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OF SWEETWATER

A TEXAN'S HISTORIC  
PLAY AT THE MASTERS

THE MOST OVERLOOKED  
BIG BEND VISTA

# Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

APRIL 2025

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1. 14.5¢ kWh - June 2024 Texa's Monthly Electricity Rate Average | Actual data powered by Symphony

2. ENERGY STAR rated units qualify for 30% through 2032, 26% through 2033 and 22% through 2034

# April 2025



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Texas' diversity of colorful dragonflies and damselflies beguiles bird and butterfly watchers.

*By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers*

### The WASPs Who Flew Out of Sweetwater

Hundreds of female pilots made history at Avenger Field, where they're still celebrated.

*By Pam LeBlanc*

**ON THE COVER**

Widow skimmer dragonflies use their legs and fangs to catch and eat prey.

*Photo by Kerry Carloy*

**ABOVE**

Women Airforce Service Pilots trainees in the 1940s.

*Photo courtesy Official National WASP WWII Museum, Sweetwater, Texas*

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Troy Moore, a crew supervisor at Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative.

# Grounded in Co-op Pride

**WILLIAM KAISER JOINS** the rest of Co-op Country in saluting a special segment of the workforce April 14, National Lineworker Appreciation Day.

As a groundman in the late 1940s, Kaiser, 96, helped construct power lines in Central Texas for San Bernard Electric Cooperative.

He did so from the back of a Burma Jeep, unspooling line around Hallettsville, about halfway between San Antonio and Houston. Bringing electricity to rural Texas was backbreaking work in the years after co-ops got their start, and all these decades later, Kaiser is proud of his role.

“Somebody had to lay those lines out through the right-of-way so that they could hang the lines on the pole,” he says. “It takes a whole crew, many people, to get to where the lineman could do his job.”

A job, Kaiser notes, that wasn’t for him: “I’m not somebody who likes to get up in the air.”



“A flower blossoms for its own joy.”

— OSCAR WILDE

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

The best view in Texas is ...

**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: **My first car was ...**

A 1953 Chevy with a nonworking reverse gear. Had to be creative in finding a place to park.

WANDA SIKES  
TRINITY VALLEY EC  
TERRELL

Such a clunker that it was on my mechanic’s lift so much that it had more miles on it vertically than horizontally.

JOE POLINO  
TRI-COUNTY EC  
GRANBURY

A hearse! Specifically, a 1958 Cadillac coach by Miller-Meteor. My father wanted to make sure if I got in an accident, it would be the other guy who got hurt.

JAY WEBER  
PEDERNALES EC  
ROUND ROCK

A used fluorescent yellow Ford Maverick. Living in a small town, my parents always knew where I was—no tracking/locator services needed!

PEGGY RUSTERHOLTZ  
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC  
LUCAS

Visit our website to see more responses.



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**RECOMMENDED READING**

We sure love telling you about intriguing insects—as we did with *The Bugs That Make You See Red* in February 2019. Find it at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

FEBRUARY 2025 It's Hip To Be a Square

"I square danced for 20 years. Nothing better for exercise, enjoyment, friendships."

DONNA DEAN HUTCHERSON  
VIA FACEBOOK



DAVE SHAFER

**Fun For All**

I plan to send *It's Hip To Be a Square* [February 2025] to some folks who may be shy about trying square dancing or round dancing.

Cheryl Rush  
Upshur Rural EC  
Winnsboro

It brought back so many memories of when my hubby and I had a blast square dancing for so many years. It was very challenging, and the friendship was incredible.

Genny Pruitt  
Nueces EC  
Victoria

**Not Light Reading**

I enjoyed *Field of Beams* [December 2024] so much that I had a tear in my eye when I finished.

Roberta McLaughlin  
Heart of Texas EC  
Lorena



KENNY BRAUN

**Bears in Texas**

Around age 10 my friend and I were walking on a trail that ended at a dirt road. We saw a large black bear less than a football field away [*Our Nosy New Neighbors*, January 2025]. We cried and ran.

Then, my friend stopped running and started laughing. I turned around and saw the bear running away from us.

There were many black bears in Minnesota. None of our bear meetings turned out bad for anyone other than our garbage cans. But I still don't think people will like having that many bears in Texas.

Tyler Carlson  
Pedernales EC  
San Marcos

**Black History Month**

Thank you for the informative articles in February [*Currents* and *History to a Tea*] about the achievements and contributions of Black Americans in the U.S. and world. It is much appreciated.

Gabrielle Gordon  
Tri-County EC  
Tarrant County

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

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1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor  
Austin, TX 78701

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

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# ODE TO A MIGHTY HUNTER

**Texas' diversity of colorful dragonflies and damselflies beguiles bird and butterfly watchers**

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

**O**n the grassy edge of a dry irrigation canal, an emerald green insect darted about in the air. Then it landed on the limb of a thorny mesquite.

Armed with a camera, amateur naturalist Tripp Davenport of Uvalde aimed his long lens at the dazzling dragonfly and quickly snapped photos before it flitted away.

That morning in July 2017, he had visited the National Butterfly Center in South Texas in hopes

of spotting a red-mantled skimmer, a dragonfly from central Mexico that rarely ventures into Texas. Instead he found something even more special.

“When I looked at my images, I realized it was a dragonfly that I’d never seen before,” says Davenport, a high school teacher and Medina Electric Cooperative member. “And I’ve seen nearly all of them in Texas.”

Perplexed and excited, he called and texted pictures to some fellow naturalists. One beelined to Davenport’s location. Another researched records and nailed down the species. “It was a secretive darter that had only been photographed twice before, in central Mexico,” Davenport says. “My adrenaline was running!”

When you’re a dragonfly chaser, that’s what can happen. Like avid bird watchers, many chasers keep life lists of every species they’ve seen. Similarly, they may travel long distances in pursuit of dragonflies. Damselflies, too. The closely related insects, which have two pairs of long wings, elongated bodies and large compound eyes, are listed in the taxonomic group Odonata (derived from *odont*, a Greek root word for “tooth” that refers to their large chewing mandibles).

Luckily for Texans, our state is home to hundreds of species.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT A female eastern pondhawk dragonfly; dragonflies and damselflies have compound eyes made up of thousands of tiny eyes called ommatidia. The eastern amberwing is one of the only dragonflies that mimics a wasp. The great spreadwing is one of the largest damselflies in North America, with a length up to 2.4 inches, a 3-inch wingspan and a notable yellow stripe. A male eastern pondhawk with its prey.

PHOTOS THIS SPREAD: KERRY CARLOY

Odonates (chasers call them “odes”) can typically be found near water but not exclusively. Their bodies come in a rainbow of hues—red, orange, yellow, green, blue and purple along with black and white. They can alternately beat and rotate their four membranous wings, enabling them to zip in all directions and even backward.

Using their aerial agility, odes hunt in the air and use their strong legs to snatch prey, such as butterflies, mosquitoes, bees and other insects, including other dragonflies. Odes have excellent vision, too. Not even the tiniest movement escapes their compound eyes made of thousands of tiny eyes called ommatidia.

Of the two groups, dragonflies can generally be identified by their thicker bodies and hindwings that are broader at their base than the forewings. They fly higher than damselflies and can reach speeds of up to 35 mph. At rest, dragonflies hold their wings open whereas damselflies fold their wings over their toothpick-thin bodies.

Worldwide, odonate species total more than 6,430, a number that’s tracked virtually at Odonata Central. The website maintains an extensive database compiled from information submitted by users who report their dragonfly



COURTESY TRIPP DAVENPORT

sightings and upload photos. According to the site, more than 490 odonate species occur in the U.S., and more than half (251 species) have been documented in Texas.

John Abbott, a Texas native who serves as the director of museum research and collections at the Alabama Museum of Natural History, has studied and written about dragonflies and damselflies since the early 1990s. Among his many publications, Abbott has authored *Damselflies of Texas* and *Dragonflies of Texas*, field guides published by the University of Texas Press.

In his opinion, there’s no better place than Texas to chase dragonflies.

“The state holds a unique geographic position where there’s mixing of eastern and western faunas and temperate and subtropical faunas,” Abbott explains. “This leads to the large number of odonate species that can be regularly observed in the state and tremendous opportunities for new species to be documented.”

He credits a growing number of natural history enthusiasts interested in odonates for making major contributions to what’s known about the species of Texas.

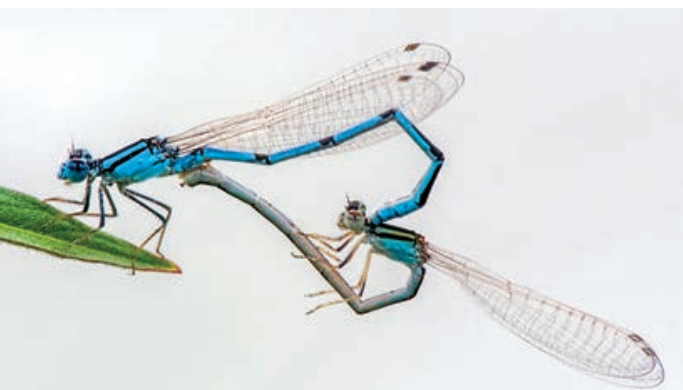
Among them are enthusiasts like Davenport and Martin Reid, a retired computer programmer from San Antonio who used to photograph mostly birds and butterflies.

“I got interested in dragonflies in 2001 when I saw a cool-looking insect eating one of my butterflies,” Reid recalls. “I took a picture, and that was it. I was hooked on dragonflies.”

Since then, Reid has sought out odonates across the country as well as in Mexico, Peru, Panama, England and other distant places. But he prefers to focus on Texas species, of which he’s photographed 230.

“Whenever there’s been a new species found in the state, I dash out and try to catch up with it,” he says. “I get tips from Facebook or when someone texts me with a sighting.”

Life for dragonflies and damselflies begins in the water, where some species deposit eggs. Others insert eggs into



## LOVE ON THE WING

**Butterflies and flies mate back-to-back. Not odonates. During mating, their slender bodies curl and join together (like these double-striped bluet damselflies) to form a heart-shaped “wheel” that’s unique among insects. They remain in this position for a few minutes or hours.**

KERRY CARLOY





OPPOSITE One of the first photos captured in Texas of a secretive darner dragonfly, at the National Butterfly Center in South Texas.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT A male checked setwing dragonfly. A male American rubyspot damselfly, found in all but two of the lower 48 states. A male neon skimmer dragonfly.

PHOTOS THIS PAGE: KERRY CARLOY

vegetation or rotting wood near water. From the eggs hatch aquatic larvae that look like big-eyed creepy crawlers. After shedding their hard skins in a series of molts, the nymphs emerge from the water and morph into winged adults.

All across Texas, adult odonates fly from spring through fall. Some occur year-round. Most adult damselflies live two to four weeks; dragonflies live four to six weeks. But some odonates survive several months.

They're best found around freshwater, where they hunt and mate. Large open spaces, such as yards, fields and parking lots, may attract hungry odes in search of winged prey.

On their travels, Reid and Davenport have frequented the Christmas Mountains Oasis, 70 miles south of Alpine in far West Texas. Since 1996, owner Carolyn Ohl-Johnson, a member of Rio Grande Electric Cooperative, has worked to transform 5 acres of her scrubby ranchland into a lush hot-spot for birds, butterflies, and, more recently, dragonflies and damselflies. So far, she has tallied 65 species.

"I remember when Tripp Davenport found a California spreadwing here," she says. "Since then, I've had hundreds of them. People come here specifically to see them and Mexican amberwings."

In Port O'Connor, on the Gulf Coast, longtime birder Petra Hockey, a member of Victoria Electric Cooperative, mostly taught herself about odonates.

Using her birding skills and Abbott's field guides, she documented local odonate species. She's since branched out to photograph dragonflies in the Big Bend, Pineywoods, Rio

Grande Valley and other places across Texas. Before a trip, she always researches her destination.

"I learn what dragonfly species are there and what habitats they're found in," Hockey says.

"What time of the day do they fly? Do they fly high or low? How do they perch? As you get more into dragonflies, you learn how interesting and unique they are."

That uniqueness fascinates retired teacher Kerry Carloy, who lives north of Dallas in Lewisville and is a CoServ member. He frequents local natural areas in search of dragonflies. "Their intelligent design to me says they weren't an accident," he says. "I try to get that point across through my photos."

"They're interesting because they can maneuver with such agility," he adds. "They have 360-degree vision, and you can watch them crunch insects up with their teeth."

Though he's chased dragonflies around the world, Brian Gooding, a quality engineer who lives in Plano, doesn't keep a life list.

"Numbers aren't important to me," he says. "My challenge is to take the best picture that I can, even if it's a common species. I've used some of my best pictures to help educate people about dragonflies and how cool they are."

They can also be wise. Gooding recalls the time he watched two male eastern pondhawks fighting over territory at the Colleyville Nature Center northeast of Fort Worth.

"After they were done, they went back to their respective perches and carried on with existing," he says. "That's when I realized I need to be more like them and let go of negative stuff in my life. It was a great lesson to learn from a dragonfly." ■

Hundreds of female pilots made history  
at Avenger Field, where they're still celebrated

# The WASPs Who Flew Out of Sweetwater



BY PAM LEBLANC

**They had to cinch up the waistbands of their oversized, hand-me-down flight suits, and they weren't allowed to climb out of a cockpit without applying fresh lipstick. The women who trained at Avenger Field in Sweetwater stepped up in a serious way.**

They volunteered when more pilots were needed to fly vital stateside missions during World War II.

The National WASP WWII Museum, which opened in 2005 in a circa 1929 hangar at Avenger Field, celebrates the Women Airforce Service Pilots, or WASPs, who trained at the remote airbase, about 40 miles west of Abilene, as part of an experimental wartime program designed to free up male pilots for combat.

"A lot were young and single and free, but some were married—and some had children," says Lisa Taylor, executive director of the museum, located across Avenger Field from what is now Texas State Technical College, where the female trainees once lived in barracks.

"The feeling was, 'We have this skill, and there's a need for us.' They adored flying and were thrilled to fly, but they were also thrilled to be needed."

Applicants to the program, which ran for two years, had to have high school diplomas or the equivalent and be between the ages of 18 and 35, although at least one 17-year-old lied about her age to get in. They had to be at least 5 feet 4 inches tall, have a pilot's license, and pass a physical exam and interview to get a spot.

About 25,000 women applied, and 1,830 were accepted.

They came from all 48 states and Alaska and Hawaii. They were overwhelmingly white, but there were at least two Chinese Americans, a Native American and two Latina women. The program rejected Black applicants. They were high school dropouts and debutantes, blackjack dealers and teachers. One was a pinup girl. Some had worked as crop duster pilots or barn stormers, performing stunts in traveling shows.

OPPOSITE Women Airforce Service Pilots assigned to Camp Davis in North Carolina pose in front of a Beechcraft AT-11.

BELOW The courtyard between hangars at the National WASP WWII Museum features three steel cutouts based on a historical photograph of women arriving at the base.



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OFFICIAL NATIONAL WASP WWII MUSEUM, SWEETWATER, TEXAS

The program officially started in Houston in November 1942, under the direction of pioneering aviators Jacqueline Cochran and Nancy Harkness Love. It quickly outgrew its space in Houston and moved to Avenger Field, where the women could live in bunks in on-site barracks.

The new location worked well. The airfield had two runways plus classroom space. The sparsely populated area's big skies and open fields suited the flight school's needs, and the stiff West Texas wind provided ample training opportunities.

The women spent half their days in ground school, learning meteorology, navigation, first aid, military law, Morse code, mechanics and parachute packing. The rest of the working day was spent learning to fly various military aircraft.

Many of the women were small and had a hard time reaching the pedals on aircraft designed for men. They used blocks of wood and parachute packs as cushions to make it work. One bragged that she was a "three-cushion pilot," meaning she stuffed three packs behind her back so she could operate the controls.

For their efforts, the women earned \$174.50 per month (about \$3,250 today), deducting \$1.65 for room and board. Because they were civil workers and not officially part of the U.S. military, they even had to buy their own uniforms.

Training lasted at least seven months, and about 40% of the recruits washed out before earning their wings. But ultimately, 1,102 women completed training.

Those who graduated were assigned to air bases around the country, where they went to work shuttling military personnel

## Notable Texan WASPs

### **Millie Dalrymple**

After her husband was shot down in a B-17 over Europe, Dalrymple of Llano took up flying, joined the WASPs and was soon flying B-17s herself.



### **Madge Moore**

As a local who grew up just up the road from Sweetwater, in Haskell, Moore used dead reckoning—a navigational method of estimating a plane's current position based on a previously known location, course, speed and time traveled—to ferry planes without working instruments.

### **Florene Miller Watson**

Watson of San Angelo was one of just 25 women who qualified for a forerunner to the WASP program. She flew every type of plane used by the Army Air Corps.



and ferrying aircraft from base to base. The WASPs flew 78 different aircraft, including pursuit planes and bombers, and flight-tested others, flying more than 60 million miles.

Some of the women served as tow pilots, dragging targets 1,000 feet behind their planes so soldiers on the ground could practice firing at them with live ammunition. Others worked as instructors or practiced concealment, learning to lay smoke that would hide personnel on the ground.

Thirty-eight WASPs were killed during their service, including 11 who died in training accidents. The military didn't pay for their funerals, so fellow WASPs took up collections to send the women's remains home to family.

About 14,000 people visit the museum in Sweetwater every year, exploring two hangars filled with everything from flight suits to logbooks, part of a tow target, a flight simulator, medals, parachutes and four complete aircraft of the type the women used for training.

Visitors can take a turn at a chin-up bar like one the women used during daily calisthenics or grab a seat in a re-creation of a classroom, where a film leads them through what it was like as an incoming recruit reporting for duty. They can peer into a mock-up of a room in the barracks too.

Mostly, though, visitors can learn who the WASPs were as individuals. "They've all got really amazing stories," Taylor says, sharing a few as she walks through the museum.

When one group of WASPs traveled to California on a mission, they were arrested and briefly jailed for impersonating military pilots, Taylor says. Another WASP made an emergency landing in a farmer's field, and the family who owned the land fed and housed her for the night. Other stories describe WASPs who had to parachute to safety from their airplanes and WASPs who tested aircraft with engines prone to catching fire.

The names of all the WASPs, including those who didn't complete training, are listed on one wall of the museum, and visitors can access a database that includes information about each one. There are photos and handprints of many of the women.

Each April, the museum hosts a Homecoming Celebration & Fly-In, set for April 25–26 this year. While most of the

## Homecoming Celebration & Fly-In

The National WASP World War II Museum will celebrate its 20th anniversary at this year's WASP Homecoming Celebration & Fly-In, Friday–Saturday, April 25–26. There will be museum tours, guest speakers, live reenactors, aviation games and a display of aircraft. For more information, go to [wasmuseum.org/homecoming](http://wasmuseum.org/homecoming).



OPPOSITE A graduation ceremony August 7, 1943, at Avenger Field in Sweetwater.

ABOVE AND LEFT Nell "Mickey" Stevenson Bright, 103, knew she wanted to learn to fly when she was 8. She ended up being one of only 20 women chosen to train on B-25 bombers.



WASPs are now gone, their families, as well as members of the public, still attend.

At the 2012 homecoming, WASP Nell "Mickey" Stevenson Bright, who is now 103 years old, explained that she skipped meals as a teenager to pay for flying lessons. After becoming a WASP, she remembers standing in a shower wearing her flight suit to clean it.

"The thrill of flying those wonderful airplanes and getting paid for it—that was worth it," Bright, who is from Canyon, said at the time.

The WASPs were deactivated in December 1944, but it took more than 30 years before President Jimmy Carter signed a bill recognizing them as military veterans. In 2010, President Barack Obama awarded the WASPs Congressional Gold Medals, the oldest and most prestigious civilian award in the U.S.

Today, museum officials hope the institution can inspire the next generation.

"These women went to a lot of time and trouble to learn how to fly in a world that wasn't going to let them in," Taylor says. "So, what is it that you want to do and try, and what barriers will you need to overcome to leave a good legacy for yourself?" ■

**TCP** Tour Hangar 2 at the National WASP WWII Museum with Lisa Taylor, the museum's director.





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GREBE III

# Linemen Power Life—Whatever It Takes

LINE WORK RANKS as one of the most dangerous jobs in the country.

The crews at Medina Electric Cooperative work, rain or shine, in often-challenging conditions to ensure you have reliable electricity. On April 14, we celebrate Linemen Appreciation Day, honoring those who make sure our community has the power it needs every day.

It's hard work but very rewarding.

## The Danger

Working around high-voltage electricity comes with obvious risks. Move just a little the wrong way or lose focus for a split second, and it could be deadly.

Linemen often work on energized power lines and can't tell they're energized by sight alone.



Their work requires concentration, and there's no margin for error. They often endure rainstorms, high winds, and extreme heat and cold to restore power during an outage—sometimes in the dark or near fast-moving traffic.

That's why workers must undergo years of training before they can officially be called a lineworker. They typically start as apprentices, helping crews with tools and keeping job sites safe, which usually spans four years.

After an apprenticeship, with more than 8,000 hours of training under their belts, they transition to journeyman lineman status.

But the education is ongoing. Linemen continue training to stay up on safety requirements and up-to-date on the latest equipment and procedures.

## The Sacrifices

This job comes with sacrifices. Linemen are often first on the scene of devastating emergencies, like car accidents, structure fires and damage from severe storms.

They don't know what type of situation they're going to face or when they'll face it. They get calls at all hours, including in the middle of the night. They might miss their kids' sports events and family dinners, but with the support of their families, their dedication pays off in the end.

Their sacrifices ensure the electricity that powers the lives of our friends and neighbors stays on.

## It's Worthwhile

One thing that makes this job worth it is the camaraderie. Medina EC's employees are like a second family, and the line crews are a tight-knit group. In this work, they have to depend on the person beside them in life-or-death circumstances.

It's a culture of trust, teamwork and service. It's all about keeping everyone safe and the lights on.

Linemen have a lot of pride in their work. When it's cold and wet, they know they're working to keep people warm. There's a lot of satisfaction in hearing someone yell "Thank you" from the window after the lights come back on or seeing people flip the light switches on their porches after an outage is restored.

No matter how tired they are or how long they've been working, that feeling makes it worth it.

You can trust that Medina EC linemen are doing their best to get the lights back on as quickly and safely as possible—you can get back to living.

Until next time,  
Trey Grebe





## Bruni and Laredo Linemen

**Back line, from left:** Josh Perez (12 years), Trey Guerra (5 years), Mario Lopez (17 years\*), Felipe Moreno (9 years), Justin Cortez (6 years) and David Perez (3 years). **Front line, from left:** Jose Ruiz (<1 year), Elias Tobias (13 years) and Armando Castillo (20 years). **Not pictured:** Benjamin Soto (4 years).

\*As of March 3, Lopez transitioned to a new role as a safety coordinator.



## Dilley Linemen

**Left to right:** Tony Banda (10 years), Joselito Morales (6 years), Martin Gonzales (10 years), Marcus Cortez (8 years), RJ Ortiz (<1 year), Rene Alvarez (1 year), Edward Varnador (29 years), Jonathan Garza (<1 year), Javier Sanchez (<1 year), David Hernandez (7 years) and Joe Stone (7 years).



## Hondo and Devine Linemen

**Back line, from left:** Mario Molina (12 years), Cristian Escobar (1 year), Wesley Menges (2 years), Michael Cardoza (2 years), Raymond Schawe (22 years) and Jacob Barron (<1 year). **Front line, from left:** Scott Schulte (31 years), Silver Elizondo (1 year), Reynold Munoz (5 years), Justin Moncada (1 year), Jay Rodriguez (2 years) and Gus De Hoyos (2 years).

**Not pictured:** Ace Gaucin (39 years), Justin Lopez (2 years) and Tony Benavidez (1 year).



## Rio Grande City Linemen

**From left:** Gerardo Lopez (3 years), Jose Olivarez (3 years), Jorge Zapata (17 years), Johnny Rosa (6 years), Pat Garza (22 years), Luis Gutierrez (3 years), Albert Vela (20 years), Victor Garica (1 year), Wicho Garcia (3 years), and John Rodriguez (13 years).

**Not pictured:** Eric Hinojosa (10 years).



## Uvalde Linemen

**Back line, from left:** Marcus De La Cruz (4 years), Ben Garcia (13 years), Jim Aviles (1 year), Eddie Lopez (2 years) and Felipe Negrete (3 years). **Front line, from left:** Serapio Guzman (13 years), Jason Gomez (16 years), Johnny Garza (5 years), Seb Suarez (33 years) and Joe Flores (31 years).

**Management Personnel (not pictured):** Oscar Chapa (36 years), Norby Salazar (31 years) and Leonard Geyer (30 years)



DMITRY I ADOBESTOCK

# Operate Your Generator Safely

**THE PRIMARY HAZARDS** to avoid when using a generator are carbon monoxide poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust, electric shock or electrocution, and fire. Here are some tips for safely using a portable generator.

- ▶ Always thoroughly read and follow the directions supplied with the generator. Also understand the requirements for generator installations by your utility.
- ▶ Never try to power the house by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. Known as “backfeeding,” this practice puts utility workers, your neighbors and your household at risk of electrocution.
- ▶ To avoid electrocution, keep the generator dry and do not use in rainy or wet conditions. Operate it on a dry surface, and do not touch the generator with wet hands.
- ▶ Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Make sure it’s at least 20 feet away from your garage, doors, windows and vents. The carbon monoxide generated is deadly.
- ▶ Be sure to turn the generator off and let it cool before refueling. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.
- ▶ Store fuel for the generator in an approved safety can and outside of living areas in a locked shed or other protected area. Use the type of fuel recommended in the instructions or on the label on the generator.
- ▶ Plug appliances directly into the generator, or use a heavy duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Check that the entire cord is free of cuts or tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.
- ▶ Remember, even a properly connected portable generator can become overloaded, resulting in overheating or generator failure. Be sure to read the instructions.
- ▶ If necessary, stagger the operating times for various equipment to prevent overloads.
- ▶ Consider a GenerLink device, installed by Medina Electric Cooperative, behind your meter to operate a generator and ensure proper installation per Medina EC guidelines at [MedinaEC.org/Generator](https://www.MedinaEC.org/Generator).

## 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

Ken Weynand, (830) 426-0762

Larry Huesser, (830) 363-7651

Mickey Holzhaus, (210) 422-3310

#### Voting District 2

Jimmie Raines, (830) 591-8437

Joe Foley, (830) 261-1304

Larry Neal, (210) 218-2367

#### Voting District 3

Annette Sorrells, (361) 231-0173

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

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#### CEO

Trey Grebe, 1-866-632-3532, ext. 1046

## 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 1-866-632-3532 o visitando una de nuestras oficinas.

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## Director Earns Gold

**MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S** Board President, Ken Weynand, recently received the Director Gold credential from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid grasp of the cooperative principles and business model for the benefit of Medina EC members.

The NRECA Director Gold credential recognizes directors committed to continuing their education and who demonstrate their ongoing commitment to advancing their knowledge and performing their fiduciary duty to the best of their ability.



WEYNAND HAS BEEN A DIRECTOR SINCE 2019 AND BECAME BOARD PRESIDENT IN 2024.

Weynand also completed NRECA's Certified Cooperative Director certification in 2020 and his Board Leadership Certificate in 2024.

NRECA represents the nation's more than 900 private, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, including Medina EC.



## Do Not Tamper with Your Electric Meter

**MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** would like to remind our members that meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and will result in additional fees.

**Never** break a meter seal.

**Never** open a meter base.

**Never** remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.

For safety reasons, only Medina EC personnel are permitted to remove meters from a meter socket. This includes situations where the meter needs to be removed, even if there is a licensed electrician present and even for temporary work to be done. These instances must be scheduled ahead of time with the cooperative.

If Medina EC finds evidence of meter tampering at a location or receives notice a meter was removed from a socket, it will result in a trip fee of \$125-\$175 and a \$500 tampering fee.

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## Medina EC Celebrates Administrative Professionals Day

**IN HONOR OF** National Administrative Professionals Day on April 23, Medina Electric Cooperative would like to recognize our administrative team, Brittany Meyers and Savannah Persyn.

From coordinating both our volunteer time off and lineman testing programs, to booking all

Medina EC-related trainings and travel, facilitating meals, helping with administrative tasks and so much more, these two ladies are valuable members of Medina EC's staff.

Meyers has been with the cooperative since 2019, and Persyn joined the team in 2024.



**Brittany Meyers**  
Administrative Clerk



**Savannah Persyn**  
Administrative Specialist



## Get Ready for the Emergency Preparation Supplies Tax Holiday

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR** for the Emergency Preparation Supplies Sales Tax Holiday, April 26–28. 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—tax-free, when: 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 (less than \$3,000)
- 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, smoke detectors and first aid kits
- Portable, self-powered light sources—candles, flashlights and lanterns
- Radios and mobile telephone batteries and chargers

### Nonqualifying Products

- Medical 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).**

## Assign a Voter Designee for Your Organization

**IF YOUR MEDINA ELECTRIC** Cooperative membership is in the name of an entity instead of an individual, you should have a voter designee on file. The voter designee is the person who is authorized to vote on behalf of the entity, per Section 3.10 of Medina EC's bylaws. The entity must have a completed Voter Designation Form on file and it must be signed by the owner of the entity. Voter designees will need to be on file by the record date approved by the board of directors when an election takes place.

If you have made any changes to your entity, or you just want to update the voter designee on your account, complete the form at [MedinaEC.org/Designee](https://MedinaEC.org/Designee) or contact us to get a form.

**Contact us at:**  
**1-866-632-3532**  
**OR**  
**[Info@MedinaEC.org](mailto:Info@MedinaEC.org)**





## Medina EC Representatives Attend Legislative Rally

**IN FEBRUARY**, a few of Medina Electric Cooperative board members and employees attended the Texas Electric Cooperatives Legislative Rally in Austin and visited with state representatives for our service area. This was a great opportunity for the representatives to meet with Medina EC to discuss current and future legislation that may impact co-op members.

The most pressing legislative topics included the impacts of increased load on the Electric Reliability Council of Texas grid and protecting members from increased costs associated with those large loads, and the potential rate and reliability impacts of broadband expansion and other telecommunication pole attachments on our distribution system. Staff also discussed with legislators the possibility of using tax surplus to fund power generation, transmission and distribution; and the cooperative difference in response to potential state mandates being con-

sidered as a result of recent storms.

It's easy for the media and state representatives 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's important that electric cooperatives like Medina EC put a face 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 get involved in these issues that will impact them in the future. If you're interested in getting involved or staying informed, we recommend starting with these organizations.



**Voices for Cooperative Power** 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](http://voicesforcooperativepower.com) to get involved.**



**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 to build the collective strength of co-ops' voices in Washington, D.C.



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



**Co-ops Vote** is a national, non-partisan initiative focused on enhancing co-op's political strength through relationship-building with policymakers and keeping members informed with a list of candidates and current elected officials in each state.



**Scan this code or visit [vote.coop](http://vote.coop) to learn more.**



**Rural Friends of Electric Cooperatives** is similar to America's Electric Cooperative PAC but with a focus on the representatives of and in the state of Texas. Founded in 1976, Rural Friends supports candidates who will speak for and protect the interests of electric cooperatives and our consumer-members.



**Scan this code or visit [texas-ec.org/about/coop-advocacy](http://texas-ec.org/about/coop-advocacy) to make a donation.**



SHANNON FAGAN | ISTOCK.COM

## How Do You Plan To Celebrate Earth Day?

**EARTH DAY IS ONE OF** the world's largest civic events, and on April 22, we can all be part of this global movement to help the environment.

There are many ways we can improve the environment, and some are easier than you'd think. **Here are a few simple actions you can take now to reduce your energy use for the environment.**

**Audit your light bulbs.** Swapping out incandescent bulbs with LEDs can make a big difference in home efficiency, and it's one of the easiest ways to reduce your energy bill.

**Maintain your HVAC system.** Replace your home air filters to allow your HVAC system to run efficiently. Air filters prevent dust and allergens from clogging your HVAC system. Changing the filters makes your unit run more efficiently—keeping your home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

**Examine your smart or programmable thermostat.** Make sure it's programmed for the current season and family schedule. Your thermostat is one of the best tools at your fingertips; however, you can only achieve these efficiencies and savings if it's programmed properly and adjusted periodically to keep pace with changes in household routines.

**Seal windows and doors.** Seal leaks with weatherstripping and caulk to keep cool air indoors during warm months and prevent cold air from penetrating the indoors during colder months. Sealing gaps around piping, dryer vents, fans and outlets also helps to seal the envelope and increase efficiency.

As we celebrate Earth Day, let's continue to work together and make a positive impact on our local community—and our beautiful planet.



**SAFETY IS IN YOUR HANDS.  
EVERY DIG. EVERY TIME.**

## Call 8-1-1 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. Underground lines may include electric, oil and gas, telecom, water and sewer lines. Unsafe digging can be dangerous and cause damage.

Follow these steps for safe digging:

1. Notify 8-1-1 at least two-to-three days before your work begins.
2. Wait for the locator to visit your property and to mark any found underground lines.
3. Confirm that all affected utilities have responded.
4. Dig carefully, avoiding the marked areas.



## Improving Reliability Through System Updates

**MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS ALWAYS WORKING** to enhance both reliability and safety. To achieve this, here are a few projects we're investing in to optimize operations and reinforce our infrastructure.

### SCADA Updates

We are in the process of launching a new phase of our 24/7 system operations center by implementing a state-of-the-art supervisory control and data acquisition system. This in-house solution will improve our operations by enabling faster fault detection, quicker restoration times and advanced analytics to proactively identify potential issues. Additionally, by allowing remote control of circuit breakers and other equipment, we'll enhance safety for our linemen, first responders and the public as well as improve overall system reliability. As we roll out this multi-year project, our members will experience the benefits of a more robust and efficient electric grid.

### Circuit Plan

Medina EC crews are patrolling our power line rights-of-way, sometimes on foot, to help identify and fix any potential problems that may lead to large power outages. This is being done in conjunction with the inspection of 20,000 poles this year and our ongoing vegetation management program. Impacted members are being notified as inspections enter their area.

### Equipment Upgrades

Medina EC is working to improve our infrastructure to ensure reliable electric service through upgrading our equipment to handle electric load. This is being done in an effort to accommodate projected growth in our service area. These conversions do cause temporary outages for our members but are done to prevent potentially large outages in the future. For this type of project, members are notified prior to planned outages.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**Linemen  
Appreciation Day**  
Monday, April 14

**Easter**  
Sunday, April 20

**Earth Day**  
Tuesday, April 22

**Administrative Professionals'  
Day**  
Wednesday, April 23



DFIKAR | ADOBESTOCK

## 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.

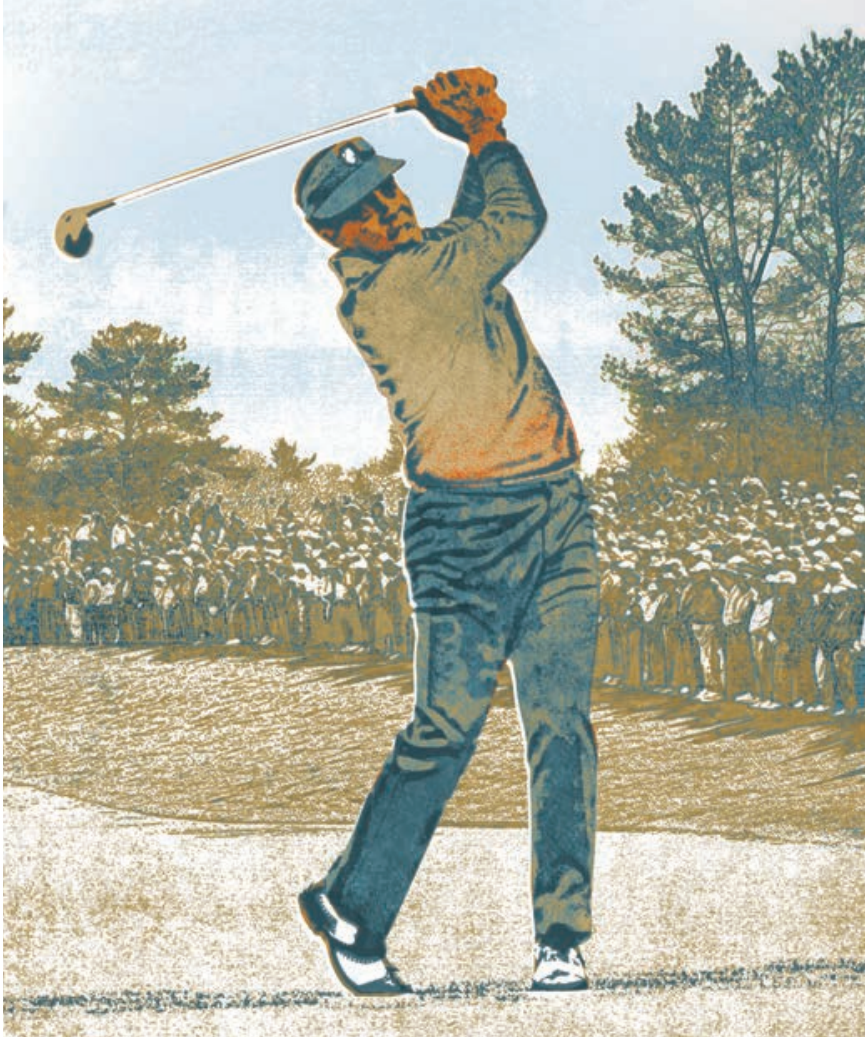
Applications due May 2.  
[MedinaEC.org/ORU](https://www.MedinaEC.org/ORU)



FREEPIK | FREEPIK.COM







# Playing Through

Golfer Lee Elder shot his way to the very top despite grave barriers

BY KEVIN ROBBINS • ILLUSTRATION BY ERIC KITTELBERGER

LEE ELDER WAS 40 when he played in his first Masters Tournament, the spring golf ritual in Augusta, Georgia, that represents the first of the four major championships each season. But his rather advanced age wasn't the story at all 50 years ago this month—in April 1975. Nor were the death threats.

The Dallas native had become the first African American to compete in the Masters. Augusta National Golf Club, which organizes and hosts the tournament, had finally responded to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. While the club had no formal policy banning Black players, it nonetheless had never extended an invitation to one.

That changed in 1971.

That year, the Masters announced that

any player who had won the previous season on the PGA Tour would automatically qualify—a policy that exists to this day.

Elder won the 1974 Monsanto Open in Pensacola, Florida. It was two weeks after Hank Aaron broke the Major League Baseball home run record set by Babe Ruth.

Elder's acceptance to play in the Masters generated massive publicity. It felt like a watershed moment in American sports.

"Move over, Hank Aaron," wrote *The Chicago Defender*, a Black newspaper. "There's enough room in the spotlight for at least two people." The threats soon followed.

In April, as the Masters neared, Elder rented two houses near the course for himself and his wife. He wanted no one

else to know where he would be while competing.

It was all so new and unnerving to the U.S. Army veteran who, along with his nine siblings, had lost his parents when he was young. Born in 1934, Elder caddied with his brother Raymond at Tenison Park Golf Course in Dallas, miles from the nearest course that allowed Black players. He moved to California in the 1940s to live with an aunt.

There he caddied, toiled in bag rooms, did odd jobs in pro shops and gradually learned to hit a golf ball straight and far.

Elder joined the United Golfers Association, a tour for Black players, who were, at the time, excluded by fiat from the PGA Tour.

Elder thrived on the UGA. He won 18 of 22 tournaments in one remarkable stretch. But that wasn't where the money and prestige were; UGA purses were a pittance. Elder joined the PGA Tour in 1968, seven years after it lifted its Caucasian-only policy.

That August, he took the mighty Jack Nicklaus to a playoff in Akron, Ohio. Elder had arrived. People knew his name.

He eventually won four tournaments in 448 starts on the PGA Tour, including once in Texas, at the 1976 Houston Open. He proved, with Charlie Sifford and Calvin Peete, that Black players belonged in professional golf.

Elder missed the 36-hole cut at that Masters (a tournament he would play five more times) in his 1975 debut. He later said he felt seen in a way he never had.

"The display from the employees at Augusta National was especially moving," Elder, who died in 2021, told *Golf Digest* in 2019. "Most of the staff was Black, and on Friday, they left their duties to line the 18th fairway as I walked toward the green.

"I couldn't hold back the tears. Of all the acknowledgments of what I had accomplished by getting there, this one meant the most." ■

# Eggs

Hearty meals that just might be too good to limit to breakfast

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

Team salsa verde! I unapologetically drench salsa verde over all my dishes, but over eggs in a well of hash browns topped with bacon? This is what breakfast dreams are made of. Take this directly from the stovetop to the table and serve it family style.

## Salsa Verde, Hash Brown & Bacon Breakfast Skillet

**6 strips bacon, diced**  
**6 cups frozen diced hash browns**  
**¾ cup chopped red bell pepper**  
**¾ cup chopped green bell pepper**  
**½ cup chopped onion**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**¼ teaspoon ground black pepper**  
**4 eggs**  
**1 cup salsa verde**  
**¼ cup chopped cilantro (optional)**

1. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook bacon until crisp. Remove bacon and set aside. Drain, reserving 2 tablespoons of drippings in skillet.
2. Add hash browns, peppers, onion, salt and pepper to drippings. Cook 2 minutes while stirring.
3. Cover and cook about 15 minutes more or until potatoes are browned and tender, stirring occasionally.
4. Reduce heat to low. Make 4 wells in potato mixture. Break 1 egg into each well. Top each egg with ¼ cup salsa verde.
5. Sprinkle bacon over the top, cover, and cook until eggs are completely set, about 8–10 minutes.
6. Serve warm, garnished with cilantro if desired.

SERVES 4

**TCP** Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in Cocina Gris at [sweetlifecake.com](http://sweetlifecake.com), where she features a recipe for Honey Flan.





## Egg Puff & Stuff

MICHELE BRADLEY  
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

If you crave an easy, sticks-to-your-bones breakfast, this one has it all—veggies, sausage, eggs, cheese and a hint of spice. Served warm with a few slices of creamy avocado, this dish will keep you going all morning.

- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed**
- 1 small potato, diced**
- ½ cup ground pork or turkey breakfast sausage**
- ½ cup diced green bell pepper**
- ½ cup diced red bell pepper**
- ½ cup diced yellow bell pepper**
- ¼ cup thinly sliced portabello mushrooms**
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic**
- 8 eggs**
- 2 tablespoons cottage cheese**
- 1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning**
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes**
- Sliced avocado**

- 1.** Heat oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add diced potato and sausage. Cook, stirring occasionally, until sausage is cooked through and potato is fork-tender.
- 2.** Stir in peppers, mushrooms and garlic, and cook until vegetables are slightly tender, adding additional oil if needed. Remove from skillet and set aside.
- 3.** In a bowl, beat eggs lightly. Add cottage cheese, Cajun seasoning and crushed red pepper flakes.
- 4.** Pour egg mixture into skillet over medium-high heat. Run spoon across bottom of skillet to begin lightly scrambling eggs.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >



\$500 WINNER

## Easiest Breakfast Casserole

VALERIE KRUSE  
TRI-COUNTY EC



Stuffing in a breakfast casserole? This recipe piqued my interest from the start, and boy was I happy I gave it a try. The stuffing addition gives this eggy dish a mouthful of flavor and bite. This casserole will feed a crowd, but you could also keep it for yourself and enjoy it for lunch all week.

- 9 eggs**
- 3 cups milk**
- 1 box stuffing mix (6 ounces), any flavor**
- 1 pound ground breakfast sausage, cooked and crumbled**
- 3 cups grated cheddar cheese, divided use**

- 1.** Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
- 2.** In a large bowl, lightly beat eggs. Add milk, stuffing, sausage and 2 cups cheese. Stir to combine.
- 3.** Spoon into prepared dish and top with remaining 1 cup cheese.
- 4.** Cover with plastic wrap or aluminum foil and refrigerate overnight.
- 5.** In the morning, allow casserole to sit at room temperature 30 minutes while the oven preheats to 350 degrees.
- 6.** Bake uncovered 40–45 minutes or until lightly browned on top and toothpick inserted comes out clean.

SERVES 12–16

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**ONE-SKILLET DINNERS** DUE APRIL 10

It's a busy weeknight, and you need an easy one-dish dinner to fill up the family. What's your go-to? Send us your best skillet stunner, and you could win \$500. Enter by April 10.

**UPCOMING: CANDIES AND FUDGE** DUE MAY 10



RECIPES CONTINUED

5. Stir in cooked potato, sausage and vegetables to evenly coat with egg. Continue to cook until eggs are fully cooked.

6. Serve warm, topped with avocado.

SERVES 3-4

### Easy Egg Bake

AMY STREET  
MIDSOUTH EC

This egg bake packs all the flavors of a breakfast sandwich into a casserole. I love finding great recipes to have on hand for a lazy Sunday morning brunch with ingredients I have readily available in my kitchen. Fresh from the oven, I topped my slice with plenty of hot sauce—delicious!

1 tube crescent rolls (12 ounces)  
1 pound pork breakfast sausage



½ cup diced green onion  
8 eggs  
1 cup milk  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon ground black pepper  
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese, divided use  
1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese, divided use

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Line crescent rolls along the bottom, pinching seams to seal. Bake 8 minutes, then remove from oven.
2. While crust is baking, cook breakfast sausage in a skillet over medium-high heat, breaking up with a spoon. Add green onion and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until sausage is fully cooked. Remove from heat.
3. Reduce oven temperature to 350 degrees. Add eggs, milk, salt and pepper to a bowl. Whisk until thoroughly combined.
4. Spread sausage mixture over cooked crescent crust. Sprinkle half the cheddar and mozzarella over sausage. Pour egg mixture evenly over cheese and then sprinkle on remaining half of cheeses.
5. Bake 30 minutes or until top is lightly browned and toothpick inserted comes out clean.

SERVES 12

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COURTESY TODD WHITE STILLS AND MOTION

## Fish School

For millions of fish, life starts at Sea Center Texas

BY CHET GARNER

**MANY TEXANS WILL** spend their entire lives chasing the big one on the Gulf Coast. They'll traverse marshes and bays in search of a bull red or spec worthy of hanging on the wall or, perhaps more importantly, posting on social media.

I've spent my share of afternoons casting but have never had half as much luck as I did in 10 minutes fishing the ponds outside Sea Center Texas in Lake Jackson, about an hour south of Houston. That's because many of the redfish and speckled trout in our state started their lives right here.

Sea Center Texas is an aquarium, science lab and fish nursery. It's where the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department breeds fish to populate our waters and educates the public on all the amazing creatures of our coast.

What immediately impressed me wasn't the live fish but the replicas of state-record saltwater fish covering the lobby walls. Let's just say the great hammerhead specimen still gives me nightmares.

I walked the halls of aquariums, each focusing on a different underwater ecosystem, from coastal marshes to deeper offshore waters. There was even a touch tank where I held a blue crab (pincers removed, thankfully).

I then grabbed a tour of the back-of-house where TPWD biologists raise millions (literally) of reds, trout and flounder. Outside is a wetlands boardwalk and 75 acres of tanks, including some open for public youth fishing. Luckily I had my kids in tow and was able to reel in a speckled trout much bigger than anything I've ever caught before. But, hey, I'll count it.

It's just one of the many reasons to plan a trip here instead of chasing the big ones all around the coast. ■

ABOVE Chet and Paul Cason, director of Sea Center Texas, with a speckled trout.

**TCP** Watch the video on our website and see all Chet's Explorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



## Know Before You Go

Call ahead or check an event's website for scheduling details, and check our website for many more upcoming events.

## APRIL

11

**Carthage [11-12] Piney Woods Quilt Festival**, (903) 754-1948, carthagetexas.com

12

**Aubrey GreenFest on the Greenbelt**, greenfestdenton.com

**Lake Jackson Kids Reel Big Fish Event**, (979) 297-4533, lakejacksontx.gov

**McKinney [12-13] Spring Native Plant Sale**, (972) 562-5566, heardmuseum.org

19

**Fairfield Easter Eggstravaganza**, (903) 389-5792, fairfieldtexaschamber.com

23

**Corsicana [23-26] Derrick Days**, (903) 654-4850, derrickdays.com

25

**Burnet [25-26] Highland Lakes Quilt Festival**, hlqguild@gmail.com, hlqg.org

26

**Burton Cotton Gin Festival**, (979) 289-3378, texascottonginmuseum.org

**Castroville Alsatian Festival of Texas**, castrovilletx.gov

**Channing Hogs at the Point**, (806) 935-5598, talonpoint.org

**Fredericksburg Volunteer Fire Department Fish Fry**, (830) 997-7521, fbgtx.org

**Huntington Homestead Festival**, shophuntingtontx.com

**Huntsville** Gen. Sam Houston Day, (936) 294-1832, samhoustonmemorialmuseum.com

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

**Tomball** Rails & Tails Mudbug Festival, (281) 290-1035, tomballtx.gov

**Brazoria** [26-27] Migration Celebration, 1-844-842-4737, migrationcelebration.org

**Temple** [26-27] Texas State Button Society Spring Show and Sale, (512) 892-4265, texasstatebuttonociety.com

## MAY

2

**Fort Worth** UNT One O'Clock Lab Band Spring Showcase, (817) 212-4280, basshall.com

**Taylor** [2-3] Chisholm Trail Quilt Guild Quilt Show, ctquiltguild.org

3

**El Campo** Cinco de Mayo Celebration, (979) 275-1600, eclostlagoon.com

**Fairfield** Lemonade Day, (903) 389-5792, fairfieldtexaschamber.com

**New Ulm** Honey Bee Jubilee, (713) 568-5584, newulmtexas.org

**San Marcos** Heritage Home Tour, (512) 392-4295, heritagesanmarcos.org

**Comfort** [3-4] Hill Country Two-Step, texasminimilkers.org

### TCP Submit Your Event

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

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# Characters

Whether your friends be of a feather or the four-legged variety, they bring a unique flavor to life in Texas. As these photos attest, being true to oneself is joyful.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1

1 THERESA MCKEE  
FANNIN EC

"This guy has been iconic over the years. He truly is a Texas character!"

2 PAUL GARCIA  
MEDINA EC

"It took me forever to get this shot. I had about 10 hummingbirds at my feeder and had an idea about trying to hand-feed them."

3 MARY CARUTH  
PEDERNALES EC

Cheese! This was taken at Dripping Springs Distilling.

4 AMY SAYLAK  
BRYAN TEXAS UTILITIES

"A Texas girl with her first cap gun, Sneaky Pete!"



3



2



4

## Upcoming Contests

- DUE APR 10 College Life
- DUE MAY 10 Off-Road Adventures
- DUE JUN 10 Heroes



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

**TCP** See Focus on Texas on our website for many more Characters photos from readers.



## Overlooked (No More)

The best view in the Big Bend is worth the trek

BY PAM LEBLANC  
PHOTO BY CHRIS LEBLANC

**FROM MY VANTAGE** point on the side of a rocky slope high above the Rio Grande, the river looks like a glinting horseshoe far below.

I think it's the best view in the Big Bend region, and that's saying a lot. I've spent hours gazing down at the rippling desert floor from the South Rim, watching the sun sink behind the Window in the Chisos Basin and peering upriver at Santa Elena Canyon.

But this view, from the western edge of Mesa de Anguila, surpasses all of those, and few hikers make the trip. The mesa, an 11-mile hump of land that juts like a broken pinkie off the western side of Big Bend National Park, is one of the least-visited areas of the park.

I first discovered the overlook six years ago, during a challenging multiday back-

packing trip down the spine of the mesa. Now I make a much easier 2.5-mile jaunt to reach the overlook.

Here, the desert closes in for a prickly hug. With its shattered rocks and cactuses that look like bouquets of steak knives, this remote spot feels like the backdrop of an old *Star Trek* episode.

You've probably seen photographs of Horseshoe Bend at the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area in Arizona, where Instagrammers famously flock to snap photos of themselves high above a U-shaped section of the Colorado River. This, to me, is the Texas equivalent.

To get here from the park's west entrance, drive 21 miles west along FM 170 to Lajitas. The Mesa de Anguila Trail starts behind the Lajitas Golf Resort, next to a sign that says, "Poisonous snakes and insects may be present."

The first mile and a half of the trail zigzag through flat desert, dipping into shallow arroyos and winding past scrub. There is no shade; bring plenty of water, even in winter.

After about 30 minutes plodding through the desert, the trail starts to climb up a rocky gully. You'll get a quad-burning workout as you ascend 600 feet over half a mile. You might need to use your hands as you clamber over rocks as big as armchairs and tiptoe through spillways of scree.

When you reach the saddle at the top, just past the 2-mile point, the main trail continues straight. Instead of following that path, look for a faint trail to your right. Make your way up the hill, then look south, toward Mexico.

Voilà.

Find a good boulder to sit on, and take it in. I could sit for hours, contemplating the way the river embraces the land.

They say horseshoes bring good luck. In this case, I'm sure it does. Anyone who makes it to this spot is lucky to take in such a beautiful view. ■

Author Pam LeBlanc takes in the view from the western edge of Mesa de Anguila in Big Bend National Park.

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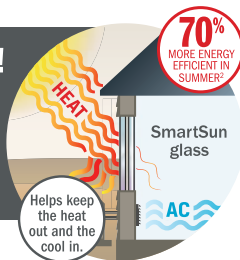
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