

## Donation aids dive team

The Shelby County Dive Team volunteers are always poised and ready when the call for assistance comes in to aid a water search and rescue. After their truck's engine blew coming back from a six-day operation near Cowden last summer, the dive team needed some assistance of their own.

Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) worked with several community groups to raise \$26,000 toward the purchase of a replacement vehicle. "We are sincerely grateful to these community organizations for their donation. It will go a long way in helping us purchase a new vehicle to tow our rescue boats to a search and rescue scene," commented Dive Team Commander Austin Pritchard.

"This was a unique opportunity to partner with CoBank's Sharing Success Program and other community organizations again," explained SEC President/CEO Josh Shallenberger. "This sparked quite a fire and resulted in a donation about five times the size of what we would have otherwise raised."

SEC, CoBank, Shelby County, Friends of Lake Shelbyville, and Shelbyville Area Community Foundation teamed up to donate to this volunteer organization. This donation leaves the dive team only \$10,000 short of their goal.

According to Pritchard, "The original dive team formed when Lake Shelbyville was first created, and then it fizzled out. The current version of the team formed in 2000 through a Water Rescue Grant from the state of Illinois."

The dive team covers all of Shelby County including all of Lake Shelbyville, a portion of the Kaskaskia



*On hand for the check presentation were, pictured left to right, Shelby Electric Cooperative President/CEO Josh Shallenberger, CoBank Vice President Aaron Johnson, Friends of Lake Shelbyville Representative Kara Pfeiffer, CoBank Regional Vice President Doran Dennis, County Board Chairman Dave Cruitt, Dive Team Commander Austin Pritchard, and Shelbyville Area Community Foundation Representative Noel Bolinger.*

River, and other bodies of water. The team is made up of 16 volunteers, with some being divers and some being shore responders.

Aaron Johnson, Vice President of CoBank, said, "We have been doing the Sharing Success Program since 2012. We set aside \$3 million every year and receive applications from April 1 to October 1, and match dollar for dollar for our members up to \$5,000 each. It all goes to improving rural America. We are proud to be part of this."

Since the inception of CoBank's Sharing Success Program, the cooperative has received matching dollars for donations to the Shelbyville Fire Department, Roxy Theatre, Shelby County Veterans Fund, Shelby County CEO, and Taylorville Development Association.

CoBank is a member of the Farm Credit System, a nationwide network of banks and retail lending institutions chartered to support the borrowing needs of U.S. agriculture, rural infrastructure, and rural communities.

# Stay vigilant against scams posing as utilities

Local and national headlines are hard to miss, scam attempts are still on the rise. Whether by phone, email, or door-to-door, criminals continue to target individuals within our communities, including Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) members.

The most common scam attempt is a threatening phone call stating your electric service is in immediate danger of being disconnected. The caller associates themselves with SEC, or another local utility, and warns the individual that a payment must be made immediately to avoid a disconnection of service. Various payment options, including prepaid credit cards and other personal information, are requested within a short window, usually a few minutes, or the service will be shut-off.

The scams are effective when they create a sense of urgency and catch you off-guard in a quick moment of panic. In that brief moment of panic, individuals have been lured into providing credit card and other personal information. Unfortunately, it is often tough for law enforcement to recover any lost money.



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Remember the following important information to prevent yourself from falling victim to a utility scam:

- SEC will NEVER call and demand an instant payment or ask for personal information to prevent immediate disconnection.
- A mailed notice will be sent advising of an overdue account. You may also receive a phone call from us before a disconnection as a reminder of the overdue balance.
- If you are ever unsure of the status of your account or the party you are speaking with, hang up and call the cooperative immediately. Cooperative representatives are readily available to you by calling 1-800-677-2612. You can also check the status of your account online at [shelbyelectric.coop](http://shelbyelectric.coop) or download the SmartHub app.



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**1-855-385-9981**  
**[www.shelbyelectric.coop](http://www.shelbyelectric.coop)**  
**[twitter.com/YourCoop](https://twitter.com/YourCoop)**  
**[facebook.com/YourCoop](https://facebook.com/YourCoop)**

**Office Hours:**  
**7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

**Laundry Tip:** Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter-weight clothing. You'll spend less time running the dryer for lighter-weight items, which saves energy.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



REAL LIFE  REAL POWER

## Getting Real with Marla and garages

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), at least 430 people die and approximately 50,000 people visit the emergency room each year in the U.S. due to accidental carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Garages are often overlooked when it comes to safety and energy efficiency. A home's thermal boundary should exclude the attached garage. The thermal boundary is what separates the home's conditioned space from its unconditioned space. Ideally, it is an air sealed, insulated area that is responsible for controlling heat flow in and out of the home. In the case of attached garages, the overall energy efficiency and occupants' safety can all be greatly affected by the thermal boundary.

Vehicles can be a major source of CO. Even with the overhead garage door open, especially at start-up, a vehicle produces large amounts of poisonous exhaust. CO can be drawn into the home when items, such as an exhaust fan, force air out.

Additionally, items often stored in garages, such as lawn mowers, gasoline-powered tools, paint, and chemicals can also produce toxic gases. Any HVAC units, ductwork, pipes, and wire accesses running between the garage and home should be carefully sealed to prevent contaminated air from flowing into the home.

The CDC recommends following these tips to prevent CO poisoning:

- Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- Never leave a vehicle motor running while parked in an enclosed space, such as a garage.
- Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open.
- Never run a motor vehicle, generator, or gasoline-powered engine less than 20 feet from an open window, door, or vent where exhaust can vent into an enclosed area.
- Never use a charcoal grill, lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, or camper.
- If your CO detector's alarm sounds, leave the house and call 911.

Energy can escape from your garage in the same way it does your home: roof, doors, windows, gaps, and holes. The solution is the same as for your home: air seal and insulate. Do not forget to change incandescent bulbs to more efficient LED bulbs. Unplug and dispose of that old, outdated garage fridge, too. When the electric bill arrives in the mail, it can be easy to forget all the possible sources of energy use. However, what happens in the garage, does not always stay in the garage!

~ Marla Pruemmer,  
Communication Specialist

### Top 5 ways to boost outdoor efficiency

Could your garage, shed, barn, or other outdoor building use an energy efficiency boost? Try these tips to save energy and money:



- 1** The same rules apply for outdoor buildings as houses: add insulation, install energy-efficient windows, and seal ductwork.
- 2** Unplug power tools and battery chargers at the end of the season.
- 3** Install an insulated door and seal the sides and bottom to reduce air leaks.
- 4** Install motion sensors on outdoor lights.
- 5** Look into LED retrofit kits for outdoor security lights. They cost more upfront, but payback is five to 10 years, and LEDs can last up to 20 years.

Source: Cooperative Research Network



## ONLINE BILL PAY

Pay your bills online and monitor usage with the **smarthub** app!



# Winter weather and your propane tank

Winter can produce some of the most magnificent scenery, but it can also be challenging. Accumulated snow and ice have the potential to damage your propane system. While you can not always predict snowstorms or hazardous weather conditions, you can take measures during and after winter storms.

## Keep snow and ice from accumulating on propane equipment.

Snow or ice accumulation can potentially cause parts of your propane system to crack or break, resulting in a gas leak. It is your responsibility to make sure that all propane pipes, valves, regulators, and tanks are clear of snow and ice. Gently brush away snow or ice that has accumulated around the tank, meter, regulator, and any other piping. Do this using a broom or by hand. If you must use a shovel, use extreme caution around all equipment. If you notice any snow or ice buildup that cannot be removed easily, contact Shelby Energy Company. DO NOT attempt to remove snow or ice by kicking or hitting equipment.

## Be alert to snow buildup on rooftops and other areas.

Frequently check where snow or ice collect on your roof, structure, or



*Keeping your propane tank free from snow and ice will allow your propane provider safe and easy access to service your tank.*

nearby trees, and clear it if you believe it might fall on any part of your propane system. Never shovel snow off roofs and onto propane equipment. Heavy accumulations of snow or ice falling on tanks, regulators, meters, piping, or valves may cause damage that could result in a gas leak.

## Keep vents clear.

Appliance vents and chimney flues must ALWAYS be clear of snow or ice. Some homes may have “direct” vents, which are close to the ground. Improper venting can cause carbon monoxide to

become trapped in your home, causing serious illness or even death.

## Clear driveways and pathways to propane tanks.

Please remember that a propane delivery truck needs at least a 10-foot-wide path to be able to deliver fuel to your home. Also, keep the tank area and a path to the tank free of snow. When plowing, snow blowing, or shoveling, do not push or pile snow around your tank, meter, regulator, or piping.

## Talk to your contractors.

If you use a snow removal service, make sure that the service knows the location of all propane equipment on the property. Instruct them to keep their equipment clear of all parts of your propane system. If your snow removal service shovels snow off your roof, instruct them to never shovel snow onto any part of the propane system.



## Propane safety tips

- Handle any propane-powered equipment cautiously and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Cylinder tanks for equipment such as stoves and ovens must be located outside of the home.
- Never store or use propane gas cylinders larger than one pound inside the home.
- Never operate a propane-powered gas grill inside the home.
- Have propane gas equipment inspected periodically by a professional for possible leaks or malfunctioning parts.
- Carefully follow the manufacturer's instructions when lighting a pilot.
- If you smell a strong odor of gas, leave the area immediately, call 911 from outside the home, and then call your propane provider.

Shelby Energy Company is an LP gas subsidiary of Shelby Electric Cooperative. You can reach them by calling 217-774-2311, visit their website at [shelbyenergyco.coop](http://shelbyenergyco.coop), or like them on facebook @ShelbyEnergyCo.



Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, February 18 in observance of Presidents Day.