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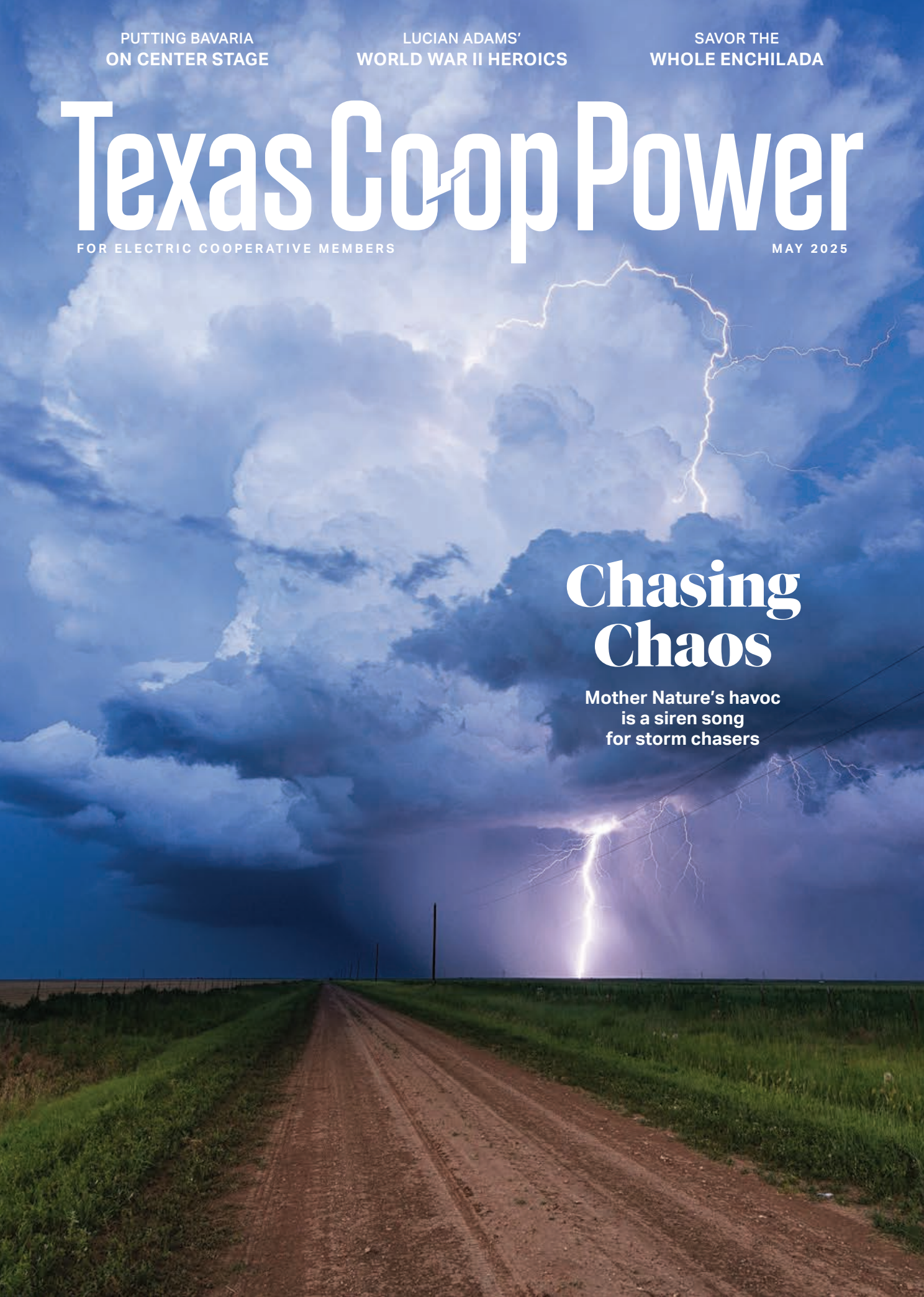
# Texas Coop Power

FOR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBERS

MAY 2025

## Chasing Chaos

Mother Nature's havoc  
is a siren song  
for storm chasers



State of Texas

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# May 2025



12

## 06 Twisted Approach

Storm chasers go to great and dangerous lengths for thrills and scientific research.

*By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers*

## Bavaria, By Way of Texas

Yodeling takes this German back home, even after decades of running a restaurant and entertaining in tiny Walburg.

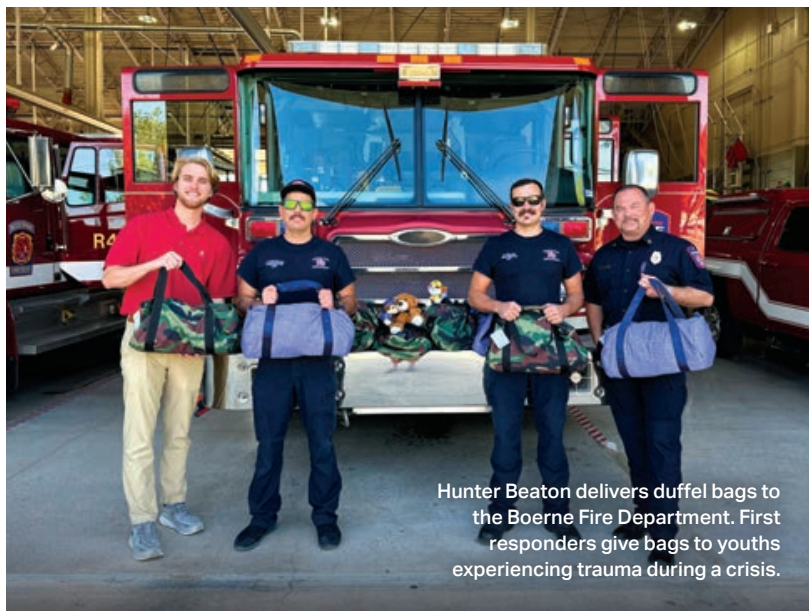
*Story and photo by Erich Schlegel*

ON THE COVER  
Supercells like this one near Claude trigger an adrenaline rush for storm chasers.  
*Photo by Jenny Brown*

ABOVE  
Ronny Tippelt and the Walburg Boys entertain in the Bavarian style.  
*Photo by Erich Schlegel*

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# A Case Study in Compassion



Hunter Beaton delivers duffel bags to the Boerne Fire Department. First responders give bags to youths experiencing trauma during a crisis.

**NATIONAL FOSTER CARE DAY** is the first Tuesday in May—May 6 this year.

For Hunter Beaton, every day is foster care day. Beaton, disturbed that foster children showed up at adoptive homes carrying all their possessions in trash bags, used his 2016 Eagle Scout project to offer some measure of dignity for them.

He raised \$10,000 and filled 100 duffel bags to give to Texas foster kids.

When requests for duffels kept pouring in, Beaton knew he found his lifelong mission. He started the nonprofit Day 1 Bags, which has since delivered 224,000 bags in 47 states and drove 2023 legislation in Texas requiring the state to maintain a supply of proper luggage for foster youths.

Beaton said in 2018, when we first wrote about the Bandera Electric Cooperative member, after his parents adopted three foster children, “They had all their possessions in a black trash bag. How awful is that? I decided to find a way to say, ‘No, no kid deserves this.’”

To help Beaton in his mission, go to [day1bags.org](http://day1bags.org).



## Cinco Celebrations

Cinco de Mayo has become a day to commemorate Mexican culture and heritage in the U.S., where it is more celebrated than in Mexico. May 5, 1862, is when the Mexican army defeated invading French forces at the Battle of Puebla. Outside of that city, the day doesn't get much attention in Mexico.

The big celebrations south of the border come on *Diez y Seis*, when Mexicans mark their independence from Spain, on September 16, 1810.



## TCP Contests and More

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### RECOMMENDED READING

From our archives: In May 2005 we took readers to Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, where endangered and threatened species have found safe haven since 1984. Download the issue at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

**I blush whenever ...**

**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 March prompt: **Making my bed every morning is ...**

What keeps me from climbing back into it.

MARSHA MOORE  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES  
GRANBURY

Means I've made it through another night, saw another sunrise. Hope I get to make my bed tomorrow.

KENNY COGBURN  
CECA  
COMANCHE COUNTY

Totally useless since, at 76, I need a nap every day.

CAROLYN SUE HAMMONS  
SOUTH PLAINS EC  
LUBBOCK

A ritual that started as a requirement and is now a source of happiness.

MARK W. OWEN  
BLUEBONNET EC  
ELGIN

Visit our website to see more responses.

MARCH 2025 Home of the Brave

“Brig. Gen. George ‘Bud’ Day made me to want to be a pilot growing up, but I did not have the eyesight for it.”

ARTHUR RICHARD TROELL III  
VIA FACEBOOK



ROBERT SEALE

### Unforgettable Honor

As an Army lieutenant, I was charged with researching and commissioning a series of paintings showing the actions of the Medal of Honor recipients from South Carolina [*Home of the Brave*, March 2025]. It was my privilege to talk directly with some of the honorees or with their families. It was an honor I won't forget.

Ed Rowland  
CECA  
Eastland

### Return of the Bluebonnets

*Nanny's Blessing* [March 2025] struck me, as the same miracle happened to me. Our ranch was destroyed by the Eastland Complex Fire three years ago. By a divine hand, bluebonnets returned where the house once stood the following year when there were none for at least 15 years.

Bill Dakin  
CECA  
Eastland County



SARAH FERONE

### Sancho's Long Reach

I enjoyed the J. Frank Dobie tale of the tamale-loving longhorn [*Sancho's Long Road*, March 2025]. It took me back to my childhood when Walt Disney took the story and made it an episode of his long-running Sunday night TV show. It was about Texas, so I had to watch it.

Michael Bolton  
CoServ  
Little Elm

### Dancing Memories

I would like to see an article about polka and waltz music/dancing/bands being handed down through the generations [*It's Hip To Be a Square*, February 2025].

These bands play at church picnics, festivals, old dance halls—you name it—almost the whole year in south Central Texas. I learned to dance to Joe Patek in Shiner.

Del Jean (Leck) Bauer  
GVEC  
La Vernia

### 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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American MainStreet Publications

## Storm chasers go to great and dangerous lengths for thrills and scientific research



COURTESY CHELSEA BURNETT

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

Nearly everyone has their passion. Some people love to garden, hike or travel. Others play video games, dance or volunteer.

Chelsea Burnett chases storms. Her unusual passion surfaced at age 2 in the late 1980s, when, upon hearing thunder, she'd rush to a window and search the skies.

"As I got older, I watched the Weather Channel and local weather updates," recalls Burnett, who lives in Little Elm, north of Dallas. "I had weather calendars, and I'd cut out newspaper articles about weather in the region. I also had a weather radio alarm clock that played local forecasts."

Today, Burnett, a member of CoServ, makes a living from weather-related work. So does her husband, Adam Lucio. Their mutual passion led them to become storm chasers—a term for professional and amateur weather watchers who pursue tornadoes, hurricanes and other severe weather.

Why? Some want to see their first tornado. Many crave the adrenaline rush. Others photograph storms for spectacular images, scientific research or news coverage. And these days, social media, mobile devices and even tour groups are making it easier than ever to find and share stunning storms despite extreme risks.



COURTESY ERIK BURNS

# Twisted



# *Approach*

OPPOSITE A storm cell produces lightning beyond a church in Gainesville.

ABOVE A Tornadoic Expeditions tour in April 2021 came across a rare weather phenomenon in Lockett: a tornado alongside a rainbow.



COURTESY ERIK BURNS



COURTESY CARRIE CUNNINGHAM

ABOVE A Tornadic Expeditions tour pursued this supercell for 125 miles across West Texas, from Spur to Tuscola.

LEFT Tim Marshall and Carrie Cunningham met in 2010 chasing storms for the Vortex2 research project.

*“The first people I see coming into a disaster area are the power crews. It’s amazing how many of them get ready and are there once law enforcement clears the roads.”*

Modern-day chasers follow in the wake of David Hoadley, considered to be the father of storm chasing. In 1956, he photographed the aftermath of a severe thunderstorm in his hometown of Bismarck, North Dakota. His fascination led him to drive after and document storms using his own forecast maps. From 1977 to 1986, he published *Storm Track* magazine for the growing chaser community.

At 86, Hoadley, who lives in Falls Church, Virginia, still chases.

“It’s a challenge,” he says. “I enjoy intersecting storms and getting pictures. I just do what I like to do.”

Some words of warning: Chasing is dangerous, sometimes deadly. And even despite the best of safety precautions, accidents happen. In June 2013, three veteran chasers were killed by a tornado near Oklahoma City. Other chasers have died in car crashes while on the road.

In 1996, daring risk-takers came to life when *Twister* tore into theaters nationwide. The disaster film—which inspired a generation of weather scientists—stars Helen Hunt and the late Bill Paxton as storm chasers trying to release data-gathering sensors into a tornado in hopes of improving early warning systems.

The same goal returns in *Twisters*, the action-packed 2024 sequel that features scientists and chasers going up against tornadoes in the social media era using more sophisticated technology.

Tim Marshall of Flower Mound, in the Metroplex, Hoadley’s protégé, started storm chasing in 1978. In those days, he’d stop at pay phones to call the National Weather Service for radar updates. Then he and his partner would take off for a location where a storm might intensify. Or not.

“In the ’70s and ’80s, the odds of catching a tornado were 1 in 20 times when you went out,” says Marshall, who has seen hundreds of twisters. “Now it’s 1 in 8 or 10. It’s still more miss than anything, but the odds are better because of our technology.”

Marshall and Hoadley were among the six inaugural inductees to the National Storm Chaser Hall of Fame in February. Professionally, Marshall, a CoServ member, has worked since 1983 as a meteorologist and forensics engineer. As part of his job, he assesses damaged buildings after catastrophic weather events.

“Before a storm, power crews prestage their trucks,” he says. “So the first people I see coming into a disaster area are the power crews. It’s amazing how many of them get ready and are there once law enforcement clears the roads.”

Most chasers carry first-aid supplies in case they’re the

first on the scene of a disaster.

Carrie Cunningham of Boerne, near San Antonio, met Marshall in 2010 when she volunteered with Vortex2, which was the largest tornado research project of its kind. As a driver, she was among a team of more than 100 scientists and crew members, with 40 support vehicles and 10 mobile radars, who raced after supercell thunderstorms for six weeks across seven Midwestern states.

On June 10, 2010, she witnessed her first tornado with Marshall near Denver. Every season since, she and her husband, Doug, have chased with Marshall. When forecasts and weather models predict risky conditions, the couple pack up and head north.

“We call them ‘chase-cations,’” says Carrie Cunningham, a member of Bandera Electric Cooperative. “It’s not always about seeing a tornado. I just love to drive, visit the small towns, eat in cafés and meet new people. For me, it’s spiritual being with the storms and nature.”

Then there’s the tradition among the community of eating a steak after a sighting.

## Myths Busted

**MYTH:** Areas near mountains, cities and rivers are safe from tornadoes. **FACT:** Twisters can go up mountains, through cities and across rivers, like the 1925 tri-state tornado, which crossed the Mississippi and Wabash rivers and killed nearly 700.

**MYTH:** Open windows in your house during a tornado to equalize pressure. **FACT:** Do not do this! Your house will not explode, and opening windows will only let in powerful winds. Seek shelter in an interior room.

**MYTH:** If you’re on the highway with a tornado approaching, find an underpass. **FACT:** As the opening scene of *Twisters* showed, this is a dangerous myth. High-speed flying debris is channeled through underpasses, where winds move at incredible speeds. If a tornado is imminent, seek a ditch, and duck and cover.

Source: National Weather Service



COURTESY ERIK BURNS

“Some of our family think we’re crazy,” she says. “A lot of friends are fascinated, and some say they’d love to go with us.”

For more casual storm adventure seekers, chasing tours can be booked through many companies in Texas and beyond. That is, if they’re not booked up, thanks to renewed interest inspired by *Twisters*.

For example, Tornadic Expeditions completely sold out for 2025 tours by the end of 2024, and 2026 will fill soon. Erik Burns, a Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative member who lives in Whitesboro, near the Oklahoma border, launched the niche business in 2015.

“On a seven-day tour, we cover about 2,500 miles,” says Burns, who met his Australian wife, Emma, on one of his 2019 excursions. “Our tours are laid-back and personable. We only put four guests in a van, so everyone’s got a window seat.”

The U.S. experiences more tornadoes than any other country—about 1,150 per year, which is about five times what Europe will see in a year. And 2024 was the second-worst tornado season on record in the U.S., with more than 1,735 confirmed twisters, including 169 in Texas—more than any other state. On average in the U.S., 73 people die in tornadoes per year.

Burns and his chaser guides conduct five- to 10-day trips from April into July across Tornado Alley, a twister-prone area that roughly spans north from Texas up to Nebraska and South Dakota. Tours may also venture into neighboring states, depending on weather. Guests travel in vans equipped with Wi-Fi, cameras and laptops loaded with radar and satellite-tracking software.

Since 2018, Ray Myers of Plano has been on three Tornadic Expedition tours. He’s also accompanied Burns on numerous

## *Early Eyes on the Sky*

**Some of America’s Founding Fathers were avid weather watchers. Thomas Jefferson bought a thermometer while in Philadelphia for the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. He noted that the high temperature there July 4, 1776, was 76. He also owned one of the only barometers in the colonies. George Washington also made regular weather notes. The last weather entry in his diary was made the day before he died.**

Source: National Weather Service

solo trips. On April 23, 2021, the two witnessed five tornadoes near Lockett, west of Wichita Falls, including twin tornadoes and one that spiraled next to a rainbow. What was his reaction to seeing his first?

“I said, ‘Oh, look at that! Oh, look at that—look at that—look at that!’ ” recalls Myers. “There are just no words. You are witnessing one of the most powerful things in nature. Some people go speechless. Some cry.”

Storm chasing has even joined the collegiate world. Since 2020, the department of atmospheric sciences at Texas A&M University has offered a spring course called convective storms field studies. Students are trained on how to storm chase, forecast tornadoes and conduct field research.

*“There are just no words. You are witnessing one of the most powerful things in nature. Some people go speechless. Some cry.”*



COURTESY CHRIS NOWOTARSKI



COURTESY ERIK BURNS

CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE A Tornadoic Expeditions tour watched this twister in Hawley stay on the ground for 24 minutes. Texas A&M University students studying atmospheric sciences launch balloons for National Weather Service research. A Tornadoic Expeditions tour poses with a tornado in 2022 in Crowell.

“Then for two weeks in May, we go out storm chasing,” says Chris Nowotarski, an associate professor. “The students take turns forecasting and navigating where they think there will be storms in the Great Plains. They also launch weather balloons and send the data to the National Weather Service.”

After graduation, “our meteorology majors go on to become forecasters for the National Weather Service, private forecasting companies or aviation companies that need weather forecasts,” Nowotarski says. “Some go into grad school to do research related to severe weather or other weather. Some go into television.”

Schooled or not, storm chasers provide information that advances scientific understanding of weather.

“Many amateur storm chasers are more focused on collecting photography and videos of tornadoes, which may be less useful in improving our understanding and prediction,” Nowotarski says. “But these chasers report tornadoes to the National Weather Service. These reports are critical to developing an accurate record and climatology of tornadoes that can be used for future studies.”

Although she has no meteorology degree, Chelsea Burnett has years of hands-on training and experience. She’s a tour guide for Tornadoic Expeditions and a public speaker with Storm Science, which conducts educational weather programs. She’s also a member of Girls Who Chase, an online group that encourages and connects women who want to storm chase, and is a chaser and speaker with Texas Storm Chasers.

In her chasing career, Burnett has gone after 70 twisters (and three hurricanes). But—like all storm chasers—she’ll never forget her first. On the night of December 26, 2015, she was standing outside a gas station near Red Oak, south of Dallas, when power flashes and lightning illuminated the sky—and a tornado.

“I couldn’t believe I was seeing one,” she recalls. “It was the most incredible moment of my life! You’re eye to eye with one of Mother Nature’s most raw processes. To see a tornado come together truly is a spiritual moment.” ■



# Bavaria, By Way of Texas

**Yodeling takes this German back home, even after decades of running a restaurant and entertaining in tiny Walburg**

**T**ake Exit 268 off Interstate 35, head east on FM 972, make a pair of 90-degree jogs past mobile homes and rolling farmland, and suddenly you're in Germany. Well, the German settlement of Walburg, formerly known as Concordia.

The Williamson County community, about 40 miles north of Austin, was founded in 1881 by Henry Doering, a German immigrant. The following year, Doering opened the Hy. Doering Co. mercantile store. Doering eventually changed the name of the community from Concordia to Walburg, his German birthplace.

Today, instead of groceries, dry goods and hardware, the shelves of the former general store are now filled with more than 200 beer steins.

Iconic flags of Bavaria hang from the high ceiling, with matching blue and white tablecloths in the dining room. Of course, there's a cooler full of imported German beer. And opposite the buffet table and kitchen is a stage where Ronny Tippelt and his band, the Walburg Boys, play Friday and Saturday nights. Tippelt is also co-owner of the venue, which is now called Walburg German Restaurant & Biergarten.

Tippelt, founder of the band, was born in Munich. He learned to yodel at the age of 7 from his "vocal hero," Franzl Lang, a world-renowned *Jodlerkönig*, or Yodel King. Lang was an expert in Bavarian alpine yodeling.

Humans have yodeled for tens of thousands of years, mostly for calling livestock, but across Switzerland and Bavaria (a state in southern Germany), the calls began to be incorporated into songs, accompanied by accordion, in the 19th century.

Some Native American cultures yodeled, Liz Tracy writes in *No Depression* magazine. Then cowboys picked up on the custom. "The yodel is used as a call to herds across lonely landscapes; the pastoral, solitary life of cowboys made them a prime conduit for the yodel," Tracy writes.

Ronny Tippelt, a music-maker in Walburg, has been yodeling since he was 7.

By age 12, Tippelt was learning accordion. At 16, he won a Bavarian yodeling competition in Munich. By then, he had started a musical group called the Lerchenauer Baum with some friends and had been playing Oktoberfest in Munich—the largest and oldest such German festival in the world.

In 1982, Tippelt was 23 when his band was at Oktoberfest. "After the show, I went over to a table of cute American ladies, and I ended up marrying one of them," Tippelt says. "She was a Braniff Airlines flight attendant from Austin, Texas."

They moved to Texas that year, and though the marriage didn't last, Tippelt stayed. He opened his restaurant a few years later. "I just thought Texas was the Wild West," Tippelt says. "I figured out pretty quickly that it wasn't like the movies."

He started a duo called the Bavarian Boys. They're now a five-piece band featuring, in addition to accordion and yodeling, a keyboard, guitar, saxophone, bass, fiddle and drums.

When he performs, Tippelt wears traditional lederhosen with beautifully embroidered scrolls stitched in and a T-shirt with the Bayern—the German name for Bavaria—state coat of arms. He plays a chromatic accordion with keys like a piano.

He typically sings in German, flowing smoothly from German lyrics into yodeling and back. "When I play and yodel," Tippelt says, "I feel pride in representing my homeland. People get to hear a true German music style."

Another Texas musician who plays in the Bavarian style is Alan Walling, leader of Metroplex band AlpenMusikanten, a friend of Tippelt's and a self-taught yodeler.

"I met Ronny at a Fredericksburg German festival in 1990," Walling says. "He's a fantastic yodeler in the Bavarian style. The best yodeler in Texas and perhaps in the United States."

In 2019, Walling and Tippelt organized their own festival, Walburg Fest, which became an annual event over Labor Day weekend.

About 35 years ago, the boys were playing one of the stages at Austin's former Aqua Fest. Tippelt came up to the headliner and introduced himself. "Hello, I'm Ronny Tippelt from Germany. Who are you?" he said.

"Well, I'm George Strait from Texas," answered the famous country singer.

Ronny Tippelt from Texas now covers a handful of Strait's songs, with *Amarillo By Morning* being a favorite.

And that isn't his only foray into the country realm. He's especially proud to sing Merle Haggard's sentimental hit *Silver Wings*. Tippelt ends it with his signature yodeling. ■

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The ATTO SPORT redefines mobility with a sporty, elegant design that looks as great as it feels. Its modern aesthetic and 3-wheel agility let you navigate tight spaces, and it is equipped with **electronic stability control for added safety on descents and turns.**

## Airline Approved Battery

The ATTO SPORT is equipped with a TSA-approved battery. Its compact size and optional split mode make it the only mobility scooter that can fit in the aircraft's overhead compartment.

## Reliable for Every Adventure

With a driving range of up to **12.5 miles** (extendable to **25 miles** with the XL battery), a **6.2 MPH top speed**, a **weight capacity of 300 lbs**, flat-free, shock-absorbing tires, and **4-inch ground clearance**, it is ideal for air travel and outdoor exploration and built for longevity.

## Front and Rear Lights

ATTO SPORT's powerful front and rear LED lights enable riding in dark conditions.

## It's Never Too Soon

Time waits for no one, so why should you? There's no better time to reclaim your mobility and make the most of every moment.

**Don't wait! Call now and buy your ATTO SPORT and receive a free front/rear basket and phone holder, a \$184 value.**



## Why Choose Movinglife?

- Free in-home demos
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- Expert Technicians
- Multi-location service network
- Industry's most comprehensive warranty
- Personalized solutions
- Trusted by 60,000+ users
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rolls like a trolley  
suitcase



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easy lifting



**Lightweight design**  
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4999 Quorum Drive Suite 155

**CALL NOW: 1-888-905-9117**



CEO

HERBERT "TREY"  
GREBE III

## Affordable Electricity Powers Quality of Life

**WE ALL USE ELECTRICITY EVERY DAY.** And because it seems so abundant and available—with the simple flip of a switch—electricity can easily be taken for granted.

A typical U.S. household uses more air conditioning, appliances and electronics than ever before. A growing number of internet-connected devices add to that. Considering everything that's powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally wince at our monthly bill. It's no longer just the light bill.

Electricity powers our quality of life. It powers the infrastructure of your home—appliances, water heater and HVAC system—and connects us to the world through our phones, TVs, devices and Wi-Fi. Your energy bill covers so much more than lighting these days.

At the same time, prices are increasing for most goods and services, like groceries or TV streaming. One of my favorite streaming services has almost doubled in price over the last few years without adding any value.

We conduct regular cost-of-service studies to ensure our rates are fairly established and allocated by the respective rate class. The team here at Medina Electric Cooperative works hard every day to keep the cost of every kilowatt-hour you purchase as low as possible.

We also offer personalized consumer analytics to our residential members on SmartHub. Consumer analytics provides members with an energy breakdown by appliance type, helping members to see where they use the most electricity in their home. Learn more about this feature at [MedinaEC.org/ConsumerAnalytics](https://MedinaEC.org/ConsumerAnalytics).

Considering all the ways we depend on electricity, it could be said that its value grows every day, as the ways we use it and the conveniences it provides increase.

So the next time you're enjoying your favorite TV series or movie, video chatting with family, or enjoying the convenience of working from home, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life.

We care about you, the members we serve, and understand that electricity is more than a commodity—it's a necessity. That's why Medina EC will continue working hard to power your life, as reliably and affordably as possible.

Until next time,  
Trey Grebe

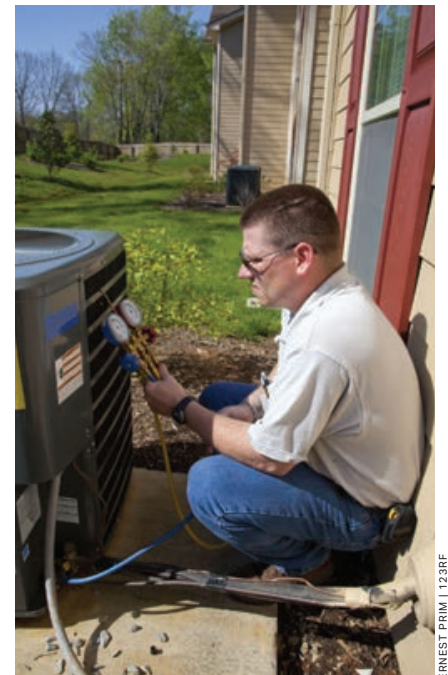
## A Springtime AC Inspection Can Pay Off in Summer

**A TUNEUP IN THE SPRING** can prevent your air conditioning system from going on the fritz later, when the weather is so hot that you won't want to be without AC for even a few hours.

It typically costs less than \$150 to have a professional inspection of your system, and it's well worth the money.

Some contractors offer an annual preventive maintenance agreement, which will cost a few hundred dollars a year and typically includes fall and spring inspections of your HVAC system and discounts on repairs and equipment. Depending on services offered in your area, it may be a better deal to pay as you go for individual inspections.

Either way, your cooling system will get attention from a qualified, licensed service technician who is trained to spot problems most homeowners overlook. The tech might even alert you if a small repair now will prevent your family from sweltering this summer during an air conditioner breakdown.



ERNEST PRIM | 123RF



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## Stay Cool With the Right Fan

IF THE WARM SPRING weather tempts you to turn on your air conditioning too early, don't do it.

Reach for your ceiling fan instead. Fans can make a room feel cooler, and they use 90% less energy than the AC.

**If you're looking into getting a new ceiling fan, answer these five questions.**

**1. How big is your room?** The bigger the room, the longer the blades should be. As a rule of thumb, buy a fan with 32- to 36-inch blades for a room smaller than 100 square feet, such as a bathroom or laundry room. For a bedroom, office or kitchen—up to about 225 square feet—you'll need a fan with blades measuring 42–48 inches. Main bedrooms and dining rooms up to 485 square feet: 50- to 56-inch blades. Large rooms such as a living room—up to around 600 square feet: 60 inches or more.

**2. What style and color do you like?** Fan blades come in painted colors, metallic coatings and wood finishes so you can match them to your furniture, floor or cabinet hardware. Some manufacturers make two-sided blades so you can flip them when it's time for a new look.

**3. How high is the ceiling?** For the most comfortable results, install the fan 7 to 8 feet from the floor. If your room has a high ceiling, buy an extension downrod to lower the fan to the ideal location. Some manufacturers have special close-mount fans for rooms with extra-low ceilings.

**4. Do you want to combine the fan with a light?** Fixtures with down-lighting create a traditional effect, while those with uplighting bounce the light off the ceiling to diffuse it and make it softer. If you do opt for lighting with your fan, be sure to look for the Energy Star label for the light. Energy Star-qualified units are over 50% more efficient than conventional units.

**5. How do you want to operate the fan?** You can pull a cord, flip a light switch or tap a remote control.

Now that you've picked the perfect fan, be sure to use it wisely. In the summer, run the blades counterclockwise to push air downward and create a cool breeze. If you raise your thermostat by only 2 degrees and use your ceiling fan, you can lower air conditioning costs by up to 14% over the course of the cooling season.

**And remember:** Fans cool only people, not the room, so when you leave the room, turn the ceiling fan off.

## Medina Electric Cooperative



### CONTACT US

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

**Email** Info@MedinaEC.org

**Web** 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

Rodolfo H. Rodriguez, (210) 846-1092

### 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

**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



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.

# Medina EC Celebrates Safety Professionals

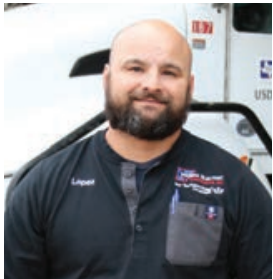
**NORTH AMERICAN OCCUPATIONAL** Safety and Health Week and Electrical Safety Month, both observed in May, highlight the critical role Medina Electric Cooperative's safety team plays in keeping the co-op's employees, members and the general public safe.

Medina EC's safety team consists of Derly Carrizales, safety

manager, and Mario Lopez, safety coordinator. Both are essential in developing and enforcing safety protocols, providing specialized training, and ensuring compliance with regulations. By promoting a strong safety culture and implementing rigorous safety measures, this team ensures the well-being of Medina EC's team.



**Derly Carrizales**  
Safety Manager



**Mario Lopez**  
Safety Coordinator

# Meet Your New Board Member

**LARRY NEAL OF PEARSALL** joined Medina Electric Cooperative's board of directors in March following the resignation of Jimmy Crawford. Crawford was elected during the 2024 director election and resigned in December, opening a seat to represent Voting District 2, which represents Atascosa, Edwards, Frio, Kinney, Real, Uvalde and Zavala counties.

Qualified members were interviewed in January by a selection committee comprising of three board members, one from each voting district. Based on the qualifications and interview, Neal was selected to fill the vacancy. He will fill the seat until it's up for election in 2027.

Neal graduated from Southwest Texas State University with an education degree, briefly teaching in Pearsall. He then transitioned into the financial sector, where he had a successful career at Security State Bank, rising from teller to

executive vice president and chief financial officer, retiring in 2017, and continues to serve on the board of directors.



LARRY NEAL, NEW BOARD MEMBER

Beyond his banking career, Neal has been actively involved in community service. He has served on other boards including president of Frio Regional Hospital and a trustee member of Pearsall Independent School District. Currently, he contributes to hospital ministry at his church in Kerrville. Neal demonstrates a commitment to both professional excellence and community involvement.

# Team Members Reach Important Milestones

**MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CELEBRATED** several special work anniversaries for employees between January and March.

Medina EC celebrates work anniversaries in five-year increments and honors each employee with an award for their years of service. For each service award, the cooperative also donates \$100 to an organization of the employee's choosing. In 2025, Medina EC employees are on track to donate \$1,100 to various local organizations.

Please join us in celebrating these Medina EC employees!



**ROLAND ELIZONDO**  
Journeyman Electrician  
Dilley office  
February | 5 years

**DONATION TO**  
Relay for Life



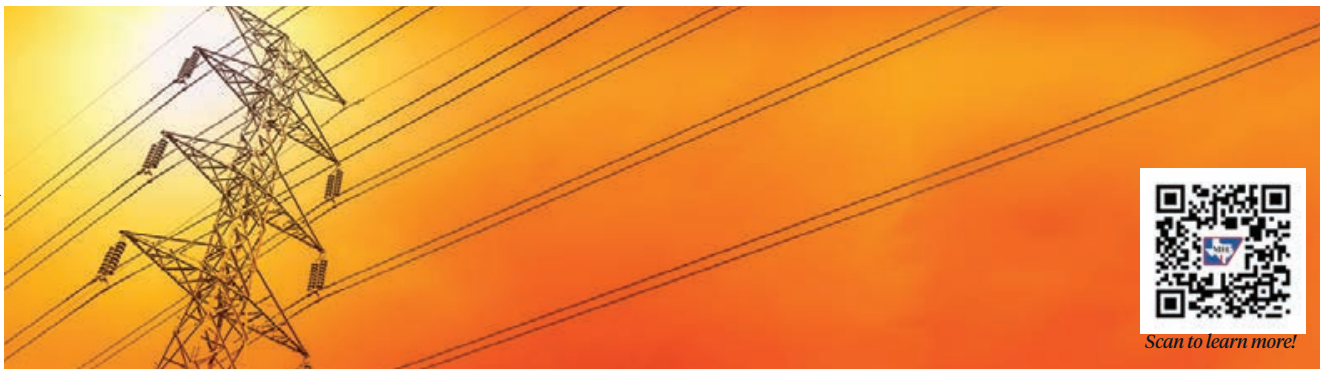
**MARTIN GONZALES**  
Working Foreman  
Dilley office  
March | 10 years

**DONATION TO**  
Wounded Warrior Project



**FERNANDO RANGEL JR.**  
Engineering Technician  
Hondo office  
March | 15 years

**DONATION TO**  
St. Jude Children's Research Hospital



## Summer Supply for ERCOT Grid

**IN FEBRUARY**, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas released its Capacity, Demand and Reserves report which focuses on future planning reserve margins during peak demand periods. You can find the report on ERCOT's website, [ERCOT.com](https://ercot.com).

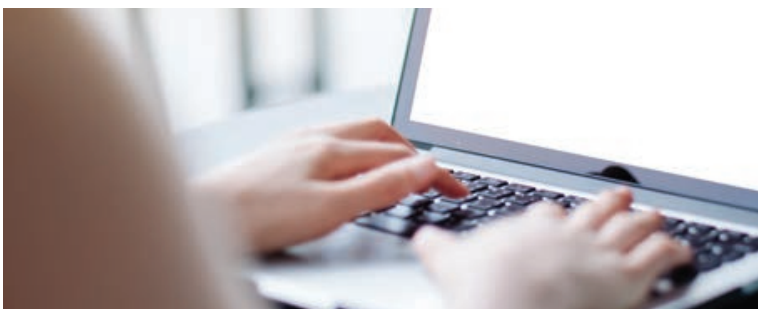
The summer record peak demand is 85,508 megawatts, set in August 2023. In general, a megawatt of electricity can power about 200 Texas homes. The most recent CDR report predicts 103,105-plus MW of capacity for summer 2025 peak demand.

ERCOT will issue alerts and declare energy emergencies if needed. Alerts help consumers, including Medina Electric Cooperative members, know that conservation is needed. Declaring an emergency allows the grid operator to take advantage of additional resources. If grid conditions continue

to worsen, the grid operator can mandate forced outages across the state. If this occurs, it is likely to happen quickly with little warning or time for advance notifications. Medina EC will do its best to notify members as quickly as humanly possible. ERCOT has also established the Texas Advisory Notification System to provide early notifications ahead of periods of higher demand. Learn more about that at [ERCOT.com/TXANS](https://ercot.com/TXANS).

Learn more about what to do during a load-shed event, energy conservation requests, our notification process and more at [MedinaEC.org/ERCOT](https://MedinaEC.org/ERCOT), or scan the QR code above.

## Is Your Contact Information Up to Date?



**MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE** is asking members to contact the cooperative to update any changed account information.

This information includes:

- Name on the account
- Cellphone and landline numbers
- Email address
- Mailing address
- Primary use for electricity
- Gate code

It's important to inform Medina EC of any updates to your account so we can continue to provide better service and communication to members.

If you have a change to your account information, please call us at 1-866-632-3532 or email [Info@MedinaEC.org](mailto:Info@MedinaEC.org).

### WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

During May, 350 members will be randomly selected to answer Medina Electric Cooperative survey questions by email. The surveys are being done by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and should take less than five minutes. If you do not get an email but would like to share feedback or an idea with the cooperative, email us at [MyCoop@MedinaEC.org](mailto:MyCoop@MedinaEC.org).



# Medina EC Celebrates Accounting Professionals

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE’S finance and accounting teams manage the financial condition of the co-op. In honor of National Accounting Day on May 19, we’re featuring our accounting and consumer accounting departments.

Medina EC’s accounting team is responsible for financial statements and work orders, data entry, reconciling accounts, working with and paying co-op vendors and employee payroll. Medina EC’s consumer accounting team prepares and processes capital credits, member bills, payments, and helps resolve member billing concerns. These teams also work together to create and manage department and project budgets.

These financial departments are critical to co-op operations. Meet the accounting and consumer accounting teams below.



**Laurie Van Damme**  
Chief Financial Officer

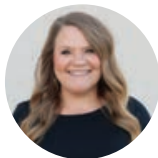
## ACCOUNTING TEAM



**Emily Tankersley**  
General Accounting  
Supervisor



**Anisa Browning**  
Accounting Clerk



**Danielle Bendele**  
Accounting Assistant



**Brooke Bader**  
Accounting Assistant

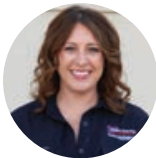


**Kim Mulvany**  
Accounting Assistant

## CONSUMER ACCOUNTING TEAM



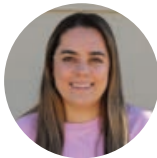
**Brett Williams**  
Manager of Finance



**Pamela McFadin**  
Consumer Accounting  
Specialist



**Shelby Hernandez**  
Consumer Accounting  
Assistant



**Amber Lally**  
Consumer Accounting  
Assistant

# Medina EC Earns an ACSI® 2025 Customer Satisfaction Award

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS HONORED to have earned a 2025 Customer Satisfaction Award\* from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) based on our member survey results. Members were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with us, how well we lived up to their expectations, and how well we measured up to their ideal co-op experience. While these were not the only questions in the survey, we included these specifically because they are the core components of the proprietary ACSI methodology.

Medina EC’s ACSI score substantially outperforms the industry average score earned by publicly measured utilities reported in the 2025 ACSI Energy Utility Study. This award is a testament to Medina EC’s ongoing efforts to provide the best possible member experience.

The 2025 Customer Satisfaction Award affirms that the cooperative’s hard work has been noticed by its members. Medina EC is grateful for its members and will continue to strive for excellence through constant dedication to improvement.



*\*Award criteria are determined by the ACSI® and are based on customers rating their satisfaction in a survey independent of the syndicated ACSI Energy Utility Study. For more about the ACSI, visit [www.theacsi.org/badges](http://www.theacsi.org/badges). ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC.*



## Need a New Appliance?

May is a great time to buy

**THIS YEAR TEXAS' ANNUAL** Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday is May 24–26. During this three-day weekend, ending on Memorial Day, sales taxes are not charged on a variety of energy-efficient appliances and products. There is no limit on the number of qualifying items you can buy, and you do not need to give the seller an exemption certificate to buy items tax free.

### These Energy Star-labeled items qualify for the sales tax exemption:

Air conditioners (priced at \$6,000 or less)	Clothes washers
Refrigerators (priced at \$2,000 or less)	Dishwashers
Incandescent and fluorescent light bulbs	Dehumidifiers

### These items do not qualify and are taxable even if they are Energy Star labeled:

Attic fans	Freezers	Stoves
Beverage chillers	Heat pumps	Water heaters
Clothes dryers	Kegerators	Wine refrigerators

During the holiday you can buy qualifying Energy Star products in store, online or by phone, mail, custom order or any other means. The sale of the item must take place during the specific period. The purchase date is determined by when payment is actually completed (i.e., a credit card charge is processed).

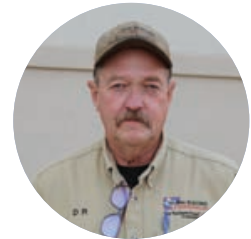
Delivery, shipping and handling charges are taxable. Charges for installing free-standing items are considered part of the item's sales price. If the item you buy is not taxable, then these charges are not taxable. However, for items with a sales price cap, installation fees may be taxable if the total goes above the cap.

For more information, visit [comptroller.texas.gov](http://comptroller.texas.gov) or call 1-800-252-5555.

## Medina EC Celebrates National Skilled Trades Day

IN HONOR OF National Skilled Trades Day on May 7, Medina Electric Cooperative is recognizing the hands-on tradesmen who troubleshoot, repair and replace any wiring or equipment for members or keep the cooperative offices running smoothly.

Medina EC's electricians install, maintain, and repair electrical systems and smart grid devices for load management, cooperative facilities, and distributed generation, ensuring efficient and reliable power delivery to cooperative members. The facilities coordinator manages shipping and receiving, facilitates maintenance, vehicle upkeep, and general support tasks, ensuring smooth operations and a safe, organized work environment at Medina EC's offices.



**Darrell Ritchie**  
Master Electrician



**Roland Elizondo**  
Journeyman Electrician



**Gregorio Zapata**  
Facilities Coordinator



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## Get Ready for Storm Season

Preparedness is the best defense

**ALTHOUGH SPRING AND SUMMER** allow more opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, the seasons unfortunately can create the perfect conditions for severe storms.

Medina Electric Cooperative crews are always prepared and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area. When severe storms cause power disruptions, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines.

We encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit [ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for additional resources.

- ▶ Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of nonperishable food, including canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- ▶ Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- ▶ Ensure your first aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- ▶ Set aside basic household items you'll need, including flashlights; batteries; a manual can opener; and a portable, battery-powered radio.
- ▶ Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.
- ▶ In the event of a prolonged power outage, unplug major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics.

This will help avert damage from potential power surges and will also help prevent overloading circuits during power restoration. Be sure to leave one light on so you'll know when power is restored.

- ▶ If you plan to use a portable generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you'll need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.
- ▶ Listen to local news or a weather radio for storm and emergency information.
- ▶ Severe storms can occasionally bring down power lines. If you see a downed line, always assume it's energized and never approach it. If flooding occurs, never walk through areas where power lines could be submerged.
- ▶ Advanced planning for severe storms or other emergencies can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and lessen the impact of the storm's effects.
- ▶ If you experience an outage, please don't report it on Facebook. Call our outage reporting number at 1-866-632-3532—this is the fastest way to let us know if your power is out.

During a power outage, we will send outage notifications through text and email to members who have verified their contact methods through SmartHub. Learn more about those alerts at [MedinaEC.org/Outage-Alerts](https://MedinaEC.org/Outage-Alerts). You can follow outage updates on our outage map at [MedinaEC.org/Outages](https://MedinaEC.org/Outages).

No one wants to experience severe storms, but it can be hard to predict Mother Nature's plans. At Medina EC, we recommend that you make a plan today—because storm preparedness is always our best defense.

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS:

# WE HAVE A TRUCK FOR YOU!

MEDINA EC IS DONATING A RETIRED

**2015 CHEVROLET SILVERADO, 4WD, 3/4-TON**

SERVICE TRUCK TO AN AREA VFD.



*The 2025 Truck*

ELIGIBILITY AND APPLICATION:

**MEDINAEC.ORG/VEHDONATION**



SCAN THE QR CODE TO  
LEARN MORE AND APPLY!

VFDs THAT SERVE ANY OF THE COUNTIES  
LISTED BELOW ARE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY:

- |          |          |        |
|----------|----------|--------|
| ATASCOSA | JIM HOGG | STARR  |
| BROOKS   | KINNEY   | UVALDE |
| DIMITT   | LA SALLE | WEBB   |
| DUVAL    | MCMULLEN | ZAPATA |
| EDWARDS  | MEDINA   | ZAVALA |
| FRIO     | REAL     |        |

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

**Operation Round Up Applications Due**

Friday, May 2  
Learn more about ORU and apply at [MedinaEC.org/ORU](https://MedinaEC.org/ORU).

**Mother's Day**

Sunday, May 11

**Armed Forces Day**

Saturday, May 17

**Memorial Day**

Monday, May 26  
Our offices will be closed in observance of the holiday. As always, crews will be on call.

Sold elsewhere  
for \$119.99



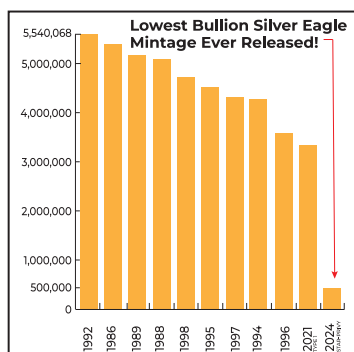
Actual Size  
40.60 millimeters)

2024 Silver Eagle BU  
5 Sided Star Privy Mark

## A World's First Creates The Lowest Mintage Silver Eagle...Ever!

The American Silver Eagle is arguably the most popular coin on the planet. First struck in 1986 for US citizens to own physical silver bullion, the Silver Eagle is made from one ounce of 99.9% fine silver. It's no wonder why these hefty silver dollars have become THE global standard for silver bullion coins, with over 640,000,000 coins minted to date.

And now, the US Mint has released a special Silver Eagle that might just become THE greatest of all time...the *Star Privy Silver Eagle*!



with 3,603,386 coins made. The Star Privy Silver Eagle has a mintage of only 500,000 coins. That's SEVEN TIMES LOWER. Just look at the graph for perspective.

### The First 50,000 Coins Released

Each coin comes certified in Gem Brilliant Uncirculated condition, coming from the first 50,000 coins issued, the "top 10%" if you will, certified by the leading independent 3rd party grading company NGC. Those are bragging rights every collector would dream of having!

### What's So Special?

There are two "key" reasons why the Star Privy Silver Eagle is poised to become the most sought-after coin in the Silver Eagle series;

**One**, collectors LOVE "Firsts" and the Star Privy is the First-Ever bullion Silver Eagle to have a Privy Mark, cementing its permanent place in Silver Eagle history.

**Two**, collectors also GO CRAZY for low mintage coins, the lower the better. And the Star Privy Silver Eagle not only has a low mintage. It's the lowest mintage bullion Silver Eagle EVER!

### First-Ever Privy-Marked Bullion Silver Eagle

Privy marks are small symbols added to coin, oftentimes to commemorate special occasions and/or historic events. In this case, the US Mint has added a "star" to the Silver Eagle to celebrate the release of a new mobile gaming app, 8th Era, a groundbreaking new mobile gaming app that marries gaming with coin collecting to inspire the next generation of collectors. It's an instant "must-have" for Silver Eagle collectors.

### Lowest Mintage Bullion Silver Eagle EVER

Not only is the Star Privy Silver Eagle the first ever privy-marked bullion Silver Eagle, it's also the lowest mintage bullion Silver Eagle ever! How low? It's not even close! Consider this...the 1996 Silver Eagle is the lowest mintage

### Buy More and Save

If you act now, you'll even have the chance to SAVE BIG when you buy more! But don't wait, our inventory won't last long! Every moment you hesitate, someone else could be claiming your piece of this historic release!

### 2024 1oz Star Privy American Silver Eagle - NGC Gem BU

1-2 coins - \$79 each plus s/h  
3-4 coins - \$77 each + **FREE SHIPPING**  
5-9 coins - \$75 each + **FREE SHIPPING**  
10+ coins - CALL FOR PRICING

### FREE SHIPPING on 3 or More!

Limited time only. Product total over \$149 before taxes (if any). Standard domestic shipping only. Not valid on previous purchases.

**Call 1-833-304-6533**

**Offer Code SPEP130-1**

Please mention this code when you call.



SCAN TO BUY ONLINE  
rarcoca.com/star-privy-eagle



Staff Sgt. Lucian Adams of Port Arthur receives the Medal of Honor from Lt. Gen. Alexander Patch.

# Beyond the Call

Lucian Adams dedicated his life to his comrades in arms

BY CHUCK LYONS

IN 1994, A 6-mile stretch of Interstate 37, between I-410 and I-10, was named in honor of Lucian Adams. Maybe you've seen signs for the freeway, in southeast San Antonio, and wondered who he is.

Adams was one of 12 children born into a Mexican American family in Port Arthur, near Beaumont, along the coast. Twenty-two years later, like a Gulf wind, Adams tore through a French wood and earned a Medal of Honor.

"I never had any fear," Adams said years afterward. "And you do things so automatically because of the training that you had in the States that you don't take time to think how serious, you know, the predicaments you get into are sometimes. And before you know it, you're in it to your head and you just have to fight

your way out."

During World War II, in October 1944, Staff Sgt. Adams' Army company was fighting to reconnect with the 3rd Battalion, 30th Infantry, which had become isolated in the Vosges Mountains near Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, in northeastern France. German machine-gun fire had killed three of Adams' men and wounded six others before his unit could even move 10 yards.

While the remaining men took cover, Adams grabbed a Browning automatic rifle and charged forward, dodging from tree to tree and firing from his hip as machine-gun fire and grenades hit the trees over his head.

"I didn't want to go down with any ammunition still on me," Adams told

*The Dallas Morning News* in 1993, "so I just kept firing."

In 10 minutes of intense fighting, Adams single-handedly killed nine Germans and silenced three machine gun nests, reconnecting with the isolated battalion and restoring an important supply line for the Allies.

On April 23, 1945, Adams was awarded a Medal of Honor—the highest military distinction awarded by the U.S.—joining 472 other Americans to earn the remarkable distinction during World War II.

Along with four other members of the 3rd Infantry Division, Adams received his award at ceremonies held in Nuremberg's Reichsparteitagsgelände (Reich Party Congress Grounds), which had been the scene of massive Nazi rallies before the war. The Allies had captured the grounds three days earlier.

A large cement swastika, symbol of the Nazi party, that was still on the stadium roof at the time of the presentation was covered with an American flag during the medal ceremony and destroyed with explosives shortly afterward.

Seven of Adams' brothers also fought in the war, but he was the only one to return with a Medal of Honor. He also received a Purple Heart, earned earlier in the war, when he was wounded neutralizing an enemy machine gun nest in Italy.

After the war, Adams dedicated himself to helping other veterans. He worked for the next 40 years as a representative for the Veterans Administration in San Antonio. Afterward, he worked as a VA consultant for U.S. Rep. Frank Tejeda (himself a veteran who also has a highway named in his honor).

Adams retired in 1986 and died in March 2003. He was buried with full military honors at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio. ■

# The Whole Enchilada

So many flavors rolled into one savory dish

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

My morning enchiladas are comfort food to the max. This is my go-to recipe when hosting brunch, as I can whip up the sauce the day before and assemble them before guests arrive. Serve with a mimosa or coffee for a delicious start to your day.

## Black Bean Breakfast Enchiladas

**¼ cup plus 2 teaspoons vegetable oil, divided use**  
**½ cup diced onion**  
**2 cloves garlic, chopped**  
**1 can black beans (15 ounces)**  
**1 cup water**  
**2 teaspoons salt, divided use**  
**2 teaspoons ground black pepper, divided use**  
**8 corn tortillas**  
**6 eggs**  
**2½ cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese, divided use**  
**Salsa, for serving**  
**Cilantro, minced, for serving**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. In a skillet, heat 2 teaspoons oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook until light and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 additional minute.
3. Transfer onions and garlic into a blender or food processor. Add black beans, water, 1 teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon pepper. Blend until smooth. Return black bean sauce to skillet and keep warm.
4. Heat remaining ¼ cup oil in a second skillet over medium-high heat. Lightly fry each tortilla 5 seconds on each side and place on paper towels to drain. Reduce heat to medium and use the same skillet to prepare eggs.
5. Add eggs, remaining 1 teaspoon salt and remaining 1 teaspoon pepper. As eggs begin to set, use a spatula to gently pull the eggs across the skillet until thoroughly scrambled and cooked. Remove pan from heat.
6. To assemble the enchiladas, dip each tortilla in bean sauce, fill with egg, sprinkle with ¼ cup cheese, roll and place seam side down in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Repeat this process until all tortillas are rolled. Spoon the remaining sauce over rolled enchiladas and top with remaining ½ cup cheese. Bake 10 minutes. Serve warm with salsa and cilantro.

**SERVES 4**

**TCP** Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in Cocina Gris at [sweetlifebake.com](http://sweetlifebake.com), where she features a recipe for Chicken Enchilada Tostadas.





## Butternut Squash and Black Bean Enchiladas

PENNY ATKINS  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

- 4 tablespoons olive oil**
- ½ cup diced white onion**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 butternut squash (3–4 pounds), peeled, seeds removed and diced**
- 1 can black beans (15 ounces), drained and rinsed**
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin**
- 2 teaspoons seasoned salt**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 12 corn tortillas**
- 1 can red enchilada sauce (15 ounces), divided use**
- 2 cups shredded Mexican-style cheese**
- 1 can sliced black olives (2.25 ounces), drained**
- 2 green onions, sliced diagonally, for garnish**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook onion and garlic until onions are translucent and fragrant.
3. Add butternut squash, cook 5 minutes, then reduce heat to simmer and cook an additional 10 minutes or until squash is tender and lightly browned. Stir in black beans, cumin, salt and pepper.
4. Place half the tortillas on a plate, cover with a damp paper towel, and microwave 30 seconds or until pliable. Repeat with remaining tortillas.
5. Spread ¼ cup enchilada sauce evenly on bottom of baking dish. Spoon ¼ cup squash and bean mixture onto center of each tortilla and roll up. Place seam side down in baking dish.
6. Pour remaining enchilada sauce evenly

\$500 WINNER

## Shrimp Enchiladas

JANICE MERCK  
PEDERNALES EC



Merck has been cooking up these enchiladas for over 30 years to rave reviews, and, baby, I get it! I absolutely loved these creamy shrimp enchiladas. The simplicity of the sauce in this coastal twist on classic enchiladas was so ... wow!



- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, divided use**
- 1 cup finely chopped onion**
- 1 cup chopped green chiles, drained**
- ¾ cup finely chopped green bell pepper**
- 3 teaspoons salt, divided use**
- 2 teaspoons ground white pepper, divided use**
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper, divided use**
- 4 teaspoons ground oregano, divided use**
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic**

- 3 cups heavy cream**
- 1 cup sour cream**
- 8 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese, divided use**
- 2 pounds medium shrimp, peeled and deveined**
- ¾ cup finely chopped green onions**
- ½ cup vegetable oil**
- 20 corn tortillas**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, melt ½ cup butter. Add onion, chiles, bell pepper, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon white pepper, ½ teaspoon cayenne and 2 teaspoons oregano. Cook 10 minutes, stirring often. Add garlic and cook an additional minute.
3. Stir in heavy cream, bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer uncovered 10 minutes, stirring constantly.
4. Whisk in sour cream until sauce is smooth, then add 3 cups cheese, 1 cup at a time, whisking after each addition until all cheese melts. Remove from heat and set aside.
5. In a 4-quart saucepan over medium-high heat, melt the remaining ½ cup butter. Add shrimp, green onions and remaining seasonings—2 teaspoons salt, 1 teaspoon white pepper, ½ teaspoon cayenne and 2 teaspoons oregano. Cook about 5 minutes, until shrimp is fully cooked.
6. Stir in cream sauce, reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
7. In a small skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Lightly fry each tortilla 2–3 seconds on each side and place on paper towels to drain.
8. Spoon ⅓ cup of shrimp mixture into the center of each tortilla. Roll and place seam side down in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Spoon remaining sauce over rolled tortillas and sprinkle with remaining 5 cups cheese.
9. Bake 10 minutes or until cheese melts.

SERVES 10

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

CANDIES AND FUDGE DUE MAY 10

Homemade confections can be sure to make an impression and draw a crowd. Send us your best treats, and you could win \$500. Enter by May 10.

UPCOMING: TURKEY TIME DUE JUNE 10



CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >

## RECIPES CONTINUED

over tortillas. Spread cheese evenly over enchiladas and top with black olives.

7. Bake 15–20 minutes, until heated through and cheese is melted. Remove from oven and sprinkle with green onions.

SERVES 6

### Buffalo Ranch Chicken Enchiladas

CARLA MOON  
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning
- 2 tablespoons ranch seasoning, divided use
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1½ cups Buffalo sauce, divided use
- 1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), softened



- 2 cups shredded pepper jack cheese, divided use
- 1 whole cooked chicken, deboned and shredded
- 12 corn tortillas

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In a skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook onion and bell pepper until soft and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add Cajun seasoning and 1 tablespoon ranch seasoning and stir.

3. Add stock and 1 cup Buffalo sauce. Reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes or until sauce is slightly thickened. Remove from heat and set aside.

4. In a large bowl, stir together cream cheese, remaining 1 tablespoon ranch seasoning, remaining ½ cup Buffalo sauce and 1 cup pepper jack. Stir well, then stir in shredded chicken.

5. Spread ¼ cup enchilada sauce in the bottom of the prepared baking dish. Place about ¼ cup of the chicken and cream cheese mixture in the center of each tortilla and roll. Place each rolled tortilla in the baking dish seam side down. Spoon remaining sauce over enchiladas. Top with remaining 1 cup pepper jack.

6. Cover dish with foil and bake 15 minutes. Uncover and bake about 15 more minutes or until cheese is bubbly and slightly browned on the edges.

SERVES 6

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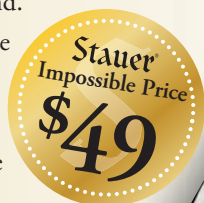
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## A Walk on the Wild Side

This ranch boasts cows and pigs—but also giraffes and kangaroos

BY CHET GARNER

**HAVE YOU EVER** wanted to dine with a giraffe? Swim with an otter? Hold a baby kangaroo? Of course you have! Blue Hills Ranch, a 150-acre wildlife sanctuary outside Waco, can make all your wildest dreams come true.

I was giddy as I pulled up to the farmhouse that now serves as the office for this exotic ranch. I walked in and felt like I had stepped into the office of Dr. Dolittle. Two St. Bernard dogs lay on the floor like giant rugs while a potbellied pig and kangaroo poked around the kitchen.

Owner Matt Lieberman explained how his ranch started as a wedding venue with a couple giraffes in the pasture to make for interesting photos. But he soon realized animals were much easier than brides—and much more fun. He started adding other species, including axis deer and zebras, and had soon built one of the most interesting interactive animal adventures in Texas.

My first experience was a leisurely drive through the ranch feeding the dozens of species that populate the hills. Let me say, there isn't anything much scarier (or slimier) than the tongue of a hungry Highland cow.

Next I headed for the hot tub, where I spent an hour swimming with resident otters Otto and Sweet Pea. I've never met more curious creatures and could have spent the entire afternoon feeding them bits of shrimp as they treated me like a human jungle gym.

When it was time for the grand finale, we grabbed a picnic basket and headed out for dinner with Blue, the giraffe. There are few better ways to enjoy a Texas sunset than with a 16-foot-tall giraffe sniffing your plate for grapes and crackers.

I've done a lot of amazing things in Texas, but this has to be one of the wildest of them all. ■

ABOVE Chet finds himself on friendly terms with a giraffe at Blue Hills Ranch.

**TCP** Watch the video on our website and see all Chet's Texplorations 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.

# MAY

## 8

**Abilene [8–11] Western Heritage Classic,** (325) 677-4376, [westernheritageclassic.com](http://westernheritageclassic.com)

## 9

**Grand Prairie [9–11] Asian Heritage Fest,** (972) 975-5100, [asiatimesquare.com](http://asiatimesquare.com)

## 10

**Brenham 7 Bridges: The Ultimate Eagles Experience,** (979) 337-7240, [thebarnhillcenter.com](http://thebarnhillcenter.com)

**Corsicana Mimosas at the Market,** (903) 654-4850, [visitcorsicana.com](http://visitcorsicana.com)

**El Campo Crawfish & Gumbo Cook-Off,** (979) 275-1600, [eclostlagoon.com](http://eclostlagoon.com)

**Palestine Wiggy Thump Festival,** 1-800-659-3484, [visitpalestine.com](http://visitpalestine.com)

**Winnsboro Max and Heather Stalling,** (903) 342-0686, [winnsborocenterforthearts.com](http://winnsborocenterforthearts.com)

## 13

**Fort Worth [13–18] MJ,** (817) 212-4280, [basshall.com](http://basshall.com)

## 15

**Luling Field Day,** (830) 875-2438, [lulingfoundation.org](http://lulingfoundation.org)

**Pasadena [15–18] Strawberry Festival,** (281) 991-9500, [strawberryfest.org](http://strawberryfest.org)

## 16

**Columbus [16–17] Magnolia Days Festival,** (979) 732-8385, [magnoliadays.org](http://magnoliadays.org)



## Pick of the Month

### Texas Route 66 Festival

Amarillo, June 5-14

1-800-692-1338, visitamarillo.com

Ten fun-filled days along Texas' stretch of the iconic highway include classic car shows, live music, a cattle drive and parade, bus tours, and a rodeo dance. The grand finale June 14 features Elvis impersonators, a pinup pageant, corn dog eating contests and kids' activities.

17

**El Campo** Coletto Creek BBQ Association Cook-Off, (979) 275-1600, eclostlagoon.com

**La Grange** Bluff Schuetzen-Fest, (979) 968-5658, friendsofkbmh.org

**Round Top** Vanity Fur Fashion Show, (979) 966-0021, janssenanimalshelter.org

21

**Winnsboro** [21-July 19] Gary Bachers Memorial Art Exhibit & CJ Bachers, (903) 342-0686, winnsborocenterforthearts.com

22

**Grapeland** [22-24] Salmon Lake Park Gospel Bluegrass Festival, (936) 687-2594, slpbluegrass.com

MORE EVENTS >

## TCP Submit Your Event

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



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**TICKETS:**  
[www.fbcraftbeerfestival.com](http://www.fbcraftbeerfestival.com)

# MAY EVENTS CONTINUED

23

**Fredericksburg [23-25]**  
**Crawfish Festival,**  
[fbgcrawfishfestival.com](http://fbgcrawfishfestival.com)

**Victoria [23-25] Memorial**  
**Weekend Bash,**  
(361) 485-3116,  
[discovervictoriatexas.com](http://discovervictoriatexas.com)

**Granbury [23-26]**  
**Memorial Day Weekend**  
**Festival,** (682) 936-4550,  
[granburysquare.com](http://granburysquare.com)

24

**Freeport [24-Aug. 13]**  
**Shark Exhibit,** (979) 233-  
0066, [facebook.com/](https://facebook.com/freeportmuseum)  
[freeportmuseum](http://freeportmuseum)

30

**El Paso Downtown**  
**Treasures,** (915) 533-0048,  
[tomlea.com](http://tomlea.com)

31

**Godley Christian Music**  
**Fest,** (817) 389-2287,  
[godleymethodist.org](http://godleymethodist.org)

JUNE  
7

**Corsicana The '77**  
**Experience: Hits of 1977**  
**Tribute,** (903) 874-7792,  
[corsicanapalace.com](http://corsicanapalace.com)

**Fredericksburg Lucken-**  
**bach School Open House,**  
(830) 685-3321,  
[historicschools.org](http://historicschools.org)

**Waxahachie [7-8]**  
**Gingerbread Trail Tour of**  
**Homes,** (469) 309-4040,  
[waxahachiecvb.com](http://waxahachiecvb.com)

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# Patterns

We marvel with these readers at the smooth repetition of human-made structures and the chaotic arrangements found in nature. While they may seem random at first, if we just step back, we see the big picture.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1

**1 SHARON BLUNT**  
COSERV

"Turkey tail mushrooms on a fallen log in Caddo Lake State Park."

**2 MARK HOLLY**  
BANDERA EC

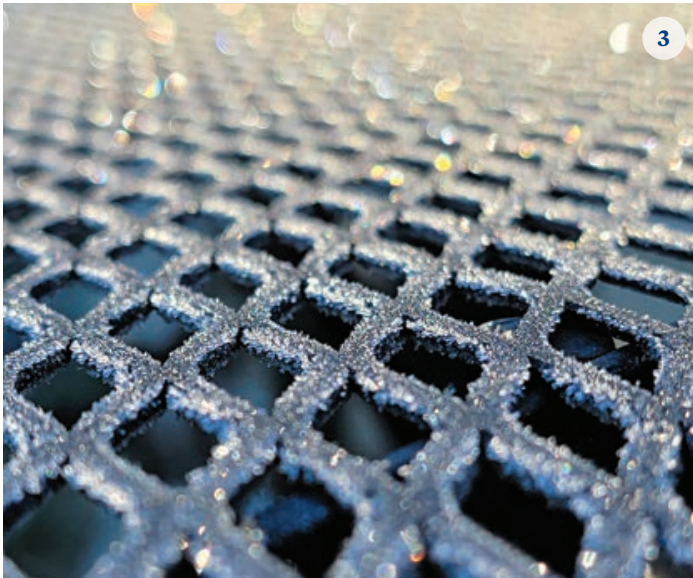
Hotel balconies along the San Antonio River Walk.

**3 KATHY DUMAS**  
PEDERNALES EC

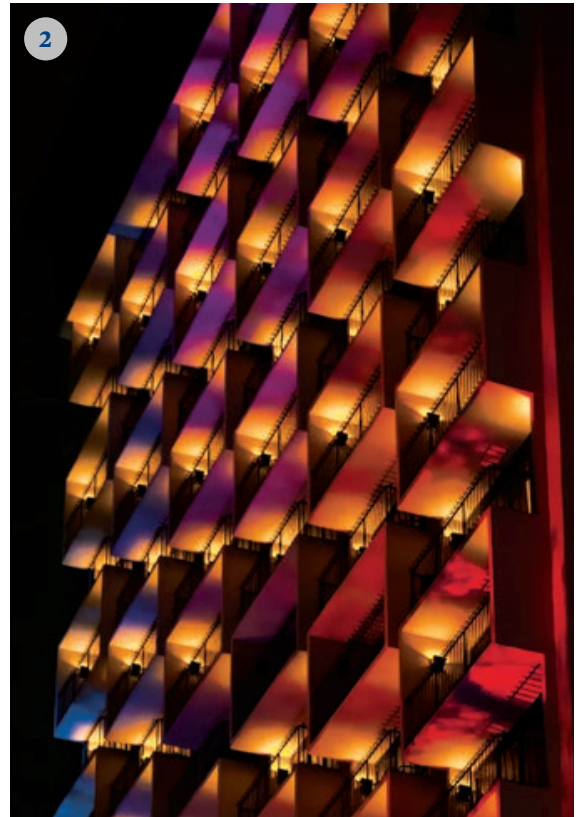
"I captured the morning sun sparkling off the frost on the grates of a patio table."

**4 KEITH CUDDEBACK**  
PEDERNALES EC

Fallen leaves at Lost Maples State Natural Area.



3



2



4

## Upcoming Contests

**DUE MAY 10** Off-Road Adventures

**DUE JUN 10** Heroes

**DUE JUL 10** Abstract



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

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



## Stepping Up

Our family tree branched out with Bobbin, at first a stranger

BY MARTHA DEERING  
ILLUSTRATION BY  
ANNA GODEASSI

**WE CALLED OUR** grandmother Bobbin. I'm not sure why. She was my mother's stepmother, acquired with some reluctance on Mother's part when her father remarried a few years after her own mother died of rheumatic heart disease.

By the time Bobbin came into her life, my mother was a tiny tyrant, used to having her father and a string of housekeepers kowtow to her every need.

To be fair, it must be hard to lose your mother at the tender age of 6, especially since Mother was not allowed to attend the funeral. No one explained to her what had happened.

Mother, a petite, lively tomboy with shining dark hair, and Bobbin could hardly have been more different. Bobbin was tall and willowy with long blond hair. As the wedding approached, she pored

over a box of family photos, trying to capture a past she had not shared.

There were problems, of course. They faced the task of consciously building the bridge of communication and love that typically develops naturally between parents and their children. My grandfather, superintendent of schools in a small Wisconsin town, could do little more than stand by and watch with love and understanding.

Bobbin's well-meaning friends offered unsolicited advice. Mother's playmates stood ready with sympathy. "Is she mean to you?" they asked. But most of the problems seemed to stem from worrying too much.

Admiration and love gradually grew. When Mother learned in her early teens that Bobbin was expecting, she rushed out to be the first to buy a present for the new arrival.

Years later, Mother shared this bit of advice with Bobbin, who was writing an article about stepmothers: "Tell them to be demonstrative about showing affection even if the child doesn't appear to want it. I used to pretend I didn't want to be hugged and kissed, but deep down I wanted it badly."

By the time Mother married and had a family of her own, none of us perceived a difference between our beloved Bobbin and other grandmothers. When she rode the train to Texas to visit us, she was entangled in so many loving arms, she couldn't move out of the way to allow other passengers to disembark.

She regularly trounced my brothers and me at Scrabble—no surprise since later in life she worked in Washington, D.C., as an editor at the national cathedral. As much as she loved us, she never let us win.

We lost her in her 80s when a young addict grabbed her purse as she walked home from church, slamming her onto the sidewalk. She only had \$20. If he had asked her, she would have gladly given it to him.

Bobbin's DNA did not match ours; she was a grandmother of the heart. ■

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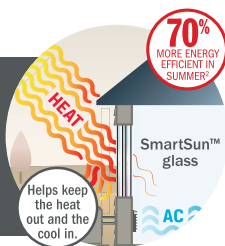
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