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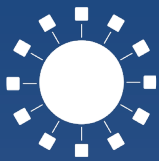
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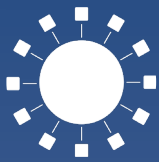


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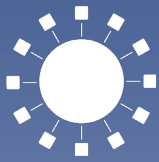
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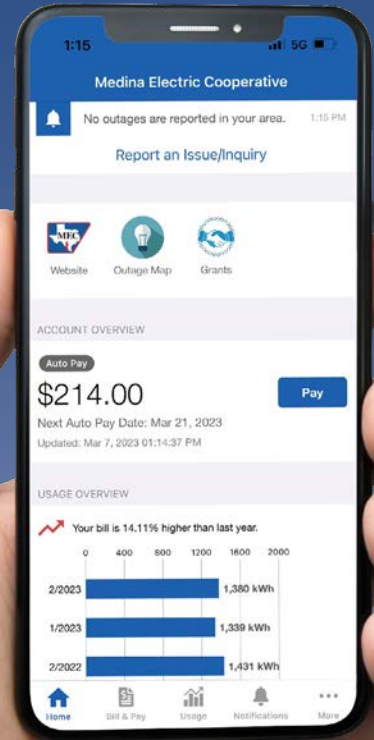


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CAN YOU BELIEVE  
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THE TEXAN WHO BEAT THE  
WRIGHTS INTO THE SKY

HOW THE PEOPLE OF WEST  
HAVE PREVAILED

# Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

APRIL 2023

## Brenham Is Smokin’

Here’s the scoop:  
The barbecue there  
is worth stopping for



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# April 2023



08

## Fruits of Their Labor

How passionate artists help each other turn gourds into richly embellished works of art.

*By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers  
Photos by Julia Robinson*

## 12 Make No Bones

Barbecue joints in Brenham, a town famous for ice cream, are attracting crowds of their own.

*By Anna Mazurek  
Photos by Wyatt McSpadden*

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#### ON THE COVER

Matt Lowery is proud of how the ribs at LJ's BBQ stack up.  
*Photo by Wyatt McSpadden*

#### ABOVE

The Hallettsville home of Blanche and Roy Cavarretta hoards their gourds.  
*Photo by Julia Robinson*

# Rising Stars

**WE SALUTE** a select group of Texas co-op employees this Lineworker Appreciation Day, April 10. Apprentices from Pedernales Electric Cooperative in Johnson City dominated at two competitions in 2022 that spotlighted and promoted lineworker skills and safe work practices.

PEC's Phillip Stapp finished first among 96 apprentices at the Texas Lineman's Rodeo in July, claiming the top prize for the co-op for the fourth consecutive rodeo. Co-workers Crispen Davis placed third and Cole Compton fifth. Then, at the International Lineman's Rodeo in October in Kansas, PEC's Zackery Gough, below, beat out 365 competitors to claim first place. Davis was close behind in second place, and Stapp was 14th.



“The hardest thing in the world to understand is income taxes.”

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE I DROVE ALL NIGHT TO ...

**TCP** Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to [letters@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:letters@TexasCoopPower.com) or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town.

Here are some of the responses to our February prompt: **Rainy days make me ...**

Get in the kitchen and make soup or dumplings and do some baking.

ELAINE GARNER  
VIA FACEBOOK

Want to curl up with a cozy blanket and a good book.

MARGIE HARGROVE  
BOWIE-CASS EC  
DAINGERFIELD

Glad I'm retired from delivering mail so I can sit on my porch and enjoy it.

TANIS WILLIAMS  
WOOD COUNTY EC  
FRUITVALE

Want to make oatmeal, hot cocoa, tomato soup and grilled cheese.

KIMBERLEY BAILEY RIGGS  
VIA FACEBOOK

Remember when it was dry and I promised not to curse rainy days.

MARK BROWNING  
SAN HOUSTON EC  
GOODRICH

Visit our website to see more responses.



## April 8 National Empanada Day

Writer Vianney Rodriguez shared that empanadas were among her favorite types of pan dulce in *Sweet Memories*, from December 2020.

## Funny How Time Slips Away

Willie Nelson, the musical genius from the Hill Country who has won 10 Grammys, written more than 2,500 songs and turned plenty of others' tunes into hits of his own, turns 90 on April 29.

Here are the favorite songs of TCP's writers and editors:

Chris Burrows: *City of New Orleans*

Alex Dal Santo: *On the Road Again*

Travis Hill: *Hello Walls*

Jessica Ridge: *Pancho and Lefty*

Tom Widowski: *Seven Spanish Angels*

**TCP** Watch Willie perform each of these songs on our website.



# Holy Smokes!

**SEEMS ONLY FITTING** that the world's longest barbecue marathon took place in Texas.

Pitmasters from Panther City BBQ in Fort Worth grilled for 40 hours, 49 minutes and 17 seconds July 13–15, 2022, to set the record. Chris Magallanes, above, and two others cooked 450 pounds of hamburgers, 300 pounds each of tablitras (beef short ribs) and fajitas, and 100 pounds each of onions and peppers.

The food was donated to the community, including to first responders and a hospital.

### **TCP** Contests and More

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DAVE SHAEFER

**Caught Cuisine**

“I discovered hundreds of sundew plants growing in my backyard in Kountze. Let’s just say I had no problem with ants in my yard!”

EDWARD ROWLAND  
CECA  
EASTLAND COUNTY

**Kitty Hawk’s Mark**

My first carrier landing in an A-7 Corsair aboard the USS Kitty Hawk was in November 1968, and my last landing after 130 combat missions in Southeast Asia was August 16, 1969 [*Breaking Up*, February 2023]. There’s nothing like your first carrier deployment, especially if it’s to a combat zone.

Mike Scott  
Tri-County EC  
Granbury

It’s heartwarming to know that 95% of her will be recycled and that her armor will be incorporated into a new U.S. ship [*Breaking Up*, February 2023].

DAVID HURLEY  
VIA FACEBOOK

We just booked a guided trip through the ship channel [at right]. Our guide told us a few things about the retired carrier, but you filled in all the blanks.

Randy Carroll  
Wood County EC  
Winnaboro



COURTESY RANDY CARROLL

**Honoring the 442nd**

My parents—U.S. citizens—were among those who lost their assets and possessions when all those of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast were ordered into internment camps without due process and without any evidence of a crime [*Rescue of the Lost Battalion*, February 2023].

Two of my uncles served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Thank you for remembering the loyalty, valor and tremendous sacrifice of the Japanese Americans of the 442nd.

Jeanne Makihara  
Guadalupe Valley EC  
Cibolo

**Indianola Relocated**

After the destruction of Indianola by hurricanes and subsequent fires, many of the homes were dismantled and moved to nearby Cuero and Victoria for a safer location [*Important Entry*, February 2023]. A search of the internet reveals addresses where visitors can see these old homes in a restored setting.

Jeri Porter  
Pedernales EC  
Fischer

**TCP WRITE TO US**  
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

Editor, Texas Co-op Power  
1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor  
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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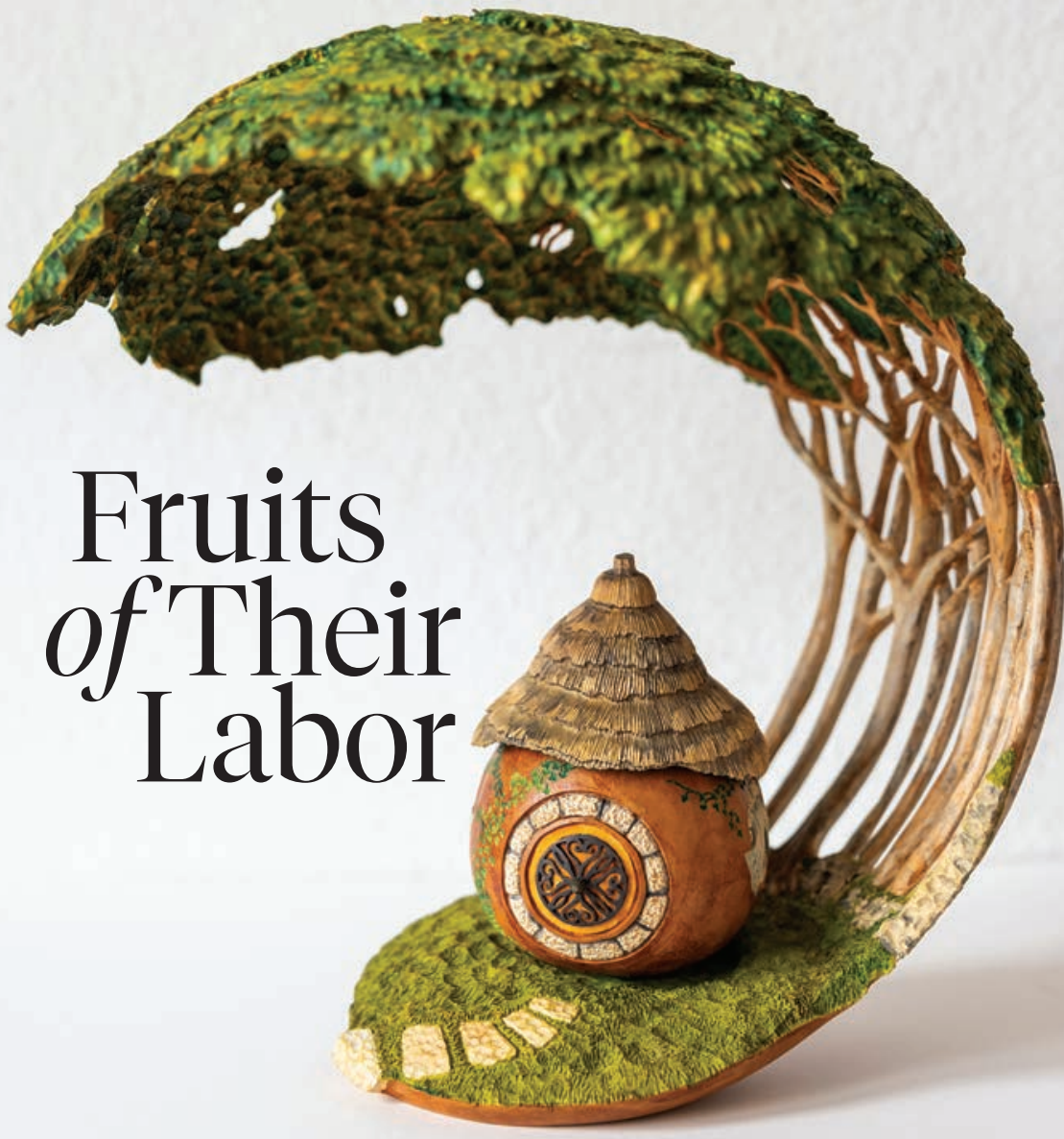
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# Fruits of Their Labor

How passionate artists turn gourds into richly embellished works of art

FROM LEFT Michael Ford's pieces sometimes incorporate multiple gourds. Ford, a former graphic artist for the Texas Department of Transportation, has been turning gourds into art since 2013.

With one hand, Wimberley artist Michael Ford grips what looks like a glossy beige birdhouse shaped like an hourglass and etched with black tendrils. Then he gives it a shake. *Boom, boom—BOOM.* The deep rumbles startle passersby at the Lone Star Gourd Festival in Fredericksburg. Like me, they're dumbfounded.

"This is a thunder gourd," says Ford, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member. When shaken, a spring vibrates a drumhead, creating ominous notes that emanate through holes in the gourd.

"It's very functional. If your company stays too long, just duck into a hallway with your gourd," Ford says, grinning, then shakes it again, setting off more thunderous booms. "Then tell your guests, 'Uh-oh, storm's coming. Better leave while you can!'"

Ford's joking, of course. But he's dead serious about the art form that he calls his passion—much like his fellow gourd artists all over Texas. Using an array of techniques, they create bowls, holiday décor, birdhouses, masks, sculptures, jewelry, lamps and miniature hobbit homes, to name



a few examples. There are simple designs, like painted gourds, and richly embellished pieces that can sell for thousands of dollars.

But wait—what is a gourd? Is it just a smooth pumpkin? Well, close. Gourds and pumpkins, along with squash, melons and cucumbers, are members of Cucurbitaceae, a plant family that produces hard-shelled fruits that humans have used for food, ornaments and utensils over thousands of years. Experts believe gourds are the only plants that have been grown around the world since prehistoric days.

Historians in Peru have unearthed ancient gourd fragments associated with early humans. For generations, Peruvian artist Ana Poma and her neighbors in Cochas Chico have passed down the tradition of carving and burning intricate designs onto gourds as a way of storytelling. “Families teach their children,” says Poma, a vendor and teacher at the Fredericksburg festival. “I learned as a child from my mother, uncles and grandparents.”

For some artists, though, not just any gourd will do. Forget using our thin-skinned Texas natives, such as buf-

falo and balsam gourds. Instead, many artists prefer hard-shelled and decorative gourds available in endless shapes, sizes and thicknesses. Thicker shells (three-eighths of an inch thick or more) are sturdier for carving and burning. Standard gourd shapes, designated by the American Gourd Society, include cannonball, basketball, martin house, dipper, club and banana.

Many artists order their gourds from professional growers, such as the Wuertz Gourd Farm in Arizona and the Welburn Gourd Farm in Southern California. Some grow their own. John and Rickie Newell, Central Texas EC members near Llano, grow gourds. At the festival, Rickie—an artist who displays her work at the Llano Art Guild and Gallery—has a bin piled high with gourds for sale, ranging from 50 cents to \$12. Typically, gourds are priced according to their widest diameter. Those that have been cleaned on the outside and/or had their seeds and pulp scraped out cost more.

“We plant our gourds around April 15,” Rickie says. “Then we harvest when they’re dead in the field from October up to Christmas and dry them in a metal cage.”



## Get a Gourd Look

See for yourself at Central Texas shows this year.

**Southwest Gourd & Fiber Fine Art Show,**  
May 18–July 1,  
Kerrville

**Lone Star Gourd Festival,**  
Sept. 29–30,  
Fredericksburg

**Hill Country Collectables,**  
year-round,  
Wimberley



Choosing a gourd is just the first step for many artists, and gourd shows are an ideal place to learn about the craft and expand skill sets. This Texas show is one of a handful of annual events held across the U.S. that attract hobbyists and professionals alike. Artists and vendors welcome questions, and many sell basic supplies. The Texas Gourd Society, the nonprofit organization that sponsors and organizes the annual Lone Star Gourd Festival at the Gillespie County Fairgrounds, is also a resource for crafters. Across Texas, the society has regional chapters called “patches.”

“We learn techniques from each other, like leather stitching,” says Sherry Nelson, a member of the Guadalupe Gourd Patch in Kerrville. “In the gourd world, though, you never copy someone’s work. Instead, you can use their technique as an inspiration to create something new.”

On her gourds, Nelson, a Central Texas EC member, uses various methods, such as burning; carving; painting; applying alcohol dyes; and attaching horns, beads and cactus fibers. “Pyrography is my favorite,” she says. “I can draw with my wood burner for hours. It’s very relaxing.”

Like many gourd artists, Roy and Blanche Cavarretta, who live in Hallettsville and are members of San Bernard EC, started out by growing gourds and turning them into bird-houses. Then, while traveling in New Mexico, they viewed a gourd art exhibit at an art festival. “We had no idea so many things could be done with them,” Roy recalls. “It set us on a

CLOCKWISE FROM IMMEDIATELY ABOVE Roy Cavarretta’s Standing Tall, Jill Robinson’s Chasing Dreams and a James Medders spiraling piece. Rickie Newell continues work on her angel with wings. Robinson’s Green Goddess. Blanche and Roy Cavarretta’s hobby has them “on a journey we never could have imagined.”

INDIVIDUAL GOURDS: COURTESY THE ARTISTS



journey we never could have imagined. There's not a day goes by that we're not working on a gourd."

That was 11 years ago. The Cavarrettas still grow gourds. They've also become master gourd artists who've won countless awards. "At art shows, you enter at the novice level," Roy explains. "When you win at that level, you advance to intermediate, then advanced and master."

Together, the couple market their work as Gravel Road Arts. On her urn-style gourds, Blanche primarily uses pyrography, transparent dyes and a weaving stitch called closed coiling. Flowers, hummingbirds, dragonflies and inlaid gemstones adorn many of her pieces. Similarly, Roy uses pyrography and dyes along with chip carving using a gouge. His designs lean toward contemporary and Southwestern themes, such as his Spirit Doll that won Best of Show at the Fredericksburg festival.

The People's Choice award went to Chasing Dreams, a large kettle gourd intricately crafted by Austin's Jill Robinson. "I use a lot of random techniques," she says of her striking designs. "On this one, I used enameling, woodburning, stipple carving and alcohol inks along with real cactus fibers and carved cactus fibers."

Visit with Robinson and other gourd artists, and you'll quickly pick up on their camaraderie and deep love for the craft. When artist James Medders of Morgan Mill lost the use of his left hand, Roy Cavarretta rigged a carving vise

that could hold a gourd in place for his friend. Soon Medders, a United Cooperative Services member, was back to woodburning, carving and painting on his gourds. Using a method called pine needle coiling, he also stitches longleaf pine needles into elaborate designs.

"Once I got started in gourd art eight years ago, I had a passion," says Medders, who has also won awards. "Why? I don't know. I just do. Sometimes my wife tells me, 'Put that gourd down! We've got somewhere to go.'"

Meanwhile, across the exhibit hall at the festival, a hands-on art area called the Imagination Station beckons newbies of any age. From a big pile of gourds, I choose a little one cut open like a bowl. Then I plunk down at a table with metallic paints, rhinestones, a paintbrush and a sponge.

"One of our goals is to pass on gourd art to young people so it won't die out," says Rona Thornton of Austin, who's overseeing the area. "I take the Imagination Station to garden clubs, schools and military bases. It's fun to see people who think they're not artistic create their own piece."

That would be me—I'm definitely no artist. But wait! Before long, my plain gourd has transformed into a sparkly urn. Wow, I *am* an artist.

Thornton smiles. "Anything's possible with a gourd," she says. ■

**TCP** See more gourds in this story on our website.



Barbecue joints in Brenham, a town famous for ice cream, are attracting crowds of their own



# MAKE NO BONES

**L**eonard Botello IV always wanted to have a roadside barbecue shack. So when a hole-in-the-wall barbecue restaurant 3 miles west of downtown Brenham on U.S. 290 went up for sale, Botello bought the 1,200-square-foot red metal building.

He grew up in a family of restaurateurs in Lake Jackson and initially swore he'd never follow the same path. He graduated from Texas A&M University with a biology degree in 2013. But after a visit to Austin's La Barbecue, Botello was blown away by the simplicity of the barbecue. Right away he started experimenting with his uncle's pit and later drove to Ohio to pick up his first offset smoker, a \$4,000 Craigslist purchase.

"It's like one big science project every single day because everything's completely different," Botello says. "Every cow is different. Every piece of wood is different. The weather is different."

He opened Truth Barbeque in July 2015 and added a covered patio next to his roadside barbecue shack on the outskirts of Brenham.

While Brenham is best known as the home of Blue Bell Creameries, there's more to the city's culinary scene than ice cream. The small town, population 18,000, has a handful of barbecue restaurants that are building impressive résumés. Two of these spots—Truth Barbeque and LJ's BBQ—are just a mile and a half apart, and both made *Texas Monthly's* list of the 50 Best BBQ Joints in 2021.

At either place, the owners and pitmasters could be stationed behind the counter slicing up the Texas trinity—brisket, sausage and ribs—each cooked with their own personal style and accompanied by an array of delectable sides. Brenham's location, halfway between Austin and Houston, makes it an easy day trip or weekend destination for barbecue. Come hungry and be prepared to loosen your belt.



OPPOSITE FROM TOP The staff at LJ's BBQ and a spread at the restaurant. ABOVE Preparing servings of LJ's ketchup-based sauce, which balances sweetness with apple cider and white vinegars.

## HONORING MAMAW

**LJ'S STARTED** in an unlikely place—the backroom of a downtown liquor store, where Matt Lowery, his cousin Leah Cook and her husband, Corey Cook, were selling lunches on a table at a side entrance in 2016. Pitmasters Lowery and Corey Cook were preparing the food at Leah's parents' house.

The trio moved their business to the current brick-and-mortar location, a concrete building with a red metal awning on West Main Street in 2017. Most days the parking lot is full and one of the three pitmasters—Lowery, Cook and Josh Jalomo, who joined the team in 2020—is behind the counter chopping brisket for one of their signature side dishes: brisket mac and cheese.

"It's just mac and cheese with chopped brisket on top," Corey Cook says. "It's no more simple than that. It's one of the most popular items."

The idea for the restaurant was hatched when Lowery began cooking barbecue and doing small catering gigs in 2014, when he was in graduate school at the University of Houston, studying hotel and restaurant management. After graduation, he was visiting the Cooks in Brenham when they began brainstorming an idea for a business. In 2015 they started doing pop-ups before moving to the backroom of the liquor store.

The trio decided to name the restaurant for their grandmother, Laura Jean, who lived in Brenham.

"One day, Leah said, 'How about we call it LJ's after our mamaw?'" Lowery says. "It just seemed like a good way to pay homage to her and had a great story."

LJ's main focus is locally sourced ingredients, from the post oak they burn to the collard greens they serve. "We get our collard greens from a local farmer here that's about 5 miles away from our restaurant," says Lowery about their twice-weekly deliveries from Whitehurst Farm. "The greens you order here at LJ's literally are in the ground no more than 24 to 48 hours before."

The brisket is seasoned with a salt and pepper rub. "It's simple, but it's done well," Lowery says. All the meat is cooked on one of four smokers—one 1,000-gallon and three 500-gallon offsets tucked behind the restaurant. In addition to brisket, sausage and ribs, LJ's also serves up pulled pork and turkey. All the meats pair well with their ketchup-based sauce that Cook calls the "perfect balance" of sweet mixed with apple cider and white vinegars. Peach cobbler and banana pudding are the stars of the dessert menu.

With so many options, deciding what to order can be tough. Lowery suggests starting with a three-meat plate, piled high with brisket, ribs and sausage.

"Obviously, the turkey is the hidden gem," Cook says. "But the first thing that you want to try are those."



to kind of complement the meat,” Botello explains.

His most popular sides are collards, corn pudding and potato tot casserole, a family recipe. But save room for the triple-layer cakes for dessert—each slice weighs a pound. Using another Botello family recipe, head baker Kiki Wilkins makes 12 rotating varieties of cake, including triple-chocolate, carrot, strawberry, tres leches and banana caramel.

Truth debuted on *Texas Monthly*'s list in 2017, earning the No. 10 spot. But getting there wasn't easy.

“I remember cooking three briskets a day and then nobody showing up,” Botello says. He initially chose Brenham to avoid being drowned out in bigger markets like Austin and Houston. Truth gained traction quickly, partially thanks to its photogenic plating that made Botello's barbecue ripe for social media. In 2019 he opened a second location, in Houston.

Success hasn't changed how Botello does business. He's still behind the counter cutting meat, and his dad is often at the register. “I like to be hands-on [and] talk to customers,” explains Botello, who always ensures sauce bottles are clean and facing the correct way. “I like to be approachable.”

Botello enjoys the questions and interactions. “When

they ask you questions, your brain starts to work a lot harder,” he says. “And you realize how much information you have locked up here that you're just doing [by] second nature. So it's good for them, and it's good for me.”

He teaches barbecue classes one Sunday a month, inspired by the openness of Wayne Mueller, a third-generation pitmaster and the owner of Louie Mueller Barbecue in nearby Taylor. One day, while Botello was eating, Mueller sat down beside him and started sharing his knowledge unprompted, including his temperature for cooking meat—often a secret in the barbecue world.

“Even though these are trade secrets, I could give them to you,” explains Botello. “But it's like Jimi Hendrix or Stevie Ray Vaughan teaching somebody how to play a guitar. They're never going to be able to recreate that no matter how many answers you give them.” ■

FROM TOP A sampling from the menu at Truth Barbeque. Owner Leonard Botello IV, left, is often found behind the counter cutting meat as his father works the register.



## MOMENT OF TRUTH

AT TRUTH BARBEQUE, Botello's Central Texas-style preparation consists of a simple rub made in-house and post oak to smoke the meat. To expand his skills and menu, Botello also serves up a rotating menu of less conventional dishes—smoked boudin, pastrami brisket and Carolina whole hog, a popular Saturday-only menu item. The meats are accompanied by a choice of three sauces: a traditional tomato base, tangy mustard or white barbecue. The latter two are his tribute to Carolina-style barbecue. “Our sauces are a smidge more vinegary than most sauces, but it's just



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There's no frustrating "middleman" to deal with. **We manage the entire process—from the consultation and manufacturing to the installation and the warranty.**

It's like getting **FREE WINDOWS** for 1 year<sup>2</sup>

**NO** MONEY DOWN

**NO** PAYMENTS

**NO** INTEREST

**FOR 1 YEAR**<sup>2</sup>

and

**BUY 1 WINDOW OR DOOR, GET 1 WINDOW OR DOOR**

**40% OFF**<sup>1</sup>

**Call or scan the code for your FREE Window and Door Diagnosis**



**RENEWAL**  
by **ANDERSEN**  
FULL-SERVICE WINDOW & DOOR REPLACEMENT

Austin

**512-298-1858**

San Antonio

**210-961-9990**

West Texas

**432-257-3640**

Dallas/Fort Worth

**469-606-5229**

[TopWindowSolution.com](http://TopWindowSolution.com)

Scan to self-schedule your appointment



<sup>1</sup>Subject to availability, on a total purchase of 4 or more. Buy 2 windows or doors and get the second 2 windows or doors, of equal or lesser value, 40% off – applied to lowest priced window and/or door products in purchase. To qualify for discount offer, initial contact for an appointment must be made and documented on or before 4/30/23 with the purchase then occurring on or before 5/10/23. <sup>2</sup>No payments and deferred interest for 12 months available from third-party lenders to well qualified buyers on approved credit only. No Finance Charges will be assessed if promo balance is paid in full in 12 months. Products are marketed, sold and installed (but not manufactured) by Renewal by Andersen retailers, which are independently owned and operated under Central Texas Windows & Doors LLC, d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Austin and San Antonio. North Texas Windows & Doors LLC, d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Dallas/Fort Worth and West Texas. See complete information and entity identification at [www.rbaguidelines.com](http://www.rbaguidelines.com). ©2023 Andersen Corporation. ©2023 Lead Surge LLC. All rights reserved. <sup>3</sup>Values are based on comparison of Renewal by Andersen® double-hung window U-Factor to the U-Factor for clear dual pane glass non-metal frame default values from the 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018 International Energy Conservation Code "Glazed Fenestration" Default Tables. <sup>4</sup>See limited warranty for details at <https://www.renewalbyandersen.com/homeowner-help/warranty>.

# Meet the Beauty in the Beast

Discover this spectacular 6½-carat green treasure from Mount St. Helens!

For almost a hundred years it lay dormant. Silently building strength. At 10,000 feet high, it was truly a sleeping giant. Until May 18, 1980, when the beast awoke with violent force and revealed its greatest secret. Mount St. Helens erupted, sending up a 80,000-foot column of ash and smoke. From that chaos, something beautiful emerged... our spectacular *Helenite Necklace*.

**EXCLUSIVE FREE**  
**Helenite Earrings**  
 -a \$149 value-  
 with purchase of  
 Helenite Necklace



Helenite is produced from the heated volcanic rock of Mount St. Helens and the brilliant green creation has captured the eye of jewelry designers worldwide. Today you can wear this massive 6½-carat stunner for **only \$149!**

**Make your emeralds jealous.** Our *Helenite Necklace* puts the green stone center stage, with a faceted pear-cut set in .925 sterling silver finished in luxurious gold. The explosive origins of the stone are echoed in the flashes of light that radiate as the piece swings gracefully from its 18" luxurious gold-finished sterling silver chain. Today the volcano sits quiet, but this unique piece of American natural history continues to erupt with gorgeous green fire.

**Your satisfaction is guaranteed.** Bring home the *Helenite Necklace* and see for yourself. If you are not completely blown away by the rare beauty of this exceptional stone, simply return the necklace within 30 days for a full refund of your purchase price.

**JEWELRY SPECS:**

- 6 ½ ctw Helenite in gold-finished sterling silver setting
- 18" gold-finished sterling silver chain

**Limited to the first 2200 orders from this ad only**

Helenite Necklace (6 ½ ctw)..... Only **\$149** +S&P  
 Helenite Stud Earrings (1 ctw) ..... **\$149** +S&P  
**Helenite Set \$298.... Call-in price only \$149** +S&P  
 (Set includes necklace and earrings)

Call now to take advantage of this extremely limited offer.

**1-800-333-2045**

Promotional Code HNN137-03  
 Please mention this code when you call.



Necklace enlarged to show luxurious color.

*"My wife received more compliments on this stone on the first day she wore it than any other piece of jewelry I've ever given her."*

- J. from Orlando, FL  
 Stauer Client

**Stauer®** 14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. HNN137-03, Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 [www.stauer.com](http://www.stauer.com)

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- Change A/C Filters
- Paint Tommy's Bedroom
- Call ZINTEX for Bathroom Remodel



**SAVE \$799**  
ON YOUR NEW BATH OR SHOWER\*

OR ASK ABOUT OUR **INTEREST FREE**  
FINANCING FROM 18 TO 24 MONTHS.\*

**PLUS RECEIVE A \$500 GAS CARD WITH PURCHASE\***

**UPGRADE YOUR OUTDATED BATHROOM IN AS LITTLE AS A DAY**



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**Locally owned and Family Operated for over 20 Years. Born, Bred & Based in Texas.**

**MILITARY DISCOUNT  
SENIOR DISCOUNT  
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\*Valid only for new product replacement customers who purchase products and have them installed through Zintex Remodeling. Not valid with any other offer or promotion. Repairs to existing products including parts and service excluded. Prior sales excluded. Other restrictions may apply. See local exclusive dealer for details. ^Subject to credit approval. Fixed APR of 0.00% for 24 months. Payment example assumes \$10,000 on your purchase window expiration date with 24 amortized payments of \$416.67. Your fixed interest rate is based on creditworthiness and is disclosed in your loan agreement. Interest is waived if the purchase amount is paid in full before the end of the promo period. Making initial minimum monthly payments will not pay off your loan before the end of the promo period. -Two (2) \$250 Shell gift card with purchase paperwork verification. ©2023 Zintex Remodeling. Expires 5/31/2023.



CEO  
**HERBERT "TREY"  
GREBE III**

## The Power Behind Your Power

### Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 10

**YOU'VE LIKELY NOTICED** Medina Electric Cooperative's crews out and about, working on power lines and other electrical equipment in our community. It's no secret that line work is tough—but it's essential, even when conditions are challenging. This month, as we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 10, I want to share some interesting facts about electric lineworkers with you.

The work can be heavy, in more ways than one. Did you know the equipment and tools that a lineworker carries while climbing a utility pole can weigh up to 50 pounds? That's as heavy as 6 gallons of water. And speaking of utility poles, lineworkers can climb poles up to 120 feet tall.

Lineworkers must be committed to their career—because it's not just a job, it's a lifestyle. The long hours and ever-present risks can truly take a toll. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics lists line work among the 10 most dangerous civilian jobs in the U.S.

Lineworkers often work nontraditional hours outdoors in difficult conditions. The job requires years of training and hands-on learning. That's because working with high-voltage equipment requires specialized technical skills, experience and an ongoing mental toughness. Shortcuts aren't an option, and there is precious little room for error in this line of work.

During severe weather events that bring major power outages, lineworkers are among the first ones called. They must be ready to leave the comfort of their homes and families unexpectedly, and they don't return until the job is done, sometimes days later. That's why a lineworker's family must also be dedicated to service.

Nationwide, there are more than 120,000 electric lineworkers. Medina EC has 53 linemen who are responsible for keeping power flowing 24/7, 365 days a year. To do this, they maintain 9,911 miles of power lines across 17 counties.

Being a lineworker may not seem like a glamorous job, but it's essential to the life and well-being of our community. Without the exceptional dedication and commitment of these hardworking men, we simply would not have the reliable electricity that we need for everyday life.

So, the next time you see a lineworker, please thank them for the work they do to keep power flowing, regardless of the time of day or weather conditions. After all, lineworkers are the power behind your power. Please join us as we recognize them April 10, and follow #ThankALineworker on social media to see how others are recognizing these critical first responders.

Until next time,  
Trey Grebe

#### BY THE NUMBERS

With their combined 476 years of experience, here is what our linemen manage to ensure members have the power they need.

Miles driven in 2022:  
832,000

Meters: 34,364 total, or 648 per lineman in the field

Hours worked in 2022:  
122,747

Over 9,900 miles of power lines

Weight of climbing gear and tools: 44 pounds

Square miles of service area: 10,750 total, or 206 per lineman in the field

#### Management Team

These former linemen now oversee crews in all offices.

- Oscar Chapa, 34 years
- Norby Salazar, 30 years
- Leonard Geyer, 28 years

#### Former Linemen

These are former linemen who now use their experience in other areas within the cooperative.

- Allen Boehme
- Ben Falcon
- Chris Groff
- Chris Muennink
- Derly Carrizales
- Eduardo Chapa
- Fernando Rangel
- Isaac Solis
- Joel Gonzales
- Michael Harkins
- Ricky Cerna

# MEET MEDINA EC'S LINEMEN!



**Ace Gaucin**  
Hondo - 38 years



**Seb Suarez**  
Uvalde - 31 years



**Scott Schulte**  
Hondo - 30 years



**Joe Flores**  
Uvalde - 30 years



**Edward Varnador**  
Dilley - 28 years



**Reuben Ayala**  
Dilley - 22 years



**Raymond Schawe**  
Hondo - 21 years



**Pat Garza**  
RGC - 20 years



**Albert Vela**  
Bruni - 19 years



**Armando Castillo**  
Bruni - 19 years



**Jorge Zapata**  
RGC - 16 years



**Mario Lopez**  
Bruni - 15 years



**Jason Gomez**  
Uvalde - 15 years



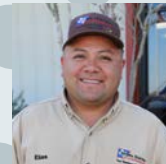
**Ben Garcia**  
Uvalde - 12 years



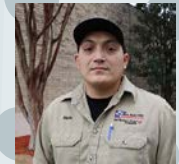
**Serapio Guzman**  
Uvalde - 12 years



**John Rodriguez**  
RGC - 12 years



**Elias Tobias**  
Laredo - 11 years



**Mario Molina**  
Hondo - 11 years



**Josh Perez**  
Bruni - 10 years



**Eric Hinojosa**  
RGC - 9 years



**Tony Banda Jr.**  
Dilley - 9 years



**Martin Gonzales**  
Dilley - 8 years



**Felipe Moreno**  
Laredo - 8 years



**Marcus Cortez**  
Dilley - 6 years



**David Hernandez**  
Dilley - 6 years



**Mario Factor**  
Laredo - 5 years



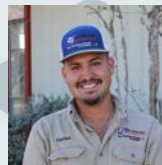
**Joselito Morales**  
Dilley - 5 years



**Joe Stone**  
Dilley - 5 years



**Tyler Graff**  
Hondo - 5 years



**Justin Cortez**  
Bruni - 4 years



**Gabriel Guerra**  
Bruni - 4 years



**Reynold Munoz**  
Hondo - 4 years



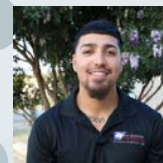
**Juan Rosa**  
RGC - 4 years



**Johnny Garza**  
Uvalde - 4 years



**Benjamin Soto**  
Bruni - 2 years



**Marcus De La Cruz**  
Uvalde - 2 years



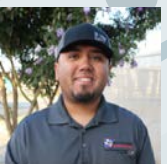
**Jason Samarripa**  
Uvalde - 2 years



**Luis Gutierrez**  
RGC - 1 year



**Jose Olivarez**  
RGC - 1 year



**Felipe Negrete**  
Uvalde - 1 year



**Jose Garcia**  
RGC - 1 year



**Gerardo Lopez**  
Hondo - 1 year



**Israel Perez**  
Hondo - 1 year



**Jacob Rodriguez**  
Hondo - 1 year



**Michael Cardoza**  
Hondo - <1 year



**Ricky Ayala**  
Dilley - <1 year



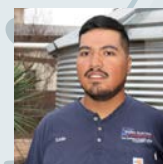
**Justin Lopez**  
Hondo - <1 year



**Wesley Menges**  
Hondo - <1 year



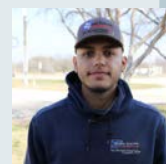
**Daniel Flores**  
RGC - <1 year



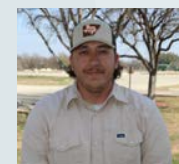
**Eduardo Lopez**  
Dilley - <1 year



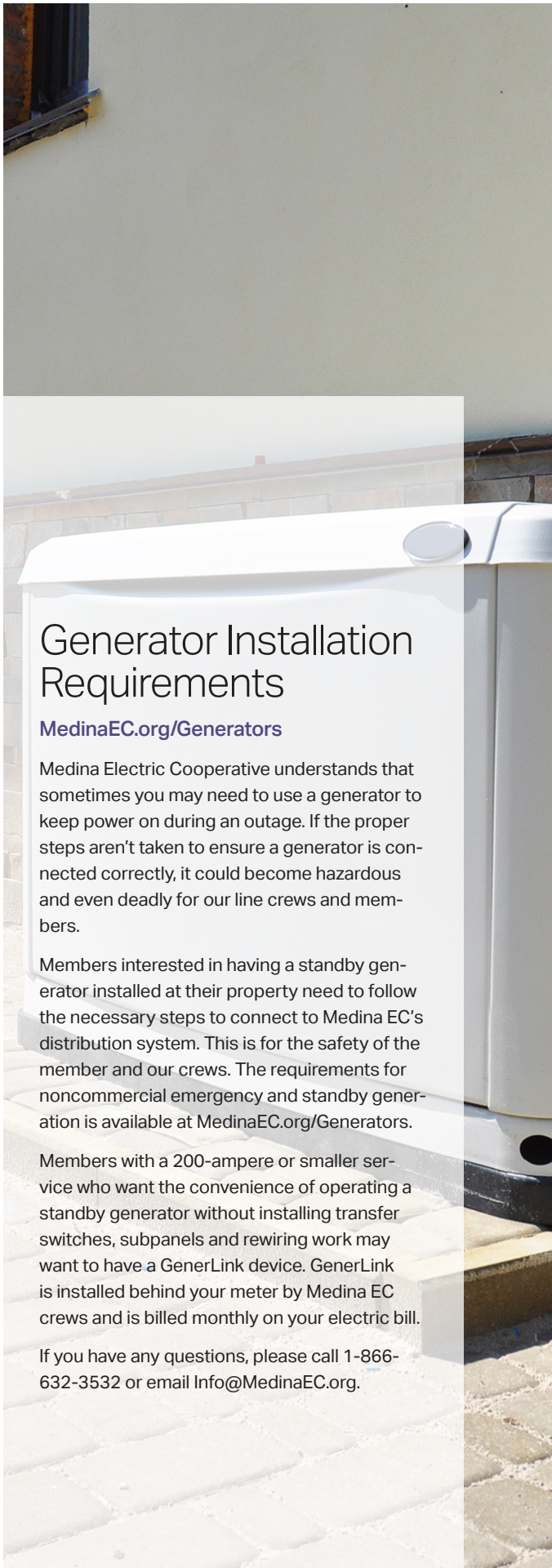
**John Suarez**  
Dilley - <1 year



**Gustavo De Hoyos**  
Hondo - <1 year



**James Long**  
Hondo - <1 year



# Generator Installation Requirements

[MedinaEC.org/Generators](https://www.MedinaEC.org/Generators)

Medina Electric Cooperative understands that sometimes you may need to use a generator to keep power on during an outage. If the proper steps aren't taken to ensure a generator is connected correctly, it could become hazardous and even deadly for our line crews and members.

Members interested in having a standby generator installed at their property need to follow the necessary steps to connect to Medina EC's distribution system. This is for the safety of the member and our crews. The requirements for noncommercial emergency and standby generation is available at [MedinaEC.org/Generators](https://www.MedinaEC.org/Generators).

Members with a 200-ampere or smaller service who want the convenience of operating a standby generator without installing transfer switches, subpanels and rewiring work may want to have a GenerLink device. GenerLink is installed behind your meter by Medina EC crews and is billed monthly on your electric bill.

If you have any questions, please call 1-866-632-3532 or email [Info@MedinaEC.org](mailto:Info@MedinaEC.org).

## Medina Electric Cooperative



### CONTACT US

**Toll-Free** 1-866-632-3532

**Email** [Info@MedinaEC.org](mailto:Info@MedinaEC.org)

**Web** [MedinaEC.org](https://www.MedinaEC.org) - Chat Feature Available

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Voting District 1

Larry Huesser, (830) 363-7651

Wayne W. Scholtz, (830) 426-1328

Ken Weynand, (830) 426-0762

#### Voting District 2

Jimmie Raines, (830) 591-8437

Kenneth White, (830) 232-6541

#### Voting District 3

Annette Sorrells, (361) 231-0173

J. L. Gonzalez, (956) 286-1863

Rodolfo H. Rodriguez, (210) 846-1092

#### CEO

Trey Grebe, 1-866-MEC-ELEC, ext. 1045

## Call us.

### TOLL-FREE

1-866-632-3532

Option 2: Report an outage

Option 3: Pay bill, get account balance

Option 5: Speak to a representative

### OFFICE LOCATIONS

**Bruni** 1300 FM 2050 N., Bruni 78344

**Dilley** 1718 W. FM 117, Dilley 78017

**Hondo** 237 Highway 173 N., Hondo 78861

**Rio Grande City** 601 N. FM 3167,  
Rio Grande City 78582

**Uvalde** 2604 Highway 90 E., Uvalde 78801

**Corporate Office** 2308 18th St., Hondo 78861

### VISIT US ONLINE

[MedinaEC.org](https://www.MedinaEC.org)



This institution is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

Información sobre todos los programas y servicios que ofrece Medina Electric Cooperative están disponibles en español al llamarnos al 1-866-MEC-ELEC o visitando una de nuestras oficinas.

# CALLING ALL BEEKEEPERS AND HONEY PRODUCERS!

**We are looking for local honey to give to members at our annual meeting this year. If you or someone you know produces and sells honey in one of Medina EC's 17 counties, send their contact information to [MyCoop@MedinaEC.org](mailto:MyCoop@MedinaEC.org) by July 1!**

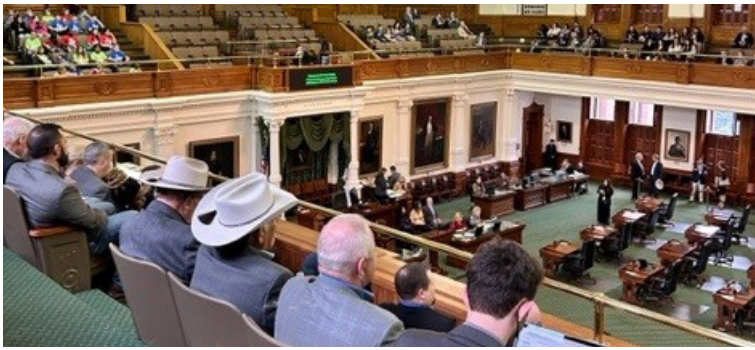
GERTRUDDA | ADOBESTOCK

## Valuing Volunteers

**NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK** is recognized April 16–22, 2023. Medina Electric Cooperative is proud to give back to our communities through our volunteer time-off benefit. Through this program, Medina EC employees can give back to local organizations and events that help our communities prosper. You may see our team members delivering meals to the elderly, stocking shelves at food pantries, repairing lights at Little League fields, supporting local school events, reading at libraries and many other various community events. We're proud of our employees who use their volunteer hours to give back to the communities we serve. That's the value of a volunteer—and the heart of our cooperative.

If you know of an event or organization in Medina EC's service area that is in need of volunteers, please send that information to [MyCoop@MedinaEC.org](mailto:MyCoop@MedinaEC.org) to be considered.





## Nesting Season

Medina Electric Cooperative's large service area is home to many species of birds. Nesting season for many birds can start as early as March and typically extends through August. If you're a fan of bird-watching, you can promote safe nesting in your area by installing a nest box. Installing a nest box on your property may also deter birds from building nests on unnatural perches such as utility equipment.

Birds that make utility equipment—like crossarms—homes for perching or nests can cause power outages. Medina EC is committed to providing reliable power to members and takes the protection of wildlife seriously. Medina EC uses an avian protection plan to mitigate the risk of wildlife dangers and reduce the potential for avian hazards while improving long-term reliability of the power system that would otherwise be impacted by outages. The plan is managed by Medina EC's certified wildlife biologist.

## Medina EC Representatives Attend Legislative Rally

**IN FEBRUARY**, a few Medina Electric Cooperative board members and employees attended the Texas Electric Cooperatives Legislative Rally in Austin, and visit with state representatives for our service area. This was a great opportunity for the representatives to meet Medina EC CEO Trey Grebe and to discuss current and future legislation that may impact Medina EC members. Legislative topics included the need for continued local control and decision making, funding for infrastructure projects and the need for Electric Reliability Council of Texas and Public Utility Commission market reform.

It is easy for the media and public to focus on larger utilities in bigger cities and forget about electric cooperatives that serve smaller, rural areas. Your co-op is a local business that employs local people to power our local communities. It is important that electric cooperatives like Medina EC put faces to the opportunities and hurdles facing electric cooperatives across the state and country.

Medina EC works to have a seat at the table and to propose ideas and solutions that are in the best interest of our members. We encourage our members to also get involved in these issues that will impact them in the near and far future. There are two grassroots organizations we recommend becoming involved with, depending on your preferred involvement method.

### Vocal Support

Voices for Cooperative Power, or VCP, is a grassroots network of co-op members that was created to help elected officials better understand the many ways your electric co-op supports you and your community. By joining the VCP movement, you can receive updates on the issues that matter most and, when needed, information on how to contact your elected officials to voice your opinions.



Scan this code or visit  
[voicesforcooperativepower.com](https://voicesforcooperativepower.com)  
to get involved.

### Financial Support

America's Electric Cooperative PAC is a federal political action committee of the nation's electric cooperatives. The PAC is funded by grassroots contributions from electric co-op members and employees in 48 states. By giving support to America's Electric Cooperative PAC, you are financially helping build the collective strength of co-ops' voices in Washington, D.C.



Scan this code or visit  
[cooperative.com/pacdonation](https://cooperative.com/pacdonation)  
to make a donation.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Earth Day started in 1970 by Wisconsin Gov. Gaylord Nelson. It is now a global event and celebrated in more than 190 countries.





# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT: PITMASTERS

ONE OF THIS MONTH'S FEATURE STORIES is about the barbecue scene in Brenham.

The art of barbecuing, grilling and smoking meat is a favorite pastime among Medina EC employees. Learn more about the pitmasters at Medina Electric Cooperative and their love of barbecuing, including their preferred methods and the thrill of competing against others.

## OLIVER STONE | HONDO

IT TECHNICIAN

I love to barbecue because it's a great way to be outdoors with the fresh air and the scent of wood smoke swirling around. I like to grill for my family and friends.



## YVETTE GARZA | RGC

MEMBER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE

I prefer to grill and I love to compete against other pitmasters. My favorite dish is Pollo Borracho and I prefer to use dry rub over sauce.



## MATTHEW STINSTON | HONDO

COMMUNICATION & CONTROL TECH

To me, everything is better with BBQ. I prefer to smoke my dishes and chicken and ribs are my favorite. I have competed before, but I prefer to do it for fun.



## GREG ZAPATA | HONDO

FACILITIES COORDINATOR

The reason I like to barbecue is to hang out and have a great time with my family and friends. My favorite thing to barbecue is brisket. I like to compete with other co-op employees.



## GABRIEL PEREZ | RGC

OFFICE SUPERVISOR

I like to grill to feed my family and friends. I prefer to grill for fun over competing, and will grill anything—meat and vegetables.

LUKAS GOJDA | ADOBESTOCK



**BUILT** by our community.  
**SHAPED** by our community.  
**LED** by our community.

**WE'RE PROUD TO  
POWER YOUR LIFE.**



## Get Ready for the Emergency Preparation Supplies Tax Holiday

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR** for the Emergency Preparation Supplies Sales Tax Holiday, April 22-24. Texas shoppers wanting a break on emergency supplies can buy certain preparation supplies in stores, online or by phone, mail, custom order or any other means (including in-store purchases) tax-free, when either: The item is both delivered and paid for during the exemption period or you order and pay for the item and the seller accepts the order during the exemption period for immediate shipment, even if delivery is made after the exemption period ends. If you pay sales tax on qualifying items during the sales tax holiday, you can ask the seller for a refund of the tax paid or a refund form to send directly to the Texas comptroller's office.

### Qualifying Products

- Portable generators
- Emergency ladders
- Axes and hatchets
- Batteries, single or multipack
- Nonelectric can openers
- Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- Coolers, ice chests and ice products
- Fire extinguishers
- First aid kits

### Nonqualifying Products

- Medical and face masks
- Cleaning supplies and gloves
- Toilet paper
- Camping supplies and stoves
- Chainsaws
- Plywood
- Batteries for motorized vehicles

**Learn more at [Comptroller.Texas.gov](https://www.comptroller.texas.gov).**

## Upcoming Petition Deadlines

If you are interested in running for a seat on the board in the fall election, you can be placed on the ballot through the petition process.

### Petition Deadlines

Voting District 1: April 10

*Medina County*

Voting District 2: April 10

*Edwards, Real, Kinney, Uvalde, Zavala, Frio and Atascosa counties*

Voting District 3: April 10

*Dimmit, La Salle, McMullen, Webb, Duval, Zapata, Jim Hogg, Brooks and Starr counties*

Learn more at

**[MedinaEC.org/Nominee](https://www.MedinaEC.org/Nominee).**

## OPERATION ROUND UP

If you or someone you know needs financial assistance, apply for an ORU donation. Applicants must live in one of the 17 counties served by Medina EC.

Applications due on May 5

**[MedinaEC.org/ORU](https://www.MedinaEC.org/ORU)**



FREEPIK | FREEPIK.COM

# NATIONAL WORK ZONE AWARENESS WEEK IS APRIL 17-21!

Be sure to “Move Over, Slow Down” when in a work zone.

Avoid distractions, slow down and give our linemen and other workers space when driving through a work zone.

F. ARMSTRONG | ADOBESTOCK

## Call 811 Before You Dig

If you're getting ready to knock out spring projects, be sure you are prepared to do so safely. If your outdoor projects require any digging, be cautious of underground utility lines, including electric, oil and gas, telecom, water, and sewer lines. Unsafe digging can be dangerous and cause damage.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

#### Community Empowerment Program Grant Applications Due

Monday, April 3

*Learn more and apply at  
[MedinaEC.org/Grant](https://MedinaEC.org/Grant).*

#### Good Friday

Friday, April 7

*Our offices will be closed in  
observance of the holiday.*

#### Easter

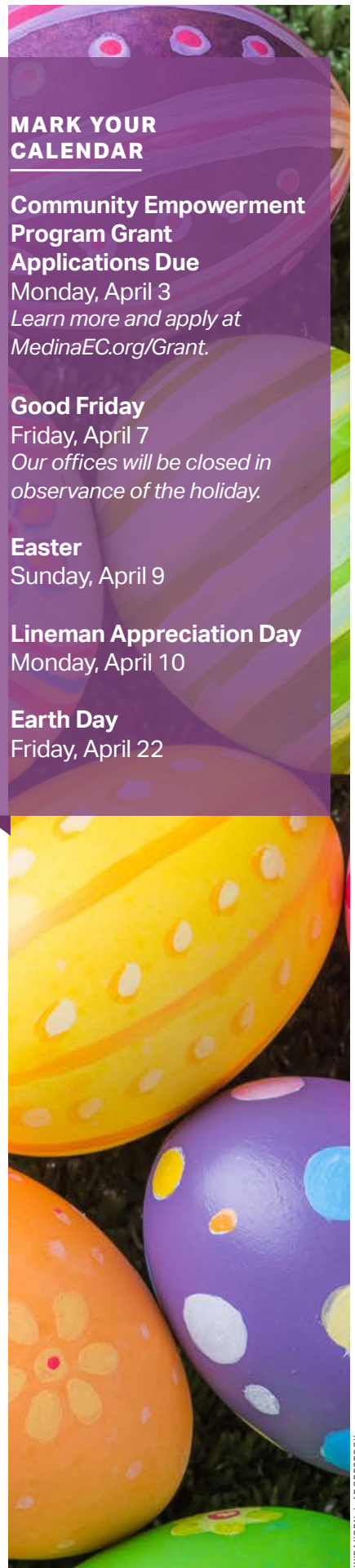
Sunday, April 9

#### Lineman Appreciation Day

Monday, April 10

#### Earth Day

Friday, April 22



WIRAKORN | ADOBESTOCK

Special Offer for New Customers Only Ages 18+

REQUEST MUST BE RECEIVED WITHIN 30 DAYS

**YES!** Please send me the following:

QTY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
1	\$2 Note (limit 1)	<b>FREE!</b>
	Shipping	<b>FREE!</b>
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>FREE!</b>

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Please print clearly

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt # \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to:  Littleton Coin Company  
**Offer Code: 5YD460**  
1309 Mt. Eustis Rd  
Littleton NH 03561-3737



**These exciting \$2 bills...**

- Depict Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and 3rd U.S. president, on both face and back
- Make up less than 1% of all U.S. currency notes printed
- Are rarely found in circulation

©2023 LCC, Inc.

# Get a Rarely Seen Uncirculated \$2 Federal Reserve Note **FREE!**

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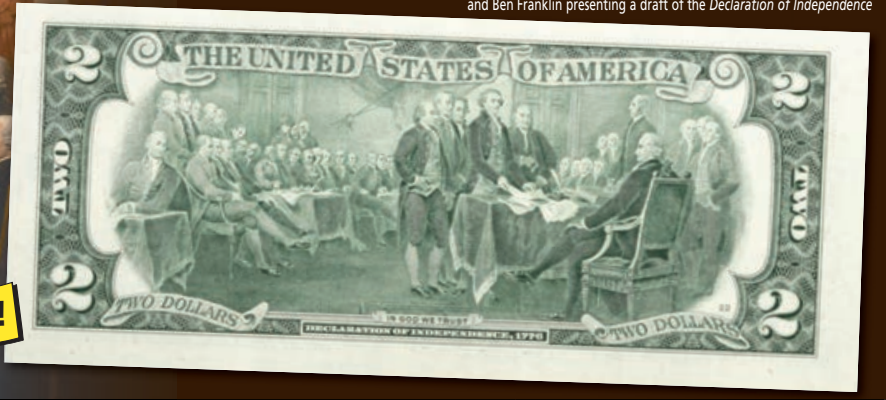
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# Grounded in Mystery

Some believe Jacob Brodbeck made the first powered flight in history—but there's little proof

BY MARTHA DEERING • ILLUSTRATION BY DANA SMITH

NEARLY 40 YEARS before the Wright brothers made their famous first flight on a North Carolina beach in 1903, a German immigrant named Jacob Brodbeck flew a homemade airship in a field near Luckenbach in 1865.

At least he might have.

Many details have been lost to history, and uncertainty abounds. The Texas State Historical Association Handbook of Texas includes a passage about the feat, though it acknowledges the flight might have occurred in San Antonio—and perhaps even in 1868. An official Texas historical marker in Luckenbach affirms the flight with no mention of the year and somewhat vaguely pins the accomplish-

ment as occurring north of San Antonio.

Iris Brodbeck Macek, who is a great-granddaughter of Brodbeck, self-published *Wings Over Luckenbach*, a partially fictionalized account of the man and his life. In it, she acknowledges the perplexity of that flight: “Good stories never go away. Stories inspired by true events laced with mystery become even more memorable. Jacob Brodbeck’s story is one of these.”

Brodbeck, a professor, inventor and talented musician, was a German immigrant who settled in Fredericksburg, where he became a schoolmaster. He was captivated by the idea of manned flight. In Fredericksburg he made small

models of airships powered by tightly wound springs, an idea that grew out of his attempts to invent a self-winding clock. He took a model to local fairs where it drew attention from other mechanically minded innovators. Their interest prompted Brodbeck to offer shares in his invention.

In an 1865 article in a San Antonio newspaper, he wrote: “For more than 20 years, I have labored to construct a machine which should enable man to use, like a bird, the atmospheric region as the medium of his travels. I have therefore concluded to collect subscriptions ... in order to build a large Air Ship.”

He set the price of one share at \$5 to be repaid with interest when he sold the patent.

The airship featured a cockpit, helicopterlike propeller, compass and barometer. The TSHA writes that the airship rose 12 feet over a Luckenbach field September 20, 1865, and traveled about 100 feet before the spring that powered it completely unwound. A hard landing followed in which the craft was destroyed, but Brodbeck walked away without serious injury. His investors, who had hoped to make a fortune when he sold the patent, were not game for another try.

A photo purports to show the wrecked airship, though what happened to it after that day remains a mystery.

In spite of his failure, Brodbeck contributed much to pioneer Texas, serving as Gillespie County surveyor and later as county commissioner. In 1967, Gov. John Connally declared him the Father of American Aviation. ■

# Incredible Eggs

A prized ingredient that's as versatile as it's cracked up to be

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Eggs are such an essential part of our daily kitchen landscape, and yet we often forget how versatile they are. Fruit curds are a wonderful way to celebrate eggs. Here, tart grapefruit is mixed with honey for a luscious spread that can be served for breakfast or on top of angel food cake.

## Grapefruit Curd

**½ cup grapefruit juice**

**¼ cup honey**

**2 eggs**

**2 egg yolks**

**5 tablespoons butter, cut into pieces**

1. Fill a small saucepan with 2 inches of water and set over medium heat to simmer.
2. In a heatproof bowl that can sit on the saucepan, whisk together grapefruit juice, honey, eggs and egg yolks.
3. Set the bowl over the simmering water and cook, whisking until honey is melted and liquid is a uniform consistency.
4. Add the butter a few pieces at a time, whisking to melt and combine. Once the first pieces are almost completely melted, add the next few pieces. Keep adding butter and whisking until all the butter is incorporated. The curd should be smooth and noticeably thicker, coating the back of a spoon. It will thicken more as it cools; do not overcook. If desired, press the curd through a sieve to remove any lumps.
5. Pour into a jar, cover and chill at least 2 hours to set before serving.

**MAKES ABOUT 1½ CUPS**

**TCP** Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at [stetted.com](http://stetted.com), where she features a recipe for Cheese Quiche.







## Zucchini Crescent Pie

JUDY SEWARD  
HAMILTON COUNTY EC

Perfect for brunch or as a dinner side, this veggie-filled dish is a crowd pleaser. Slicing the zucchini thinly helps it bake into the filling along with the cheese.

**4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter**  
**4 cups thinly sliced zucchini**  
**1 cup chopped onion**  
**½ cup chopped fresh parsley**  
**¼ teaspoon dried basil**  
**¼ teaspoon dried oregano**  
**½ teaspoon salt**  
**½ teaspoon ground black pepper**  
**2 eggs**  
**2 cups shredded mozzarella or Muenster cheese**  
**1 can crescent rolls (8 ounces)**  
**2 teaspoons Dijon mustard**  
**Grated Parmesan cheese, for topping**

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Heat a skillet over medium and add butter to melt. Once melted, add the zucchini and onion and cook until very soft, about 10 minutes. Stir in parsley, basil, oregano, salt and pepper.
2. In a bowl, beat eggs, then stir in cheese. Stir into vegetable filling.
3. Coat a 7-by-11-inch baking dish with nonstick spray. Unroll the crescent roll dough but do not separate. Press the dough into the bottom and partially up the sides of the dish, sealing any holes in the seams. Spread mustard evenly on dough.
4. Pour vegetable filling over the dough. Bake 18–20 minutes, until golden brown and filling is set. Let cool 10 minutes, then sprinkle with Parmesan and serve.

SERVES 6

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



\$500 WINNER

## BLT Egg Salad

PAIGE STAFFORD  
PEDERNALES EC



Egg salad lovers, this one's for you. Bacon and sun-dried tomatoes add savory flavor to this classic sandwich filling. Any mustard from yellow to grainy Dijon works well for this spread.

SERVES 4–6

**6 eggs**  
**2 tablespoons cider vinegar or lemon juice**  
**6 slices cooked bacon, coarsely chopped**  
**¼ cup sun-dried tomatoes, coarsely chopped**  
**2–3 green onions, diced**  
**¼ cup mayonnaise**  
**1 tablespoon mustard**  
**1 teaspoon garlic powder**  
**Salt and ground black pepper, to taste**

1. To hard-boil, place the eggs in a medium pot and fill with water until they are covered. Add vinegar and a dash of salt. Bring the water to a boil, then cover and reduce heat to low. Cook the eggs 8 minutes, drain and place the eggs in an ice bath to cool.

2. Once completely cooled, peel the eggs and chop into bite-size pieces. Place in a bowl along with the remaining ingredients. Stir well to combine, then taste and adjust seasoning as needed. Serve with crackers or vegetables or as a sandwich.

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**NO-BAKE DESSERTS** DUE APRIL 10

How do you beat the heat and still offer a flourishing finish? Send us your favorite no-bake desserts by April 10 for a chance to win \$500.



## Spicy Sausage and Egg Boats

PATRICIA STEHLING  
CENTRAL TEXAS EC

Egg boats make for a fun presentation at breakfast. Add your favorite vegetables, such as bell pepper, mushrooms or spinach, to the filling.

- 4 demi baguettes or large bolillos
- 8 ounces breakfast sausage
- 8 eggs
- ½ cup heavy cream
- Salt and ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 4 green onions, sliced
- 4 jalapeño peppers, seeded and diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Scoop out the centers of the breads to create a boatlike shape, leaving an edge all around.
2. Cook sausage and set aside. In a bowl, beat eggs, then whisk in cream and salt and pepper. Stir in the sausage, cheese, green onions, jalapeños and garlic.



3. Spoon mixture into bread boats. Bake 25–30 minutes, until eggs are set and no longer runny.

**SERVES 4–6**

**TCP** These great dishes just scratch the surface of what you can do with eggs. Check out our website, where you'll find hundreds of reader recipes that feature eggs, many incorporating them in hard-to-resist baked goods.

## Egg-zact Replacements

BY MEGAN MYERS

**Many recipes default to using large eggs. But what if you don't have any large eggs on hand? Use this handy guide for subbing different sizes of eggs in recipes.**

You can replace **one** large egg with **one** egg of any other size.

Replace **two** large eggs with **two** medium, extra-large or jumbo eggs; or **three** small eggs.

Replace **three** large eggs with **two** jumbo eggs, **three** medium or extra-large eggs, or **four** small eggs.

Replace **four** large eggs with **three** jumbo eggs, **four** extra-large eggs, or **five** medium or small eggs.

You can also replace whole eggs with liquid eggs: 1 cup of liquid egg equals about five large eggs.



JASON RISNER PHOTOGRAPHY

## Fredericksburg

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Meteoric Fall

Odessa crater marks the site of a space rock's collision with Earth

BY CHET GARNER

IT'S NOT OFTEN you can say "it came from outer space" and actually mean it. But that's what happened some 62,000 years ago, when an object fell from the sky and crashed just southwest of what is now Odessa. In search of an extraterrestrial experience, I grabbed my tinfoil hat and headed west.

My pulse quickened as I drove through cactus and mesquite in search of one of the largest meteorite impact craters in the U.S. Once there I stared at an empty field just slightly lower (about 15 feet) than the surrounding desert. "Hmm," I thought. "Where's the massive crater?" I needed some explanation.

Inside the visitor center, I learned how a 25-foot space rock hurtled toward Earth at 27,000 mph. It pierced the atmosphere and shattered into thousands of pieces that crashed into the land with the force of 19,000 tons of dynamite. The impact stretched over 2 square miles, with this largest crater measuring at least 500 feet wide and 100 feet deep. It has perplexed cowboys and scientists alike since it was first documented in 1892.

Over time, the crater became a mere shadow of its former self as dust and silt filled in the hole, leaving a simple depression marked by a rim of jagged rocks. In the 1940s, scientists dug a 165-foot shaft into the center to see if a large meteorite remained. They found fragments—the largest weighing 300 pounds.

While it may not be as impressive as it once was, it's the only crater of its kind in America that visitors can walk through. I set off on foot imagining what it might have been like when the meteorite smashed into this exact location. I would have been pulverized in an instant. It was an appropriately existential thought for such an extraterrestrial place. ■

ABOVE The Odessa crater spreads out behind Chet.

**TCP** Follow along as Chet walks onto the very site of an extraterrestrial event. See the video on our website and see all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



## Know Before You Go

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

### APRIL

#### 07

**Canton [7-8] Tractor Show and Swap Meet**, (214) 837-8861, [lonestarihc25.org/canton](http://lonestarihc25.org/canton)

**Addison [7-9] Dallas Reggae Festival**, (832) 277-3874, [dallasreggaeifest.com](http://dallasreggaeifest.com)

#### 08

**Kerrville EasterFest**, (830) 896-1155, [kerrvillechamber.biz](http://kerrvillechamber.biz)

**San Marcos Easter Egg Hunt and Festival**, (512) 392-4295, [heritagesanmarcos.org](http://heritagesanmarcos.org)

**Stonewall Easter at the Farm**, (830) 644-8107, [tpwd.texas.gov](http://tpwd.texas.gov)

#### 15

**Burton Cotton Gin Festival**, (979) 289-3378, [texascottonginmuseum.org](http://texascottonginmuseum.org)

**Corpus Christi Explore the Shore**, (361) 749-5246, [tpwd.texas.gov](http://tpwd.texas.gov)

**Fredericksburg Fredericksburg Volunteer Fire Department Fish Fry**, (830) 997-7521, [fbgtx.org](http://fbgtx.org)

**Gonzales Spring Plant Sale**, (830) 672-8531, [gonzalesmastergardeners.org](http://gonzalesmastergardeners.org)

**Grapevine New Vintage Wine and Gallery Trail and Art Show**, (817) 410-3185, [grapevinetexasusa.com](http://grapevinetexasusa.com)

**Kerrville Spring Native Plant Sale**, (830) 257-4837, [riversidenaturecenter.org](http://riversidenaturecenter.org)

**Stephenville Wine and Art Walk**, (817) 715-1682, [facebook.com/stephenville-downtownmerchants](http://facebook.com/stephenville-downtownmerchants)

20

**Chappell Hill [15-16] Bluebonnet Festival,** (979) 836-6033, [chappellhillhistoricalsociety.com](http://chappellhillhistoricalsociety.com)

**Lubbock [15-16] Arts Festival,** (806) 744-2787, [lubbockartsfestival.org](http://lubbockartsfestival.org)

21

**Dale [20-23] Old Settler's Music Festival,** [oldsettlersmusicfest.org](http://oldsettlersmusicfest.org)

**Henderson [21-22] East Texas Antique Tractor and Engine Club Show,** (903) 646-3769

**McKinney [21-22] Tom Cotter,** (214) 769-0645, [thecomedyarena.com](http://thecomedyarena.com)

**Terrell [21-22] Kaufman Quilt Show,** (972) 979-9152, [kaufmanquiltguild.org](http://kaufmanquiltguild.org)

**Fredericksburg [21-23, 28-30] The Play That Goes Wrong,** (830) 997-3588, [fredericksburgtheater.org](http://fredericksburgtheater.org)

**Ingram [21-23, 28-30, May 5-7] The Gods of Comedy,** (830) 367-5121, [hcaf.com](http://hcaf.com)

22

**Brenham One Night in Memphis,** (979) 337-7240, [thebarnhillcenter.com](http://thebarnhillcenter.com)

**Grapevine Spring Into Nash,** (817) 410-3185, [grapevinetexasusa.com](http://grapevinetexasusa.com)

**Helotes Fiesta Dachshund Dash,** (844) 703-6943, [ddrtx.org](http://ddrtx.org)

**The Colony Coach Cox's Kid Chase,** (972) 625-1106, [visitthecolonytx.com](http://visitthecolonytx.com)

**Tyler Ruthie Foster,** (903) 595-7274, [libertytyler.com](http://libertytyler.com)

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### **TCP** *Submit Your Event*

We pick events for the magazine directly from [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com). Submit your July event by May 1, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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## Pick of the Month

### Conroe Crossroads Music Festival

Conroe, April 13-16  
conroecrossroads.com

Experience 40 shows across eight venues over four days in one city! A wide variety of musical genres are represented in the lineup, and daytime activities are free and fun for the whole family.

### APRIL EVENTS CONTINUED

27

**Alvin [27-29] Frontier Days**, (832) 868-1478, alvinrotary.org

28

**Gun Barrel City [28-29] Quilt Show**, (903) 391-3241, gunbarrelquiltersguild.org

**McKinney [28-29] James Camacho**, (214) 769-0645, thecomedyarena.com

**Seguin [28-29] Yellow Rose Fiber Fiesta**, (210) 422-0619, yellowrosefiberfiesta.com

**Saint Jo [28-30] The Real West Symposium**, therealwest.org

29

**Hillsboro Wine and Photography Art Walk**, (843) 442-7424

**Ingram Stonehenge Celtic Festival and Highland Games**, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

**Johnson City JCTX Jazz and Art Festival**, (830) 868-7111, johnsoncitytx.org

**Kerrville Hill Country Chorale Spring Concert**, (830) 321-0303, hillcountrychorale.org

**Nacogdoches [29-30] Sacred Heart Catholic Church Multicultural Festival**, (936) 564-7807, sacredheartnac.org

**Waco [29-30] Central Texas Comic Con**, ctxcomiccon.com

**Llano [29-30, May 5-7] The Savannah Sipping Society**, facebook.com/llanocommunitytheater

MAY

05

**Brenham [5-6] Maifest**, (979) 337-7580, brenhammaifest.com

**Burnet [5-6] Utopiafest**, utopiafest.com

**Milam [5-6] Trade Days**, (430) 558-7134, milamsettlers.org

**Port Aransas [5-6, 12-13] PalmFest**, (361) 444-3631, palmfestporta.com

06

**Hilltop Lakes Kentucky Derby Gala**, (713) 503-0470, hilltoplakes.com

**Quitaque Experience Caprock**, (806) 455-1492, tpwd.texas.gov

**The Colony Up, Up & Away Festival of Flight**, (972) 625-1106, visitthecolonytx.com

**Willow City Willow City Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department's Fundraiser**, (830) 456-3785, willowcityfd.com

# Riding the River

Texans love to make a splash. So stock the cooler and grab your river shoes—it's time to dive in and test the waters.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

**1 STEVE COYLE**  
PEDERNALES EC

"Taking in sunset on Galveston Bay with a squall line approaching from the north."

**2 WENDY ALLEY MLADENKA**  
SAN BERNARD EC

A family day of kayaking on the Colorado River near Beason's Park in Columbus.

**3 ANGELA RIED**  
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

The Frio River in Garner State Park.

**4 TAWNI AND MICHAEL WAYNE SOLISE**  
BANDERA EC

Stopping for a drink at sunset in Bandera.



1



2



3



4

## Upcoming Contests

**DUE APR 10** Hoof and Horn

**DUE MAY 10** Night Sky

**DUE JUN 10** Helping Out



Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/contests).

**TCP** See Focus on Texas on our website for more Riding the River photos from readers.



A memorial created in 2017 stood across the street from where the fertilizer plant exploded in West.

responded to a fire—later determined to be intentionally set—before it triggered the explosion that turned the scene into a war zone. In moments, 350 homes were destroyed or damaged, a nursing home came down like a tornado had roared through, and the emergency medical services building buckled and fell. Tommy Muska, the mayor then and still today, estimated that there was \$200 million in damage to the city and its schools and businesses.

The destruction was so severe that many outsiders projected it would be West's demise. Those outsiders, however, didn't grasp the soul of this town. "The city of West will not be defined by the explosion but by the resilience and the spirit of the citizens to rebuild their community," Muska said last fall. And that is exactly what has happened, in a remarkably short period of time.

Anyone who visits West these days won't find any physical evidence of blast damage. In the 10 years since the disaster, there have been more than 1,000 residential and commercial building permits issued, 82 new homes and three new schools built, 123 remodels completed, and over \$10 million in infrastructure improvements made. Currently, there are five subdivisions being built, in all price ranges.

A person has to wonder: How did this small town pull itself up by its bootstraps in the face of such overwhelming tragedy?

In short, the blast brought people together in unexpected ways. Their resilience and staunch faith made them stronger and more united than ever. They are a people who have proved themselves unshakable, even in the face of profound heartache and grief.

Perhaps Muska said it best when 10 years ago he proclaimed, "This town will not die on my watch." He was not alone in his commitment. The entire town lived it, believed it and made sure West would not only survive but would thrive.

And indeed it has. ■

## Rise Up West

10 years after a deadly explosion, the town is stronger than ever

BY JEFFREE WYN ITRICH

AS THE SAYING GOES, I wasn't born here, but I got here as soon as I could. And *here* is the small Czech town of West, north of Waco. I knew about this charming town long before I followed my Texas roots to settle here in the land of my forebears, who go back to the post-Civil War period.

I remember with razor-sharp clarity the night I watched a story on the evening news detailing how 30 tons of ammonium nitrate exploded in a West fertilizer plant on April 17, 2013, at 7:51 in the evening. Five years later, my husband and I settled in West. It was only then that I understood the full scope of the explosion that registered as a 2.1 magnitude tremor and blasted a crater in the ground nearly 100 feet wide and 10 feet deep.

Fifteen people died in the tragedy, 12 of them volunteer firefighters who





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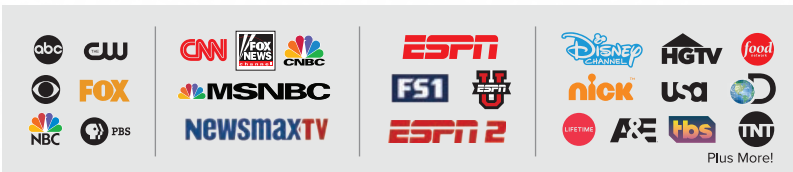
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