

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

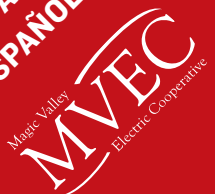
2017

*holiday*  
CONTEST  
WINNERS

Readers share  
prized recipes for  
family celebrations



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Black-tailed prairie dogs once inhabited 56.8 million acres in Texas.

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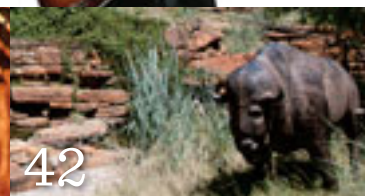
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PRAIRIE DOG: RUSSELL A. GRAVES. JOE ELY: TED PARKER JR.

**ON THE COVER** *Warm Gingerbread With Lemon Basil Sauce* by Rebekah Stewart of San Bernard EC wins the grand prize. Photo by Melissa Brisko

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## Youth Tour Optimism

I trust that this journey will have opened their eyes and hearts to the need that people of character be in office and guide our country in the right way [*The State With the Most*, October 2017].

JACKY MANCHESTER | VAN ALSTYNE  
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

Impressive group of young people. If the rest of the nation raises such fine students, the future of the country is in good hands.

PAUL VELEZ | KYLE  
PEDERNALES EC

## Dia de los Muertos

I enjoyed reading *Dia de los Muertos* [October 2017] and learning how to celebrate our friends and relatives who have passed on. I like the tradition. ¡Muchas gracias!

DAVID FISCHER | GEORGETOWN  
PEDERNALES EC

## From the TCP Kitchen

I was given Paula Disbrowe's *Cowgirl Cuisine: Rustic Recipes and Cowgirl Adventures From a Texas Ranch* cookbook when it came out. I have made a good impression following her recipes when I bring food to gatherings. Scorpion Tails [*Some Like it Hot*, August 2017] are labor-intensive but so worth it.

DO chill the filling overnight.  
DO use the listed cheeses.  
DO find the pequillo peppers for the sauce topping.

Broiling until browned, not blackened, makes a huge difference.

My cook's tip: Using a serrated grapefruit spoon to gut the jalapenos during prep is much easier than a paring knife.

## Never a Humdrum Day

One of our linemen, Edward Varnador, saw this hummingbird trying to fly in the truck barn at Medina EC, where I also work.

It had been in the barn for several days trying to get out, but it had string wrapped around its body and feet. The little bird was worn out from trying to fly and it fell to the ground. Edward picked it up and unwound the string from it before setting it free.

These rough, tough lineman hands were so tender and delicate to remove the string from this little fellow.

LINDA SPEED | PEARSALL | MEDINA EC



I made a huge batch of 30 recently for a fête and gobbled down five before I could stop myself.

SHELLEY MEYER | CANYON LAKE  
PEDERNALES EC

We are fascinated with John Madison's ribs [above] but are hesitant to try it [*Smoky Fall-off-the-Bone Ribs*, October 2017]. Please explain the purpose of cooking the ribs in waxed paper. We barbecue often but have never heard of

this method. The paper does not melt or stick to the ribs?

SANDI APPELT | BRENHAM  
BLUEBONNET AND PEDERNALES ECS

## Food Editor Paula Disbrowe

**responds:** Madison's method of double-wrapping the ribs in waxed paper and aluminum foil was new to me, as well. Essentially, he's trying to preserve moisture by sealing in the juices. The waxed paper does not melt or stick to the ribs (thanks to the rendered meat fat); however, you also can use butcher paper or parchment—or simply use aluminum foil.

## Yay for Snow Days

As a 7-year-old in 1957 in Arlington, Virginia, I remember we had a big blizzard that year, too [*Letters, Derailed by Blizzard*, October 2017]. I used to watch the weather report and

noticed our big snowstorms always came out of Texas.

To a little schoolboy, a foot of snow meant freedom. Too bad it started to snow on Saturday and not Sunday night.

MARK BORCHELT | ROBY  
BIG COUNTRY EC

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## HAPPENINGS

# Heavenly Holiday in Hondo

**HONDO**, west of San Antonio, calls itself “God’s Country,” so naturally its annual yuletide festival is called **CHRISTMAS IN GOD’S COUNTRY**.

The celebration, **DECEMBER 8-9** this year, includes real snow, Santa Claus, a worship service, lighted night parade and vendor booths around the Medina County Courthouse square.

Medina Electric Cooperative is a sponsor of the event, and the co-op’s employees often volunteer to contribute to its success.

Just follow the holiday greeting signs, put up along U.S. Highway 90 by area businesses, to find your way.

**INFO** ▶ (830) 426-3037, [hondochamber.org/events](http://hondochamber.org/events)

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## LIFESTYLE

### ‘Volar un Papalote’

**That’s how** you would say “go fly a kite” in Spanish.

**Two sections** of the recently published children’s book *50 Cities of the U.S.A.* visit Texas cities where you might hear that phrase.

**The pages on Austin** note that the Zilker Kite Festival is the U.S.’s longest-running kite festival, dating to 1929. The Houston pages note there are 145 languages spoken in the area.



## SPORTS SECTION

### ICE IN THEIR VEINS

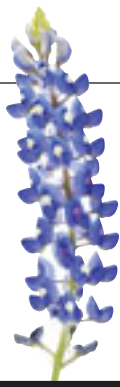
**The legendary Ice Bowl**, when the Green Bay Packers claimed the NFL championship with a 21-17 victory over the Dallas Cowboys in one of the coldest and most memorable games in league history, was played 50 years ago.

**The game-time** temperature December 31, 1967, was minus 13, with a wind chill of minus 48. Players said the turf at Lambeau Field in Green Bay was like a sheet of ice.

**Quarterback Bart Starr**, one of several players who suffered frostbite during the game, ran the ball into the end zone with just seconds left to clinch the Packers’ victory.



WORTH REPEATING



*“My heart found its home long ago in the beauty, mystery, order and disorder of the flowering earth.”*

— LADY BIRD JOHNSON

The former first lady was born December 22, 1912, and the National Wildflower Research Center opened on that same date in 1982.

CO-OP PEOPLE

# Knowing the Ropes

**MICHAEL ZAMZOW** can compete among the best when it comes to ropes and zeal. The HILCO Electric Cooperative lineman of two years won a share of a \$150,000 grand prize at the World Series of Team Roping Finale XI in Las Vegas in December 2016 and a second-place trophy at the Texas Lineman’s Rodeo in Seguin in July 2017. He roped steer in one event and a mock-injured lineman in the other.

How did he do it? “Lots of practice and hard work,” Zamzow says. “It takes a lot of time to get to where you want to be.”

The Whitney native grew up riding horses and going to rodeos. He began practicing his roping skills daily and soon was traveling to compete in rodeos every weekend. Qualifying for the World Series was a dream.

“Man, it was pretty cool,” he says of his first trip to Las Vegas. “I was in bed pretty early every night, getting ready to rope the next morning and take care of my horse.”

Zamzow heads back to Vegas, to compete in the WSTR Finale XII, December 10–16.



NATURE

# SEEDS OF AN IDEA

**Legendary Trees**, about 20 miles south of Athens, grows and sells saplings descended from Texas’ historic trees. Among the 11 trees currently available, most are oaks such as Texas A&M University’s Century Tree (the most popular), Comanche’s Fleming Oak, Stephens County’s Halfway Oak and New Braunfels’ Church Oak.

**The idea for the business** came from these very pages. Company founders Chuck Cade and Bourke Harvey, members of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative, read *Grow Your Own Tall Tale* in the April 2015 issue. That story described the special project to sell saplings from the historic La Bahia pecan, which overlooks the ferry crossing at Washington-on-the-Brazos, where it has stood since the days of the Texas Revolution.

**Cade and Harvey** decided to seek out acorns and pecans from historic trees in Texas and offer them for sale. Pecan lovers now can select the Goodnight-Loving pecan in Palo Pinto County where, legend has it, Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving sealed their partnership in 1866.

**Learn more** at [legendarytrees.com](http://legendarytrees.com).

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# Christmas ❄️ IN THE ❄️



BY MELISSA GASKILL

**The holiday season** brings visions of gathering with friends and family, participating in special traditions and creating wonderful memories. But it easily can turn into a frenzied time, involving excessive dashing hither and yon to shop, prepare and manage all the moving parts. And all that effort is just to achieve the “gathering” stage. It does not account for the stress of overspending, overeating and overexposure to those difficult relatives. Sometimes, the holidays lose their fun.

This year, consider an alternative. Step back—in some cases, way, way, back—to simpler days and enjoy the outdoors, fun activities and quality time with friends or family at special holiday events hosted by Texas state parks.

Consider the six favorites we describe here and check for additional holiday events at other parks on the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department State Parks events page: [tpwd.texas.gov/calendarstate-park-events](http://tpwd.texas.gov/calendarstate-park-events).



# Parks



## Goliad State Park

The Spanish colonial mission of Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga forms the centerpiece of this park on the banks of the San Antonio River in Southeast Texas. Originally established in 1722 near Matagorda Bay and moved to its present site in 1749, the mission also served as Texas' first large cattle ranch, supplying beef for Spanish settlements all the way to Louisiana.

Every December, park staffers decorate the whitewashed stucco chapel, reconstructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. Festive lights adorn outdoor arches; greenery and lights twine around altar railings inside; and glowing luminarias line the walkway to the chapel. Check the park website events page for holiday concerts at the mission, which boasts excellent acoustics.

**Luminarias, left, and other lighting give Nuestra Señora del Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga a festive feel.**

## South Llano River State Park

Walter Buck donated his 2,600-acre Central Texas ranch to the TPWD in 1977. The park includes campgrounds, picnic areas, riverfront and more than 18 miles of trails.

"The park headquarters is in the former ranch house," says interpretive ranger Holly Platz, "and we have it decorated all month for the holidays." Christmas at the Ranch, a one-day event December 2, celebrates ranching holiday traditions with events such as Dutch oven cooking, period music and horse demonstrations. "Entrance fees are waived for the day, so it's a great time for families to come," Platz adds.

**Fly-fishing is just one of the activities that lures visitors to South Llano River State Park.**



## Monument Hill and Kreische Brewery State Historic Sites

The imposing circa-1850s home of German immigrant H.L. Kreische brings out the holiday spirit with traditional German-Texas Christmas trees, wreaths, lamps and candles. Thousands of festive lights shine along the half-mile Scenic and Historic Trail that traces a bluff with a view of the town of La Grange. Inside the grand old house, Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus wait to hear children's wish lists, and the Monument Hill and Kreische Brewery Docent Organization presents Christmas music and refreshments. These festivities take place December 2, 8, 9, 15 and 16, 6–8 p.m.

**A decorated outdoor window sill at the Kreische Brewery**



## Battleship Texas State Historic Site

Commissioned March 12, 1914, the Battleship Texas took part in significant naval battles in World War I and World War II. Now retired, it docks on the Houston Ship Channel near San Jacinto Battleground State Historic Site.

For Yuletide Texas, December 1–31, staff and volunteers dress up the ship. “We decorate it in the same way the crew serving aboard the ship would have,” says park employee Barbara Graf. “The sailors and officers were missing spending the holidays at home with their families and tried to make this time aboard the ship special.”

Graf says the highlight of the celebration is A Sailor’s Christmas, 11 a.m.–3 p.m., December 9. It includes festive activities such as pictures with Santa and cookies served from the ship’s galley. It’s free with paid admission to the battleship.

**The bell from the original USS Texas, top, commissioned in 1895, is displayed in the Battleship Texas, above.**



## Wyer Aerial Tramway, Franklin Mountains State Park

Bright yellow, Swiss-made gondolas travel a 2,600-foot steel cable to the top of Ranger Peak, 5,632 feet above sea level, where an observation deck offers a 360-degree view of El Paso, Mexico and the rugged Franklin Mountains. Activities include an Art in the Park event December 9 when kids of all ages can make a holiday-themed craft. Santa is expected to make a weekend visit to take pictures with tramway visitors. On December 31, join park staff sporting Santa hats on a morning hike up Ranger Peak—a great way to work off all the cookies and milk.

**From atop Ranger Peak, visitors can see 7,000 square miles.**



## Palo Duro Canyon State Park

The second-largest canyon in the country at 120 miles long, 20 miles wide and up to 800 feet deep, Palo Duro extends from Canyon to Silverton. About a million years ago, the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River began carving into the plains, exposing four geologic layers going back more than 200 million years.

On December 16, 5–8 p.m., this dramatic scenery provides a backdrop for Christmas in the Canyon, which features lighted hot air balloons that make a spectacular photo opportunity. “The balloons stay on the ground, but with the right conditions, they may lift off slightly,” says park interpreter Jeff Davis. The event at the Mack Dick Group Pavilion includes photos with Santa Claus, holiday crafts for the kids, entertainment from local bands and choirs, and a food truck serving hot drinks and food. Park entrance is free starting at 4 p.m. with a donation of canned goods for the local food bank.

**The “Grand Canyon of Texas” features the iconic Lighthouse rock formation.**

Read more of **Melissa Gaskill’s** writing at [melissagaskill.blogspot.com](http://melissagaskill.blogspot.com).





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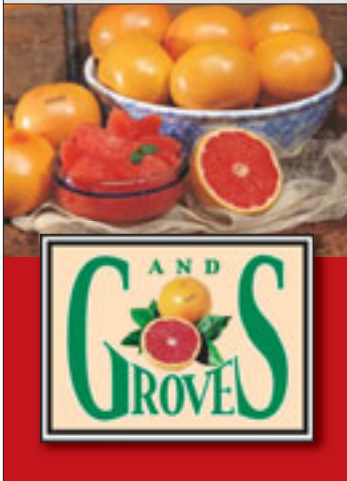
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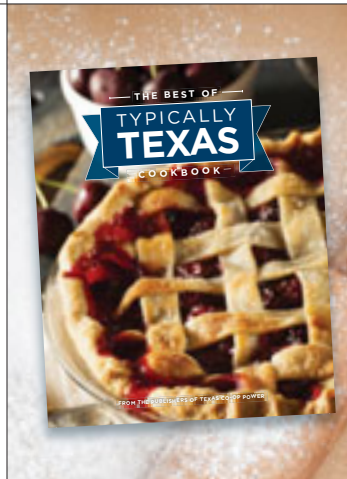
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# HIGH PLAINS SENTINEL

Prairie dog “towns” survive in North Texas—but barely

**“Right there,”** I said as I pointed, motioning to my wife and kids as we cruised through a remote corner of Floyd County, northeast of Lubbock. Flanking the edge of a dry playa lake, conical mounds of fresh dirt offered confirmation that prairie dogs had started a settlement, called a “town,” on the slope overlooking the broad basin.

While most of the town’s residents seemed to be hunkered underground to escape the relentless March wind, a few of the rodents skittered about as we slowed to take a closer look.

The black-tailed prairie dog is one of four species of prairie dogs in North America and the only species found in Texas. The rodent, historically found west of the 98th meridian, once again

occupies pockets of its original range after a century of decline.

Floyd County straddles an ecological area that changes dramatically from west to east. On the county’s western side is the lower edge of the High Plains, a vast zone that gradually tilts downhill so sediment flows east from the Rocky Mountains as it has for eons. Below the Caprock Escarpment, rolling plains ripple eastward to the Texas Cross Timbers. On both sides of the ecological demarcation, prairie dog colonies pepper the landscape.

When I was a teacher, prairie dogs were an integral part of my wildlife education curriculum. Every year, my students mapped a prairie dog town and tested the soil and forage quality to determine the prairie dogs’ effect on the land.





**Prairie dogs forage outside their burrows, marked by mounds with entrances.**

“Like beavers, prairie dogs are known as ecosystem engineers because they dramatically change the landscape,” says Jonah Evans, state mammologist with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department. “The short grasses and burrow systems in prairie dog towns create important habitat that benefits multiple species, including pronghorn, burrowing owls, black-footed ferrets, Sprague’s pipit, horned lark and many more.”

As we drive, we see small towns here and there across the plains. The largest covers perhaps an acre. At every town, we see prairie dogs foraging or sitting up, keeping watch for pred-

ators and crying out their high-pitched “chirk” at any hint of danger. The call alerts other prairie dogs, which scurry to the safety of their subterranean burrows to wait for the all-clear.

Even though prairie dogs are abundant in spots across Texas, their number and the range they occupy is only a tiny percentage of what it once was.

### A CENTURY OF DECLINE

In the 1901 edition of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s *Yearbook of Agriculture*, C. Hart Merriam, chief of the Division of Biological Survey, submitted a report titled *The Prairie Dog of the Great Plains*. In his report, he cited a prominent Texas newspaper as editorializing:

“No man who has not gone through the portions of Texas infested by prairie dogs can conceive the enormous ravages they have committed. Millions of acres of land once covered with nutritious grasses have been eaten off by these animals, until the land is naked and worthless, and will remain worthless so long as the prairie dog remains. They invade the farms and eat down the growing crops. Here and there individual effort has been made to destroy them, without avail, and their numbers steadily increase, until they are a menace to the prosperity of the land.”

Four years later, Vernon Bailey released the *Biological Survey of Texas*, in which he described a prairie dog town that stretched 260 miles, from San Angelo to Clarendon. That town was about 100 miles wide and, in Bailey’s estimation, covered 16 million acres.

Black-tailed prairie dogs were tapped for eradication by the dawn of the 20th century. The rodents were plentiful and stood in the way of settlers taming the grasslands for fattening cattle or growing crops.

In 1898, B.A. Owen, a ranch manager, wrote, “I ordered 100 pounds of strychnine and 400 pounds of cyanide of potash through Doss Brothers of Colorado City. We got started about Dec. 1st and worked 15 men all that winter and had success. The next year we had a good season and the grass was knee high all over the ranch. Mr. Godair [the ranch owner] came to the ranch the next fall and asked me what I had to spend on the dogs. I told him approximately \$6,000 and he said he wouldn’t have them back for \$20,000.”

Over the next quarter century, black-tailed prairie dog numbers dropped 25 percent, as confirmed by official reports such as the *Yearbook of Agriculture*. In 1922, government agents poisoned more than 1 million acres of prairie dog country in Texas and eradicated 90 percent of the animals in the process.

In 1924, researchers sealed the prairie dog’s fate for the next generation of animals when they reported, “The prairie dog is one of the most injurious rodents of the Southwest and Plains region. These animals assemble in areas called towns, where populations become very high; thus, the removal of vegetation in

its entirety from the vicinity is common.” After the report was published, eradication efforts continued across the Great Plains.

**A prairie dog chirks to alert others to potential danger.**

As the numbers of prairie dogs dropped precipitously nationwide, their eradication was nearly complete in Texas. In 1870, Texas prairie dogs were estimated to cover 56.8 million acres. By 1998, that number had been reduced to 22,500 acres—a 99.96 percent drop. Since then, prairie dogs have maintained a steady population.

### ANATOMY OF AN EARTH MOVER

When prairie dogs colonize an area, their incessant digging creates habitat for other animals. Badgers, burrowing owls, snakes and rabbits are among those that occupy active and abandoned burrows. When the plains were full of prairie dogs, their presence helped maintain a complicated grassland ecosystem that supported the largest concentrations of mammals in North America, including vast herds of grazers such as bison and pronghorn.

Every prairie dog town is segmented into neighborhoods called coterie. These coterie are typically made up of related prairie dogs, and the inhabitants of each coterie don't necessarily get along with those next door. Extra-coterie fighting occurs between prairie dogs to resolve territorial disputes.

Coterie typically cover an acre and include 50–100 burrows. The burrows aren't interconnected, and many feature only a single opening. Most, however, have entrance and exit openings, and the two allow enough of a draft to keep the burrows' subterranean temperature at a comfortable range of 50–70 degrees.

Inside the dirt mounds, females whelp three to five pups of mixed gender. The babies remain inside the burrow for the first six weeks and then emerge to integrate into the coterie. They spend their days playing and feeding on grasses, insects and prickly pears.

Even though they isolate themselves into small communities, prairie dogs have evolved to live communally in large groups because the larger community provides more eyes to watch for danger. When a prairie dog spots a predator such as a coyote or hawk, it makes a high-pitched alert called a chirk. The closer the danger, the faster the chirk. When the call goes out, other prairie dogs take notice.

Prairie dogs chirk until the last possible moment, when they duck into the burrow. When the danger is passed, they call out with a “jump-yip.” The jump-yip is an animated call created when a prairie dog rises on its back legs, throws its head back and announces that the coast is clear.

### THE FUTURE OF PRAIRIE DOGS

Based on the species' decline, it seems that prairie dogs should be listed as an endangered species, but they are not. In 1998, the



#### WEB EXTRAS

► Learn more fascinating facts about prairie dogs from the World Wildlife Fund and from *The Prairie Dog: Sentinel of the Plains*.

National Wildlife Federation petitioned the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to list the prairie dog as a threatened species. Threatened species status, while not as dire as endangered species status, still brings a degree of oversight on privately owned lands.

After hearings and lobbying on both sides of the prairie dog issue, the USFWS ruled that even though the prairie dog is warranted for inclusion on the threatened species list, its listing was precluded. Instead, the service opted on a plan in which individual states could submit restorative plans to manage and mitigate the prairie dog's demise.

Texas' plan, adopted in 2004, states, “The Management Plan is a step-by-step plan to reach the statewide goal of 293,129 acres of occupied prairie dog habitat by 2011.” Even though a count is in progress, it is not clear that the habitat goal was reached.

The approach to achieve the habitat goal was based on five points: understanding the exact population of the black-tailed prairie dog in Texas, implementing outreach and educational programs, developing management options that conserve prairie dog populations, tightening regulations that protect prairie dogs and establishing research programs that support long-term population viability.

It's unlikely that the prairie dog will ever occupy the entirety of its original range. The agribusiness infrastructure and human settlement forbid it from a practical standpoint. However, there are still special pockets of rangeland where prairie dogs thrive.

In rural Floyd County, my family and I saw a few.

Writer and photographer **Russell A. Graves** is a member of South Plains EC and author of *The Prairie Dog: Sentinel of the Plains*.



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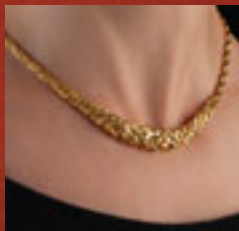
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From the publishers of **TEXAS COOP POWER**

# Magic Valley's 80th Anniversary Celebration Recap



**John W. Herrera**

## MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

Since 1937, Magic Valley Electric Cooperative or Valley REA, as we were once called, has been providing safe, affordable and reliable power to our members in the Rio Grande Valley. We have gone through many milestones, from being the first electric cooperative in the nation to retire capital credits, to using social media and fully translating all of our publications into Spanish, including our website. For us, it is essential to ensure that all of our members are up to date with what is happening at their cooperative.

Throughout this year, we have celebrated Magic Valley's 80th Anniversary. In the January issue of Texas Co-op Power, you may recall reading about Magic Valley's first 80 years and how a group of farmers and ranchers from the Valley area got together to form the cooperative.

The February issue of Texas Co-op Power featured the article "Building on 80 Years of Success," emphasizing MVEC's growth and the future plans for the cooperative. In that same issue, we also introduced the history of Willie Wiredhand, the longtime friendly face of rural electric cooperatives nationwide.

On the 80th day of the year, March 21st, we thanked our members with coffee, cupcakes and promo items at our four office locations.

On April 17th, we invited you to your Annual Meeting, which was held at the Harlingen Municipal Auditorium this year. If you attended the meeting, you may have seen a timeline display showcasing MVEC's history. The display highlighted much of the growth and change Magic Valley has experienced over the past 80 years. If you did not get a chance to attend the meeting, we invite you to visit any of our four offices, as we have installed a permanent history timeline display in each office.

In May, we launched a bilingual radio campaign showcasing Magic Valley's milestones and popular music from the different decades, since the 1930s to the present time. In the June edition of the Texas Co-op Power, we shared MVEC's Annual Meeting highlights, for those members who were not able to join us.

In the September issue of the magazine, we reminded you about the capital credit checks going to members, thanks to the \$5.6 million capital credit retirement approved by the Board of Directors.

In October, we hosted an 80th Anniversary celebration for the Mid-Valley business community, which brought approximately 100 community members to MVEC's headquarters office in Mercedes. Magic Valley received a resolution on behalf of State Representative Armando "Mando" Martinez and the State of Texas. A second resolution was presented to MVEC by City of Mercedes Mayor, Henry Hinojosa.

In November, MVEC was in the spotlight once again, as we received the "Business of the Year" award by the Weslaco Area Chamber of Commerce.

Since 1937, your cooperative has seen the Valley grow tremendously, and we are proud to say that we have played a vital role in that growth. Looking forward, I'm excited for what the future will bring to our region and to MVEC. I trust that 80 years from now, our co-op will still be lighting up the Rio Grande Valley.

On behalf of your board of directors, staff and employees, I want to thank you once again for being an MVEC member.

Happy Birthday, Magic Valley Electric Cooperative!

Respectfully,

  
**John W. Herrera**  
General Manager

## Magic Valley Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 267  
1 3/4 Mi. W. Hwy 83  
Mercedes, TX 78570



### GENERAL MANAGER

**John W. Herrera**

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# Ask Willie Wiredhand

## STAY SAFE WHILE SHOPPING ONLINE

If you're like many consumers today, you probably do some shopping online. Every year, online sales seem to increase dramatically. During the 2016 Christmas shopping season, internet related sales grew more than 12 percent from the year before—reaching an astonishing \$122.9 billion, according to the National Retail Federation. But while shopping from the convenience of your keyboard can save time, money and gas, there are important things to consider for your own security:

It's always safer to shop with merchants you know. If you want to buy from a website that's new to you, do an online search for that merchant and "complaints" to check for negative chatter about the seller.

Use secure websites. When placing your order on the merchant's website, make sure that there is an "s" near the beginning of web address: for example, the URL should begin "https://" instead of just "http://." Also, be sure to look for a padlock icon in the upper left or lower right portion of the screen. Both of these features signal that the site you are visiting uses a high level of security to protect customers' personal information.

Credit cards give you greater protection than cash and debit cards. If you are not charged the correct amount for your purchase or do not receive the merchandise you ordered, you can dispute the transaction under the terms of the Fair Credit Billing Act—but only if you used a credit card.

Choose your passwords carefully. Most websites require you to use a password to access your personal information and place orders. Be sure to create passwords that are not easy for others to guess—and use a combination of letters, numbers and, if possible, symbols such as \* and %, to make it more difficult for your information to be accessed by others.

Check the merchant's privacy policy. This will tell you how they plan to use your information—including whether they will share it with others. You may wish to avoid sellers that do not have a privacy policy, as you have no way of knowing what they'll do with your data.

Always print and keep the receipts for your transactions. Receipts contain all the information from your order, including what you bought, the price you paid and any order or confirmation number. This info is vital if you need to follow up with the merchant or dispute your transaction.

Shopping online is easy and convenient—and by taking some simple precautions, it can also be safe.

### Deck the Halls With LEDs

Remember old-school Christmas lights? When one went out, they all did. But not anymore, if you use LEDs for holiday decorating. These hardy, energy-saving bulbs give you one less thing to worry about during the holidays.

Why are LED holiday lights better than traditional ones?

- The look of LED lighting is now on par with that of traditional bulbs. LEDs come in warm, inviting colors, with a variety of light beam patterns and dimming levels.
- LEDs have an operational life span of about 20,000 hours—enough to last for 40 holiday seasons.
- LED bulbs don't have glass or filaments, which makes them durable and resistant to breaking.
- An outage in an individual LED bulb generally doesn't darken the whole strand.
- LEDs use less energy. Running LEDs on a 6-foot Christmas tree 12 hours a day for 40 days can save about 90 percent of the cost of using traditional lights.
- Because they use less energy, it's safer to connect multiple LED strands end-to-end without overloading the wall socket. Also, they're cool to the touch, reducing the risk of fire.



# RECIPE OF THE MONTH

## Tamales with Cheese and Jalapeño Filling



SOURCE: BETTYCROCKER.COM

Servings 20

### Ingredients

- 30 dried corn husks, 4 husks reserved

### Tamale Dough

- 3 to 4 cups Progresso™ reduced-sodium chicken broth (from 32-oz carton)
- 4 cups instant corn masa for tamales (powdered). If using ready masa, eliminate the chicken broth.
- 2/3 cups shortening or lard
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon chicken bouillon granules
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder

### Cheese and Jalapeño Filling

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 medium white onion, sliced
- 1 can (12 oz.) sliced jalapeño chiles, rinsed and drained
- 1/2 lb Oaxaca, Asadero-style cheese or string cheese, cut into 3 x 1/4-inch strip

### Steps

1. Pull about twenty 1/4-inch strings from reserved husks to wrap tamales or use twine; set aside. Cover corn husks (including pulled strings) with warm water and let stand until pliable, at least 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, in large bowl, mix 2 cups of the broth and remaining tamale dough ingredients. Beat with electric mixer until well combined, adding remaining chicken broth as needed to make soft dough.
3. In 10-inch skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat until hot. Cook and stir onion in oil 2 to 3 minutes or until tender. Stir in chiles; cook 1 to 2 minutes or until hot.
4. Drain corn husks; pat dry with paper towels. Place 3 level tablespoonfuls dough on each corn husk; slightly spread out, making indentation in center with back of spoon. Place 1 to 2 strips cheese and onion and chile on center of dough; fold dough around filling. If corn husks are too small, overlap 2 husks. Fold bottom one-third of corn husk over filling; fold sides in toward center. Tie tops with corn husk strings.
5. In 5-quart Dutch oven, place round steaming rack. Pour boiling water in Dutch oven, almost touching rack. (Water should not touch tamales when they are added.) Place 6 empty tamale husks on top of rack. Stand tamales inside pot, leaning against sides all around. Cover; reduce heat to medium. Simmer gently 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes or until tamale dough becomes firm. Add more water if needed during cooking time. Let stand uncovered

## Tamales Rellenos de Queso y Jalapeños

### Ingredientes

- 30 hojas de maíz secas, 4 hojas de maíz extras

### Masa para tamales

- 3 a 4 tazas de sodio-reducido de consomé de pollo (de un cartón de 32-oz)
- 4 tazas de masa de maíz en polvo instantánea para tamales. Si usa masa preparada, elimine el consomé de pollo
- 2/3 taza manteca vegetal o de puerco

- 1 cucharadita de sal
- ½ cucharadita de consomé de pollo granulado
- ¼ cucharadita de polvo de hornear
- Relleno de queso y jalapeños
- 2 cucharadas de aceite vegetal
- 1 media cebolla blanca, cortada en rodajas
- 1 lata (12 oz) rodajas de chiles jalapeños, lavados y escurridos
- ½ lb queso Oaxaca o asadero, cortado en 3 x 1/4 pulgadas

### Instrucciones

1. Corta unas 20 tiras de 1/4-pulgada de las hojas para atar los tamales o utiliza cordel; déjalas a un lado. Cubre las hojas de maíz (incluyendo las tiras) con agua caliente y dejar reposar hasta que estén suaves, al menos 30 minutos.
2. Mientras tanto, en un recipiente grande, mezcla 2 tazas de caldo y demás ingredientes para la masa. Bate con la batidora eléctrica hasta que estén bien combinados, añade el caldo de pollo restante necesario para hacer una masa suave.
3. En un sartén de 10 pulgadas, calienta el aceite a fuego medio-alto hasta que esté caliente. Cocina y menea la cebolla en aceite de 2 a 3 minutos o hasta que esté suave. Añade los chiles; cocina de 1 a 2 minutos o hasta que estén calientes.
4. Escurre las hojas de maíz y sécalas con toallas de papel. Pon 3 cucharadas de masa en cada hoja de maíz y extiende la masa en la hoja. Agrega 1 a 2 tiras de queso y cebolla y chile en el centro de la masa; envuelve la hoja con la masa y el relleno adentro. Si las hojas de maíz son demasiado pequeñas, puedes juntar dos hojas. Dobla el tercio inferior de la hoja de maíz hacia el centro. Puedes amarrar los tamales con las tiras o hilos.
5. En una olla de 5 litros coloca una rejilla vaporera. Pon el agua hirviendo en la olla, rozando la rejilla. (El agua no debe tocar los tamales cuando se agreguen.) Pon 6 hojas de tamal vacías en la parte superior de la rejilla. Acomoda los tamales, apoyándolos contra las paredes de la olla, todo alrededor. Tapa la olla y reduce la temperatura a fuego mediano. Cocer suavemente de 1 hora a 1 hora 15 minutos o hasta que la masa adquiera firmeza. Añadir más agua si es necesario durante el tiempo de cocido. Dejar reposar destapado de 10 a 15 minutos. Para comer, desdobra cuidadosamente cada tamal, quitando el amarre y la hoja.

Merry Christmas  
& Happy New Year

MVEC will be closed  
Monday, December 25, for  
Christmas, and Monday,  
January 1, for New Year's  
Day.

Feliz Navidad y  
próspero año nuevo

Las oficinas de Magic Valley  
estarán cerradas el lunes 25  
de Diciembre, por Navidad y  
el lunes 1 de enero, por el año  
nuevo.



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# Magic Valley cumple ochenta años



## MENSAJE DEL DIRECTOR GENERAL

Desde 1937, Magic Valley Electric Cooperative o Valley REA, que fue nuestro primer nombre, ha suministrado servicio confiable, seguro y accesible a la gente del Valle del Río Grande. Hemos logrado muchas metas, como ser la primera cooperativa en la nación en rembolsar créditos de capital, comunicarse con miembros por redes sociales y traducir todas nuestras publicaciones al español, incluyendo la página web. Para nosotros es fundamental asegurarnos de que todos nuestros miembros reciban información de su cooperativa.

### John W. Herrera

A lo largo de todo el año hemos celebrado nuestro 80° aniversario. En la edición de enero de la revista Texas Co-op Power, tal vez

recuerdes el artículo sobre el inicio de Magic Valley hace 80 años y cómo un grupo de agricultores y ganaderos del Valle se unieron para formar la cooperativa.

En la edición de febrero del Texas Co-op Power tuviste la oportunidad de leer el artículo "Creando 80 años de éxitos," destacando el crecimiento de MVEC y los planes de futuro de la cooperativa. En la misma edición también presentamos la historia de Willie Wiredhand, el simpático personaje y portavoz de siempre de las cooperativas eléctricas de todo el país.

El 80° día del año, el 21 de marzo, ofrecimos café y pastelitos "cupcakes" para nuestros miembros, en nuestras cuatro oficinas: Edinburg, Pharr, Mercedes y Brownsville.

El 17 de abril te invitamos a la junta anual, que este año se celebró en el Auditorio Municipal de Harlingen. Si tuviste la oportunidad de asistir a la junta, seguramente viste una exposición sobre la historia de MVEC, la cual destacaba el crecimiento y el cambio que Magic Valley ha experimentado durante los últimos 80 años; si no tuviste la oportunidad de ir a la junta, te invitamos a que visites cualquiera de nuestros cuatro oficinas, ya que en cada una de ellas hemos instalado una exposición permanente sobre la historia de Magic Valley.

Durante el mes de mayo, iniciamos una campaña bilingüe de radio sobre hits de la música popular de las diferentes décadas desde los años 30 hasta la actualidad. En la edición de junio de Texas Co-op Power, compartimos contigo la información más destacada de la junta anual para las personas que no pudieron acompañarnos.

En la revista de septiembre, mencionamos los cheques de créditos de capital que recibirían los miembros gracias a la aprobación de \$5.6 millones de dólares por la junta directiva.

En octubre, celebramos el 80° aniversario de Magic Valley junto con la comunidad empresarial y logramos reunir aproximadamente 100 miembros de este sector en nuestra oficina corporativa, en Mercedes. Magic Valley recibió una resolución a nombre del representante estatal Armando "Mando" Martínez y del estado de Texas. Una segunda resolución para MVEC fue presentada por el alcalde Henry Hinojosa, a nombre de la ciudad de Mercedes.

En noviembre, MVEC recibió un reconocimiento más: fuimos galardonados con el premio "Empresa del Año" otorgado por la Cámara de Comercio de Weslaco.

Desde 1937, tu cooperativa ha presenciado el extraordinario crecimiento del Valle y nos sentimos orgullosos de haber desempeñado un papel fundamental en ese crecimiento. Me entusiasma pensar en lo que el futuro traerá para nuestra región y para MVEC y confío en que dentro de 80 años, nuestra cooperativa seguirá iluminando el Valle del Río Grande.

A nombre de los integrantes de la junta directiva, el equipo de liderazgo y los empleados y empleadas, quiero darte las gracias una vez más por ser miembro de Magic Valley.

¡Feliz cumpleaños Magic Valley Electric Cooperative!

Respetuosamente,

**John W. Herrera**  
General Manager

## Magic Valley Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 267  
1 3/4 Mi. W. Hwy 83  
Mercedes, TX 78570



### DIRECTOR GENERAL

John W. Herrera

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Gracias a nuestros 97,061 miembros de MVEC que celebraron el 80° aniversario de Magic Valley en este año.



80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
MVEC

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# Preguntale a Willie Wiredhand

## CUIDA TU SEGURIDAD AL COMPRAR EN LÍNEA

Si eres como muchos de los consumidores de hoy en día, probablemente haces algunas compras en línea. Cada año, las ventas en línea parecen aumentar drásticamente. Durante la temporada de compras navideñas de 2016, las ventas relacionadas con la internet, aumentaron más del 12% respecto al año anterior, alcanzando una asombrosa cantidad de \$122.9 billones, según la National Retail Federation. Pero, aunque comprar desde la comodidad de tu teclado puede ahorrarte tiempo, dinero y gasolina, hay cosas importantes que debes de considerar por tu propia seguridad:

Siempre es más seguro comprar en negocios que ya conoces. Si vas a comprar en un sitio nuevo de la web, haz una búsqueda del negocio en línea, específicamente en la sesión de "quejas" para que revises información negativa acerca del negocio.

Utiliza sitios seguros en la web. Cuando hagas tu pedido en línea, asegúrate de que haya una "s" cerca del final de la dirección web: por ejemplo, la URL debe comenzar "https://", en lugar de solo "http://." También, asegúrate de buscar el icono de un candado en la esquina superior izquierda o la parte inferior derecha de la pantalla. Estas dos características son una señal de que el sitio que visitas utiliza un alto nivel de seguridad para proteger la información personal de los consumidores.

Las tarjetas de crédito te ofrecen mayor protección que el dinero en efectivo y tarjetas de débito. Si no te cobran la cantidad correcta por tu compra o no recibes la mercancía que ordenaste, puedes disputar la transacción bajo los términos del Fair Credit Billing Act, pero solo si utilizas una tarjeta de crédito.

Elige cuidadosamente tus contraseñas. La mayoría de los sitios web requieren el uso de una contraseña para acceder a tu información personal y hacer pedidos. Asegúrate de crear contraseñas que no sean fáciles de adivinar y, si es posible, utiliza una combinación de letras, números y símbolos como \* y % para hacer más difícil que alguien pueda acceder a tu información.

Verifica la política de privacidad del comerciante. Esto te dirá cómo el negocio piensa utilizar tu información o incluso si va a compartir tu información con alguien más. Tal vez quieras evitar a los vendedores/negocios que no tienen una política de privacidad, ya que no tienes forma de saber lo que van hacer con tus datos.

Siempre imprime y guarda los recibos de las transacciones. Los recibos contienen toda la información de tu pedido, que incluye lo que has comprado, el precio que pagaste y cualquier orden o número de confirmación. Esta información es vital si necesitas hacer un seguimiento con el comerciante o disputar tu transacción.

Las compras en línea son fáciles y cómodas y, si tomas algunas precauciones sencillas, también pueden ser seguras.



## Usa luces LEDs para decorar esta Navidad

¿Te acuerdas de las luces viejitas de navidad? Cuando se fundía un foquito, todos los demás se fundían también.

Pero hoy en día ya no es así, si utilizas luces LED para decorar en estas fechas. Los nuevos foquitos son más resistentes y consumen menor cantidad de energía, lo cual sirve para quitarte una preocupación durante esta navidad.

¿Por qué las luces decorativas LED son mejores que las tradicionales?

- Las luces LED lucen igual que las bombillas tradicionales y vienen en colores cálidos y agradables, con una variedad de diferentes patrones de luz y niveles de atenuación.
- Las luces LED tienen una vida de aproximadamente 20,000 horas, suficientes para durar hasta 40 temporadas de navidad.
- Las bombillas LED no tienen filamentos o vidrio, lo que las hace más durables y resistentes a quebrarse.
- Un corto en una bombilla LED individual no suele provocar que se apague el resto de las luces.
- Las luces LED usan menos energía. Si utilizas una serie de luces LED en un árbol de navidad de 6 pies de alto durante 12 horas al día a lo largo de 40 días, puedes ahorrar aproximadamente 90 por ciento del costo del uso tradicional de las luces.
- Como utilizan menos energía, es más seguro conectar múltiples extensiones de luces LED sin preocuparte de una sobrecarga. Además, se mantienen frías al tocarlas, reduciendo el riesgo de incendios



# Survival of the Sharpest

When it's you against nature, there's only one tool you need: the tempered steel *Stag Hunter* from Stauer—now **ONLY \$49!**

That first crack of thunder sounded like a bomb just fell on Ramshorn Peak. Black clouds rolled in and the wind shook the trees. I had ventured off the trail on my own, gambled with the weather and now I was trapped in the forest. Miles from camp. Surrounded by wilderness and watching eyes. I knew that if I was going to make it through the night I needed to find shelter and build a fire... fast. As the first raindrops fell, I reached for my *Stag Hunter Knife*.

Forget about smartphones and GPS, because when it comes to taking on Mother Nature, there's only one tool you really need. Our stunning *Stag Hunter* is the ultimate sidekick for surviving and thriving in the great outdoors. Priced at \$149, the *Stag Hunter* can be yours today for an unbelievable **\$49!** Call now and we'll include a bonus leather sheath!

**A legend in steel.** The talented knifemakers of Trophy Stag Cutlery have done it again by crafting a fixed-blade beauty that's sharp in every sense of the word. The *Stag Hunter* sports an impressive 6¼" tempered German stainless steel blade with a genuine deer stag horn and stained Pakkawood™ handle, brass hand guard and polished pommel. You get the best in 21st-century construction with a classic look inspired by legendary American pioneers.

**Your satisfaction is 100% guaranteed.**

Feel the knife in your hands, wear it on your hip, inspect the craftsmanship. If you're not completely impressed, send it back within 30 days for a complete refund of the item price. But we believe that once you wrap your fingers around the *Stag Hunter's* handle, you'll be ready to carve your own niche into the wild frontier.



*"This knife is beautiful!"*

— J., La Crescent, MN



*"The feel of this knife is unbelievable...this an incredibly fine instrument."*

— H., Arvada, CO



**BONUS!** Call today and you'll also receive this genuine leather sheath!



Not shown actual size.

**Stag Hunter Knife** ~~\$149~~\*

Offer Code Price Only **\$49** + S&P Save **\$100**

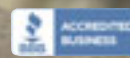
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Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 [www.stauer.com](http://www.stauer.com)

\*Discount is only for customers who use the offer code versus the listed original Stauer.com price.



Rating of **A+**



• 6 1/4" fixed German stainless steel blade (12" total length) • Stag horn and Pakkawood™ handle • Includes leather sheath

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Not valid on orders previously placed. Not valid with other offers.

*Offer expires December 10, 2017.*

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"Throughout the office it was unanimous that none of us had ever met a fruitcake we liked. We had one of your FABULOUS DeLuxe® Fruitcakes at work this past week and changed our tune."

"It is made just the way I like Christmas cakes to be, rich and moist, and totally packed with fruit and nuts - I am almost ashamed to say that I consumed one whole one myself - in the space of a week I hasten to add."

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
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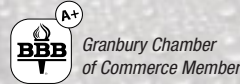


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**TexasCoopPower.com**

# WARD WHITETAILS



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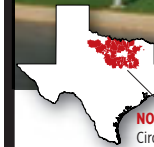
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## Bauer SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**20 VOLT LITHIUM CORDLESS 1/2" COMPACT DRILL/DRIVER KIT**

- 450 in. lbs. of torque
- 1.5 amp hour battery
- Weighs 3.4 lbs.



**NEW**  
 COMPARE TO PORTER-CABLE \$99  
 MODEL: PCC501LB  
**SAVE \$39**  
**\$69.99**  
**RISK FREE TRIAL**  
 MONEY BACK GUARANTEE  
 ITEM 63531

35389777  
 LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## U.S. GENERAL SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**56", 11 DRAWER INDUSTRIAL QUALITY ROLLER CABINET**

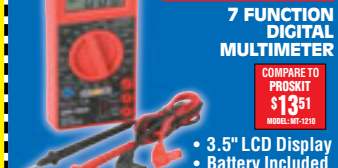


• 25,363 cu. in. of storage  
 • 3458 lb. capacity  
 • Weighs 400 lbs.  
 ITEM 69395/67681 shown  
**COMPARE TO PROSKIT SNAP-ON \$3,495**  
 MODEL: KRA511FP60  
**SAVE \$2845**  
**\$649.99**  
**\$749.99**

35259417  
 LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## FREE SUPER COUPON

WITH ANY PURCHASE  
**CENTECH**  
**7 FUNCTION DIGITAL MULTIMETER**



• 3.5" LCD Display  
 • Battery Included  
 ITEM 63604/63758  
 98025/69096/63759/90899 shown

35121780  
 LIMIT 1 - Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or prior purchase. Coupon good at our stores, HarborFreight.com or by calling 800-423-2567. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & Handling charges may apply if not picked up in-store. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 4/7/18. Limit one FREE DIT coupon per customer per day.

## 20% OFF SUPER COUPON

ANY SINGLE ITEM

35121589  
 LIMIT 1 coupon per customer per day. Save 20% on any 1 item purchased. \*Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or any of the following items or brands: Inside Track Club membership, Extended Service Plan, Hit Card, open card, Visa, 3 Day Parking, Lot Sale Item, compressor, floor jacks, saw mills, storage can, hose, chests or carts, trailers, wrenches, Adrenaline, Sauer, Cobra, CoverPro, Daytona, Earthmate, Remolde, Jupiter, Lynx, Poulan, Predator, Tallgrass, Viking, Veritas, Zurich. Not valid on prior purchases. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 4/7/18.

## PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**1 TON CAPACITY FOLDABLE SHOP CRANE**



- Boom extends from 36-1/4" to 50-1/4"
- Crane height adjusts from 82" to 94"

**COMPARE TO IRONTON \$179.99**  
 MODEL: 46218  
**SAVE \$80**  
**\$99.99**

ITEM 69512/61858/69445 shown  
 35130875  
 LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## CENTRAL PNEUMATIC SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**21 GALLON, 2.5 HP, 125 PSI VERTICAL OIL-LUBE AIR COMPRESSOR**



- Air delivery: 5.8 CFM @ 40 PSI, 4.7 CFM @ 90 PSI

**COMPARE TO HUSKY \$219**  
 MODEL: C201H  
**SAVE \$69**  
**\$169.99**  
**\$149.99**

ITEM 69091/61454  
 62803/63635/67847 shown  
 35150438  
 LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**3-POINT QUICK HITCH • 2000 lb. capacity • 27-3/16" clearance**



**SAVE \$120**  
**\$199.99**  
**\$99.99**

ITEM 97214  
**COMPARE TO DOUBLE HH \$199.99**  
 MODEL: 10712  
 35402715  
 LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## HaulMaster SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**STEP STOOL/WORKING PLATFORM**



**SAVE 65%**  
**\$29.99**  
**\$19.99**

ITEM 62515  
 66911 shown  
**COMPARE TO GPL \$27.55**  
 MODEL: H-21  
 35164212  
 LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## COVER PRO SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**10 FT. x 20 FT. PORTABLE CAR CANOPY**



**SAVE \$106**  
**\$205.99**  
**\$99.99**  
**\$129.99**

ITEM 63054/62858 shown  
 35404142  
 LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## CENTRAL PNEUMATIC SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**4 PIECE ANTI-FATIGUE FOAM MAT SET**



**SAVE 22%**  
**\$6.99**  
**\$8.99**

• Each pad measures 25" x 25"  
 ITEM 61607/62389/94635 shown  
 35422528  
 LIMIT 9 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## BADLAND ZXR Battle Tested SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**12000 LB. OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ELECTRIC WINCH WITH AUTOMATIC LOAD-HOLDING BRAKE**



- Weighs 86.4 lbs.
- 21" L x 10-1/8" H

**SAVE \$400**  
**\$299.99**  
**\$699.99**  
**\$399.99**

ITEM 64046/64045/63770 shown  
 35388003  
 LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## HARDY SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**POWDER-FREE NITRILE GLOVES PACK OF 100**



**SAVE 55%**  
**\$7.99**  
**\$5.99**

• 5 mil thickness  
 ITEM 61363, 68497, 61360, 61359, 68496, 68498 shown  
 35211812  
 LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## CENTRAL MACHINERY SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**10" PNEUMATIC TIRE**



• 300 lb. working load  
**SAVE 60%**  
**\$5.99**  
**\$3.99**

COMPARE TO FARM & RANCH \$10  
 MODEL: FR1055  
 ITEM 69385/62388/62409  
 62698/30900 shown  
 35215631  
 LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## CENTRAL MACHINERY SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**10 TON HYDRAULIC LOG SPLITTER**



• Accepts logs up to 18" long and 6-1/2" diameter  
**COMPARE TO SUN JOE \$132.55**  
 MODEL: L110M  
**SAVE \$42**  
**\$89.99**  
**\$119.99**

ITEM 62291  
 67090 shown  
 35216516  
 LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## PITTSBURGH SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**TORQUE WRENCHES**



• Accuracy within ±4%  
**SAVE 88%**  
**\$19.99**  
**\$9.99**

COMPARE TO HUSKY \$84.97  
 MODEL: H20TWIA  
**LIFETIME WARRANTY**  
 35224685  
 LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## Lynxx SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**40 VOLT LITHIUM CORDLESS BRUSHLESS BLOWER**



**SAVE \$79**  
**\$139.99**  
**\$119.99**

COMPARE TO DEWALT \$199  
 MODEL: DCBL908  
 ITEM 63284  
 35421369  
 LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## Bauer SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**10 AMP DEEP CUT VARIABLE SPEED BAND SAW KIT**



**NEW**  
**SAVE \$199**  
**\$139.99**  
**\$99.99**

COMPARE TO DEWALT \$299  
 MODEL: DWM120  
 ITEM 63763/63444 shown  
 35228772  
 LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**3 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL JACK STANDS**



**SAVE \$179.99**  
**\$239.99**  
**\$179.99**

COMPARE TO ACDELCO \$34.99  
 MODEL: S4124  
**SAVE 48%**  
 ITEM 62392/69597  
 38846/61196 shown  
 35239951  
 LIMIT 6 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## WARRIOR SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**29 PIECE TITANIUM DRILL BIT SET**



**COMPARE TO DEWALT \$60**  
 MODEL: DW1369  
**SAVE 83%**  
**\$179.99**  
**\$99.99**

ITEM 62281/61637 shown  
 35408073  
 LIMIT 8 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

## ROCKETFISH SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**  
**TILTING FLAT PANEL TV MOUNT**



**SAVE 81%**  
**\$249.99**  
**\$149.99**

• 176 lb. capacity  
**COMPARE TO ROCKETFISH \$79.99**  
 MODEL: RF-TVMP103  
 ITEM 62289/61807 shown  
 35243246  
 LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*



**PREDATOR** SUPER COUPON

8750 MAX. STARTING/  
7000 RUNNING WATTS  
13 HP (420 CC) GAS GENERATOR

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

**\$529.99**

WHEEL KIT AND BATTERY SOLD SEPARATELY.

ITEM 68530/63086/69671/63085 shown

ITEM 68525/63087/63088, CALIFORNIA ONLY

35262627

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

**PORTLAND** SUPER COUPON

7 AMP ELECTRIC POLE SAW  
9.5" BAR

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

**\$64.99**

SAVE \$34

COMPARE TO WORX MODEL: W6389 \$99.98

ITEM 68862/63190/62896 shown

35263526

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

**PITTSBURGH** #1 SELLING JACKS IN AMERICA SUPER COUPON

RAPID PUMP®  
4 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL FLOOR JACK

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

COMPARE TO BANNER MODEL: W6350 \$179.99

**\$109.99**

WEIGHS 105 LBS.

SAVE \$70

ITEM 60706/62319/68056 shown

35273129

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

**CENTRAL MACHINERY** SUPER COUPON

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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

**\$49.99**

SAVE \$53

COMPARE TO BUFFALO BLACK MODEL: DPF5UL \$102.99

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35274204

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

**CENTRAL MACHINERY** SUPER COUPON

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Pair of arbor plates included

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$72

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COMPARE TO MAXWORKS MODEL: GP2002 \$222.49

ITEM 32879 60603 shown

35287753

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

**HaulMaster** SUPER COUPON

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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

**\$5.99**

COMPARE TO BLUE HAWK MODEL: 77280 \$19.99

ITEM 69505/62418/66537 shown

35292004

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

**VIKING** SUPER COUPON

JUMP STARTER AND POWER PACK

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

COMPARE TO SCHUMACHER MODEL: SL1 \$129.99

**\$69.99**

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LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

**drillmaster** SUPER COUPON

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**U.S. GENERAL** SUPER COUPON

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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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**\$99.99**

ITEM 61634/61952/95659 shown

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LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

**PITTSBURGH** AUTOMOTIVE SUPER COUPON

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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 58%

**\$6.99**

COMPARE TO CUSTOM ACCESSORIES MODEL: 99008 \$16.89

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LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

**CHICAGO** ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS SUPER COUPON

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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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35360390

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

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6.5 HP (212 CC) OHV HORIZONTAL SHAFT GAS ENGINE

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

COMPARE TO HONDA MODEL: GX200UT20X2 \$329.99

**\$99.99**

ITEM 60363/69730 69727 shown

35415439

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

**HaulMaster** SUPER COUPON

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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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**\$129.99**

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**HaulMaster** SUPER COUPON

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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 59%

**\$79.99**

COMPARE TO MILWAUKEE MODEL: 33700 \$199.7

ITEM 61899/63095/63096 60497/63098/63097/93888 shown

35409861

LIMIT 8 - Coupon valid through 4/7/18\*

**SUPER COUPON**

.50 CAL METAL AMMO CAN

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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# Hochheim's Namesake

German immigrant Valentine Hoch started DeWitt County settlement

BY GENE FOWLER

EARLY SETTLERS OFTEN MADE GREAT sacrifices to get to Texas. That's certainly the case with Valentine Hoch, the German namesake of the DeWitt County hamlet of Hochheim.

Most of DeWitt County is in the Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative service territory.

The stories about Hoch's trek to Texas and subsequent settlement on the coastal plains vary slightly, but all accounts agree that shortly before Hoch and his wife, Margarethe, sailed for the New World in 1845, one of their children died. According to an account by Hoch's great-granddaughter, Mildred Allen Duhon, another child died during the voyage and was buried at sea. Heartsick, Margarethe herself died shortly after the family landed at the Texas port of Indianola. Hoch buried her in a wooden coffin that he built himself.

Duhon described her ancestor as a stonemason and a nail smithy, mechanic, baker, lay minister for the Lutheran church and, by necessity, a farmer and tender of livestock. Great-grandson H.R. Hoch told the *Houston Post* in 1964 that the Lutheran minister immigrated to Texas to escape religious oppression. Hoch purchased land in Texas from an agent who was visiting Europe on a mission to entice settlers. Instead of proceeding to this land, Hoch and other Germans followed trails inland to nearby territory that would become DeWitt County in 1846. Hoch and his surviving children stayed with others from the Old Country in another DeWitt County settlement called Concrete.

Hoch purchased land near the Guadalupe River. Working with another immigrant mason, Augustus Weig, he began building a home that still stands today along U.S. Highway 183. They quarried sandstone in the Guadalupe River valley and hauled it to Hoch's land on a slide hitched to "an old



gray horse" he had acquired in Indianola.

In 1854, Hoch heard about a widow in Indianola named Johanna Fleming and went to visit her. She had immigrated from Germany with her husband after losing three children to diphtheria, according to an account provided in 1932 by her son. Another baby died at sea and then, after landing with four children, Johanna's husband died of yellow fever, and she lost still another child. She was struggling to survive as a single mother with three young children when Hoch came courting.

Their combined family grew to 10 children, and Hoch continued to labor on the rock house. Girls occupied the second floor, and boys slept in the attic. Inscriptions dated 1856, 1857 and 1866 indicate completion dates for sections of the 2½-story home. Lime mortar for the stones was made by burning stacked layers of wood and sandstone. Hoch made lath for interior walls by twisting willow sticks and walnut shoots with mortar, mud and moss. For wall plaster, he mixed pulverized limestone with sand, fine gravel and ashes. Hoch fastened the hand-hewn timber rafters with wooden pegs.

In 1857, the Hoch residence became a stagecoach stop on the Austin-to-Indi-

anola road. As more folks settled nearby, Hochheim grew into a thriving trade center. By 1895, the town had two general stores, a hardware store, saddler, blacksmith, saloon, drug store and hotel.

Today, the only survivor of those structures is Hoch's stage stop. A 1950s restoration by then-owners Ross and Lucille Boothe of Gonzales received an award from the San Antonio Conservation Society. The Boothes hosted several hundred Hoch descendants during the stage stop's centennial, and researchers at the time noted some 3,000 descendants of the home's original family. The Hochheim Historical Foundation received the property through a 2001 donation, and the organization completed additional restoration work.

Doug Kubicek, a retired history teacher in Yoakum, taught one Hoch descendant in the seventh grade. "We had a program where the kids dressed up as pioneer figures and gave reports," he recalls. "Most wanted to be Bowie or Crockett, but the descendant dressed up like Valentine Hoch." Asked what he learned about his ancestor, the student replied, "Oh, he's cool."

Gene Fowler is an Austin writer who specializes in history.



**\$500 SAVORY WINNER**  
Savory Grits With Beer-Battered Shrimp



**\$500 SWEET WINNER**  
Pineapple Cream Cheese Pie



**\$500 SWEET WINNER**  
Cherry Nut Coffee Cake



**\$500 SAVORY WINNER**  
Paulina's Meatballs



2017

# Holiday Recipe Contest

AMONG THE FANTASTIC RECIPES submitted by readers for this year's contest, our staff most loved the Warm Gingerbread With Lemon Basil Sauce by Rebekah Stewart, a member of San Bernard Electric Cooperative.

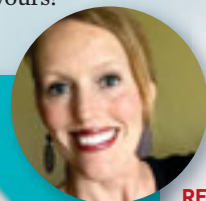
Some testers said they could drink the accompanying lemon basil sauce, while others would be happy just to have the warm gingerbread with cinnamon whipped cream. You can choose to plate the recipe with all its components or let guests pick and choose from among the three toppings. We guarantee they'll all be happy.

Stewart wins \$3,000, and four other co-op members each win \$500 for their recipes, two sweet and two savory. Happy holidays from our table to yours!

SHANNON OELRICH, GUEST FOOD EDITOR



**\$3,000  
GRAND  
PRIZEWINNER**  
Warm Gingerbread  
With Lemon Basil  
Sauce



REBEKAH STEWART

## Warm Gingerbread With Lemon Basil Sauce

REBEKAH STEWART | SAN BERNARD EC

"I love to use cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves in my holiday desserts," Stewart says. "In this recipe, I've combined the flavors of gingerbread and apples and made it extra special by adding a delicious lemon basil sauce. This dessert is wonderful served warm, and the flavors complement each other perfectly."

- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1½ teaspoons ground cinnamon

### APPLE COMPOTE

- 2 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and cubed
- 2 tablespoons butter
- ⅛ teaspoon fresh lemon juice

### GINGERBREAD

- 1 cup sugar
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 egg
- ½ cup sour cream
- ½ cup molasses
- ¾ cup whole milk
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon salt

### LEMON BASIL SAUCE

- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 cup hot water
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- Juice from 2 lemons
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3 tablespoons heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil



FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY: MELISSA BRISKO. BACKGROUND: NYS | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM. ORNAMENTS: OKSANICA | SHUTTERSTOCK.COM. STEWART: COURTESY REBEKAH STEWART

## CINNAMON WHIPPED CREAM

- 1 cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup powdered sugar
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon

**1. GINGERBREAD:** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Apply cooking spray to an 8-by-8-inch or 9-by-9-inch baking dish.

**2.** In a large mixing bowl, cream together sugar and butter 2 minutes. Add egg and mix until light and fluffy. Add sour cream, molasses and milk, and mix 1 additional minute.

**3.** In another large bowl, combine all the dry ingredients thoroughly, then slowly mix into the wet ingredients. Mix just until smooth. Pour batter into baking dish.

**4.** Bake 35 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean when inserted. Make compote, sauce and whipped cream while it bakes, so you can serve with warm gingerbread.

**5. APPLE COMPOTE:** In a small saucepan, mix the cubed apples, butter and lemon juice. Cook on low heat, stirring occasionally, until apples are soft. Keep warm.

**6. LEMON BASIL SAUCE:** In a medium saucepan, mix sugar, cornstarch and nutmeg. Slowly whisk in hot water and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until sauce thickens. Once thickened, remove from heat and whisk in lemon zest, lemon juice, butter and heavy cream. Put saucepan back on medium heat, stir and cook 1 more minute. Remove from heat and stir in chopped basil. Keep warm.

**7. CINNAMON WHIPPED CREAM:** In a medium bowl, whip together heavy cream, powdered sugar and cinnamon. Once it's whipped, place in a piping bag to pipe onto each serving, if desired.

**8.** Serve gingerbread with a spoonful of compote and a drizzle of sauce, and top with whipped cream—or make your own combination. Serves 16.

**\$500  
SAVORY  
WINNER**



## Savory Grits With Beer-Battered Shrimp

KATHY KAHN | DEEP EAST TEXAS EC

“I had cheesy grits with a gastrique at a cooking demonstration, and I wanted to try it at home, so I started playing around with the flavors,” Kahn says. “I added the shrimp because my mother-in-law always made beer-battered shrimp, and we loved it. Once I tried the bacon, I knew that was it.”

### GRITS

- 2 cups half-and-half
- 1½ cups chicken broth
- ½ cup instant grits
- ¼ cup butter
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ small purple onion, finely diced
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup shredded white cheddar cheese

### SHRIMP

- 1 pound medium shrimp
- 1 teaspoon Creole seasoning
- 1 can beer
- 1 quart canola oil
- 1 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper

### GASTRIQUE

- 4 strips bacon
- 1 tablespoon bacon fat
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ tablespoon water, or more as needed
- ½ cup balsamic vinegar

**1. GRITS:** In a 2-quart saucepan, bring half-and-half and chicken broth to a simmer over medium-high heat. Add grits, butter, garlic, onion, red pepper flakes, salt and pepper. Stir until grits are fully cooked and mixture is smooth, about 5 minutes. Fold in shredded cheese and season to taste. Remove pan from heat, cover and set aside.

**2. SHRIMP:** Peel, devein and clean shrimp. In a bowl, toss shrimp with Creole seasoning. Set aside 15–30 minutes in the refrigerator. Pour beer into a separate bowl and stir about 2 minutes to make it go flat, then set aside. Pour oil into a deep-sided 5-quart frying pan or Dutch oven and heat to 375 degrees.

**3.** In a bowl, stir together flour, salt and pepper. Add flattened beer to flour mixture a little at a time to make a slightly runny batter. Remove the shrimp from the refrigerator and dip into the batter, shaking the excess off. Fry shrimp in oil, 2–3 minutes, or until golden brown. Set cooked shrimp on a rack lined with paper towels to drain.

**4. GASTRIQUE:** Cook bacon, crumble finely and set aside, reserving bacon fat. Place sugar in a heavy-bottomed, 2-quart saucepan and add enough water to make a mixture resembling wet sand. (The tip of a spoon pulled through the mixture should leave a trail.) Cook over medium heat until sugar dissolves and bubbles form, swirling the pan gently instead of stirring to cook the sugar evenly. Continue cooking, watching closely as the sugar mixture darkens, about 5 minutes.

**5.** When mixture is golden brown, add balsamic vinegar all at once. Pour carefully, as it might spatter. The mixture will harden, but keep stirring with a wooden spoon until it liquefies again. Add the bacon fat and bacon, reduce heat and continue stirring. Once the sauce thickens slightly, remove from heat.

**6.** Serve the shrimp atop the grits with the gastrique drizzled over the top. Serves 8–10.



## Celebrate the Season!

When your family and friends gather this holiday, ask everyone to bring their favorite recipe—one with a holiday connection or one that's just extra-special. You'll start a new tradition and have a head start for next year's *Texas Co-op Power* Holiday Recipe Contest!

### \$500 SAVORY WINNER



#### Paulina's Meatballs

PAULINA PARKER | SAM HOUSTON EC

"I made these for my mom and dad in 1962," Parker says. "They liked them so much, but minus the pepper and jalapeño jelly, as they did not like spicy food. My mother had me make them again while she wrote down all the ingredients—otherwise, I would not have the recipe today!"

- 1 cup chopped onion
  - 1 cup chopped green bell pepper
  - 2 teaspoons olive oil
  - 2 pounds lean ground beef
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  cup seasoned breadcrumbs
  - $1\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons Italian seasoning
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground black pepper
  - 2 teaspoons dried mustard
  - 2 teaspoons garlic powder
  - 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes
  - 3 tablespoons brown sugar
  - 2 eggs, lightly beaten
  - 2 cans (8 ounces each) refrigerated crescent dinner rolls
  - 10 teaspoons jalapeño jelly, plus more for serving
  - $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (1 stick) butter, melted
- Dash cayenne pepper  
Pizza or pasta sauce for serving

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a skillet, sauté onion and bell pepper in olive oil until soft. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, mix ground beef, breadcrumbs, Italian seasoning, salt, pepper, dried mustard, garlic powder, red pepper flakes, brown sugar and eggs. Add onion and bell pepper, and mix thoroughly.
3. Form beef mixture into  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch meatballs and set on a rack with a baking pan underneath to catch grease. Bake meatballs 18–25 minutes, then remove from oven and let cool.
4. Roll out 1 can of crescent dough into a solid piece. Cut squares big enough to wrap each meatball completely. Repeat with second can, as needed.
5. Place a meatball on a square of dough, then spoon  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon jalapeño jelly on top. Pinch dough closed on top to seal. Repeat until all meatballs are used. Brush tops with melted butter and sprinkle with cayenne pepper. Bake until lightly browned, 15–20 minutes.
6. Serve with more warm jalapeño jelly or pizza sauce. Serves about 20 as appetizers or 10 as dinner entrées.

**COOK'S TIP** Splenda can be substituted for brown sugar in the meatballs, if desired.

### \$500 SWEET WINNER



#### Cherry Nut Coffee Cake

ARTIE STOCKTON | PEDERNALES EC

"This coffee cake is a treat for Christmas morning," Stockton says. "The cake freezes beautifully, so it can be made ahead of time. I have made this coffee cake each Christmas season for the last 20 years. It is still the favorite of my adult children as well as my grandchildren."

#### DOUGH

- 1 package dry yeast
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup warm water
- 1 cup whole milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (1 stick) butter
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs, well-beaten
- 4 cups all-purpose flour

#### FILLING

- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dried cranberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sweetened flaked coconut, toasted
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup cherry preserves
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup chopped pecans
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup ( $\frac{1}{2}$  stick) butter, melted
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- 1 egg, well-beaten, for egg wash

#### ICING

- $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons half-and-half
- 1 tablespoon juice from jar of maraschino cherries

#### DECORATIONS

- Maraschino cherry halves
- Pecan halves

# Recipes

**1. DOUGH:** Dissolve yeast in warm water, 105–115 degrees; set aside. Heat milk in saucepan over low heat. Add sugar, butter and salt, stirring until butter is melted and sugar is dissolved. Pour milk mixture into mixing bowl and cool to lukewarm.

**2.** Mix two beaten eggs and dissolved yeast into lukewarm milk mixture. Add flour, a little at a time, beating well until dough resembles a soft sponge. Cover bowl and chill dough in refrigerator overnight.

**3. FILLING:** In a bowl, combine cinnamon, dried cranberries, coconut, cherry preserves and chopped pecans.

**4.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Roll out dough on floured surface to a rectangular shape, about 1/8 inch thick. Brush dough with 1/4 cup melted butter, then sprinkle with 1/2 cup sugar. Dot the filling on the dough until covered, leaving about an inch on each side free of filling.

**5.** Roll up dough lengthwise, then transfer to a baking sheet with the seam-side down. Shape like a horseshoe and tuck ends under to seal. Let rise in a warm place about 25–30 minutes.

**6.** Brush egg wash over top of dough. Bake 20–25 minutes or until golden brown.

**7. ICING:** In a mixing bowl, combine powdered sugar, half-and-half and cherry juice. Mix well, then drizzle on cake.

**8. DECORATIONS:** As the icing firms up, decorate with cherry and pecan halves. Serves 16–18.

**COOK'S TIP** Note that since the dough needs to chill overnight, this is a two-day process.

## \$100 Recipe Contest

May's recipe contest topic is **Cake Walk**. Send us your cherished recipes (from cupcakes to fancy layer cakes) for celebrating special occasions. The deadline is **December 10**. Readers whose recipes are featured will receive a special *Texas Co-op Power* apron.

**ENTER ONLINE** at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/contests); **MAIL** to 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701; **FAX** to (512) 763-3401. Include your name, address and phone number, plus your co-op and the name of the contest you are entering.



**\$500  
SWEET  
WINNER**



## SWEET WINNER Pineapple Cream Cheese Pie

DAWN HODGES | SAN BERNARD EC

"I started with a similar recipe as a guide and just added flavors that seemed to go with the plan," Hodges says. "Since that first pie, I have added more 'goodies' to it. I am one of those who thinks if a little is good, a lot is even better!"

### CRUST

- 1 sleeve graham crackers
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 1/4 cup sweetened flaked coconut
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) butter, melted

### FILLING

- 1 can (8 ounces) crushed pineapple
- 1 1/2 packages (12 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon lime or lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon grated lime or lemon zest
- 1/2 cup sweetened flaked coconut
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla or coconut extract

### TOPPING

- Reserved pineapple liquid
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- Extra sweetened flaked coconut, toasted
- Extra grated zest for topping

**1. CRUST:** Pulse graham crackers in food processor until they are fine crumbs. Pour them into a 9-inch pie dish, then place pecans and coconut in food processor (no need to clean it first) and pulse until finely chopped.

**2.** Add pecan mixture and powdered sugar to graham crackers and mix with a fork. Drizzle melted butter into mixture, then stir to combine thoroughly. Press mixture into bottom and up sides of pie pan.

**3. FILLING:** Over a bowl, drain pineapple, reserving liquid. Set both aside. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

**4.** In a mixing bowl, combine cream cheese, egg, sour cream, sugar, juice and zest. Beat with a mixer until creamy. Add drained pineapple, coconut, nutmeg and extract, and stir to combine thoroughly.

**5.** Pour mixture into crust and bake 20 minutes or until no longer wobbly in middle. Cool and refrigerate.

**6. TOPPING:** In a small saucepan, mix reserved pineapple liquid with sugar and cook over medium heat until mixture thickens into a runny syrup. Set aside.

**7.** Whip heavy cream in a food processor. Add powdered sugar and whip until thick, about 1 minute. Spread over cooled filling and top with toasted coconut.

**8.** To serve, drizzle some of the thickened pineapple juice over the top. A little grated zest on top is great, also. Serves 8.

**COOK'S TIP** You can purchase a graham cracker crust, but it won't be as flavorful. Also, whipping the cream in the food processor makes a heavy, stiff whipped cream that holds its shape nicely.

### WEB EXTRAS at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com)

See previous winners and recipes from the Holiday Recipe Contest.



# Stairways

THERE ARE MANY STEPS TO GREATNESS, but our readers go above and beyond! On the stairway to heaven, or just enjoying a little piece of heaven on Earth, Texans love a good two-step. **GRACE ARSIAGA**

**WEB EXTRAS** ▶ See more photos online.

◀ **MICHELLE BERTA**, HILCO EC: "I love reading great literature. These are some of my favorite books. Each step is hand-painted."



▲ **LETICIA NAVARRO**, Bandera EC: When nature takes over



▲ **MARK HOLLY**, Bandera EC: After a remodel of the Lampasas County Courthouse

▼ **CHARLES BAXTER**, CoServ: Rusty oil tanks along Highway 380 in West Texas

▲ **JUDY O'KELLEY**, Nueces EC: "When we traveled from South Texas to San Francisco, we saw this mosaic tiled staircase ... a popular tourist attraction."

## UPCOMING CONTESTS

APRIL WESTERN WEAR	DUE DECEMBER 10
MAY PROM NIGHT	DUE JANUARY 10
JUNE TRACTORS	DUE FEBRUARY 10

All entries must include name, address, daytime phone and co-op affiliation, plus the contest topic and a brief description of your photo.

**ONLINE:** Submit highest-resolution digital images at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/contests).  
**MAIL:** Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be included if you want your entry returned (approximately six weeks). Please do not submit irreplaceable photographs—send a copy or duplicate. We do not accept entries via email. We regret that *Texas Co-op Power* cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline.





## Pick of the Month Main Street Bethlehem

**Burnet** December 1-3, 8-10  
(512) 756-4481, fbcburnet.org

Main Street Bethlehem, celebrating its 25th year and staged by First Baptist Church, recreates the town of Bethlehem on the night Christ was born. It features about 125 volunteers, many of whom are members of Pedernales EC, costumed and in character, and animals depicting life more than 2,000 years ago. It attracts more than 25,000 visitors every year.



BETHLEHEM: COURTESY FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF BURNET. SMORES: ARINAHABICHOB | DREAMSTIME.COM. FIESTA: RHBABIAK13 | DREAMSTIME.COM

## December

1

**Natural Bridge Caverns** [1-31]  
**Christmas at the Caverns**, (210) 651-6101,  
naturalbridgecaverns.com

7

**Freeport Holiday on the Brazos**,  
(979) 233-3306

**Granbury S'mores with Santa**,  
(817) 326-6005, actontx.com/events

**Jasper Christmas Parade**, (409) 384-2762,  
jaspercoc.org

**Kerrville Gloria: Celestial Holiday Music**,  
(830) 792-7469, symphonyofthehills.org

**Clute** [7-9] **Christmas in the Park**,  
(979) 265-8392, goclute.com

8

**Bryan Downtown Christmas Parade**,  
(979) 822-4920, downtownbryan.com

**Crockett Russian Grand Ballet's *The Nutcracker***, (936) 544-4276, pwfaa.org



December 7  
Granbury  
S'mores with Santa

**Bastrop** [8-9] **Merry Market**, (512) 988-0034

**Fredericksburg** [8-9] **The Christmas Journey**, (830) 997-2069,  
bethanyfredericksburg.com

**Montalba** [8-10] **A Walk Through Bethlehem**,  
(903) 764-8048, visitpalestine.com

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**GET BACK TO THE COAST**  
April issue: what's open and where to go to enjoy our Gulf Coast, from South Padre to the Sabine River.

**WESTERN WAYS**  
September: Lone Star destinations for the rugged leather feel of Texas culture.

**WIN A GALVESTON GETAWAY**  
at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com)

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# 9

**Beaumont** Christmas in Boomtown, (409) 880-1750, beaumontcvb.com

**Bulverde** Living Christmas Drive Through Presentation, (830) 980-2813, redroofchurch.org

**Chappell Hill** Garden Club Christmas Home Tour, (713) 562-6191, chappellhillgardenclub.com

**Forney** Candlelight Tour of Historic Homes, (972) 552-2400, spellmanmuseum.com

**Round Top** *The Nutcracker* Ballet, (979) 249-3129, festivalhill.org

**San Saba** Lighted Christmas Parade, (325) 372-5141, sansabatexas.com

**Santo** Community Craft Show, (940) 659-3990

**Snyder** Big Country Christmas Ball, (325) 660-8338, westtexasrehab.org

**Washington** Christmas on the Brazos, (936) 878-2214, wheretexasbecametexas.org

**Waxahachie** YMCA Santa Run, (469) 309-4045, ymcadallas.org

# 14

**Elgin** Sip, Shop & Stroll, (512) 229-3213, elgintx.com

**Palo Pinto** Frontier Christmas, (940) 659-3573, palopintohistory.com

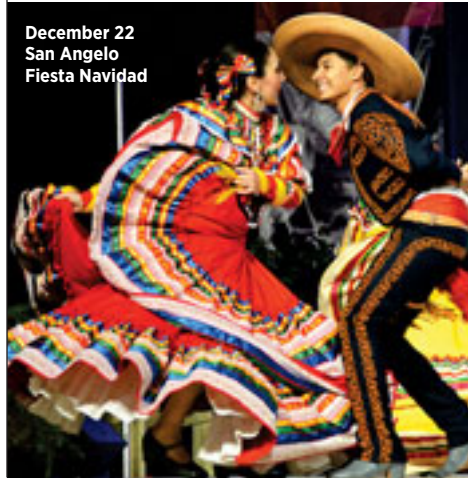
# 15

**Palestine** [15-17] Irving Berlin's *White Christmas*, (903) 723-3014, visitpalestine.com

# 16

**Big Spring** Big Spring Symphony: *The Nutcracker* with Midland Festival Ballet, (432) 263-8235, visitbigspring.com

**College Station** Wreaths Across America: Brazos Valley, (757) 478-4747, brazosvalleywaa.org/ceremony



**Del Rio** Posada, Tamalada, Bailes y Cantos, (830) 768-2287, casadelacultura.com

**Lake Jackson** Bird Banding, (979) 480-0999, gcbo.org

**Lockney** Country Christmas Ball, (806) 983-6228

**Morgan Mill** Live Nativity, (254) 728-3107, morganmillumc.com

**Boerne** [16-17] Cowboy Christmas Market Days, (210) 844-8193, visitboerne.org

# 22

**San Angelo** Fiesta Navidad, (325) 284-3825, sanangelopac.org

## January

# 5

**Odessa** [5-13] Sandhills Stock Show and Rodeo, (432) 366-3951, sandhillsstockshow.com

### Submit Your Event!

We pick events for the magazine directly from *TexasCoopPower.com*. Submit your event for February by December 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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20328 R9-16

# An Environmental Legacy

Experience an authentic native landscape in Goldthwaite's Legacy Plaza

BY MELISSA GASKILL

UP UNTIL ABOUT 600 YEARS AGO, THE early residents in what is now Mills County gathered seeds and ground them on stone surfaces, established camps, chipped projectile points from flint and cooked food in earthen ovens. Much of the land remains relatively undisturbed, and many ancient relics lay untouched until modern times. A few artifacts ended up in local collections. Now, some of these items are on display in **Legacy Plaza**.

Filling a city block near the center of Goldthwaite on U.S. Highway 183, the plaza contains a welcome center and a botanical garden, including a play area, educational displays and an event pavilion.

Legacy Plaza's landscape designer, Tab Ledbetter, set out to replicate a portion of the Colorado River (which flows within about 10 miles of Goldthwaite) as it would have looked to early residents who hunted and gathered in the region.

"An authentic native landscape occupied by early inhabitants would have included natural sources of food, water and shelter commonly found here," Ledbetter says. "So I created a stream flowing through a small canyon, lined with native plants such as pecan trees, dogwood, Texas redbud, agarita, sideoats grama, upland switchgrass and buffalo grass." Implementing Ledbetter's plan required 27 truckloads of rock.

The garden incorporates several authentic bedrock mortars, bowl-shaped depressions in rocks created by the repeated grinding of nuts and grains. "Any items used here had already been removed from their natural locations," stresses Jan Fischer, Legacy Plaza executive director. "So as to not disrupt the integrity of surviving prehistoric sites, we only brought



things here that had already been moved from their original site."

Eventually, the Legacy Plaza block will include a two-story Native American cultural center, designed in consultation with the Smithsonian Institution's **National Museum of the American Indian** and the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma. Along with the existing pavilion, the center will provide space for conservation and ecotourism programs, such as classes on rainwater harvesting and native plants.

Mills County, named for Republic of Texas Judge John T. Mills, was carved from parts of Brown, Comanche, Hamilton and Lampasas counties in 1887. San Antonio architect Henry T. Phelps designed the county's red-brick, Beaux Arts-style **courthouse**, built in 1913. The Texas Historical Commission funded a renovation that was completed in 2011.

Across the street from the courthouse, the **Mills County Artisan Guild Gift Shop** offers photographs, paintings, stained glass, jewelry, quilts, pottery and fabrics made by more than 30 Texas artisans.

For an edible souvenir of Mills County and Goldthwaite, consider pecans from **Pecans.com**, a shop just a few blocks from Legacy Plaza. Pecans.com sells fresh,

**Legacy Plaza's botanical garden replicates ancient Mills County terrain.**

shelled pecans as well as candies, fudge and pies. Samples are almost always available.

About 20 miles from town, you'll find one of the few drivable suspension bridges in Texas. Called Regency Bridge or the Swinging Bridge, this single-lane structure is suspended from cables that cross the Colorado River at a height of 325 feet. First built in the 1920s, demolished by a flood in 1936 and rebuilt mostly by hand in 1939, the bridge was refurbished in 2014. There is space on its south side to park and walk out onto the span. This view provides a learning opportunity: To compare the contemporary appearance of the Colorado River with the historic version recreated at Legacy Plaza. On its way to the bridge turn-off, scenic County Road 574 curves over picturesque hills and winds past rambling ranches with fancy gates. An ideal way to see an out-of-the-way piece of Texas.

Read more about **Melissa Gaskill's** work at [melissagaskill.blogspot.com](http://melissagaskill.blogspot.com).

 **WEB EXTRAS** ▶ See more photos of Legacy Plaza online.



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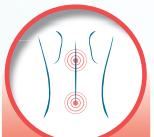
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