

Annual Meeting Notice



Annual Report



Financial Report

Texas Coop Power

FOR TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP MEMBERS

SEPTEMBER 2021



Back Cover: vote to earn a **\$25 bill credit** and be entered to win **door prizes!**



82nd Annual Meeting of the Members

INVITATION AND OFFICIAL NOTICE

Tri-County Electric Cooperative invites you to the 82nd Annual Meeting of the Members. Please join us **virtually** on Tuesday, October 5, at 7 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to elect members to the board of directors, approve reports for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021, and transact any other business related to the co-op.

Your cooperative is doing everything we can to protect our member-owners, directors and employees during the global coronavirus pandemic. As part of this effort, we are holding the meeting **virtually** rather than in-person to provide a safe alternative.

Please make plans to join us for the Annual Meeting **online** or by **phone**. Register online at tcectexas.com/annual-meeting to receive a call prior to the meeting connecting you by phone.

Member-owners are strongly encouraged to vote in the 2021 election. Every member is eligible to vote in the election, regardless of the district in which you reside. This year's ballot includes the director election for districts 3, 6 and 8. Please vote by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, September 29, 2021, either online or by mail. Full voting details and ballot instructions are located on the inside back cover of this magazine. All member-owners who vote in the election by the deadline will receive a **\$25 bill credit** and will be entered into the door prize drawing held during the **virtual** Annual Meeting.

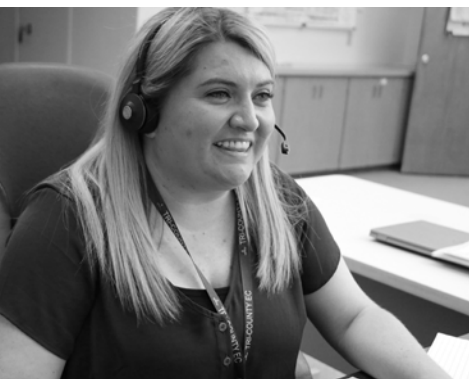
Sincerely,



John Killough
Board Secretary/Treasurer

STREAM ONLINE
tcectexas.com/annual-meeting

LISTEN BY PHONE
855-710-6229



TEXAN PADDLES INTO
ENDURANCE CHALLENGES

FRANCE'S 1841 BEEF?
WHY, IT WAS PIGS

READERS DISH UP
SWEET SPUDS

Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

SEPTEMBER 2021

More Vets on the Way

New Texas Tech
veterinary school fills
long-standing need



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Texas Tech University's long-awaited veterinary school begins mission of bolstering rural communities.

*By Chris Burrows
Photos by Dave Shafer*

Current Events His Way

When West Hansen needs an escape from society, he just goes with the flow.

*By Pam LeBlanc
Photos by Erich Schlegel*

ON THE COVER

Paris veterinarian Wally Kraft with his sons—Jack, left, who is in veterinary school at Oklahoma State University, and Trey, also a vet.

Photo by Dave Shafer

ABOVE

West Hansen negotiates boulders in the Rio Gashan in Peru.

Photo by Erich Schlegel

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Ocean Currents

UNDERWATER VOLCANOES generate so much energy that they could power entire continents. But there's a catch, say the British scientists researching such eruptions.

"I would say there is effectively zero chance of capturing the energy for all sorts of reasons, such as we don't know when or where the eruptions will happen, very tricky to access, etc.," volcanologist David Ferguson, of the University of Leeds, told Vice. "The point of the comparison was really just to illustrate how powerful/energetic these things are."



"I never think of the future. It comes soon enough."

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

THE SWEETEST SOUND IN THE WORLD IS ...

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town. Below are some of the responses to our July prompt: **I should have paid more attention ...**

To my mother's way of preparing hearty and flavorful meals with simple ingredients on a shoestring budget for our family of seven.

DEBORA MARINO
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES
KOPPERL

To my retirement 30 years beforehand.

THOMAS ALAN MOORE
VIA FACEBOOK

To my parents telling me to enjoy childhood because once you're an adult, you're an adult FOREVER.

KAY RAY
VIA FACEBOOK

To the fine print.

GARY L. GALLOWAY
TRI-COUNTY EC
WEATHERFORD

When he said "sign here" at the draft board.

ED FAHSOLTZ
VIA FACEBOOK

To see more responses, read Currents online.



STEP UP TO SAFETY

Aluminum ladders can conduct electricity and so can nonmetallic fiberglass ladders when they're dirty or wet. When working outdoors with a ladder, keep it at least 10 feet away from power lines and always carry it horizontally to avoid hitting a line.



Earliest Inconvenience

ON HIS PREGNANT WIFE'S BIRTHDAY last year, Casey Walls wasn't celebrating. Instead, the Wood County Electric Cooperative lineworker was packing his bags August 28, preparing for long days of hard work after Hurricane Laura left tens of thousands of East Texas electric cooperative members in the dark.

Walls wasn't worried either because Shea wasn't due until November.

But around 5 a.m. about four days into his trip, Walls was awakened by his cellphone, which showed dozens of missed calls. His father was on the line. Shea had gone into labor hours earlier. Walls rushed to Tyler, where Shea gave birth just 20 minutes after he arrived.

Twins Braxten, above left, and Casen celebrate their first birthdays September 1.



Fungi to the Rescue

Don't ever underestimate the power of a fungus, the extraordinarily versatile life-form that produces mushrooms. Fungi can be trained to eat cigarette butts, used diapers, oil spills and even radiation.



TCP Contests and More

ON TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM

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Pasta

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Fired Up!

WIN 2 NIGHTS IN FREDERICKSBURG
Help Fredericksburg celebrate its 175th anniversary with a two-night getaway that includes lodging, dining and attractions. Enter now to win.



More About McVea

Groundbreaking Cougar [Currents, July 2021] reminded me of a game Warren McVea played in 1963. San Antonio Brackenridge faced crosstown Robert E. Lee in one of the most entertaining high school football games ever played. My dad and I watched it together at Alamo Stadium.

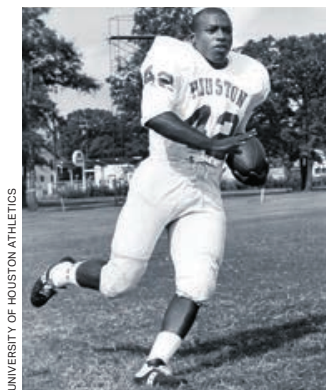
It had two of the most explosive running backs in the country, McVea and Lee's Linus Baer. Each team scored just about every time they got the football—McVea dancing and speeding around Lee defenders, and Baer running through and over Brackenridge defenders. Lee won, 55-48.

Rick Covington
Pedernales EC
Cedar Park



I loved the story and the illustration [Parent Imperfect, June 2021]. Martha Deeringer wrote a wonderful tribute to her father while also reminding us to forgive ourselves for having once been teenagers embarrassed by a parent or grandparent.

LINDA PIAZZA
VIA FACEBOOK



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON ATHLETICS

An Unlikely Blueprint

“Your story of John S. Chase is about the kind of man whose can-do spirit is so lacking in society today.”

DANIEL SVETLIK
PEDERNALES EC
VICTORIA

Slice of Heaven

We agree Dala Burk's Tangy Tomato Slices [June 2021] are a winner.

We used Big Beef tomatoes, Texas 1015 onions, fresh basil and parsley—all grown in our garden.

We read *Texas Co-op Power's* recipes enthusiastically every issue and have for the past 25 years. However, we had never made any of them. But with a counter full of tomatoes from the garden this year, we couldn't resist.

We could not wait for the dish to marinate in the refrigerator and had to try it once done. OMG!

Marilynn Schmidt
Bluebonnet EC
Somerville

Minor Typo, Major Figure

Chet Garner's article about the funeral museum was interesting, but I need to correct one thing [A *Serious Undertaking*, July 2021]. The millions of Catholics in Texas will know that we buried our beloved Pope John Paul II. We haven't had a III yet.

Theresa Phinney
Bryan Texas Utilities
College Station

TCP WRITE TO US

letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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Austin, TX 78701

Please include your electric co-op and town. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.

Texas Co-op Power

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Paris veterinarian Wally Kraft, with help from his son Jack, wraps a quick-set cast on a horse. OPPOSITE As Texas Tech University graduates new vets, relief from long workdays could be on the horizon for rural vets like the Krafts.

Texas Tech University's long-awaited veterinary school begins mission of bolstering rural communities

Second to *None*



BY CHRIS BURROWS • PHOTOS BY DAVE SHAFER

Bethany Solomon Schilling still cringes when she hears the ring tone. The ring tone that years ago interrupted dinners, events and sleep to let her know there was an emergency at one of the Central Texas clinics where she worked as a veterinarian.

She grew up surrounded by animals on a ranch and earned a scholarship to help pay for her veterinary schooling. The field combined everything she loved: science, medicine and agriculture.

But then Solomon Schilling went to work caring for animals at those clinics in Lockhart and Luling, where workweeks ran into weekends and that ring tone stretched workdays into nights. Gone were the “referral zebras” of her university’s teaching hospital, she said, replaced by the everyday rigors of mixed-animal veterinary medicine, where demand far outpaces supply in many parts of Texas, leading to burnout among vets.

“At some point you think, ‘Is this sustainable?’” Solomon Schilling said. She and her husband were trying to start a

family, but working 50–60 hours a week made that a challenge. “I was like, ‘If we go into rural practice, we are never going to have a life.’”

Solomon Schilling and 31 other faculty members began reshaping that reality in August, when they welcomed the inaugural class to the Texas Tech University School of Veterinary Medicine in Amarillo—Texas’ first new vet school in more than a century. Decades in the making, Tech established

the school with the specific intent of recruiting passionate students from small towns and forming them into career-ready practitioners prepared to help address the shortage of veterinarians, especially in rural Texas.

“There’s a high demand in Texas, but it’s not being met in these rural communities where we need them,” said Clayton Cobb, another professor. “That’s where Tech comes in.”

Texas counts 6,600 practicing veterinarians but needs 1,300 more to reach the national average for the state’s population, according to Tech. Fewer than 200 of those vets work exclusively on livestock in rural parts of the state that has nearly double the number of cattle of any other state and hundreds of thousands more horses and almost a million more goats than any other state.

But many Texas vets say a new veterinary school—especially one focused on rural students and underserved communities—is long overdue.

“If you’re going to select all the kids out of Houston, Dallas and places like that, you’ve got very little hope of getting very many of those to ever go out past those metropolitan areas,” said Kynan Sturgess, a Panhandle veterinarian whose clinic is



served by Deaf Smith Electric Cooperative. “They didn’t grow up around farming and ranching; there’s no guarantee they’re going to stick around. But you’ve got a lot better shot of taking a kid from Dimmitt, Texas, and maybe expecting him to go back to some area like that.”

Sturgess is one of just four veterinarians permanently based in Deaf Smith County, where more than 600,000 cattle outnumber humans about 33 to 1. The Panhandle has the highest density of cattle in the country, but three veterinary schools in three other states are closer than Texas’ only other vet school—at Texas A&M University.

Sturgess has had to advertise openings at his Hereford clinic in other states—one reason he’s advocated for a school like Tech’s for years.

“The whole state, from a rural standpoint, is having problems,” he said. “I have colleagues all over the state that are constantly looking for somebody.”

About 40% of Texas’ working vets earned their degree outside the state; the rest went through Texas A&M University’s College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences—founded in 1916 and one of the best and largest vet schools in the nation.

As the second school in the state, Tech has the advantage of a specialized focus. “We don’t have to cater to everybody,” Cobb said.

Cobb grew up on a ranch in Northeast Texas and as an

‘A slow day is kind of unusual. We pretty much have to take care of everybody who walks in the front door. If you don’t love it, you’re not going to do it.’

undergraduate at Tech about 20 years ago, he advocated for a veterinary program before moving on to vet school at A&M. So when he heard about the Legislature including just that in the state’s 2019 budget, allocating \$17.35 million in operational support for the program (which donors supplemented with \$90 million for construction costs), he was thrilled. Then he got the call to come work there.

“When they said, ‘We’d like to extend you an offer. When do you think you could start?’ I told them, ‘Six hours and 36 minutes. Give me time to get there. We are starting today,’” Cobb said.

With firsthand experience in rural animal care, Cobb has tremendous respect for those who do it—and especially for Wally Kraft, his childhood vet, who still treats animals of all sizes at his Paris clinic.

“A slow day is kind of unusual,” said Kraft, 76, a member of Lamar Electric, who still pulls calves, sews up horses,



LEFT Kraft, assisted by vet tech Emily Odell, removes a benign tumor from a Doberman pinscher. BELOW In August, Texas Tech welcomed the first 64 students to its Amarillo campus—the 33rd veterinary school in the country.



“If you want to go into dairy, we’ll send you to dairies. If you want to go into feedlots, we’ll send you to feedlots,” Cobb said. It’s a way to immerse students in the life and lifestyle of rural animal care, preparing them for the everyday rigors and rewards of the job.

That’s part of what Solomon Schilling was missing from her own vet school experience.

“I felt very prepared intellectually but not for things that I saw day in and day out,” she said. “Communication, training, interpersonal relations, stress management, work-life balance, financial management ... things like that are the reasons people leave the profession or leave practice. It’s not the medicine that runs them off.”

Tech’s model aims to turn out confident, competent vets who are ready for that late-night phone call—because they’ve already experienced it.

“When you’re at a teaching hospital, certain services will only see a handful of patients a day, whereas in a very busy private practice, you can see 25, 30 patients a day per doctor,” Solomon Schilling said. “It’s a lot more volume and a lot more exposure.”

The 64 students who comprise Tech’s first class started their studies in Amarillo at the newly completed School of Veterinary Medicine, which houses 185,000 square feet of labs, offices and classrooms. A large-animal clinical

skills facility is about 2 miles northwest.

Access to the state-of-the-art facility won’t cost the class of 2025 as much as some schools. The average in-state veterinary medicine degree costs more than \$200,000, according to the VIN Foundation, but Tech students will pay \$88,000 for tuition (plus more for books and supplies). The hope is that saddling vets with less debt will allow them to work wherever they’re needed.

“A lot of people think we’re just raising country vets to work cows,” Cobb said. “That is not true at all. We could graduate our first four classes of veterinarians and send them all to El Paso and Laredo, and they would still be underserved communities.

“The people in those clinics and those communities out there are in desperate need. Nobody is really looking at them and trying to help them. That’s exactly the point of what we’re doing.” ■

and vaccinates and treats more and more dogs and cats as the Metroplex creeps toward the country. “We pretty much have to take care of everybody who walks in the front door. If you don’t love it, you’re not going to do it.”

Two of Kraft’s veterinarian sons are on their way to one day taking over his practice, but most of Texas’ aging vets don’t have that kind of security—even while demand swells. Texas added 4 million people since 2010—more than any other state—according to census data, but 41% of vets in rural Texas are older than 60.

“Everything has grown,” Sturgess said. “I’ve taken on more feedlots; I’ve got more horse clients and way more small animal clients.”

Tech is hoping to stem that tide using what it calls a distributed veterinary learning community to turn out well-rounded, practice-ready generalists. Unlike traditional vet schools like A&M, where fourth-year vet students practice at a teaching hospital, Tech students will do 4- to 6-week rotations at private practices across the state in their final year.

TCP WEB EXTRA See a timeline of veterinary education in Texas.

Current Events **His Way**

RIGHT Austin adventurer West Hansen at the San Marcos River. BELOW Hansen, right, and a guide navigate Mantaro River rapids in Peru. OPPOSITE Hansen makes a satellite phone call after his team's raft flipped in white water.



When **West Hansen** needs an escape from society, he just goes with the flow

BY PAM LEBLANC • PHOTOS BY ERICH SCHLEGEL



n a warm fall afternoon,

West Hansen glides a sleek, narrow racing canoe beneath a row of towering cypress trees on the San Marcos River.

He dips in a paddle, steers nimbly around a partially submerged log, then rides a riffle of blue-green water over a natural rock spillway as he makes his way from the tiny town of Martindale to the even tinier community of Staples, downstream from San Marcos.

The 6-mile, leisurely cruise takes less than two hours—barely a blip on the odometer for Hansen, 59, an endurance paddler who led an expedition 4,200 miles down the entire Amazon River in 2012 and paddled 2,100 miles down the Volga River in Russia two years later. As he pulls ashore, he tips back his cowboy hat—a trademark piece of attire for the leader of the Arctic Cowboys, who next year plan to become the first paddlers to kayak 1,900 miles through the Northwest Passage in the Arctic Archipelago.

“As our world has gotten busier and technology has evolved and we have 24/7 news cycles, it’s nice to get away,” he says.

Hansen, a social worker who helps seniors navigate the ins and outs of health care through his family’s home health care business in Port Arthur, is opinionated and bull-headed, traits that serve him well as an expedition leader. He tucks a notepad and pen in his front pocket, scribbling thoughts wherever he goes. In 2018 he ran unsuccessfully for U.S. Congress in the 25th district of Texas and won’t rule out the possibility of running again.

Hansen started paddling in the early 1980s when he took a whitewater kayaking class at what was then Southwest Texas State University. A few years later, he learned about the Texas Water Safari, a 260-mile paddling race from San Marcos to Seadrift on the Texas coast. Since then he’s finished the event—during which sleep-deprived paddlers navigate rapids, drag their boats over bobbing logjams, endure heat and exhaustion, and dodge alligators—21 times. He is also a

four-time winner of a 340-mile paddling race down the swift Missouri River. He endures miseries like chafing, sucking mud, nausea and biting insects, he says, because he enjoys the camaraderie and the escape from modern life.

“In every race, I think about quitting, even the ones I’ve won,” he says. “But I know how bad it’ll feel to pull out.”

Hansen funds his trips through donations and hard work, taking on odd carpentry jobs on weekends and raising money through his nonprofit organization, Worldwide Waterways.

In 2008, Hansen, who lives in Austin with his wife, Lizet, traveled to Iquitos, Peru, for the Great River Amazon Raft Race, where teams use eight 16-foot balsa logs to build a raft and sprint nearly 100 miles. Until that year, competitors lined all their logs side by side to make a wide raft. Hansen’s team instead spliced two rows of logs end to end. They won and set an overall record of 12 hours and 19 minutes.

More importantly, Hansen was hooked.

“The [Amazon] river really is the biggest river on the planet. It’s shocking to see that amount of anything in motion,” he says. “It was just so powerful, and it really moved me.”

On the flight home, one of his race partners lent him Joe Kane’s book, *Running the Amazon*. “Before I got back to Houston, I had pretty much read the entire thing,” he says. “By the time I landed in Austin, I thought, ‘OK, I can do this. I can paddle the entire Amazon River.’”

Hansen spent the next few years researching the river and lining up sponsors. He made a scouting trip to Peru in 2011. In 2012 he launched his expedition—the first to paddle the Amazon from a newly determined source high in the Andes Mountains to the sea. His wife and daughter, Isabella, who graduated from Georgetown University last spring, traveled there to watch for a few days.

“It’s very shallow, just a stream [at the start],” he said. “A lot of times we had to get out and drag our boats. A lot of times we were in whiteout snow conditions.”

Hansen wrote a book about the experience, *The Amazon From Source to Sea: The Farthest Journey Down the World’s Longest River*, which details the 111-day adventure, including the day they spotted a sloth swimming across the river and other days when they saw frolicking pink dolphins. They were held at gunpoint five times, discovered floating bales of marijuana and dodged boulders as big as refrigerators that rained from canyon walls where crews were building a dam.

Longtime friend Jeff Wueste was part of the Amazon team and Hansen’s only partner on the Volga trek. They met in 1992 and have teamed up for the Texas Water Safari several times. Wueste, who will paddle the Northwest Passage with the Arctic Cowboys, describes Hansen as determined and well prepared, someone who does the due diligence needed to accomplish big things.

'I love to be far away from everybody and the stimulus that's constantly coming at us.'



"He's good to the core," Wueste says. "Ultimately, he's driven to an end goal. But as many expedition leaders are, they're as egotistical as they can be. You're not going to find any wallflowers leading expeditions."

When the originally planned trip through the Northwest Passage in 2020 was postponed because of the pandemic, Hansen and four others set out to paddle 420 miles up the Texas coast instead.

They started at the state's sandy tail on South Padre Island and chugged to its refinery-studded tip at the Louisiana border, enduring tent-wrecking storms, campsites covered in enough ooze to host a mud-wrestling competition and swells so big they lost sight of one another. Their fingernails grew soggy and loose, and they labored to find a proper rhythm,



but they also paddled alongside pods of dolphins; pitched tents on small barrier islands covered in lush, lime-colored grass; and watched serene sunrises and sunsets.

When they finally pulled their 18-foot Epic sea kayaks ashore at Walter Umphrey State Park in Port Arthur, Hansen announced: "Well, that's done."

Underwater explorer and filmmaker Nancy McGee, who knows Hansen through the Explorers Club, a global organization whose members include astronauts, mountain climbers and aviators, describes him as the epitome of the 21st-century explorer.

"His goals are the stuff of dreams," she says, adding that he "has helped create a deeper understanding of the cultures he has encountered and the physical geography he has mastered."

For Hansen, who is already working on a second book, which will detail a history of Amazon expeditions, those accomplishments are only part of the motivation to explore.

"I love to be far away from everybody and the stimulus that's constantly coming at us," Hansen says. "I like doing things that haven't been done before, and that list is getting smaller and smaller." ■

ABOVE Hansen paddles down the Mantaro River. LEFT Hansen cruises the San Marcos River with author Pam LeBlanc.

TCP WEB EXTRA Check out more photos from West Hansen's 2012 Amazon River expedition.

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— The Jewellery Editor, 2021



C.



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**DARRYL
SCHRIVER**

MESSAGE
FROM
PRESIDENT/
CEO

Brazos Bankruptcy

FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors and staff have worked relentlessly to leave no stone unturned in an investigation of events surrounding February's Winter Storm Uri and what caused our generation and transmission cooperative, Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. (Brazos), to file for bankruptcy. I have provided the membership with updates throughout our investigation of this constantly changing situation. Below is a brief recap of the last six months and an update as to where we currently find our cooperative.

As you may recall, on March 1, 2021, Brazos filed a voluntary petition for relief under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Texas. Since March, numerous legislative hearings have been conducted related to the winter storm, senate and house bills have been filed and passed, and many proceedings have taken place in the Bankruptcy Court. Throughout this time, Tri-County Electric Co-op has been represented by a team of attorneys and consultants who have assisted us in actively protecting the interests of you, our members. 800879902

In the early days of the bankruptcy, Brazos was keenly focused on the legislative process and had high hopes that some form of legislative relief would be identified that would "bail out" Brazos. As the legislative session wrapped up without a state supported bailout and neither of the special sessions included an agenda item related to the electric market, Brazos pivoted to managing the ERCOT and other creditor claims filed against it as it contemplates various other bankruptcy exit options and scenarios.

One exit scenario being discussed by Brazos is based on provisions of Senate Bill (SB) 1580 and House Bill (HB) 4492 passed during the session relating to securitization. Under a securitization exit scenario, millions, and possibly billions, of dollars of debt could be issued resulting in increases to your bills for the next 15 to 30 years. Your cooperative is spearheading the charge against a securitization scheme, which we believe is bad for you, our member-owners.

In conjunction with other member-cooperatives, we are actively pushing Brazos to seriously consider other options that are more favorable to you as the end-users. The cost of securitization would be placed solely on the backs of consumers and Tri-County Electric Co-op believes other options, such as the sale of Brazos's assets to raise money, would not only help to pay Brazos's creditors but would also help to reshape Brazos so that Tri-County Electric Co-op's members are not exposed to a similar disaster in the future. Asset sales would also put Tri-County Electric Co-op in a much better position to manage its future power supply transactions by putting the decision-making of our largest cost item in the hands of Tri-County Electric Co-op's board, not Brazos's board.

Our board of directors and staff will continue to actively engage in all matters related to Brazos and we will keep the best interests of our member-owners at the forefront. This is still a very fluid situation, and at this point, we still lack definitive answers about how much the Brazos bankruptcy will ultimately cost Tri-County Electric Co-op and its members. We will keep fighting for you. We are in this together. ■



Blinks and Surges

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've returned home to find your microwave clock blinking despite a sunny day. When this happens, your home has likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power blink or surge. While the symptoms of blinks and surges can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

Power Blinks

Power blinks are brief service interruptions typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults are caused by a variety of disturbances, like squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2019 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 outages.

You may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage. 23759002

Regardless of the outage cause, Tri-County Electric Cooperative crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs. Any time you experience repeated power disruptions, please let us know so we can help you determine the cause and minimize future issues.

Power Surges

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment at your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage, but power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts, which can be extremely damaging to electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like air conditioning systems, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers. We encourage all members to install surge protective devices to safeguard your sensitive electronics. ■

Capital Credits Update

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S Board of Directors approved a \$5 million capital credits retirement. Members who received electric service from the co-op in 2002 can expect to see retirements this month. Watch the mail or your billing statement for your share of the retirement!

Tri-County Electric Co-op is a not-for-profit entity. Each year, the board of directors will allocate net margins, which are any funds remaining after all expenses are paid for the year, to the membership on a pro rata basis. 37007001

Additionally, the board examines the financial health of the co-op to determine capital credits retirements. Capital is retired on a first-in, first-out basis, meaning patronage from earlier years is retired back to the membership first.

Including the September 2021 retirement, the co-op has returned \$61.1 million in capital credits to active and former members who received electric service in the years 1939-2001. ■

Retiring Patronage

Bylaws: Article 7, Section 7.7

- ▶ For active members receiving capital credits of \$150.00 or less, the cooperative will credit the member's account.
- ▶ For active members receiving capital credits of \$150.01 or more, the cooperative will issue a check through the postal service.
- ▶ For former members, the cooperative will issue a check through the postal service, deliverable to the last known address.

I Work for You



TIM KITCHEN **Cyber Security Analyst** **Information Technology**

As a utility, an electric co-op needs to have its own experts to be able to safely conduct business online. That's exactly why Tim Kitchen joined the Tri-County Electric Co-op family.

A native of Enid, Oklahoma, Tim went to college to study law. He shifted gears when he learned he could make a living doing what he really enjoyed: information technology. He built a home lab and taught himself, then added certifications along the way.

When Tim, Ashley and their two kids moved to Springfield, Missouri, Tim went to work for Associated Electric Co-op. After seven years, his father's death brought them back to Enid, but when he saw a job opening at Tri-County Electric Co-op, he asked Ashley, "What about Texas?"

She gave him a thumbs-up, and the rest is history.

"I really love being back in the electric co-op world," he said.

One of his first projects at Tri-County Electric Co-op was changing out the email filter, adding a layer to the co-op's defense against "phishing" and other forms of hacking.

"Any utility – oil companies, electric companies, water companies – is going to be a prime target," he said. "There's always people scanning and trying anything."

Although he spends his days putting a halt to phishing, Tim enjoys a little real fishing in his free time. And with a name like Kitchen, it's a no-brainer that he also loves to cook. ■



Stability in

Christ's Haven nurtures kids and community

BY BOB BUCKEL,
COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE

PHOTO: Noah, shown here getting ready to blow some bubbles, was born after his mom came to live at Christ's Haven. An active two-year-old, he lives in a home with several other children and their houseparents.



a Storm

IN THE ELECTRICITY BUSINESS, no news is good news – when the power stays on and everything is normal.

Normal is a worthy goal when it comes to raising children, too: a normal day, a normal meal, a normal night's sleep, a normal school year. When the child comes from a background of hunger, stress, instability, and abuse, *normal* is truly something to strive for.

No one knows that better than the folks at Christ's Haven for Children.

"Our focus is normalcy, dignity, and hope," said Cassie McQuitty, CEO of the Keller-based nonprofit. "We want kids to feel welcome and worthy."

Christ's Haven got its start in 1954 when the Vickery Boulevard Church of Christ in Fort Worth rented a small house next to its church building and began caring for homeless children. Over the next three years, volunteers and church members took in and fostered 21 kids. Needing more space, they started raising funds and in 1956, they were able to

purchase a small farm in Keller – on Tri-County Electric Cooperative's lines. 800888998

Keller has changed a lot over the past 65 years. Rural has given way to urban as houses have sprung up in fields that once grew cotton, corn and peanuts. Christ's Haven has grown right along with the community, and Tri-County Electric Co-op has been its electricity supplier every step of the way.

McQuitty, a graduate of the University of Texas at Tyler, brought a strong nonprofit management background when she joined Christ's Haven two years ago. She loves what the facility stands for, how the community of Keller has embraced it, and the impact it continues to have in the lives of children.

Christ's Haven pioneered the use of the family as a model, with houseparents nurturing kids in small groups, in homes that look and feel like typical family homes in a quiet residential neighborhood. Everything on campus – food pantry, art room, gym, pool, playgrounds, tutoring, counseling and more – is designed to support the parents and children in those homes.

"One hundred percent of our kids have come from some darkness," she said. "When they come here, we help them get the services and the resources they need to heal from that trauma. We surround them with a family unit that loves them, that believes in them."

The COVID-19 pandemic offered a unique opportunity to demonstrate how healthy families react amid chaos.

"They had come from a background of instability, food loss, job loss, escalated stress in a home – and they'd only seen that handled in an unhealthy way," McQuitty said. "We were able to show them that when everything was falling apart, we never missed a meal. You were never displaced. We stabilized."

They also saw a community rally to help. The food pantry was so well-stocked, Christ's Haven itself became a donor, reaching out to serve families that were at risk, keeping their children fed and families intact. 8003785601

McQuitty cited church groups, Boy Scout and Girl Scout groups, volunteers, neighbors, families, companies like Chick-fil-A and organizations like the National Charity League of Keller and the Young Men's Service League of Keller that have taken on special projects. When expiration dates force Christ's Haven to pull food off the shelves, partnerships with Community Storehouse and the Tarrant Area Food Bank take what they can to make sure that generosity is not wasted.

"Just watching the hands and feet of Jesus flood



these gates and solidify that as part of these kids' story was unbelievable," McQuitty said.

“Just watching the hands and feet of Jesus flood these gates and solidify that as part of these kids’s story was unbelievable.”

—CASSIE MCQUITTY

Funding and Facilities

When Tri-County Electric Co-op held its 1958 annual membership meeting at the Keller Lion’s Club Fairgrounds, Christ’s Haven was listed among the 172 members present. The co-op had 4,400 members, and Christ’s Haven was still sitting in the middle of farmland.

A few years ago, they sold the land they weren’t using and created an endowment fund – but there’s still plenty of room on the 58 acres they kept. A spacious enrichment center was built about 12 years ago, and there’s also a Life Path house, a Teen Mom house, a chapel, a pavilion, workshop, barn, swimming pool, sport courts and multiple playgrounds in addition to the seven cottages.

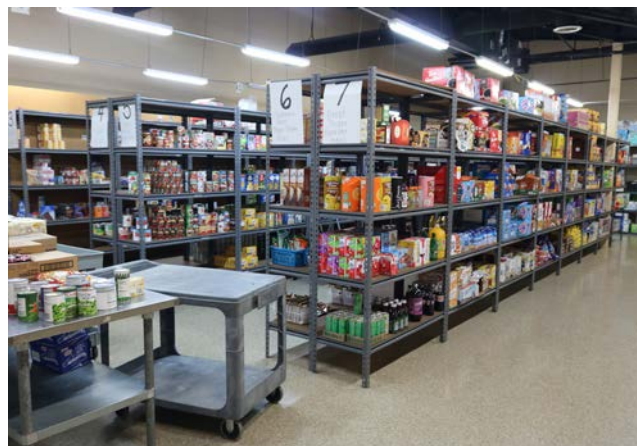
Right now, they’re at capacity with about 50 kids, and there is a waiting list. They’re looking for houseparents, too, but it’s not a job for just anyone. Couples live on campus and strive for a normal home atmosphere, with one parent working outside the home and the other an employee of Christ’s Haven. The children are all placed voluntarily when their parents are unable to provide care for them due to abuse, neglect or financial strain. There are no fees associated with application or placement. 800617882

The kids attend Keller schools. Beginning their junior year in high school, and for up to five years after graduation, they are provided with housing, transportation, and tuition support. They also learn life skills like car maintenance, house cleaning, repairs, health and wellness. They gain a rental history, choose a college or career path, get job training and set future goals.

In short, they get the start on life that a normal, healthy family would give them.

Operating expenses – about \$3 million a year – are funded by donations. The website, christshaven.org, offers numerous opportunities to get involved, donate and participate in events like the annual Golf Classic, spring and fall workdays and the annual Fashion Show & Brunch.

Christ’s Haven for Children is also part of North Texas Giving Day – an 18-hour online giving event slated this year for September 23. Hosted by the Communities Foundation



PHOTOS, FROM LEFT: Christ's Haven feels like a neighborhood, with winding streets and lots of green space – perfect for an evening bike ride.

Big kitchens make it possible for everyone to get involved in meal preparation.

Keller resident and Tri-County Co-op member Fumi Benson delivers food to pantry manager Rhonda Thomas-Peters.

The well-stocked pantry is open to houseparents 24 hours a day, to supplement their grocery budget.

of Texas, last year's NTX Giving Day raised \$58.8 million for more than 3,200 local nonprofits, making it the nation's largest community-wide giving event.

Christ's Haven also raises funds through the resale shop, "Bearly Used" at 301 N. Main in Keller, which sells donated clothes, books and toys.

Promises and Passion

McQuitty said funding is important because it enables the community, volunteers and staff to keep the promises they make to the children.

"I say all the time when people want to mentor or get involved or provide something for a kid, 'Just don't make a promise you can't keep,'" she said. "Their lives have been full of broken promises. We're not going to do that here.

"There's stuff that's in their life that's out of control, but when we pour into these kids, we have an opportunity to rewrite their story."

When a child comes to Christ's Haven, staff members make a concerted effort to find out what each one loves – what they're passionate about. Whether it's music, sports, academics, art or something else, the goal is to help them pursue it. 800734227

"For some kids that is the classroom," she said. "For a lot of kids, it's not. We work really hard to figure out what that is, with that kid, so that they have that release. We have kids with crazy musical talent, we have really smart kids, we have great athletes, kids doing cheer, volleyball, dance, karate."

"It's really fun to see these kids with these gifts planted inside of them, and to get to foster and nurture that," she said. "Once they set foot here, we're full of hope. We're going to handle the hurt stuff today, but our focus is on the future."

At the end of the day, it's all about love.

"It's the purest form of love," McQuitty said. "All we're here to do is show them Jesus, through our actions and how we love them. Jesus went after the ones who were abused, abandoned or neglected and showed them they were worthy of love.

"It's an honor for us to do that." ■

Support your favorite nonprofit organizations on September 23 for NTX Giving Day.

This 18-hour event, organized by Communities Foundation of Texas, is the largest community-wide giving event in the nation. Since 2009, more than 680,000 donors have given over \$351 million to local nonprofits.

Interested in participating?

Visit northtexasgivingday.org to learn more and find a local nonprofit to support.

North Texas Giving Day

SEPTEMBER 23



Wild West Festival
September 18

North Texas Giving Day
September 23

Your Co-op's Community Calendar

September

1-29

2021 Election open for voting
tcectexas.com/annual-meeting

9

Keller Chamber Golf Classic
kellerchamber.com

11

13th Annual Sting Fling
azlestingfling.com

14

Freedom House Garden Safari
freedomhousepc.org

17

Lone Star Legislative Report
metroportchamber.org

18

Wild West Festival
springtownchamber.org

23

Grace House Ministries Annual Gala
gracehouseministries.net

Faith Hope Family 2nd Annual Golf Tournament
faithhopefamilyhome.com

North Texas Giving Day
northtexasgivingday.org

October

5

82nd Annual Meeting
tcectexas.com/annual-meeting

8

Advocats Help & Hope Luncheon
aledoadvocats.com

NOTE: Events are subject to postponement or cancellation due to COVID-19 guidance. Please check the event resource for updates.

Interested in promoting your event in the next issue of *Texas Co-op Power*?
Email pr@tcectexas.com with the event name, date and where readers can find more information.

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24/7

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ABOUT TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

Tri-County Electric Co-op owns and maintains more than 9,510 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 97,900 members in Archer, Baylor, Denton, Foard, Haskell, Hood, Jack, King, Knox, Palo Pinto, Parker, Stonewall, Tarrant, Throckmorton, Wilbarger, and Wise counties.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Aledo

200 Bailey Ranch Road, Aledo 76008

Azle

600 NW Parkway, Azle 76020

Granbury

1623 Weatherford Highway, Granbury 76048

Keller

4900 Keller-Hicks Road, Fort Worth 76244

Seymour

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Annual Report

FISCAL YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2021



Scan to
view Annual
Report online



Nominations & Qualifications Committee

2021 DIRECTOR NOMINATION REPORT

THE COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS is responsible for reviewing and accepting applications from members interested in running for a seat on the board of directors. The committee carefully reviews application packets from candidates for the director seats up for election each year.

Nomination through a committee composed of fellow members is one of the most transparent methods a cooperative can use for director nominations. The committee was formed after the board of directors approved a new set of bylaws that went into effect last November. In order to serve on the committee, members must be in good standing with the cooperative, not serving as a cooperative board member, not employed by the co-op, not a director candidate or closely related to a co-op director or director candidate.

The process kicked off in January when the committee met virtually with Darryl Schriver, President/CEO, and cooperative staff for an onboarding session. Schriver outlined the committee's purpose, objectives and responsibilities, and the board of directors purpose and responsibilities. The committee's first task was interviewing candidates for the two vacant board seats. Committee members reviewed each applicant's application packet and asked a series of questions over a rigorous two days of interviews. After much deliberation, the seven-member committee recommended a slate of top candidates to the board of directors for consideration, as outlined in the bylaws.

The committee met at 5 p.m. on Friday, March 12, to accept and review nomination applications and at 5 p.m. on Monday, April 19, to accept and review petition applications. Committee members carefully reviewed each application submitted by members interested in running for the board based on eligibility outlined in the cooperative's bylaws, and election policies and procedures. The deadline for members to apply to be nominated by committee was 5 p.m. on Thursday, March 11, and the deadline to be nominated by member petition was 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 15.

Committee members are Steve Bartley, District 3; Randy Marshall, District 4; Ramey Keeth, District 5; Danny Tuggle, District 6; Ranell Scott, District 7; Lesley Boone, District 8; Robert Gotcher - chairman, District 9.

The Committee on Nominations and Qualifications approved four candidates through the committee nomination path and one candidate through the member petition path and set the ballot as follows:

District 3

Jorden Wood (Incumbent)

District 6

John Killough (Incumbent)

District 8

Jarrett Armstrong (Incumbent)

Michael Sivertsen (Nomination Candidate)

~~Rick Barnes (Petitioning Candidate - Withdrawn Candidate)~~



COMMITTEE MEMBERS, LEFT TO RIGHT

Danny Tuggle, District 6 | Randy Marshall, District 4
Steve Bartley, District 3 | Lesley Boone, District 8
Ramey Keeth, District 5 | Ranell Scott, District 7

Not pictured: Robert Gotcher, District 9, Committee Chair

District 3



**JORDEN
WOOD**

INCUMBENT
UNOPPOSED

Jorden Wood represents the members of District 3 and has served on the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors since February of 2006. He currently serves as board chairman and has held the position since 2014.

Wood completes yearly training to maintain his Director Gold Credential awarded by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He also received his Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate and Board Leadership Certificate through NRECA.

Wood leads Texas Electric Cooperative’s Government Relations committee as the chairman. Since 2017, he has served on the committee to help advocate on behalf of electric cooperatives on legislative and regulatory matters at the state and national levels.

Wood maintains an active role in his community serving on several boards and organizing charitable fundraisers.

Professionally, Mr. Wood has been involved in real estate investments, property development, new home construction and ranch management. ■

District 6



**JOHN
KILLOUGH**

INCUMBENT
UNOPPOSED

John Killough represents the members of District 6 and has served on the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors since February 2005.

Killough completed training requirements for his Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate and is working toward his Board Leadership Certificate through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Killough, a Granbury and Hood County native, graduated from Granbury High School and from Tarleton State University with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology.

He has been a small business owner in the Granbury area since 1993 and is active in his community through the Granbury Masonic Lodge and church, Triple Cross Cowboy Church. ■

Meet the Candidates

A virtual candidate forum was held on Thursday, August 26. Each director candidate was asked a series of questions by co-op staff, and took questions from members watching online and listening by phone.

A recording of the forum is available at tcectexas.com/director-elections.

District 8



JARRETT
ARMSTRONG

INCUMBENT

Jarrett Armstrong represents the member-owners of District 8. He has served on the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors since June 2010.

Armstrong completes yearly training to maintain his Director Gold Credential awarded by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He also received his Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate and Board Leadership Certificate through NRECA.

Jarrett Armstrong, D.C. has been in private practice in Keller, Texas, since 1992. He currently serves on the Keller Lions Foundation Board and North Texas Charity Board. Armstrong is a member of the Keller Lions Club, Keller Masonic Lodge and Scottish Rite. He has previously served on the Keller Chamber of Commerce Board and the Keller ISD Board. Armstrong is married and has four grown children who all live in Keller, Texas. ■

District 8



MICHAEL
SIVERTSEN

NOMINATION
CANDIDATE

I wish to serve our community as the Tri-County Electric Co-op District 8 Board member. I have 15 years of electric utility experience, a B.S. degree in Physics, and a Master's degree in Knowledge Management. Prior to my recent retirement, I was a Systems Engineer with Lockheed Martin Aeronautics in Fort Worth.

I was born and raised in Wisconsin and attended the University of Minnesota, Institute of Technology, where I graduated with a Physics degree in 1979. My wife and I married that same year. I then worked for Schlumberger Well Services as a Field Engineer. This was followed by a year as an in-country Christian missionary, after which I began a 15-year electric utility career in Connecticut.

My electric utility experience was wide-ranging and included scientist positions in both radiation physics and information systems. I was recognized for my written and spoken communication skills as a nuclear engineering instructor with an appointment to the instructional staff for new instructors. During this time management noted that I was a welcome addition due to my technical aptitude, high moral standards, good work habits, and sense of humor. Another manager noted that they needed a person of honesty and integrity in a company-wide information management position, which is why I was hired.

Community involvement included electrical generation presentations in middle schools and high schools, science teacher workshops, and judging a State Science Fair. I also volunteered as a Cub Scout Den Leader and took my son and his fellow Cub Scouts on a tour of a nuclear power plant. That was an exciting event for them!

As the favorite saying goes, "I wasn't born in Texas,

Continued on next page.

but I got here as fast as I could.” In the mid-1990s I intentionally choose Texas for the future home of our five-member family. I secured a job here and we all relocated in 1997. My three grown children and their spouses love Texas as much as I do. They have all remained in North Texas and have blessed us with eight wonderful grandchildren. So the family of five has now grown to 16!

Activities I enjoy in Texas have included engineering and science career presentations at local high schools and bicycle rides with my granddaughters in Keller and North Richland Hills. I’ve also enjoyed elk hunting in nearby states.

In 2004, I received Lockheed Martin Aeronautics highest award, the Aero Star Award, for developing a unique web-based tool for the assessment and development of aerospace leadership. The analytic and adaptable style of decision-making, problem solving, and teamwork that resulted in this award will be well suited to the Board where problems and issues faced by Co-op leadership can be complex, varied, or unpredictable.

I am comfortable talking about issues across a wide range of levels and perspectives, from focusing on just key points to exploring things in detail. My Master’s Degree in Knowledge Management, coupled with an expertise in personal knowledge management, enables me to stay abreast of numerous topics that could impact our Board and Members. As a result I am able to see further down the road and provide early warnings and recommendations, which supports better decision making in the face of complexity. This was demonstrated in my interactions with TCEC management and the Board regarding the recent change to a new metering system. I met with the General Manager and did a formal Board presentation in November 2019 regarding potential health risks. In February 2020, the Board adopted an opt-out policy similar to that of Oncor. This positive experience in working with the Board is part of the reason I am now running as a Board candidate. In addition, my retirement will provide the time I need to properly discharge my Board duties.

The importance of a Board member with direct experience in the electric utility industry, coupled with a science and engineering background, was dramatically underscored by the Texas state-wide electrical outage in February 2021. ERCOT Board members came under intense scrutiny as a result of this disaster.

A co-op provides the means for us to achieve an over-arching unity around the goal of a dependable electrical supplier. We are all members, we have a voice, and we vote on important matters — in essence a microcosm of the great American experiment.

Thank you for your vote to represent you as your District 8 Board member. ■

District 8



**RICK
BARNES**

**WITHDRAWN
CANDIDATE**

Rick Barnes, a petitioning candidate for district 8, withdrew his candidacy to pursue other endeavors. According to Tri-County Electric Cooperative’s Election Policies and Procedures, a candidate may withdraw candidacy at any point.

Barnes’s photo, picture and biography were included in the August *Texas Co-op Power* magazine. Since he has withdrawn candidacy, Barnes was not included in the Candidate Forum on August 26, and is not on the ballot.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative thanks Rick Barnes for his membership, and his interest in running for the board of directors, and wishes him the best in his future endeavors. ■

Board of Directors

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S 16-county service area is divided into nine districts – four urban, four suburban and one rural. A member from each district sits on the board of directors. The board oversees the co-op and serves as the regulatory and governing body.

Directors meet monthly to provide guidance and direction, as well as look out for the best interest of all members. ■



**JORDEN
WOOD**
CHAIRMAN
DISTRICT 3



**MAX
WADDELL**
VICE CHAIRMAN
DISTRICT 9



**JOHN
KILLOUGH**
SECRETARY/TREASURER
DISTRICT 6



**KEVIN
INGLE**
DISTRICT 1



**MARGARET
KOPREK**
DISTRICT 2



**JERRY
WALDEN**
DISTRICT 4



**STEVE
HARRIS**
DISTRICT 5



**LARRY
MILLER**
DISTRICT 7



**JARRETT
ARMSTRONG**
DISTRICT 8

A YEAR OF TIDAL WAVES

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT/CEO & BOARD CHAIRMAN



**DARRYL
SCHRIVER**

PRESIDENT/
CEO



**JORDEN
WOOD**

BOARD
CHAIRMAN

MANY NAMES HAVE TAGGED 2020 and 2021, including unprecedented, unusual, challenging and unparalleled. Merriam-Webster's 2020 word of year was *pandemic* – a fitting choice as we trudged through the coronavirus epidemic. At Tri-County Electric Cooperative, it was the year of tidal waves.

The past year was hard for many, and our communities were not immune. Through all these trials and hardships, Tri-County Electric Co-op's employees banded together to persevere and serve you, our members.

Our cooperative has experienced many difficulties over the past year. Beginning with the ice storm that hit our Seymour service area last October, to Winter Storm Uri bringing rotating outages across the state, to our power supplier, Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, entering bankruptcy, all while navigating the ever-changing landscape of the coronavirus pandemic.

February's winter storm wreaked havoc across the state. Many facets of our every-day-lives were impacted, from supply chain issues at grocery stores and home-improvement stores, to the interruptions of essential services like trash pickup. The most impactful and publicized breakdown was the state's electric grid and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas mandating rotating outages.

The coronavirus pandemic continues to loom over the globe. Eighteen months ago, we closed our offices to the public. This was not an easy decision, but was in the best interest of the health and safety of both our employees and you, the members. We hope the disease eases so we can open our lobbies again soon. Until then, we promise to continue to serve you. Indeed, over the entire period our employees have remained in the office with no work-from-home options to ensure you received the best possible service.

Additionally, the cooperative experienced positive challenges like exponential growth. We also accomplished things like increased transparency in our governance structure and overall communications and added member benefits and elevating our service.

Tri-County Electric Co-op's Board of Directors welcomed two new directors in late February. The new bylaws, effective November 1, 2020, included a redistricting of director districts creating two new seats. Kevin Ingle, district 1, and Margaret Koprek, district 2, were appointed to fill the vacant seats after completing a rigorous interview process with the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications and the board. We are excited to have Kevin and Margaret serving the membership as members of the board. The knowledge, skills and experience they bring makes them valuable members of the board.

Even through the eventful, unprecedented year we've had, you, our member-owners, scored Tri-County Electric Co-op at 84 out of 100 in the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). We use the ACSI to gauge member satisfaction, and it is our goal to continuously improve. As we get ready for our 2021 survey, we hope you will give candid feedback to the survey team so we can use your input to continue to improve the manner to which the cooperative serves its members.

Last year's annual meeting theme and message was *I work for you*. As we travel through 2021, we will continue to face many challenges, but our message still stands clear: member-focused, member-driven. Every Tri-County Electric Co-op employee comes to work with the intention to take care of you, our member owners.

Looking back on the past year, it definitely was not without challenges. However, we are very proud of our employees and the Board of Directors for always looking out for and protecting the membership's best interest. Since April, every President/CEO column has ended with "We are in this together." We can assure you that this statement is not taken lightly, and we are doing everything we can to protect you, our members. We truly are in this together.



BRAZOS BANKRUPTCY

THE IMPACT OF WINTER STORM URI

WINTER STORM URI and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) grid crisis is an event that will go down in history. The mid-February storm hit the entire State of Texas with severe winter weather, including ice, snow and sustained sub-freezing temperatures. From Dalhart to Brownsville, Port Arthur to El Paso, no Texan was left out.

The rolling blackouts mandated by ERCOT affected Tri-County Electric Co-op and all members and employees. Uri made local, state and national news and quickly became a main focus of the 87th Texas legislative session. Investigations of ERCOT and the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) ensued, and resignations from the ERCOT leadership and board of directors and PUCT commissioners followed.



Brazos Bankruptcy

A major consequence of the winter storm and grid crisis was our power supplier's decision to file for bankruptcy. On March 1, Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, our wholesale power supplier, filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy in the Southern District of Texas. For the past six months, Tri-County Electric Co-op's Board of Directors and leadership has navigated through this difficult and ever-changing situation while looking out for you, our member-owners.

In early March, the board instructed President/CEO Darryl Schriver to leave no stone unturned during the investigations, hearings and filings. Schriver worked with the Board and an excellent team of outside consultants and legal counsel. During our investigations, we have learned that Brazos's generation fleet did not operate as expected during the storm. These units are intended to hedge power costs by producing electricity to protect the 16 member-cooperatives against the price volatility of the ERCOT market. It is painfully evident that the units did not perform as intended when the member-cooperatives need them most – during Uri when prices were approximately 300 times the normal rate –



resulting in Brazos racking up \$2.1 billion in power bills from ERCOT, which was approximately three times the cost of power for all of 2020. If Brazos's generation fleet had been able to operate at the industry's minimum standard during Uri, this could have avoided much of the financial devastation.

Tri-County Electric Co-op's leadership continues to press Brazos for answers and documentation. However, we are still left puzzled on many items and believe Brazos entered into bankruptcy too quickly. Tri-County Electric Co-op and the other 15 member-cooperatives received little advance notice, which created a problem for us and left us with little control of the situation.

These issues caused Tri-County Electric Co-op's Board to the unanimous decision to call for the resignations of Brazos's leadership. When the state legislature investigated what happened at ERCOT and the PUCT, resignations came from decision-makers at both entities. Our board feels that it is time hold decision-makers at Brazos accountable for their actions and move Brazos toward a future where it can better serve its member cooperatives.

Schriver's President/CEO column on page 18 includes an update on the bankruptcy and exit scenarios Brazos is considering. As we navigate this extremely fluid situation, we have two goals: take care of you, the members, and to keep you informed through transparent communications.

Legislative Update

Texas representatives and senators wrapped up the 87th legislative session on May 31. Legislators passed more than 500 bills connected to the winter storm, with more than 300 relating to the state's electric grid. The largest and most encompassing bill was Senate Bill (SB 3). Key provisions included creating a disaster notification system, a map of critical gas facilities and pricing of the energy market during emergencies. The PUCT and ERCOT are still working to digest and implement SB 3. Until they can fully analyze the bill to propose regulations, we do not know precisely how the legislation will impact the State's electric grid and ultimately our cooperative and its members.

BYLAWS & GOVERNANCE

FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS, Tri-County Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors has worked to revamp the bylaws. The bylaws serve as one of the governing documents for the cooperative and include various items like membership requirements, annual meeting and special membership meeting notices, board of director qualifications, nominations, elections, board officers and meetings, capital credits, disposition of assets and financials.

After careful consideration and extensive discussions and work with consultants and legal counsel, the Board of Directors approved a new set of bylaws that went into effect on November 1, 2020. The board utilized the talents of experienced attorneys and consultants to include the best parts of the old bylaws, while incorporating lessons learned from other large co-ops and our own experience, to navigate the complex revision. The new bylaws were created with you, the member, in mind.

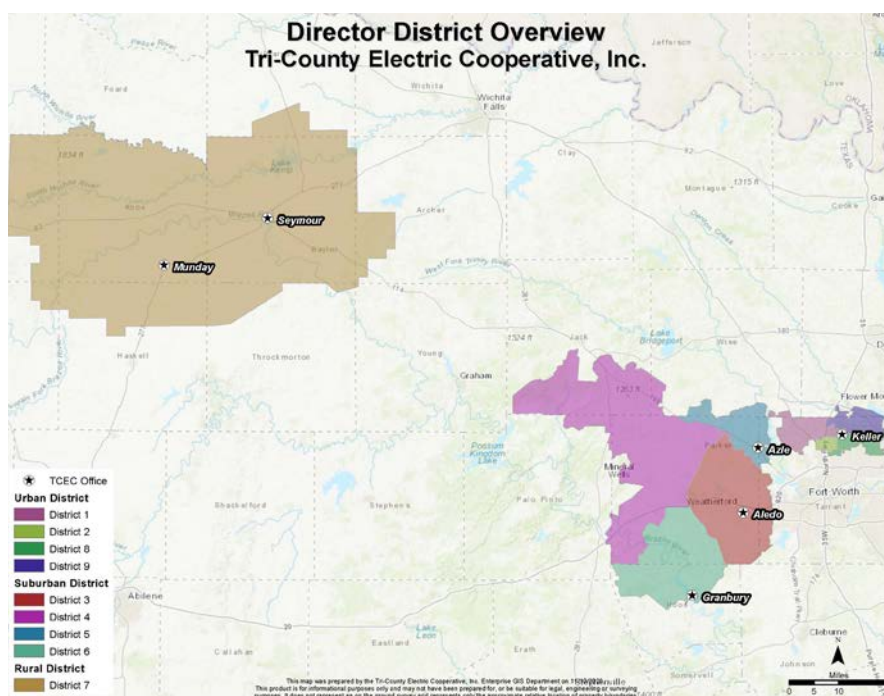
Major items of consideration for the new bylaws revolved around corporate governance, including director districts, director qualifications and nominations. Tri-County Electric Co-op is unique, and equal representation in the board room – including residential, commercial and industrial members across our service area – is important.

The board decided to increase from eight to nine directors to represent the urban, suburban, rural and extremely rural areas of the co-op territory. Additionally, membership numbers in the urban districts are 5 percent of each other and membership numbers in the suburban districts are 5 percent of each other. The four urban districts (1, 2, 8 and 9) represent a total of approximately 55,500 members and the four suburban districts (3, 4, 5 and 6) represent a total of approximately 41,000 members. This redistricting process resulted in two vacant seats in the Keller area. One seat, district 2, was new since the board increased to nine directors. The other seat, district 1, transitioned from the suburban area after Todd Smith resigned last June leaving the seat vacant.

The two vacancies were filled during late February after the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications reviewed applications from interested members who live in each district, interviewed candidates, and recommended a candidate slate to the board for consideration. Kevin Ingle was appointed to fill district 1 position and Margaret Koprek was appointed to district 2.

Another major change to the bylaws relates to director nominations. In previous years, director nominations would take place at district meetings. Now, interested members who meet the director qualifications outlined in Article 4, Section 4.3, can seek nomination in two ways: either through the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications or through member petition. Eligible members may seek nomination through committee by filing a complete application packet, including a petition with 25 member signatures from members who reside in the district. Eligible members may seek nomination through a member petition by filing a complete application packet and a petition with 50 member signatures from members who reside in the district.

The Committee on Nominations and Qualifications is responsible for accepting and reviewing director candidate applications from interested members. The committee is composed of members from each director district and are nominated by the board. A full report of this year's director nominations is in the Annual Report on page AR 2.



COVID-19 PANDEMIC

THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC continues to impact our cooperative. In March 2020, Tri-County Electric Cooperative closed our lobbies to preserve the health and safety of our communities, members and employees.

Our communities were hit hard. People lost jobs, took leave to stay at home to teach young ones, and worked long hours in the health field to tend to the ill. The pandemic touched each and every member in some way. To help our members in time of need, our member services team set up payment arrangements, returned deposits, and put a hold on disconnects. The friendly voices on the phones were there to listen to our members and help in any way possible.

Many businesses shut down completely and sent employees home to conduct their day-to-day work activities. This method does not work for our industry because linemen cannot maintain and repair lines from the comfort of their homes. Co-op leadership made the decision to keep all employees in our offices to perform work together as one. We enacted protocols to ensure employee safety and enabled us to keep every healthy employee in the office to take care of you, the members. Tri-County Electric Co-op employees were not immune to the disease, but we can proudly say that exposure was limited due to the safety practices enacted by the human resources department and followed by employees across all departments and offices.

We know that closing our lobbies is not convenient for all members. Over the past 18 months, our drive-through windows at our Azle and Keller offices stayed busy, and our member services team received more phone calls and emails than ever. We truly appreciate your patience and understanding as we take care of your needs, and we hope to serve you, face to face, in the near future.



Many events went virtual, including our annual meeting. We had more than 1,140 members participate in the 81st Annual Meeting of the Members last October, which is comparable to the 1,178 members who registered at the 2019 Annual Meeting at Weatherford High School. Transitioning to a virtual option was in the best interest of you, the members. As the pandemic lingers, the board of directors made the decision to hold this year's annual meeting virtually as well. Members can watch the meeting online or listen by phone. The official notice and invitation is on the front inside cover of the magazine and includes full details on how you can participate. We hope you take the time to join us, but if you cannot, a recording will be available on our website one week after the meeting.



GROWTH & RELIABILITY

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE experienced exponential growth in 2020. We added more than 5,400 meters, or 4.73% growth. So far in 2021, we have placed around 500 new meters a month and we are on the path to 5.5% growth by the end of the year. Nationally, the average growth rate is 1 to 2 percent for electric cooperatives, and many co-ops are experiencing negative growth or meter loss.

The Dallas-Fort Worth area is one of the most-sought-after areas in the nation. Those keeping up with the housing market in the metroplex saw a boom in 2020 that continued to flourish in 2021. According to the *Dallas Morning News*, the median price of a home in July 2021 was \$349,000, increasing 20% since July 2020.

Tri-County Electric Co-op's service area is situated just north and west of Fort Worth, and departments across the co-op are feeling the affects of the DFW growth. Our member services team, who handles the phone calls from new and existing members as well as the public received an average of 786 calls a day and welcomed 4,940 additional members to the co-op. The work order technicians and the field services department fulfilled more than 9,600 field appointments for new services. Linemen and contractor crews built more than 280 miles of line. Our business development team is keeping up with developers and builders who are taking advantage of the market success.

METERS ADDED

500+

PER MONTH

5.5%
growth

PHONE CALLS

786

PER DAY

We are blessed to be in this condition and area. While high growth does present challenges, your co-op is looking toward the future. Growing pains are common for teenagers and businesses. As we continue to add more meters to our system, our engineering and operations teams work behind the scenes to minimize impact, or strain, on our distribution grid. We commonly hear long-time residents express concern for the power grid. Rest assured. Our extensive work plan created and closely monitored by our engineering team, and implemented by our operations department will ensure a reliable flow of electricity amid the growth.

Our operations department performed various maintenance projects to increase reliability. Additionally, our vegetation management crews trimmed more than 1.3 million feet of line on the system. While clearing the rights-of-way across the system is a major endeavor, the project drastically affects service reliability. We are on target to completely trim the system in eight years. Events like the ice storm that hit our Seymour/Munday area last October, Winter Storm Uri, and spring storms cause inevitable outages. Over the past year, Tri-County Electric Co-op's System Average Interruption Frequency Index was 1.46, meaning the average member experienced less than two outages. Additionally, our Customer Average Interruption Duration Index was 208.9, meaning the average member was out of power less than four hours over the course of the year.



MEMBER SERVICE

YOU, OUR MEMBER-OWNERS, are the only reason we are here. Without our members, this cooperative would not exist. We have a dedicated member services team whose goal is to take care of your every need. All other employees are on board to serve you as well. Every business decision is made with you, our member-owners at the forefront.

Every employee stands by our vision to take care of our member-owners. We value your membership, patronage and feedback. We strive to provide the best customer and reliable service and meet your needs. In 2020, you gave us an 84 out of 100 on the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). Two years ago, we started measuring our member service experience and we strive to improve each year.

Member service was a focus area this past year, from setting up new members, to helping members through the pandemic, to transparently communicating updates via our website, Facebook and the *Texas Co-op Power* magazine. Additionally, we are wrapping up the Advanced Member Power (AMP) meter deployment. More than 117,000 meters have been upgraded from the old system to the new advanced metering infrastructure system. The AMI system provides added benefits, including daily electric use readings, safety alerts, remote connects and disconnects, and more. We expect to complete the project by the end of 2021.

In June, our member services team launched the online membership application. New and existing members can now apply for service, including transferring service to a new location. This electronic method streamlines the application process by tracking all documentation in one location. In April, our team launched a new and improved outage map. The map brought added functionality in outage reporting. We have additional upgrades planned to increase the member experience.

Did you know we have an online member portal and a mobile app? These tools are available for members to take charge of their electric account. The online member portal allows members to perform tasks like pay bills, schedule payments and track electric use. More than 72,500 members are registered for the online member portal, meaning three in every four members take advantage of the resource. TCEC Connect, our mobile app, allows members to take their portal on the go. The app allows members to pay bills, report an outage and track electric use. TCEC Connect subscriptions increased 102 percent since last year, with more than 7,600 members registered for the app!

One of the benefits of being a co-op member is receiving capital credits. Tri-County Electric Co-op's Board of Directors approved a \$5 million capital credits retirement earlier this summer. Members who received electric service in 2002 can expect a bill credit or a check this month. If the amount is \$150 or less, a member will receive a credit on their electric account. If the amount is \$150.01 or more, a member will receive a check in the mail. Including the 2021 retirement, Tri-County Electric Co-op has returned \$61.1 million in capital credits to active and former member-owners who received service through 2001. It truly pays to be a member!

Last year at the annual meeting we announced a new member benefit: air ambulance service through AirMedCare Network (AMCN). For just \$65 a year, members can sign up to protect their families. An AMCN membership ensures you will have no out-of-pocket expenses if flown by an AMCN provider. Members may sign up for this benefit anytime. Learn more at tcectexas.com/airmedcare. ■



Statement of Income and Expenses

12 MONTHS ENDED MARCH 31, 2021

INCOME		
Electric Energy Revenue	\$257,913,975	98.6%
Interest Income	\$988,501	0.4%
Non-Operating Income and Capital Credits	\$2,594,732	1.0%
TOTAL INCOME	\$261,497,208	100%
EXPENSES		
Electric Power Cost	\$185,135,043	72.9%
Electric Operating Expense	\$42,768,023	16.8%
Electric System Depreciation	\$17,809,014	7.0%
Interest Expense	\$6,091,040	2.4%
Taxes and Other	\$2,113,815	0.8%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$253,916,935	100%
NET MARGINS	\$7,580,273	2.9%

Condensed Balance Sheets

AS OF MARCH 31

	2021	2020
ASSETS		
Cash	\$26,940,319	\$35,007,559
Accounts Receivable	\$12,265,283	\$9,884,630
Equity in Associated Organizations	\$147,380,303	\$151,307,272
Investment in Subsidiary	\$4,949,308	\$33,023,599
Utility and Non-Utility Plant (Net of Depreciation)	\$493,114,058	\$387,134,180
Accrued Revenues	\$14,940,000	\$12,880,000
Other Assets	\$1,752,026	\$908,846
TOTAL ASSETS	\$701,341,297	\$630,146,126
LIABILITIES		
Long-Term Debt	\$160,040,999	\$141,919,936
Accounts Payable and Other Current Liabilities	\$65,277,506	\$24,107,708
Accrued Power Cost, Advanced Payments	\$35,312,926	\$25,446,357
Accumulated Provisions	\$21,374,616	\$25,673,796
Consumer Deposits	\$5,642,191	\$6,417,474
Accrued Taxes, Interest and Other	\$13,250,635	\$12,210,844
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$300,898,873	\$235,776,115
EQUITIES		
Membership Fees	\$2,362,984	\$2,254,702
Patronage Capital	\$398,079,440	\$392,115,309
TOTAL EQUITIES	\$400,442,424	\$394,370,011
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITIES	\$701,341,297	\$630,146,126

Operating Highlights

12 MONTHS ENDED MARCH 31

	2021	2020
Total Revenue	\$261,497,208	\$258,880,913
Total Expenses.....	\$253,916,935	\$244,840,677
Plant Additions (Net of Accumulated Depreciation)	\$105,979,878	\$47,979,417
Utility Plant - Gross	\$683,160,947	\$564,572,044
Total Active Meters	122,102	116,228
Plant Investment Per Member-Owner	\$5,595	\$4,857
Peak Demand (kW)	866,378	706,458
Electric Energy Sales (kWh).....	2,933,527,005	2,988,990,449
Residential Average Annual Use (kWh).....	19,116	18,944
Commercial/Industrial Average Annual Use (kWh)	54,519	68,521
System Average Retail Cost per kWh	\$0.089	\$0.087
Net Margins	\$7,580,273	\$14,040,236
Total Miles of Line	9,461	9,145



JOHN KILLOUGH
BOARD SECRETARY/
TREASURER

A Message from your Board Secretary/Treasurer

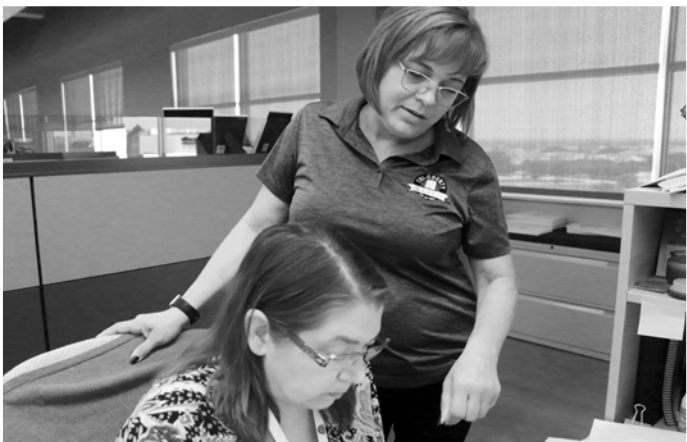
Independent auditing firm Briscoe, Burke & Grigsby LLP of Tulsa, Oklahoma, performed an audit of our financial statements for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2021.

We received a clean, unqualified opinion on the audit. A full audit report is on file at Tri-County Electric Cooperative’s headquarters located at 200 Bailey Ranch Road, Aledo, Texas. ■

AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL COST

\$4.33

PER DAY



Minutes from the
81st Annual Meeting of the Members

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2021 | 7PM

The 81st Annual Meeting of the Members of Tri-County Electric Cooperative was held virtually at 200 Bailey Ranch Road in Aledo, Texas, on Tuesday, October 6, 2020, at 7:00 p.m.

Gloria Barron, Director of Marketing & Business Development, opened the meeting with the invocation given by Greg Hood, followed by the National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Barron then introduced the Board of Directors and CEO/General Manager, Mr. Darryl Schriver.

Ms. Barron and Mr. Schriver announced door prize winners throughout the meeting.

Ms. Barron then turned the meeting over to the President of the Board of Directors, Jorden Wood, who named Mr. Schriver as the Chairman of the 81st Annual Meeting.

The notice of the Annual Meeting and proof of mailing statement was then read by Ms. Barron. In accordance with the bylaws 92,980 copies were mailed to the membership on August 31, 2020.

A resolution was passed at the July 21, 2020 Board of Directors meeting to hold all balloting prior to the Annual Meeting. Tri-County Electric Cooperative partnered with Survey and Ballot Systems to conduct the election. Members were able to vote by mail or electronically. According to the Cooperative bylaws, a minimum of 5% of the total membership is required to conduct business. The minimum quorum requirement is 4,649. Mr. Schriver then announced the election results. Survey and

Ballot Systems reported a total of 4,018 ballots submitted by mail, and 2,432 were submitted electronically for a total of 6,450 ballots for the election. Quorum was met and a qualified election for the 81st Annual Meeting of the membership. Mr. Schriver then called for the approval of the minutes of the 2019 Annual Meeting. A motion and a second was made to dispense with the reading of the minutes. The motion carried and the minutes were approved.

Mr. John Killough, Secretary-Treasurer, then gave the Treasurer's report to the membership.

Mr. Schriver and Ms. Barron then reported on the District meetings in Districts 1 and 4. The District 1 Meeting was held on Wednesday, July 8, 2020 at 404 Main Place in Azle. There were 84 member-owners registered for this meeting. Due to the resignation of Director Todd Smith and lack of a quorum at this meeting, this Director position remains vacant at this time. The District 4 meeting was held on Thursday, July 9, 2020 at the Garner Elementary School in Weatherford. There were 94 member-owners registered for this meeting. Due to the lack of a quorum, the incumbent Mr. Walden was placed on the ballot for the Annual Meeting election. Based on the vote tabulation from Survey and Ballot Systems, the nominee for Director District 4, Jerry Walden, has been approved by the membership in sufficient numbers in accordance with the bylaws. It was announced that at this time the Board has decided not to fill the District 1 Board seat until new bylaws are adopted to address necessary changes to our election process, and to address new Board

district boundaries that will be drawn to reflect the Cooperative's membership growth. This concluded the business portion of the agenda items.

Additional announcement of door prize winners continued.

Mr. Schriver and Senior Staff then gave a report on the state of the Cooperative and the sale of OneSource Communications to Ubiquity DFW.

A video by the employees was then presented to the membership.

Mr. Schriver then responded to member questions.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m. ■



"Taking Care of our Member-Owners!"

RELIABILITY | RESPONSIBILITY | INTEGRITY | ACCOUNTABILITY | RESPECT | COMMITMENT



MMM's Forest Berry Cobbler

BY MARTHA MCCORMICK
KELLER

COBBLER

- 1 cup blackberries
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 cup raspberries
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 2 tablespoons flour
- ½ cup water
- 6 tablespoons butter

DOUGH

- 2 cups flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ⅔ cup shortening
- 6 tablespoons cold water
- Sparkling sugar

1. To make the crust, mix flour and salt together. Cut shortening into flour mixture until crumbly. Add water and mix until dough comes together. You may need more water depending on consistency.

2. Divide dough in half. Roll half of the dough out on a lightly floured board and place in pan.

3. Pour berries into the bottom of the pan, spreading evenly over crust. Cover berries with sugar, flour and water. Slice butter into pieces and place evenly over berries.

4. Roll out remaining dough and place on top of berry mixture. Sprinkle a little sparkling sugar on top.

5. Bake at 400°F for 40 minutes until bubbly and golden brown.

Enjoy!



**Tri-County Electric Co-op
Member Recipe Submission Form**

MEMBER _____

CITY _____

EMAIL or PHONE NUMBER _____

RECIPE NAME _____

SUBMITTING YOUR RECIPE:

EMAIL: Please include the above information with your recipe and send to pr@tcectexas.com

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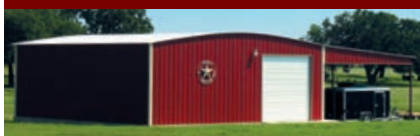
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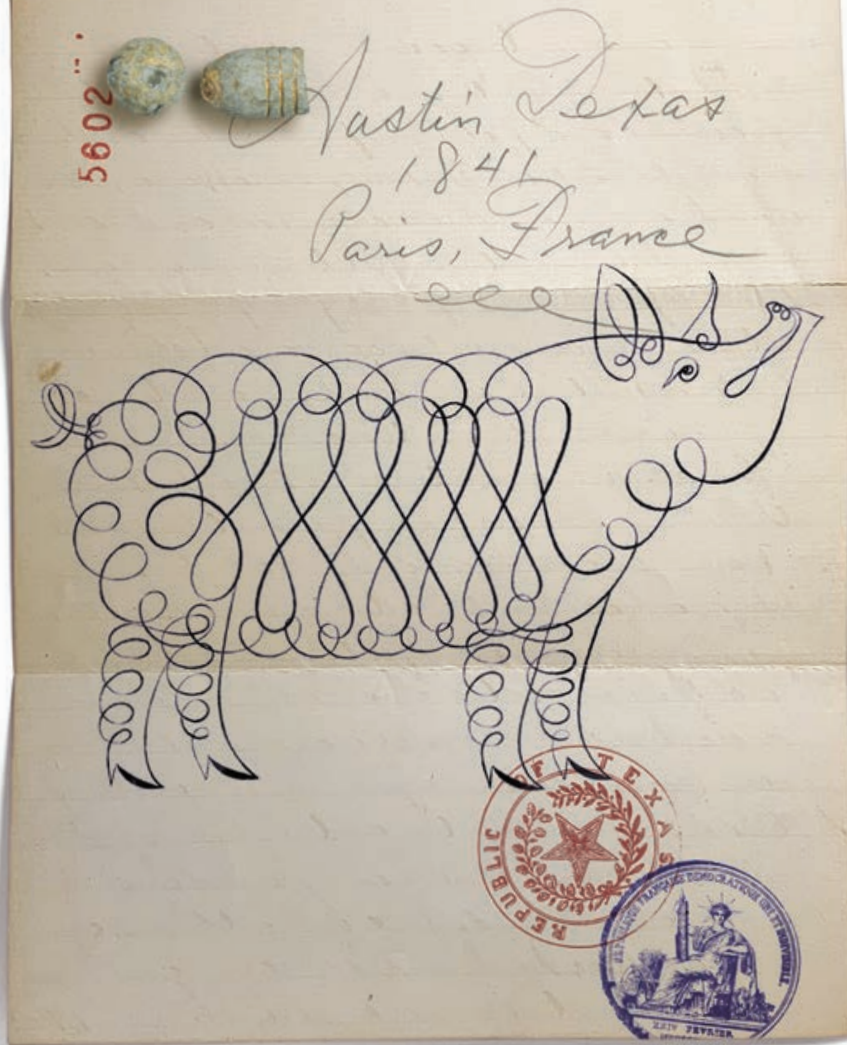
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TCP WEB EXTRA

Listen to W.F. Strong read this story.

France's Beef? Pigs

Ill-mannered hogs ruin France's attempt at a relationship with the newly independent Texas

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY MOLLOY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AFTER SECURING independence at San Jacinto, Texas was an independent country but one with no money and a shaky government. With no military force to secure its vast territory, Texas needed friends on the international stage and needed them quickly.

Texas turned first to the United States. Just months earlier, Stephen F. Austin had written, "We ought to get united to the United States as soon as possible."

Though the U.S. was not ready to pursue annexation, it was the first country to formally recognize the new sovereign nation. Congress made that move because it feared Britain or France might gain an inside track to the wealth of Texas.

The next country to recognize Texas

was France. A commercial treaty was signed September 25, 182 years ago, and it established import duties on Texas cotton in France and reduced import duties on French wines, brandies and silks in Texas ports. The French Legation was opened in Austin, and the Texas Legation was opened in Paris.

This recognition from France was of enormous significance because most European countries saw the Texas Revolution as internal unrest within Mexico and believed that Santa Anna might crush the rebellion and reclaim the wayward state.

Once recognized internationally, Texas needed support for its banking system. In 1841, Gen. James Hamilton, the Texas commissioner of loans, walked

into a French minister's office in Paris and asked for a \$5 million loan. The minister asked if he had any collateral, and the Texan said, "a territory as big as the kingdom of France."

At the time Texas was actually about 50% larger than France. It looked like this loan would sail through the French bureaucracy. Then some Texas pigs caused an international incident.

Back in Austin, hogs owned by the innkeeper Richard Bullock wandered onto the grounds of the French Legation and ate corn in the stable, tore up gardens and invaded the house. Dubois de Saligny, the chargé d'affaires of the legation, ordered his servant to shoot the pigs. An outraged Bullock wanted Saligny arrested, but Saligny claimed diplomatic immunity.

Bullock caught the servant outside the legation, beat him up and threatened to do the same to Saligny. The Frenchman cut off diplomatic relations with Texas before traveling to New Orleans. A year later, he returned to his post, but the pig war had effectively killed the loan.

Even so, Saligny's glowing reports of the unfathomable wealth and prosperity for which Texas was destined fueled France's interest in the nation.

By keeping close ties with Texas, France wanted to make a grab at the last foothold available for it in North America. Negotiations for a French colonization and stationing of 30,000 French troops along the Texas frontier continued unconsummated until Texas was annexed by the U.S. in 1845.

France sacked Saligny for his ineptitude, and the trouble was all traced back to those pigs. As one French minister said of Saligny, "We can make mistakes, but we can't afford to look ridiculous." ■

Sweet Potatoes

Traditional holiday staple proves plenty versatile—from waffles to brownies

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Sweet potatoes are an ingredient that doesn't often get much love outside of the holidays, but these versatile spuds deserve a spot in your regular rotation. I try to make them at least once a week, changing up the preparation to keep my family from having dish fatigue. Mashed sweet potatoes are a great preparation, but we tend to have lots of leftovers each time. Enter sweet potato waffles, a lightly spiced way to brighten up any weekend breakfast.

Sweet Potato Waffles

2 cups flour
¼ cup packed dark brown sugar
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1½ cups milk
1 cup mashed sweet potatoes
¼ cup vegetable oil
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
Spray oil, as needed

COOK'S TIP If you don't have a waffle maker, this recipe works beautifully for pancakes too.

1. In a large bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg.
2. In another bowl, whisk together milk, sweet potatoes, oil, eggs and vanilla until smooth.
3. Pour wet mixture into dry and stir until completely incorporated and no dry bits remain.
4. Preheat your waffle maker. Once hot, spray cooking plates with oil if needed, then scoop batter onto plates, close and cook according to the manufacturer's instructions. Keep waffles warm on a sheet pan in an oven set to low heat while you repeat with remaining batter.

SERVES 4

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Persimmon Sweet Potato Soup.





Oven-Roasted Sweet Potato Medley

BECKY POE
WOOD COUNTY EC

This easy side dish is excellent served with grilled proteins such as sausage or fish. Fresh cherry tomatoes added just before serving lend a pop of juicy sweetness, while the fresh jalapeño layers in heat.

- 1 pound sweet potatoes, cubed**
- 1 large poblano pepper, diced**
- 1 small red onion, cut into slivers**
- 1 cup cubed fresh pineapple, or 1 can (8 ounces) pineapple tidbits, drained**
- 2 tablespoons olive or avocado oil**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh cilantro**
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced**
- Juice of half a lime**
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered**

1. Place a 12-by-18-inch rimmed baking sheet in the oven and preheat to 425 degrees.
2. In a large bowl, combine sweet potatoes, poblano, onion and pineapple. Add oil, salt and pepper and stir well to coat. Remove baking sheet from oven. Spread sweet potato medley onto heated baking sheet and roast 25 minutes, stirring halfway through.
3. Remove pan from oven and stir in cilantro and jalapeño. Drizzle with lime juice, then add cherry tomatoes and season to taste.

SERVES 4

MORE RECIPES >



\$500 WINNER

Texas Turkey Hash

HEATHER CARPENTER
TAYLOR EC



Spicy with a bit of sweetness, this hash makes an excellent breakfast, brunch or even dinner. Carpenter created the dish based on a favorite at an Abilene restaurant, making a few healthy substitutions along the way. Serve with a poached or fried egg for a more complete meal.

SERVES 4

- 2 cups cubed sweet potatoes, or 20 ounces frozen sweet potato cubes**
- 1 onion, chopped**
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped**
- 2 jalapeño peppers, sliced**
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt**
- 4 tablespoons grapeseed or olive oil, divided use**
- 1 pound turkey breakfast sausage**
- 2 pinches crushed red pepper flakes (optional)**
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Toss sweet potatoes, onion, garlic, jalapeños and garlic salt together with 2 tablespoons oil and spread onto a rimmed baking sheet. Roast in the oven 25–35 minutes or until fork-tender.
3. In a large skillet over medium heat, brown turkey sausage with red pepper flakes, if using. Transfer sausage to a bowl and set aside.
4. Using the same skillet, increase heat to medium high and add remaining oil and roasted vegetables. Add the maple syrup and stir once. Let potatoes cook, undisturbed, for a few minutes. Turn over a few pieces to check for browning; you want a crispy, brown potato.
5. Once potatoes are browned, stir in sausage and serve.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

PASTA DUE SEPTEMBER 10

From angel hair to ziti and manicotti to macaroni, pasta is a pantry staple. What's your prized dish? Enter at TexasCoopPower.com/contests by September 10 for a chance to win \$500.



Volcanic Sweet Potato Brownies

KANINA HADEL
PENTEX ENERGY

These brownies will surprise everyone at the dessert table. Supremely fudgy and rich, they're excellent topped with a dollop of whipped cream. This recipe makes a large batch but can easily be halved.

3 pounds sweet potatoes
Butter, for the pan
2¾ cups (about 24 ounces) smooth almond butter
¾–¾ cup molasses or pure maple syrup
1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup cocoa powder
½ cup almond flour
1 tablespoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt

COOK'S TIP For a less gooey brownie, refrigerate overnight before serving.

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees and place sweet potatoes on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake 50 minutes or until sweet potatoes are soft when pressed. Let cool.
2. Lower oven temperature to 350 degrees and butter a 9-by-13-inch pan.
3. In a large-capacity blender or food processor, purée sweet potatoes until smooth. Add almond butter and blend to mix well. Add molasses or maple syrup and vanilla and blend to mix.

4. In a medium bowl, stir together cocoa powder, almond flour, baking soda and salt. Add dry ingredients into sweet potato mixture and blend until uniform.

5. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake 40–45 minutes. Let cool completely before serving.

MAKES 32 BROWNIES

TCP WEB EXTRA We have more than 900 searchable recipes at TexasCoopPower.com, including a salad, casserole and stew that feature sweet potatoes. Just search for "sweet potatoes."

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This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

La Grange's Tribute

Monument Hill tomb honors Texans killed in two notable clashes

BY CHET GARNER

WE CELEBRATE THE Battle of San Jacinto as the grand finale of the Texas Revolution. In reality, the struggle was far from over in 1836. Mexico never officially ratified Gen. Antonio López de Santa Anna's treaty of surrender and made numerous attempts to retake Texas.

I tripped to the Central Texas town of La Grange to learn more about a group of men who gave their lives in the name of Texas sovereignty.

La Grange is a charming town with an impressive 19th-century courthouse and plenty of places to grab an authentic Czech kolach. I discovered the best views just south of the square, on a bluff overlooking the Colorado River. At this scenic spot sits the Monument Hill State Historic Site along with the ruins of the Kreische Brewery, one of the state's first commercial beer producers. I wasn't looking for a historic pint; I wanted to learn more about the stories that had intrigued me since childhood.

Just past the visitors center, I found an above-ground tomb and a 48-foot-tall shellstone obelisk engraved with the story of the men laid to rest here. Many were killed outside San Antonio in the 1842 Dawson Massacre, after Mexican forces had successfully retaken control of the city. Others were from the 1843 Mier expedition in Mexico. Known as the Black Bean episode, 176 captured Texans had to draw beans to determine their fates. Those who drew one of the 17 black beans immediately faced a firing squad.

In 1848 residents of La Grange exhumed the remains of the fallen men from both sites and reinterred them in a tomb on this bluff. Even Sam Houston attended the ceremony. I paused for a solemn moment. Looking out over the Texas landscape, I pondered the lives lost to claim Texas. ■

ABOVE Chet at the Kreische Brewery State Historic Site.

TCP WEB EXTRA Join Chet in his latest video, which takes in this site overlooking the Colorado River. See all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

Know Before You Go

Call or check an event's website for scheduling details.

SEPTEMBER 09

Addison Vitruvian Nights Live: Bidi Bidi Banda, (972) 590-8866, udr.com/vitruvian-park/vitruvian-park-events

10

Fredericksburg [10-12] Fall Planting Days Kick-Off, 1-800-848-0078, wildseedfarms.com

11

Conroe American Cancer Society Relay For Life/Bark For Life, (936) 520-0718, relayforlife.org/mocotx

Luckenbach LuckenRod Car Show & Music Festival, (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

New Braunfels Gruene 10K/5K, 1-877-806-3987, athleteguild.com

New Braunfels Lady A: What A Song Can Do Tour 2021, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

Gainesville [11-19] Gainesville Area Visual Arts Fall Art Exhibition, (940) 613-6939, gainesvilleareavisualarts.org

Palestine [11, 17-18, 24-25] Texas State Railroad Diesel Roundtrip, 1-855-632-7729, texasstaterailroad.net

16

New Braunfels Come and Taste It, (830) 606-0093, grapevineingruene.com

Grapevine [16-19] GrapeFest, 1-800-457-6338, grapevinetexasusa.com/grapefest

17

Grandview [17-19] Antique Alley Texas, (817) 666-5024, antiquealleytexas.com

Amarillo [17-25] Tri-State Fair and Rodeo, (806) 376-7767, tristatefair.com

18

Bay City Jason Anderson Memorial Golf Tournament, (979) 240-4575, jamgt.com

Blanco Classic Car Show, (512) 632-0648, blancoclassicarshow.com

Bullard Wine on Main, (903) 894-4238, m6winery.com

Flower Mound Christ Child Fiesta, (972) 816-3862, christchildsfestdfw.org

Ponder Labor Day Roping, (940) 479-2043, dentoncountycowboychurch.org

Huntsville [18-19] Antique Show, (936) 661-2545, facebook.com/huntsvilleantiqueshow

New Braunfels [18-19] Old Gruene Market Days, (830) 832-1721, playinnewbraunfels.com

21

Kerrville [21-25] Paint Kerrville, (830) 895-2911, kacckerrville.com

24

Brenham Aaron Barker and Allen Shamblin, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

Austin [24-25] Capital of Texas Vintage Postcard & Paper Show and Sale, (512) 775-6796, ctxpc.org

MORE EVENTS >

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Pick of the Month

Leander Educational Excellence Foundation MUDstacle & Family Fun Run

Cedar Park, September 18
 (512) 570-0027
leef.tx.org/mudstacle

The name is a mouthful, and the event itself can be too if you're not careful. Participants pass through seven levels of a mud forest and a sea of swirly noodles and then walk the plank before reaching the finish line.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS CONTINUED

24

Galveston [24-25] Galveston Island Shrimp Festival, (409) 770-0999, galvestonislandshrimpfestival.com

Harper [24-25] Frontier Days Celebration, (830) 864-5048, harpercommunitypark.org

Victoria [24-25] Memories in the Making Quilt Show, (281) 506-8465, quiltguildvictoria.org

25

Lakehills Medina Lake Cajun Festival, (830) 460-0600, cajunfestival-medinalake.com

Mason Old Yeller Day, (325) 347-5758, masontxcoc.com

Paradise Main Street Festival, (940) 389-2654, paradisehistoricalsociety.org

Ingram [25-26] Texas Arts and Crafts Fair, (830) 367-5121, txartsandcraftsfair.com

26

Rosanky St. Mary of the Assumption Homecoming Festival, (512) 359-2448, stmarysp.church

30

New Braunfels [30-Oct. 2] Hollydays Market, (281) 788-4297, homefortheholidaysgiftmarket.com

OCTOBER

01

Arlington [1-3] Ramblin' Roads Music Festival, (817) 303-2800, ramblinroadsfest.com

Fredericksburg [1-3] Lone Star Gourd Festival, (512) 964-5540, texasgourdsociety.org

Fredericksburg [1-3] Oktoberfest, (830) 997-4810, oktoberfestinfbg.com

Georgetown [1-3] Popptoberfest, 1-800-436-8696, popptoberfest.georgetown.org

Kerrville [1-11] Kerrville Folk Festival, (830) 257-3600, kerrvillefolkfestival.org

02

Boerne Book and Arts Festival, (830) 249-3053, boernebookfest.com

DeKalb Oktoberfest, (903) 277-3519, facebook.com/dekalb.oktoberfest

Kerrville Kerr County 4-H Wild Game Dinner, (830) 257-6568, kerr.agrilife.org

Mason Mason County Republican Women's Home Tour, (325) 294-4016, masontxcoc.com

Rust and Decay

Some say it's better to wear out than to rust out. But our readers see more than an old rust bucket. We're nowhere near the Rust Belt, but just look at these beauties, weathered by the elements and taken over by nature.

BY GRACE FULTZ

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT

BRITNEY CASTILLO
CENTRAL TEXAS EC
Overgrown.

BETTY ALVARADO
COSERV

An old tractor near a city park in Round Rock.

KAY BELL
NUECES EC

"This car lies where it died,
and the desert is slowly
reclaiming the rusting hulk."

RAY LITTLE
KARNES EC
Granddaddy's Jeep.



Upcoming Contests

DUE SEP 10 Fired Up!

DUE OCT 10 Public Art

DUE NOV 10 The Texas Experience

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Focus on Texas on our website for more Rust and Decay photos from readers.



Sowing Perspective

Getting outdoors grants long-awaited inner peace

BY BABS RODRIGUEZ
ILLUSTRATION BY MITCH BLUNT

LIKE SO MANY Americans, as I've gotten older and with grown and flown children, I've found myself filling my time with more hours of my "day" job. When the pandemic had me stuck at home, I almost never left my desk. It was as if I came to believe that my industry—manacled nouns to verbs—was needed to keep the world ticking on.

Meanwhile, the backyard I worked so hard to tame when I first bought my house was manicured by a crew of strangers and less and less often enjoyed by loved ones. After winter's brutal last blast, I decided it was time to change all of that. I forced myself to put my phone down, turn off the cable news channel and wander outside.

I found the dandelion digger, es-chewed gardening gloves and, for two hours, stretched my back, legs and

arms pulling and twisting handfuls of weeds from the beds of drought-resistant natives. I was grateful for the gentle surrender the damp, soft soil afforded. I spoke to the pink buds of my Mexican buckeye and welcomed back the desert willow while whispering words of encouragement to the freeze-traumatized American beautyberry.

I did not curse the agave when it stabbed me, and I took the time to salute the bright yellow dandelion blossoms and profusion of purple buds on the hen-bit. I apologized that they had to go and acknowledged that in another world or age or garden, they might be the stars. Being assigned the status of weed seems subjective, after all. "Clover," I said, "the luck is not yours today." It offered up no four-leaf rebuttal.

And when my labor was done, I sat in my most seasoned lawn chair and listened to the birds. I tilted my head back and, with my eyes closed, I watched the patterns of clouds dart across my inner eyelids. I heard an ambulance siren in the distance and, without thinking, said the prayer the nuns taught me 50 years ago to say for those in need.

I took deep breaths and sat still for a long time, grateful that I have such a spot in which to gather myself. And I followed that mental garden path to plant seeds of gratitude for lessons learned in this past year, corners turned, memories recovered and priorities reorganized.

Now I am vowing to reap daily the harvest fruits of that day's labor, whether for 10 minutes or an hour of outdoor time on my creaky deck, watering my herbs, learning the names of the birds who visit. Sowing perspective has me harvesting an inner peace that had proved elusive while I labored so long without looking up. ■



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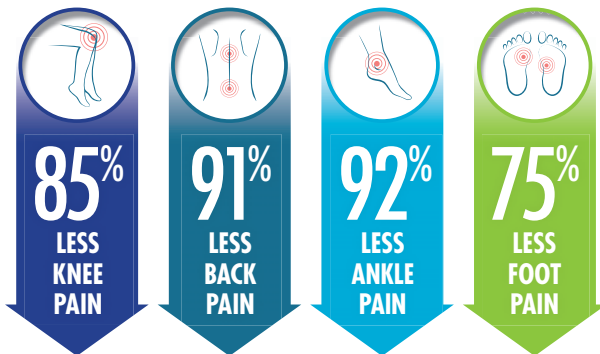


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2021 Election and Director Candidates

Tri-County Electric Cooperative's 16-county service area is divided into nine director districts. Each year, one-third of the directors are up for election and elected to three-year terms. This year, members will elect director candidates in districts 3, 6 and 8. The official 2021 election ballot is located on the back of this magazine. Members who vote by Wednesday, September 29, 2021 will receive a **\$25 bill credit** and be entered into the door prize drawing.

The board of directors approved a new set of bylaws that includes a new director nomination process. For this year's election, you will see two types of candidates: incumbent and nomination candidates. All candidates listed on the ballot were approved by the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications. Please turn to page AR 2 in the Annual Report for a nomination report from the committee.

Director candidate biographies are located in the Annual Report on pages AR 3 - AR 5.



Official Ballot Instructions

Your official election ballot is located on the back of this *Texas Co-op Power* magazine.

Voting Information

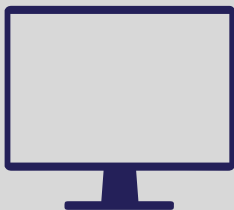
Every member is eligible to vote in the election, regardless of the district in which you reside. Only one ballot may be cast per membership.

All members who vote prior to the deadlines below will receive a **\$25 credit on your electric account, and will be entered to win door prizes announced during the virtual Annual Meeting on Tuesday, October 5.**

How to Vote

Members may vote online or by mail-in ballot. *Absolutely no ballots will be accepted at our offices.*

ONLINE



Go to **directvote.net/TCECTX** and enter your ballot ID and election passcode printed on the back of this *Texas Co-op Power* magazine.

-OR-

MAIL-IN



Complete the ballot located on the back of this *Texas Co-op Power* magazine and mail to Survey and Ballot Systems (SBS), in the postage-paid envelope provided.

CLOSES AT 5 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 29

MUST BE RECEIVED BY
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VOTE TO RECEIVE A \$25 BILL CREDIT!

**Voting will close at 5 p.m. on
Wednesday, September 29, 2021.**

All members are eligible to vote regardless of the Director District in which you reside.

Mail completed ballot to Survey and Ballot Systems (SBS) in the envelope provided, or vote online at **directvote.net/TCECTX** using your ballot ID and passcode below.

Director candidate photos and biographies are located inside the magazine in the Annual Report on pages AR 3 - AR 5.

Full voting instructions are located on the reverse side of the ballot.

VOTE ONLINE
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ME!**



Please use blue or black ink. Preferred marking method:

..... Please detach and mail ballot.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative 2021 ELECTION MAIL-IN BALLOT

District 3 Director Election

☐ **Jorden Wood**
Incumbent
Unopposed

District 6 Director Election

☐ **John Killough**
Incumbent
Unopposed

District 8 Director Election

☐ **Jarrett Armstrong**
Incumbent
☐ **Michael Sivertsen**
Nomination Candidate

Member Signature