

*Welcome  
to*



**Bluebonnet**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

**MEMBER  
HANDBOOK**





## About Bluebonnet

This handbook contains important information about your electric cooperative. Please read and keep it handy for future reference.

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative is a member-owned electric service provider. Distribution cooperatives such as Bluebonnet buy electricity from wholesale providers and arrange for its transmission and distribution to members through the co-op's lines.

Covering 3,800 square miles, Bluebonnet is one of the largest electric cooperatives in Texas and one of the oldest, having served residents in all or part of 14 Central Texas counties since 1939.

Being a co-op member has added benefits. Members/owners elect the 11-member Board of Directors who govern the cooperative. That election is at Bluebonnet's Annual Meeting every May. Also, Bluebonnet shares with its members any money it collects above what it takes to run the business. The money, similar to dividends paid

to a company's shareholders, is called capital credits.

Bluebonnet employs more than 300 people, many of whom are Bluebonnet members, just like you. All Bluebonnet employees have a vested interest in the cooperative and live and work by Bluebonnet's Foundation Values of Safety, Courage, Respect, Reliability, Community and Love.

***Members of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative agree to purchase electric service from Bluebonnet and comply with, and be bound by, the Articles of Incorporation, the Tariff, the Bylaws, the member handbook and any and all policies and procedures of Bluebonnet.***

Bluebonnet's Tariffs and Bylaws may be accessed at **bluebonnet.coop** under the "About" tab, then "Reports & Forms."



## Member Agreement

All members who need power at a new location where there are no Bluebonnet poles, lines or equipment must sign Bluebonnet's Member Agreement. Any new or current members wanting to add a meter to their account or take over an existing meter must also sign the agreement. Service cannot be completed until the agreement is signed.

The agreement must be signed electronically, either by email or by visiting one of the co-op's member service centers.

Find a sample copy of the agreement in English or Spanish at **bluebonnet.coop**. Under the "About" tab, click on "Reports & Forms" and scroll down to the "General Information" section.

If you have questions or need assistance, call member services at **800-842-7708**.



## Starting electric service

If you are in Bluebonnet's service territory, apply for co-op membership and electric service by calling Bluebonnet member services at **800-842-7708**, by visiting any of Bluebonnet's five member service centers in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart and Manor, or requesting service online at **bluebonnet.coop** by clicking on the "Residential" or "Commercial" tab, then "Electric Service."

To start new service in a location where no electric service is available, call **800-842-7708**, option 3, as soon as possible to allow time for us to determine where poles, lines and equipment should be placed, and then to construct the job.

To connect service at a location where our power is already available, please allow one business day's notice.

Applicable fees may be paid with cash, check, credit/debit card or check-by-phone (E-check).

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**800-842-7708**

**memberservices@bluebonnet.coop**



## Deposit requirements

A deposit may be required for residential and commercial service. For more information, call **800-842-7708**.

### Return of deposit

Deposits accrue interest at a rate established annually by the Public Utility Commission of Texas. Interest will be credited to individual electric accounts monthly. All deposits are refunded after 12 consecutive billings as long as there has been no discontinuation of service due to non-payment or more than one late payment. The deposit is applied against unpaid bills if electric service is discontinued.



## Privacy policy

The Federal Trade Commission's Red Flags Rule, passed in November 2007, requires certain businesses that maintain covered accounts, including utilities, to implement a written identity-theft prevention program designed to detect the "red flags" of identity theft in day-to-day operations and establish a program to identify, prevent and mitigate its damage.

Because Bluebonnet maintains accounts for its members and allows the members to pay for service after it has been rendered, it is considered a creditor and is subject to the Red Flags Rule.

For questions about Bluebonnet's privacy policy, call **800-842-7708** or write to **Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 729, Bastrop, Texas 78602**. You may request a printed copy or find information online at **bluebonnet.coop**. Click on "Privacy and Legal" in the bottom toolbar of any page on the website.



## Your bill

### Seven ways to make a payment

- 1)** Online at **bluebonnet.coop** (Learn how to create an online account on page 10).
- 2)** On Bluebonnet's free **mobile app** for iPhone and Android smartphones, available in the App Store or at Google Play.
- 3)** By calling **800-842-7708** to speak to a member service representative from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday or to use our automated voice recognition system.
- 4)** Through a **recurring payment plan** set up online or via our mobile app with a MasterCard, Visa, Discover, American Express or bank draft.
- 5)** At one of five Bluebonnet **member service centers**, which accept cash, check or credit/debit card.

**6)** By mail to Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 240, Giddings, TX 78942. Include your Bluebonnet account number on your check. No cash please — Bluebonnet is not responsible for cash sent via mail.

**7)** In a payment **drop box** at a member service center. No cash please — Bluebonnet is not responsible for cash left in the boxes.

### Paperless billing

To sign up, log in to your account at **bluebonnet.coop** or via our free mobile app and select the "Preferences" tab. Under the "Contact Info" section, verify that your email address and information are correct. Check the "Receive Paperless Billing" box and click the "Save Changes" button. If you have any questions or need assistance, call member services at **800-842-7708**.



## A past-due bill

A member has 16 days from the date the monthly bill is issued to pay. That payment due date is noted on the bill. Payments received after 16 days are considered delinquent and will result in a late payment fee. If the payment is delinquent, Bluebonnet will send a notice by mail about possible discontinuation of service. Once that notice is issued, the member has 10 days to pay his or her electric bill or service may be discontinued.

If electric service is discontinued because a bill was not paid, service will not be reconnected until the member pays the full amount owed, in addition to a reconnect fee and a deposit, if applicable. Payments must be made at a member service center or by calling **800-842-7708**.



## Payment assistance

The State of Texas Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program offers aid for those who need help paying their electric bill. A list of providers is available at **[tdhca.state.tx.us/community-affairs](https://tdhca.state.tx.us/community-affairs)**.

Information is also available on our website. Go to **[bluebonnet.coop](https://bluebonnet.coop)**, and under either the “Residential” or “Commercial” tab, click on “Your Bill” and scroll down to “Payment Assistance.” On the app, click on the “Payments” tab, then “Payment Assistance.”



## To cancel electric service

Members should provide the following information in person at a Bluebonnet member service center or by calling

**800-842-7708:**

- The service address, Bluebonnet account number or meter number;
- Two forms of personal identification;
- The date electric service should be discontinued; and
- A forwarding address and telephone number.



## Statement of Nondiscrimination

Bluebonnet provides equal employment opportunities to all employees and applicants without regard to protected status: race/ethnicity, color, national origin, ancestry, sex/gender, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, marital/parental status, pregnancy/childbirth or related conditions, religion, creed, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other protected status.

Additionally Bluebonnet is committed to employ and advance in employment qualified minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, and protected veterans (including, but not limited to, disabled veterans, recently separated veterans, Armed Forces service medal veterans, and active duty wartime or campaign badge veterans). Equal Employment Opportunity is the law.



## Reporting an outage

### 4 ways to report unplanned outages

- 1) Call **800-949-4414**. Our automated system is available 24 hours a day, every day.
- 2) On our **mobile app**. Download the app on your iPhone or Android smartphone.
- 3) Go to **bluebonnet.coop** and click on “Report Outage” at the top left of any page.
- 4) By text message on your smartphone. To register, text **BBOUTAGE** to **85700** and follow the prompts. Once you have registered, report an outage on your mobile device by texting OUT to 85700. You can receive updates by texting STATUS to the same number.



## Planned outages

Bluebonnet’s more than 11,000 miles of power lines require ongoing maintenance. Occasionally, power must be interrupted to homes and businesses to allow our crews to work safely, effectively and efficiently. A member who will be impacted by a large outage should receive an automated call informing them about the outage in advance. There will also be information about these planned outages on **bluebonnet.coop** or on the cooperative’s social media pages.



## Tree trimming

To maintain safe and reliable electric service, Bluebonnet trims trees and removes vegetation too close to power lines within our easement or rights-of-way. Trees near power lines can contribute to outages and, in some instances, be dangerous. To request tree trimming or to report a potential hazard, call **800-842-7708**, visit a member service center or go to **bluebonnet.coop** and click ‘Request Service’ at the top of any page.





## Meters

### Meter tampering

Tampering with Bluebonnet's metering or electrical equipment is illegal, dangerous and costly to all Bluebonnet members. If you suspect someone is tampering with a Bluebonnet meter or other electrical equipment, call **800-842-7708**, visit a Bluebonnet member service center or email **memberservices@bluebonnet.coop**.

### Meter loops

Bluebonnet provides specifics about amp size and meter loop requirements for requested electric service. A meter loop may be purchased from Bluebonnet or members may provide their own. Should a member provide his or her own meter loop, it is their responsibility to ensure the meter loop is at the job site and completely assembled according to Bluebonnet specifications. This must be done before construction of electric service or upgrades to service begin.

A list of meter loop specifications is available at member service centers and **bluebonnet.coop**. Under the "About" tab, click on "Reports & Forms" and scroll down to the "Meter Loop Specifications, Line Extensions" section.

### Automatic meter reading

Bluebonnet installs meters that are read electronically, eliminating the need for Bluebonnet personnel to enter a member's property to read the meter.



## Member wiring

***YOU RELEASE Bluebonnet from any and all liability for damage that may occur from your defective wiring or from Bluebonnet's failure to inspect such wiring, and you INDEMNIFY and hold Bluebonnet harmless from any and all such liability.***

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## Bluebonnet.coop and our mobile app

Our website and free mobile app let you do business with Bluebonnet anytime, anywhere.

To track your energy use, pay your bill online or report outages online, create an online account.

At **bluebonnet.coop**, in the top right corner of any page, simply click on “Register” and follow the prompts.

Download the Bluebonnet app on your smartphone or mobile device from the iPhone App Store or Google Play. After installing it, scroll down the main screen to “Don’t have an online account yet?” Then click on “Register Now.”

For either sign-up method, you will need your email address and information from a recent electric bill. When you are prompted, your username should be the email address associated with your account.

### Your digital dashboard

After logging in to your account, you will see a dashboard with a current billing overview (with the option to “Pay Now”) as well as the details of your energy usage and costs. Our Energy Tracker allows you to view and compare data down to the hour, predict your next bill and see the impact weather has on your bill.

### Billing & payments

The Billing & Payments tab (or “Payments” on the mobile app) shows current billing details and history. You can enroll in recurring payments, set up or change your payment method, or request a payment arrangement.

### Other features

Click on the “Preferences” tab to update your contact information or enroll in paperless billing. Online, this tab is also where you can set up outage and energy alerts. On the app, you’ll find this feature in the “Alerts” tab.

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**Report outage: 800-949-4414**

**bluebonnet.coop**

# Connect with Bluebonnet



## bluebonnet.coop

Do business 24/7 with our virtual member service center. Create an online account, pay your bill online, study your power use with our Energy Tracker, report outages, set up recurring payments, sign up for paperless billing, request services and more.



## Outage viewer

Track the number, size, location and status of outages in real time across our service area on the outage tracker at **outage.bluebonnetelectric.coop:82**



## Texas Co-op Power magazine

Monthly news and features about the cooperative and its service area are featured on Bluebonnet's blue-bordered pages in the center of this magazine that is delivered free to all co-op members. Downloadable pdfs are available at **bluebonnet.coop/tcp**.



## Social media

Get updates on Facebook and Twitter about major power outages, emergency alerts, Bluebonnet news, photos, interesting energy information and money-saving tips.

**Facebook:** @BluebonnetElectric

**Twitter:** @BluebonnetCoop

**Instagram:** @bluebonnetelectric

**YouTube:** Bluebonnet Coop

**LinkedIn:** bluebonnet-electric-cooperative-inc-

# Member service centers

Bluebonnet has five member service centers, where members can pay their electric bills or get help with co-op related matters — from power outages and new service connections to information about energy-saving programs.

## BASTROP

690 Highway 71 West, Bldg 1  
Bastrop, Texas 78602  
800-842-7708  
Fax: 512-321-3471

## BRENHAM

2401 Highway 290 West  
Brenham, Texas 77833  
800-842-7708  
Fax: 979-836-0801

## MANOR

810 Lexington  
Manor, Texas 78653  
800-842-7708  
Fax: 512-272-8920

## GIDDINGS

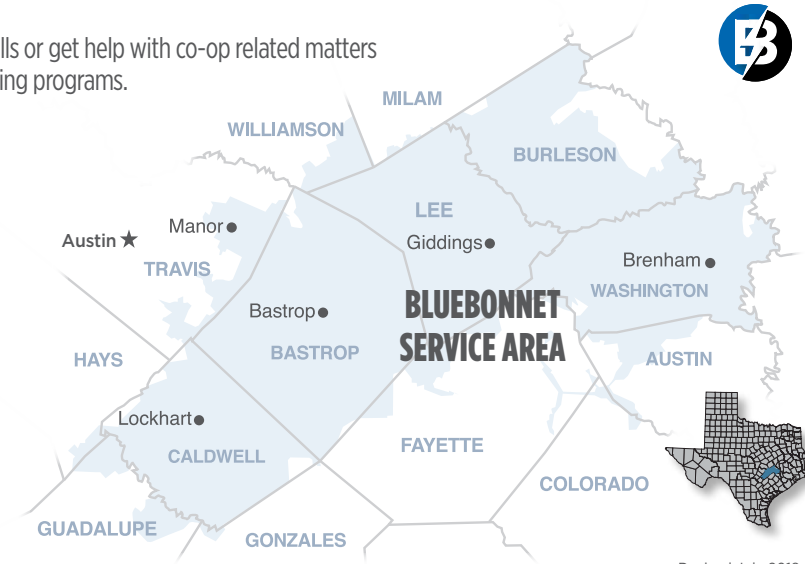
3190 E Austin Hwy.  
Giddings, Texas 78942  
800-842-7708  
Fax: 979-542-2392

## LOCKHART

1916 West San Antonio St.  
Lockhart, Texas 78644  
800-842-7708  
Fax: 512-398-9844

## LOBBY & DRIVE-THROUGH HOURS:

**Monday-Friday,  
7:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.**  
(Monday-Friday;  
closed major holidays)



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**bluebonnet.coop**