

APRIL 2026

# URECC NEWSLETTER

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## Lineworkers are Ready When it Matters Most



At Upshur Rural Electric Cooperative, we have the unique privilege of seeing firsthand what it truly takes to keep the lights on for our members. Each April, we pause to recognize the dedicated men and women who make that possible every single day—our lineworkers.

When storms move through our communities and outages occur, many experience the inconvenience. Our lineworkers, however, see a call to action. They are always ready when it matters most—leaving family dinners, working through the night, and heading into challenging conditions to restore power as safely and quickly as possible. That level of readiness is not accidental. It comes from rigorous training, years of experience, and a deep commitment to serving others. What makes our lineworkers especially remarkable is that they are not simply restoring power to a system—they are restoring power to their own communities. They live here. They raise their families here. They understand that electricity is more than a convenience; it is essential to daily life, to local businesses, schools, farms, and emergency services. Powering the places we call home is personal to them.

Electric cooperatives like URECC were built on the principle of neighbors helping neighbors, and our lineworkers embody that spirit every day. They are often the first to respond and the last to leave, working long hours behind the scenes. At times, serving our neighbors extends beyond our own service territory through mutual aid. During major outage events, URECC crews stand ready to assist neighboring cooperatives—sometimes nearby and sometimes across state lines—to help restore power. This spirit of cooperation strengthens all co-ops and ultimately benefits the members we serve.

We understand that any time the lights go out, it can be frustrating. We are truly grateful to our members for your patience and encouragement during these times. Linework is demanding, physical, and at times dangerous work. Our crews approach every job with a focus on safety, teamwork, and excellence. They take great pride in their craft and in the trust our members place in them.

On April 13, 2026, we will celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day, but one day is hardly enough. Every day, we are thankful for the dedication and service of our lineworkers—they are the backbone of our cooperative.

To our lineworkers: thank you for your hard work, your readiness, and your unwavering commitment to the communities we serve. We are proud to stand behind you and deeply grateful for all that you do.

Sincerely,  
Upshur Rural Electric Cooperative

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As we prepare for the seasonal shift, remember to set your ceiling fan rotation accordingly. In winter months (or whenever your home heating system is running), fan blades should rotate clockwise, which produces an updraft that pushes warm air down. In summer months (or whenever your home cooling system is running), blades should rotate counterclockwise, which produces a downdraft or windchill effect that makes you feel cooler. When used correctly, ceiling fans can boost comfort and allow you to adjust the thermostat a few degrees for energy savings.

## UTILITY SCAM AWARENESS TIP OF THE MONTH

Don't fall victim to power outage scams. When widespread outages occur, scammers may target affected utility customers. They can contact you via call, text or email, urging you to act quickly and provide personal information to restore service. Always communicate with your utility through official channels, such as their website, mobile app or phone number listed on your bill. Your safety and personal information are worth taking a moment to pause and verify unknown senders.

# SPRING INTO ENERGY SAVINGS!



Schedule an HVAC tune up to improve efficiency and lower energy costs.

Set ceiling fans to run counter clockwise to help cool rooms.

Adjust your thermostat a few degrees for easy savings.

Run major appliances during off peak hours to reduce energy costs.

## URECC 2026 ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 2ND

**REGISTRATION OPENS  
AT 11:30 AND THE  
MEETING KICKS OFF  
AT 1 PM.**



## MEMBER NOTICE

Go Green by enrolling in paperless billing this April to support sustainability and for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit. Sign up via the SmartHub app or contact Member Services for assistance. Our Power2Go Prepaid Metering program allows you to pay for your electricity in advance, giving you daily control over your energy usage. With Power2Go, you avoid monthly bills, deposits, and late fees, and receive daily usage updates and low-balance notifications. To learn more or to enroll, contact our Member Services team at 903-843-2536. April 13th is Lineworker Appreciation Day—a special opportunity to express our gratitude to the linemen who work tirelessly and bravely to keep our community powered. We sincerely thank them for their dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment to serving our members.

To request vegetation management near or endangering a power line, select “Contact Us” in the SmartHub app or web version, and choose System/Line Problems. You can also call Member Services at 903-843-2536.



Earth Day is celebrated each year on April 22. It is a reminder that small actions can make a big difference in protecting our planet. From conserving energy to reducing waste, every step we take helps create a cleaner, healthier future for generations to come.

# URECC BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT:

## SMALLWOODS



When Josh Smallwood tells the story of how he turned a two-person, rustic frame operation in a tiny shed into over a hundred-million dollar custom art operation employing over 300 people in East Texas, he usually tells the short version of the story: He graduated from business school, tried accounting, didn't like it, and took a big risk to start his own company.

Josh had spent his early years not really having a place to call home. Growing up in East Texas with his parents meant growing up fast and fending for himself, witnessing his family caught in cycles of drug abuse and prison sentences. They moved around often and for years the only person Josh could count on was his older brother, Dustin—now the Smallwood's General Manager. Life was difficult, but there was one thing Josh loved about his childhood—something that took his mind out of the grind of surviving and gave him moments of real joy. A farm. Josh didn't know it then, but the time he spent on his grandpa's farm would change his outlook — and his future. Looking back, his experiences on the farm laid the foundation of the Smallwoods brand: a love of East Texas, care of the land, the importance of family, and a lived-in knowledge of what everyday working people are up against in their effort to provide for their loved ones.

Josh graduated high school, immediately went to college to study accounting, began building a family with his wife Holly, worked several jobs, and attended night school. Holly studied nursing and graduated with a nursing degree, and Josh went on to earn his MBA. While going through the motions and trying to build a stable life for his family, he eventually realized he was living someone else's life. It wasn't him.

Josh knew he wanted to do his own thing. But he didn't know what that thing was yet—and he didn't have a ton of real-life experience. He knew he was a hard worker. So, he worked. Hard. Josh's big break came in the form of a few small breaks—none of which looked too promising at the start. Then finally in 2012, he executed on an idea that would change the trajectory of the entire Smallwood family.

Josh started a small framing business where a newly formed team of employees would huddle up in a 12 by 20-foot garage stall and cut up old barn wood to make rustic frames. They'd then slap an old John Wayne print onto the backing and sell them to western decor retail stores. It wasn't a glamorous beginning—and Josh had no idea where he was going with it. But he had a hunch that he could make this into something different, something big. From these humble origins, Smallwoods was born.

It had been a long journey, and everything was finally coming together. But Josh didn't have time to celebrate—and many of the new machines he had recently invested in would never have a chance to run. One night, Josh got a phone call from the local fire department — the Smallwoods building was on fire. Josh rushed to the building, and when he got there, the building was engulfed. Josh knew without having to ask. His building was gone. And his dream—closer to being realized than ever before—had just gone up in smoke.

The Smallwoods team took the temporary setback as a chance to be the tight-knit work family they'd always talked about being, using it to come together, to rebuild, but also to reimagine. What should have been an ending was instead an opportunity to rebuild bigger and better. Josh started buying land around the home he and Holly had built. The Smallwoods family went from 80 to over 240 acres of beautiful Texas land to call their own. And in 2020, they broke ground on another dream: a 1-million square foot work campus with a beautiful glass building looking out onto the gorgeous landscape. Against everything he'd imagined as a kid, Josh was back in East Texas, creating a space for his employees to take in the beauty of the place he'd always sworn he'd leave.

For Josh, Smallwoods is about a commitment to what is truly valuable—not just profitable. It's about taking time to think comprehensively and long term about things of lasting value and meaning. It's a commitment to taking rough starts and humble beginnings, difficult trials and unforeseen setbacks, and using them to think better, bolder, and with more humanity.

# URECC offices will be closed Friday, April 3, 2026 in observance of Good Friday.

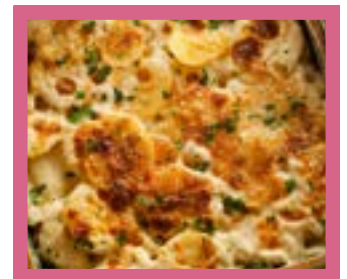


## Securing Your Financial Future

April is Financial Literacy Month, a reminder that understanding money basics can shape your financial future. Financial literacy is not about complex strategies. It is about knowing how to budget, save, understand credit and plan for long-term goals. Understanding compound interest, fees and your benefits statements can help you make smarter decisions and avoid common mistakes. Small improvements in financial knowledge can build confidence and reduce stress. This month, choose one area to strengthen, whether it is retirement planning, investment options or building a realistic budget. Small steps today can lead to meaningful progress over time.

## CHEESY BAKED POTATOES

- Frozen diced hash browns
- 1 cup shredded cheddar or Colby Jack
- 2 tbsp butter
- Salt and pepper
- Optional green onions or bacon bits



- Heat oven to 425°F. An air fryer works great too.
- Toss potatoes with melted butter, salt, and pepper.
- Bake for 10 to 12 minutes until crispy.
- Sprinkle cheese on top and bake 2 to 3 more minutes until melted.
- Add toppings if desired.