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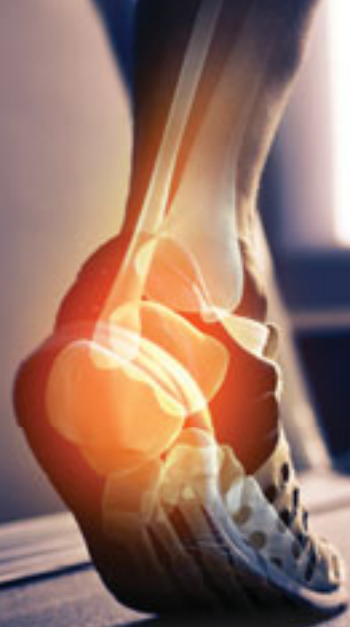
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Sue, left, and Jerry Machetta sponsor children in Nuevo Progreso.

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Story and photos by Laura Jenkins

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**NEXT MONTH**

**Rendezvous on Route 66** *The Mother Road still journeys through a slice of American life in the Panhandle.*



FAMILY: LAURA JENKINS. CAR: BILLPHILPOT | DREAMSTIME.COM

**ON THE COVER** *Winter Texan neighbors from South Dakota and Minnesota greet each other.* Photo by Laura Jenkins

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## Chain of Command?

If, as you write, Navy Adm. Chester Nimitz of Fredericksburg “commanded all land and sea forces in the Pacific” during World War II, then what was Army Gen. Douglas MacArthur doing? [*Painting the Heavens Blue*, Currents, April 2018]

LOUIS LEE JURIKA | BUDA  
PEDERNALES EC

## Another Evil Plant

I don’t know why bull nettle isn’t named after the devil because it comes straight from hell! [*What the Devil?*, March 2018]

LES MEADS | STOCKDALE  
GUADALUPE VALLEY EC

## Long Time Coming

At Pedernales EC, we currently have two female lineworkers who are an important part of our team [*Women at Work*, Currents, March 2018]. It has been a long time coming since people like Rosa Vasquez, my mother, helped pave the way for women in the industry. In April 2017, my mother became the first female lineworker inducted into the International Lineman’s Hall of Fame. As a lineman and her son, I am very proud of her accomplishments.

The lineworkers, men and women, are the backbone of America.

JAMES VASQUEZ, TECHNICAL TRAINING MANAGER  
JOHNSON CITY  
PEDERNALES EC

## Finding Books

Following your feature on out-of-the-way bookstores [*Blue Highway Literature*, June 2017],

## Beach Beauty

I always enjoy reading *Texas Co-op Power*, especially the Texas History section and recipes. We spend time at Padre Island National Seashore twice a year.



I took this photo on Malaquite Beach last fall, and your April cover [*Back to the Beach*] reminded me of it. It is always a beautiful place!

MONIKA SANDOVAL | LAGO VISTA  
PEDERNALES EC

I arrived at Booked Up in Archer City on a Monday. The front door was decorated with a sign: “By appointment Mon.–Wed., from 1 to 5 Thur.–Sat.” At Recycled Books, Records & CDs in Denton, my luck was in.

I found some nice copies of Andre Norton I was missing. Gladewater Books added a Giles and a Costain.

GERALD STEPHENS | SHELBYVILLE  
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC



## Appreciating Prairie Dogs

Read *High Plains Sentinel* [December 2017] and have known prairie dogs are a

threatened Texas treasure. In New Mexico, they have prairie dog towns along their busy city streets. Amazing to see them scurrying around and popping their heads out of their tunnels. They can survive in Texas if we work with them in their habitats.

CINDY BARNETT VIA FACEBOOK | FLOWER MOUND  
COSERV

## Malakoff Man

I have an anthropology degree. I knew that there were three of these heads but had no idea that they were finally all together in one display a short drive away [*Saving Face in Malakoff*, November 2017].

I look at the Pearce Museum as an underappreciated asset and a well-kept secret considering the quality of the exhibits.

After viewing the faces, it is obvious to me that they are not naturally occurring, nor were they carved in historic times as some have postulated. These

heads are oddities not unlike some other past finds that don’t fit so neatly into the archaeological record as we understand it but are, nevertheless, there to make us think about it.

ED DOLZEL | MARLIN  
NAVASOTA VALLEY EC

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## HAPPENINGS

# The Final Frontier

The southern High Plains' Cochran County in the 1930s bragged that it was "where the pavement ends and the West begins." Indeed, Cochran was one of the last counties formed by the Legislature and the last to be settled, leading to its nickname, Texas' Last Frontier.

Today, the area celebrates that legacy with the annual **TEXAS' LAST FRONTIER HERITAGE CELEBRATION** in **MORTON, JUNE 22-24** this year. The festival started in 2004 as part of a commemoration for a historical marker that heralds the end of a misadventure that has become known as the Buffalo Soldier Tragedy of 1877. Four African-American cavalry troops on patrol during a drought in West Texas succumbed during an 86-hour search for water. Dozens survived the ordeal.

Among the highlights of the Last Frontier Heritage Celebration, which attracts many members of Bailey County Electric Cooperative, are a brisket cook-off and car show.

**INFO** ▶ (806) 893-6808, [facebook.com/texaslastfrontier](https://facebook.com/texaslastfrontier)

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## YOUTH TOUR

### A Special D'Hanis Travel Agent

**After graduating** from D'Hanis High School in the 1990s and attending college in San Antonio, Cody Santos landed a job as an accountant with United Airlines in Houston.

**His heart, though,** remains in Medina County, in part because he bought his grandparents' place in Yancey in Medina Electric Cooperative's service territory. Santos also believes his education in D'Hanis set him on his way to a successful career. So when he read the feature story *The State With the Most* [October 2017] about the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, he was inspired by the program and Medina EC's involvement in sending students to Washington, D.C., each summer.

**He contacted** the co-op and offered to pay for Medina EC to send an additional student on the trip this summer. And so Medina is sending four students instead of three on Youth Tour, June 6-15 this year.

**"I believe in** giving back," Santos says. "I'm a very big proponent of people traveling."



45

states observe Juneteenth, which commemorates June 19, 1865, when Texans learned about the Emancipation Proclamation—more than two years after President Abraham Lincoln issued it. The five states that do not observe Juneteenth are Hawaii, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota and South Dakota.



CO-OP PEOPLE

## A Toad's Abode

**THE DISTINCTIVE, HIGH-PITCHED** and trill-sounding chirps of the Houston toad were once common sounds across the central coastal region of Texas. But today, the toad's chorus is harder to come by, as habitat loss and other factors have pushed the species toward extinction in the wild.

**TWO MEMBERS** of the cooperative family are working to reverse that trend.

**LAST FALL, ROXANNE AND ELVIS HERNANDEZ**, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative members and owners of Rancho Zunzun in Bastrop County, became the first private landowners to enroll in a conservation program through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to aid in the recovery of the endangered Houston toad.

**THROUGH BRUSH MANAGEMENT**, invasive species control, prescribed burning and other conservation practices, the Hernandezes hope to revitalize their property with the native loblolly pines and sandy soils that the toad depends on—and in the process, help restore the Lost Pines ecosystem, which was ravaged by wildfires in 2011.

**“WHAT’S GOOD** for the toad is good for other wildlife,” says Roxanne, whose 53-acre ranch is part of the Alum Creek Wildlife Management Association. Though Rancho Zunzun is so far the only official participant in the Houston toad conservation program, Hernandez says every bit of the association’s acreage is being managed to some extent for the benefit of the toad. And other property owners have expressed interest in joining the program—a prospect Hernandez welcomes: “It’s the collective that’s going to make the difference.”

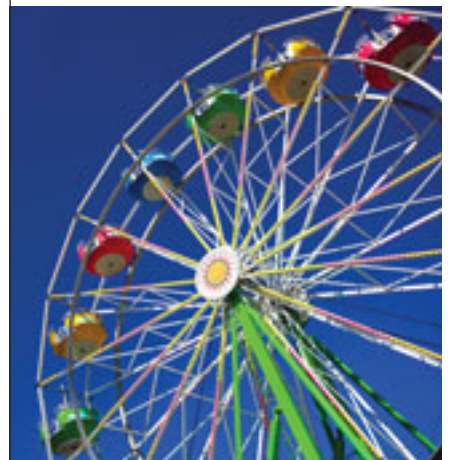
## REINVENTING THE WHEEL

Note these milestone anniversaries this month, commemorating people and events that left quite a mark in American society:

**175 years ago:** Susan Elizabeth Blow, who opened the first successful public kindergarten in the United States—in St. Louis—was born June 7, 1843.

**150 years ago:** The patent for the typewriter, developed by Wisconsin inventor Christopher Latham Sholes, was granted June 23, 1868. It featured the QWERTY keyboard that’s still in use today.

**125 years ago:** Two creations debuted at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893 that continue to provide enjoyment: a new popcorn sensation that became known as Cracker Jack and the Ferris wheel.



### Did you know?



**AN ANONYMOUS** developer filed a request with the Federal Aviation Administration last fall to perform a study to build the world’s largest Ferris wheel in San Antonio. The wheel would tower 900 feet high, making it the tallest structure in San Antonio.

A man and a woman are riding bicycles away from the camera on a paved road. The man is on the left, wearing a dark jacket and a white cap. The woman is on the right, wearing a pink shirt and grey pants. The road is lined with tall palm trees on the left and a white building with a red truck parked in front on the right. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, suggesting sunset or sunrise.

# ❄️ the winters of their LIVES

**They come from colder  
climes, and while they're here,  
Winter Texans volunteer  
and spread warmth**





*Story and photos  
by Laura Jenkins*

**F**or a woman who was once on the run from a drug cartel, Sue Machetta seems surprisingly relaxed in Mexico. I don't mean the chaise-longue, umbrella-drink kind of relaxed. I'm talking about the composure that appears when you're certain you've found your calling. Even though they live in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, Sue and her husband, Jerry, work with the Mexican Children's Refuge, a nonprofit that provides scholarships for children across the border, in Nuevo Progreso, Mexico.

After spending one day with the couple in Mexico, I had a hard time keeping up with all the ways they've found to improve the lives of the impoverished.

Each year, this couple and thousands of Winter Texans like them spend an enormous amount of their time and resources to give back to the community that's taken them in.

Winter Texans spend a few weeks to a few months in the Lone Star State each year, usually to escape harsh winters in the northern U.S. About half own or rent a mobile home in the Rio Grande Valley; another third own a recreational vehicle; and some own a second home or condo.

According to a 2016 study conducted by the Business and Tourism Research Center at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, approximately 96,000 Winter Texans visited the area in 2016. That seems like a lot, but that number is down from 144,000 in 2010. Kristi Collier of Welcome Home RGV, an organization that provides resources and support for Winter Texans, says the decline isn't surprising.

**Ron and Celeste Rogers ride through Snow to Sun RV resort in Weslaco.**

"The No. 1 reason people come down here is word of mouth," Collier says. "They heard about it from a friend who was coming here. There were times when you couldn't find an



**Top: A coveted waterside slip in Isla Blanca Park on South Padre Island. Above: Jardin de Los Niños, a kindergarten endowed by the Mabel Foundation.**

RV spot because they were all full. But every year, due to attrition, we lose people. Some are in poor health. Some pass away. We're kind of in that transitional phase where [we] haven't been replacing them as fast as we've been losing them."

When pressed for a ballpark figure, Collier estimates that today the mobile home parks are about 75 percent full. She says back in the 1980s, the region did quite a bit of marketing in the Midwest, which is where the great majority of Winter Texans hail from. But once the parks got full, marketing efforts dwindled.

Despite their waning numbers, Winter Texans' economic impact is staggering. According to the aforementioned study, Winter Texans funneled an estimated \$760 million into the Rio Grande Valley economy in the 2015–2016 season and injected another \$30.6 million into Mexican border towns. But the value of volunteerism that Winter Texans bring might be an even greater benefit than the money they spend.



**Above: Medical supply room at Mabel's Free Clinic in Nuevo Progreso. Right: Winter Texans fish at Isla Blanca Park.**



Clearly, these people aren't skimping on the fun of being retired.

But somehow they still manage to find plenty of time to give back to their seasonal community.

The Machettas, who heard about the Rio Grande Valley from friends, unwittingly sold their beekeeping business and home in South Dakota to a person involved in drug trafficking. While the authorities sorted out the details of the case, the Machettas drove their RV to Texas to keep a low profile as the case was resolved. They visited Nuevo Progreso and met a shoeshine boy who ignited their passion to serve that community. That was eight years ago.

Eventually they joined forces with Dr. Eva Lilia Garcia de González, a physician in Nuevo Progreso who is the Mexican director of the Mabel Foundation, a nonprofit that provides medical care, food and scholarships to the community. (Mabel Clare Proudley was a Weslaco-based humanitarian and philanthropist who devoted most of her life to serving the people in and around Nuevo Progreso.) The Machettas live in the RGV for four months each winter, but their work on behalf of the poor in Nuevo Progreso is year-round.

“When we were young, our grandparents often just sat in rockers watching the world go by,” Sue Machetta says. “People were there to help us when we were struggling and trying to raise our families and pay tuition fees, and now it’s our turn to pay it forward!”

They make furniture and intricate woodcarvings, sew quilts, and paint on canvas and glass, and they sell the items to fund their work with the refuge. Sue Machetta recently had the idea to found

a trade school for those who don't have access to traditional education. Plans are in the works for sewing, woodworking and welding courses, with other trades and music classes forthcoming. The Machettas are just two Winter Texans who devote themselves to charitable causes in and around the Rio Grande Valley.

It's a cold, drizzly January day in South Texas when I pull into Trophy Gardens RV Resort in Alamo. I selected this community, a member of Magic Valley Electric Cooperative, out of *The Park Book*, a guide that lists 330 RV and mobile home parks in the Rio Grande Valley.

I'm here to see if I can gain a better perspective on how Winter Texans spend their time. As I walk through the main entrance, I notice a group of people playing shuffleboard. The weekly calendar of events on the wall makes me tired just to read it. I note several art and sewing classes, including a crocheting and knitting





**Above: A conga line at the Trophy Gardens RV Resort in Alamo. Right: Karen Price, left, and Kristi Collier at a welcome event in Mercedes.**



group that calls itself “The Happy Hookers.” The calendar includes a profusion of card games, sports and exercise opportunities. Every Saturday night, the park hosts a dance with a live band. Clearly, these people aren’t skimping on the fun of being retired. But somehow they still manage to find plenty of time to give back to their seasonal community.

“We go to police stations and schools to ask what areas, what children need help,” says Janet Yeley, who serves on the board of the park’s nonprofit organization, Caring for Others. “There’s a new shelter going in for women and children, so we’re going to try and see what their needs are. Every Tuesday morning, we meet to consider where to concentrate our efforts.” Trophy Gardens residents founded CFO more than three decades ago. Their aim is to design creative ways to help needy children and families.

Their efforts are eclectic and inspiring.

Some residents help care for premature babies at an area hospital. Others play Santa or take food and presents to the poor on Christmas Eve. One man collects old bicycles, refurbishes them and gives them to people who need transportation. Another man collects used carpet, cleans it and makes beds for children in Mexico. A women’s group collaborates with the Rio Grande Valley Quilt Guild to make quilts for individuals in the U.S. military.

“We have residents that drive the van to the Shriners hospital in Houston,” says Lynn Murray, who with her husband, J.D., manages Trophy Gardens. “They pick the kids and a parent up at the border, drive them to Houston and then spend the night with them at a hotel.”

Everything the Trophy Gardens RV Park donates is either made by residents or purchased with funds raised by park residents. They have bake sales and make things like hats and blankets. They organize food drives. One of the most popular fundraising efforts is the park’s donation station, where residents

contribute clothing and household items.

“Every Wednesday they bring us their donations,” says Yeley. “I get it all ready, fix it up, make sure any appliances work. Then they all come back on Tuesday and give money for what their neighbors have donated. All proceeds are used to fund our work in the Alamo community.”

Most Winter Texans I met convince me that they’re a resourceful bunch. Many referenced Collier’s organization as a heartwarming presence and a phenomenal resource. But her company exists to serve the needs of Winter Texans, not to spearhead their volunteer efforts. I never encountered anyone who was organizing volunteers on a large scale. Winter Texans effect positive change in a multitude of singular ways.

“I think volunteerism is part of the Midwest values,” says Murray. “A lot of our residents come from Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, even Canada. I think they’re taught from a young age to give back to the community. So that continues no matter where they are.”

Murray and her husband live in the Valley full time, and she says one thing she really appreciates about her adopted state is the inclusion implied by the name part-time residents are widely known by.

“The great thing about coming to Texas is the term ‘Winter Texan,’” Murray says. “You’re not just a snowbird here. You’re considered a Texan.”

Laura Jenkins is a writer and photojournalist based in Austin.

# CONNECTING YOUR HOME





# High-tech devices allow you to control lights, appliances and air conditioning wirelessly

Story by Jeff Siegel | Illustrations by Carl Wiens

When CoServ offered its members a discount on smart thermostats in April 2016, the North Texas cooperative's goal was to enroll 3,000 devices in its demand-response program. The plan was to reach this goal by December, but by May, just one month later, 4,000 devices already had been enrolled.

"The demand is there for devices like smart thermostats and smart TVs," says Oscar Martinez, director of communications for CoServ, an electric cooperative headquartered in Corinth, north of the Metroplex. "Yes, they want to save energy and save money, but it's about more than that. They see that these gadgets have a lot of potential for changing the way they live."

CoServ members who bought the smart thermostats were creating part of what experts call "the connected home," which is powered by the "internet of things." Connected homes are about more than simply being connected to your co-op's system.

At its most basic, the internet of things refers to the ability of devices to communicate and work with each other over Wi-Fi, thanks to a computer chip embedded in each lightbulb, thermostat, camera or appliance.

The technology in a smart thermostat is another step forward on the road that gave us email, video chat and music streaming. The connected home makes it as easy to control appliances, lights and air conditioning as it is to send a text message.

One essential point to keep in mind about the connected home, explains Alan Shedd, director of energy solutions for Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, is that these solutions assume you have in-home Wi-Fi. Without that connectivity, Shedd points out, you will have access to only some of the functionality of a product like a Nest thermostat, but you cannot implement the comprehensive solution.

"This represents an important enabling technology," Shedd says, "but make sure your expectations are in line with reality." Start with the most basic ways to use new technology because that is where you realize tangible benefits.

"One of the best ways to approach this is to look for the low-hanging fruit," says Will Holford, manager of public affairs for Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Bastrop and serving parts of 14 Central Texas counties. "Focus on the most bang for your buck. And that is often going to be a smart thermostat because that's going to do more to cut [energy] use than blinds or lightbulbs."

A critical consideration when it comes to connecting devices is the strength of your Wi-Fi signal. None of this will work unless the signal is strong enough to allow the devices to talk to each other, and there are dozens of reasons why your signal may not be strong enough. That your house may be too big is not even the most important. In some cases, Wi-Fi signals can even lose strength in a small apartment. Among the culprits: fish tanks, because the signal can't pass through water; interference from neighboring Wi-Fi, cordless phones or even a baby monitor, which can overwhelm the radio channels available for the signal; and too much concrete, brick or metal in a building, which can slow or even block the signal. One way to check Wi-Fi signal strength is via the website [speedtest.net](http://speedtest.net).

"Be sure you have the bandwidth to make it all work," Holford says. "Is your signal strong enough so that all of the devices can work together effectively? That's one thing in an urban area but may be quite different in a rural area."

## What Makes a Smart Home?

One of the reasons the idea of a smart or connected home seems so daunting is that no one can quite agree on what makes a home smart.

The simplest definition says a home becomes connected when it has three smart devices—lightbulbs, say, plus a thermostat and programmable window blinds. Typically, you control these devices separately through phone apps, so that what the thermostat does won't have any effect on what the blinds or lightbulbs do.

"The main thing to understand is what you want to get out of these gadgets," says Brian Sloboda, program and product manager for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "This is not *The Jetsons*. This is not science fiction. This is about your comfort and convenience. They are there to make your life a little easier, and that's what you need to understand."

Some say a home can only be called connected when the smart devices can talk to each other through what's called a hub—a device such as an Amazon Echo or Google Home—or through a website or phone app, such as Samsung SmartThings, which lets you control each device from one place. That way, the lights can be programmed to come on at the same time the blinds go down.

The availability of these devices varies from co-op to co-op, and there is no single right answer for how best to use the technology. NRECA is launching a pilot this year to test a hub for smart devices, in which a home with all its connected devices

# Wi-Fi Explained

The easiest way to understand Wi-Fi is to consider an average home or business since most of them support Wi-Fi access. The main requirement for Wi-Fi is that there's a device that can transmit the wireless signal, like a router, phone or computer.

In a typical home, a router transmits an internet connection coming from outside the network, like an ISP, and delivers that service to nearby devices that can reach the wireless signal. Phones and computers can share wireless or wired internet connections with other devices by creating a Wi-Fi hot spot, which functions similarly to a router.

No matter how the Wi-Fi is being used or what its source of connection is, the result is always the same: a wireless signal that lets other devices connect to the main transmitter for communication, like to transfer files or carry voice messages.

Wi-Fi, from the user's perspective, is just internet access from a wireless-capable device like a phone, tablet or laptop.

—Lifewire



will learn how to manage electricity use—through lights, heating and cooling, hot water, and the stove. The goal, says Sloboda, is to develop a system that understands the homeowner's needs: to save money, to be comfortable or both, then, over time, to control electricity use and provide that desired result to the homeowner.

"The problem here is that too many people see a smart home as technology for technology's sake," says Wesley Higbee, a software developer and consultant. "Then, it's just a lot of buzzwords, and the smart devices don't really make our lives easier."

Case in point: Home computers make our lives easier by allowing us to pay bills, talk to family through Skype or FaceTime, and send emails. But does a smart lightbulb, working by itself, do the same thing? Probably not, says Higbee, because it still has to be turned on and off like a regular lightbulb.

This is the reason, say several experts, that coordinating smart devices through a hub seems to be the most likely future for the connected home.

"That's why it's not about a single device but about the idea of multiple devices working together to do something for you that is easier than you doing it yourself," says Walt Zerbe, senior director of technology and standards for the Custom Electronic Design & Installation Association, a trade group for home technology and networking companies. "And that's the difference between smart and connected: It's that the devices are connected to each other and that you don't have to connect them yourself."

Even though this concept is practical, it still may sound far-fetched. But go back to the home computer example. Who would have thought, even a few decades ago, that you would be able to video chat with someone thousands of miles away without a telephone or expensive camera?

Consumer awareness is the only thing in the way, says Johan Fagerberg, CEO of Berg Insight, which tracks connected home technology.

"The consumer awareness barrier is, however, gradually being overcome," he says. "Smart home solutions are becoming more common on the market, and smart home solution vendors are investing substantial resources in marketing to raise awareness and educate consumers about the benefits of these solutions. In addition, many smart home ecosystems are underdeveloped, and products are often complicated to use. More devices that work with each other and that have well-implemented user interfaces are needed in order to accelerate the market. Smart home devices must be easy to set up and use."

## Security Matters

Any time Wi-Fi is involved, security matters. One key to security success, Zerbe says, is to use a password to protect your network, and update your software and hardware regularly. In addition, understand that most connected devices aren't made to last; rather, like cell-phones, they have a relatively short shelf life and need to be replaced as the technology they use becomes more sophisticated. Older software and hardware are more prone to flaws.

One connected home scenario depends on geofencing, which uses GPS technology to create a virtual geographic boundary around your house. When a connected device in your car senses you've crossed the geofence, for example, it transmits the signal to open the garage door. The rest follows, based on how you use your hub to set up your interconnected devices. Of course, you can program the devices to do the reverse when the garage door closes: The lights go off, the blinds close, the thermostat moves higher and the camera follows the dog into the bedroom, where he flops on the bed and goes to sleep.

Duane Paulson, a vice president at Fing, where he helps clients incorporate the firm's connectivity platform into security and home-automation systems, says the future is here. The first two choices—about cost and how extensively consumers want to improve device connectivity in their homes—are straightforward. The third choice is more complicated: Is the connected home a do-it-yourself project, or should someone be hired to assemble the package?

"I always compare it to cutting my grass," he says with a laugh. "I know how to cut my grass. But I don't want to do it. It's the same here. I can install a couple of devices and set up a hub, but do I want to spend the time? Do I want to Google something when I can't get it to work or to wait on hold with customer support?"

Because, in the end, the connected home is about making our lives easier.

Learn more about writer **Jeff Siegel** at [winecurmudgeon.com](http://winecurmudgeon.com).



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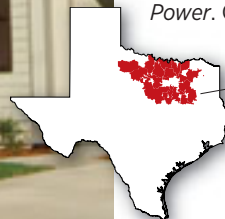
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## MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

# WEATHERING THE STORM TOGETHER

— John W. Herrera

June not only ushers in school breaks, family outings and road trips, but also the beginning of hurricane season, officially June 1–November 30, with activity typically peaking in August for Texas.

We at Magic Valley Electric Cooperative know that this is not an occasion to take lightly, especially post-Hurricane Harvey, the most significant tropical cyclone rainfall event in U.S. history since record keeping began in the 1880s. While Harvey brought unprecedented rainfall and vicious storms, unleashing tornadoes and floods, to multiple areas of our state last year, it also provided an inspiring example of cooperative ideals in action.

Of the many examples of selflessness that we saw during the torrential rains and in the aftermath of the Category 4 storm, perhaps no story is as emblematic of the cooperative spirit as Jackson Electric Cooperative lineman Jimmie Scott's.

The hurricane destroyed Scott's home, which his father built outside Bay City on land that had belonged to his grandfather. With a big job ahead—salvaging whatever belongings he could and rebuilding—Scott went right to work. But not on his property. Instead, he turned his attention to his co-workers and the mission at hand: to get power restored to Jackson EC members. That commitment to serving others even brought comfort for Scott, who acknowledged that going to work sustained him during those wrenching days.

Weathering a crisis together and the commitment to never let members or fellow linemen down, exemplifies cooperative principles Concern for Community and Cooperation Among Cooperatives. Other cooperatives' responses to the havoc wreaked by Harvey echoed those principles.


Victoria Electric Cooperative, one of 15 electric co-ops affected by Harvey, lost power to all 22,467 of its meters. Electric cooperatives from all over Texas sent aid. Magic Valley Electric Cooperative responded by sending 11 employees and equipment to help repair damage and get the power back on, working in harsh conditions far from home for several days.

Members of the co-op family across the country responded with donations of money and supplies, including two co-ops that sent 18-wheelers filled with cleaning supplies, toiletries and handwritten notes expressing support.

The state of Texas coordinated a comprehensive response to Harvey. While focusing on the acute needs of survivors of that storm—with 371,307 FEMA-approved applicants to date—a report from Governor Greg Abbott's Harvey commission notes: "The bottom line is that we cannot just rebuild what was damaged; we must 'future-proof' what is built new to mitigate future problems to the greatest extent possible."

This is an approach and directive Magic Valley takes to heart. We'll continue working to safeguard and maintain our electric infrastructure to withstand extreme weather events as much as possible. If and when the next storm of biblical proportions comes to our doorstep, our lineworkers and behind-the-scenes staff stand ready to get your lights back on as quickly and safely as possible in service to our co-op family.

In light of these efforts and steadfast commitment, we ask you to please review [ready.gov/hurricanes](http://ready.gov/hurricanes) for tips on navigating hurricane season. Let's continue working together to keep you and your family safe.

  
John W. Herrera  
General Manager

### TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

## Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Preparing for Hurricane Season:

June 1–November 30

**EVACUATION PLANNING:** When a hurricane threatens, listen for instructions from local officials. When they call for an evacuation in your area, get going without delay.

- **Discuss evacuation plans** with your family **before** hurricane season June 1–November 30. Make a checklist of what you need to do before you leave town and review it.
- **Monitor NOAA Weather Radio**, local TV and radio broadcasts during storm season.
- **Prepare an emergency supply kit** including: radio, flashlight, extra batteries, extra eyeglasses, bottled water, nonperishable food, dry clothes, bedding, insurance information, important documents, medications, copies of prescriptions and special products for babies, seniors, medically fragile family members and pets.
- **Learn evacuation routes** before storm season. When there's a hurricane in the Gulf, keep your gas tank as full as possible. Expect traffic delays in an evacuation.
- **Register with the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry online at [stear.dps.texas.gov](http://stear.dps.texas.gov) or dial 211 to register if you have a disability or medical needs, or if you simply do not have transportation.** Gulf Coast residents in evacuation zones who have a disability or medical needs who do not have friends or family to help or do not have transportation should register with STEAR in advance.

### CONTACT US

For outages and all customer service inquiries

### CALL US

1-866-225-5683 toll-free

### FIND US ON THE WEB

[magicvalley.coop](http://magicvalley.coop)

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# Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:



## 1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

## 2. Distribution Substation:

A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.

## 3. Main Distribution Lines:

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

## 4. Tap Lines:

If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

## 5. Individual Homes:

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issue.

How to report outages to Magic Valley Electric Cooperative



• MVEC App



• MVEC Website: [magicvalley.coop](http://magicvalley.coop)



• By calling 866-225-5683

# EMPOWERING MEMBERS TO DO MORE

## 2018 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

At Magic Valley, we know our members are driven to do more, learning and paving their way to expand their horizons and by doing so, building a brighter future.

We're committed to providing reliable energy and resources to help future generations reach their potential.

Our 2018 scholarship winners were honored on April 16 at Magic Valley's Annual Meeting held in Harlingen.



Students: Shaena Reyes, Mariah Gutierrez, Marcus Jay Ramirez II, Jerry Callen Lefner, Karen Jimenez, Miguel Angel Lopez, Adrian Garza



## MVEC YOUTH TOUR RECIPIENTS 2018



Students: Jonathan Sherchand, Fatima Figueroa, Andrea Garcia, Jose Esparza III



This year, Magic Valley will send four outstanding students from our region to Washington D.C. on June 6th-15th to see government in action firsthand. Students will have a chance to meet our members of Congress, hear inspirational speakers and join 1,600 other Youth Tour students from other electric co-ops around the Nation.

From the battlefields of Gettysburg, to the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C., Youth Tour students will explore the leadership lessons of our Nation's history and be immersed in the cooperative spirit.





**“ I’M MARCUS, AND MY  
CO-OP POWERS ME ”**

We’re committed to providing reliable energy and resources  
to empower future generations to reach their potential.

Magic Valley  
**MVEC**  
Electric Cooperative

**EMPOWERING OUR MEMBERS TO DO MORE**

**MAGICVALLEY.COOP**

# Magic Valley Electric Cooperative 2018 Annual Meeting

The sounds of a neighborhood get-together filled the air at the annual Magic Valley Electric Cooperative meeting held at the Harlingen Municipal Auditorium. “Well, hello. How are you? “How is the new baby?” “¿Como estás?”

Magic Valley members make up a community, although a widespread one, covering five counties.

From McAllen and San Benito, Pharr, Los Indios, Harlingen and Weslaco, 900 people – far-flung neighbors from all seven districts – came to learn how their cooperative had fared in 2017, and what plans were in the works for 2018.

Magic Valley, the third largest co-op in Texas, showed its appreciation to those who took time to attend by offering friendly greetings and an insulated, orange-striped gift bag stuffed with surprises: rain gauge, cutting board, vegetable scrubber, chip clipper, cell phone mount, sewing/manicure set, flyswatter, hand sanitizer and more.

“I try to come every year,” said Leo E. Hernandez, a member since 1970. His cap had the insignia of the 2nd Armored Division, recalling his Army service in Germany about 50 years ago. “I enjoy meeting the people here, and Magic Valley is a very good company. They respond fast, and no one gives me a better deal than they do.”

The youngest MVEC family member at the annual meeting was 8-month-old Jayla Madison Torres, who came from Weslaco with her parents Del and Lorenzo Torres and two siblings. Lorenzo said the family had been coming to MVEC’s annual meetings for 18 years. “We’re here in appreciation: when it storms, and the power goes out, Magic Valley gets power restored right away. And we like to keep up with how much Magic Valley is growing.”

Edna Junge attended with 12 neighbors -- Winter Texans and year-round Texans—from Lakewood Village in Harlingen. “I come every year, even though I already have a dozen flyswatters,” she joked. “I like to learn what’s going on.”

The auditorium lobby also held numerous MVEC employees (the folks behind your power) eager to talk with the people who use the electricity. MVEC’s Training Coordinator Anabella Ramos explained that teaching soft skills – listening, treating people with respect, problem solving – is the foundation for taking good care of co-op members. “Soft skills are at the very core of customer service. Soft skills let you put yourself in another person’s shoes and understand what matters to them. Connecting with customers and fellow employees motivates us to serve our members to the best of our abilities.”

Debbie Bocanegra, MVEC HR Manager, who started at MVEC after high school graduation, working part-time while in college, has never wanted to work anywhere else. She listened while Gina Alvarez of Harlingen talked about attending annual meetings for the past 18 years. “I love the atmosphere, the information, the goody bags and the door prizes.” Gina said she often gives her MVEC meeting gift bag away to friends, while recommending they sign up with MVEC. “Now with the service area maps online, I can tell them they can get Magic Valley.”

At the Texas Co-op Power booth, Rebecca Elizondo talked to MVEC members. “We like to remind members that Texas Co-op Power magazine has news about the community.” That includes Rio Grande Valley day trips, area history and recipes submitted by local members. Rebecca handed out packets of wildflower seeds and free raffle tickets. Nearby, members could pick up a free Co-op Connections card, which gives members discounts on rental cars, hotels and at pharmacies. MVEC also provided English-to-Spanish translation services to Spanish speaking members, allowing them to follow every word of the evening’s presentation.





Inside the auditorium, almost every seat was taken when Dr. Martin Garcia, President of the Board of Directors, gave his report. Members learned that \$5.6 million was distributed to MVEC members as capital credits in 2017. The co-op added 2,143 members last year, bringing the total to over 99,000 members connected.

Other news included the upcoming new portal on the MVEC website that will allow members to monitor their power usage. The new web portal is part of a larger operating system that MVEC is currently working to transition to. The new operating system should be fully integrated in approximately 18 months.

At the end of the evening, the drawings for numerous door prizes held everyone's attention. Ken and Phyllis Robison, who were among the 15 who attended from Quiet Village II in Donna, thought the trip to Harlingen was worthwhile. They went home with a certificate good for \$100 off their power bill, as did three other members.

Frances Garcia of San Benito bubbled with excitement after winning the Texas Co-op Power raffle. After years of attending the annual meeting, she took home a large gift

basket. "This is what we come for, the prizes," she said. "I would have loved to win the truck, but I'm thrilled with this. And I love Magic Valley. The cost is so low; you get the bill and don't feel bad. Plus, the service is wonderful. And I love the recipes in the magazine."

From live music to great door prizes, the overall atmosphere at MVEC's annual meeting was that of excitement and enthusiasm. If you didn't make this year's meeting, then make plans to attend next year's meeting so that you can partake in the festivities.





## MENSAJE DEL DIRECTOR GENERAL

# RESISTIENDO LA TORMENTA JUNTOS

— John W. Herrera

El mes de junio no solo marca el principio de las vacaciones escolares, paseos con la familia y viajes por carretera; también es el inicio de la temporada de huracanes, oficialmente desde el 1 de junio hasta el 30 de noviembre, con una actividad más alta durante el mes de agosto en Texas.

Nosotros en Magic Valley Electric Cooperative nos tomamos muy en serio esta temporada, especialmente después del Huracán Harvey, el evento ciclónico más importante en la historia de Estados Unidos, desde los primeros registros en la década de 1880. Si bien Harvey provocó lluvias brutales sin precedentes, desatando tormentas e inundaciones y tornados en varias áreas de nuestro estado el año pasado, también nos dejó un modelo inspirador de los ideales cooperativistas en acción.

De los muchos ejemplos de heroísmo que vimos durante las lluvias torrenciales y los resultados de la tormenta de categoría 4, quizá ninguna historia es tan simbólica del espíritu cooperativista como la de Jimmie Scott, liniero de la Cooperativa Jackson Electric.

El huracán destruyó la casa de Jimmie Scott, la misma que su padre construyó en las afueras de la ciudad de Bay City en el terreno que perteneció a su abuelo. Con una gran tarea por delante – rescatar las pertenencias que le quedaron y reconstruir – Jimmie Scott optó por enfocar su atención en sus compañeros y la misión que tenían por delante: restaurar el servicio eléctrico a los miembros de la cooperativa Jackson Electric. El compromiso de ayudar a los demás incluso reanimó a Jimmie Scott, quien expresó que fue un consuelo para él irse a trabajar durante esos días dolorosos.

Sobrellevar una crisis juntos y ese compromiso de no fallarle ni a nuestros miembros ni a nuestros compañeros de trabajo muestra los principios cooperativistas de Compromiso con la comunidad y Cooperación entre cooperativas. La respuesta de otras cooperativas a los estragos que causó Harvey hizo eco a esos principios.

Victoria Electric Cooperative, una de las 15 cooperativas afectadas por Harvey, perdió la energía de todos sus 22,467 medidores. Las cooperativas eléctricas de todo Texas respondieron con ayuda. Magic Valley Electric envió 11 empleados y equipos para ayudar a reparar los daños y restaurar la energía, en condiciones duras de trabajo, lejos de casa durante varios días.

Los miembros de la familia de las cooperativas en todo el país respondieron con donaciones de dinero y comida, incluidas dos cooperativas que enviaron camiones llenos de artículos de limpieza y de aseo personal con tarjetas escritas a mano, expresando su apoyo.

El estado de Texas coordinó una respuesta extensa al Huracán Harvey. Manteniendo la prioridad en las urgentes necesidades de los sobrevivientes de esa tormenta, con 37,307 solicitantes aprobados por FEMA hasta la fecha, un informe del gobernador Greg Abbott señala: "La conclusión es que no podemos simplemente reconstruir lo destruido; debemos construir 'a prueba de futuro' lo nuevo que se construya, para mitigar problemas en el futuro."

Este es un objetivo y una directriz que Magic Valley se toma muy a pecho. Continuaremos trabajando para proteger y mantener nuestra infraestructura eléctrica para resistir condiciones meteorológicas extremas, lo más que sea posible. Si una nueva tormenta de proporciones bíblicas llega a nuestras puertas, nuestros linieros y personal de oficina estarán preparados para restablecer la energía a nuestros miembros lo más rápido y seguro que nos sea posible para servir a nuestra familia de cooperativas.

A la luz de estos esfuerzos y compromiso constante, te pedimos que por favor visites la página web [Ready.gov/hurricanes](http://Ready.gov/hurricanes) para recibir consejos sobre qué hacer durante la temporada de huracanes. Sigamos trabajando juntos para que tú y tu familia se mantengan seguros.

**John W. Herrera**  
Director General

### DIVISIÓN DE ADMINISTRACIÓN DE EMERGENCIAS DE TEXAS

## Guía para Huracanes

**Preparación para la temporada de huracanes desde el 1 de junio hasta el 30 de noviembre**

### EVACUACIÓN EN CASO DE HURACÁN:

Cuando exista una amenaza de huracán, escucha las instrucciones de funcionarios locales. Cuando ordenen una evacuación en tu área, evacua el área lo más pronto posible.

- **Habla con tu familia** sobre los planes de evacuación ANTES de la temporada de huracanes, que empieza el 1 de junio y termina el 30 de noviembre. Haz una lista de lo que debes hacer antes de salir de la ciudad y revisala.
- **Escucha la radio y televisión** durante la temporada de huracanes.
- **Prepara un equipo de emergencia** que incluya: radio, linterna, baterías de repuesto, anteojos extras, agua embotellada, alimentos no perecederos, ropa extra, ropa de cama, información de seguros, documentos importantes, medicinas, copias de recetas médicas y productos especiales para bebés, personas mayores, miembros de la familia que sean médicamente frágiles y mascotas.
- **Aprende las rutas de evacuación** antes de la temporada de huracanes. Cuando haya un huracán en el Golfo, mantén el tanque de gasolina lleno. Recuerda que habrá demoras en el tráfico.
- **Puedes registrarte con el 'State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry' (STEAR) en la página web: <https://STEAR.dps.texas.gov> o llamando al 211 para registrarte, si tienes una discapacidad o necesidades médicas o si simplemente no tienes transporte.** Los residentes que viven en la costa del Golfo en zonas de evacuación con una discapacidad o necesidades médicas – que no tienen amigos o familiares para ayudarles – o no tienen transporte deben registrarse con STEAR por adelantado.

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## 2. Subestación de distribución:

una subestación puede servir a cientos o miles de consumidores. Cuando hay un apagón muy grande, los linieros tienen que inspeccionar la subestación para determinar si los problemas vienen de las líneas de transmisión que alimentan la subestación, la subestación misma o si el problema está en otra parte de las líneas eléctricas.

## 3. Las líneas principales de distribución:

Si no se encontró un problema en la subestación de distribución, las líneas de distribución serán inspeccionadas.

Estas líneas llevan la energía a grandes grupos de consumidores en las comunidades o subdivisiones.

## 4. Líneas de media tensión:

Si todavía hay interrupciones eléctricas en zonas más pequeñas, las líneas de suministro (también conocidas como líneas de media tensión) son inspeccionadas. Estas líneas suministran energía a los transformadores, montados sobre los postes o en unas bases de cemento para las líneas de servicio subterráneas, fuera de las empresas, escuelas y hogares.

## 5. Casas individuales:

Si tu casa se queda sin energía, la línea de servicio entre el transformador y tu casa podrá tener que repararse.

Es importante llamar para reportar un apagón; esto ayuda al equipo de linieros a aislar los problemas locales.

**Cómo reportar apagones a Magic Valley Electric Cooperative**



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El grupo de estudiantes ganadores de la beca 2018 fueron homenajeados el 16 de abril en la Junta Anual de Magic Valley que se celebró en Harlingen.



*Estudiantes: Shaena Reyes, Mariah Gutierrez, Marcus Jay Ramirez II, Jerry Callen Lefner, Karen Jimenez, Miguel Angel Lopez, Adrian Garza*



## ESTUDIANTES DE YOUTH TOUR 2018

Este año, Magic Valley enviará a cuatro estudiantes sobresalientes de nuestra región a Washington D.C., del 6 hasta el 15 de junio, para ver de primera mano cómo funciona nuestro gobierno nacional. Los estudiantes tendrán la oportunidad de conocer a nuestros miembros del Congreso, escuchar inspiradores discursos y reunirse con más de 1,600 jóvenes estudiantes de otras Cooperativas Eléctricas de nuestra nación.

Desde los campos de batalla de Gettysburg, hasta los salones del Congreso en Washington, D.C., las y los jóvenes estudiantes podrán explorar las lecciones de liderazgo de la historia de nuestra nación y sumergirse en el espíritu cooperativista.

Las y los estudiantes también visitarán sitios históricos, como la Catedral Nacional de Washington, el Cementerio Nacional de Arlington y los museos Smithsonian.

El grupo de estudiantes ganadores de programa Youth Tour fueron homenajeados el 16 de abril en la Junta Anual de Magic Valley que se celebró en Harlingen.



*Estudiantes: Jonathan Sherchand, Fatima Figueroa, Andrea Garcia, Jose Esparza III*





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# Magic Valley Electric Cooperative

## Junta Anual 2018

Los sonidos de una reunión entre vecinos y amigos llenó el aire en la celebración de la Junta Anual de Magic Valley Electric Cooperative que se celebró en el Auditorio Municipal de Harlingen. "Hola, ¿cómo estás?" "¿Cómo está tu nuevo bebé?" "Hi, how are you?"

Las y los miembros de Magic Valley conforman una comunidad, aunque muy amplia, ya que abarca cinco condados.

Desde McAllen y Pharr, San Benito, Los Indios, Harlingen y Weslaco, 900 personas de los extensos siete distritos asistieron a la junta para aprender sobre el progreso de la cooperativa en el 2017 y los planes a futuro para el año 2018.

Magic Valley, la tercera cooperativa más grande de Texas, mostró su agradecimiento a aquellos que se tomaron su tiempo para asistir a la junta, ya que regalaron abrazos, sonrisas y sobre todo una bolsa de regalo color naranja llena de sorpresas: un pluviómetro, también conocido como medidor de lluvia, tabla de cortar, cepillo para lavar verduras, clips para bolsas de fritos, mini-costurero/Set manicura, matamoscas, desinfectante para manos y mucho más.

"Trato de venir cada año," dijo Leo E. Hernández, miembro desde 1970. Su gorro tenía el logotipo de la Segunda División Blindada, recordando su servicio militar en Alemania hace unos 50 años. "Me gusta venir para conocer nueva gente y Magic Valley es una muy buena empresa. Responden rápido y nadie me da un trato mejor que el de ellos."



El miembro más joven de la familia Magic Valley que asistió a la junta fue Jayla Madison Torres con tan solo ocho meses, quien fue desde Weslaco con sus padres Del y Lorenzo Torres y dos hermanos. Lorenzo dijo que su familia había estado asistiendo a la junta anual desde hace 18 años. "Estamos aquí en agradecimiento, cuando hay tormentas y se va la luz, el personal de Magic Valley restaura la energía enseguida. También nos gusta mantenernos informados sobre el crecimiento de Magic Valley."

Edna Junge asistió con 12 vecinos que son Winter Texans que ya viven en el Valle durante todo el año en Lakewood Village en Harlingen. "Vengo cada año, aunque ya tengo una docena de matamoscas," bromeó. "Me gusta enterarme de lo que está pasando."

En el lobby del auditorio había muchos empleados de Magic Valley (las personas detrás del servicio eléctrico) disponibles para hablar con los miembros de la cooperativa. La Coordinadora de Capacitación de Magic Valley, Anabella Ramos, explicó sobre el entrenamiento en las habilidades "blandas": escuchar, tratar a las personas con respeto, solución de problemas, son la base para dar un buen servicio a los miembros de la cooperativa. "Las habilidades blandas son el corazón del servicio al cliente. Estas habilidades nos permiten ponernos en el lugar de la otra persona y entender lo que es importante para ella. El poder conectarse con clientes y compañeros nos motiva a servir a nuestros miembros al máximo de nuestras capacidades."

Debbie Bocanegra, Gerente de Recursos Humanos de Magic Valley, quien empezó a trabajar para Magic Valley después de su graduación de High School, trabajó medio tiempo mientras asistía a la universidad y nunca ha querido trabajar en ninguna otra parte. Debbie escuchaba mientras Gina Alvarez de Harlingen hablaba sobre su asistencia a la junta anual durante los últimos 18 años. "Me encanta el ambiente, la información, la bolsa de regalo y los premios." Gina dice que con frecuencia obsequia su bolsa de regalo de Magic Valley a sus amigos y así les hace la recomendación de hacerse miembros de Magic Valley. "Ahora, que está disponible en línea el mapa de servicio de Magic Valley, puedo decirles dónde está disponible el servicio."

En el área de la revista de Texas Co-op Power, Rebecca Elizondo platicó con los miembros de Magic Valley. "Nos gusta recordarles que la revista de Texas Co-op Power tiene noticias sobre nuestra comunidad." Incluye artículos sobre excursiones de un día en el Valle del Río Grande, recetas enviadas por miembros. Rebecca entregó paquetes de semillas de flores silvestres y boletos para la rifa de una canasta gratis. En la siguiente mesa, las y los miembros podían tomar gratis la tarjeta de Co-op Connections que ofrece descuentos para renta de autos, hoteles y farmacias. También, Magic Valley ofreció gratuitamente servicio de traducción del inglés al español para permitirles a



quienes hablan español seguir cada palabra durante la presentación.

Dentro del auditorio, casi cada asiento se llenó cuando el Dr. Martín García, Presidente de la Junta de Directores, presentó su informe. Las y los miembros escucharon que \$5.6 millones de dólares fueron regresados a los miembros de MVEC como créditos de capital en 2017. La cooperativa añadió 2,143 miembros el año pasado, alcanzando un total de más de 99,000 miembros y 114,297 medidores conectados (escuelas, granjas, negocios y centros comerciales suelen tener más de un medidor.)

Otras noticias incluyeron el nuevo portal en el sitio web de Magic Valley que permitirá a los miembros revisar su consumo de energía. El portal es parte del nuevo sistema operativo de Magic Valley, que se está integrando actualmente. El nuevo sistema operativo será integrado en aproximadamente 18 meses.

Al finalizar la noche, la rifa de los numerosos premios acaparó la atención de todos. Ken y Phyllis Robison, quienes fueron parte de un grupo de 15 vecinos que asistieron de Quiet Village II de Donna, dijeron que el viaje a Harlingen, valió la pena. Regresaron a casa con un certificado de descuento de \$100 en su factura eléctrica, al igual que otros tres miembros más.

Frances García de San Benito se emocionó después de ganar la rifa de Texas Co-op Power. Después de varios años de asistir a la junta anual, se llevó a casa una gran canasta de regalo. "A mí me gusta venir por los premios," dijo. "Me hubiera gustado ganar la camioneta, pero estoy encantada con esto. Y me encanta Magic Valley. El precio es bajo; cuando te llega la factura, no está tan mal. Además, el servicio es maravilloso. Y me encantan las recetas de la revista."

Desde la música en vivo hasta la rifa de premios, el ambiente de la junta anual de Magic Valley fue emocionante y sorprendente. Si no pudiste asistir a la junta este año, te invitamos para hacer el plan de asistir a la junta del próximo año y ser parte de la celebración.



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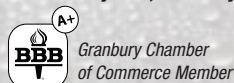


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# Bear Dogs of El Paso

Extinct ancestor of modern dogs once roamed Texas

BY MARTHA DEERINGER

OF THE PREHISTORIC CREATURES THAT once roamed the land now defined as Texas, one that might seem suited for modern times is the bear dog. These ancient mammals, ancestral to both bears and dogs, colonized Texas during the Eocene Epoch, 56 million–33.9 million years ago.

“The extinct family Amphicyonidae, commonly called bear dogs, represents a major group of carnivores with a rich evolutionary history of more than 30 million years, extending from the Middle Eocene to the Late Miocene,” write Susumu Tomiya, a vertebrate paleontologist at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, and Jack Tseng, an anatomist at the University at Buffalo. “During the course of their evolution, bear dogs spread to all northern continents as well as Africa and included not only bear-like forms but also small fox-sized animals and wolf-like pursuit animals.”

Although Tomiya came across an odd fossil in a dusty drawer in Chicago’s Field Museum, the Chihuahua-sized jaw had been unearthed near El Paso in 1966. Nobody was sure what it was, so Tomiya and Tseng decided to take a closer look.

“The teeth reminded me of some of the later and much larger carnivores known as bear dogs,” Tomiya said. The best-known types of bear dogs were as big as modern-day brown bears, however the Texas variety was diminutive by comparison. To be certain of the identity of the skull, Tomiya and Tseng studied a micro-CT scan of the rock-encrusted fossil, which they used to create 3D reconstructions of the skulls.

“These scans,” Tseng explained, “helped to unlock important anatomical features on the inside of the specimens, and that information allowed us to determine the true identity of these very old fossil skulls



as amphicyonids.”

“What’s remarkable about this discovery,” Tomiya added, “is that it gives us a new understanding of where these incredibly successful hunters evolved.” Earlier research suggested that bear dogs crossed from Eurasia into North America, but the newer study, which also compared the fossils to similar discoveries housed at the University of Texas, suggests that the bear dog could have arisen first in North America. It also pinpoints Southwest Texas as a key location for this incredibly successful group of predators.

Bear dogs were ferocious hunters with huge jaws and crushing teeth. The enormous bear dogs of the Miocene may have resembled modern bears, but the Texas variety, which date to much earlier, looked more like tiny dogs or foxes. Unlike dogs, however, they had a heavier build and walked with their feet flat on the ground (like bears) instead of off the ground with the foot bone serving as an extension of the legs as is the case with modern dogs.

Tomiya estimates that the Texas bear dogs may have weighed about 5 pounds and had molars that allowed it to feast on small mammals, fruit and insects much

as foxes do today.

“Bear dogs and true dogs shared a common ancestor,” Tseng pointed out, “but there is little evidence that true dogs are direct descendants of bear dogs.” At some point, the family Amphicyonidae was gradually displaced by more modern forms of bears and dogs, which were better adapted to compete.

Although bear dogs roamed Texas for more than 30 million years, increasing aridity and changing landscapes made hunting tougher. Early forms of pack-hunting wolves and dogs likely outmaneuvered bear dogs.

“Bear dogs happen to be extinct today,” Tomiya reported, “but their history is relevant to understanding where living bears and dogs come from and how their diversity has been shaped over millions of years while they coexisted.”

“In a way, bear dogs were variants of nature’s evolutionary experiments on the predatory lifestyle,” Tseng added, “making them helpful in putting modern predator adaptations into context.”

**Martha Deeringer**, a member of Heart of Texas EC, lives near McGregor. Her new book, *Elephant Dreams*, is available online.

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## Your Best Grilled Cheese

WARM, GOOEY CHEESE BETWEEN crisp, buttery bread—aka grilled cheese—is the ultimate comfort food. This month, readers shared their favorites, including a sumptuous peppered bacon and fig jam combo, and a French knife-and-fork sandwich known as a *croque monsieur*. I love this recipe from *Grilled Cheese Kitchen* by Heidi Gibson, the winner of seven grilled cheese championships and co-owner of American Grilled Cheese Kitchen in San Francisco. The Hawaiian is inspired by the classic pizza: a combination of gooey mozzarella, sweet-tart pineapple, savory ham and spicy tomato sauce. The sandwich “is one of our guilty pleasures,” Gibson writes. Aloha!

PAULA DISBROWE, FOOD EDITOR

### Hawaiian Grilled Cheese

- 4 slices fresh pineapple (about ¼-inch thick), cored, or 4 slices canned pineapple rings, drained
- 6–8 slices ripe plum tomato (about ¼-inch thick)
- 1 tablespoon butter, softened
- 4 slices Hawaiian bread (slightly sweet white bread) or artisan white bread
- 4 slices fontina cheese
- 4 ounces sliced ham
- 3 ounces fresh mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced
- Pinch red pepper flakes

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment or aluminum foil.
2. Arrange the pineapple and tomato slices on the baking sheet and bake for 12 minutes, or until the surfaces appear dry but not yet browned, turning the pieces over halfway through. Remove from the oven and set aside.
3. Heat a cast-iron or nonstick skillet over medium-low heat.
4. Spread the butter on one side of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32



# Recipes

## Your Best Grilled Cheese

### THIS MONTH'S RECIPE CONTEST WINNER

SHANNON KELEHER | COSERV

Keleher has fond childhood memories of spending summers with her mom's parents, Nan and Granddad. "My sister and I had only ever had a regular grilled cheese until Nan introduced us to the *croque monsieur*, a recipe she learned when my grandfather was stationed overseas in the Army." French for "mister crunch," this luxurious sandwich is made with ham and cheese sauce and finished under the broiler to create a crispy browned crust. Serve it with tart pickles like cornichons and a green salad. To make this a *croque madame*, serve topped with a fried egg.

### Nan's Croque Monsieur

#### CHEESE SAUCE

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1½ cups milk, heated
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- Pinch nutmeg
- ½ cup grated Gruyère cheese

#### SANDWICHES

- 8 slices white sandwich bread, crusts removed, if desired
- Dijon mustard
- 8 ounces sliced Virginia ham
- 3½ cups grated Gruyère cheese

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. CHEESE SAUCE: Melt the butter over

low heat and stir (or whisk) in the flour. Stir with a wooden spoon for 2–3 minutes. Pour in the warmed milk and stir constantly until the sauce thickens; remove from heat. Stir in the Parmesan, salt, pepper, nutmeg and ½ cup of Gruyère.

3. SANDWICHES: Lightly toast bread in the oven on a baking sheet for approximately 5 minutes on each side. Spread Dijon on one side of each piece of bread. Place slices of ham and a handful of Gruyère on four slices of bread, and top with remaining bread slices. Pour cheese sauce on top of each sandwich (using a knife to spread over top) and top with another handful of Gruyère. Bake sandwiches for approximately 5 minutes, until warmed through.

4. Broil until cheese sauce and cheese become brown and bubbly. Serve immediately. ▶ Makes 4 sandwiches.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

each bread slice, dividing it evenly. Place two slices, buttered-side down, on a clean cutting board. Layer two slices of the fontina, half of the ham, three or four slices of roasted tomato, two rings of roasted pineapple, and half of the mozzarella on top of each. Sprinkle with red pepper flakes. Finish with the remaining slices of bread, buttered-side up.

5. Using a wide spatula, place both sandwiches in the pan, cover, and cook until the bottoms are nicely browned, about 4 minutes. Turn and cook until the second sides are browned, the cheese is melted and the other ingredients are heated through, about 4 minutes longer.

6. Cut the sandwiches in half and serve immediately. ▶ Makes 2 sandwiches.

Reprinted from *Grilled Cheese Kitchen* (Chronicle Books, 2016)

### Grilled Goat Cheese and Asparagus Panini

KATHERINE TITTERINGTON | RUSK COUNTY EC

A combination of bright, tangy and savory flavors creates a satisfying sandwich. Coating the bread with onion-infused olive oil highlights and complements each ingredient. Feel free to use the thin, tender stems in addition to the asparagus tips (or slice thicker stems into ¼-inch diagonal slices).

- 1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 4–5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 bunch (about 1¼ cups) asparagus tips, fresh or frozen
- Salt
- 6 ounces chèvre (soft goat cheese)
- 2 tablespoons buttermilk
- 8 thick slices Italian bread

1. Sauté the onion in 2–3 tablespoons of olive oil over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until caramelized (about 10–12 minutes), then remove from heat. Add remaining olive oil to the pan and stir to infuse it with the onion flavor.

2. Meanwhile, blanch asparagus tips in salted water until just tender, 1–2 minutes. Drain in a colander, rinse with cold water then place them on a plate lined with paper towels to dry.

3. Using a fork, combine the chèvre and buttermilk until soft and smooth. Spread a thin layer of cheese on each slice of bread, then divide asparagus and onions



IF YOUR RECIPE IS FEATURED,  
YOU'LL WIN A TCP APRON!

### \$2,500 Holiday Recipe Contest

November's issue will feature winners of the 14th annual **Holiday Recipe Contest**. Share the dishes that make your holiday gatherings so special. Send us your best ORIGINAL recipes in the Savory Dish or Sweet Dish category, and your recipe could appear in *Texas Co-op Power* and win you a cash prize. The deadline is **June 8**. See complete rules at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

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.



evenly between four slices and top with remaining bread. Brush the remaining onion oil on the outside of the bread (adding more olive oil to pan if needed).

**4.** Grill the sandwiches on a panini press or with flat-sided waffle iron until cheese is melted and bread toasted.

► Makes 4 sandwiches.

**COOK'S TIP** For the best flavor, season the onions and asparagus with salt and pepper to taste before assembling sandwich. Consider adding chopped fresh basil, mint or parsley to the goat cheese spread, or adding a layer of olive purée (tapenade) or pickled hot peppers to the sandwich. If you don't have a panini press, cook the sandwiches in a cast-iron skillet, top them with a layer of parchment or aluminum foil then weigh them down with an additional skillet.

## Fig and Bacon Grilled Cheese

JENNIFER POMEROY | HAMILTON COUNTY EC

Fig jam delivers unexpected sweetness that plays beautifully against peppery bacon and the rich-

ness of Muenster and aged white cheddar. Feel free to use another type of jam, any style of bacon or a different bread. Preheating the skillet (preferably cast-iron) creates perfectly crisp results.

- 6 slices black pepper bacon
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter, softened
- 4 slices sourdough bread
- 2 teaspoons fig jam (or more as desired)
- 4 slices aged white cheddar cheese
- 4 slices Muenster cheese

**1.** Cook bacon as desired. (Pomeroy's preferred method is to bake in a 400-degree oven for 20–30 minutes.)

**2.** Butter both sides of bread and spread fig jam on one side of two slices. Place a slice of aged cheddar and Muenster on top of the jam, top with three strips of bacon and another slice of cheddar and Muenster.

**3.** Heat a skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the sandwiches on the preheated pan until both sides are golden brown. Slice in half, if desired, and serve warm.

► Makes 2 sandwiches.

## Build a Better Grilled Cheese

Technically, a grilled cheese sandwich requires nothing more than bread, cheese and butter. But mixing up the players and adding other ingredients adds delicious texture, surprising flavor and intrigue. Here are some fun ways to enliven a classic. —PD

### BREAD

Seeded or rye  
Whole grain  
Sourdough  
English muffins  
Brioche

### CHEESE

Brie or Camembert  
Pimento cheese  
Swiss or Gouda  
Ricotta  
Pepper jack

### ADD-ONS

Apples or pears  
Pickled peppers  
Pickles  
Tomatoes  
Cucumbers  
Sautéed greens

### CONDIMENTS

Flavored mustards  
Olive or pepper purées  
Hot pepper jelly  
Fruit jams, jellies or marmalade



**2017 GRAND PRIZEWINNER**  
Warm Gingerbread With Lemon Basil Sauce  
Rebekah Stewart | San Bernard EC  
Get the recipe at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

## 14TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY RECIPE CONTEST

# \$2,500 IN PRIZES

**\$1,000 GRAND PRIZEWINNER**

One \$500 Best Savory Winner  
One \$500 Best Sweet Winner  
Two \$250 Honorable Mention Winners

### Share your best original recipes!

Show us how you add your personal touch to every part of a meal—from savory beginnings to sweet endings—for fun and festive holiday gatherings.

Send us your best ORIGINAL holiday recipes—ones you've developed, not copied from a friend or found in a book or magazine. Winners will be featured in our November 2018 issue. Enter by June 8 at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

Go to [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com) for details and official rules.

## TEXAS CO-OP POWER

**Deadline:  
JUNE 8**

Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). Each entry MUST include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your Texas electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. Specify which category you are entering, Sweet or Savory, on each recipe. Mail entries to: Texas Co-op Power/Holiday Recipe Contest, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You can also fax entries to (512) 763-3401. Up to three total entries are allowed per co-op membership. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper if mailed or faxed. Mailed entries all can be sent in one envelope. No email entries will be accepted. For official rules, visit [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). **Entry deadline: June 8, 2018.**

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- Weighs 73 lbs.

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SAVE \$69

**NOW \$79.99**

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COMPARE TO **KOMELON \$6.98**

MODEL: L4253V

- Thumb Lock
- Rubber Wrapped Case

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ANY SINGLE ITEM\*

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- 580 lb. capacity
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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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COMPARE TO **\$1499**

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COMPARE TO **\$799.95**

SAVE \$699

ITEM 64096

21042995

LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**PREDATOR** **SUPER COUPON**

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

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

**SUPER QUIET**

ITEM 68530/63086/63085 shown

ITEM 68525/63087/63088, CALIFORNIA ONLY

- GFCI outlets

COMPARE TO **HONDA \$2,699**

MODEL: EM68050K3KAT

SAVE \$2,169

**NOW \$529.99**

COMPARE TO **\$599.99**

Wheel kit and battery sold separately.

21043584

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**BADLAND** **Battle Tested** **SUPER COUPON**

**2500 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH WIRELESS REMOTE CONTROL**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

- Weighs 14.3 lbs.
- 11-1/8" L x 4-1/2" H

**NOW \$499**

COMPARE TO **\$179.99**

SAVE \$130

ITEM 61840/61297/63476/61258 shown

21054874

Voted Best Winches

LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC** **SUPER COUPON**

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

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

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

**NOW \$149.99**

COMPARE TO **\$219**

SAVE \$69

ITEM 69091/61454 shown

21056867

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**COBRA** **SUPER COUPON** **Customer Rating** **★★★★★**

**8 CHANNEL SURVEILLANCE DVR WITH 4 HD CAMERAS AND MOBILE MONITORING CAPABILITIES**

- Night vision

**NOW \$229.99**

COMPARE TO **\$349.99**

SAVE \$120

ITEM 63890

21067090

LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**SUPER COUPON**

**10" PNEUMATIC TIRE**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

**NOW \$3.99**

COMPARE TO **\$10**

SAVE 60%

ITEM 69385/62388/62409/62698/30900 shown

21067181

LIMIT 6 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**PITTSBURGH** **SUPER COUPON** **Customer Rating** **★★★★★**

**301 PIECE MASTER MECHANIC'S TOOL KIT**

**LIFETIME WARRANTY**

SAE AND METRIC

**NOW \$159.99**

COMPARE TO **\$249.99**

SAVE \$90

ITEM 63457/69312/63464/45951 shown

21072773

LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**SUPER COUPON**

**HEAVY DUTY FOLDABLE ALUMINUM SPORTS CHAIR**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

**NOW \$19.99**

COMPARE TO **\$49.99**

SAVE 60%

ITEM 62314/63066/66383 shown

21074623

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**WARRIOR** **SUPER COUPON** **Customer Rating** **★★★★★**

**29 PIECE TITANIUM DRILL BIT SET**

COMPARE TO **DEWALT \$60**

SAVE 83%

ITEM 62281/61637 shown

**NOW \$9.99**

COMPARE TO **\$17.99**

21082185

LIMIT 2 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**luminar** **OUTDOOR** **SUPER COUPON**

**24 FT., 18 BULB, 12 SOCKET OUTDOOR STRING LIGHTS**

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

**NOW \$19.99**

COMPARE TO **\$39.98**

SAVE 50%

ITEM 64486/63483 shown

21087844

LIMIT 6 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**HaulMaster** **SUPER COUPON** **Customer Rating** **★★★★★**

**3/8" x 14 FT., GRADE 43 TOWING CHAIN**

- 5400 lb. capacity

**NOW \$19.99**

COMPARE TO **\$64.99**

SAVE 69%

ITEM 60658/97711 shown

21087859

LIMIT 7 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**Bunker Hill Security** **SUPER COUPON** **Customer Rating** **★★★★★**

**60 LED SOLAR SECURITY LIGHT**

- Includes 6V, 900 mAh NiCd battery pack.

**NOW \$29.99**

COMPARE TO **\$48.94**

SAVE 38%

ITEM 62534/69643 shown

21088780

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**PITTSBURGH** AUTOMOTIVE **SUPER COUPON**

**ATV/LAWN MOWER LIFT**

- 300 lb. capacity
- Weighs 72.5 lbs.

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

**NOW \$79.99**

COMPARE TO **\$179.99**

SAVE \$100

ITEM 60395/62325/62493/61523 shown

21094386

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**HaulMaster** **SUPER COUPON** **Customer Rating** **★★★★★**

**STEP STOOL/WORKING PLATFORM**

- 350 lb. capacity

**NOW \$199**

COMPARE TO **\$57.55**

SAVE 65%

ITEM 62515/66911 shown

21097241

LIMIT 4 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**HARDY** **SUPER COUPON** **Customer Rating** **★★★★★**

**POWDER-FREE NITRILE GLOVES PACK OF 100**

- 5 mil thickness

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**NOW \$5.99**

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SAVE 55%

ITEM 61363, 68497, 61360, 61359, 68498, 68496 shown

21108936

LIMIT 8 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

**CENTECH** **SUPER COUPON** **Customer Rating** **★★★★★**

**2/10/50 AMP, 12 VOLT BATTERY CHARGER/ENGINE STARTER**

**NOW \$29.99**

COMPARE TO **SCHUMACHER ELECTRIC \$69.99**

SAVE 57%

ITEM 60581/60653 shown

21117063

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 10/7/18\*

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# Tractors

FOR MORE THAN 100 YEARS, the agricultural community has implemented tractors in Texas, making them a beloved and iconic fixture in the landscape.

This month's photo entries were curated by Cedar Park High School student Cailin Sylvester, and the intro was written by Rouse High School student Nalani Nuylan. They participated in Leander Independent School District's Career Opportunities on Location Week at *Texas Co-op Power*.

**WEB EXTRAS** ▶ See Focus on Texas on our website for more photos from readers.



▲ **M'LYNN JOHNSON**, Bryan Texas Utilities: Johnson's 3-year-old daughter, Quinn Grace Johnson, "loves the farm life. She is the future of agriculture."

▼ **LISA GRIFFIS**, Mid-South Synergy: "My neighbor has several bluebird boxes on his property. This male bluebird decided to catch a ride to deliver his takeout dinner."



▲ **MICHAEL MITCHELL**, J-A-C EC: Tractors in Munday

▶ **BILL GALLOWAY**, Pedernales EC: "Retired antique tractor fenced in by barbed wire and tasajillo, near Granite Shoals"



▲ **GENE DOMEK**, Jasper-Newton EC: Tractor hay rake in the back pasture after an early-morning snowfall in Southeast Texas last December

## UPCOMING CONTESTS

OCTOBER	CLOCKS	DUE JUNE 10
NOVEMBER	ABANDONED BUILDINGS	DUE JULY 10
DECEMBER	HIGH CONTRAST	DUE AUGUST 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 Kosse Homecoming

**Kosse** June 8-9  
(254) 375-2212, [kossetexas.com/homecoming](http://kossetexas.com/homecoming)

Homecoming weekend has been the signature fundraising event in this North Central Texas town every year since the 1920s. Proceeds support the Kosse Community Center, the Kosse Heritage Society, the Kosse Volunteer Fire Department and community projects. Festivities include a barbecue cook-off, parade, kids events and music both nights.

KOSSE: COURTESY KOSSE HOMECOMING COMMITTEE. PIE: ELENATHEWISE | DREAMSTIME.COM. FIREWORKS: MARILYNGOULD | DREAMSTIME.COM

## June 8

**Abilene** [8-9] Stars Over Abilene Regional Quilt Show, (325) 733-3935, [facebook.com/abilenequiltersguild](https://facebook.com/abilenequiltersguild)

**Burnet** [8-9] Burnet County Area Fair, (512) 355-2633, [burnetcountyfair.com](http://burnetcountyfair.com)

**Nacogdoches** [8-9] Blueberry Festival of Quilts, (936) 615-0095, [nacquilters.org/blueberry-festival-of-quilts](http://nacquilters.org/blueberry-festival-of-quilts)

**Salado** [8-10] Texas History Days, (254) 466-9065, [texashistorysalado.com](http://texashistorysalado.com)

**Ingram** [8-9, 15-16, 22-23] *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, (830) 367-5121, [hcaf.com](http://hcaf.com)

## 9

**Athens** Glow Run, (903) 675-5630, [easttexasarboretum.org](http://easttexasarboretum.org)

**East Bernard** Kolache-Klobase Festival, (979) 335-7907, [kkfest.com](http://kkfest.com)

**Jacksonville** Tomato Fest, (903) 586-2217, [jacksonvilletexas.com](http://jacksonvilletexas.com)

**San Marcos Texas Water Safari**, (512) 738-6607, [texaswatersafari.org](http://texaswatersafari.org)

**Greenville** [9-10] Cotton Boll ArtFest, (903) 450-4502, [amacmuseum.com](http://amacmuseum.com)

## 15

**Cisco** [15-16] TX Pie Fest, (254) 442-2259, [ciscotxpiefest.com](http://ciscotxpiefest.com)



June 15  
Cisco  
TX Pie Fest

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**Stonewall** [15-16] Peach JAMboree and Rodeo, (830) 644-2735, stonewalltexas.com

## 16

**El Paso** Magoffin Home Victorian Sci-Fi Book and Tea Club, (915) 533-5147, thc.texas.gov

**Saint Jo** Real Cowboy Symposium: From Drover to Ranch Hand, (940) 995-2786, therealcowboysymposium.com

**Terrell** Barn Open House, (214) 244-6139, awalkinghorseranch.com

**Victoria** Hwy 87 Trade Days, (361) 576-9899, hwy87tradedays.com

## 17

**Palestine** Throw Papa on the Train, (855) 632-7729, texasstaterailroad.net

## 21

**Levelland** [21-23] Golden Spread Classic Steer and Heifer Show, (806) 894-4161, malleventcenter.com

**Bastrop** [22-24] Department of Texas Marine Corps League Annual Convention, (512) 965-6176, lpl1384.org

**Luling** [21-24] Watermelon Thump, (830) 875-3214, watermelonthump.com



July 4  
Columbus  
Fourth of July  
Celebration

## 22

**Conroe** [22-23] Bloomin' Crazy For Quilts, (832) 687-4662, waqq.org

**Giddings** [22-23] Happy Hearts Quilt Show, (979) 249-6755

## 23

**Boerne** Chili on the Guadalupe, (210) 274-4952, centraltexaschili.com

**Luckenbach Hill** Country Food Truck Festival, (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

**Meridian NCBC & Chamber of Commerce** Catfish Dinner, (254) 435-2966, meridian-chamber.com

## July

### 3

**Granbury** [3-4] Old-Fashioned 4th of July Celebration, (817) 573-1622, granburychamber.com

### 4

**Columbus** Fourth of July Celebration, (979) 732-8385, columbus.texas.org

**Kyle** Independence Day Celebration Fireworks Show, (512) 262-3939, cityofkyle.com/recreation

**Little Elm** July Jubilee, (972) 731-1468, lakefrontlittleelm.com

## Submit Your Event!

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

**GET AWAY TO Frisco**

ENTER TO WIN A TRIP TO FRISCO AND TOUR DALLAS COWBOYS WORLD HEADQUARTERS

GET DETAILS AND ENTER ONLINE AT **TexasCoopPower.com**

Check out VisitFrisco.com for more about Frisco.

From antiques to boutiques or one-of-a-kind creations, treasures are found at every turn in downtown Waxahachie. Every street has a café, and your every step will be carefree.

Almost every weekend, there's something going on including Gingerbread Trail Home Tour, Cow Creek Country Bike Ride, Crape Myrtle Festival and much more.

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# Happy in Hico

Hints of history and legend pepper modern life in northern Hill Country town

BY GENE FOWLER

WHO AMONG US WOULD NOT WISH TO dwell “Where Everybody is Somebody?” That’s the happy motto of Hico, a gem of a town southwest of Fort Worth. In the mid-20th century, one old-timer there was *really* somebody. Brushy Bill Roberts, folks say, was actually a still-living Billy the Kid.

History contends that Pat Garrett dispatched the Kid to the Everlasting in 1881. But at Hico’s *Billy the Kid Museum*, you get the whole nine-lives yarn on how Billy escaped and rode with Buffalo Bill and Teddy Roosevelt’s Rough Riders.

Photographs of old Hico (pronounced HIGH-co) recall the days when it served as a cotton-ginning center. Resident historian Jane Klein says the town had several thousand residents in the early 1900s. “But then we had the boll weevil, a bad flood and finally the stock market crash,” she explains.

More vintage Hico images are displayed in the renovated *Midland Hotel*, which dates to 1896; in comfort-food diner *Koffee Kup Family Restaurant*, where “pie fixes everything”; and at *Blue Star Trading*, a sprawling furnishings store, art gallery and ranch outfitter.

Photographer Rufus Frank Wiseman came to Hico in 1886 and documented local life for decades, selling his photography business before his death in 1954. The new owner loaded up Wiseman’s archive and took it to the dump. Hico native James Hefner, who had worked for Wiseman as a boy, was able to rescue the archive.

Kevin and LaDonne Wenzel keep the photographer’s name alive today with *Wiseman House Chocolates*. The couple’s retail store, located in the home built by the lensman in 1903, sells handmade chocolate treats that, as their website states, offer “the same richness and flavor that inspired



the Ancient Mayans to revere chocolate as the nectar of the gods.”

The Wiseman re-tail outlet occupies a historic house adjacent to the *Koffee Kup*, but the company makes its toffees, truffles, mocha crunches and pecan-caramel clusters in a Pecan Street storefront.

A stroll along Pecan leads to unique shopping and cultural experiences. I’m a softie for ghost signs, both restored and faded, and Hico has several of the bygone exterior wall graphics. A *Star Tobacco* advertisement adorns the side of *Blue Star Trading*. Others include murals for *Bright and Early Coffee and Tea* and *Eveready Radio Batteries*.

At *Flacas Fitness & Brews*, health-conscious visitors can wolf down salads, sandwiches and wraps then work off the calories with kickboxing and yoga. A bit south of downtown, you can get a workout ascending the innards of a former grain silo at *Siloville Climbing Gym*.

Kevin and Holly Stahnke escaped from Austin to bring “ag tourism” to Hico. Their *Two Clay Birds Farm & Garden Market* on U.S. Highway 281 offers organic produce from

**Downtown buildings feature weathered advertising murals known as ghost signs.**

their small farm as well as from other area growers.

“The soil here is Bosque clay loam,”

Holly Stahnke explains. “My brother, who is with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, just touched it and said, ‘Yes, buy that land!’ ”

Bridging Hico’s past and future, the Stahnkes bought a 100-year-old house that old-timers say was built on top of the town’s former railroad scales.

In the storied tradition of Brushy Bill, it’s not too hard to imagine another ancient resident whispering that he’s a still-living half of the notorious Bonnie and Clyde. Though the Hico Barrows were not among his kin, local lore holds that bank-robbing Clyde would visit them, hiding in furniture store caskets when he feared the law was wise.

Gene Fowler is an Austin writer who specializes in history.

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