

## 1960s

### Midwest Electric Cooperative

The 1960s started off on a high note – with new office and warehouse facilities – and, on December 2, 1963, the original loan for \$137,000 plus interest was paid in full. Membership numbers continued to rise, and the co-op began the decade with 3,998 members. Average monthly kWh usage for a co-op member rose, too, to 588 kWh – showing the benefit of electricity – for an average bill of \$15.47.

In 1966, Midwest joined with other electric cooperatives to sponsor the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, and began hosting annual contests to send area high school students to Washington D.C.

Over the 22 years since the co-op's birth, the cost of living had increased several times, and prices of all retail items and services had increased considerably. From 1939 to 1964, the cooperative had never increased its rates to members. The average kWh cost hit an all-time low of less than 3¢. In 1964, the co-op conducted a rate study and, after much consideration by the board of directors, a rate **decrease** was announced in January 1965. This accomplishment was not only a tribute to good management, but to members through their greater use of electricity to apply the capacity of their electric system. In 1965, the average bill rose to \$17.55 for average usage of 753 kWh per month. In 1968, another rate study was conducted due to the increased cost of electricity. More members were using electricity in all aspects of their lives; all-electric homes were being built and many existing homes were being converted to all-electric. In January 1969, another rate decrease took effect. At the end of 1969, the energy billing and record keeping systems were converted to data processing.

The last week of 1969 dealt a harsh blow to the cooperative: a severe ice storm struck the area once again, resulting in the loss of almost 300 poles and over \$75,000.00 in damages to the system in just a few days. However, the benefits of modern equipment and assistance from the cooperatives in Hereford and Eldorado, as well as from construction companies, allowed power to be restored to almost everyone within one week.

### Stamford Electric Cooperative

*Adapted from Stamford Electric Cooperative, Inc.: The First Thirty-Seven Years by C.M. Lester*

For the year 1960, SEC sold 34,381,936 kW for a total revenue of \$675,880.41. Approximately 60% of total revenue was from oil-related services.

In August 1967, the cooperative enacted a policy that all employees would be required to retire on or before the date of their 65<sup>th</sup> birthday. In 1968, the board approved Stamford EC's participation in the Statewide Data Processing center in Austin, which was already in use by most Texas cooperatives. In September 1968, the board approved remodeling of the Manager's office, kitchen, men's restroom and the Community Room, adding furnishings, and adding more personnel.

The most memorable event to conclude the 1960s for Stamford EC was a devastating ice storm, as recalled by C.M. Lester:

The worst disaster to hit the Cooperative came in the last four days of 1969, when "the ice storm" began on a Sunday afternoon, with a light rain and plunging temperatures and glazing everything in sight. The area looked like a fairyland, but to the linemen, helpers, maintenance

men and office force, it was pure nightmare. One to two inches of rain fell over the area and the wires were weighted down with ice. Roads were icy, fields were wet and frozen and the temperature stayed bitter cold for several days. Phones at the office never stopped ringing; crews worked almost around the clock and ten other cooperatives sent crews and equipment to help us. First lines to be put back in service were the ones that would put the most people back in service and the special hardship cases, whenever we could. Most of the residences were back in service within 4 to 6 days, in comparison with the three weeks it took in the storm in 1949, although the earlier storm had only half as many broken poles. This latest storm, in the last few days of 1969 and the first part of 1970, took three hundred poles and many miles of broken line, and cost \$58,708. 14 to repair.