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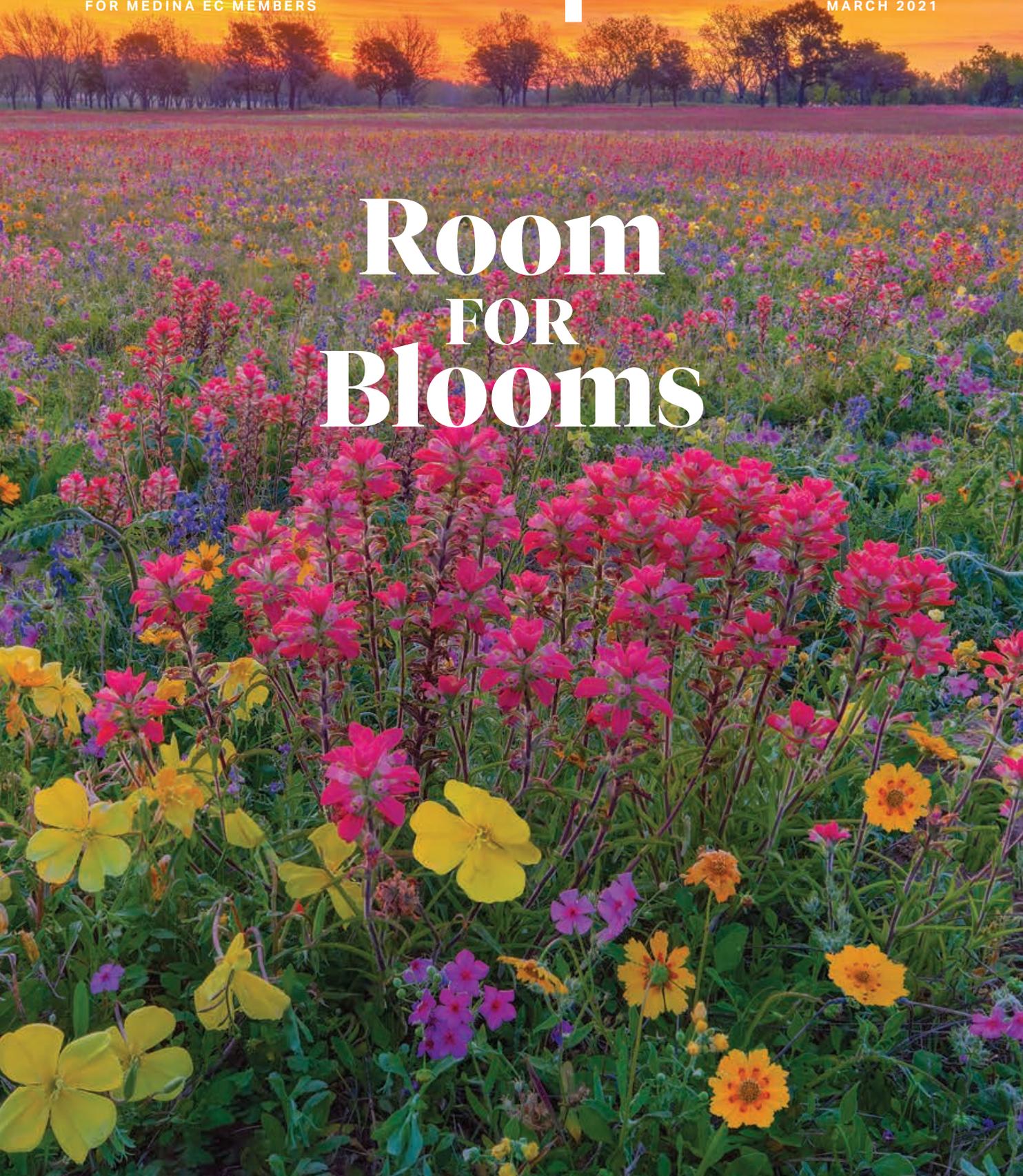
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March 2021



08

Flower Power

Wildflowers proliferate in an explosion of color along the highways and byways of Texas each spring, inspiring artists to capture the state's wild beauty and luring travelers off the beaten path.

By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers

ON THE COVER

A red patch of Indian paintbrush highlights a field of wildflowers near New Berlin.

ABOVE

A firewheel.

Photos by Rob Greebon

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By Eli Winter

Month of Tweets

OF THE 654 SPECIES of birds documented in Texas, over half are migratory. Millions of these will fly the Texas skies starting this month on their way to northern breeding grounds after wintering in Mexico and Central and South America.

Some species, such as the prothonotary warbler, below, and red-eyed vireo, will go no farther north than Texas, where they'll make their home until the fall, when they migrate south again.



Scout's Honor

Since the Boy Scouts of America created the Eagle Scout rank in 1911, about 2.6 million Americans have earned one of Scouting's highest honors. Until last year, all Eagle Scouts were boys.

When Abby Winkelman, whose family is a member of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, became an Eagle Scout in October, when she was 14, she made history, becoming one of the first girls to reach the rank.

"I don't think I've ever set a goal this ambitious for myself, so I'm just really proud of myself that I met my goal," said Winkelman, of Troop 5131 in Austin, "and I planned and I got help from all my friends and all my community."



Hank the Cool Dog

Texas' coolest dog meets Texas' coolest character.

A new podcast series stars Matthew McConaughey as Hank the Cowdog, based on the long-running series of children's books written by Texan John R. Erickson, illustrated by Gerald L. Holmes and set in the Panhandle.

The podcast, which debuted in the fall, is available on all major podcast platforms.

“I will never forsake Texas and her cause. I am her son.”

—JOSÉ ANTONIO NAVARRO

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

THE SONG THAT GOT ME THROUGH A YEAR OF PANDEMIC IS ...

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town. Here are some of the responses to our January prompt:

Life was better ...

When my skate key was hanging around my neck, my knees were scabbed and the wind was blowing my hair from my face.

JANICE F. CONWAY
TRINITY VALLEY EC
KEMP

Before COVID-19.

GARY GALLOWAY
TRI-COUNTY EC
WEATHERFORD

When we could reach out and touch someone, literally. I miss hugs and handshakes.

CARMEN LOCKSTEDT
VICTORIA EC
VICTORIA

When the only screen we had was in our door, and we could see through it.

PATRICIA RAPACKI
MIDSOUTH EC
MONTGOMERY

After I recovered from ovarian cancer.

SHERRI JEFFERY
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC
MCKINNEY

To see more responses, read Currents online.



Drink to That?

USING HOUSTON as a model, researchers at Rice University have developed a plan to recycle wastewater economically and make it drinkable, which could reduce the need for surface water—from rivers, reservoirs and wells—by 28%.

“All the technologies needed to treat wastewater to drinking water quality are available,” Rice researcher Qilin Li said. “The issue is that today they’re still pretty expensive.”

This proposed system makes up for that by bringing down the cost of a city’s water supply. Recycled water doesn’t have to travel as far and is therefore cheaper.

Cheers.



TCP Contests and More

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RUSSELL A. GRAVES

Captured!

“Katmai National Park and Preserve holds a contest every year to name the fattest bear at Brooks Falls.”

JULIA FRANKENFIELD
MIDSOUTH EC
MONTGOMERY

No Fan of the Span

My wife drove across it with our teenage son in 1985 and could not drive back [*The Scariest Bridge in Texas*, January 2021]. It was so traumatizing for her that she has not been able to drive over any multilevel highway overpass, interstate or other even moderately high bridge since.

It should have a warning sign.

William Hamlin
Tri-County EC
Keller



Crossed it pulling a six-horse trailer with a truck full of squealing little girls [*The Scariest Bridge in Texas*, January 2021]. Not something I care to repeat.

KAY MOTLEY
VIA FACEBOOK

A World Opens

The Carnegie library of my hometown of Terrell did indeed fill a real need [*Literary Fortunes*, January 2021]. As a boy I was able to jump on my bike and spend time looking through the stacks and especially enjoying the reference room. The whole world opened for me.

Dan Wood Jr.
Trinity Valley EC
Terrell

Dialect in Danger

The Texas German dialect and culture are slowly dying out as they are not passed on to younger generations [*Burgs in a New Land*, December 2020]. Within the next 20 years, the Texas German dialect will become extinct after being spoken for close to 200 years.

In 2001, I founded the Texas German Dialect Project at the University of Texas to record this unique dialect.

Hans Boas
Pedernales EC
Austin

Thank you for the article about the fear of crossing bridges and high overpasses. I am that person. I will go out of my way to avoid the flyovers in Houston and any other high or narrow bridge.

I no doubt annoy drivers behind me when I have no choice but to use one of these structures, and I crawl across it, white-knuckled, at 40 mph.

Linda Secrist
San Bernard EC
Magnolia



ROBERT SEALE

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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

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

Texas Co-op Power

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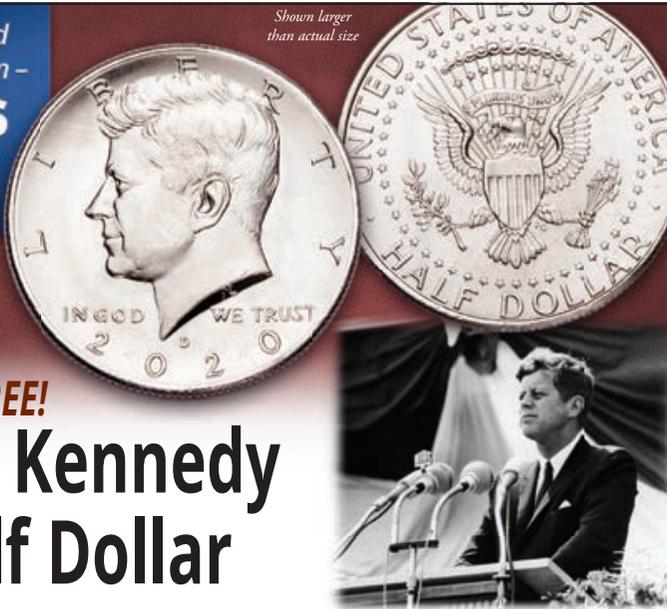
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SEASONAL SWAY OF COLORS
DRIVES TEXANS WILD

Flower POWER

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

NATURE'S PALETTE CAPTIVATES Texans every spring. Sapphire blue, lemony yellow, crimson red, golden orange, lavender purple and ivory white. We love our wildflowers so much that we'll drive great distances to see them. Frame their colors in countless photos. Designate official state titles in their honor. Celebrate their return with festivals, parades and dances. Spread their seeds across our yards, campuses and roadsides. Pen words, compose music and paint landscapes that hail their natural glory.

We also revere the Texans who've promoted our 5,000-plus species of wildflowers and native plants. Foremost was Lady Bird Johnson, who started her national highway cleanup campaign during Lyndon B. Johnson's presidency and co-founded the National Wildflower Research Center in 1982. Now called the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, the 284-acre complex in Austin supports the Botanic Garden and Arboretum of Texas as well as cultivated gardens and wild natural areas.

Another wildflower hero is Carroll Abbott of Kerrville, a native plant expert who lobbied in 1981 to establish the fourth Saturday in April as Texas Wildflower Day. That same year he was instrumental in founding the Native Plant Society of Texas, which now boasts 34 chapters with 2,800 members.

Other wildflower advocates made a difference, too. San Antonio civic leader Sallie Ward Beretta launched a state-wide campaign in the 1920s to stop the bluebonnet from being overpicked. As president of the City Federation of Women's Clubs and the San Antonio Council of Girl Scouts, she recruited volunteers to gather seedpods in fields around the city. Then they shared the seeds with other cities across the state and nation.

Large or small, every effort to protect our wildflowers makes a difference. You can do your part: Please don't pick, trample or uproot bluebonnets or any other wildflowers. No law prohibits Texans from picking bluebonnets unless they're on private property or state park land, but any flower picked or damaged can't reseed for the next spring's bloom.

So welcome back, wildflowers. We look forward to yet another glorious show!



ROB GREENON | IMAGESFROMTEXAS.COM



A field of bluebonnets in the southern Chisos Mountains welcomes the sun as it rises on Big Bend National Park.

WELL, I DO DECLARE!
OFFICIAL STATE DESIGNATIONS

Officially WILD

STATE FLOWER

Most U.S. states claim one official state flower. Not Texas. We have at least 16. In 1901 the bluebonnet (*Lupinus subcarnosus*) went up against the prickly pear and cotton boll for the right to be named state flower. Rep. John “Cactus Jack” Nance Garner of Uvalde lobbied for the cactus bloom. Other legislators argued that cotton had made Texas rich. In the end, the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America carried the day, and the bluebonnet won.

But floral dissent wasn’t over. Many didn’t like the bluebonnet choice. Of the state’s six bluebonnet species, *Lupinus subcarnosus* was the “least attractive,” opined botanist Howard S. Irwin in *Roadside Flowers of Texas*. So in 1971 state lawmakers amended legislation to include the more popular Texas bluebonnet (*Lupinus texensis*) in addition to *Lupinus subcarnosus* and all other varieties of bluebonnet as the official state flower.

Since then, horticulturalists have developed different colors of bluebonnets, such as white and maroon. To date, they’ve introduced at least 10 bluebonnet varieties. Thus, Texas has at least 16 official state flowers ... for now.



WILDFLOWER CAPITAL OF TEXAS

DeWitt County

Wildflower trails crisscross DeWitt County, northwest of Victoria, where more than 1,000 wildflower species have been documented. A 1999 resolution adopted by the Texas House recognized the county as the Wildflower Capital of Texas.

TEXAS WILDFLOWER DAY

Fourth Saturday in April

In April 1981 the Legislature declared the fourth Saturday of April as Texas Wildflower Day. The resolution asks the governor “to issue an appropriate proclamation annually” to encourage the proper observance of the special day.

BLUEBONNET CO-CAPITALS OF TEXAS

Burnet and Llano counties

Every spring visitors admire wildflowers along the Highland Lakes Bluebonnet Trail, which winds through Burnet and Llano counties in Central Texas. In 1981 the Legislature designated the pair as Bluebonnet Co-capitals of Texas.



EDDIE WHITE

STATE FLOWER SONG

Bluebonnets

Our state flower song, *Bluebonnets*, has roots in Washington County. Julia D. Booth of Chappell Hill wrote lyrics for the song, which was composed by piano teacher Lora C. Crockett. On February 8, 1933, Alice Clay Rountt of Chappell Hill, accompanied by Crockett on the piano, sang the tune for the Texas House. It was then adopted as the state flower song by the Legislature.

OFFICIAL BLUEBONNET FESTIVAL OF TEXAS

Chappell Hill Bluebonnet Festival

The Chappell Hill Historical Society hosted its first bluebonnet festival in 1964, calling it the Bluebonnet Antique Show. In 1983 the name changed to Chappell Hill Bluebonnet Festival. In 1997 the Legislature named the event, in the town east of Brenham, as the Official Bluebonnet Festival of Texas.

**WILDFLOWER SEEDING
BRIGHTENS ROAD TRIPS**

Take It ON THE ROAD

SINCE THE 1930s the Texas Department of Transportation has planted native flowers and grasses along state highways. In 1934 the agency directed staff not to mow until wildflowers had set seed, a policy that still guides mowing schedules.

TxDOT's wildflower program has expanded in both scope and vision, and the department now maintains 800,000 acres of roadside along with 80 safety rest stops and 12 travel information centers. Every year TxDOT must reseed approximately 4,800 construction projects.

Enter native plants, which require less care, provide wildlife habitat and increase biodiversity. "Every fall we sow approximately 30,000 pounds of native flower and grass seed mixes," says Travis Jez, a TxDOT vegetation specialist. "Because monarch butterflies have become a species of major concern, we're also planting pollinator gardens and milkweeds, such as zizotes. What's cool is that all pollinators benefit."

No single seed source can supply the 15 tons that TxDOT sows annually. So Jez works with six Texas companies that specialize in producing seeds for native species. TxDOT also collaborates with Texas Native Seeds of the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute, a nonprofit program that develops commercial seed supplies of native plants for use in restoring habitats on private and public lands. The program supports six regional projects that select and grow plants endemic to their areas.

While you're searching for wildflowers, look out for bright green carpets along Texas roadsides. Those indicate that the areas have been hydro-seeded with a slurry of seeds, mulch and water. "The process is used for spreading seeds and to control erosion," Jez explains. "The mulch also holds in water and helps the seedlings get started."

As for the green color, "It allows applicants to see where they've sprayed the slurry," Jez says.



ROB GREEBON | IMAGESFROMTEXAS.COM



Bluebonnets and Indian paintbrush accompany travelers along a stretch of Texas 16 in Gillespie County.

Picture THIS

IN APRIL 1961 nature enthusiasts hurraed the publication of *Roadside Flowers of Texas*. The classic guide written by botanist Howard S. Irwin showcases 257 wildflower paintings by Mary Motz Wills, a prolific artist and amateur botanist whose work was exhibited nationally. Her attention to the smallest details led to floral watercolors that were, as one columnist noted, “botanically accurate as well as artistically superb.”

Wills attended formal art schools and began painting flowers in 1913 while recovering from an illness in Panama, where her husband, a U.S. Army colonel, was stationed. After his death in 1925, Wills moved to Georgia and then to Abilene, where she aspired to record as many Texas flowers and plants as she could.

At her home studio, Wills painted plants that she collected or were sent to her by friends. She sometimes woke at 4 a.m. or worked through the night to capture blooms in their most natural form. “Some flowers only bloom at night, so I stay up until I get them painted,” she told a newspaper reporter in 1958.

A stickler for accuracy, Wills often noted on her paintings the common and botanical name of plants and where they grew in the wild.

In all, Wills produced more than 2,000 Texas botanical paintings. Many of the plants that she painted “were endangered species in her day, and some have disappeared entirely since then,” writes Cecilia Steinfeldt in *Art for History’s Sake: The Texas Collection of the Witte Museum*.

Wills died at 86 in 1961. Today, many of her delicate watercolors are housed for safe-keeping in Austin’s Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, San Antonio’s Witte Museum and Abilene’s Grace Museum. ■

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Collectors are Already Going Wild for This "Final" Release!

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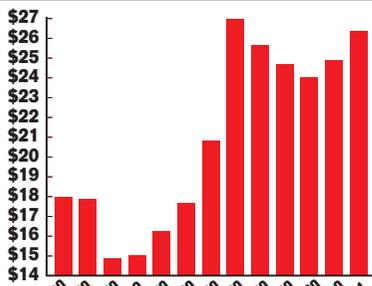
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Silver Trend Chart: Price per ounce based on monthly averages.

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MESSAGE FROM CEO

MARK ROLLANS

What's in It for 'We'?

THE COOPERATIVE business model answers the popular question “What’s in it for me?” with “What’s in it for we?”

Co-ops are formed when the market fails to offer a product or service, with decent quality, at an affordable price. Medina Electric Cooperative was formed in 1938, when investor-owned utilities claimed there was not enough profit to be made in our community and refused to offer electricity.

The founding members of Medina EC went door to door to collect \$5 from each resident who was willing to become a member to raise a portion of the original investment the co-op needed to get started. They realized the only way to get electricity for “me” was to get it for “we”—the whole community.

Cooperative ownership is in the hands of the people who use the co-op’s services (not investors), so not only do co-ops start out answering the question “What’s in it for we?” but they continue to answer that question for as long as they exist.

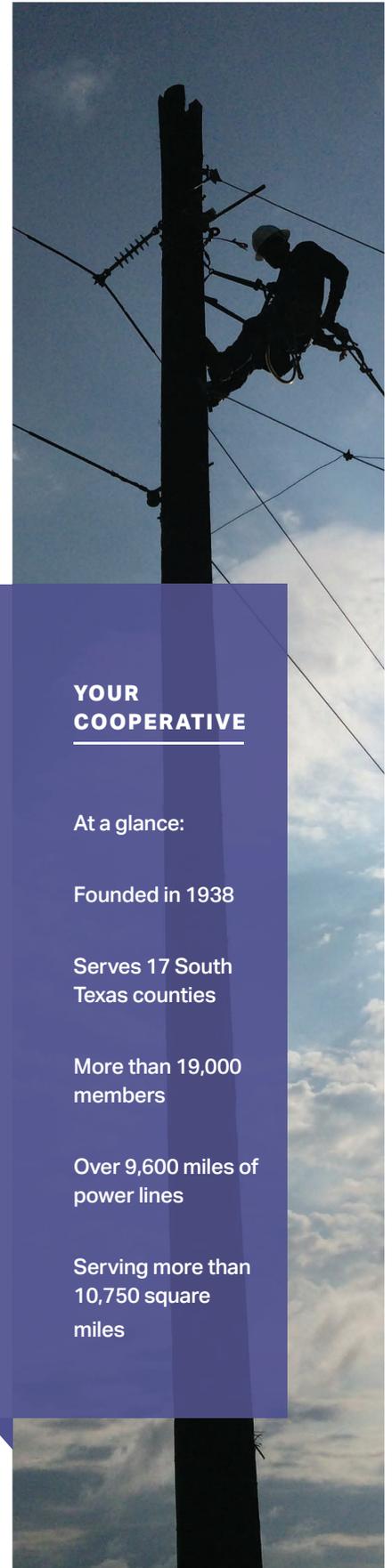
These days we often hear about companies moving overseas in search of cheaper labor and negatively impacting the community through job loss, decline in housing values and school closures. The co-op is a critical part of what makes our community a community and you can count on it being part of the community for years and years to come.

The way co-ops continue to answer the question “What’s in it for we?” is critical to our survival. It is imperative that we keep you—our members—as the primary focus. Keeping rates as low as possible is one major part of that focus, but ensuring that we provide real value as your trusted energy adviser is also extremely important. You can count on our experts if you have questions about your electric bill or want suggestions on ways to conserve energy.

And we will continue to look for ways to improve the quality of your life through services beyond the distribution of electricity, such as by offering solar options for our members and supporting legislation that benefits the people in our communities.

By maintaining that focus with your help and support, we will continue to be able to serve the “me” and the “we” in our community long into the future.

Sincerely,
Mark Rollans



YOUR COOPERATIVE

At a glance:

Founded in 1938

Serves 17 South Texas counties

More than 19,000 members

Over 9,600 miles of power lines

Serving more than 10,750 square miles

Community Empowerment Grants Available

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Up to \$5,500 will be awarded in 2021.

Application deadline: 11:59 p.m.* April 1

Emphasis will be placed on projects that:

- >> Encourage economic diversity.
- >> Contribute to community health and development.
- >> Improve the quality or quantity of services essential for the development of viable communities.

**Technical support will not be available outside of normal business hours. Encountering technical issues turning in the application on the last day will not be grounds for an extension.*

COUNTIES WHERE GRANTS CAN BE AWARDED

Atascosa	Frio	Medina	Zapata
Brooks	Jim Hogg	Real	Zavala
Dimmit	Kinney	Starr	
Duval	La Salle	Uvalde	
Edwards	McMullen	Webb	

LAST YEAR'S RECIPIENTS

Boys and Girls Club of Laredo, Laredo

\$1,250 to replace basketball rims and backboards in three club gyms.

Dilley Public Library, Dilley

\$1,250 to purchase STEM kits to help teach robotics, coding and programming to the community.

El Progreso Memorial Library, Uvalde

\$1,250 to purchase a professional laminator to be used in their Business Service Program by small businesses, teachers, students and community members.

Lil Lady Mavs, Pearsall

\$500 to help the organization pay for its Showcase Softball Tournament.

St. Louis Catholic School, Castroville

\$1,250 to help purchase and install a filtered water bottle filling station for the school.



View eligibility information
and apply online at
[MedinaEC.org/Grant](https://www.MedinaEC.org/Grant).

Medina Electric
Cooperative



CONTACT US

Toll-Free 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532)

Email Info@MedinaEC.org

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Wayne W. Scholtz, (830) 426-1328

Ken Weynand, (830) 426-0762

Voting District 2

Jimmie Raines, (830) 591-8437

Chris Surlis, (830) 965-5538

Kenneth White, (830) 232-6541

Voting District 3

Annette Sorrells, (361) 231-0173

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

Rodolfo H. Rodriguez, (210) 846-1092

CEO

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



This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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

Garden Efficiently

AN EFFICIENT GARDEN can not only provide a relaxing place to unwind but also enhance the energy efficiency of your home. With a little planning and effort, your green space can efficiently use resources such as water and electricity.

Strategic Planting

Clever planting can create an aesthetically pleasing garden while providing organic structures that slow your home's resource consumption.

Arrange plants by their water requirements. Thirsty plants do well in sheltered areas, where they will lose less water through transpiration. Planting in groups also reduces how much you have to move the hose.

Create a windbreak. Evergreens provide shade and windbreaks, which help reduce drafts in homes and cut down your garden's evaporation.

Use native plants. Plants that grow naturally in your region are a low-maintenance option since they adapted naturally to the area.

Plant shade trees. Shading your house and roof with trees can reduce indoor temperatures and the need for air conditioning. It will help your outdoor space feel cooler, too.

Smart Watering

Having a garden that uses water efficiently doesn't mean you're confined to xeriscaping or hardscapes. Instead, use these tactics to make sure your water doesn't go to waste.

Use a trigger. A nozzle that has a trigger will allow you to turn the spray on and off when watering your garden with a hose, and avoiding spraying the ground between plants.

Time watering. Water early in the morning or in the evening. Watering midday leads to evaporation and waste.

Amend the soil. Healthy soil retains water better, so adding materials such as compost and organic matter like wood chips can help the ground stay moist.

Remove part of your lawn. As beautiful as it might be, that green part of your yard consumes a lot of resources. Removing it conserves water and frees up space for alternatives.

Let it drip. A drip system slowly emits water and keeps it close to the ground. Drip tape reduces evaporation and runoff.

Energy Conservation

Even outdoor spaces can consume resources such as electricity or fuel, but a couple of changes can keep utility costs down.

Use solar lights. These can be easily installed to illuminate gardens at night without having to rely on the electric grid.

Consider an electric mower. If you have a small lawn, an electric mower can be more efficient than a gas-powered mower, depending on the price of fuel.



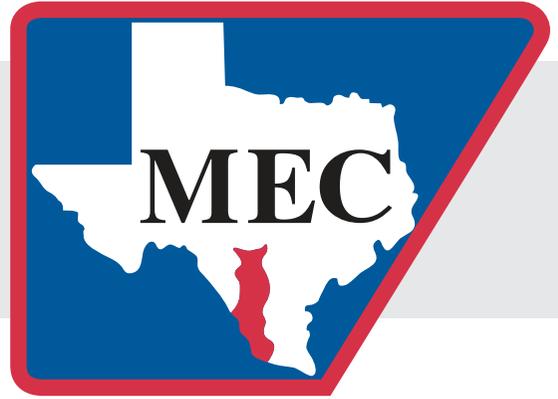
My Co-op Is Cool

Watch our Facebook page this year!

Each month, you have a chance to win a custom Medina EC Coleman cooler as a thank you for your membership!



Medina EC is dedicated to serving our members with reliable, low-cost electricity. We work with various partners and banks to accomplish that. One of those is the Rural Utilities Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Below is the nondiscrimination statement that Medina EC operates under as a participant in those programs.



Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Person with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the

Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Declaración de No a la Discriminación

De acuerdo con la ley federal de derechos civiles y las reglamentaciones y políticas de derechos civiles del Departamento de Agricultura de Estados Unidos (U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA), se prohíbe al USDA, sus agencias, oficinas y empleados, e instituciones que participan o administran los programas del USDA, discriminar por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional, religión, género, identidad de género (incluidas las expresiones de género), orientación sexual, discapacidad, edad, estado civil, estado familiar/parental, ingresos derivados de un programa de asistencia pública, creencias políticas, o represalias o actividades previas sobre derechos civiles, en cualquier programa o actividad llevados a cabo o financiados por el USDA (no todas las bases se aplican a todos los programas). Las fechas límite para la presentación de remedios y denuncias varían según el programa o el incidente.

Las personas con discapacidades que requieran medios alternativos de comunicación para obtener información sobre el programa (por ej., Braille, letra grande, cinta de audio, lenguaje americano de señas, etc.) deberán comunicarse con la Agencia responsable o con el Centro TARGET del

USDA al (202) 720-2600 (voz y TTY) o comunicarse con el USDA a través del Servicio Federal de Transmisiones al (800) 877-8339. Asimismo, se puede disponer de información del programa en otros idiomas además de inglés.

Para presentar una denuncia por discriminación en el programa, complete el Formulario de denuncias por discriminación en el programa del USDA, AD-3027, que se encuentra en línea en http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, o en cualquier oficina del USDA, o escriba una carta dirigida al USDA e incluya en la carta toda la información solicitada en el formulario. Para solicitar una copia del formulario de denuncias, llame al (866) 632-9992. Envíe su formulario completado o su carta al USDA por los siguientes medios:

(1) correo: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; o

(3) correo electrónico: program.intake@usda.gov.

Esta institución es un proveedor, de servicios con igualdad de oportunidades.

Last Chance:

\$20,000 in Scholarships

The cooperative is offering four scholarships for adults pursuing higher education and 16 for high school seniors.

MedinaEC.org/Scholarships

Applications due 11:59 p.m.* March 5

**Technical support will not be available outside of normal business hours. Encountering technical issues turning in the application on the last day will not be grounds for an extension.*

TOUCHSTONE ENERGY

Upcoming Petition Deadlines

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

Petition Deadlines

Voting District 1: April 12

Medina County

Voting District 2: April 9

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

Voting District 3: April 12

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

*Learn more and download a petition at **MedinaEC.org/Nominee.***



DID YOU KNOW?

March 20 is the first day of spring and the vernal equinox. On this day, daytime and nighttime are roughly equal for all parts of the world. Equinox means "equal night."

ROMOLO TAVANI | ISTOCK.COM



Co-op Connections Corner: Vehicle Parts and Sales

Whether you want to fix up an old car or buy a new one, these participating business partners can help!

A & A Auto Parts—Cotulla, Pearsall and Dilley

Cotulla: (830) 879-3553
 Dilley : (830) 965-1700
 Pearsall: (830) 334-2035
 10% off all available parts

Rio Motors—Rio Grande City

(956) 487-2596 | RioMotors.com
 \$500 off MSRP on any truck or car in stock

If you need a rental car while yours is in the shop, these national Co-op Connections discounts are here to help you save.

AVIS Car Rental

(800) 331-1212 | AVIS.com
 Discounts of up to 25% on rental cars using promo code A403890

Dollar Rent A Car

Dollar.com
 5% off any vehicle

Enterprise Rent-A-Car

(855) 266-9565 | Enterprise.com
 10% off of the already-reduced internet rate; 5% discount when renting at nonairport locations nationwide. Use corporate class number: 16JP097 and PIN "NAT"



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

HVAC Tuneup Time!

SUMMER IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER, and that means air conditioning units will be working overtime across our area of South Texas.

In preparing for warmer temperatures, it is a good idea to have your air conditioning system serviced to ensure it is in top working order and ready to operate like it should. Keep in mind that Medina EC offers a \$60 rebate for HVAC tuneups.

If time has caught up with your HVAC unit and it needs to be replaced, Medina EC also has rebates of \$200 and \$400 for that, depending on what you replace the system with. There is also a \$35 rebate for Energy Star-certified window units.

In 2020, Medina EC members received \$23,095 in rebates related to air conditioning efficiency changes and replacements.

However you keep cool this summer, there may be a rebate to help you out!

**LEARN ABOUT OTHER
 REBATES AVAILABLE TO
 MEMBERS AT
MEDINAEC.ORG/REBATES**



Love of Lavender

A DAY OUTSIDE IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL. A day spent in a lavender field has additional aromatherapy benefits, or at least it seemed to on a visit to Doe-Re-Mi Lavender Farm last spring.

The farm is just outside of Yancey, south of Hondo and west of Interstate 35 South, a bit off the beaten path. The drive down the small, unassuming rural road to the farm gate is the first sign that the visit ahead could be a nice surprise, tucked away and hidden. And when the gate swings open and you step into a field with bed after bed of different varieties of flowers and colors and smells, there is no doubt the day ahead will be peaceful.

The farm's third lavender season begins the first weekend of March. Their second season was different than they expected due to the coronavirus pandemic hitting the United States as Doe-Re-Mi was ready to swing open the gates and welcome visitors. Since it is an outside, open-air location, they were able to welcome guests later in the spring and early summer to take in the lavender.

This season, they are ready to have many people come and enjoy the beautiful views and smells the lavender field offers. Admission is free. They grow more than 20 varieties at the farm. On opening weekend, the Spanish Lavender will be in full bloom and their SuperBlue variety will soon follow. Just as the name indicates, SuperBlue has a brilliant color.

The farm is very family friendly—they have yard games available to play and animals to feed, including a donkey, goats and chickens. You can pack a picnic lunch and spend the day. How about enjoying a Lavender U-Pick experience? Relax in the lavender field while cutting your own fresh bundle of lavender to take home and enjoy. You can also book a stargazing experience if you would like to see the lavender fields and stars in the evening light.



OWNERS ROB AND ANN KARNs

If you want to learn more about extracting the lavender essential oils and hydrosols, they offer demonstrations of the distillation process with their copper still, which is very interesting to learn about and see in action. You can also book a Lavender 101 class to get a more in-depth look.

In addition to plants that you can purchase to create your own lavender garden at home, they also have heirloom tomato plants, herbs and other flowers for sale for your spring garden. They also have many lavender products available in the Farm Gift Shop. While I visited, I sampled a lavender scone, which I can attest is delicious. I also grabbed a dried lavender bundle and some lavender hydrosol spray, which with just a spritz adds a great fragrance to any space.

Brainstorming for a lavender festival in a future season is well underway, and you can watch their website and Facebook page for information on special events during the open season.



DoeReMiLavender.com | (210) 382-0672



Solar Installations Available

Have you been considering a solar photovoltaic system? Through Solar by Medina EC, members can purchase a 5-kilowatt, ground-mounted solar PV system with installation for \$15,000 plus tax.

For more information on Solar by Medina EC: MedinaEC.org/Solar

For more information on installing any distributed generation system: MedinaEC.org/DG

Contact us:
1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532)
Info@MedinaEC.org



Farm Season and Hours

1381 CR 7410 | YANCEY

OPEN SEASONS:

March through July | September through October

Closed for farm maintenance during August.

November and December: Watch website for special events

HOURS:

Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday through Wednesday, by appointment

Special groups and parties can be booked throughout the year.

FOLLOW DOE-RE-MI LAVENDER FARM ON FACEBOOK FOR BLOOM TIMES AND FARM NEWS!

SECRETS OF A BILLIONAIRE REVEALED

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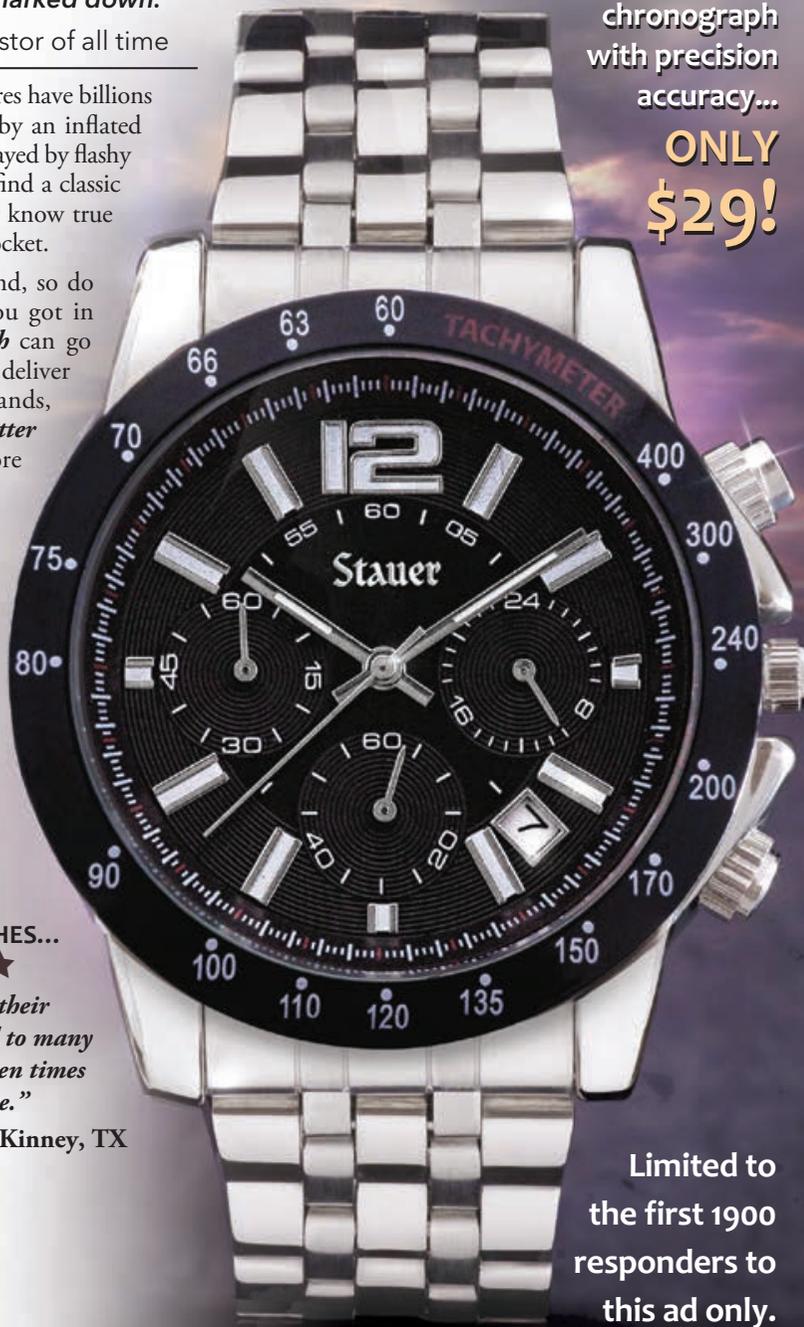
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— J. Fitzgerald, VA

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Indigo



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Wounded— Then Rejected

The first casualty of the Texas Revolution, a free Black man, had to fight for his residency in the new republic

BY MICHAEL HURD

SAMUEL MCCULLOCH JR. was biracial but considered a free Black man when, as a soldier with the Texian army, he was wounded during the Battle of Goliad on October 9, 1835, and considered the first casualty of the Texas Revolution. A musket ball shattered his right shoulder, and despite his injury and service, the postwar Texas government ordered him and all other free Blacks to leave.

Then, in a series of conflicting legislative moves, things got confusing. Could he stay, or did he have to go?

McCulloch was born in 1810 in South Carolina. His father was white, and his mother was Black, but no other records

of her status exist. McCulloch Sr. moved his son and three daughters, all considered free, to Texas, where they settled near the Gulf Coast in what is now Jackson County in May 1835.

The Battle of Goliad was the second skirmish of the revolution, coming one week after the brief skirmish known as the Battle of Gonzales and just four days after McCulloch joined the Texian army as a private with the 50-man Matagorda Volunteer Company. When the force attacked a Mexican army camp, McCulloch was first to enter the fort and the lone soldier wounded. The injury left his shoulder permanently disabled.

After the war McCulloch's residence status quickly began to twist and turn. Initially, the republic's constitution, adopted in September 1836, prohibited citizenship for "Africans and the descendants of Africans and Indians" and required all free Blacks to apply to the Congress for permanent residence. McCulloch made the required application for himself and his sisters in 1837, recounting his military service and stating that he had been "deprived of the privileges of citizenship by reason of an unfortunate admixture of African blood."

On June 5, 1837, the republic passed a law that permitted free Blacks to keep their residency if they had been living in Texas before the Republic's Declaration of Independence on March 2, 1836.

With his petition still pending, McCulloch saw his residency status further imperiled on February 5, 1840. That's when an act was passed to prohibit the immigration of free Blacks and demand that all free Black residents vacate the republic within two years or be sold into slavery.

McCulloch filed a successful second petition, likely because of the Ashworth Act, passed December 12, 1840. This legislation provided that the Ashworth families, Black relatives in Jefferson County, could remain in Texas after influential whites intervened.

As a disabled veteran, McCulloch was eligible for a land grant and was awarded one league (4,428 acres) of land, two-thirds of which he chose to ranch and farm near Von Ormy.

Despite his land and his disability, McCulloch soldiered again, fighting in the battle of Plum Creek in 1840 against Comanches and serving as a spy during the Mexican invasion of San Antonio in 1842. He died in Von Ormy on November 2, 1893. ■

Tacos

Some of the most creative and complex flavors ever to meet a tortilla

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

This month, readers treat us to a variety of taco recipes, so naturally we crave salsa. We turn to Austin food advocate and community coordinator Héctor González, who has been sharing his recipes since moving from Mexico. "There are taquerías there that established their fame based on their salsas," González says. But, he says, you don't have to limit the versatile ingredient's use to a condiment—it is also the perfect base for cocktails. This salsa can easily be adapted to your tastes. Increase or decrease the jalapeño pepper or try a habanero if you want an extra kick.

Roasted Red Salsa

6 plum tomatoes
1 medium white onion, halved
3–5 cloves garlic
1–2 hot peppers, such as jalapeños, serranos or habaneros
Fresh cilantro (optional)
Salt, to taste

COOK'S TIP You can turn this salsa into a michelada. Press $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salsa through a fine mesh strainer into a pint glass. Add 1 tablespoon lime juice and 1 teaspoon salt, or more to taste, then slowly pour in 12 ounces of Mexican lager. Cheers!

1. Roast the tomatoes, onion, garlic and peppers on the stovetop or under a broiler. Turn vegetables as needed, blackening all over. Keep an eye on the garlic and peppers, as they will roast faster than the tomatoes.
2. Add roasted vegetables, and cilantro if you like, to a blender or food processor and blend until smooth. A couple of pinches of salt will bring the salsa's brightness to the fore. Taste and adjust seasoning to your liking. You can serve this salsa warm, or chill until ready to serve.

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS

TCP WEB EXTRA Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Butternut Squash Tacos With Black Beans.





Fajita Tacos With Chimichurri Sauce

KITTIELE POTTS
BOWIE-CASS EC

For her fajita tacos, Potts uses a zippy chimichurri sauce that pairs beautifully with sweet caramelized onions.

FILLING

- 32-ounce sirloin steak**
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar**
- ¼ cup olive oil**
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce**
- 1 tablespoon salt**
- 1 tablespoon pepper**
- 1 teaspoon cumin**
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder**
- ½ teaspoon onion powder**
- ½ teaspoon paprika**

CHIMICHURRI SAUCE

- 1 cup parsley**
- 1 cup cilantro**
- ½ cup olive oil**
- ½ red onion**
- 20 green pitted olives**
- 4 cloves garlic**
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar**
- 1 tablespoon capers**
- 1 teaspoon oregano**
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes**
- ¼ teaspoon cumin**

CARAMELIZED ONIONS

- 4 onions**
- ¼ cup (½ stick) butter, melted**
- ⅓ cup olive oil**
- 1 tablespoon sugar**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper**

TO SERVE

Tortillas

COOK'S TIP The sauce is best made in advance to allow flavors to meld.

CONTINUED >

\$500 WINNER

Grilled Garden Harvest Tacos

CHERYL SCHULMAN
FAYETTE EC



These vegetarian tacos pack a surprising amount of flavor into each bite, thanks to the crisp slaw and cool avocado crème. If you can't find ancho chile powder, substitute regular chili powder and a pinch of ground cayenne.

MAKES 6 TACOS

FILLING

- 3 large carrots**
- 2 medium zucchini**
- 1 large sweet potato**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil**
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin**
- 1 teaspoon ground ancho chile powder, or to taste**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- 2 ears corn, shucked**

"BRING THE HEAT" SLAW

- 3 cups shredded green cabbage**
- ⅓ cup chopped cilantro**
- 1 small jalapeño pepper, chopped**
- ⅓ cup diced jicama**
- ½ cup chopped red bell pepper**
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon pepper**
- ½ teaspoon sugar**



AVOCADO CRÈME

- 1 large avocado**
- ½ cup Mexican crema**
- 2 teaspoons lime juice**

TO SERVE

- 12 corn tortillas**
- Crumbled cotija cheese**
- Pico de gallo**
- Lime wedges**

- 1. FILLING** Prepare grill to cook over medium-high heat.
- 2.** Peel carrots and cut in half lengthwise. Slice zucchini into strips ¼ inch thick. Peel sweet potato and dice into ¼-inch cubes. Toss all in olive oil, cumin, ancho chile powder and salt. Set aside.
- 3. SLAW** Mix cabbage, cilantro, jalapeño, jicama, bell pepper, vinegar, salt, pepper and sugar. Set aside.
- 4. CRÈME** Combine avocado, crema and lime juice in a blender and blend on low until smooth. Set aside.
- 5.** Place a sheet of foil on half of grill grates. Place carrots flat side down on foil along with sweet potato cubes. Place zucchini strips and corn directly on grill. Turn vegetables to char on all sides. Remove vegetables once they're well charred and tender all the way through, about 6 minutes total for the zucchini and 10 minutes for the carrots, corn and sweet potato. Let cool slightly, then slice zucchini and carrots into quarters and cut corn kernels off the cob.
- 6.** To assemble tacos, grill or warm the tortillas. Layer two tortillas, then top with grilled vegetables followed by slaw and avocado crème. Garnish with pico de gallo, cotija or lime juice.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

KIDS COOKING DUE MAR 10

Have your kids turned into sous-chefs? Share their kitchen creations with our readers. Enter at TexasCoopPower.com/Contests by March 10.



Focus on Texas

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Deadline: March 10

Portraits

Deadline: April 10

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RECIPES CONTINUED

1. FILLING Place steak in a shallow baking dish. Combine vinegar, olive oil and Worcestershire sauce and pour over steak. Cover and refrigerate; let marinate at least 4 hours.

2. SAUCE Combine ingredients in a blender or food processor and pulse until ingredients are completely chopped but not liquefied. The sauce should be somewhat thick and chunky.

3. ONIONS Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Peel off the outer paper layer of the onions, leaving the ends on. Halve onions lengthwise from stem to root. Place the onions in a casserole dish cut-sides up. Combine melted butter, olive oil, sugar, salt and pepper. Drizzle onions generously with the mixture. Cover loosely with foil and bake 30 minutes. Flip onions over and bake an additional 25 minutes, or until onions are tender and caramelized.

4. When ready to cook steak, prepare grill for direct heat cooking. Combine salt, pepper, cumin, garlic powder, onion powder and paprika, and season steak on all sides. Grill to desired doneness, about 10 minutes per side for a medium sirloin. Let steak rest 5 minutes.

5. Slice steak thinly and layer on tortillas with caramelized onions and chimichurri sauce.

SERVES 8



Instant Pot Carnitas Tacos

MELALEE WINKLER
COSERV

These carnitas tacos are made in an Instant Pot for all of the flavor in half the time. Instead of frying, Winkler finishes the carnitas under the broiler to get the crispy edges carnitas are known for. If you have leftovers, save some of the cooking liquid for reheating.

6-7 pounds boneless pork butt shoulder

1 tablespoon salt

1 tablespoon dried Mexican oregano, crumbled

1 tablespoon smoked paprika

1 tablespoon cumin

1 teaspoon chipotle powder

½ teaspoon garlic powder

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 cup orange juice

¼ cup chicken stock

1 yellow onion, quartered

TO SERVE

Flour tortillas

Diced red onion

Sliced radishes

Chopped cilantro

Crumbled queso fresco

Lime wedges

COOK'S TIP If you don't have an Instant Pot, you can also cook this in a heavy, covered pot in the oven at 325 degrees for 3½ hours.

1. Cut the pork butt into six or seven chunks. Mix together the salt, oregano, paprika, cumin, and chipotle and garlic powders. Rub the pork with the spice mixture on all sides.

2. Set the Instant Pot to sauté setting high. Heat the oil in the pot and, working in batches, brown the pork on all sides. Remove the pork and deglaze the Instant Pot with the orange juice and chicken stock, scraping up the browned bits.

3. Place the quartered onion in the pot and turn off the Instant Pot. Place all of the pork on top of the onion. Put the lid on, making sure the valve is set to seal, and set the Instant Pot to pressure cook, high, 1 hour.

4. When the time is up, allow natural release for 15 minutes, then manual release. Remove pork, reserving some of the cooking liquid. Discard the onion.

5. Pull pork with two forks and spread on a baking sheet. Drizzle with a small amount of the cooking liquid and place under the broiler until the pork is slightly browned and crispy on the edges, 3-5 minutes. Serve with grilled flour tortillas, red onion, radish, cilantro, queso fresco and lime wedges.

SERVES 12

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Where Artistry Congregates

Czech and German painted churches in Central Texas are sparkling shrines

BY CHET GARNER

A **TOUR OF TEXAS** back roads takes you past prosaic scenes such as pastures full of grazing cows, profiles of spinning windmills and rural churches quietly awaiting their Sunday congregations. For most of these outlying houses of worship, a simple exterior foreshadows a modest sanctuary. That expectation changes in Fayette and Lee counties, where, concealed within unassuming facades, you'll find Old World decorative glory inside the region's painted churches.

I started my own churchgoing road trip with an apricot kolach because that's what you do when visiting Texas Czech country. I was on a mission to visit the area's five painted churches that are hidden in plain sight within the Czech and German communities that dot the map. My first stop was Dubina.

I pulled into a dirt parking lot and shrugged at what appeared to be an ordinary white building known as Sts. Cyril and Methodius Church. As soon as I stepped inside, I was transported to a world of sacred traditions and intricate religious art. From floor to ceiling, the room dazzled in bright colors and inlaid metals adorning the altars and statues of saints. It was clear that the Czech immigrants who built this church in the late 1800s took great pride in their work and sought to recreate the traditions and artistry of their European homeland here in Texas.

I spent the entire day driving, relying on my GPS so I didn't miss a turn down an obscure road in Fayette or Lee counties. From St. Paul Lutheran in Serbin to St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Ammannsville, each sanctuary had its own feel and history. In the ornately painted St. Mary Catholic Church in High Hill, known as the "Queen of the Painted Churches," the wooden columns looked just like marble. I felt transported to Europe without leaving Texas. ■

ABOVE Chet inside St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Ammannsville.

TCP WEB EXTRA See Chet's video from the painted churches in Fayette County 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.

MARCH

01

College Station [1-11] Territory: The Exhibition in a Box, (979) 458-0539, arch.tamu.edu/inside/services/wright-gallery

06

Bulverde [6, 13, 20, 27] Saturday Night Rodeo, (830) 980-2226, tejasrodeo.com

09

Houston Viano String Quartet, (713) 348-5400, chambermusichouston.org

11

Tyler [11-14] Texas Rose Spring Kickoff II Hunter/Jumper Horse Show, (903) 882-8696, texasrosehorsepark.com

12

Shiner [12-13] Pink Chandelier Market Barn Sale, (361) 798-0573, facebook.com/pinkchandeliermarket

McKinney [12-14] Third Monday Trade Days, (972) 562-5466, tmttd.com

13

Huntsville [13-14] Rusty Chippy Vintage Hippy & Garden Show, (936) 661-2545, huntsvilleantiqueshow.com

14

Dallas [14-June 20] Building on the Boulevard: Celebrating 20 Years of the Meadows's New Home, (214) 768-2516, meadowsmuseumdallas.org

Dallas [14-June 20] Fossils to Film: The Best of SMU's Collections, (214) 768-2516, meadowsmuseumdallas.org

15

Fredericksburg [15-20]
Spring Break at the Pioneer Museum, (830) 990-8441, pioneermuseum.net

16

Austin [16-20] South by Southwest Online, (512) 467-7979, sxsw.com

18

Brenham [18-21, 25-28]
The Absolute Brightness of Leonard Pelkey, (979) 830-8358, unitybrenham.org

19

Abilene [19-20] Outlaws and Legends Music Fest, (325) 660-8458, outlawsandlegends.com

Wichita Falls [19-20]
Cowboy True, (940) 767-2787, artscouncilwf.org/cowboy-true

Tyler [19-21] United States Dog Agility Association Agility Trials, (903) 882-8696, texasrosehorsepark.com

Palestine [19-April 4]
Texas Dogwood Trails Celebration, (903) 723-3014, www.texasdogwoodtrails.com

20

Corpus Christi Lecture:
Kitchen Herbs, (361) 852-2100, stxbot.org

Irving Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra: Jonathan Jones, (972) 252-4800, lascolinassymphony.org

Luckenbach Mud Dauber Fest, (830) 997-3224, luckenbachtexas.com

Mesquite Eggcitement With the Bunny, (972) 216-6273, cityofmesquite.com/pard

MORE EVENTS >

TCP Submit Your Event

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

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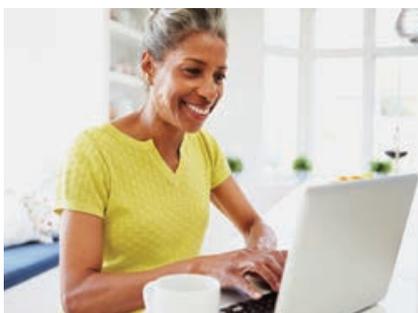
Hit the Road

Event Calendar

Fairs, festivals, food and family fun! Pick your region. Pick your month. Pick your event.

With hundreds of events across Texas listed every month, TexasCoopPower.com has something for you.

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Pick of the Month

Classic Car Stampede

Bellville, March 13
(979) 865-3187
austincountycruisers.com

Austin County Cruisers is a small group of die-hard car enthusiasts who share a passion for the mixture of mechanics and art that creates a vehicle. Cars, trucks and motorcycles from 1976 and earlier will be on display.

27

Abilene Triple Concerto: Beethoven at 250, (325) 677-6170, abilenephilharmonic.org

Burnet Hill Country Lawn & Garden Show, (512) 756-9396, burnetcountyhighlandlakesmastergardener.org

Burton Texas Ranger Day, (979) 803-0393, burtontexas.org

Sabinal [27-28] Wild Hog Festival and Craft Fair, (830) 486-8549, sabinalwildhogfestival.com

San Antonio [27-May 9] Night of Artists, (210) 299-4499, briscoemuseum.org/noa

MARCH EVENTS CONTINUED

Palestine Dogwood Festival, (903) 729-6066, palestinechamber.org/dogwoodfestival

Belton [20-21] A Sami Show, (512) 441-7133, samishow.com

New Braunfels [20-21] Old Gruene Market Days, (830) 629-5077, gruenemarketdays.com

21

Kerrville Celtic Angels Ireland, (830) 896-9393, caillouxtheater.com

Belton [21, 28, April 11, 18, 25] Healthy Kids Running Series, (254) 340-4577, healthykidsrunningseries.org

26

West [26-27] West, Central Texas Ceramic Expo & Handcrafted Items, (254) 716-5227, westceramicshow.com

Burton [26-April 3] La Bahia Antique Show and Sale, (979) 289-2684, labahiaantiques.com

APRIL

01

Levelland [1-3] American Business Club Pro Rodeo, (806) 777-1510, abcrodeo.com

Karnack [1-24] Earth Day Flotilla, (903) 736-3063, tinyurl.com/flotilla2021

Ennis [1-30] Bluebonnet Trails, (972) 878-4748, bluebonnettrail.org

02

Jefferson [2-4] City-Wide Rummage Sale, (903) 665-2672, jefferson-texas.com

03

Llano Fiddle Fest, (325) 247-5354, facebook.com/llanofiddlefest

New Braunfels Jamestown Revival, (830) 964-3800, whitewaterrocks.com

Palestine Easter Egg Express on the Texas State Railroad, (855) 632-7729, texasstaterailroad.net

Diners

Diners sprinkled across the state offer cooking that tastes like home no matter where you travel. Here's what our members served up, and we're coming back for seconds!

GRACE FULTZ



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

CHRIS MILLER
BLUEBONNET EC

A diner Miller stumbled upon during a road trip on Route 66.

REAGAN MAZY
SAM HOUSTON EC

Sunset at Ranch Hand Cafe in Cleveland.

SHELLY BORGFELD
FITZPATRICK
PEDERNALES EC

"We spent our anniversary in the charming town of Blanco and had a delightful experience at the Chess Club."

SANDRA DRAKE
BLUEBONNET EC

Drake's grandson at Mama's Daughters' Diner.



Upcoming Contests

- DUE MAR 10** Night Life
- DUE APR 10** Portraits
- DUE MAY 10** Rust & Decay

Enter online and review submission rules at TexasCoopPower.com/Contests.

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



Few and Far

Young musicians find out just how much luck and money Far West Texas requires

BY ELI WINTER
PHOTO BY WYATT MCSPADDEN

CAMERON KNOWLER AND I rang in Christmas next to a trailer in the Christmas Mountains. It was 2018, and we had just done a show at Terlingua's Starlight Theatre. For breakfast we'd eaten cowboy omelets with Catfish, a legendary river guide who punctuated slow bites with a groan—"Oh, merciful days!"

Later that night, toward the end of an 11-hour drive to Austin, we sat in an empty Kerrville IHOP for 45 minutes without being served and wolfed down fast food in a parking lot late at night.

That's how touring goes sometimes: No matter the crowd size, guarantee or delusions of grandeur, whether you play bars, basements or arenas, you spend a lot of time driving. Especially in far West Texas.

We were just 21 and 22 but already seasoned touring musicians. My music re-

volves around instrumentals for six-string, 12-string and Weissenborn acoustic guitars. Cameron's guitar and banjo playing draws influence from old-time and bluegrass musicians of the rural South.

This tour marked the first time we had performed together regularly, reinterpreting traditional folk songs and devising our own, and our Christmas Eve concert marked a halfway point, for which we'd traveled from Houston to the desert and back—a route we had looked forward to.

Growing up in Houston, I thought of Far West Texas as a region of stark beauty and mystery. I listened to *StarDate* on the radio and gave a presentation on Fort Davis in fourth grade. It seemed impossibly far.

We were surprised to have made it. On the way out of Lubbock, we stopped by Buddy Holly's grave. Holly toured similarly, and his plane use began from a desire to avoid freezing on a tour bus between shows in the rural Midwest. Our concerts, perhaps like his, were small—a nonprofit record store in Dallas, a backyard barn in Austin and a hotel bar in Marfa—but they didn't need to be big. Cameron thought of it like Hollywood, less charmed by the \$10 cacao nibs we attempted to snack on during long drives or the person who asked him before a gig if we were together, then asked, "Are you any good?"

Each day we made enough money for the next, aware of the luck that permeated our travels: playing to a packed house in a repopulated ghost town the night before Christmas, the night after playing for an attentive handful on the outskirts of Austin.

At the homecoming show in Houston, we cracked jokes about our travels, and I thought back to Catfish, as I often do. These days had been merciful indeed. ■

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.

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.



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.



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