutes. It's free and available 24/7.

The analytic "engine" behind the calculator factors in local energy rates and weather data, and by entering your Sam Houston EC account number, the calculator can utilize your historic usage information to fully customize your results.

Within seconds a colorful pie chart appears showing what portions of your monthly bill went for heating, cooling, lighting – even the TVs. The [HomeEnergySuite](#) lets you try various scenarios like adjusting heating or cooling settings, adding insulation, or installing storm windows. You can also preview cost-saving actions that would fit your budget and see the impact of longer-term investments.

### mySam Houston



Log in to view or pay your bill

[Log in Now](#)

Don't have an account? [Register now](#)  
[Payment Options](#) | [Paystations](#)



[View Storm Central](#)



[Report an outage](#)

**(888) 444-1207**

Call Toll-Free 24/7



### News & Press

#### Sam Houston EC Offering \$3,000 Reward for Copper Theft Information

Approximately 2,000 Sam Houston Electric Cooperative members experienced an outage April 3, 2013,...

#### Copper Thieves Cause Outages in Liberty County



Around 1:30am on April 3, 2013, approximately 2,000 Sam Houston Electric Cooperative members...

#### Help Us Tell Our Story



In 2014, Sam Houston Electric Cooperative will proudly celebrate 75 years of...

[More News](#)



## Welcome to the **HomeEnergyCalculator**<sup>TM</sup>

### Learn More About Your Home's Energy Use!

View useful details about your **estimated** usage, seasonal factors, and cost-saving recommendations. The **HomeEnergyCalculator** is **free** and will take **less than 10 minutes to complete**.

Enter Your Customer Account ID   , then

**SELECT**

I am interested in viewing or printing a **comprehensive report** of my energy usage!

Or select a specific question below

**SELECT**

Why are my energy costs different from last month or last year?

**SELECT**

Where are my energy dollars going?

**SELECT**

What are some no-cost or low-cost recommendations for my home to lower my energy costs?

**SELECT**

What are some long-term investments I can make in my home to lower my energy costs?



The HomeEnergyCalculator uses your local Weather and Energy Rates. This is only an **estimate** of your actual energy use.



Please complete your **Home Profile** below. If your home differs from the given defaults, please click on the section buttons on the left to select your inputs.

- 1 HOME TYPE AND OCCUPANTS**  
Single Story/2000 to Present/1,800SF/2 People
- 2 AIR LEAKS AND INSULATION**  
Drafty/Street noise
- 3 WINDOWS AND GLASS**  
Single Pane
- 4 HEATING AND COOLING SYSTEMS**  
Electric / 70F , Central Air / 76F
- 5 WATER HEATING**  
Electric / 5-8 yrs
- 6 REFRIGERATORS AND FREEZERS**  
1 Refrigerator , 0 Freezers
- 7 TELEVISIONS AND LIGHTING**  
0 Televisions, All Incandescent Lighting
- 8 KITCHEN AND LAUNDRY**  
Click here to view details
- 9 POOLS AND HOT TUBS**  
Pool - No / Hot Tub - No

Next >>

**CALCULATE**

**Your Home Type**

Click on the options below for more information.

- Single Story       Townhouse End
- Multi Story       Townhouse Mid
- Split Level       Apt Top Floor
- Manufactured Home    Apt Lower Floor

**Single Story**



If all the rooms in the main part of your home are on one level (not including a basement), select the single story home option.

If you have a basement, indicate in the menu below whether it is a walk-out/daylight basement and/or if the garage is on the basement level. Finally, indicate whether the basement is heated and/or cooled.

**Additional Information**

- Is your home elevated?       Yes  No
- Do you have a basement level?    Yes  No
- If yes, is it a walk out/garage?    Yes  No
- Is it heated?       Yes  No
- Is it cooled?       Yes  No

**Year Home Was Built**

Select the year your home was built

2000 to Present

**Home Size / Square Footage**

Select the appropriate home size / square footage excluding your basement

3 Bedroom - 1,800 SF

**Occupants**

Home during day: 1

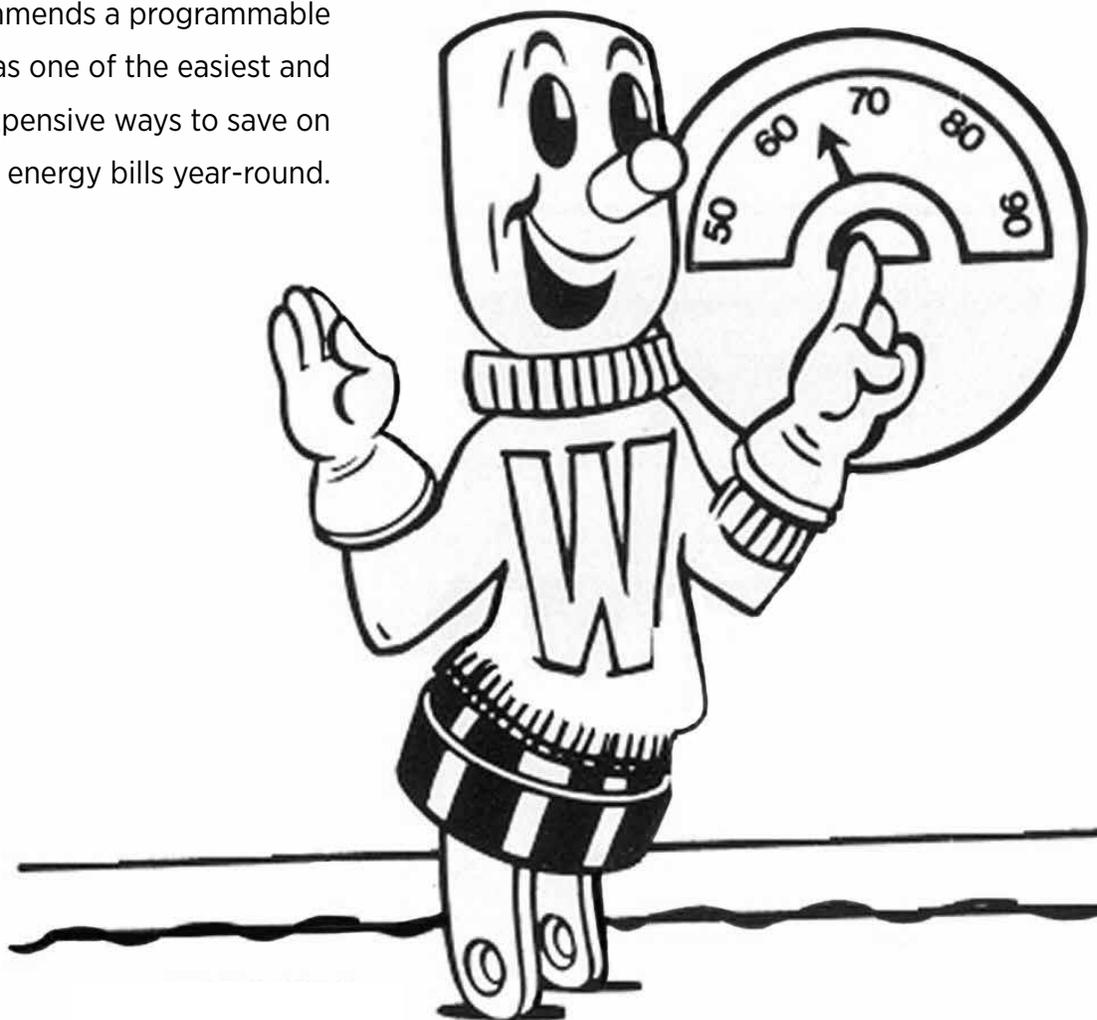
Away during day: 1

Total: 2

The HomeEnergyCalculator uses your local Weather and Energy Rates. This is only an estimate of your actual energy use.

# Set it and forget it.

The average household spends more than \$1,200 in heating and cooling costs annually. Willie Wiredhand recommends a programmable thermostat as one of the easiest and most inexpensive ways to save on energy bills year-round.



**Sam Houston**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE  
[www.samhouston.net](http://www.samhouston.net)



# YOU'RE NOT ALONE IN THE DARK

## POWER RESTORATION IS A COOPERATIVE EFFORT



Electricity powers our lives. We depend on it for nearly everything we do. So we understand how frustrating it can be when you're left in the dark.

Power outages are never convenient. It takes a lot of hands to keep your power on, and even more hands to get it up and running when an outage occurs. Sam Houston Electric Cooperative works hard to restore your electric service when outages occur, but there are necessary steps to take to ensure that power is restored to the majority of members as quickly, and safely, as possible.

After a major storm, Sam Houston EC crews must identify which substations, poles and lines have incurred damage. Very rarely, but occasionally in the case of a major storm such as a hurricane or tornado, substations can be damaged. If that is the case, tens of thousands of members could be affected.

High voltage transmission lines feed power to Sam Houston EC's distribution substations. These substations serve thousands of members. If there is no damage done to the transmission lines, the local distribution substations are checked first. If the issue is isolated and can be resolved at the substation level, great! That means thousands of people can get their power restored at once.

At times, the issue cannot be isolated to one of our distribution substations. If that is the case, Sam Houston EC crews inspect supply lines between the substations and the meters they serve. If the supply lines can be repaired, power can be restored to the towns and homes those lines serve, as long as there is no damage to the tap lines.

Tap lines carry power to the transformers located underground or connected to poles outside of homes and other buildings.

Many times, the issue is resolved once the tap lines are repaired. But have you ever lost power only to look next door and see the lights still blazing from your neighbor's window? When this happens, it generally means that the service line between your home and the nearby transformer has been damaged.

Whenever an outage occurs, please call 1-888-444-1207 right away so we can send a line crew to your home.

Power restoration can be a tricky business, so if you lose service in your home or neighborhood please remember the following:

- Stay clear of downed power lines. Contact with these lines could be life threatening.
- Report the outage to Sam Houston Electric Cooperative at 1-888-444-1207 as soon as possible.
- Make sure to inform us of any specific information you may have regarding what caused the outage, such as a tree on the line.

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative keeps a close eye on potentially threatening weather year-round. For more information on outages, stay connected with Sam Houston EC on Twitter and Facebook. Or, check out our website at [www.samhouston.net](http://www.samhouston.net) and visit our Storm Central page and our online outage viewer.

To help protect you from storm-related hazards, be sure to visit the helpful links on our Storm Central page, including answers to common storm safety questions.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation whenever an outage occurs.

**[PHOTO] Sam Houston Electric Cooperative crews make repairs to the Cooperative's Tarkington substation in late August. Damage to the substation caused outages to more than 2,000 Sam Houston EC members.**



## CO-OP CONNECTIONS



The Co-op Connections Card is a member benefit program that delivers discounts from participating businesses, both local and nationwide. Find more at [www.connections.coop/samhoustonec](http://www.connections.coop/samhoustonec).

### New Source Energy Constructors

302D West Plum, Daisetta, TX 77533

[www.nseci.com](http://www.nseci.com)

M-Sat, 8-6

936-334-1113

Offer: \$15 off preventative maintenance or repair of stand-by generator.

### TJ's Services

134 PR 8635, Spurger, TX 77660

[www.beaumontcleaningservice.com](http://www.beaumontcleaningservice.com)

Daily, 7-7

409-209-1564

Offer: 10% discount

### Thomas Mercantile

2464 Old Hwy 35 North

Livingston, TX 77351

Th-Sat, 10-6

936-967-5333

Offer: 10% discount, excluding sale items.

## 2014-2015 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE



Do you have a graduating high school senior in your household? Do they plan on pursuing higher education after graduation?

Each year Sam Houston Electric Cooperative sponsors a scholarship program for high school seniors whose parents or legal guardians are active Sam Houston EC members.

The money that funds the scholarship program comes from unclaimed Cooperative capital credits that are returned by the State of Texas each year and earmarked for scholarships.

Scholarships are awarded to students who attend public, private, parochial or home school. Students are judged

on academic achievement, future plans, extra-curricular activities and financial need.

Interested students can contact any Sam Houston EC office by phone or in person to obtain an information package and application.

Students may also go online and visit our website at [www.samhouston.net](http://www.samhouston.net). Click on "Community" then "Scholarships." There, you'll find an easy to download application for the 2014-2015 academic year.

Please read all the instructions carefully. Applications not filled out in their entirety will not be accepted.

Completed scholarship applications and recommendations must be returned to Sam Houston EC no later than Feb. 2, 2015.

Twenty-four \$3,000 and six \$1,500 scholarships will be awarded and the winners will be announced in May 2015.

Sam Houston EC has proudly supported the dreams of higher education through our scholarship program since 1992.

## CONSERVATION Corner



To save energy this month, try lowering your water heating costs. Water heating accounts for 14 to 25 percent of the energy

you consume. Turn the water heater's temperature to the warm setting, which is around 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This will save energy – and help you save on your monthly bill.

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

## HOLIDAY OFFICE CLOSINGS



All Sam Houston Electric Cooperative offices will be closed the following days:

- Nov. 27, 2014—In observance of Thanksgiving Day
- Dec. 25-26, 2014—In observance of Christmas Day
- Jan. 1, 2015—In observance of New Year's Day

As always, Sam Houston EC crews will be on-call to respond to any unexpected power outages while our offices are closed.

Cooperative members may still access many of our services, including account balances, bill payment and service requests online at [www.samhouston.net](http://www.samhouston.net) or through our toll-free number, 1-800-458-0381.

If you experience a power outage, please report it by calling 1-888-444-1207.

May we be the first to wish you and your loved ones a happy holiday season!



## JOIN US AT THE 2014 ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS



Join us for Sam Houston Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting of Members on Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2014.

The meeting will be held at the Polk County College/Commerce Center in Livingston. The facility is located at 1015 North 59 Loop, with entrance at Pedigo Park. Shuttles will be available to take attendees from the parking area to the facility.

### We're meeting earlier this year!

Doors will open at 12 p.m. for registration. The meeting will begin earlier this year, starting at 1:30 p.m.

Members present at the meeting will be able to visit with other member-owners, as well as meet the Board of Directors and Cooperative management. Walter Plant will provide entertainment. A door prize drawing will also be held. Cooperative managers will report on Co-op business, including the announcement of Board election winners.

For more information about the Cooperative Annual Meeting, visit our website at [www.samhouston.net](http://www.samhouston.net). Click on "Your Cooperative" then "Annual Meeting."

## COMMUNITY HELPS REVITALIZE LAKE LIVINGSTON SHORELINE



At Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, we work for the sustainable development of our communities through projects supported by our membership, for example, by supporting local charities and non-profit organizations.

The Lake Livingston Friends of Reservoirs is a project created by Tom McDonough, the Piney Woods Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists and Texas Black Bass Unlimited. This project starts by building tanks at area schools to grow American Water

Willow, a native plant. After the plants have grown, they are planted along the shoreline of Lake Livingston.

"The main reason [this project] is important is to create cover for fish, birds and reptiles," McDonough said. "There are very few frogs in the lake because the tadpoles get eaten right away. When fish spawn, fingerlings go to the shoreline for protection, and here, there is no protection for them."

On September 23, volunteers joined the Friends of Reservoirs to plant more than 300 American Water Willow Plants grown by the students at Onalaska Senior High School and Livingston High School [see photo].

"This project is going to help the local economy, increase filtration of the water, and anchor soil, which will decrease soil erosion," McDonough said. "We are bringing Lake Livingston back to life."

# Think Safety.

## *Potshots at Transformers are Dangerous*

Target practice and electrical equipment are a dangerous combination. Shooting at power transformers or insulators is not only risky; it's also illegal. If you see someone shooting at power line equipment, please call your local law enforcement or Sam Houston EC.



## **SAFETY DOESN'T STOP HERE.**

At Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, we believe one of our most important roles in the community is to educate our members and neighbors about what to do in order to stay safe around electric power. Visit [www.samhouston.net](http://www.samhouston.net) and click on "Safety Sense."



**Sam Houston**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE  
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



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# The Year Texas Dried Up

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By Janet Ruth Myers



[PHOTO] Jordon Herrin, district forester with the Texas A&M Forest Service, examines a Long Leaf Pine near Kirbyville. The Texas Forest Service, in addition to fighting fires, offers help and planning to Texas landowners through its Landowners Assistance Program. The free service aids property owners with consultation for timber production, recreation, water quality and family legacy forestry.

**The** black and white images from the Dust Bowl Days are haunting. Swallowed by a dusty wasteland, rickety wooden shacks, inhabited by hardscrabble farmers and their families, dotted the countryside. This was Depression-era America where everyone was simply trying to survive. The choking dust storms across the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles, southeastern Colorado and western Kansas made life miserable. But that was the mid-1930s and those types of droughts could never happen again...or so we thought.

“We really became aware of the 2011 Texas drought at the end of summer and beginning of fall 2010, a trend that continued through most of 2011,” says Jordan Herrin, district forester with the Texas A&M Forest Service. “In fact, in Huntsville where I live, the last early season rain in 2011 was the second week of February. It didn’t rain again until the following late November.”

The culprit? A stubborn high-pressure weather system anchored itself above Texas for many months, causing the worst drought in Texas history. Then, impossible as it might seem, things got infinitely worse.

“In 2011, we found ourselves dealing with a historic wildfire season,” Herrin says. “One example of this occurred in West Texas. In a single afternoon, we had a fire race 20 miles

between Alpine and Fort Davis, burning that entire corridor and threatening the McDonald Observatory. At the same time, we had a large fire west of Fort Worth at Possum Kingdom Lake.”

Though the fires have long since been put out, the damage of the 2011 drought continues to wreak havoc on the forested regions of Texas. When you drive around, you can see lots of trees still dying along the roadside. What you can’t see, just yet, are the trees that will perish over the next 10 years. The reason?

During the drought of 2011, massive sections of the root systems of many trees died. This will mean that, though it’s been fairly wet during 2014, even more trees will perish in the years ahead because they don’t possess enough live roots to supply the water trees need. But there’s more to the story than loss of tree roots.

In the rocky soils of the western Piney Woods, foresters first noticed a decline in various oak species. However, it wasn’t the drought that killed them. The oaks succumbed to hypoxylon canker, a type of fungus normally found in 90 percent of oaks. With enough water, the trees can keep the canker at bay, but in 2011, because they were already weakened by the drought, the trees were killed by the canker.

Something similar happened to many pine trees.



This time, the villain was the Ips Bark Beetle (not to be confused with the Southern Pine Bark Beetle), which looks for individually stressed pine trees to attack. If a pine tree has enough water to create sap, it can flush the beetles out as they attempt to bore through the bark. But in 2011, with so little water available, many pine trees had no way to defend themselves from the small, but voracious beetles.

Since 94 to 97 percent of forested land in Texas is privately owned, the cost of losing so many trees has been astronomical to individual property owners and communities.

Herrin says some private landowners were hit really hard but others weren't, depending on where the property was located and the type of soil present.

"In Walker County I visited a landowner who had a beautiful 40-acre pine stand in really deep, dry sand," Herrin says. "It wasn't the best soil for growing pine trees. In any other year it would have been fine, since the trees had already matured."

But by the end of that summer, Herrin counted only two trees out of the entire 40 acres that were still alive.

"Losing that many trees is a hard thing to wrap your head around," Herrin says. "In fact, it's baffling to think about what we actually witnessed."

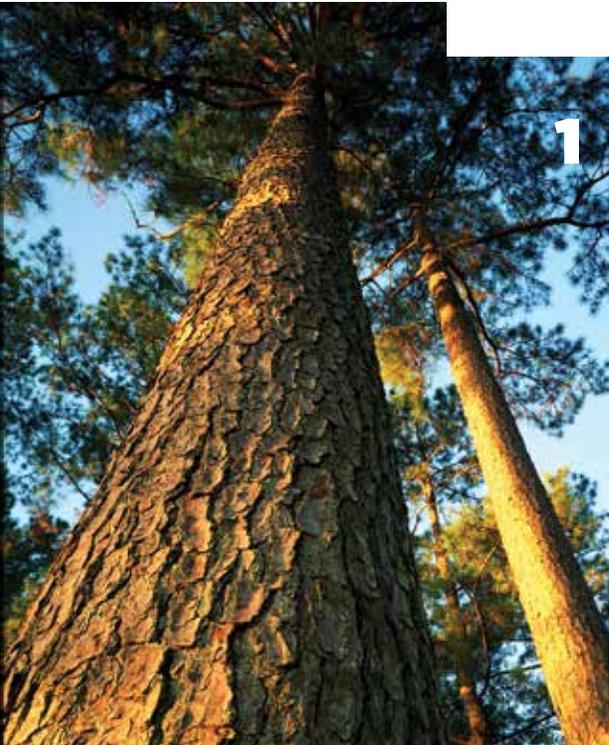
Statewide, from the Louisiana border all the way to El Paso, some 300 million trees died from the drought of 2011. The Texas A&M Forest Service estimates that the value of the older merchantable trees lost totals \$558 million. Smaller, pre-merchantable trees were estimated at a loss of \$111 million.

It wasn't just landowners and the timber industry impacted by the drought of 2011. From October 2011 to October 2012, Sam Houston Electric Cooperative cut down more than 150,000 dead trees in a \$10 million proactive right-of-way maintenance effort. The significant loss of trees from the drought left hundreds of thousands of tree threatening to fall on power lines, which would result in power outages for the Cooperative's members.

Sam Houston EC CEO Kyle J. Kuntz emphasized to the Co-op's membership back in 2011 that the amplified dead and danger tree project was essential to reduce the risk of outages and potential fires across more than 6,000 miles of distribution line, due to falling trees and limbs.

[PHOTO 1] East Texas' forests may look healthy now, but the drought of 2011 will continue to cause trees to die for at least a decade.

[PHOTOS 2 and 3] Images of pine trees in autumn 2014 demonstrate that three years later, the forest is still losing trees.





Right-of-way maintenance is not new to the Cooperative as crews regularly cut dead and danger trees throughout the year. However, this special emphasis on the project required up to eight times the resources normally used. The dead tree removal project continued well into 2013 on a smaller scale.

Normally, every summer in late August and early September, Texas experiences seasonal drying. But in 2011, even trees growing in the lower elevations (down in creek beds that usually stay damp all year) were hit hard. Most trees were accustomed to always having at least a little bit of water available to them, no matter what—but that all changed in 2011.

“There are a lot of different things that can kill a tree,” Herrin says. “But most of the time it’s due to a lot of bad things happening to the tree at the same time.”

Finally, in November 2011 it rained again. Does that mean the drought is over? Does it mean we’ve gotten all the rain we need? No one knows the full answer to these questions. The weather service measures average rainfall over a 25 or 30-year cycle. So if we’re experiencing a 30-year dry spell, even a wetter

year can be a dry year, in the grand scheme of things. In fact, from the perspective of a 30-year period, we’re still fairly dry, as witnessed by some Texas towns that are close to running completely out of water. Other parts of Texas, however, appear to be back to normal.

“If you look at it holistically, there’s a day and night difference between 2011 and 2014,” Herrin says. “We’re not having wild fires. The grass is green in my front yard and along the highways—not dead and brown like it was in 2011. However, we still see trees dying in East Texas because of what happened in 2011. One thing is for sure. Never again will I complain about it raining.”

It would be easy to think that the awful drought of 2011 is behind us, but nature has a way of reminding us that the only constant in this world is change. So, the mild, wet summer of 2014 should not lull us into believing that the days of plentiful precipitation are here for good.

There will always be a cycle of wet and dry summers. Certainly, with the blessings of a wet 2014, we can all rejoice in this year’s abundance and hope that many more wet summers lie ahead.

[PHOTO 4] A pine seedling emerges from the wood char from a fire in April of 2012. The rainfall during the next year will determine if the seedling withers and dies or becomes a tree.





ISTOCK @ GODSMOODPHOTO

# POWER TIP

Save **ENERGY** • Save **MONEY**

Fall is here, and that means colder months will be here before we know it. Is your home prepared for the drafts that may enter? Tight-fitting Insulating drapes or shades are a perfect way to keep the heat in and the cold out.



## Sam Houston Electric Cooperative

Posted by Rachel Frey [?]

Page Liked · October 6, 2014 · Edited ·

October is a great month to prepare your home for the upcoming colder months! Tight-fitting insulating drapes keep the heat in and the cold out.

Tag Photo

Add Location

Edit

Like · Comment · Share



Lisa Jason Valderez, Juanita Potts, Phyllis Kennedy and 2 others like this.



Write a comment...



### Suggested Pages

See All



## Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

Erin Campbell likes this.

Like



**Sam Houston EC** @SamHoustonEC · Dec 15

Don't let holiday visitors crash your electric bill. Wash clothes in cold H2O & set thermostat to 68° ([TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com)).



**Sam Houston EC** @SamHoustonEC · Dec 12

Today's featured Co-op Connections business is Candlicious Creations. Click here for more information: [connections.coop/products-page/...](http://connections.coop/products-page/)



**Sam Houston EC** @SamHoustonEC · Dec 11

Decorate this Christmas with savings from your Co-op Connections Card! [ow.ly/i/7RPbV](http://ow.ly/i/7RPbV)



[View photo](#)



**Sam Houston EC** @SamHoustonEC · Dec 10

Holiday efficiency tip: Find and seal air leaks around the home so that heated air isn't escaping!

Search

# Celebrate Earth Day with Sam Houston EC

TUESDAY, APRIL 01, 2014

Tweet Like 1 g+1

April 22, 2014, is Earth Day. Since 1970, Earth Day has been an annual reminder of how important it is for us all to be good stewards of our planet. The past four decades have seen amazing advancements in energy efficiency and in our ability to generate cost-effective renewable power.



At Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, we're proud to be leading the way to a cleaner energy future, by expanding the use of hydropower and harnessing opportunities to generate electricity with biomass technology.

East Texas Electric Cooperative, Sam Houston EC's generation and transmission cooperative, is spearheading the Woodville Renewable Power Project. The economic-boosting facility will be capable of producing 50 megawatts of clean energy by converting wood chips into renewable, carbon-neutral power.

Help us celebrate Earth Day. Come by and visit any Sam Houston EC location April 22nd, and receive a free CFL—while supplies last.

## Sam Houston

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On April 13, 2015, America's electric cooperatives will honor the

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What better way to celebrate Earth Day this month

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