

4 steps to prepare for EXTREME WINTER WEATHER

The most predictable thing about winter in Texas: It's unpredictable.

Although average temperatures in the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative region rarely drop below freezing, severe winter events have taught us to be prepared for anything.

Take these steps to stay safe and prepare your family and home for an unexpected winter-weather emergency.

1. Create a communication plan

- Your family may not be together when severe weather hits, so create a plan that includes everyone's role during an emergency.
- Discuss how you will stay in touch with one another.
- Do not rely on cellphones alone, as service could be lost.
- Create "know your number" contact cards for everyone's wallet or bag and consider having an out-of-area emergency contact who won't be affected by the weather.
- Make a plan to regroup at a designated place.
- Decide who is responsible for household pets' safety.

2. Download apps and save website URLs

- Federal Emergency Management Agency, fema.gov, and American Red Cross, redcross.org, provide emergency notifications and information about shelters, first aid and recovery assistance.
- The National Weather Service at weather.gov (type in your area), local weather apps, the Weather Channel at weather.com, AccuWeather at accuweather.com and WeatherBug at weatherbug.com provide local and regional forecasts and alerts.
- The Texas Department of Emergency Management at tdem.texas.gov has



safety and weather information.

- Drive Texas, drivetexas.org, has road-closure information.

3. Stock up on supplies

- Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable or canned food items and water, one gallon per person for each day.
- Make a winter-weather emergency kit that includes blankets, extra warm clothes, sleeping bags, a first-aid kit, portable lights, a cell phone charger and walkie-talkies with extra batteries.
- Keep your gas tank full, and stock your vehicle with items such as a battery-powered or hand-crank radio, a towrope and an ice scraper.

4. Prepare your home

- Check heating systems; insulate and seal doors, windows, cracks or holes; repair any roof damage; and clear gutters.
- Secure lightweight outdoor items that could blow away.
- Cut tree branches near or hanging over your roof.
- Ahead of severe weather, insulate exposed pipes, drain outdoor water systems and keep water moving in indoor pipes by dripping all faucets.
- Store a fire extinguisher in a place you can easily reach.

For more tips to stay safe this winter and save money on your electric bill, visit bluebonnet.coop/winter-tips.

Grant for nonprofit first responders

BLUEBONNET ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE and the Lower Colorado River Authority recently provided a \$24,400 grant to the Bastrop County First Responders as part of LCRA's Community Development Partnership Program.

Bastrop County First Responders is a volunteer organization of 45 licensed emergency medical technicians and paramedics stationed throughout the county. Members respond to emergencies in their personal vehicles to provide care for the sick and injured until an ambulance arrives. The grant, along with \$6,100 in matching funds from the first responders, will allow the group to buy emergency equipment, including cardiac monitors and defibrillators.

Bluebonnet, one of LCRA's wholesale electric customers, is a partner in the grant program that supports the co-op's members and the communities it serves.

Applications for the upcoming round of grants will be accepted through Jan. 31. The next round of applications will be accepted in July. Get more information about this program and a link to an application, when it is available, at lcra.org/cdpp.



Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative and LCRA representatives present a \$24,400 grant to the Bastrop County First Responders for emergency equipment. Pictured, from left, are Tom Oney, LCRA chief people officer and executive vice president of external affairs; Gregory Klaus, Bastrop County judge; Matthew L. 'Matt' Arthur and Margaret D. 'Meg' Voelter, LCRA board members; Zackary Caviness, First Responders paramedic; Preston McGrew, First Responders vice president and paramedic; Phil Wilson, LCRA general manager; Stan Gerdes, District 17 state representative; Rick Arnic, LCRA regional affairs representative; Josh Coy, Bluebonnet's Bastrop-area community representative; and Garrett Gutierrez, Bluebonnet superintendent of operations. — LCRA photo

OFFICE CLOSINGS

Bluebonnet offices will be closed Jan. 1 for New Year's Day, Jan. 20 for Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Jan. 24 for a companywide meeting.

If you have a power outage, you can report it by texting OUT to

44141, online at bluebonnet.coop, via the MyBluebonnet mobile app or by calling 800-949-4414.

You can pay bills any time online, on our mobile app or by calling 800-842-7708 (select option 2 when prompted).

See history. Make history.

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS & SENIORS

The Government-in-Action Youth Tour
is an all-expenses-paid,
multiday trip to Washington, D.C.
Each recipient will receive
a \$1,000 scholarship.

Tour dates: **June 15-23, 2025**

For more information, go to bluebonnet.coop/scholarships

Online application deadline
Jan. 17, 2025