

HE TAUGHT HOLLYWOOD
STARS TO TALK TEXAN

BESSIE COLEMAN'S REACH
KNEW NO BOUNDS

CHAGRIN OVER
MY FATHER

Texas Coop Power

FOR MEDINA EC MEMBERS

JUNE 2021

After Nature Strikes

How co-ops join forces
to get the power back on



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June 2021



07

'That's What Co-ops Are For'

Three months of historic weather in 2020 and the February polar vortex unleash the full force of Texas' co-op family.

Stories by Chris Burrows

ON THE COVER

A co-op crew works to restore power near Lake Charles, Louisiana, after Hurricane Delta.

Photo by Chad Simon | Sam Houston EC

ABOVE

Lineworkers across Texas scrambled to restore power during the polar vortex in February.

Photo courtesy Pedernales EC

12 Texas Talk Man

Robert Hinkle had some of Hollywood's biggest stars talkin' and dressin' the part.

By Jessica Ridge

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Parent Imperfect

By Martha Deeringer



Sunset Cinema

DRIVE-IN THEATERS have enjoyed a resurgence since last spring as the COVID-19 pandemic forced folks to find forms of entertainment that didn't risk their health. Even before that, drive-ins were thriving in Texas, as we wrote about in *Drive in, Chill Out* in June 2019.

June 6 National Drive-In Movie Day

Grab some popcorn and celebrate.

“Noble fathers have noble children.”

—EURIPIDES

Can-Do Perspective

Recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to run a 14-watt CFL for 20 hours, a computer for three hours or a TV for two hours.



Storm Surge

A record 30 named storms formed in the Atlantic Ocean in 2020. Thirteen of those named storms turned into hurricanes, and three of them—Hanna, Laura and Delta—brought high winds or heavy rain or both to Texas, which mobilized lineworkers across the state. See *'That's What Co-ops Are For'* on Page 8.

As the planet warms, scientists say, hurricanes are lingering longer and staying stronger once they make landfall.

Alas, hurricane season begins again June 1 and runs through November.

Heavy Metal

THE LARGEST PLAYABLE GUITAR in the world is 43½ feet tall, 16½ feet wide and weighs 1 ton, according to Guinness World Records. Built by students from the Conroe Independent School District Academy of Science and Technology, it's modeled on a 1967 Gibson Flying V and was first played in June 2000 with the opening chord of *A Hard Day's Night*.



TCP Contests and More

ON TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Pies

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Fillin' Stations

RECOMMENDED READING

Gas With Class (January 2013) visited a fillin' station that still offered full service.



A CAREER TAKES OFF

Nothing is cooler for an aspiring writer than to see her work in print for the first time.

Ainsley Shaw gets that thrill this month with the publication of *Queen Bess Soared* on Page 29.

Shaw is a first-year student at Maastricht University in the Netherlands, but she began writing about Bessie Coleman, the Texan who became the first African American woman and first Native American woman to earn a pilot's license, in 2020, when she was a senior at Leander High School.

Shaw, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member, participated in the Leander school district's Career Opportunities on Location week by shadowing the staff at *Texas Co-op Power*. "Being in a real writing environment has only reinforced my intention to pursue writing as a career," she said of her COOL experience.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE
I ALWAYS
LAUGH WHEN
MY DAD ...

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town. Below are some of the responses to our April prompt: **I thought I was smart until ...**

I realized I was mis-
taking knowledge
for wisdom.

GAIL DURFEE
MAGIC VALLEY EC
MCALLEN

I left home.

PATTY LONGINO SMITH
VIA FACEBOOK

I began talking less
and listening more.

TAMMIE MANCHESTER
JACKSON EC
SARGENT

To see more responses,
read *Currents* online.



DAVE SHAFER

The Seed Flourishes

“Great story on vintner Alphonse Dotson. Michael Hurd could have added that Dotson shows great character by his choice of dog—the blue Lacy pictured on the cover.”

BEN ROBERTS
HAMILTON COUNTY EC
GATESVILLE

Runaway Scrape's Anguish

Janice Woods Windle wrote about her family's involvement in the Runaway Scrape in her historical novel *True Women* [The Runaway Scrape, April 2021]. One detail I'll never forget is that a child who died on the way east was later dug up and reinterred near home, after the danger was over.

Mary Pritchard
HILCO EC
Midlothian



Gotas de Oro is the best wine, and I'm not a wine drinker [The Seed Flourishes, April 2021]. I could get used to it.

TERESA ATOR
LEIFESTE
VIA FACEBOOK

Botched Attempt

You state that Sarah Fuller was the first female athlete to play in a major college football game and two weeks later was the first woman to score in such a game [A Big Step, Currents, April 2021]. Wrong on both counts.

Katie Hnida played for the University of Colorado in 1999 and New Mexico 2002–04. On August 30, 2003, she kicked two extra points against Texas State to become the first woman to score in a Division I game.

Mike Lusk
Medina EC
San Antonio

Real as It Gets

I must say that in today's world of polemic divisiveness, your homey, well-written and informative magazine is a breath of fresh air. In a world of hypercommercialism at mind-blowing speeds, thanks for being so real.

Douglas Stewart
Pedernales EC
Wimberley



COLLEGIATE IMAGES / GETTY IMAGES

TCP WRITE TO US

letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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Austin, TX 78701

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

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BY CHRIS BURROWS

WALKING THE LINES

WHEN FEBRUARY'S polar vortex brought to Texas enough snow, ice, cold and wind to strain every bit of infrastructure, Cody Hansen, a Bandera Electric Cooperative lineworker, parked his bucket truck on the side of a Hill Country road. He was hoofing it.

"The roads were super snowed over. Then instead of patches of black ice, we had all black ice," he said. "It's a lot more difficult when you have to walk the lines out and try not to break an ankle."

Bandera EC and many of the state's 65 other distribution cooperatives supplied line crews with foul-weather gear—even if they couldn't supply their homes with power—and the lineworkers in turn restored power to millions between grid-mandated rolling outages. Those workers faced fender benders, exhausting conditions and 12-plus-hour shifts as they knocked ice from poles and hammered at frozen gates and chains to keep power flowing to co-op members.

But for many, the work wasn't done when their lights were back on. Not when others still needed help.

About a dozen co-ops sent workers to other cooperatives after ice broke thousands of poles across Co-op Country and residential heating demand overwhelmed other electrical equipment, stretching thin co-ops and crews.

"When our system was on the ground and members were without power, it was reassuring to know we had support from our co-op family," said Kathi Calvert, general manager at Houston County EC.

Borne out of hardship and guided by the Seven Cooperative Principles, including Cooperation Among Cooperatives, Texas' electric co-ops worked together, helped along by the very members they serve, to do what they've always done.

"Our crews in the field were constantly stuck and having to be pulled around due to the icy conditions," said Bryan Chandler, operations manager at Heart of Texas EC. "Our members came to our aid with food, fuel and tractors to help pull trucks."

It took everyone working cooperatively.

"This was definitely the worst winter storm I have worked in," said Doug Grimm, a 20-year linework veteran for Bluebonnet EC. "We did what we always do: Come together and get the job done." ■

AFTER TEXAS THAWED AND THE LIGHTS CAME BACK ON IN FEBRUARY, CO-OP LINEWORKERS STILL WEREN'T DONE

COURTESY PEDERNALES AND SAM HOUSTON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



'THAT'S WHAT CO-OPS ARE FOR'



BY CHRIS BURROWS



THREE MONTHS OF HISTORIC WEATHER IN 2020 UNLEASHED THE FULL FORCE OF TEXAS' CO-OP FAMILY

IT wasn't the 16-hour days or the searing heat. It wasn't the meager accommodations—a 100-man tent—or the fact that he'd had only five days off in seven weeks. Speaking from a mud-caked work truck in southwest Louisiana, James Warden didn't bring up any of those things.

"The hardest part is being away from home," Warden said. He had just missed his youngest son's eighth birthday. "When I'm working at home, I still get to see my kids and wife when I come in late at night. I at least get to kiss 'em good night, but here it's just a phone call."

The construction foreman for Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative was five days into his second trip in about a month to DeRidder, Louisiana, where he was helping an electric co-op severely damaged by hurricanes Laura and Delta. It was mid-October 2020, and Warden's crew, based out of San Augustine in East Texas, was setting poles and hanging lines, some of which they'd already reset and rehung weeks before, following Laura. That hurricane knocked out power to Warden's own home and heavily damaged his own co-op's lines.

But the day after the lights were back on in East Texas, Warden was in Louisiana. He left his own family to help another family—the co-op family.

In his 24 years as a lineworker, Warden has worked the front lines of major recovery efforts, including after hurricanes Katrina and Rita. But he had never experienced anything like this. He'd never had to miss one of his four kids' birthdays.

"When we first got here, there weren't hardly any lines up in the air," he said. "Their whole system was tore up. It was just wiped. When you drove down the highway, just about every pole you would look at was broke."



Co-ops follow the Seven Cooperative Principles, including Cooperation Among Cooperatives, through which they seek aid from and offer assistance to fellow co-ops during times of crisis.

COURTESY BLUEBONNET, HILCO, HOUSTON COUNTY, PEDERNALES, SAM HOUSTON AND SWISHER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



'EVERY TIME WE HAVE A STORM AT HOME AND IT GETS REAL BAD, PEOPLE VOLUNTEER TO COME HELP US. BEING A LINEMAN, WHAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO IS GO HELP PEOPLE.'

Relentlessly dedicated lineworkers like Warden have for more than 80 years ensured that the lights stay on across Co-op Country, where cooperatives rely on one another when disaster strikes. The full force of that network was on brilliant display last fall, when Laura in August, Hurricane Sally in September and Delta in October ripped through the South, including parts of Texas, killing dozens, displacing many more and destroying electrical infrastructure. And then an unprecedented ice storm tore apart co-op grids in West Texas and the Panhandle.

By the end of last October, lineworkers from every part of Texas had helped restore power for more than a quarter-million co-op members in Texas, Louisiana and Alabama—resetting thousands of poles along hundreds of miles.

But lineworkers like Ben Perry don't measure progress in miles or meters. They measure it in relieved faces.

"That's probably what will stick with me the most—the people that were there, the hospitality," said Perry, a foreman for United Cooperative Services, a co-op based south of Fort Worth. Perry, like Warden, was part of a crew dispatched to Louisiana to help Beauregard EC, whose entire electrical system was taken offline by Laura—the strongest recorded hurricane to ever make landfall in Louisiana. The Category 4 storm killed 77 after it made landfall August 27, 2020, packing 150 mph winds.

Laura dealt serious damage to several Texas co-ops but decimated Beauregard EC, prompting a call for help that

drew more than 1,200 lineworkers from across the South and Midwest, including Warden and Perry, for a massive monthslong power restoration effort. "We really couldn't do it without them," said Danielle Tilley, communications specialist at Beauregard EC.

"The devastation from that storm was unreal," said Brad Morrow, another United lineworker. "It seemed like everywhere you drove, there were trees and debris, and any sort of house or building was destroyed."

Twenty Texas co-ops sent help to Jasper-Newton EC, where 90% of that East Texas co-op's 22,900 members had no power. General Manager Mark Tamplin was grateful. "Assistance from other cooperatives was extremely critical to the restoration effort," he said.

"Every time we have a storm at home and it gets real bad, people volunteer to come help us," Warden said. "Being a lineman, what you're supposed to do is go help people."

Cooperation Among Cooperatives, one of the Seven Cooperative Principles that guide all co-ops, ensures that help is just a phone call away when any co-op anywhere needs it.

"Whenever they call us, we're obligated to go help because there'll be times in the future when I know we'll need help," Perry said. "That's just what you do."

Tate Glasscock knows firsthand.

The foreman at Lighthouse EC, based in the Texas Panhandle, also made the trip east after Laura's onslaught, driving eight hours to spend 10 days helping Jasper-Newton EC.



From August through October, Texas lineworkers faced sweltering and then arctic conditions after hurricanes in the Gulf and an ice storm in West Texas and the Panhandle devastated co-ops' infrastructure.

"That's what co-ops are for—to help each other," Glasscock said.

Just a few weeks after returning from East Texas, Glasscock's own co-op was hit by a devastating ice storm that snapped upward of 3,700 power poles and knocked offline more than 63,000 meters across 15-plus cooperatives in West Texas and the Panhandle. The October storm coated power lines with half-inch-thick ice, which can add 500 pounds to a single span of line, toppling crossarms, lines and poles across sparse stretches of plains.

Help poured in to the co-ops affected by the ice, which a South Plains EC spokesperson called "the most devastating storm we've had in 20 years"; Lighthouse EC general manager Albert Daniel said was "the worst storm to ever hit Lighthouse by all recollections"; and Lyntegar EC called "likely the largest single outage event ... in the history of the cooperative."

Suddenly Glasscock and many fellow first responders were the ones in need of help after they just provided it.

"In my nearly 20-year career, I've never seen anything this detrimental to our system," Glasscock said. "Most of the time it's in one specific area. This was our whole system."

United lineworkers Perry and Morrow headed west, just weeks after their tireless work out east, joining a major rebuilding effort in the Panhandle.

"Just seeing those guys roll through the gates, I thought, 'Man, we've got help,'" Glasscock said. "I knew we were in

good shape then."

Progress was much slower in the Panhandle, where homes can be separated by miles.

"I believe the first day that we went out, there were 13 or 14 poles that were on the ground that fed one house," Morrow said. "In Louisiana that might have gotten 30, 40, 50 people on, if not more." But the payoff was no different. "The relief in people's eyes and the joy that they experience is the same."

Between the hurricanes and ice storm, Perry spent about three weeks away from his family over the course of about two months. "I don't know that I'll ever forget this year," said Perry, a 16-year line work veteran. "This has been one of the craziest years that I've been a part of in this work."

Those in need kept him going. That was just as true this past February, when co-op members supported crews through an unprecedented polar vortex. Dangerous roads, iced-over lines and poles, and grid-mandated outages made lineworkers' jobs even more challenging.

"There was the normal fatigue that comes from working so many 12-hour days in a row, but sometimes that was compounded by coming home to a cold house," said Kendal Fiebrich, a Bluebonnet EC lineworker.

Sympathetic members lent support online and in the field—like a woman in Moss Bluff, Louisiana. She cooked up a meal of gumbo "and any kind of Louisiana fixin's you could think of," Morrow said, for linemen from Texas and Missouri who restored her power after weeks of living off a generator.

Strangers united by the co-op family.

"It's the people who make it worthwhile," Morrow said. "You'll never find someone more thankful and willing to help you when you're there to help them." ■

Texas Talk MAN

A full-page photograph of a man in his late 60s or early 70s, smiling at the camera. He is wearing a black cowboy hat, a white long-sleeved shirt, and a black leather vest. A large, ornate silver bolo tie is around his neck. He is leaning his arms on a thick, mossy tree branch. In the background, a brown horse is grazing in a field under trees with some autumn-colored leaves.

He had some
of Hollywood's
biggest stars
talkin' and
dressin'
the part

Robert Hinkle

likes to sit where he can see everyone in the room and who's walking through the door. He leads me to the corner of a long table at the back of a pandemic-emptied Masonic Lodge in Leander and chooses a seat with a clear view of the entrance. He wears an Air Force cap and a sky-blue Mason's shirt embroidered with "N. Hollywood," each emblematic of the twists and turns of his prolific career.

Attention to wardrobe figured into Hinkle's duties as unofficial technical adviser on the West Texas and Panhandle sets of *Giant* and *Hud*, two better-known entries in the catalog of midcentury Texas cinema. When costume design choices went awry—a hat that wasn't creased correctly or was impractical for work, jeans too short for horseback riding—he would issue a concise verdict: "A Texan wouldn't wear that," then figure out a fix.

That was just one duty on two projects over an entertainment career that spanned decades and comprised a raft of roles: stuntman, actor, writer, producer, director and Texas talk man, as *Giant* director George Stevens dubbed him.

Hinkle's preference for an unobstructed view isn't surprising, either. A few years before he coached Hollywood luminaries Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman on the nuances of a type of Texas dialect—leaving the "g" off words like "walking" and emphasizing r's when they ended a word such as "mother" or "father"—he enjoyed an embarrassment of bird's-eye views.

Born and raised in the South Plains of Texas, Hinkle left high school in 1947 to join the Air Force at 17 after securing a promise from a recruiter that he could continue his education while enlisted. "Nobody in my family ever had a high school diploma," he says. After earning that credential, he spent several months in Europe working on a crew that flew coal from Frankfurt to Berlin.

On one trip, the co-pilot had a heart attack midflight. Hinkle took over co-pilot duties for the rest of the round



Robert Hinkle lassos Elizabeth Taylor on the set of *Giant*.

trip, thanks to the private pilot's license he'd earned at 16.

While stationed overseas, Hinkle's first stop in Vienna was to board the Riesenrad, a 212-foot-tall Ferris wheel. It was a precursor to a ride he'd take a few years later, on a Ferris wheel much closer to home, with his good friend James Dean.

Not bad for a kid from Brownfield who didn't officially exist on paper until his 20s.

The country doctor who attended Hinkle's birth on an unelectrified Terry County ranch in 1930 misrecorded his first name as "Bobbie." It didn't get corrected until some 22 years later, when Hinkle went to the courthouse with his aunt and uncle in tow to vouch for his identity. Today, the nonagenarian takes that misnomer in stride, along with the doctor's weeklong delay in recording his birth on the county rolls. "That old doctor," he says, not unkindly. "At least he got me here."

Hinkle's family followed the crops around for work for a time after his birth. "We were poor," he says. "They were



James Dean shows Hinkle how well he's learned to hogtie.

poor people.” After the military and before setting out for Hollywood, Hinkle worked as a weekend rodeo cowboy and in construction, among other jobs. His 12-hour shifts in a West Texas oil field in 1950 and 1951 earned him \$1.76 an hour and, years later, a foothold in a conversation with Howard Hughes, the manufacturing scion and film producer.

An uncredited role in a 1956 film, *The First Traveling Saleslady*, led to a chance meeting of the two Texas transplants in Hollywood. After being instructed by the director to all but pretend not to even see Hughes as he visited the set, Hinkle was wrangled into meeting him anyway when the film's star, Ginger Rogers, walked him over. The inventor didn't offer to shake hands, Hinkle says, but the two quickly found common ground: Much to the magnate's approval, the drill bits the supporting player had used in his oil field days were manufactured by Hughes Tool Company.

During *Giant's* 1955 production, Hinkle, James Dean and Elizabeth Taylor, along with a handful of other cast and crew members, repaired to Dallas over the Fourth of July weekend, all because the famously violet-eyed star couldn't resist the siren song of Neiman Marcus. Hinkle called the luxury retailer and dropped a few names. Stanley Marcus, the store's owner, not only agreed to allow the group entry to the store on a Sunday, when it would typically be closed, but also sent a plane to Marfa to whisk the group to Love Field.

After being feted by Dallas society in Stanley and Billie Marcus' Highland Park mansion, Hinkle, Taylor and Dean embarked on their shopping excursion, followed by an outing to an offseason Fair Park, home to the state fair, where they rode a rickety wooden roller coaster, sampled carnival fare, played midway games and boarded the soaring Texas Star.

The lighthearted weekend contrasted with Dean's

intense focus on getting the part of Jett Rink, the anti-hero of *Giant*, just right.

“He told me, the day I met him, ‘I want you to help me be a Texan 24 hours a day,’” Hinkle says. During filming, the pair grew close as the dialogue coach modeled Texan sensibilities for Dean. They shared meals, pulled pranks and hunted rabbits together. “He was like a brother,” Hinkle says, “just like I was raised with him there in Brownfield.”

Hinkle says Dean wasn't a big star then, having only one film credit at the time. But his commitment to his craft

and his precision in shaping a character in the likeness of his mentor precipitated a friendship.

“He was so dedicated,” says Hinkle, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member. “He wanted to be with me all the time. Because he wanted to be a Texan. I mean, he watched everything I did and everything I said, watched every person that I met, how I met 'em and things like that, and he just studied it.”

That osmosis translated to the screen. Dean received a posthumous Oscar nomination for the role, which came as no surprise to his grieving friend.

“He could have played *Giant* a different way, you know,” Hinkle says. “He wanted to play him just as an old down and out cowboy, didn't have anything and didn't figure he'd ever have anything, except a dream.”

After filming of *Giant* ended, Dean gave a replica Oscar to Hinkle, inscribed with his name, to thank him for creating the character.

Back at the Masonic Lodge, the afternoon unspools. Just before he tells me about recruiting Buddy Holly to headline a car-selling telethon starring Western character actor Chill Wills, strains of *El Paso* fill the room. It's Hinkle's iPhone ring tone. His eyes crinkle. “That's Marty Robbins,” he says. “I managed him for 14 years.”

Looking back on his half-century career, spanning roles from cowboy stuntman to mentor to manager and many points in between, I ask if there's anything he'd change.

“No,” he says. “I'd just love to do it again. I've had a lot of rough times and things—boy, I'd take them right along with the good ones, if I could just do it one more time.” ■

TCP WEB EXTRA Want to see more from Hinkle's Hollywood days? Visit our website.



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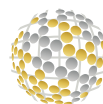
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THE BEST SOURCE FOR COINS WORLDWIDE™

SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest—but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and snatched it up for our **Sedona Turquoise Collection**. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features a unique, one-

of-a-kind matrix surrounded in Bali metalwork. You could drop over \$1,200 on a turquoise pendant, or you could secure 26 carats of genuine Arizona turquoise for **just \$99**.

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The supply of Arizona turquoise is limited, don't miss your chance to own the Southwest's brilliant blue treasure. Call today!

Jewelry Specifications:

• Arizona turquoise • Silver-finished settings

Sedona Turquoise Collection

A. Pendant (26 cts)	\$299	\$99*	Save \$200
B. 18" Bali Naga woven sterling silver chain		\$149	
C. 1 1/2" Earrings (10 ctw)	\$299	\$99*	Save \$200
Complete Set**	\$747	\$249	Save \$498

** Complete set includes pendant, chain and earrings.

Call now and mention the offer code to receive your collection.

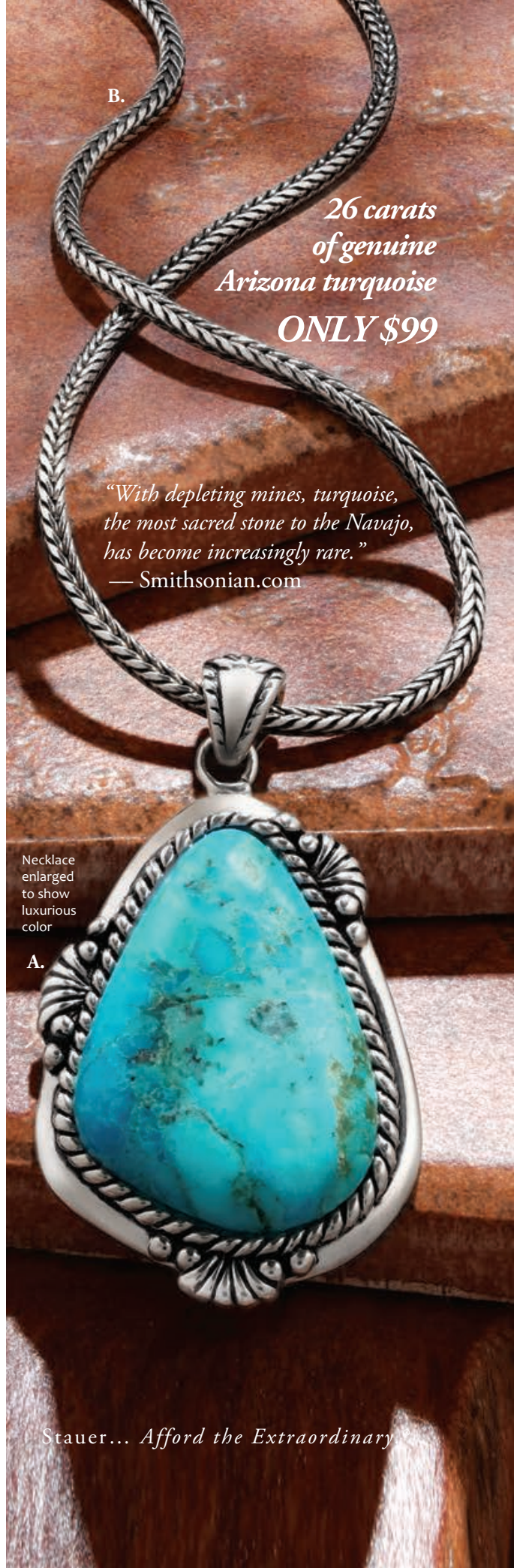
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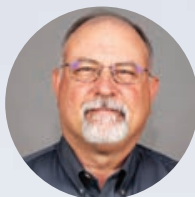
"With depleting mines, turquoise, the most sacred stone to the Navajo, has become increasingly rare."

— Smithsonian.com

Necklace
enlarged
to show
luxurious
color

A.

Stauer... Afford the Extraordinary



MESSAGE
FROM CEO

MARK
ROLLANS

Being Prepared for Trouble

NORMALLY WE ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO PREPARE for storms in the June magazine, since hurricane season is beginning. This year, many of our members have had a very recent firsthand look at the damage a storm can cause.

As I write this column, we are a week past one of the worst storms I have been caught in. On the evening of April 28, many Medina County families were finishing up dinner as phones began sounding with a tornado warning for the area.

What followed can only be described as the loudest 10 minutes of hail I have ever heard—and it felt like much longer than that. I know most of my Medina County neighbors experienced the same and many worse, as a tornado is confirmed to have touched down just south of Hondo.

Our electric system sustained severe damage from the storm. It impacted members in Uvalde and Medina counties, with Medina County hit hardest. Just after the storm, 65% of the members there were without power. A tornado has not been confirmed in any other areas, but our crews responded to locations all over the county with obvious damage from severe straight-line winds and hail. The widespread nature of the damage was unlike most storms we have seen.

One hailstone gathered during the storm measured 6.4 inches across and will be inspected by a state climate extremes committee, which will determine if it's a record size. It's suspected that it will set a new record for Texas.

Medina Electric Cooperative had 41 distribution poles knocked over or broken and 42 transmission poles taken down in the storm. The path of the confirmed tornado went directly in line with a large span of transmission line. Crews had to splice lines in nearly 100 locations where they were broken.

As soon as the storm struck Wednesday night, our crews began reporting to locations, and contractors were called in to assist. We could not fully assess the damage that night,

but it was clear even in the dark that there was significant damage so no time was wasted in getting other crews and contractors in place to assist. Contractors were also brought in to pull our trucks into and out of locations with dozers, which proved especially important Saturday as more rain hit and flooding occurred. Helicopters were called in for aerial assessments, so our crews would have a better idea of the nature of the damage.

Our team worked tirelessly, and the last few members had power restored Sunday night, May 3. We recognize the inconvenience of the outages, especially for the length that some of them lasted, and appreciate the understanding of all the members who were impacted.

We know that so many members in the area are now fixing up property damage as roofs were completely ripped off homes and holes from hail went completely through many windows and decking on roofs. Many of our employees who were responding to the storm are dealing with this same damage.

Thursday morning, as our crews continued responding to outages from the storm, one of the first entities on the scene was the Hill County Chapter of the American Red Cross. They were helping get people immediate access to much-needed supplies. To assist in the storm relief efforts of many of our members, Medina EC made a \$10,000 donation to them the week after the storm.

One thing I do know is we will get through this. These events always make us stronger.

If you are having trouble paying your electric bill because of the financial impact the storm has had on you, please call our office and talk to our service representatives and they will work with you to help. We also have many community partners that can assist members in need. ■

Preparation Checklist

Hurricane season runs from June through November, and tornado season peaks in June. Be sure your family is ready for storms. The best time to prepare is before the storm is near, so make plans to review these tips quarterly.

KNOW YOUR RISK. Medina EC serves 17 counties over more than 10,000 square miles of Texas, so every area faces different problems from a storm that moves into the Gulf or over the mountains of Mexico. Be familiar with the common problems from storms in your area and prepare accordingly.

LISTEN TO WEATHER FORECASTS often so you'll know when high winds, hail or heavy rain are on their way. If a storm is expected in the Gulf, pay attention to where forecasters think it's headed and know what effects it could have where you live. When storms build over mountains in Mexico, keep an eye on how they build as the move into Texas.

FOR TORNADO WARNINGS stay away from windows, doors and outside walls. The best place to be is an interior room on the lowest floor. Cover yourself in blankets, towels or something to protect you from debris.

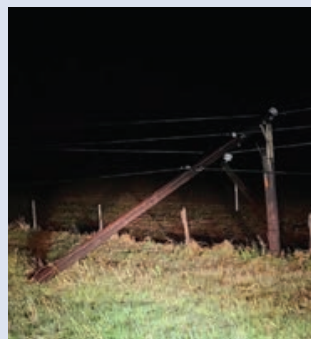
PREPARE AN OUTAGE KIT that contains a battery-powered radio, fresh batteries, a flashlight, candles, matches, a wind-up clock, and paper plates and plastic utensils.

CHARGE UP if you're normally plugged in and rely on your phone, laptop or mobile device for information. Be sure all devices you use are fully charged before a storm rolls through and consider investing in a back-up battery for these devices.

FILL UP on gas, just in case a power outage makes fuel inaccessible or supplies run low.

KEEP A STOCK OF CANNED FOOD and a manual can opener. Consider buying a camp stove and fuel that you can use (outdoors only) if you can't cook on your electric stove. It's also a good idea to have some bottled or jug water on hand. The recommendation in high-risk hurricane areas is to have enough food and water on hand to last each person in your family a minimum of one week.

CASH IS KING during widespread disasters, and many people learn the hard way that you can't buy much without cash when the power is out for any length of time. Be sure you have what you think is a safe, ample amount of cash so you can get necessities if there is a large, sustained outage in your area.





SYED F. HASHEMI | UPSLASH

2021 Youth Tour Winners

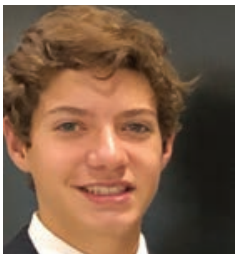
Like many things in 2020 and 2021, Medina EC’s Youth Tour program and contest looked a little different this year.

Youth Tour awards deserving students a \$500 scholarship, an educational trip to a co-op office, and a 10-day, once-in-a-lifetime trip to Austin and Washington, D.C. Each year, Medina EC uses an essay contest to choose three Youth Tour winners. However, in mid-December, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and Texas Electric Cooperatives made the decision to cancel this year’s tour due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As applications had already been submitted, Medina EC’s board of directors voted to continue with the contest, awarding the winners with scholarships and hosting an expanded and improved version of our local Youth Tour Day at Medina EC’s Dilley office.

Students were asked to submit an essay or video answering the question, “If you had the opportunity to change one thing about your school or community, what would it be and why? Additionally, how would you go about making the change?” Medina EC had an impressive response from applicants, and we are happy to announce our winners: Brad Bendele from Hondo, Ava Smith from San Antonio and Aleksandra Flores from Laredo.

To learn more about Medina EC’s Youth Tour program or to sign up to receive notifications, visit MedinaEC.org/YouthTour.



BRAD BENDELE
HONDO



AVA SMITH
SAN ANTONIO



ALEXSANDRA FLORES
LAREDO

Youth Tour Day

To give Medina EC’s Youth Tour applicants a taste of the Youth Tour trip, we planned Youth Tour Day.

Students learned more about electric cooperatives on the local, state and national levels; the history of Youth Tour; a live line safety demonstration; and the various programs Medina EC offers to its members. Students also had a chance to speak with Medina EC’s CEO Mark Rollans and Texas representatives including state Rep. Andrew Murr’s staff, U.S. Rep. Tony Gonzales and state Sen. Roland Gutierrez.



1. STUDENTS SPEAK WITH U.S. REP TONY GONZALES VIA ZOOM. 2. CEO MARK ROLLANS SPEAKS WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS. 3. ATTENDEES VIEW MEDINA EC’S LIVE LINE SAFETY DEMONSTRATION.

Capital Credit Allocations on Your June Bill: What It Means for You

MEDINA EC MEMBERS WILL SEE their 2020 capital credits allocations printed on their June bill. These totals are the 2020 margins that are being assigned to you, and you may be wondering exactly what that means.

At the end of each fiscal year, the funds remaining after expenses have been paid—or net margins—are allocated to members' accounts based on the amount of electricity they used in that year. The allocation totals do not represent cash owed to you at this time. So why can't you have the money that is allocated to your account?

The money allocated to your account is money that the cooperative is using for operating capital: to repay long-term debt; make system improvements, repairs and maintenance; and for other capital needs. Basically, it's still being used to maintain the electric system that provides members, including you, with reliable power.

The board of directors evaluates the financial condition of the cooperative at the end of each year to determine if any portion of capital credits can be retired. That retirement decision is based, in part, on if that money is still needed for operations. If it is not, a portion of the capital credits are retired. The amount retired, if any, changes from year to year based on the financial needs of the cooperative.

Once capital credits are retired, members receive them as either a credit on their bill or through a check. Each retirement is a portion of the total allocation that has been assigned to your account.

"Capital credits, allocated and retired, are another part of the cooperative difference," noted CEO Mark Rollans, "and they really set co-ops apart from other business models."

To learn more about capital credits and see a list of unclaimed credits, visit MedinaEC.org/CapitalCredits.

It's important to keep your address up to date, even after you're no longer a member, so we can return capital credits to you. In the event of the death of a member, contact us to see if the account is eligible for early retirement. You can update your account by calling 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532) or logging in to your SmartHub account. ■

"Capital credits, allocated and retired, are another part of the cooperative difference."

—CEO MARK ROLLANS



ADOBE STOCK | CHRIS NOBLE-DOGLIKEHORSE.COM

Medina EC Awards \$20,000 in Scholarships

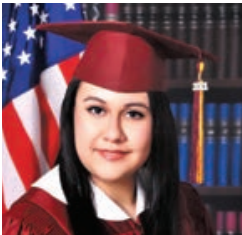
TWENTY AREA STUDENTS have an extra \$1,000 to help with their education expenses next school year.

Medina EC has again awarded \$20,000 in scholarships to area students this May. The scholarship program is an important part of the cooperative's commitment to community and to education. Since it began in 2000, the co-op has awarded more than \$627,000 in scholarships to 423 students from our service area.

Learn more about the scholarship program requirements and eligibility at MedinaEC.org/Scholarship. The scholarship applications generally open up and have a deadline in the first few months of each year. If you have applied in the past and not won, watch for information on next year's scholarship program in January or February 2022.



ABEL RAMIREZ
LAREDO



ABIGAIL CABRERA
ZAPATA



ANDREW ZAPATA
BIGFOOT



AUBREY CHERNAK
HONDO



AUSTIN MCCLARIN
HONDO



BLAKE MULVANY
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DALE DZIERZANOWSKI
DEVINE



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HAILEY MANKA
NATALIA



KADEN LENTZ
HONDO



KOLTEN LENTZ
HONDO



LAUREN SHAFER
PEARSALL



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HONDO



MADISON AINSLEY
HONDO



MORGAN WEYNAND
HONDO



NATALLIE GONZALEZ
RIO GRANDE CITY



NICOLE MARQUEZ
SANTA ELENA



SHELTON LUEDKE
HONDO



Co-op Connections Corner: Home Improvements

Summer is a great time to start home improvement projects indoors and out. These local business partners offer discounts in Medina EC's service area that can help you save money on home improvements.

Integrated Communications Technologies, LP—San Antonio
(830) 931-9898 | rschott@go-ict.com
10% discount on all new alarm system installs

Lopez Ready Mix—Rio Grande City
(956) 487-3366
\$2 off per cubic yard after 10 cubic yards purchased

Ranch Equipment and Hardware (Ace Hardware)—Cotulla
(830) 879-2223 | SouthTexasAce.com
5% discount off all cash purchases except sale, feed and fencing items; 10% discount on paint

Rio Grande Farm and Ranch—Rio Grande City
(956) 716-8236 or (956) 605-4112
10% off items (merchandise only)

W/C Dump—Devine
(210) 882-9219 | WCDump.com
10% off any size roll-off dumpster (10, 20, 30 or 40 yd). Veteran Owned and Operated



Learn more about Medina EC's Co-op Connections program and all the benefits at MedinaEC.org/Connections or on the app.

CONTACT US
Toll-Free 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532)
Email Info@MedinaEC.org
Web MedinaEC.org - Chat Feature Available

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Ken Weynand, (830) 426-0762

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Rodolfo H. Rodriguez, (210) 846-1092

CEO
Mark Rollans, 1-866-MEC-ELEC, ext. 1045

Outage? Call us.

TOLL-FREE
1-866-MEC-ELEC (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 Hwy. 173 N., Hondo 78861
Rio Grande City 601 N. FM 3167, Rio Grande City 78582
Uvalde 2604 Hwy. 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.

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



Summer Outlook for the ERCOT Grid

THE ELECTRIC RELIABILITY COUNCIL OF TEXAS, which oversees 90% of the state’s power grid, including Medina Electric’s service area, expects record electric demand this summer, “due to hot and dry conditions and continued economic and population growth.”

As in the past, ERCOT will issue alerts and declare energy emergencies if needed. Alerts help consumers, including Medina EC 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 implement forced outages across the state. Members saw this occur in February of this year and in 2011. If this occurs again, it is likely to happen very quickly, and it will not be possible for the cooperative to provide advance notice of impacted areas or estimates of how long outages will last.

As always, Medina EC will monitor ERCOT’s grid conditions and recommendations for any conservation requests. If emergency requests are made by ERCOT, Medina EC will comply with those as required and will send email alerts and post updates at MedinaEC.org as quickly as humanly possible.

You can read the current and previous Seasonal Assessment of Resource Adequacy reports at ercot.com/gridinfo/resource.

TEXT

ENERGY TO (855) 429-1119

TO SIGN UP FOR CONSERVATION ALERTS.

On summer days, conservation is generally most critical from 3 to 7 p.m. if you are able, adjust activities to avoid using extra power during this time.

CONSERVATION IS IMPORTANT

Medina EC encourages all members to practice energy conservation, especially on extremely hot days, and the cooperative offers conservation text alerts for those wanting to help conserve energy on crucial days.

If you would like to help, text ENERGY to (855) 429-1119. You can find more energy conservation tips at MedinaEC.org/Hot.

WHAT DOES THE COOPERATIVE DO?

To help combat peak demand in summer months—June through September—Medina EC offers a load management program for members on the cooperative’s irrigation rate.

Through this program, irrigators allow the co-op to shut off power to their irrigation pumps when needed to reduce energy use and strain on the grid. By shedding irrigation load at critical moments, the cooperative can reduce power costs. It also reduces load on the statewide grid during the highest-use times of the summer.

More information about the program is available at MedinaEC.org/LM.

Medical Necessities

IF SOMEONE IN YOUR HOME depends on an electrically operated health aid, your account should be listed on Medina EC's Life Support Registry. To be added, fill out the form at MedinaEC.org/Registry and attach a physician's directive or prescription.

Accounts on this list are notified before planned outages and are flagged as a priority for restoration during unplanned outages. It does not guarantee uninterrupted electrical service, will not prevent you from losing power during forced statewide outages and will not keep your meter from being disconnected for nonpayment. Outages are unavoidable and occur for reasons outside the cooperative's control.

Individuals who rely on life-support equipment should have an emergency plan, including a place to go in the event of an extended power outage, and should consider obtaining backup equipment, such as a generator and any necessary fuel or a battery backup system.

Medina EC offers GenerLink, a device installed by our employees, as an option for members to safely operate their generators should they own one. You can learn more about that service at MedinaEC.org/Generlink.

Protecting Your Privacy

MANAGING YOUR ELECTRIC ACCOUNT gives us access to personal and confidential information and protecting that information is an integral part of the service we provide. We use your name and Social Security number to verify your identity when you sign up for service and when you call with questions on your account.

Your information is kept in encrypted files behind protected firewalls. Only qualified Medina EC employees who have a need to know can access the information. Our IT department ensures that firewalls and antivirus applications prevent unauthorized access.

Printed documents containing member information are kept in locked shredding containers and destroyed.

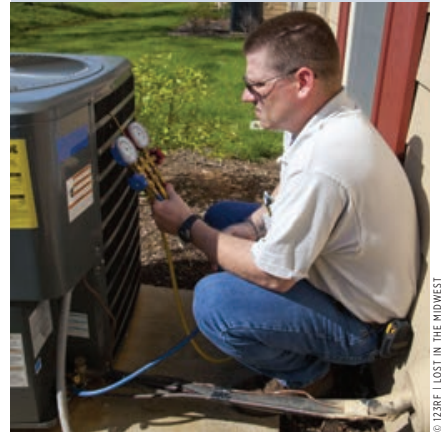
Your information is never sold or given to anyone for the purpose of selling you something. Some information might be provided to third parties acting on behalf of Medina EC and can be disclosed as required by law.

We take the responsibility to protect your personal and confidential information very seriously. Failure of an employee to comply with Medina EC's privacy policy results in punishment and can include termination.

You can also take steps to ensure that your private information stays private and that you don't unknowingly fall victim to a utility scam.

If you get an email that you aren't expecting, don't click on links or reply to it, and don't give out personal information (name, Social Security number, etc.). If the email appears to come from someone you do business with, call them to verify.

Never allow anyone into your home to check electrical wiring, natural gas pipes or appliances unless you scheduled the appointment or reported a problem. Don't be afraid to ask a utility employee for proper identification. If they are on your property, you have every right to verify that they are who they say they are.



© 123RF | LOST IN THE MIDWEST

AC Rebates Available

MEDINA EC OFFERS REBATES for members who purchase certain energy efficiency products and make energy-saving upgrades.

This time of year, many people are getting HVAC systems tuned up or replaced, often out of necessity. If you are doing anything to up the cool factor in your house, keep Medina EC's rebates in mind!

Rebates of \$60 are offered for HVAC tuneups, and rebates of \$35 are available for Energy Star-certified window units. If you are replacing an existing HVAC system with a 15-SEER central AC or heat pump, that may also qualify for a \$200 or \$400 rebate. Check if your purchase or service qualifies for a rebate at MedinaEC.org/Rebates.

The list of items that qualify for rebates also includes water heater blankets, programmable thermostats and Energy Star-certified appliances like refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers and clothes washers.

Learn more about rebates at:
MedinaEC.org/Rebates

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Rating of A+

California residents, please call 1-800-333-2045 regarding Proposition 65 regulations before purchasing this product.

• 3-piece set: 9" overall fixed knife with 5" blade; 4 1/8" trapper knife with two 3 3/8" blades; 4" overall lockback knife with 3" blade • Stainless steel blades with antler patterned resin handle • Comes in decorative display box

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TEXAS MINT

We are excited to announce the release of the 2021 Texas Silver Round – Revolution Series. This is the second release of a four-year series commemorating the battles of the Texas Revolution. Each Texas Silver Round is one troy ounce .9999 fine silver.

The obverse of the high-quality mint strike features Texas' iconic lone star in the foreground. The smooth engraving of the star is framed by a textured topographical outline of the state of Texas. "TEXAS" arches proudly over the top of the round's obverse in large capital letters, with "Precious Metals" presented inversely along the opposite side. The round's mintage year is engraved in the bottom left of the round, just southwest of what would be the Rio Grande bordering Texas and Mexico.

The reverse of the 2021 release displays a scene from the famous Battle of the Alamo. It depicts two Texian soldiers including the American icon, Davy Crockett, attempting to fend off Mexican soldiers attempting to breach the walls of the Alamo.



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BATTLE OF GONZALES

first in the series ● ● ● ●

The stunning 2020 Texas Silver Round depicts a scene from the Battle of Gonzales, with three Texian revolutionaries defending the famous Gonzales cannon, while brandishing the Come And Take It Flag.



BATTLE OF THE ALAMO

second in the series ● ● ● ●

The events of this famous battle took place on the days of February 23rd - March 6th, 1836. At the end of a 13-day siege, President General Antonio López de Santa Anna and his Mexican troops reclaimed the Alamo Mission, killing the Texian and immigrant occupiers.

The Texas Silver Round can be purchased in a monster box produced exclusively for the Texas Mint. Packaged in 20 protective tubes of 25 rounds each, the monster box holds 500 1-ounce Texas Silver Rounds. Built from durable cold-rolled steel and finished with a matte black powder coat, the monster box lid features an orange cutout of the state of Texas. Each sealed monster box is secured with a unique serial number and a holographic seal to ensure maximum product protection.

The Texas Silver Round is also available to purchase in a similarly designed and secured mini-monster box, which contains 10 protective tubes of 25 rounds each for a total of 250 silver rounds.



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TCP WEB EXTRA

See Gigi Coleman's performance as Bessie Coleman.

Back in the U.S. a year later, she became the first Black woman to perform in an air show. She toured the country making speeches, executing tricks, stunting like a daredevil and working as an activist against discrimination. Coleman, nicknamed Queen Bess, had a reputation for refusing to perform for segregated audiences. Using money she earned from barnstorming, she purchased her own plane, a Curtiss JN-4.

Tragedy struck during a test flight April 30, 1926, over Florida, when a loose wrench jammed the control gears and flipped the plane upside down. She wasn't wearing her seat belt, and the plane had no canopy. Coleman, 34, fell to her death.

Black newspapers gave her death front-page coverage, but the mainstream press barely noted it. In 2019, *The New York Times*, as part of an effort to recognize the lives of remarkable people whose deaths went unreported at the time, ran a complete obituary. "Coleman saw aviation as a way to empower Black people in America and dreamed of opening a flight school," it wrote. "Future pilots said they had been inspired by her, and flight clubs have been named in her honor."

The Challenger Air Pilots Association of Chicago began an annual tradition of flying over Coleman's grave there in 1931. The U.S. Postal Service issued a stamp in her honor in 1995 after Marion Coleman, Bessie's niece, persistently petitioned for it. Texas historical markers stand in Atlanta and Waxahachie, Bessie's former hometowns.

A great-niece, Gigi Coleman, portrays Bessie Coleman in a one-woman show that she performs around the country.

"When I do my performance, people cry," Gigi Coleman says. "I'm very proud to be a relative of hers. She was a trail-blazer, and she didn't take no for an answer." ■

Queen Bess Soared

Bessie Coleman slipped from the grips of gravity and Jim Crow to become the first African American female pilot and first Native American female pilot

BY AINSLEY SHAW

JIM CROW SEGREGATION laws seemed to have a grasp like gravity on Bessie Coleman—as they did for most African Americans in the early 20th century—keeping her from rising very high in life.

Coleman, born in 1892 in Atlanta, Texas, to an African American maid and a Native American sharecropper, spent her youth picking cotton. She likely never dreamed she would go on to become the first African American woman and first Native American woman to earn a pilot's license—two years before Amelia Earhart earned hers—100 years ago.

When she was 23, Coleman moved in with two of her brothers and found work as a manicurist in Chicago. Her brother John, who served in Europe during

World War I, drunkenly teased her one day about the wider range of opportunities for women in France. He told her, "Women ain't never goin' to fly, not like those women I saw in France," according to *Queen Bess: Daredevil Aviator*, a biography by Doris L. Rich.

Coleman took that as a challenge and responded, "That's it! You just called it for me." She decided to head to France, where she would face fewer obstacles for being Black and a woman.

After spending her nights learning French and days managing a chili restaurant, Coleman sailed to France and found a pilot to train her. Seven months later, she earned her pilot's license from the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale, on June 15, 1921.

Tomatoes

Sliced is nice, but you can also bake them into saucy desserts

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

For years I avoided eating tomatoes in anything but pasta sauce or pizza. Thankfully those days are behind me, and now I look forward to when my garden starts producing piles of cherry tomatoes and sandwich-ready slicers. This cake helps use up any extra tomatoes you might have on hand—and gets kids to eat them. This recipe was one of the first to appear on soup cans, and this iteration's use of fresh tomatoes only improves it. Filled with spices and wonderfully moist, it will become a summer staple.

Tomato Cake

CAKE

1 pound tomatoes, or more as needed
to yield 2 cups plus 2 tablespoons
purée, divided use

2 cups flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon ground cardamom

½ teaspoon ground ginger

½ cup packed brown sugar

½ cup sugar

¾ cup (1½ sticks) butter, softened

2 eggs

GLAZE

1½ cups powdered sugar

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Reserved tomato purée

- 1. CAKE** Preheat oven to 350 degrees and coat a 10-cup Bundt pan with cooking spray.
- 2.** Core and quarter tomatoes. Purée in a blender or food processor until completely smooth. Measure out 2 cups and set aside, reserving remainder.
- 3.** In a large bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, cardamom and ginger.
- 4.** In another bowl, beat sugars and butter until the batter is creamed and fluffy. Beat in eggs one at a time.
- 5.** Alternate adding flour mixture and tomato purée to the batter, starting and ending with the flour. Incorporate fully before each addition.
- 6.** Pour batter into the prepared pan and bake 40 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean.
- 7.** Let cake cool in pan 10 minutes, then invert onto a rack to cool completely.
- 8. GLAZE** Mix powdered sugar, vanilla and 2 tablespoons tomato purée until completely smooth. Add more sugar or liquid as necessary. Drizzle over cooled cake.

SERVES 10

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Roasted Corn and Tomato Salad.





Broiled Stuffed Tomatoes

JOYCELYN SKIDMORE
LAMAR ELECTRIC

The ideal starter for any summer dinner, these stuffed tomatoes are ready in a flash. If you have one handy, a melon baller makes easy work of removing tomato seeds.

- 4–6 tomatoes**
- ½ cup breadcrumbs**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil or parsley**
- 3 tablespoons minced green onion**
- 1–2 cloves garlic, minced**
- ¼ teaspoon salt, plus more for sprinkling**
- ¼ teaspoon pepper, plus more for sprinkling**
- ⅛ teaspoon dried thyme**
- ¼ cup olive oil, plus more for drizzling**

- 1.** Core tomatoes. Using a spoon, scoop out seeds and juice, taking care not to break the sides of the tomatoes. Set tomatoes upside down in a colander to drain.
- 2.** In a small bowl, combine breadcrumbs, basil or parsley, green onion, garlic, salt, pepper, and thyme. Stir in olive oil until mixture is well combined and looks like wet sand.
- 3.** Sprinkle salt and pepper into each tomato. Fill tomatoes with breadcrumb mixture and set on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with additional olive oil. Broil at 400 degrees 5–10 minutes, keeping an eye on the breadcrumbs so they don't burn.

SERVES 4–6



\$500 WINNER

Tangy Tomato Slices

DALA BURK
WISE EC



This simple yet flavorful dish brings back summer memories for Burk, who has been enjoying this recipe for 40 years. Enjoy the slices on their own or tucked into a warm biscuit for a best-ever tomato sandwich.

SERVES 6

- 6 tomatoes, thinly sliced**
- 1 onion, thinly sliced**
- 1 cup olive oil**
- ⅓ cup vinegar**
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard**
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder**

- 1.** Layer tomato and onion slices in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish and set aside.
- 2.** In a small bowl, whisk together remaining ingredients. Pour over tomatoes and onion, using a spatula to spread herbs evenly. Cover and chill 4–5 hours before serving.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

PIES DUE JUNE 10

OK, time to show off. We know readers all over the state serve up prize pies. Could yours be the \$500 winner? Enter at TexasCoopPower.com/contests by June 10.

[MORE RECIPES >](#)



Savory Tomato Bread Pudding

VALERIE KRUSE
TRI-COUNTY EC

This dish is ideal for using up day-old bread. Since the tomatoes cook down, feel free to use not-so-perfect ones.

- 8 tablespoons olive oil, divided use
- 1 large baguette, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 pounds tomatoes, cored and cut into chunks
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon pepper
- 1 cup grated Parmesan, Asiago

or Romano cheese
2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
(optional)

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly coat a large casserole dish with cooking spray and set aside. Heat 6 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the bread cubes and stir to coat. Sauté about 5 minutes or until bread is lightly browned and toasted, working in batches if needed. Transfer to a large bowl.
2. Add remaining olive oil to the skillet and cook the garlic 30 seconds. Add tomatoes, sugar, salt and pepper and stir well. Cook until tomatoes have released their juices and are submerged, about 10 minutes.
3. Add tomato mixture to bread cubes. Stir well to combine. Pour mixture into casserole dish and top with cheese.
4. Bake 40–45 minutes, loosening the edges with a spatula after 30 minutes to allow juices to distribute. Remove from oven and let rest 15 minutes, then sprinkle with chopped basil and serve.

SERVES 6–8

Tasty Tomato Types

BY MEGAN MYERS

While there are more than 10,000 varieties of tomatoes, most of us return to our tried-and-true favorites when cooking.

Globe

Alongside beefsteak tomatoes, this round, firm and juicy variety is what you'll most likely find at the super-market. They're delicious raw and cooked, and their shape makes them suitable for stuffing.

Roma

Roma and plum tomatoes are oblong and most commonly used for sauces thanks to their lower water content.

Cherry and Grape

These bite-size tomatoes are perfect raw for salads but also are delicious sautéed or roasted with herbs. Sweet varieties are a hit with kids, making them a great healthy snack.

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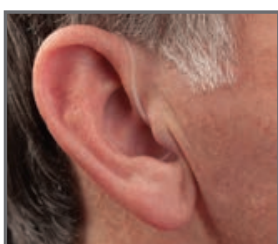


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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Deep Dip

Wimberley's seemingly bottomless Jacob's Well invites a plunge

BY CHET GARNER

STANDING ON A limestone ledge and staring into Texas' strangest swimming hole, I remembered my mother's warning, "Don't jump unless you know what's underneath you." I wasn't completely sure what was beneath the surface, but with a crowd of cheering onlookers, chickening out was not an option. I held my breath and braced for the unknown.

This is the thrill of Jacob's Well, a spring-fed swimming hole near Wimberley that's been attracting visitors for centuries. The hole itself measures less than 20 feet across but looks like it plummets to the center of the Earth. In reality, it descends into a series of caverns that extend a mile back into the Earth. Every minute of every day, the Edwards Aquifer pushes a river of fresh water out of the cave and feeds Cypress Creek.

As I completed the plunge, my only thought was, "Wow! That's cold." The spring water holds at a chilly 68 degrees year-round. Once I regained my composure, I could appreciate the fact that I was floating above what seemed like a bottomless pit of water. I had to see what was down there.

I grabbed my goggles, pointed my head toward the bottom and started kicking. I could feel the mass of water pushing against me with its invisible current, and the water was so clear that I could see every detail of the algae-covered walls and the ledge 25 feet down. With every bit of strength and air that I had, I propelled myself to the stone shelf and from there could see the small opening to the deeper and darker caves.

That was enough to freak me out, so I quickly turned and swam to the sunshine and safety of the surface. It was time for another jump. ■

ABOVE Chet leaps into Jacob's Well.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Chet's video from Jacob's Well and check out his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

Know Before You Go

Some events may have been affected by COVID-19. Call or check an event's website for scheduling details.

JUNE

04

Bandera [4, 11, 18, 25; July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Aug. 6] **Riding on Faith Rodeo**, (830) 777-7129, facebook.com/ridingonfaithrodeoseries

Denton [4–Sept. 4] **Soul Art Renewal: General Art Exhibition**, (940) 382-2787, dentonarts.com

05

Bulverde [5–July 31] **Saturday Night Rodeo**, (830) 980-2226, tejasrodeo.com

Hunt [5, 12, 19, 26, July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31] **Crider's Rodeo and Dancehall**, (830) 238-4441, cridersrandd.com

07

Mesquite [7, 21] **Jazz Breaks**, (972) 216-8132, mesquiteartscenter.org

Jacksonville [7–12] **Tomato Fest Week**, (903) 586-2217, jacksonvilletexas.com/tomato-fest

08

Victoria [8–12] **Bach Festival**, (361) 570-5788, victoriabachfestival.org

11

Luckenbach [11–12] **Thomas Michael Riley Music Festival**, (830) 997-3224, thomasmichaelriley.com

San Antonio [11–Aug. 7] **Fiesta Noche del Río**, (210) 226-4651, fiestanochesa.com

12

East Bernard Czech Kolache-Klobase Festival, (979) 335-7907, kkfest.com

New Braunfels Granger Smith, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

Terrell [12-13] Antique Tractor and Engine Show and Pull, (214) 837-8861, north-texas-antique-tractor-and-engine-club.org

14

Mesquite [14, 28] Music in the Park, (972) 216-8132, mesquiteartscenter.org

17

Big Spring [17-19] Cowboy Reunion and Rodeo, (432) 267-5053, facebook.com/bigspringrodeo

Stonewall [17-19] Peach JAMBoree, (830) 644-2735, stonewalltexas.com/peach-jamboree

18

Kerrville Urban Cowboy Reunion, (830) 896-9393, caillouxperformingarts.com

Lufkin [18-19] Pineywood Heifer Futurity, (979) 277-2656, arklatexlonghorns.com

McKinney [18-20] Third Monday Trade Days, (972) 562-5466, thirdmondaytradedays.com

19

Palestine Dogwood Jamboree: Country Music at Its Best, (903) 724-2556, dogwoodjamboree.com

New Braunfels [19-20] Old Gruene Market Days, (830) 832-1721, gruenemarketdays.com

24

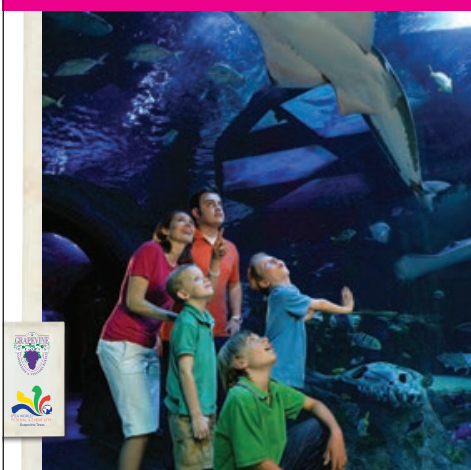
Elgin [24-26] Western Days, (512) 285-4515, elgintxchamber.com

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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

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Pick of the Month

Honey Festival

Uvalde, June 11-12
(830) 278-4115
[mainstreetuvalde.com/honey-festival](#)

Pioneers of the late 19th century found an abundance of trees and caves loaded with honey around what is now Uvalde, which is 85 miles west of San Antonio. The town celebrates this history with a festival featuring street food, a 5K race, live music, kids activities and late-night shopping.

JUNE EVENTS CONTINUED

26

Bandera RiverFest,

(830) 796-3045,
[banderariverfest.com](#)

Belton [26-July 4] 4th

of July Celebration,
(254) 939-3551,
[beltonchamber.com](#)

JULY

02

Llano [2-4] Rock'n River-

fest, (325) 247-5354,
[llanorocknriverfest.com](#)

El Paso [2-3, 9-10, 16-17,

23-24, 30-31, Aug. 6-7]
Vival El Paso, (915) 534-0600,
[vivaelpaso.org](#)

03

Stephenville 4th of July

Concert and Fireworks,
(254) 918-1295,
[stephenvilletx.gov](#)

04

Fredericksburg 4th of

July Parade & Fireworks,
(830) 997-6523,
[visitfredericksburgtx.com](#)



Hit the Road

Event Calendar

With hundreds of events across Texas listed every month, [TexasCoopPower.com](#) has something for you.

TCP Plan now

[TexasCoopPower.com/events](#)

Man-made vs. Nature

Beauty can be found where the natural and the human-made collide. Over time some things once shiny and new return to the elements, often forming a new beauty all their own and leaving us to wonder at nature's awesome power.

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

KIM LEATHERWOOD
UNITED COOPERATIVE
SERVICES

Nature reclaims this old
service station in Glen Rose.

DEBRA CZERNY
BLUEBONNET EC

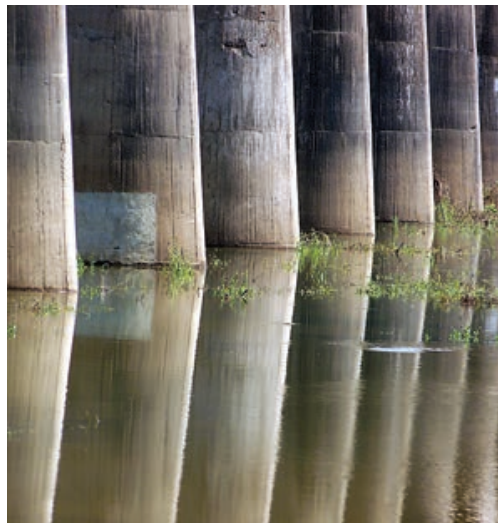
Cactus flowers growing
out of asphalt.

JACK ROBERTSON
CECA

A rainbow scarab impaled
on barbed wire.

STEVEN LACKIE
PENTEX ENERGY

The Continental Avenue
Bridge over the Trinity
River near downtown
Dallas.



Upcoming Contests

DUE JUN 10 Fillin' Stations

DUE JUL 10 Funny Signs

DUE AUG 10 Bridges

Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



Parent Imperfect

Love outdistances cool
in appreciation of a good father

BY MARTHA DEERING
ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN FALES

WHAT AWFUL AFFLICTION is it that makes preteens view their parents' idiosyncrasies through a monstrous magnifying glass?

I cringe to admit this, but in middle school I was embarrassed by my father. Born with cataracts after his mother contracted German measles, he wore Coke-bottle glasses and walked with an exaggerated high-stepping gait to avoid tripping over things. Worse, he couldn't drive like other dads. Surgery improved his vision slightly, but he was still considered legally blind.

Perhaps that was why music was so important to him; being deprived of one of his senses had sharpened another.

When my friends came over, I engineered excuses to avoid my father. He told the awfulest jokes: "What did the

mayonnaise say to the icebox? Close the door, I'm dressing." In my adolescent imagination, my friends were laughing *at* him, not *with* him.

"Your father is playing with the orchestra tomorrow night at Baylor before freshman orientation," my mother explained one night. "It's the same night as my writing class. Could you walk over there with him?"

As we crossed a busy street in the dark, my father tripped over the curb and fell forward onto his chest. His battered violin case landed with a clatter on the sidewalk along with his glasses, which suffered a spiderweb of cracks across one lens. Horrified by my inattention, I helped him up and brushed off the front of his suit coat.

"Are you all right?" I asked. "Do you want to go home? You won't be able to see the music with your glasses smashed."

"No, I can't go home," he said, checking his 200-year-old violin for damage. "They can't play the violin parts without me. I can't see the music unless I'm up close anyway, so I always memorize my parts. If you'll help me get set up on the stage, I'll be OK. Why am I so clumsy?"

Years later in high school, I began to recognize the courage it took for this gentle, loving man with a disability (he hated the designation "handicapped") to get a doctorate and then a job just after the Depression; to play Mozart, Bach and Beethoven in front of large crowds; to teach psychology to classes of graduate students; to lead brain exercise groups at local nursing homes; and to raise three children, willingly wearing out the knees of his suit pants to play the part of the horse to our cowboys and Indians.

I'm sure that my father recognized and forgave my adolescent foolishness. He was that kind of guy. ■



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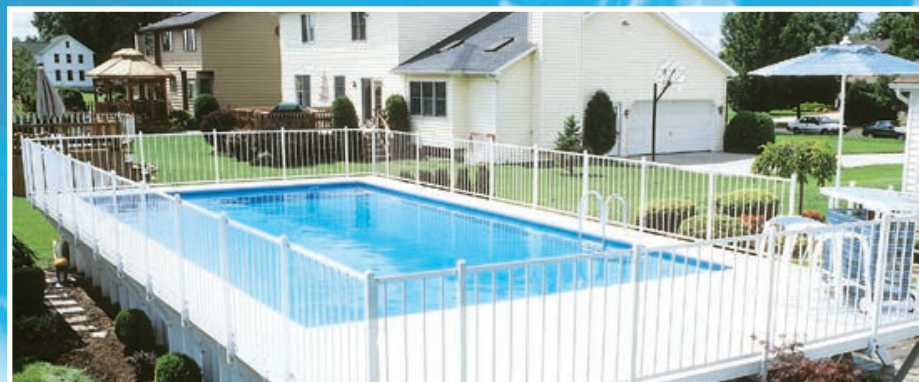


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