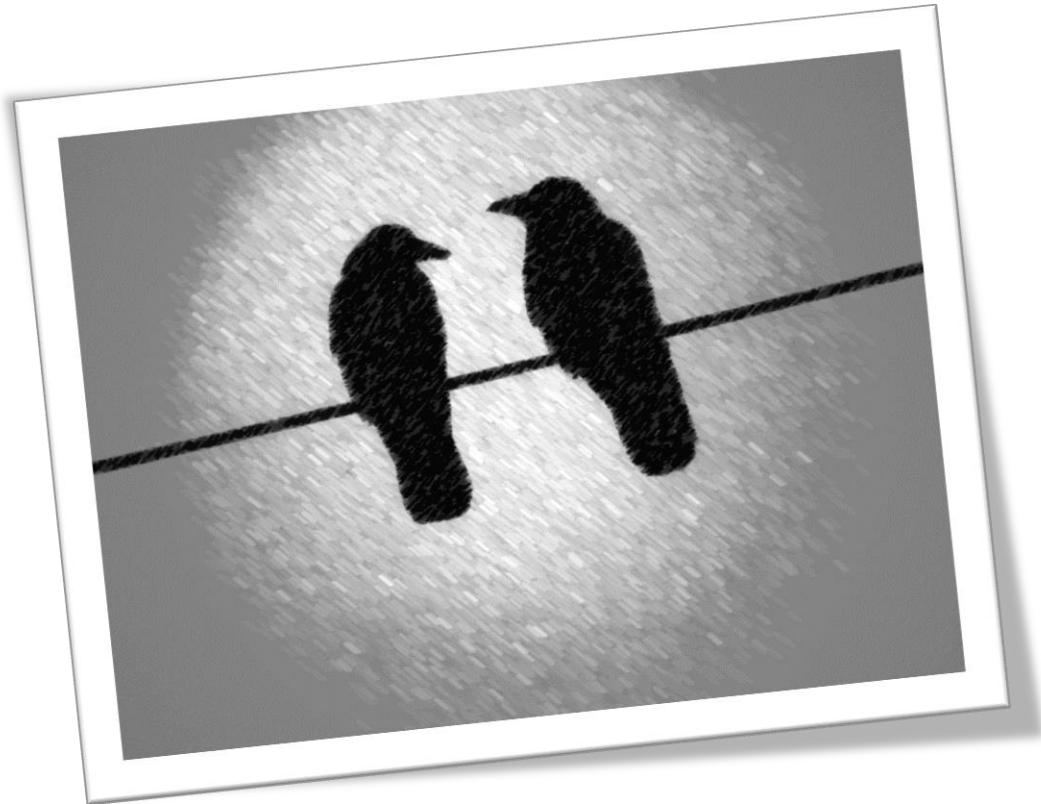


# Electric Cooperatives: Going Beyond the Wires



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Two crows land upon a wire between two utility poles.

“Hey Jeff, how’re the kids?” inquired the first crow.

“Same as usual,” Jeff, the second crow, responded, “Won’t stop begging their mother for food, they’re kinda dumb, and they can’t fly.”

“Sounds a lot like human kids to me,” the first crow quipped.

“Yeah, pretty much.”

A lull in conversation formed between them.

“Uhh... y’know Jeff, I’m really glad these utility poles exist so we can fly over to ‘em every day and talk. The view from up here ain’t so bad either,” added the first crow, gazing upon the open, rural landscape that surrounded them.

“Yeah, I’m glad they’re here too, Bill. I mean, we wouldn’t have to meet on them every day if you’d let me visit your nest for once,” Jeff said accusingly.

“Look, you know how my wife is, man. One stick out of line and she goes bonkers. No company for me unless the nest is in absolute pristine condition... which is basically never,” Bill responded.

“Yeah, anyway... you know who builds these poles, right?” Jeff asked.

“Humans do. Every crow knows that.”

“Well of course, but I mean specifically. You see, around these parts, they’re built by a cooperative called Southwest Electric.”

“A co... coop...” Bill struggled to finish the word.

“A cooperative,” Jeff asserted.

“Yeah, that. What is it?”

“A cooperative is a business made up of citizens with similar needs and goals, and they work together to achieve things that one person can’t do alone,” Jeff informed, “They also provide great savings and loans to their members, and tons of agricultural products used on farms every year. I guess you could say they go beyond just the wires.”

“So they help all that delicious corn grow in the fields around here?” Bill asked intently.

“Yes, Bill, they help grow that corn that you steal from the Johnson’s all the time.”

“Hey, if it weren’t for that weird guy that stands out in the middle of the field, I’d steal a lot more. He gives me the creeps.”

“You mean a scarecrow? Do you really fall for that?” Jeff asked, struggling not to laugh at Bill.

“Hey man, give me a break. I didn’t go to college.”

“Clearly,” Jeff joked.

“Oh, shove off. How do you know all this stuff anyway?”

“Landed on some guy’s shoulder and read it off some website he was lookin’ at on his phone. I was going for the french fries in his other hand, but I like reading, so...” Jeff boasted. He did go to college.

“How were you on his shoulder long enough to read an entire website? Didn’t he shoo you off?” Jeff wondered.

“Nah, man. He had those earbud things in his ears. They’re like zombies now, they never look away from them phones. You could lay an egg on their head and they wouldn’t bat an eye.”

“At least they don’t play Angry Birds any more. I can’t even count how many nightmares I had about being flung into a building against my will.”

“Anyways, let’s just thank our lucky stars for these cooperatives.”

“Yeah, for sure. Y’know, I was actually thinking about getting some electricity and a TV wired to my nest. I’ve been watching that ‘American Pickers’ program through the Johnson’s window, and I’m hooked.”

“We can’t operate TVs, Bill. We don’t have opposable thumbs.”

“Oh yeah.”