

Election Ballot

| Annual Meeting Notice

| Annual Report

CHARGE ON

ANNUAL
REPORT

| 2023

Featuring:

By the Numbers
Financials
Operating Highlights
Board of Directors
Director Candidates



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

84th Annual Meeting of the Members

INVITATION AND OFFICIAL NOTICE

Tri-County Electric Cooperative invites you to the 84th Annual Meeting of the Members. Please join us **virtually** on Monday, October 16, at 7 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to elect members to the board of directors, approve reports for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, and transact any other business related to the co-op.

Please make plans to join us for the Annual Meeting **online** or by **phone**. Register online at tcectexas.com/annual-meeting to receive a call prior to the meeting connecting you by phone.

Member-owners are strongly encouraged to vote in the 2023 election. Every member is eligible to vote in the election, regardless of the district in which you reside. This year's ballot includes the director election for districts 1, 2 and 4. Please vote by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, September 27, 2023, either online, via your email ballot, or by mail. Full voting details and ballot instructions are located on the inside back cover of this magazine. All member-owners who vote in the election by the deadline will receive a **\$25 bill credit** and will be entered into the door prize drawing held during the virtual Annual Meeting.

Sincerely,



Margaret Koprek
Board Secretary/Treasurer

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SEPTEMBER 2023

Mum's the Word

Kisha Clark makes no
secret of her network
of mum-makers



**TRI-COUNTY
EC NEWS**

SEE PAGE 16



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September 2023



08

Bigger and Better—Together

Makers grow Texas' colorful homecoming mum tradition—and their own skills—by working cooperatively.

Story by Kristen Pettineo
Photos by Wyatt McSpadden

ON THE COVER

Kisha Clark, right, with Lundyn Byrd, whom she mentored in the art of mum-making.

ABOVE

Materials that will blossom into mums.

Photos by Wyatt McSpadden

12 Dance Hall Darlings

After decades of rocking the countryside, the beloved Triumphs take a final bow.

Story and photo by Erich Schlegel

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Wild Blue Yonder
By Pam LeBlanc

Planter Banter

RESEARCHERS HAVE LEARNED that plants “talk,” using a process called cavitation, when tiny bubbles burst and produce mini shock waves inside a plant’s vascular system. Sort of like what happens in your joints when you crack your knuckles.

Nice to meet you.



Come here often?



“There’s two kinds of coaches: Them that’s fired and them that’s gonna be fired.”

—BUM PHILLIPS

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

My favorite swimming hole 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 July prompt: **Darkness is only scary when ...**

You’re 91 years old, living alone a mile from a neighbor, the power goes out and you can’t find your cellphone.

HAROLD R. CLARK
NUECES EC
KINGSVILLE

It’s the bottom of your empty bag of chocolates.

MONICA MILLER
COSERV
CARROLLTON

You’re 10 years old and have to go to the outhouse at night.

NORMA KRANZ
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES
SOMERVELL COUNTY

You feel something furry and you know the dog is outside.

GAYLA LEECH
CECA
ALBANY

You can’t see what is making noise and coming toward you.

BOBBY REA
TRINITY VALLEY EC
ELKHART

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LIGHTBULB MOMENT

Here's a reading recommendation for children that will enlighten them about how rural electrification changed America for the better.

Wish Upon a Crawdad takes place in 1940 Oregon. It tells the tale of 12-year-old Ruby Mae Ryan, whose family is about to get electricity for the first time thanks to the electric cooperative formed by her parents and neighbors and who is trying to earn enough money to buy a surprise gift for her mother.

"I hope kids will take away a greater appreciation for all the wonderful things they can do because of electricity," says author Curtis Condon, a retired co-op magazine editor.



In a Manner of Speaking

KINDLY NOTE that Austin is the politest American city.

That's according to a survey of more than 1,500 residents of the 30 largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. Preply, a language learning app and e-learning platform, conducted the survey.

Fort Worth ranks third.

Pardon us for saying so, but the same survey lists Houston as the 10th-rudest city.

September 4

National Newspaper Carrier Day

"Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." So said Thomas Jefferson.



JULIA ROBINSON

JULY 2023 'I Love All the Love Here'

“As a parent of an autistic child who participated in Camp CAMP for many years, I was overjoyed to see this fine organization recognized in your magazine.”

MARTIN GIBLIN
PEDERNALES EC
SPRING BRANCH

Knowing Natives

Native grasses? Really? The first grass you list (Johnson grass) was imported from Turkey [*Ranchland Revival*, July 2023]. I can remember my father cursing it and the man it was named for when I was a boy. It is listed as a noxious weed in 19 states and under certain circumstances becomes deadly to cattle and horses.

Jim Evans
Victoria EC
Port Lavaca

EDITOR'S NOTE Sharp eye, Jim. Rancher Jon Taggart has planted Johnson grass until native grasses become established, but it's not native to Texas.

My grandmother was one of the original Rangerettes [*Kilgore's Kickers*, June 2023].

HOLLY ANTHONY
VIA FACEBOOK

Historical Details

I had never known about the post-revolution battles with Mexico [*Second Sacking*, July 2023]. I also learned a new word or two from the author.

Keith Brown
Pedernales EC
Lago Vista

I noticed a discrepancy. At the end it says the two attacks on Texas drove the Texians to join the United States six years after the Mexican

attacks in 1842. That would make it 1848 when Texas joined the U.S. In school, we learned that Texas joined the U.S. on December 29, 1845. Did I miss something somewhere?

Bill Beverly
Trinity Valley EC
Canton

EDITOR'S NOTE Our mistake, Bill. Texas joined the U.S. three years after the 1842 attacks. The story has been corrected on our website.

Old-School Luxury

These fantastic hotels are true reminders of old-school luxury and comfort [*Sleeping Giants*, July 2023]. I recommend stepping out and trying all these magnificent hotels.

Bill Koenig
Fayette EC
West Point



COURTESY GAGE HOTEL

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

Editor, Texas Co-op Power
1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor
Austin, TX 78701

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

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Mums Inc.
Homecoming Mum Professionals

Makers grow Texas' colorful homecoming mum tradition—and their own skills—by working cooperatively

BIGGER AND BETTER—TOGETHER

Homecoming season is upon us.

How can you tell? Well, there's football, for sure. And the unflinching heat finally starts standing down. But maybe the biggest—BIGGEST—clues are the over-the-top mum assemblies that high school students flaunt in the name of school spirit and Texas tradition.

It used to be that homecoming mums meant corsages, a nice arrangement easily pinned to a dress. But sometime in the 1970s, Texas mums became Texas-sized—extravagant masses of ribbons, buttons, charms and bells.

Families could spend hours creating them. Or they can turn to someone like Kisha Clark, for whom mums are serious business. Just don't call them cute.

"When I hear someone call my mum business cute, that's like nails on a chalkboard to me," Clark says, laughing. "This isn't a hobby. I'm not just throwing glitter at the kitchen table. Mums are works of art. I take them seriously, and I take my business seriously, too."

So seriously that Clark launched Mums Inc., a professional organization for mum-makers. Clark, who lives in Providence Village, near Denton, believes there's power in numbers and in working cooperatively—whether it's for sourcing materials in bulk, staying on top of new trends, referring customers or building skills.

"Really anything," Clark said. "When I first got started making mums, the business was competitive. But I think



we're better together. I mean, doctors have professional membership organizations. Attorneys do too. But nobody was talking about the mum industry this way. Why not?"

Clark, a member of CoServ, an electric cooperative based in the Metroplex, has been in the mum business for more than 20 years, first learning the trade from her grandmother while growing up near Fort Cavazos (formerly Fort Hood) in Killeen. She loved making mums in high school but never dreamed of making a career of them. Instead, she went to college and studied something totally different: cybersecurity.

But she wasn't out of the mum business for long.

"It was 2002. I was 23 years old and driving home from my first cybersecurity job in Plano, and I passed a school with a big sign out front," Clark said. "It said something about picking up homecoming mums, and I suddenly

OPPOSITE Kisha Clark, a cybersecurity expert, is fully immersed in the mum-making business.

RIGHT A vast array of ribbons serves as Clark's palette.



remembered how much I loved making them in high school. I thought, ‘Hey, I could do that.’ And from that moment, I became kind of obsessed with learning the business and making mums again.”

Clark scoured the internet to source supplies, get a better understanding of the market and network with other mum-makers. But in the early 2000s, information was scarce online. The mum business was driven mostly by word-of-mouth referrals, and it could be tough to get a foothold.

Clark saw an opportunity. With her unique combination of crafting skills and computer expertise, she says she became one of the first mum-makers to sell supplies, mum kits and custom mum designs on the internet.

Her first year was slow. She sold just two mums. But each homecoming season, Clark’s customer base grew, and within just a few years, it became less a hobby and more a bona fide side hustle. Today that business, DK Florals, produces 30–35 mums every season. Some take up to 24 hours of work, and they sell for anywhere from \$250 to well over \$800.

Maybe it’s because of Clark’s day job—managing a team of engineers—or maybe it’s because she’s a self-described leader by nature. But as her mum business grew more successful, Clark felt like there was potential for something much bigger.

“I was talking to another mum-maker friend,” Clark says. “She needed some supplies, and we ended up trading some items we both needed. We got to talking about the business, and we realized we needed to create some kind of network.”

“When I first got started making mums, the business was competitive. But I think we’re better together.”

That’s when Mums Inc. was born. It started as a Facebook group for mum-makers in 2012, but the conversation kept getting bigger.

“We started buying supplies together, which got us a better cost,” Clark says. “And as our numbers grew, we began teaching marketing. And from there, it just took off.”

Before long, Clark was hosting events for Mums Inc. members and leading in-person and virtual classes. What started as a homegrown Facebook group has now spun into a full-fledged professional membership organization with 188 members from all over Texas and some from Oklahoma, New Mexico and Florida. For an annual fee of \$35, mum-makers become part of a professional network, gaining access to its tips and techniques, resources, and referrals.



FROM OPPOSITE Clark shows Lundyn Byrd some of her techniques for crafting a mum. Byrd, a 2023 Aubrey High School graduate, has had her own mum business for three years. Mums can easily weigh 10 pounds and sometimes twice that.

friends' high school-aged kiddos needed a mum or a garter, they'd call me and I'd do it."

Clark saw McGlothin's work and saw the potential for a business. She reached out through Facebook and encouraged McGlothin to consider joining Mums Inc.

"That's when I realized that this could be more than just a hobby," McGlothin says. "I was just barely breaking even at the time, and I wasn't really approaching this as an entrepreneur. And now I have a profitable business."

But mostly, McGlothin is grateful that there's a group of skilled artisans passing down a Texas tradition.

"In our group, there are so many years of professional mum-making experience," she says. "We have people who have been making mums for their kids and grandkids, going back decades. That kind of experience is priceless—and it's being handed down generation by generation in our group. We share braiding techniques, know-how and new trends. I find it all incredibly valuable.

"And I'm glad it's not getting lost."

For Clark, that kind of connection embodies the potential she envisioned when she started the mum collective. Yes, the big, beautiful mums themselves are the end product. But for Clark, Mums

Inc. is really about people reaching their potential and building a community.

"Whether I'm managing engineers or leading Mums Inc., deep down, it's about people growth," Clark says. "I like to see people beyond what they see in themselves. Mums Inc. was like a bunch of flower seeds. They were going to grow, but now they're in the same pot, growing together. And now we have this beautiful rainforest."

Clark takes pride in knowing Mums Inc. members can help put their children through college, pay for family vacations or leave their jobs—because of mums.

"Yes, I love mums," Clark says. "But my joy? It's in seeing this community succeed." ■

Mums Inc. has its own TikTok account where Clark shares social media marketing expertise. After all, the video-sharing social media network is practically tailor-made for showing off her big, colorful, ornate designs. And these days, most of Clark's Generation Z customers are on there, too.

"TikTok has been great for us, but this is about so much more," Clark says. "This is about us being taken seriously and giving people the tools they need to realize their full potential. And we're not just a bunch of crafty moms. We're businesswomen."

Erica Muñoz McGlothin, a mum-maker and Mums Inc. board member, wholeheartedly agrees. The Temple mom began making mums for friends and family as a hobby.

"I'm kind of a creative person by nature," she explains. "I love the pageantry of it. I love that it's so Texas. So when my

Dance Hall Darlings

After decades of rocking the countryside, the beloved Triumphs take a final bow

IT ALL BEGAN in the summer of 1959 in Rosenberg, southwest of Houston. Tim Griffith's dad was a traveling salesman and came home one day with a used electric guitar and amp.

Obviously, the younger Griffith needed a band.

"I played saxophone in the nearby Needville High School band," Don Drachenberg says. "We got a few other friends together, and next thing you know, we're playing our first gig in January of 1960. A sock hop in Richmond."

Band member Denny Zatyka's dad was a distributor for Lone Star beer and allowed the teens—the Triumphs—to practice in a beer warehouse, Drachenberg says. "Through the years we all had regular jobs," he says. "I became an American history high school teacher; Denny inherited the Lone Star beer distributorship; Tim Griffith was a civil engineer; Teddy Mensik worked in a machine shop; and Gary Koeppen was an insurance salesman."

In 1966 the band recorded the Hank Williams tune *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry*, sung by another founding member, B.J. Thomas. It became a national hit. The song launched a solo career for Thomas, a Grammy winner whose hit songs included *Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head* and *Hooked on a Feeling*.

From there the Triumphs started playing the Central Texas dance hall circuit, through the '60s and into the '70s, bringing their rock tunes to dance halls in towns including Brenham, East Bernard, El Campo, Hillje, La Grange, Schulenburg, Shiner, Tate and Weimar.

Dance hall historian Gary E. McKee, editor of *Texas Polka News*, says Saturday nights were for rock 'n' roll dances; Sunday afternoons were for polka bands and an older crowd. On Friday nights, of course, folks were busy with high school sports.

Through the 1960s, the Triumphs were among the best-known circuit bands in Central Texas, along with the Barons and Roy Head and the Traits.

By 1980, as the world embraced disco and the Triumphs missed spending time with their families after more than a decade of working weekends and holidays, the band took a break. They regrouped in 1992.

But on a chilly Saturday night this past February, the Triumphs took their final bow in appropriate surrounds: at Swiss Alp Hall near Schulenburg in Fayette County. Sixty-three years after that first sock hop in Richmond, they played their last show.

Butch Bosak was there—along with about 450 loyal fans. Bosak played guitar with the Barons way back when. "When we were playing, we owned the place," he says. "We competed with [the Triumphs], but they were always family to us. We'd go to their New Year's Eve dances. Now that they are gone, there is a void."

"These old dance halls have wooden floors on pier-and-beam foundations," Drachenberg explains. "The floor would bounce like crazy when our fans danced and stomped to our music. The floors were going 'whoomph! whoomph!' We had big speakers stacked on top of each other in front of the stage, and we figured we better tie them down so they don't fall down on our fans."

Jonathan Socha, owner of Lee County Peanut Co., followed the Triumphs through the ages. "If you weren't soaking wet with sweat from dancing, you weren't having a good time," he says. "Swiss Alp was basically a hay barn with windows. We sweated our tails off."

Sandy Randolph grew up in Smithville. She would catch a ride with friends to any performance nearby. "I started sneaking into the dances when I was 13," she says. "The shows were the big social gathering of our area."

The Triumphs played at lifelong fan Catherine Poppe's 50th wedding anniversary.

"They play all kinds of music, they attract all kinds of people," says Poppe, who retired from Fayette Electric Cooperative in 2021. "It's just truly amazing the draw that this band has, and now they're going to be part of history."

Over the past few years, as the band's members aged, "the band lost its family feeling," Drachenberg says. "We discussed that it might be time to stop."

Co-founder and lead guitarist Tim Griffith died in December 2022. "Tim's death was the exclamation point on our decision to hang it up," says Drachenberg, 81, a member of Fayette EC. "Our band had a magical *something*. From that magic, our fan base grew and grew. It was great to see fans that have been following us for 60 freaking years.

"We had a hell of a run."

During intermission of the final performance, McKee presented the Triumphs with an honor from Texas Dance Hall Preservation.

"It was bittersweet," McKee says. "They played the soundtrack of my life." ■



The Triumphs play their final show February 18 at Swiss Alp Hall near Schulenburg.

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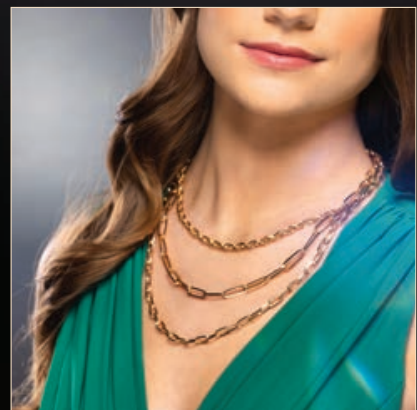
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Increasing Member Engagement

AS A MEMBER-OWNED electric provider, Tri-County Electric Cooperative strives to put our members first, and invest in our communities. We have more than 106,000 members spread across portions of 16 counties – our footprint is quite large. To meet our members where they are, we decided back in early 2020 to revitalize our member and community relations strategies by participating in a handful of existing community events. We know our members like to get out and attend events like the Parker County Peach Festival, Seymour’s Cruisin’ the Brazos, and the famous Southlake Oktoberfest, so we decided to pop a tent and be there with you! While that was our direction, the COVID pandemic placed a hold on that plan and many of the local community events themselves. However, we did not give up on this idea.

In May, we held our first Member Engagement Event at the Roanoke Round Up, where 81 members stopped by to see our employees. The momentum continued with Keller Summer Nights in June, with 90 members stopping by. In July, we were at two large events, the Granbury Hometown 4th of July and Parker County Peach Festival with 246 and 295 members registering respectively.

Over the first four events, more than 700 members stopped by to talk with our employees, spin the wheel for prizes, and register to win bill credits. We have a few events coming up, and we hope you take the time to stop by the big red tent to see us. Bring the coupon on the next page for easy registration. We hope to see you there!

Congratulations to our Bill Credit Winners!

At every Member Engagement Event, we raffle off free bill credits to members. The below winners are from our first four Member Engagement Events. Bill credits will be applied directly to your primary account.

Roanoke Round Up

- \$250 – Tessie Marlowe of Fort Worth
- \$100 – Chad Townley of Fort Worth
- \$100 – Sean Sherraden of Fort Worth
- \$50 – Kelly Dunn of Keller
- \$50 – Mark Kammer of Fort Worth

Keller Summer Nights

- \$250 – Raymond Gard of Fort Worth
- \$100 – Mina Silwal of Fort Worth
- \$100 – Cindy Clardy of Fort Worth
- \$50 – David Eckhardt of Fort Worth
- \$50 – Grant Summers of Keller

Granbury Hometown 4th of July

- \$250 – RV Keer of Granbury
- \$100 – David Turner of Brock
- \$100 – Daryl Pace of Granbury
- \$100 – Ashley Marineau of Fort Worth
- \$100 – Bill Taylor of Granbury
- \$50 – Jason Guthrie of Cresson
- \$50 – Rhonda Sprouse of Granbury
- \$50 – Marco Campbell of Granbury
- \$50 – Clinton Hyatt of Granbury

Parker County Peach Festival

- \$250 – Glenn Quinn of Weatherford
- \$100 – Hal Walton of Weatherford
- \$100 – Ryan Elliott of Weatherford
- \$100 – Kelle Smith of Weatherford
- \$100 – John Szpak of Keller
- \$100 – Mary Sheldon of Poolville
- \$50 – Richard Paryl of Keller
- \$50 – Madelyn Corbin of Fort Worth
- \$50 – Angela Pidkowicz of Springtown
- \$50 – Paul Mulholland of Weatherford
- \$50 – Elisha Walker of Weatherford
- \$50 – Debi Madearis of Weatherford





A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Tri-County Electric Cooperative will be attending community events in our service territory in an effort to reach more of our membership. This will provide you with one-on-one access with employees across departments in your co-op. Win bill credits and take home gifts when you visit our bright red tent and register. Bring the event ticket below to our booth and you will take home a member-exclusive gift.

Check out the upcoming events below or visit tcectexas.com/MEE and find an event near you!

UPCOMING EVENTS




**AZLE
STING
FLING**

Sept. 9

Main Street
Azle, Texas

**Wild West
Festival**

Sept. 16

Town Square
Springtown, Texas



**Oktoberfest
SOUTHLAKE**

Oct. 13-15

Main Street
Southlake, Texas

2023 RETIREMENT

This year the board of directors authorized the retirement of \$4.997 million to members who received electric service in 2003. This retirement includes approximately 36% of 2003 margins.

Members can expect to receive those funds this month through a bill credit or check.

- Current members with capital credit retirements of \$150 or less will receive a bill credit.
- Current members with capital credit retirements of \$150.01 or more will receive a check.
- Previous members with capital credit retirements will receive a check.

Capital credit retirements is just one more benefit of being a cooperative member!



Capital Credits Life Cycle

As a Tri-County Electric Cooperative member-owner, you invest and share in the ownership of the co-op. Each member also receives dividends, or capital credits, from the year's margins.

Here's how capital credits work:

1. Establish Membership

When you establish service at your home or business, you become a member of Tri-County Electric Co-op. When you become a member, a separate capital credits account is established in your name to track your investment in the co-op.

2. Allocations

Each year the board of directors allocates any funds remaining after expenses have been paid to the membership. Funds are allocated to each member's capital credits account based on the amount of electricity purchased. Allocations may vary from year to year.

3. Retirements

Each year the board of directors evaluates the financial status of the cooperative. Capital that is not retired will be used as operating capital for system improvements and maintenance. When capital credits are retired, the board will retire allocated funds from a previous fiscal year. The amount of capital retired to members as capital credits may change from year to year. Capital credits are returned to members in the form of a bill credit or check. If the amount is \$150 or less, a member will receive a credit on their electric account. If the amount is more than \$150, the member will receive a check through the mail. Inactive members will receive a check mailed to their last known address.

Capital credits are just one perk of being a Tri-County Electric Co-op member-owner. Right now Tri-County Electric Co-op is about 19 years out on returning capital credits, which is well above average for co-ops.

Tri-County Electric Co-op's vision is to take care of our member-owners. Returning capital is just one way we look out for our membership.

CHARGE ON

ANNUAL
REPORT | 2023

Featuring:

By the Numbers

Financials

Operating Highlights

Board of Directors

Director Candidates





BY THE NUMBERS

A YEAR IN REVIEW

The past year has been one for the history books. Tri-County Electric Cooperative has dedicated all resources to ensuring our members have been taken care of. Between managing the end of the Brazos bankruptcy and managing our new power supply, we are excited for our future as we embark together. Thank you for your membership.



MILES OF LINE

9,962

This is about the distance between Maine and South Korea

NEW MILES OF LINE

267

This is equal to the distance between Fort Worth, TX and Hot Springs, AR



908,898 PEAK DEMAND

3,256.75

GWH SOLD



AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL COST

\$7.56 PER DAY



7,037

WORK ORDERS COMPLETED



24,612

SERVICES ORDERS COMPLETED

MILES OF VEGETATION TRIMMED



267



NEW METERS

6,055



ACTIVE METERS

133,388

SYSTEM AVERAGE RETAIL COST



14.5¢



EMPLOYEES

274



GROWTH

4.76%

CAPITAL CREDITS RETURNED

2023: \$4.997 MILLION
ALL TIME: \$70 MILLION

184.550

SAIDI

Average number of minutes of interruption

104.902

CAIDI

Average outage duration in minutes

1.759

SAIFI

Average number of interruptions

97.89%

RELIABILITY

Statement of Income and Expenses

12 MONTHS ENDED MARCH 31, 2023

OPERATING INCOME

Electric Energy Revenue	\$444,987,321	100%
TOTAL OPERATING INCOME	\$444,987,321	100%

OPERATING EXPENSES

Electric Power Cost	\$339,851,301	77.6%
Electric Operating Expense	\$55,333,093	12.6%
Electric System Depreciation	\$21,806,629	5.0%
Interest Expense	\$16,466,185	3.8%
Taxes and Other	\$4,362,278	1.0%
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$437,819,486	100%

NET OPERATING MARGINS	\$7,167,835	1.6%
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NON-OPERATING INCOME

Interest Income	\$811,840	18.0%
Non-Operating Income	\$752,241	16.7%
G&T and Other Capital Credits Allocations	\$2,939,577	65.3%
TOTAL NON-OPERATING INCOME	\$4,503,658	100%

NET MARGINS	\$11,671,493	2.6%
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MARGARET
KOPREK

BOARD
SECRETARY/
TREASURER

A Message from your Board Secretary/Treasurer

Independent auditing firm Briscoe, Burke & Grigsby LLP of Tulsa, Oklahoma, performed an audit of our financial statements for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2023. We received a clean, unqualified opinion on the audit. A full audit report is on file at Tri-County Electric Cooperative's headquarters located at 200 Bailey Ranch Road, Aledo, Texas.

Condensed Balance Sheets

AS OF MARCH 31

ASSETS	2023	2022
Cash	\$7,526,361	\$6,320,293
Accounts Receivable	\$16,604,700	\$12,324,578
Equity in Associated Organizations	\$165,682,779	\$164,494,912
Investment in Subsidiary	\$4,849,042	\$4,600,434
Utility and Non-Utility Plant, Net of Depreciation	\$665,709,315	\$565,162,150
Accrued Revenues	\$25,688,047	\$23,770,000
Regulatory Asset	\$482,251,404	-
Other Assets	\$6,560,988	\$2,098,290
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,374,872,636	\$778,770,657
LIABILITIES		
Long-Term Debt	\$703,749,971	\$207,459,337
Accounts Payable and Other Current Liabilities	\$160,172,067	\$96,936,604
Accrued Power Cost, Advanced Payments	\$15,274,481	\$15,274,481
Accumulated Provisions	\$13,597,881	\$20,029,725
Consumer Deposits	\$6,100,562	\$5,317,026
Accrued Taxes, Interest and Other	\$42,506,362	\$14,639,035
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$941,401,324	\$359,656,208
EQUITIES		
Membership Fees	\$2,606,914	\$2,489,618
Patronage Capital	\$430,864,398	\$416,624,831
TOTAL EQUITIES	\$433,471,312	\$419,114,449
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITIES	\$1,374,872,636	\$778,770,657

Operating Highlights

12 MONTHS ENDED MARCH 31

	2023	2022
Total Revenue	\$444,987,321	\$319,564,360
Total Expenses	\$437,819,486	\$321,026,847
Plant Additions (Net of Accumulated Depreciation)	\$100,547,165	\$72,833,398
Utility Plant - Gross	\$869,889,146	\$765,449,784
Total Active Meters	133,388	127,333
Plant Investment Per Member-Owner	\$6,521	\$6,011
Peak Demand (kW)	908,898	752,762
Electric Energy Sales (kWh)	3,256,745,027	2,931,340,165
Residential Average Annual Use (kWh)	19,039	17,785
Commercial/Industrial Average Annual Use (kWh)	55,610	53,868
System Average Retail Cost per kWh	\$0.145	\$0.097
Net Operating Margins	\$7,167,835	(\$1,462,487)
Total Miles of Line	9,962	9,695

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S 16-county service area is divided into nine districts – four urban, four suburban and one rural. A member from each district sits on the board of directors. The board oversees the co-op and serves as the regulatory and governing body.

Directors meet monthly to provide guidance and direction, while looking out for the best interest of all members.



**MAX
WADDELL**
CHAIRMAN
DISTRICT 9



**JOHN
KILLOUGH**
VICE CHAIRMAN
DISTRICT 6



**MARGARET
KOPREK**
SECRETARY/TREASURER
DISTRICT 2



**KEVIN
INGLE**
DISTRICT 1



**JORDEN
WOOD**
DISTRICT 3



**JERRY
WALDEN**
DISTRICT 4



**STEVE
HARRIS**
DISTRICT 5



**SOMMER
PORTWOOD**
DISTRICT 7



**MICHAEL
SIVERTSEN**
DISTRICT 8

Minutes from the 83rd Annual Meeting of the Members

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2022 | 7 PM

The 83rd Annual Meeting of the members of Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Inc. was held virtually at 200 Bailey Ranch Road in Aledo, Texas, on Tuesday, October 4, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.

Janet Rehberg, Chief Strategy Officer/Vice President of Engineering opened the meeting with the introduction of Matthew Fisher, Meter Data Analyst, who gave the invocation. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance given by Jeremy McCollum, GIS Analyst.

Mrs. Rehberg introduced the board of directors and then turned the meeting over to the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Dr. Max Waddell. Mr. Waddell called the meeting to order and appointed Mr. Darryl Schriver, President/CEO as the Chairman of the 83rd Annual Meeting.

The notice of the Annual Meeting and proof of mailing statement was then read by Mr. Schriver. In accordance with the bylaws, 102,206 copies were mailed to the membership on August 21, 2022.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative partnered with Survey and Ballot Systems to conduct the election. Members were able to vote by mail or electronically. According to the Cooperative bylaws, a minimum of 3-percent of the total membership is required to conduct business. The minimum quorum requirement is 3,066. Survey and Ballot Systems reported a total of 3,261 ballots submitted by mail, and 16,351 were submitted electronically for a total of 19,612 ballots for the election. Quorum was met and qualified the election for the 83rd Annual Meeting of the membership.

Mr. Schriver then called for the approval of the minutes of the Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Inc. 2021 Annual Meeting. The Membership voted virtually and confirmed the approval of the minutes for the Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Inc. 82nd Annual Meeting on Tuesday, October 5, 2021.

Mr. Schriver then called for the

approval of the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications and explained according to the Cooperative bylaws, each year the Board shall nominate and the Membership shall confirm Cooperative Members to serve on the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications. One Member from each district shall serve on the Committee to qualify the candidates for the board elections and set the ballot. According to Section 4.4 of the bylaws, the Committee is comprised of Members in good standing, who are not currently a director or employee and who are not closely related to a director, a director candidate or an employee. The following were nominated to serve, for District 1 Jeffrey Bass, District 2 Christin Bugaj, District 3 J. Steven Bartley, District 4 Randy Marshall, District 5 Ramey Keeth, District 6 Danny Tuggle, District 7 Ranell Scott, District 8 Paula Baron and District 9 Robert Gotcher, serving to the end of 2022. Mr. Schriver called for the Members to confirm the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications. The membership voted and confirmed the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications.

Mr. Schriver then announced the Chairman of the Nominations and Qualifications Committee, Mr. Steve Bartley, to present the 2022 Director Committee on Nominations and Qualifications report. This Annual Meeting the Members voted to elect three Directors to the board in Districts 5, 7 and 9. The Committee on Nominations and Qualifications set the ballot as follows: District 5 Steve Harris, incumbent and Mike Hall, Nomination Candidate, District 7 Larry Miller, incumbent and Sommer Portwood, Nomination Candidate, District 9 Dr. Max Waddell, incumbent.

Mr. Schriver returned to the podium to announce the election results. Survey and Ballot Systems, the third-party election partner, provided the election results as follows: District 5

incumbent Steve Harris received 10,071 votes and nomination candidate Mike Hall received 9,135 votes. Steve Harris received 52% of the votes and is elected the Director of District 5. District 7 incumbent Larry Miller received 7,957 votes and nomination candidate Sommer Portwood received 11,279 votes. Sommer Portwood received 58.6% of the votes and is elected as the Director of District 7. District 9 incumbent Dr. Max Waddell ran unopposed and therefore received 100% of the votes and is elected as the Director for a 3-year term. Mr. Harris, Ms. Portwood and Mr. Waddell are now elected Board of Directors to serve 3-year terms. This concluded the business portion of the agenda items.

Mr. Schriver introduced Mrs. Margaret Koprek, Secretary-Treasurer, who gave the Treasurer's report to the membership.

Mr. Schriver and Senior Staff members Melissa Watts, Chief Financial Office/Vice President of Finance, Wesley Scheets, Chief Operations Office/VP of Operations, Mrs. Rehberg, then gave reports on the state of the Cooperative, cybersecurity within the industry, legislative changes pertaining to Cooperatives in the state of Texas, Winter Storm Uri and the effects of the Brazos Electric Cooperative bankruptcy upon Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Mrs. Rehberg and Mr. Schriver announced door prize winners throughout the meeting.

Mr. Schriver then responded to member questions.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

2023 DIRECTOR NOMINATION REPORT

OFFERING MULTIPLE PATHS to the ballot is the most transparent director nomination process a co-op can hold. Tri-County Electric Co-op allows interested and eligible members to pursue nomination through committee or through member petition.

COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS & QUALIFICATIONS

The Committee on Nominations and Qualifications is responsible for reviewing and accepting applications from members interested in running for a seat on the board of directors. The committee carefully reviews application packets from candidates for the director seats up for election each year.

In order to serve on the committee, members must be in good standing with the cooperative, not serving as a cooperative board member, not employed by the co-op, not a director candidate or closely related to a co-op director or director candidate. Each year, the committee is confirmed by the membership at the Annual Meeting of the Members.

The committee met at 5 p.m. on Monday, March 13, to accept and review nomination applications. Committee members carefully reviewed each application submitted by members interested in running for the board based on eligibility outlined in the cooperative's bylaws, and election policies and procedures. The deadline for members to apply to be nominated by committee was 5 p.m. on Thursday, March 9, 2023.

The Committee on Nominations and Qualifications approved five candidates for the ballot.

NOMINATION BY PETITION

Members could choose to seek nomination by member petition, which bypasses the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications. Application packets were due by 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 13, 2023, and were reviewed and approved by the cooperative attorney. Two candidates were reviewed and approved for the ballot.

DISTRICT 1

Kevin Ingle (Incumbent)

DISTRICT 2

Margaret Koprek (Incumbent)

DISTRICT 4

Jerry Walden (Incumbent)

David Miller (Nomination Candidate)

Julie Walden (Petitioning Candidate)

Stan Mickle (Petitioning Candidate)

2023 COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS MEMBERS

Jeffrey Bass, District 1 | **Christin Bugaj**, District 2 | **J. Steven Bartley**, District 3, Chairman | **Randy Marshall**, District 4 | **Ramey Keeth**, District 5 | **Danny Tuggle**, District 6 | **Ranell Scott**, District 7 | **Paula Baron**, District 8 | **Wayne Parkman**, District 9



2023 DIRECTOR ELECTION: CANDIDATES

MEMBERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY to vote on three director seats this year – districts 1, 2, and 4. Six candidates met the qualifications in the director election and will be on the ballot this election.



DISTRICT 1

**KEVIN
INGLE**
INCUMBENT

Kevin Ingle was appointed to the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors in February 2021 to fill the vacant urban position.

Ingle completed training requirements for his Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certificate through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Ingle works at GM Financial as the Vice President of Servicing Analytics, where he leads a team of professional data analysts, serves on several committees, and is active in the employee mentoring program. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Tulsa and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Texas at Arlington.

Ingle maintains an active role in his community. Currently, he serves as an industry advisor to the Master's of Business Analytics and Data Science program at Oklahoma State University and volunteers for the Salvation Army Angel Tree project as well as with Junior Achievement. He previously served as the president of his community homeowners association and previously served as the president of the Azle Municipal Development District.



DISTRICT 2

**MARGARET
KOPREK**
INCUMBENT

Margaret Koprek has served on the Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors since March 2021. Currently, she serves as the board secretary/treasurer.

Koprek completed training requirements for her Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certificate through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Koprek works at BNSF Railway as director of Learning & Development. She began her career at BNSF Railway in 2007 with various positions in Operations and Data Analytics and holds a bachelor's degree and master's degree from Texas A&M University, and a master's in industrial engineering from St. Mary's University. Professionally, she serves on BNSF's Women's Network Executive Board.

Koprek actively participates in her community, including support of the church and school at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Keller and the Diocese of Fort Worth.

2023 DIRECTOR ELECTION: CANDIDATES



DISTRICT

**JERRY
WALDEN**

INCUMBENT

4

I am proud and grateful to be a 5th generation farmer and rancher of Parker County. I was raised in the small community of Authon on my family's farm where we produced peanuts, hay, and ran a cow-calf operation. Growing up on the farm taught me early on the values of hard work, problem solving, and conservation, just to name a few. Professionally, I have owned several construction-related businesses ranging from property improvement to custom home building.

I have been a TCEC member since 1974 and began serving as a director on the board in September of 1999. At that time our co-op had approximately 30,000 meters and today we have over 131,000. One of my goals as director has been to preserve the small business charm of TCEC, while providing the guidance necessary to allow it to grow to our ever-increasing needs. I obtained my Credential Cooperative Director certification through our national association, NRECA, and served in leadership positions within our broader cooperative network. Throughout my time as a director, I have served as the vice president and secretary/treasurer, as well as chair of board committees.

With the continuing growth of TCEC, as well as the state of Texas, we must make strategic decisions today to ensure sustainable and reliable electricity for the future. During my years as a director, many challenges and opportunities have faced TCEC. I addressed each with honesty and integrity, striving to make the best decisions for the benefit of the member-owners. I possess the years of knowledge that only experience can provide and, equally important, the ability to adapt to present and future needs.

In the community, I served on the Garner ISD school board for 10 years, including three as board president. Additionally, I have served on local advisory committees and community boards.

My wife Ronda and I have 3 children, 6 grandchildren, and 1 great-grandson. With our future generations in mind, I have a strong desire to be a good steward of our natural resources and environment. Natural gas is currently the most economical and reliable source of electricity generation, yet I am committed to the continued exploration, development, and use of alternative natural sources of energy production, like wind, solar, and other technologies yet to be discovered. In my opinion, whatever the future holds for electricity generation, it must be reliable, sustainable, and economical.

I have a broad knowledge of the electricity industry, from generation through transmission to your home. As your director I will continue to use common sense in providing leadership to TCEC. I am confident I am the best candidate to serve you as District 4 director. Thank you for bestowing your trust in me to represent you in the past. It would be an honor and privilege to serve you for the next three years.



DISTRICT

**DAVID
MILLER**

NOMINATION
CANDIDATE

4

David Miller is a lifelong resident of North Texas who carries tenured experience in municipal government and with non-profit organizations.

David started his career in law enforcement in the mid-1980s as a patrol officer for the Keller Police Department. Since that time, he has held the positions of Chief of Police, Director of Public Safety, Deputy City Manager, and City Administrator for the cities of Trophy Club, Kennedale, Forest Hill, Bedford, and Springtown. David is currently the City Administrator and Director of Public Safety for the City of Springtown where he has served since November 2017. In addition to his work in municipal government, David serves on the board of the United Way of Parker County, serves on the Equine Advisory Board for Weatherford College, and is the Chair of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement's advisory board for Parker County. These posts are in addition to numerous other leadership roles for a myriad of local, state, and national professional organizations related to city management and law enforcement. David has done extensive work with state legislators throughout his tenure through the Texas Municipal League and other professional organizations. He is well versed in the legislative processes including but not limited to testifying in front of state subcommittees.

Outside of these efforts, David, along with his wife, Teresa, operates a therapeutic equine facility for children and adults with physical, intellectual, education and emotional disabilities, as well as for veterans, and those recovering from drug and alcohol addiction. Stars and Strides Stables is located in Peaster and utilizes therapeutic riding to aid in physical therapy, emotional growth and learning. Many riders experience a connection to the horse that few sports can create. Not only does this help raise their self-esteem but it also teaches them essential skills. It improves balance, creates trust and creates a friendship between rider and horse. The Millers established Stars and Strides in 2012 after being inspired by their daughter, Courtney, who experienced immense growth using equine-assisted therapy to overcome the challenges of her disability, Kabuki syndrome.

David is a longtime member of Northside Baptist Church where he continues to serve as a Bible teacher. David has been a resident of Parker County for more than 18 years and resides with his wife Teresa and their youngest daughter Courtney in Peaster.

2023 DIRECTOR ELECTION: CANDIDATES



DISTRICT

**JULIE
WALDEN**

PETITIONING
CANDIDATE

4

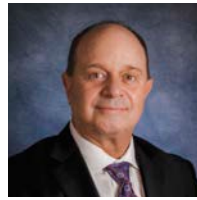
Julie Smith Walden believes in giving back to her community by being involved in various organizations including the Millsap Heritage Society, Millsap Ex-students Organization, Millsap Neighborhood Home and Garden Club and Millsap Alumni Foundation Board of Directors. Julie is a retired educator, after teaching Technology and coaching for 34 years. During her tenure as an educator, she was proud to establish the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at Peaster Middle School, she founded the Pee Wee Cheerleaders at Millsap, was Director and coach of Millsap Little Dribblers, Directed the Dance Team, and served as a PTO Officer.

Julie is an honor graduate of Millsap High School where she was involved in sports, cheerleading as well as several academic organizations. After High School, she attended Tarleton State University, graduating Magna Cum Laude and was inducted into the Alpha Chi Honor Society; all while working part-time and raising her two children. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education, with a major in Exercise and Sport Studies and a minor in Business. Julie holds a Real Estate License and has worked as a Realtor and office manager for a Real Estate firm. She is a member of Texas Association of Sports Officials and officiates Middle and High School Volleyball.

Walden attends Greenwood Baptist Church and is a member of the Women's Bible Study Group. She founded Dedicated Divas, a Bible group of approximately 500 women. Julie shares the word of God in a daily Bible verse with each of the members.

Julie is extremely proud of her children, Michael Barnes and Brandee Pemberton. Michael is Coordinator of Girls Athletics, Coach and Educator at Miles ISD. His wife Nicole is an educator and coach as well. They have three children. Brandee Pemberton, M.D., practices medicine at Star Family Medicine in Weatherford. Her husband Brian is an airline pilot based at DFW Airport. They have one son.

In her free time, Julie enjoys watching her grandchildren participate in sports and spends as much time with family as possible. Julie and her husband participate in Parker County Sheriff's Posse activities as well as other equine events. She and her husband enjoy ranch life and preserving our western heritage. They raise cattle in western Parker County. She is blessed with having the opportunity to be the caregiver of her 87 year young mother.



DISTRICT

**STAN
MICKLE**

PETITIONING
CANDIDATE

4

Stan Mickle is seeking a Board of Director position for District 4 at Tri-County Electric. Mickle aspires to bring new vision, fresh ideas, and quality leadership to the Tri-County Electric Board of Directors. He looks forward to the available training and conference networking to expand our local opportunities.

Mickle (57) is a Co-Founder and Partner of RXSoil Inc. RXSoil is a specialty chemical company providing sustainable remediation solutions to the oil & gas industry. Prior to RXSoil, Mickle spent 19 years in real estate and golf course development by designing, building, and operating Canyon West Golf Club.

Through his early years Stan was heavily involved in the equine reproductive industry. Mickle earned his Bachelor of Science from Tarleton State University with emphasis on Equine Reproductive Physiology. The Mickle family handled many of the famous legacy race, cutting and pleasure horses for almost four decades.

Mickle has lived in Parker County and has been a Tri-County user since 1974. He has been involved in many community efforts and fundraisers over the years.

2023 ELECTION AND ANNUAL MEETING

2023 ELECTION

Members have the opportunity to vote on three director seats this year – districts 1, 2 and 4. Candidate biographies are located on pages AR 9 -11. A Director Candidate Forum was held on Monday, August 21 at 6:00 p.m. to allow members learn more about each candidate and a recording is available at tcctexas.com/director-elections for members who missed the forum.

The election opens September 1 and closes September 27 at 5 p.m. Members can vote online, via your email ballot, or by mail. All balloting information is located on the back inside cover of this magazine. Voting in the director election is one of your rights and responsibilities as a co-op member-owner. Members who vote by the deadline will receive a \$25 bill credit for participating and will be entered into the door prize drawing at Annual Meeting. The \$25 bill credit is our thank-you for taking the time to invest in your co-op.

The 2023 election results will be announced at Annual Meeting on Monday, October 16.

RUN-OFF ELECTION

The 2023 election ballot includes two uncontested races and four candidates for district 4. According to section 3.8 of our bylaws, a director candidate in an election with three or more candidates must receive the majority of the votes. If a candidate does not receive a majority, a run-off election must be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order until a majority is achieved.

If a candidate receives a majority - 50% plus one vote - of the votes in the 2023 election, no run-off is needed. If a candidate does not receive a majority, the top two candidates will be placed on a special ballot in the December *Texas Co-op Power* magazine. Members will receive notice if a run-off election is necessary in the November *Texas Co-op Power* magazine. Members who vote in the run-off election, if needed, will receive a \$10 bill credit for participating.

ANNUAL MEETING

Tri-County Electric Co-op's 84th Annual Meeting of the Members is Monday, October 16, at 7 p.m. We are hosting the meeting virtually for your convenience. Members can watch online or listen by phone – from your home, office, car or wherever you may be. The official Annual Meeting notice is located on the front inside cover of the magazine.

This year's Annual Meeting will include a financial update, results from the director election, a co-op update and door prizes. Members who vote in the election by the deadline will be entered into the door prize drawing.



BILL CREDIT

Every member who votes in this year's election will receive a \$25 bill credit!

OCTOBER 16

HELD VIRTUALLY AT 7 P.M.

84TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS

Stream online: tcctexas.com/director-elections

Listen by phone: 855.710.6229



A HUB FOR HELP

AT 25, MISSION GRANBURY IS STILL GROWING - ALONG WITH NEEDS

STORY BY BOB BUCKEL, COMMUNICATIONS CONTENT SPECIALIST

Dusti Scovel, executive director of Mission Granbury, said Mission Granbury was the birthplace of the organization she has led for the last eight years.

“It’s the foundation of who we are,” she said. “We started in 1998. At first it was just a hotline, in an office that was borrowed, with volunteers answering the phone.”

The original shelter was a double-wide mobile home, replaced in 2007 by a real shelter for women and children, victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Today, it employs nine people full-time, including licensed counselors.

But Mission Granbury didn’t stop there. As the Hood County nonprofit celebrates its 25th anniversary, it encompasses a full range of programs, employs 32, involves hundreds of volunteers and serves thousands.

“When I came, our budget was not quite a million dollars,” Scovel said. “It’s \$2.6 million now. That’s quite a bit of growth. We’ve been through a lot of change in our community.”

Tough times in paradise

Granbury is a beautiful place. Many residents, including a high percentage of retirees, moved there for lake living, golf, shopping and fine dining.

But poverty, homelessness, domestic abuse and other

problems are there, too.

“You don’t see the poverty,” Scovel said. “It’s just not out on display. This is a very prosperous community, and it is the most giving community I’ve ever lived in. But there’s suffering out there. You just have to choose to see it.”

Seeing and responding to those needs has led Mission Granbury from one ministry into another.

“During the pandemic there were a lot of seniors who were homebound,” Scovel said. “Meals on Wheels was all the food they got unless somebody happened to go grocery shopping for them, and so that started our senior delivery program.”

The veterans’ care program started after an admiral put them in his will. Then, during Winter Storm Uri, it became clear that Mission Granbury could be an asset during public safety emergencies, coordinating among various groups, so they took on that role.

The CASA program was a natural outgrowth of the women’s shelter, as the children involved in those situations needed an advocate when they got in the courts system. CASA volunteers make regular visits, file reports, interview parents, foster parents, medical providers and teachers, and attend meetings at school. “They’re the child’s voice,” Scovel said. “It’s a big commitment.”



Volunteers, donors, needs abound

Jean Bondy, director of community partnerships, keeps tabs on volunteers, food and cash.

“I think people give to what they believe in – the causes that appeal to their heart,” she said. “We’ve been very blessed to have some wonderful supporters and benefactors.”

Granbury’s churches are “phenomenal,” she said. Many businesses kick in as well. Last year, Dave and Dana Purczynsky turned over the “Live Thankfully” food drive program they’d been running for nine years. It’s now “Pantries of Plenty.”

Fundraising, food-gathering and volunteer recruitment never stop, Bondy said.

“We had a lady come in Thursday for an orientation and she said, ‘I’ve got nothing to do,’” she laughed. “Trust me, we will put her to work!”

Volunteers come from everywhere.

“This community cannot not help,” Scovel said. “They’re not going to sit at home. They’re going to be there, no matter what the need is.”

Mission Granbury offers “a million ways” people can give back to their community.

“There are a lot of ways you can actually see the impact you’ve made without jeopardizing the integrity or the dignity of the person you’re helping,” she said. “You can’t go home at night after doing something like that and not say, ‘I’m going to do some more of that.’”



“The working poor”

Contrary to popular belief, most of those who struggle are not unemployed.

“The working poor are the ones who are really suffering the most,” Scovel said. “They work enough to be able to sustain



There was nothing in the house for the kids to eat. He was too drunk to drive, but he didn’t want her out of his sight, so he insisted on going with her to the food pantry. When she pulled into the line, the lady asked for her driver’s license.

She didn’t know where her purse was, so she carefully reached over, picked up his wallet and got his license. He didn’t notice; he was sound asleep.

She shielded her face, hoping the nice lady wouldn’t see the bruises and the black eye. But a knowing nod indicated she did, and she understood. She went inside and returned with a box that contained food, and information about services offered at Mission Granbury.

Discreetly nestled among the pamphlets was a flyer for the domestic violence shelter.

themselves, so they don't qualify for any help."

Many found themselves getting fewer hours after the pandemic, making less money as businesses cut back to try and survive. Many now work multiple jobs.

"We're seeing a lot of people right now who have been laid off or had their hours cut unexpectedly," Dusti said. "Anytime they're working, we're going to do everything we can to try to get them over that crisis, to the other side."

Some families live so close to the edge that one unexpected expense – an illness, a car problem, a layoff – can "flatten" them. Mission Granbury's challenge is to identify and close the gaps people fall through.

"We have to quit just pulling people out of the river," Bondy said. "We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in."

Homelessness is the best example, and the biggest challenge, Scovel said.

"As rent becomes less affordable, more people find

themselves living in motels, or in their vehicles," she said. "I think if Granbury could ever get affordable housing and public transportation it would just be an amazing change.

"None of that is easy, but it would make all the difference in the world."

Making that difference is the mission.

§

North Texas Giving Day - September 21, 2023

North Texas Giving Day is the largest community-wide giving event in the United States. It consists of an 18-hour online event to empower people to support their community nonprofits. In 2022, 94,385 donors raised \$62.6 million for 3,210 nonprofit organizations.

Visit northtexasgivingday.org to participate!



It was hot, but he barely cracked the window. He didn't want the lady in the drive-through to figure out he'd been living in the car. But when she brought the box of food, she invited him to go around front and talk to a case manager.

He made an appointment for 11 the next morning, but he arrived at 8:30 and asked if they knew a place where he could clean up. They sent him to the YMCA. After he showered, they gave him a gift card for the resale shop.

He showed up at 11 clean, dressed in new clothes. They set up a job interview, but when he went back to the parking lot his car wouldn't start. He hated to go ask for more help, but they seemed happy to stick with him. They booked him a room in a local motel, within walking distance of his interview, and had a van come pick him up.

He made the interview, and over the weekend they fixed his car – for free.

A week later, he was running the cash register at his new job when the lady from Mission Granbury came in for lunch. He greeted her with a big smile.

Hers was bigger.



Randy Baker

I work for you



Randy Baker is enjoying his “second go-round” with Tri-County Electric Cooperative. After graduating from high school, he worked for two years at the Northwest YMCA as a camp counselor – but when it came time to “get a real job” he headed straight for the co-op.

“I lived in Springtown, so you drove past Tri-County to go into Lake Worth, and it’s always been, ‘Oh, I want that job!’” he said. “There weren’t that many really good jobs out there, but when you drove past the co-op, that was the job I wanted.”

He started in October 1998 as a meter reader and went to work in the warehouse about a year later. He

eventually joined the line crew, then left in 2006 and worked for a contractor for about 12 years – helping build lines for Tri-County Electric Co-op.

After getting a lot of good training and experience, he came back in 2018.

“I did the kind of work as a contractor that I probably wouldn’t have been able to do at the co-op, because it was the kind of work they contracted out,” he said. “As a contractor, you’re there to make money. It’s a little more relaxed here. It’s like you’re still in a small town, with family, where everybody knows everybody.”

Over the past two years, Randy has moved from electric lines into the fiber-optic network that links the co-op’s AMI meters.

“Learning the fiber side of it is totally different,” he said. “The installation part is kind of the same, but splicing, running the test equipment on it, it’s totally different.”

He recently earned his journeyman lineman classification, making him even more valuable.

“I’m excited,” he said. “It’s been a great experience, coming back to the co-op. I’m a little bit older, so the stress level is different. Everything starts to slow down, and you can take things one step at a time, versus panicking. You can take a deep breath.”

Randy’s wife, Jessica, works as the PE aide at Azle’s new Hilltop Elementary – which is on Tri-County Electric Co-op power on FM 730 southwest of Azle. They have two children, Macie and Briggs, and live just outside of Azle.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

CONTACT US

200 Bailey Ranch Road
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Web tcectexas.com

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24/7

Outage Reporting

For information and to report outages, please contact us.

Online: oms.tcectexas.com
App: TCEC Connect
Phone: 817-444-3201
Text: OUTAGE to 25069

ABOUT TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

Tri-County Electric Co-op owns and maintains more than 9,900 miles of line to provide electric service to more than 106,000 members in Archer, Baylor, Denton, Foard, Haskell, Hood, Jack, King, Knox, Palo Pinto, Parker, Stonewall, Tarrant, Throckmorton, Wilbarger, and Wise counties.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Aledo
200 Bailey Ranch Road, Aledo 76008

Azle
600 NW Parkway, Azle 76020

Granbury
1623 Weatherford Highway, Granbury 76048

Keller
4900 Keller-Hicks Road, Fort Worth 76244

Seymour
419 N. Main, Seymour 76380

IT PAYS TO STAY INFORMED

Find your account number in pages 16-23 of *Texas Co-op Power*, and you will receive a \$20 credit on your electric bill. Simply contact one of the offices listed above and make them aware of your discovery!

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Check your eligibility and apply for financial assistance regarding the Brazos Financing Rider by visiting brazoshardshipfund.com or calling 844.770.8549.

LOAD SHED EXPLANATION AND REMINDER

In compliance with Senate Bill 3, effective from 2021, Tri-County Electric Cooperative provides our members with notice of Electric Load Shed and Critical Load Designation information.

Key takeaways include:

- Tri-County Electric Cooperative follows ERCOT's energy emergency level (EEL) warnings, participating in rolling outages and shedding load
- Members may lose power without advanced notice and are subject to load shed
- Residential and Critical Load and Commercial Medical designated members are not guaranteed continuous power. Critical load and commercial medical designation must be acquired through proper procedure
- Tri-County Electric Cooperative will try to give load shedding notice when available and prioritize critical community services.

Emergency Alerts

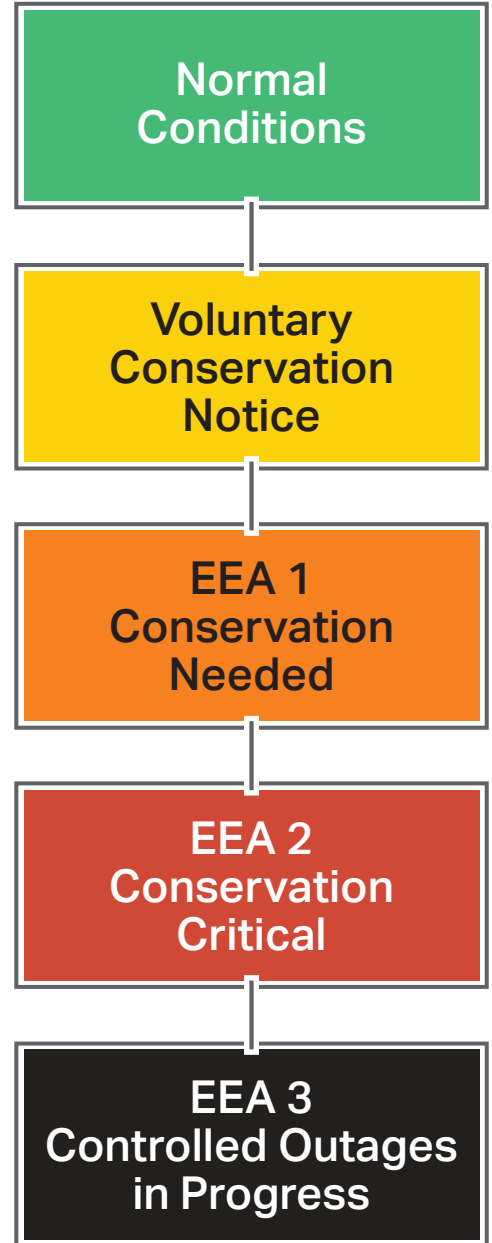
Voluntary Conservation Notice: Conserve when possible

Energy Emergency Alert 1: Statewide energy reserves are below 2,300 MW. Conserve energy where possible to avoid rotating outages.

Energy Emergency Alert 2: Statewide energy reserves are below 1,750 MW. Conserve energy where possible to avoid rotating outages.

Energy Emergency Alert 3: Statewide energy reserves are below 1,000 MW. ERCOT will issue load shed obligations to transmission companies. Conserve energy where possible.

ERCOT's Emergency Levels



Find more resources and how to apply for critical load designation at <https://www.tcectexas.com/sites/default/files/Documents/ElectricLoadShedAndCriticalLoadDesignation.pdf>

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Billie Jean King enters the Battle of the Sexes on a throne. She soon assumed a broader reign in the sports world.

King dominated Riggs, 55 years old and out of shape. When she won the first set, the women in the Astrodome gave her a standing ovation. In short order, she won the next two sets. After the final point, King tossed her racket into the air, and Riggs hopped the net and whispered into her ear, “I underestimated you.”

That was hardly news to King.

It took an act of Congress to start leveling the playing field for women. Title IX, signed into law in June 1972, heralded a promise of more opportunities for women in sports.

And yet, in September 1972, after King captured the U.S. Open title, she denounced her most unequal prize money in a press conference. She won \$10,000, while the men’s champion, Ilie Năstase, got \$25,000.

“This was ridiculous, so I said, ‘I don’t think the women are going to be back next year. We’re not going to be back in 1973 unless we get equal prize money,’” King recalled years later.

Her firm stand paid off. A year later, just weeks before the Battle of the Sexes at the Astrodome, the U.S. Open started paying women the same as men.

In the 50 years since shutting down—and shutting up—Riggs, King has become a leading advocate for women and LGBTQ+ people. She became the first female athlete awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, in 2009.

Through a 2023 lens, the spectacle at the Astrodome might seem more tiresome than outrageous. To King, being at the forefront of a social uprising in 1972 and 1973 was simply tiring.

“It was a huge year, a pivotal year for tennis and for women in general,” King told *USA Today* columnist Christine Brennan. “I just remember being exhausted all the time. As I’ve said before, when I sleep in now, I’m still catching up from the 1970s.” ■

When Pigs Fly

Billie Jean King did the unthinkable, crushing Bobby Riggs—and notching a win for gender equality—at the Astrodome

BY TOM WIDLowski

YOU HAVE TO PEEL back an almost insufferable layer of hype—garishness, really—to reach the essence of Billie Jean King’s victory in the so-called Battle of the Sexes 50 years ago this month in Houston. In truth, you have to peel back the calendar by 12 months—to King’s bold shot across the bow, when she decried the disparity in prize money between men and women.

First the hype. Bobby Riggs, a tennis star in the 1940s who later became a shameless promoter, declared no woman could beat him. Not even King, who by the summer of 1973 had already won 31 of her 39 career grand slam titles. King, 29, accepted the challenge, even agreeing to

play by men’s rules—best of five sets, as opposed to women’s best of three.

So on September 20, 1973, four shirtless members of the Rice University men’s track team carried King on a litter, à la Cleopatra, onto a tennis court set up inside the 8-year-old Astrodome. Riggs, a self-proclaimed chauvinist wearing a warmup jacket that said Sugar Daddy, entered in a rickshaw pulled by models.

King, as if to state the obvious, presented Riggs with a gift of a baby pig.

When the bluster subsided, the 30,472 in attendance, joined by some 90 million TV viewers worldwide—a tennis record that still stands—settled in for a sports contest. Except it was no contest.

No-Bake Desserts

Skip the oven but not the indulgence with these grand finales

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

Who says cheesecake must be complicated? This no-bake apple cheesecake is creamy and delicious and combines two favorite desserts—apple pie and cheesecake—into one outstanding treat.

Mini Apple Cheesecakes

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 large apples, peeled, cored and diced
¼ cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), room temperature
1 can sweetened condensed milk (14 ounces)
¼ cup lemon juice
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
6 pre-made mini graham cracker pie crusts

1. Melt butter in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the diced apples and brown sugar. Sauté until apples begin to soften. Add cinnamon and cornstarch and stir and simmer until apples are tender. Remove from heat and allow to cool completely.
2. Beat cream cheese until smooth. Add sweetened condensed milk and continue beating, scraping down sides of the bowl until well-mixed. Stir in lemon juice and vanilla.
3. Spoon cheesecake filling into graham cracker crusts. Chill in fridge until firm, about an hour, and serve topped with apple mixture.

SERVES 6

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez while she cooks in *Cocina Gris* at sweetlifecake.com, where she features a recipe for No-Bake Concha Truffles.





Ambrosia

DEBORAH ANDERSON
COSERV

Anderson shares her version of the classic Southern dessert, ambrosia, a tropical fruit salad that can be whipped up in 10 minutes.

- 1 container frozen whipped topping (8 ounces), thawed**
- 3 cans tropical fruit (15 ounces each), drained**
- 2 cups mini multicolored marshmallows**
- 1½ cups shredded sweetened coconut**

1. Combine all ingredients. Mix well. Chill until ready to serve.

SERVES 6

Frozen Peanut Butter Banana Pie

JAN BOX
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Frozen peanut butter banana pie is an easy-to-make dessert—no oven required. Layers of hot fudge, peanut butter, whipped topping, bananas and chocolate atop a sugar cookie crust make for the perfect ending to any meal.

- 2 cups crushed sugar cookies**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, melted**
- 1 jar hot fudge topping (11.75 ounces), warmed**

CONTINUED >

\$500 WINNER

Chocolate Éclair Dessert

BRENDA HEINRICH
MIDSOUTH EC



All the deliciousness of an éclair with no baking. Luxurious layers of pudding, graham crackers and whipped topping finished with a chocolate glaze make for one amazing dessert.

SERVES 8-12



- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter, room temperature, for the pan**
- 1 box graham crackers (14.4 ounces)**
- 2 packages instant French vanilla pudding mix (3.25 ounces each)**
- 3½ cups milk, divided use**
- 1 container frozen whipped topping (8 ounces), thawed**
- 2 cups sugar**
- ⅔ cup unsweetened cocoa powder**
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter**
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract**

1. Coat the bottom of a 9-by-13-inch pan with butter.
2. Line the bottom of the pan with ⅓ of the graham crackers.
3. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to combine the pudding mix with 3 cups milk. Beat at medium speed for 2 minutes.
4. Gently fold in whipped topping. Pour half the pudding mixture over the graham crackers.
5. Layer another ⅓ of the graham crackers and the remaining pudding mixture, then top with the remaining graham crackers.
6. In a saucepan, combine sugar, cocoa and remaining ½ cup milk. Bring to a boil. Boil 1 minute.
7. Remove cocoa mixture from heat and add butter and vanilla. Mix well and allow to cool. Pour the chocolate sauce over the graham cracker layer.
8. Refrigerate overnight until set.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

CHOCOLATE DUE SEPTEMBER 10

We're looking for your choicest chocolate recipe—cake, brownie, whatever. Submit your best online by September 10 for a chance to win \$500.



RECIPES CONTINUED

- 1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), room temperature
- 1 cup peanut butter
- 1¼ cups powdered sugar
- 1 container frozen whipped topping (16 ounces), thawed, divided use
- 3 bananas, sliced ¼-inch thick
- 1 cup chocolate syrup

1. Mix together sugar cookies and butter and press into the bottom of a greased 9-inch springform pan.
2. Pour warmed fudge topping over the crust.
3. Blend cream cheese and peanut butter until smooth. Mix in powdered sugar until combined then fold in ¾ of the whipped topping.
4. Spoon mixture over fudge topping, spreading evenly.
5. Top with sliced bananas
6. Top with remaining whipped topping, spreading evenly.
7. Freeze 8 hours.



8. Allow pie to sit at room temperature 15 minutes before slicing. Run a knife around edge of pan and remove the outer ring.
9. Serve drizzled with chocolate syrup.

SERVES 12

TCP We have more than 1,000 recipes in our online archive, including desserts galore. Check out our website to find other options for delicious desserts.

Trust the Crust

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ

My favorite part of a no-bake dessert is the crust. Think beyond the OG—graham crackers. Here are five tasty options that make a perfect base for any no-bake dessert:

Shortbread: For an extra buttery base, crumble up shortbread cookies and top with whipped cream.

Chocolate chip cookies: Kids and adults will love this chocolate-studded crust.

Gingersnap cookies: Gingersnaps add a touch of spice to a sweet treat.

Pretzels: Salty and sweet pretzels make any citrus dessert sing—and zing.

Cereal: Your favorite childhood bowl of cereal transformed into a crust pleases palates of all ages.



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Mysterious Markings

Native drawings in aptly named Paint Rock offer intriguing clues

BY CHET GARNER

I WAS EXCITED. It was a crisp spring day, and I was about to see the famous painted rocks of Paint Rock. I watched my phone GPS like a hawk as it led me to the town and then past it. “Hmm, that’s strange,” I thought but kept my eyes on the lookout for a visitors center or giant sign marking the largest collection of pictographs in North America.

“You’ve passed your destination,” taunted my GPS. What? I didn’t see a thing. I turned around and realized I missed a small gate sign marking the entrance to Campbell Ranch. This hidden gem was especially hidden.

I entered the property and met Kay Campbell, who at 96 still greets visitors and shares the story of the ancient markings on her family’s land. Campbell’s grandfather was an archaeologist and visited Texas in the 1870s in search of Native American artifacts. Near the Concho River, he found 1,500 pictographs on a rocky bluff overlooking the river valley. He purchased the land and began his research.

The drawings range in size from single figures to full shields. They depict people, animals and battles in multiple colors, but most are burnt red, created on rocks hauled in from miles away. In the 1990s observers realized that on certain days, like the summer solstice, shadows created by the rocky overhangs added additional shapes on top of the paintings. I was fascinated.

Many scientists believe this area served as an annual meeting ground for Apache, Comanche, Jumano and Tonkawa tribes. Over hundreds of years, they would meet, paint and celebrate the year. Much about their traditions is unknown, but I loved the thought of standing on perhaps the oldest family reunion grounds in Texas. ■

ABOVE Bill Campbell shows Chet around the pictographs at Paint Rock.

TCP Join Chet as he visits the tribal meeting ground in the video on our website. And see all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

SEPTEMBER

08

Wimberley [8–9] Wings Over Wimberley, (269) 290-5001, wingsoverwimberley.com

09

Rosenberg Ride to Rosenberg Car Show, (713) 502-3168, rosenbergartsalliance.com

10

Yorktown Holy Cross Festival, (361) 564-2893, holycrossyorktown.net

Gainesville [10–17] Gainesville Area Visual Arts Fall Art Exhibition, (940) 613-6939, gainesvilleareavisualarts.org

16

Seguin [16–17] St. James Catholic Church Classic Car Show and Festival, (830) 379-1796, saintjamescc.org

18

Kerrville [18–23] Paint Kerrville! Outdoor Painters Event, (830) 895-2911, kacckerrville.com

22

Glen Rose [22–23] Wine and Art Festival, (817) 291-8367, glenrosewineandartfestival.org

Sulphur Springs [22–23] Lone Star Heritage Quilt Guild Show, (209) 509-9522, sulphurspringstxquilts.com

23

Lakehills Medina Lake Cajun Festival, (830) 460-0600, cajunfestival-medinalake.com

Ingram [23–24] Texas Arts and Crafts Fair, (830) 367-5121, txartsandcraftsfair.com

24

Lakeway Arts in the Afternoon: Balcones Community Orchestra, (512) 261-1010, lakewayartsdistrict.com

Meyersville Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church Barbecue and Raffle, (361) 275-3868, catholiccommunityofcuero.org

Serbin Wendish Fest, (979) 366-2441, texaswendish.org

29

Fairfield [29-30] Big T Memorial State Championship BBQ Cookoff, (469) 383-8355, bigtmemorial.com

Giddings [29-30] Texas Word Wrangler Book Festival, (979) 542-2716, www.giddingspubliclibrary.org

30

Winnboro Cowboy Music and Poetry Gathering, (903) 342-0686, winnboro.centerforthearts.com

OCTOBER

06

Los Fresnos [6-7] Narciso Martinez Conjunto Festival, (956) 367-0335, narciso.martinezculturalartscenter.org

Corpus Christi [6-28] Dimension L, (361) 884-6406, artcentercc.org

07

Bowie Chicken and Bread Days Heritage Festival, (940) 872-6246, cityofbowietx.com

Jonestown Night Sky Advocacy Star Party, (512) 267-2011, jtownnightsky.com

Marble Falls Main Street Car Show, (830) 220-4489, highlandlakeskiwanis.org

TCP Submit Your Event

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

Enjoy a grand TEXAS time!

F R E D E R I C K S B U R G

FOOD & WINE Festival



**Saturday, October 28
Noon-7pm**

22 Texas wineries • Texas specialty booths

Prize pull and amazing auction

Toe-tapping music • Food concessionaires

Texas craft beer • Gargantuan grape toss

Downtown Market Square

Plus three special events: Oct. 26 - Messina Hof Hill

Country; Oct. 27 - Becker Vineyards and

Oct. 28 - Marktplatz Patron Brunch

... in Fredericksburg, Texas!

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Actual size
is 38.1 mm

New for 2023—the Morgan Silver Dollar Is BACK! **99.9% Silver, Legal Tender, Extremely Limited Availability!**

The Morgan Silver Dollar—originally minted from 1878 to 1904, then again in 1921—is the most popular vintage Silver Dollar in the world. Coin experts estimate that as few as 15% of all vintage Morgans still exist, due to the ravages of time, along with mass-meltings by the U.S. Government.

The entire market was thrilled when the U.S. Mint brought the Morgan Silver Dollar back in 2021, in honor of the popular, vintage coin's 100th anniversary.

Legal Tender, Struck in 99.9% Fine Silver

The program was a huge success, and the relatively small mintage instantly sold out at the mint. Buyers loved the fact that these new coins were the first legal-tender Morgans in 100 years, and that they were struck in 99.9% fine silver—instead of the 90% silver/10% copper alloy of the originals.

But with only 175,000 coins struck, many buyers were left empty-handed, and frustrated by the instant sell-out. If you were able to acquire a 2021 for the 100th anniversary—congratulations!

Then—An Unplanned One-Year Hiatus

Then last year, the *entire market* was left empty-handed because—although these modern Morgans were intended to be an annual release—the U.S. Mint was caught off-guard by the global shortage of the silver blanks required to strike the coins, and cancelled the 2022 release! No silver? No Morgans!

NOW for 2023—Legal-Tender Morgan Silver Dollars Are Back. But Mintages Are Low!

Now this year, 99.9% silver, legal-tender Morgan Silver Dollars are once again available to silver buyers, Morgan enthusiasts and collectors—while they last! Though somewhat larger than last year, this year's 275,000 authorized mintage is still a crazy low number—especially when you consider all the pent-up anticipation and demand caused by the quick sell-out of the 2021 Morgans, and the fact the program was cancelled last year.

Very Limited. Don't Miss Out!

Add these bright, shiny, new legal-tender 2023 Morgan Silver Dollars, struck in 99.9% Silver, to your collection now! To secure yours, call 1-888-395-3219 right now, or scan the QR code below to order online, because these—WILL NOT LAST!

Order Now! Free \$25 Bonus Pack and Free Shipping!

When you order now, you'll receive a BONUS, new and improved Patriots Pack, valued at \$25, FREE with your order. Plus, you'll also get FREE Shipping! Order now because these will absolutely disappear quickly!

FREE SHIPPING! Limited time only. Standard domestic shipping only. Not valid on previous purchases.

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Night Sky

Turn your eyes to the skies and behold the heavenly wonders. They say the stars at night are big and bright in Texas. Let's space out a while and see for ourselves.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1 MARK BONAME
JACKSON EC

If you look closely at the Milky Way, you'll see a horse formation called the Dark Horse Nebula.

2 MIKE PRESTIGIACOMO
BARTLETT EC

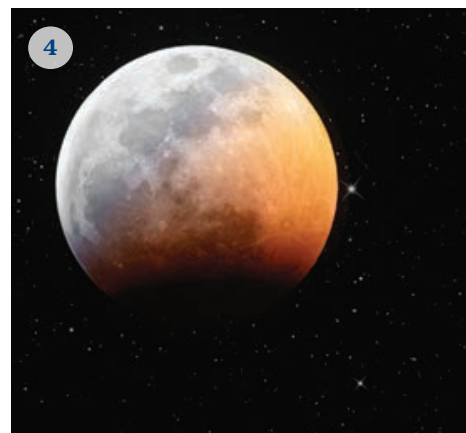
"A sudden display of colors, like fireworks on the Fourth of July, burst overhead near the Big Dipper asterism, which can still be seen."

3 JAY HOBBS
PEDERNALES EC

"A barn light is a welcoming sight for livestock in Johnson City."

4 MARK HOLLY
BANDERA EC

"It was a cold night, but I just couldn't miss photographing this rare event, the super blood wolf moon eclipse."



Upcoming Contests

DUE SEP 10 Local Landmarks

DUE OCT 10 Vibrant Color

DUE NOV 10 Architecture



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

TCP See Focus on Texas on our website for more Night Sky photos from readers.



Pam LeBlanc leaps for joy when she finds a natural body of water.

I like living my life a little out of bounds, so I count all these things as positives. They make swimming feel a little less civilized and more like a daring adventure.

For years, when I worked as a staff writer at the *Austin-American Statesman*, I crisscrossed Barton Springs Pool in Austin at noon once a week. Sometimes I'd watch cormorants dive deep into the blue-green depths, hunting for lunch. I'd see crawfish prowl the mucky bottom and thumb-sized silvery fish swirl beneath limestone ledges.

What's the appeal? No chlorine, for one. My eyes don't turn red and sting after too much time in a natural swimming hole. I don't mind getting dirty, and I like to observe the native life. In a secluded setting, I also can't resist skinny-dipping, a pastime generally frowned upon at public pools but perfectly acceptable during backpacking trips into the wilderness.

For me, wilder is better.

I've leaped into the gin-clear waters of the Devils and Pecos rivers in West Texas, swam in all seven of the Highland Lakes, and soaked in a fern-lined stretch of the Blanco River that reminds me of Shangri-La. I've swum alongside dolphins in Hawaii, whale sharks in Mexico and humpback whales in the Dominican Republic.

During a relay swim race across Lake Tahoe, I got distracted watching shafts of light flicker into the 1,644-foot depths. Once I swam, as one-half of a two-woman team, a combined 28.5 miles around Manhattan Island—up the East River, through the Harlem River and down the Hudson River. (Each one had its own distinctive flavor, as my partner says.)

I don't care if I can't see the bottom. I don't mind if a minnow nips my toes. Some days, I almost expect a mermaid to rise from the blue, and that would be OK, too. To me, swimming is like getting a full-body hug from Mother Nature. And I love hugs. ■

Wild Blue Yonder

Swimming in cement?
Give me seaweed and sand

BY PAM LEBLANC

FOUR OR FIVE mornings each week, I glide back and forth across what Jethro Bodine of the 1960s sitcom *The Beverly Hillbillies* would describe as a cement pond.

As much as I appreciate these swim practices, led by a coach who stands on deck and hollers instructions that keep me healthy and fit, I prefer a wild swim over a dip in a blue rectangle of chlorinated water any day.

Wild swims—in rivers, lakes and oceans—come with undulating aquatic plants, squishy mud and rogue waves. Sometimes they include appearances by aquatic creatures like fish and turtles or even snakes and sharks. There are no formal black stripes or lines of buoys to ensure straight swimming, and flip turns are all but impossible.

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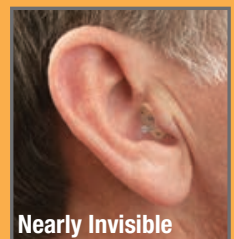
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2023 Election and Director Candidates

Tri-County Electric Cooperative's 16-county service area is divided into nine director districts. Each year, one-third of the directors are up for election and elected to three-year terms. This year, members will elect director candidates in districts 1, 2 and 4. Your official 2023 election ballot is located on the back of this magazine. Members who vote by Wednesday, September 27, 2023, will receive a **\$25 bill credit** and be entered into the door prize drawing.

This year's election includes three types of candidates: incumbent, nomination candidate, and petitioning candidate. All candidates listed on the ballot were approved by the Committee on Nominations and Qualifications. Please turn to page AR 8 in the Annual Report for a nomination report.

Director candidate biographies are located in the Annual Report on pages AR 9 - AR 11.

Official Ballot Instructions

Your official election ballot is located on the back of this *Texas Co-op Power* magazine.

Voting Information

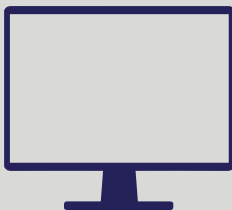
Every member is eligible to vote in the election, regardless of the district in which you reside. Only one ballot may be cast per membership.

All members who vote prior to the deadlines below will receive a **\$25 credit on your electric account, and will be entered to win door prizes announced during the virtual Annual Meeting on Monday, October 16.**

How to Vote

Members may vote online or by mail-in ballot. *Absolutely no ballots will be accepted at our offices.*

ONLINE



Go to **directvote.net/TCECTX** and enter your ballot ID and election passcode printed on the back of this *Texas Co-op Power* magazine.

EMAIL



Members with valid email addresses will receive an email on September 1 with member-specific voting credentials and a link to vote online.

MAIL-IN



Complete the ballot located on the back of this magazine and mail to Survey and Ballot Systems (SBS), in the postage-paid envelope provided.

CLOSES AT 5 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

MUST BE RECEIVED BY
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

VOTE TO RECEIVE A \$25 BILL CREDIT!

**Voting will close at 5 p.m. on
Wednesday, September 27, 2023.**

All members are eligible to vote regardless of the Director District in which you reside.

Mail your completed ballot to Survey and Ballot Systems (SBS) in the envelope provided, or vote online at directvote.net/TCECTX using your ballot ID and passcode below.

Director candidate photos and biographies are located inside the magazine in the Annual Report on pages AR 12 - AR 14.

Full voting instructions are located on the reverse side of the ballot.

VOTE ONLINE
SCAN ME!



Please use blue or black ink. Preferred marking method: 

..... Please detach and mail ballot.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative

2023 ELECTION BALLOT

District 1 Director Election

- Kevin Ingle**
Incumbent
Unopposed

District 2 Director Election

- Margaret Koprek**
Incumbent
Unopposed

District 4 Director Election

- Jerry Walden**
Incumbent
- David Miller**
Nomination Candidate
- Julie Walden**
Petition Candidate
- Stan Mickle**
Petition Candidate

Member Signature

Absolutely no ballots will be accepted at our offices.