

MEMBER SERVICES

Q&A



Q: I hate to admit that I've made a few late electric bill payments. I recently signed up for paperless billing, but the Bluebonnet email tends to get lost in my very active inbox. What's the best way to manage my bill?

A: Kudos to you for going paperless! I can personally relate to being

overwhelmed by email. My first suggestion is to flag the bill and set a reminder if your email provider offers those features. The good news is Bluebonnet just rolled out a simplified process for setting up recurring bill payments. Taking five minutes to enroll will definitely make your life easier and

prevent missing a payment. You won't have to worry about when your bill is due, and you'll save the time it takes to write a check or submit a payment every month, plus the cost of postage. When you enroll in recurring payments, your monthly payment is automatically drafted from your bank account or charged to a credit card. You'll get an email letting you know the amount of your bill and when the payment will be drafted. To enroll, you'll need your Bluebonnet member account number and preferred payment method details. Start by logging in to your Bluebonnet online account at bluebonnet.coop. If you have more than one

account, select the correct account number from the drop-down menu. Go to the Billing & Payments tab and scroll down to Recurring Payments. Click the blue "Enroll in Recurring" button, enter your payment method details and confirm your payment information. You'll receive a confirmation email upon enrollment. Congratulations! You're on your way to peace of mind. Questions? Contact a member service representative at memberservices@bluebonnet.coop or call 800-842-7708 during business hours.

— Malisa Espinal,
member service representative



Sarah Beal photo

A CONVERSATION WITH THE CO-OP

General Manager Mark Rose introduced lineman David Davis during Bluebonnet's Town Hall meeting in Caldwell in April. Davis, who works in Brenham, showed attendees the gear linemen wear to protect themselves on the job. About 50 people attended the last of six Town Hall meetings in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart, Manor and Caldwell. Bluebonnet directors and employees answered questions and provided educational handouts on everything from vegetation management to energy conservation. The co-op plans to host the Town Halls again in 2017.

Handling an estate? A few tips to maximize member benefits

By Lisa Ogle

Are you the executor of an estate for someone who was a Bluebonnet co-op member? If so, the estate may be eligible to retire the account's capital credits (a share of annual co-op profits) early and receive a check. On an annual basis, Bluebonnet's governing board considers the early retirement of capital credits on accounts designated as estates. To get the Bluebonnet account designated as an estate, you'll need to bring the death certificate or executor papers to a Bluebonnet member service center. Although this is not a complicated process, the co-op has a few checks and balances to ensure the capital credits go to the correct party. Banks are increasingly cracking down on cashing checks made out to a deceased person, so it's smart to take care of this process as quickly as possible. If a family member or someone else has been

paying the electric bill for the account and plans to continue doing so, that person may want to change the account to his or her name. That person then would accumulate the capital credits, rather than having them go to the estate and, possibly, to multiple beneficiaries. Transferring a deceased person's Bluebonnet account to a new member has several benefits. First, only the Bluebonnet member listed on the account can make changes to the account. That person can also request a security light, tree trimming or a new meter; update contact information; and possibly receive assistance in paying a bill. New members will also get faster service when reporting a power outage if the phone number they call from is associated with the address on the account. That allows us to automatically pinpoint the outage and dispatch a repair crew to the house or business much more quickly. Being a Bluebonnet member also provides the

opportunity to vote during the co-op's Annual Meeting, which is held every May. At this event, members receive updates on co-op business and have a chance to win prizes, vote on who governs the co-op, or decide on important business matters. If you have questions about how to update the account of a deceased person, email memberservices@bluebonnet.coop or call 800-842-7708. You can also stop by one of our member service centers in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart or Manor.

CORRECTION: An item about the Amazon Echo on Page 22A in the May 2016 issue should have stated that TV commercials feature Alec Baldwin and Jason Schwartzman.