

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

“The House Is On Fire!”

“No, Mama, the Lights Are On.”

RURAL TEXAS SEES THE LIGHT



PLUS

Home on the (Electric) Range
Hit the Road: Atlanta to Caddo Lake
Classic Vehicle Photos

TAME YOUR TREES

Tree Trimming

We love our trees, but when branches are too close to power lines, they can cause power outages, fire hazards and safety concerns.

Here are some rules to follow:

- If a tree or a large branch is touching or falls on an electric line, call your electric cooperative immediately. Tree sap is an excellent conductor of electricity, so a downed branch on a line is an electrocution hazard as well as a fire hazard.
- Never trim trees that grow close to power lines; that is a job for professionals. Call your electric co-op for assistance and guidance.
- Don't allow children to climb trees or build tree houses close to power lines.
- When planting a tree, plan ahead. A tiny tree may eventually grow large enough to damage power lines and possibly interrupt power during storms. At maturity, your trees should not be within 10 feet of a power line.
- Plant appropriate distances from all power lines—those along the street or right-of-way, as well as those running to your home and outbuildings.



**Texas Electric
Cooperatives**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

This public service message is brought to you by your local electric cooperative. For more information, visit your local co-op.

August 2006

VOLUME 63 NUMBER 2

FEATURES

6 Rural Texas Sees the Light

By Staci Semrad

When electric cooperatives brought power to rural areas, they brought rural people into the modern world.

12 Willie Wiredhand Turns 55

By Richard Biever

Spunky Willie had to vanquish Reddy Kilowatt in a major court battle to win the right to serve as the official mascot of electric cooperatives.



FAVORITES

- Footnotes in Texas History By Karen Hastings *A Valiant Prank* 25
Recipe Roundup *Home on the (Electric) Range* 30
Focus on Texas *Classic Vehicles* 35
Around Texas *Local Events Listings* 36
Hit the Road By June Naylor *Atlanta to Caddo Lake* 38



TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Texas Co-op Power is published by your electric cooperative to enhance the quality of life of its member-customers in an educational and entertaining format.

TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BOARD OF DIRECTORS: Audie Morris, Chair, *Decatur*; John Herrera, Vice Chair, *Mercedes*; Greg Jones, Secretary-Treasurer, *Jacksonville*; Charles Castleberry, *Tulia*; Gerald W. Lemons, *Itasca*; Mark Rose, *Giddings*; William "Buff" Whitten, *Eldorado*

PRESIDENT/CEO: Mike Williams, *Austin*

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Roland Witt, Chair, *Coleman*; Barron Christensen, Vice Chair, *Douglassville*; Bill Harbin, *Floydada*; Kim Hooper, *Bluegrove*; Billy P. Jones, *Corsicana*; Larry Definger, *Hondo*; Mark Rose, *Giddings*

COMMUNICATIONS STAFF: Peg Champion, Vice President, Communications/Publisher; Kaye Northcott, Editor; Carol Moczygemba, Managing Editor; Suzi Sands, Art Director; Martin Bevins, Advertising Director; Louie Bond, Copy Editor/Writer; Nicole Daspit, Communications Coordinator; Andy Doughty, Production Designer; Sandra Forston, Communications Assistant; Jo Johanning, Production Assistant; Karen Nejtak, Production Coordinator; Shannon Oelrich, Food Editor/Proofreader; Tracy Paccone, Communications Assistant; Alex Sargent, Production Artist; Ellen Stader, Proofreader; Cheryl Tucker, Field Editor; Sarah Bond, Emily Preece, Interns

letters

AUDIE NOT MOST DECORATED

The June issue says that Audie Murphy earned more medals than any other American soldier. In fact, a Yankee from Buffalo was the most honored. Some of Lt. Col. Matt Urban's paperwork was lost during the war. After it was found many years later, he was awarded the Medal of Honor. That put him in the lead. By that time, the legend of Audie Murphy had spread, and there is no reason to dampen the luster of what he did.

STAR CAREY

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

EDITOR'S NOTE: "Audie Murphy: Lone Star Hero" did not appear in all editions of Texas Co-op Power. If you missed the article, you may look it up on our website, texascoopower.com.

HOME ON THE PLAINS

I am writing you with reference to an article in the June 2006 Texas Co-op Power titled "The Rolling Plains." I myself am a rancher in Goliad County, and as I read this article by Russell Graves, I marveled at his use of words and photos.

BLEVINS BUNDICH

Karnes Electric Cooperative

REFRESHINGLY GREEN

As a professional in green building, I'd like to thank you for "Green by Design: Style + Substance." It was well-written and focused on the practical, and therefore a refreshing addition to the June 2006 issue.

SUE BARNETT

Pedernales Electric Cooperative

We want to hear from our readers. Send letters to: Editor, Texas Co-op Power, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, or e-mail us at letters@texas-ec.org. Please include the name of your town and electric co-op. Letters may be edited for clarity and length and will be printed as space allows.

POWER TALK

TIME FOR A CHANGE

Welcome to the new Texas Co-op Power!

For more than a year, we've been hard at work on a redesign based on information gained from our readers. Working with experts in magazine graphic design, we integrated a new editorial direction—emphasizing Texas stories, travel and history—with a clean, classic design built on clear typography and compelling photography and illustration. One of the most notable changes will be full color throughout the magazine, including your cooperative's local news pages.

Readers told us they wanted short, informational bits, so we've added "PowerTalk," a smorgasbord of interesting news about the latest technology, safety concerns and Texas oddities, as well as a variety of unusual and fascinating things to see or do in Co-op Country. The history page, "Footnotes in Texas History," has moved to the statewide section of the magazine, based upon its popularity with readers.

It's time to say goodbye to our old friends, Marvin & D-Wayne, and to Jim Gramon, whose festival column has brightened our pages for four years. We welcome June Naylor, a highly respected travel writer who knows rural Texas like the back of her hand. Her "Hit the Road" column, our new end page, will take you to a new nook of Texas each month.



June Naylor

I hope you enjoy the new magazine as much as we enjoyed creating it for you!

Peg Champion, *Publisher*



Marvin & D-Wayne

Jim Gramon's Last Blast

Friends, Summer's Last Blast (*see Happenings, page 5*) is my last blast for this column. It has been my pleasure to do this for over four years now, and it is time for a change.

I'll see y'all at the festivals!

Jim Gramon is the author of FUN Texas Festivals & Events. Jim@JimGramon.com.



Jim Gramon



CHERYL TUCKER

Electric Safety Top Five List

Think you and your family practice safety when using electricity? Here is a list from the National Safety Council so you can check to see if you're following safety rules around your home and business:

Check it out. Check your home's electrical panel for the last inspection date. If it has been more than 10 years, get a new inspection.

Get unplugged. Unplug heat-producing appliances when not in use. This includes irons and toasters. The National Fire Protection Association's Julie Reynolds says it's OK to leave a light burning for security, as long as the lamp is operating properly and the bulb is the correct wattage.

Watch the wattage. Burning a 100-watt bulb in a lamp designed for 60 watts is a fire hazard. Most lamps have wattage instructions written along the socket.

No yanking. Unplug appliances by the gripping area next to the outlet. Tugging can damage the cord wire or insulation, causing electrical shock or a fire.

Nice and tight. Screw bulbs in securely. Loose bulbs may overheat and burn shades, drapes or nearby furniture.

Find more tips at nsc.org.



H A P P E N I N G S

“Cruisin” back in the ’60s was a rite of passage that blended lots of cool cars, cheap gas and teenagers into a free-form, free-flowing party, cruising from place to place—visiting, seeing and being seen.

Those days return August 11–13 during **SUMMER’S LAST BLAST** in **VERNON**, about 175 miles northwest of Dallas on U.S. Hwy. 287. Gleaming classic cars and rumbling hot rods converge for a car show and cruise unrivaled in size and quality. The highlight is a Saturday night cruise that literally fills the city’s main drag as spectators line the street with lawn chairs and barbecue grills, making it a block party for the entire community. For more information, go to the website, vsmca.com, or call the Vernon Chamber of Commerce at 1-800-687-3137.



WHAT’S A TEXAN?

Here’s a description of Texans in an 1874 book, *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest*, by Joseph McCoy, a prominent Illinois stock raiser. Anything sound familiar?

The majority of Texans “are possessed of strong natural sense, well skilled in judging human nature, close observers of all events passing before them, thoroughly drilled in the customs of frontier life, more clannish than the Scotch, more suspicious than need be yet often easily gulled by promises of large prices for their stock; very prone to put an erroneous construction upon the acts and words of a Northern man, inclined to sympathize with one from their own State as against another from the North, no matter what the Southern man may have been guilty of.

“Fond of a practical joke, always pleased with a good story, and not offended if it was of an immoral character; universal tipplers, but seldom drunkards; possessing a strong, innate sense of right and wrong, a quick, impulsive temper, great lovers of a horse and always good riders and good horsemen; always free to spend their money lavishly for such objects or purposes as best please them; very quick to detect an injury or insult, and not slow to avenge it nor quick to forget it; always ready to help a comrade out of a scrape, full of life and fun.”

‘YOU WANT MY WHAT?’

That’s the reaction some of our readers had when they called the Consumer Credit Reporting Industry’s opt-out number, given in last month’s cover story, “Ripped Off!”

When you call, the automated voice asks for your home phone number, confirms your address and name, then prompts you to enter your Social Security number and date of birth. Some people balked at those last two requests, thinking this was simply another identity-theft scam.

However, according to the Better Business Bureau and the Federal

Trade Commission, this IS the legitimate place to opt out of pre-approved credit card offers.

The Better Business Bureau warns, “People should be wary of similar sounding groups and advisories, with different phone numbers, that may not be secure places to provide such private information.” The secure number is 1-888-5-OPTOUT (1-888-567-8688), or you may opt out on the secure website: optoutprescreen.com.

Note: You may still receive some unsolicited offers from companies who do not prescreen through the credit reporting agencies.

WHO KNEW?

COATINGS COOL MOBILE HOMES

One of the best ways to slow heat flow into your mobile home is to install a white elastomeric “cool roof” coating. Metal mobile home roofs are easy to re-coat. In fact, many homeowners do so every few years to assure their roof’s longevity and watertightness. You can apply a cool roof coating when your mobile home next needs to be re-coated, or right away for immediate benefits. Many homeowners note that their home is cooler the same day that a cool roof coating is applied.

Once you have a cool roof coating on your mobile home, you’ll never go back to the old-fashioned coatings. Ask your local hardware consultant about products.

Source: Chris Dorsi, © 2006


Saturn Resource Management, Inc.

Texas Co-op Power (USPS 540-560) is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC). Periodical Postage Paid at Austin, TX and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 74 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power*’s website is texascoopower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or e-mail knorthcott@texas-ec.org.

Subscription price is \$3.84 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$15. Individual copies and back issues are available for \$3 each.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Texas Co-op Power* (USPS 540-560), 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. Please enclose label from this copy of *Texas Co-op Power* showing old address and key numbers.

ADVERTISING: Advertisers interested in buying display ad space in *Texas Co-op Power* and/or in our 30 sister publications in other states, contact Martin Bevins at (512) 486-6249.

Advertisements in *Texas Co-op Power* are paid solicitations. The publisher neither endorses nor guarantees in any manner any product or company included in this publication. Product satisfaction and delivery responsibility lie solely with the advertiser. Direct questions or comments about advertising to Martin Bevins, Advertising Director. 

© Copyright 2006 Texas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. Reproduction of this issue or any portion of it is expressly prohibited without written permission. Willie Wirehand © Copyright 2006 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

 **Texas Electric Cooperatives**
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

“The House Is On Fire!”

“No, Mama, the Lights Are On.”

Evelyn Smith remembers the awe and splendor of that moment, as recounted in Robert A. Caro’s book, *The Path to Power*. Returning home one evening in 1939 from an excursion to Johnson City, her family neared the farmhouse and noticed something different. • “Oh my God,” her mother said. “The house is on fire!” • Moving closer, Evelyn said, “No, Mama, the lights are on.”





Rural Texas Sees the Light

BY STACI SEMRAD

When electricity finally reached rural Texans decades ago, it propelled them into the modern age at the speed of light.

Their lives changed forever, and the arduous process endured by such rural Texans in obtaining electricity was no less dramatic.

Though most Texas cities and larger towns had enjoyed electrical power for decades, rural Texas was still largely without it in 1935.

City and country life stood in stark contrast. Urban women washed clothes using washing machines while farm women bent over tubs and washboards. Women in the city flipped a switch to turn on their ovens while women in the country slaved over wood-burning stoves. City kids finished their homework under bright lightbulbs while rural children squinted under flickering kerosene lamps. Families in the city used running water and toilets, requiring electricity, while many rural people still hauled buckets of water from rivers and used outhouses.

“Hill Country folks were living like they were in the Middle Ages,” said Dr. Sandy Cohen, curator of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum in Austin. “It was as though time had stood still.”

On September 2, the museum opens an exhibit telling

the story of how electricity finally arrived in rural Central Texas. The show, which runs through May 29, 2007, also chronicles the early political career of former President Lyndon Johnson.

When elected to Congress in 1937, Johnson made rural electrification a top priority. He was raised under harsh conditions in the Hill Country, where he watched his mother endure strenuous daily chores that electricity could have eased. Johnson was determined to help the people back home and understood the obstacles that had prevented progress nationwide.

Some people had long thought the electric companies serving the cities should take action to extend coverage. But for-profit, Northeastern-based utilities serving Texas had maintained for decades that connecting widely spaced rural customers would be unprofitable because of the great distance between each meter to be connected. Even if lines were built, some financiers figured poor farmers would be unable to pay their bills.

Other people looked to the government, arguing that rivers generated electric power—a natural resource belonging to the people—so the government should involve itself in power production. But the big utility companies and their allies thwarted such attempts until the signature of

Top: Technicians from the REA helped jump-start electric cooperatives across the state with their expertise.



Members of Hill County Electric Cooperative (now HILCO) pose on a flatbed truck bearing the message, "Dreams Come True."

President Franklin D. Roosevelt permitted the establishment in 1935 of the Rural Electrification Administration (REA), a concept advocated by a member of his administration, Morris L. Cooke. At that time, electricity was connected to about 11 percent of farms nationally and less than 5 percent of Texas farms.

The REA, part of Roosevelt's New Deal, was originally enacted to see that government-financed dams and hydro power would benefit rural residents. Initially, Cooke invited the private utilities to join the process, but

they proposed serving only those farmers who had the potential to use a lot of electricity.

Early in 1936, U.S. Representative Sam Rayburn of Texas and Senator George Norris of Nebraska sponsored a bill to make private companies ineligible for REA loans. Ultimately, Rayburn helped reach a compromise allowing the REA to give loans to utilities but with preference to electric cooperatives (usually organized by farmers), municipalities and some other government entities, such as river authorities.

Cooperatives trace their ancestry to English weavers' organizations in the 1840s, one of the most prominent being the Rochdale cooperative. A unique business model, co-ops are owned and operated by the member-consumers they serve. A variation on the original cooperative principles adopted by the Rochdale cooperative is still practiced by Texas electric cooperatives and a myriad of other cooperative entities throughout the world. Those seven principles are:

1. voluntary and open membership;
2. democratic member control;
3. member economic participation;
4. autonomy and independence;
5. education, training and information;
6. cooperation among cooperatives;
7. concern for community.

Farmers—often regarded by city dwellers as uneducated and incapable—tackled with determination the enormous challenges of forming and running co-ops. They created cooperatives and municipalities to vote for electrification and learned about the legalities, science and engineering involved in building

BEFORE ELECTRICITY



COOKE COUNTY EC



THE NEXT GREATEST THING: 50 YEARS OF RURAL ELECTRIFICATION IN AMERICA © NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION, 1984



COOKE COUNTY EC

Because there was no electricity, home chores required a farm woman to labor from dawn to dusk. There was wood to cut and water to haul even before she began cooking on a wood-burning stove and washing in an iron pot. After sundown, she could finally settle into a chair

and do the mending by kerosene lamp.

Outdoor labor involved punishing drudgery. A farmer milked and watered his cows by hand and hoped the milk wagon would pick up and deliver his unrefrigerated product to town before it spoiled. He unloaded his feed and

seed by hand, shelled corn with a hand crank, plowed with horses or mules, and used a heavy axe or ripsaw to cut wood. If there was unfinished work in the barn after dark, he, like his wife, used a highly flammable kerosene lamp. Accidental fires were commonplace.

HILCO EC



Cooperative members set policies at annual meetings, which have always been major social events. Above is the crowd at the 10th annual meeting of Hill County Electric Cooperative.

power lines. Many of them joined work crews that spent months digging holes, erecting poles and connecting lines across the state.

Bartlett Community Light and Power Company (BCL&P) became the country's first energized system under the REA's new loan program. Texas Power and Light, the utility company serving the town of Bartlett, had refused to serve the surrounding rural

area at affordable rates, so three local men put up \$50 each for a charter to start BCL&P, now Bartlett Electric Cooperative. The co-op currently has nearly 9,000 meters providing power to members in Bell, Williamson, Milam and Burleson counties.

"That those three men had the foresight to organize [Bartlett] was remarkable," said Clarence Fischer, who has served on the co-op's board

for 33 years and was a youngster when his family's home near Bartlett got electricity.

Like numerous such groups across the country, the farmers around Bartlett had to deal with "spite lines" built by the big power companies into their planned service area. The lines were intended to "cherry-pick" by taking only the most profitable customers—big power users—but the

AFTER ELECTRICITY



CENTER FOR AMERICAN HISTORY (TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES)



EDWARDS EC



THE NEXT GREATEST THING: 50 YEARS OF RURAL ELECTRIFICATION IN AMERICA © NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION, 1984

With the coming of the electric co-op lines, rural Texas joined the modern age. No longer did city people and country people live in different worlds. For the first time, cooks could precisely control baking temperature. Instead of chopping wood and building a fire to boil

water before bathing or doing the laundry, rural people could use electric water heaters. Refrigeration reduced incidences of food poisoning, dysentery and other diseases that had flourished under unsanitary conditions.

The Rural Electrification Administration

and local co-ops held electric fairs and circuses to display the extraordinary array of labor-saving devices for farmers and ranchers. They increased their productivity in manifold ways. Even small towns began to have electric streetlights.



Co-op employees of both sexes pitched in to educate new customers about cooking with electricity.

Bartlett farmers finally succeeded in turning on the lights in 1936.

Eighty-six-year-old Maurice Steglich, whose great uncle, Ervin Steglich, was one of the co-op's three founders, remembers that day.

"It was the greatest thing that ever happened out in the country," he said.

Electricity was on its way to most other parts of the state, too. However, it took longer to reach areas with lower population densities because the REA loans were limited to applicants where electrical lines would serve an average of at least three farms per mile. Residents in these areas, including the Hill Country, felt hopeless, but then-Congressman Lyndon Johnson assured them they would get a loan, even if he had to appeal to President Roosevelt.

Some of Johnson's constituents had to be dragged into the modern world. Electricity was a foreign concept to many rural residents. Some farmers feared the danger of electrical power or didn't realize its full benefits. Others felt skittish about being unable to pay their debt and possibly losing their farms. Still others wanted to join a co-op but couldn't afford the required \$5 membership—a hefty sum back then. There's many a tale of farm wives using all their butter-and-egg money to make that \$5 commitment.

The farmers finally gave Johnson the support needed to go to President

Roosevelt and ask him to relax the REA density requirements. Roosevelt agreed to help the Hill Country residents and their tenacious congressman. A loan was made in 1938, and the next year, lights sparkled across that once dark region of the state.

By the 1960s, the vast majority of Texas farms were electrically powered.

In 2002, Johnson's daughter, Luci Baines Johnson, accepted on his behalf the Distinguished Service Award from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

"Generations of Johnsons are grateful to each and every one of you for continuing my father's dearest dream," she told the crowd.

Indeed, Johnson once said, "Of all the things I've ever done, nothing has ever given me as much satisfaction as bringing power to the Hill Country of Texas."

Electricity drastically changed people's lives. Farmers began to purchase refrigerators to keep their milk cool rather than hauling ice to the farm and risking spoilage. Farm women delighted in simply plugging in their electric irons. Families huddled around radios that connected them to the outside world. People could now spend more time reading.

"I could sit curled on the wicker sofa by the front windows where the sun streamed through the lace curtains, and when the sun went down,

keep on reading," Carmen Bennett wrote in a letter to *Texas Co-op Power* magazine in 1999. "What a wonderful world was opening before us."

George Pesek of Schulenburg remembers electricity reaching his family's Lavaca County home in 1940, when he was 23.

"It was energized on Christmas Eve, and we had the radio, and the Christmas tree was lit," he said. Even more awesome were the conveniences to come, such as refrigerators.

"Before, you had to butcher a chicken the same day you ate it," he said. "Electricity was a great change for farm people and a big help."

Through the years, Texas co-ops have consolidated and suburbanites have joined what were once primarily rural service areas. Today, the state's nine generation and transmission co-ops provide wholesale power and services to the state's 66 local distribution co-ops, which serve 241 of the state's 254 counties. The statewide association, now called Texas Electric Cooperatives (TEC), was formed in 1940.

"Though we have grown exponentially, we have not forgotten who we are or who we serve," said TEC Board Chairman Audie Morris.

Co-ops have evolved to incorporate technology with improved metering, outage prevention, load management and cost. Golden Spread Electric Cooperative's Mustang Station, a natural gas-fired generating facility in the Panhandle, and several coal-fired plants on the drawing boards around the state exemplify such advances, said Mike Williams, TEC chief executive officer. Technological improvements aside, some of the greatest benefits of co-op membership remain those that made co-ops popular in the beginning.

"Co-ops continue to unite people who value community cooperation, local control and free enterprise," Williams said. "With those shared priorities, co-ops will no doubt serve Texans well into the future."

Staci Semrad is an Austin-based freelance writer and a member of Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

The Electrification of Rural Texas

A new exhibit at the LBJ Library and Museum will tell the story of the electrification of rural America in the late 1930s and '40s, one of the most dramatic events of the century. The exhibit highlights Lyndon B. Johnson's efforts to bring "lights" to the countryside and displays vintage artifacts such as a large, lighted art deco sign from Pedernales EC and vintage REA demonstration appliances.

The exhibit will include a vivid recreation of life in the Texas Hill Country circa 1935. Visitors will walk through a center path, with realistic displays of chores such as washing, ironing, hauling water, hauling wood, milking cows, feeding livestock, cooking and canning on each side.

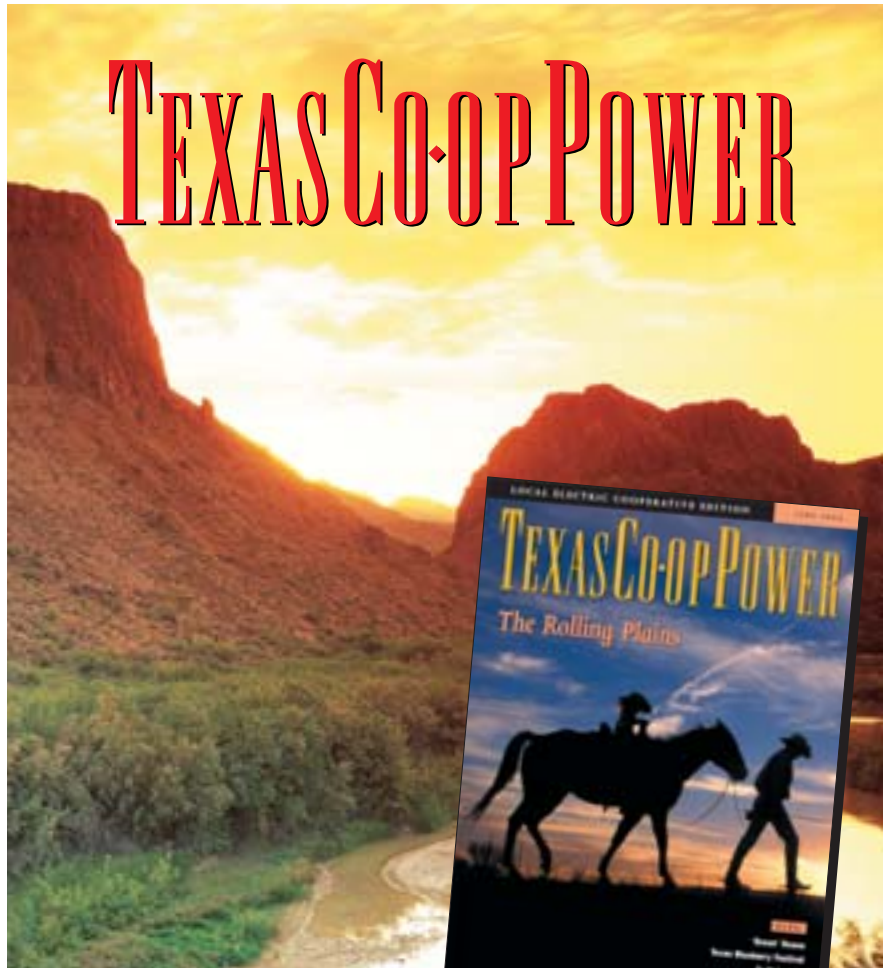
There's also correspondence between President Franklin D. Roosevelt and LBJ, period sound recordings of radio interviews and speeches in support of electrification, and interactive displays.

Power to the People: The Electrification of Rural Texas opens at the LBJ Library on September 2, 2006, and will run through May 29, 2007.

LBJ was proud of his role in establishing rural electric cooperatives and loved visiting them. Below, LBJ appears at Magic Valley Electric Cooperative.



MAGIC VALLEY EC



SHARE THE POWER!

Texas Co-op Power is the Texas living magazine with a rural, suburban and small town focus. Each month you will read entertaining articles about Texas people, Texas history, Texas nature, Texas travel and Texas food.

And, in every issue we feature a personal look at chosen towns in "Texas, USA" along with "Around Texas," featuring selected events around the state.

For just \$15 a subscription, you can share *Texas Co-op Power* with friends and family members who live far away or in big cities!

Please send a 12-month gift subscription to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Gift subscription sent by:

Include a \$15 check for each subscription made out to *Texas Co-op Power*. Mail to Subscriptions, *Texas Co-op Power*, 2550 South IH-35, Austin, TX 78704

Willie Wiredhand Turns 55

BY RICHARD G. BIEVER

A touch of tarnish may be creeping across his brass-plated crown. The roundness of his waistline is a sure indication that he is a child of the 1950s. But the twinkle in his eye, the smile on his face and the ever-present wave will never age—nor will his dedicated service to electric cooperatives and their consumers.

Willie Wiredhand, complete with his light-socket head, push-button nose and electrical plug body, is the official mascot of electric cooperatives. The friendly and inspirational figure has come to symbolize dependable, local, consumer-owned electricity all over the world. (In Latin America, for example, he is known as “Electro Pepe.”)

Willie has appeared on just about every type of cooperative promotional item over the years—signage for buildings, T-shirts, ball caps, golf balls, Christmas ornaments, beach towels, night-lights and much more. Although his presence on both the local and national stage has declined in recent years, he is still a recognized icon. Take a look on eBay, if you have any doubts.

Members of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) selected Willie as their animated ambassador in 1951. Electric cooperatives initially wanted to use Reddy Kilowatt as their mascot. Reddy—depicted with a body, arms and legs of jagged red lightning bolts, and a round head equipped with a lightbulb nose and outlets for ears—had been around since 1926 and was being used by 188 of the nation's

private power companies in 1951. However, Reddy's creator, Ashton B. Collins, disliked electric cooperatives, believing they were “socialistic” because they borrowed money from the federal government.

Not only did Collins refuse to let Reddy be associated with cooperatives, he instructed his lawyers to warn NRECA that any rival character cooperatives might develop would infringe on his exclusive trademarks.

Believing that Willie was sufficiently different from Reddy, electric cooperatives pressed ahead with his introduction. “Any similarity between trim, efficient Willie Wiredhand and the shocking figure of Reddy Kilowatt is purely coincidental,” NRECA said.

In 1953, Reddy Kilowatt, Inc., filed a federal lawsuit against a South Carolina electric cooperative that was using Willie. Their brief accused electric cooperatives of copyright infringement and unfair competitive practices. The gist of Reddy's case was not how Willie looked, but rather private power company concerns that in marketing electricity, Willie's “poses” would cause public confusion.

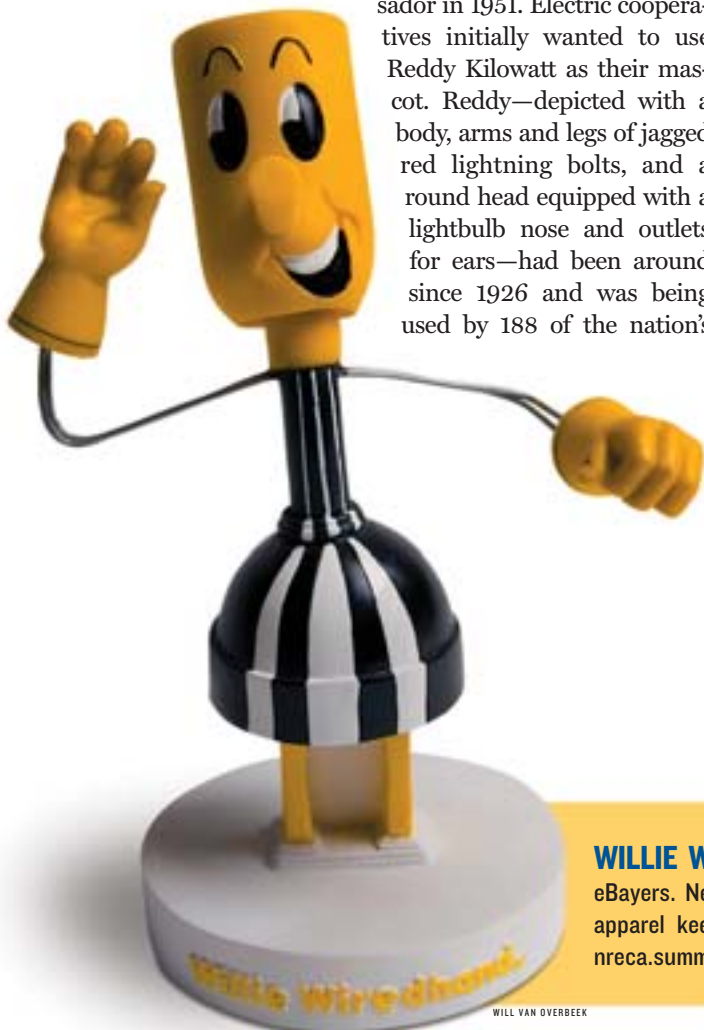
Willie's attorneys countered that other animated characters had seen widespread promotional use in the electric industry. In fact, testimony revealed that Reddy's handlers had acted like B-grade movie gangsters over the years, using threats of legal action to “unplug” other mascots.

In June 1956, after a weeklong trial, a federal district court judge awarded the first round of “Reddy vs. Willie” to the cooperatives. Not yet knocked out, Reddy and his crew promptly filed an appeal.

On January 7, 1957, the appeals bench issued a unanimous decision in favor of Willie. The court noted similarities between the two characters but maintained that Reddy “has appeared in thousands of poses ... in every conceivable activity. The plaintiff has no right to appropriate as its exclusive property all the situations in which figures may be used to illustrate the manifold uses of electricity.”

Willie came to symbolize more than just cooperative friendliness—he was now the true embodiment of cooperative spunk, willing to stand up for consumers against the entrenched might of huge power companies. The phrase “He's small, but he's wirey” became part of the trademark Willie was granted by the U.S. Patent Office in 1957.

Richard G. Biever is senior editor of Electric Consumer, the statewide publication of Indiana's electric cooperatives.



WILL VAN OVERBEEK

WILLIE WIREDHAND COLLECTIBLES aren't just for nostalgia buffs and eBayers. New items like bobbleheads, snow globes, poseable action figures and apparel keep Willie available to all his fans. Check out the online catalog at nreca.summitmg.com or call 1-800-560-0088.

Tree Climbing

Your safety is a top priority at your electric co-op. And it's even more important when it comes to our kids. They don't always know—or remember—what can be dangerous, so it's up to all of us to watch out for their safety.

Safety Rules for Trees:


- Don't plant trees or install tall playground equipment under or near power lines.
- Don't build tree houses in trees near electric lines.
- Don't allow children to climb trees growing near electric lines.
- Teach your children always to look up to check for power lines before climbing trees or any tall objects.
- Keep children away from ladders, poles or work equipment that may be near power lines.
- Set a good example by following these rules yourself.

And the Number One safety rule for everyone to remember is this: Don't touch a power line or anything that's touching the power line. No one can tell simply by looking at a line whether it is energized or not, and contact with a power line can be deadly. Remember, electricity always seeks the easiest path to reach the ground, and, unfortunately, human beings are good conductors of electricity. Look up and live!

DON'T GO OUT ON A LIMB!



**Texas Electric
Cooperatives**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

This public service message is brought to you by your local electric cooperative. For more information, visit your local co-op.

Proper Ventilation Can Reduce Your Energy Bill

BY JAMES DULLEY

DEAR JAMES: My family likes to be cool during the summer, but I worry about the electric bill. Are there any ways to use ventilation to stay comfortable without running the air conditioner as much? —*Michael A.*

DEAR MICHAEL: Proper ventilation can keep you feeling cooler and reduce your electric bills for air conditioning. The actual air temperature in your home is not really important. What is important is how you feel. Human nature being what it is, people often

can make you feel cooler, it will not cool the room. To the contrary, it actually heats the air because all the electricity it uses ends up as heat energy. When no one is in a room to take advantage of the comfort effect of the breeze, always switch off any electric fan, including ceiling fans. Each kilowatt-hour of electricity used by a fan produces 3,414 Btu of heat that your central air conditioner has to remove.

Small personal fans can be very effective to create a breeze directly on

Using a ceiling fan can help lower your electric bill.



perceive their comfort level by the temperature setting. Tell them it is lower and they think they feel cooler.

Setting your central air conditioner thermostat just 2 degrees higher can reduce your cooling costs by up to 5 percent. Moving air can feel many degrees cooler than still air at the same temperature. This is partially due to the fact that more heat is transferred from your skin to moving air. Also, as air flows over your skin, moisture evaporates even if you are not noticeably sweating, and this feels cooler.

A ceiling paddle fan works well. Run the ceiling fan on medium or high speed with the air blowing down to create a direct breeze on your skin. (During the winter, reverse the blade rotation and run it on low speed. This will gently circulate the air around the room without creating a breeze.)

Although running an electric fan

you while you sit in a chair or work at one location. If you purchase a small fan, select one that can also be used as a space heater during winter.

New personal fans are available that do not have a protective cage over the blades. The blade material is soft and will not harm your skin if you bump it while it is running. By not having a cage that creates resistance, the airflow is more efficient. The blades are also easier to clean.

Setting your central air conditioner blower to “on” can help balance out room temperatures, but will not create much of a cooling breeze. Standard blower motors are powerful; running one continuously will heat up the air. Variable-speed ECM (electronic commutated motor) blower motors use much less electricity on a continuous low speed, so running the blower makes more sense if your system has one. © 2006 James Dulley.

Photo courtesy The Home Depot

PLAY UP OUTDOOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY WITH CHILDREN

Warm, sunny days beckon the child in us all to head outdoors to play. Your electric cooperative recommends that families review and stress to children to follow simple electrical safety rules for safe outdoor play.

Help keep your kids out of harm’s way when they play outdoors. Children often do not understand the dangers of electricity. Make them aware of overhead power lines and electrical equipment, and emphasize that they should never climb or play near them.

We recommend that children be taught these safety rules:

- Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines aren’t touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.
- Fly kites and model airplanes in large open areas like a park or a field, safely away from trees and overhead power lines. If a kite gets stuck in a tree that’s near power lines, don’t climb up to get it. Contact your electric utility for assistance.
- Never climb a utility pole or tower.
- Don’t play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment.
- Never go into an electric substation for any reason—even on a dare. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment that can kill you. Never rescue a pet or retrieve a ball or toy that goes inside. Call your electric cooperative instead.
- Water always attracts kids, but water and electricity never mix. Keep all electrical appliances at least 10 feet away from hot tubs, pools, ponds, puddles and wet surfaces.
- Make sure that outdoor electrical outlets are weatherproofed and protected by a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).

Get Ready for Hurricanes

Planning and preparation can help you protect your home and family

Every year at this time, people brace themselves for another potentially destructive hurricane season.

Since we can't stop hurricanes, we can work to be better prepared and know what to do in case one hits. Your electric cooperative offers these suggestions to help protect life and property if a hurricane threatens.

MAKE PLANS FOR ACTION: The best way to cope with a hurricane is to always be prepared for one. A hurricane warning is issued when hurricane conditions are expected in a specified area in 24 hours or less. If a warning is given, stay tuned to the radio or TV for official bulletins. Secure lawn furniture and other loose material outdoors. Fill the bathtub with several days' supply of drinking water. Turn up the refrigerator to maximum cold and don't open it unless necessary. Wedge sliding glass doors to prevent them from lifting off their tracks. Check batteries in

flashlights, stock up on canned foods, and make sure you have plenty of medical supplies. Windows should be secured with plywood or shutters.

STAY OR LEAVE? Before a hurricane threatens your area, you will have to make the decision whether to evacuate or ride out the storm in the safety of your home. If local authorities recommend evacuation, drive carefully to the nearest designated shelter using recommended evacuation routes. If you have special health care needs or if you simply do not have transportation, call 2-1-1 **now** to register with the Governor's Division of Emergency Management; don't wait until a storm is in the Gulf to register for assistance.

Make sure your house is locked and water and electricity are shut off at the source. Make arrangements for the care of your pets or take them with you. Take small valuables with you, but travel light.

FREEZERS/REFRIGERATORS: First, open the freezer door as little as possible. With a freezer that's full, foods can stay frozen up to 72 hours. A half-full freezer can still keep food frozen up to 24 hours after the power goes out. If the power is off longer than that, dry ice can preserve the food in the freezer.

BE CAUTIOUS: During high winds, power lines can be torn down by limbs and trees. Any dangling line or lines on the ground can be deadly.

Call your electric cooperative to report a downed line, outage or any hazardous situation. Their crews will be on the job 24 hours a day.

Your electric cooperative is committed to supplying its consumers with dependable and safe service in all kinds of weather.

MAKE HOMEMADE ICE CREAM IN A SNAP

Remember hauling out the hand-cranked ice cream maker on hot summer days for that sweet, can't-be-found-at-the-store taste?

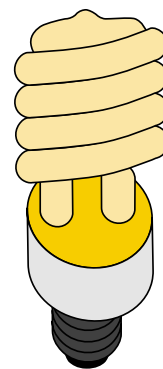
Well, you can bust out your biceps and crank that handle manually—or you can let your electricity do the work for you and have fresh, homemade ice cream in 20 to 40 minutes.

New electric ice cream makers typically come in personal, 1-quart sizes, or in 4- to 6-quart family-style sizes. Most come with recipes and some even with flavor packages that ask you to add only cream, sugar and, of course, some salt and ice to keep it churning cold.



This Cuisinart machine makes 1½ quarts.

Choose a traditional-looking model that lets you hand crank if you'd like—to show the kids how tough it used to be—but that lets you finish it up with the electric option. More modern-looking styles are all-electric, and a few don't even require the ice and salt. Almost all whip up frozen treats in less than an hour and cost between \$30 and \$80. *Photo courtesy The Home Depot*



Save Energy Save Money

Fluorescent lighting is four times more efficient than incandescent lighting.

You Have the Power!

Cheap Gas!

Supersized for high-volume sales and maximized for profit, it isn't likely that today's gas stations will ever revive the lost art of the classic American service station.

BY MICHAEL KARL WITZEL

Americans drive more than 2.5 trillion miles per year in cars, trucks and SUVs—a distance equal to 14,000 round trips to the sun! To power this amazing mileage, the U.S. motoring market consumes 146 billion gallons of gasoline every year.

The outrageous prices at the pumps continue to climb, yet few people are willing to cut back on their driving time, even as they shell out close to \$3 for every gallon of gas.

What do we get for our money? Only the refined liquid, along with the privilege of dispensing it into our own automobiles. For good or ill, the gasoline station in America has adopted a business model that is defined by speed and self-service. Much to our chagrin, the present-day definition of “convenience” means “do it yourself.”

For this reason, today's self-reliant automobile owner is burdened with a growing list of car-care responsibilities. In addition to pumping our own gasoline, we must check the level of motor oil, top off the radiator with water or antifreeze, clean the windshield, change out worn wiper blades, replace dirty air filters, and keep our tires inflated to the correct air pressure. Never mind that it costs an extra 75 cents to extract air or water from a vending machine! That's another story.

Travel 50 years back in time and you will quickly discover that the scene at the American service station was dramatically different than it is today. The most obvious difference? The price of gasoline. While economists may argue that today's cost per gallon is well in line with inflation and the current cost of living, there is no denying that refined motor fuel was a good deal cheaper in 1955, no matter how you pump it.

Once upon a time in America, fuel efficiency was not an issue. Our highways were packed with the biggest behemoths that Detroit could build—chrome-plated gas guzzlers. Owners of Ford Country Squire station wagons, Chevy Nomads, Buick Roadmasters and other highway cruisers were unfazed about how much it cost to feed their greedy, four-barrel carburetors.

As miles of virgin tarmac unrolled to service the growing legions of Motor City steel, filling stations proliferated. By 1969, there were 239,000 gas stations in America. (Today, they total around 100,000.)

The resulting competition caused a streetside scramble, leading many American petroleum peddlers to adopt eye-popping structures for their roadside businesses. Almost overnight, the highways were transformed. From the 1920s on, whimsical façades festooned the American roadscape. Along well-traveled corridors nationwide, gas stations shaped like airplanes, castles, Chinese pagodas, dinosaurs, icebergs, lighthouses, teakettles, teepees and windmills made filling up the family flivver a lot of fun.

As it turned out, morphing the gas station's appearance proved only partially effective in grabbing attention. Equally important was how people perceived the product being sold. During the 1920s, tall "visible register" pumps allowed customers to see the gas they were buying. High atop the pump, a clear glass cylinder displayed the fuel before it went into the tank. To differentiate between gasoline grades, companies like Gilmore colored their fuel, as with their Blu-Green brand.

Back in the good old days of gasoline, petroleum refiners captured the public's imagination by enlisting friendly mascots, too. The brontosaurus affectionately known as "Dino" trotted onto the scene during the 1930s, boosting sales for Sinclair gas. In 1959, Humble Oil (later Exxon) put a friendly face on its fuel with the stylized image of a tiger and the slogan, "Put a Tiger in Your Tank!" Standard Oil Company of New York's (later Mobil's) flying red horse was perhaps the most beloved of all gas icons. The neon Pegasus blazed a crimson trail across the sky on top of buildings, branding itself into the hearts and minds of motorists.

But the affable nature of yesterday's gas station was defined by more than personable mascots, wacky architecture and cheap ethyl (the first no-knock, leaded fuel). It was the employee known as the gas station "attendant" who established a real rapport with the public, demonstrating firsthand the art of personalized customer service. His mission was clear: Refill customers' fuel tanks, act as a tour guide, provide maintenance advice, and front as a goodwill ambassador for the oil companies.

To this end, pump jockeys of the gas station's golden age actually looked like they cared. Sporting a crisp uniform—complete with a bow tie and five-point hat—the typical attendant rushed out to your car when the "ding-ding" of the driveway air hose signaled your arrival. After that, it was full service all the way. Attendants cleaned the windows and checked the oil, inflated your tires, and made doubly sure that your car was roadworthy. Indeed, the memorable Texaco ad slogan, "You Can Trust Your Car to the Man Who Wears the Star," was more than advertising hype.

Fifty years ago, gas station owners worked diligently to earn our trust. They used every promotion they could think of to pull in anyone who might buy a gallon of gas. Giveaways played a big part in winning over—and keeping—customers. In exchange for their loyalty, gas station visitors received goodies such as foldout road maps, drinking glasses, dishware, calendars, collectible coins, car washes, matchbooks, trading stamps (remember S&H Green Stamps?) and a multitude of other fun freebies.

Clamoring in the back seat to latch onto the latest giveaway, kids loved filling up, too. And why not? Station owners took pleasure in handing out trinkets to future customers. Coloring books, comics, coin banks, stuffed animals, stamps, buttons, pens, lollipops shaped like station logos, and other gewgaws were the stuff kids' dreams were made of.

Unfortunately, the passage of time has all but erased the memories of how enjoyable it once was to fill up at the service station of old. Now, foreign imports and fuel efficiency dominate the street. The station attendant has evolved into a cash register attendant, and friendly mascots have been stylized out of a job. Station architecture has been revamped to conform with the banality of the mini-mart ideal. Gasoline is just another impersonal—and expensive—commodity.

Supersized for high-volume sales and maximized for profit, it isn't likely that today's gas stations will ever revive the lost art of the classic American service station. The ultra-modern convenience store—with its Big Gulps, triple lattes and lottery tickets—will continue to define the market. Until "big oil" goes the way of Dino the dinosaur, commuters have only one thing to look forward to at the pump: paying more for gasoline.

"Fill 'er up, ma'am?" Well, at least the memories are free.

Hill Country author Michael Karl Witzel has written several books about filling stations, including The American Gas Station, Gas Station Memories, and Gas Stations Coast to Coast.



MATAGORDA COUNTY

The Hotel Blessing

If you're a guest at the Hotel Blessing, you'll find the price of lunch isn't the only throwback to a long-gone era.

by Carol
Moczygemba



A couple of regulars arrive in khaki work trousers and weatherworn cowboy hats around 6 a.m. to let themselves in to the Hotel Blessing's 100-year-old, plank-floored restaurant. They start up the coffeemaker and gather 'round one of the stout wooden tables for another morning of surveying the weather, trading horse stories, speculating on the state of the union, and remembering the old days.

Helen Feldhousen, the restaurant's manager, chief cook and bottle washer, doesn't show up for another hour. "They don't need me here to sit and listen to their stories," she says matter-of-factly. They do need her to start up the kitchen fires and put the eggs on.

Feldhousen prepares a field hand's breakfast for the restaurant's first meal of the day. Omelettes, ham, sausage, bacon and hotcakes big as a plate. One of the regulars calls them "saddle blankets" for the way they practically hang over the edges. No sooner is the bacon grease cleaned from the cast iron skillet than Feldhousen orchestrates preparations for the \$6.95 all-you-can-eat lunch spread that draws hungry ranchers, town folk, truckers, tourists and hotel guests. A typical weekday offering might include pan-fried steak with gravy, liver and onions, fried chicken, pork ribs, lima beans, green beans, corn, mashed potatoes, rice, slaw, green salad, homemade yeast rolls and cornbread, cherry cobbler, strawberry shortcake, white cake, and apple pie.

If you're a guest at the Hotel Blessing, you'll find the price of lunch isn't the only throwback to a long-gone era. The hotel's 20 rooms, unadorned and sparsely furnished, rent for \$25 and \$30 a night. Each room has a screen door leading to a wide, interior corridor with fresh air flowing from an open window.

On a spring afternoon, the voile curtains in Room 3 billow with the breeze. An iron bedstead with a blue chenille cover, a straight-back chair and small table are neatly arranged. There is no telephone, and the bathroom is shared with the guests next door. It's all very simple. And sometimes, that's a blessing.

The Hotel Blessing, owned by the Blessing Historical Foundation, is located in Matagorda County on FM 616, west of State Hwy. 35. The restaurant is open every day except Christmas from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. For hotel information, call (361) 588-9579. For restaurant information, or to make group reservations, call (361) 588-6623.

Jackson Electric Cooperative serves much of Matagorda County.



COOL SUMMER SAFETY TIPS

Swimming


Don't be all wet. Remember these rules for safe pool-time fun this summer:

- Keep electric radios, TVs, clocks, barbecues, lights and other electrical appliances at least 10 feet from a pool and wet surfaces. Use battery-powered appliances whenever possible.
- Electric appliances should not be used outdoors unless they are equipped with a heavy-duty cord and three-prong plug.
- Swimming pools should be well away from electric wires to avoid the risk of hitting the wires with long-handled cleaning equipment.
- All outdoor electrical outlets should be weatherproof and equipped with a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). This is especially important in damp locations where more protection is necessary.
- Check with your electric co-op before you dig to make sure you know the location of buried electrical lines.
- Label power and light switches for pool, hot tub and spa equipment.
- If you think you are being shocked while in the water, move away from the source of the shock. Get out of the water, if possible, without using a metal ladder.

**Stay safe this summer.
Don't swim with shocks!**



**Texas Electric
Cooperatives**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

This public service message is brought to you by your local electric cooperative. For more information, visit your local co-op.

A Valiant Prank

BY KAREN HASTINGS

The way retired principal Glen “Doc” Cleckler tells the story, it started as a high school prank—a couple of boys from Weslaco, skipping class to head for the movies in nearby Harlingen.

A typical teenage tale, but then again, the year was 1943 and, in the fury and fervor of World War II, not much was typical anymore. What started as high school hijinks turned into a memorable patriotic event in wartime Weslaco—the day eight members of the Weslaco Panthers football team enlisted together in the U.S. Marine Corps.

One of those Weslaco boys—Harlon Block—would go on to fame on the island of Iwo Jima, where he helped raise the Stars and Stripes over Mount Suribachi and died in battle little more than a week later. A photograph of that famous flag-raising became an icon of World War II, and inspiration for the famous U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Washington, D.C. (Block is on the far right in that famous photo, guiding the flagpole into the ground.)

The rest of those Weslaco boys, like Cleckler, who also saw action on Iwo Jima, had their own experiences in the South Pacific. Some were wounded, others escaped battle altogether. Fate would throw them back together in far-flung places like Honolulu and Majuro Atoll, and the survivors would return home to careers as coaches and postmasters, airplane mechanics and businessmen.

One of the few still living, Cleckler, 81, resides in Harlingen. He vividly remembers the winter day of his senior year when he, Block and buddy Carl Sims played hokey.

After ending up at the Harlingen movie theater, where they hoped to avoid recognition, the three considered ways to explain their absence from school. What better excuse for missing class, they reasoned, than a visit to the nearby Marine recruiting station?

By the time the recruiter had finished with them, the boys were Marine Corps-bound. Since they expected to join the military after graduation anyway, it didn't seem that huge a step.

When word reached their friends, parents and school officials, however, events began to snowball. Other teammates and friends joined in. School officials arranged for the boys to graduate mid-term, and scheduled a special school assembly to send them on their way. Cheering crowds saw them off at

the bus station. Newspaper accounts beat the patriotic drum.

“Entire Backfield and Right Side of 1942 Panther Line Have Enlisted in Marines,” read the headline from the local newspaper on January 21, 1943.

In a grainy black-and-white photograph (below) from their induction ceremony at the San Antonio recruiting station, the Weslaco teammates stand together with five other young men, their right hands raised.

Sam Magee, first on the left and now retired from the lumber business, says he and a couple of his buddies from the Donna Redskins football team found out their Weslaco rivals were joining the Marines, and decided to get in on the action as well.

Surviving members of the “Weslaco Eight” would act as pall-

bearers when Block's body was moved from its grave on Iwo Jima and re-interred in Weslaco in 1949. Their numbers had dwindled by 1995, when Block's remains were moved yet again, to a final resting place beside the Iwo Jima Memorial that stands in Harlingen's Marine Military Academy. This Texas monument—the original model from which the Washington memorial was cast—was donated by the sculptor and dedicated in 1982.

How does Cleckler explain the thoughts and fears of

teenagers enlisting together during World War II? The long-time coach and educator recalls what he learned in boot camp.

“The idea was: You can't do anything by yourself. You've got to have your buddies to help you out,” Cleckler says. “Sometimes they'll console you; sometimes they'll listen to you; sometimes they'll plant you in the ground. They're your family. Together, you form a team.”

According to records kept in the Weslaco Museum, 21 Weslaco High School graduates and one teacher died in service during WWII.

The Marine Military Academy, a college preparatory academy for high school boys, has a museum/gift shop next to the Iwo Jima Monument. Go to its website, mma-tx.org/museum.htm, for more information.

Karen Hastings is a freelance writer based in Harlingen.

Magic Valley Electric Cooperative serves much of the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

COURTESY THE MARINE MILITARY ACADEMY



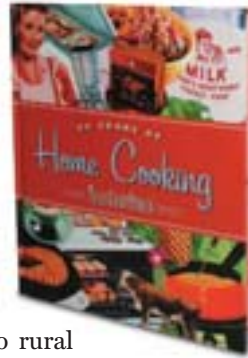
Marine swearing-in ceremony in San Antonio, Texas, January 1943. Captain D.M. Taft (right) swears in Sam Magee (Donna), Leo LaDuke (Weslaco), Ben Guess (Weslaco), Carl Cole (Donna), Leo Ryan (Weslaco), Pete Hall (Weslaco), Billy Burger (Weslaco), Bobby Walker (Weslaco), Carl Sims (Weslaco), Harlon Block (Weslaco), Glen Cleckler (Harlingen), Robert Sooter (Weslaco) and Billy Jack Robertson (Donna).

Home on the (Electric) Range

BY SHANNON OELRICH Can you imagine what it was like to prepare a meal before electricity? Curing and canning your food. Carrying water from the well. Stoking up the fire in a wood-burning stove. All these tasks and more were made immeasurably easier by electricity, brought to rural Texas by electric cooperatives. Our new cookbook, *60 Years of Home Cooking*, explores the ways cooking electrically changed how and what we eat.

In it, you'll find more than 600 recipes drawn from 60 years of *Texas Co-op Power's* archives, plus fun food timelines and short articles from the pages of the magazine. The book is divided by decade, from the 1940s through 1990s. Retro collages, historical photographs and readers' remembrances bring each decade to life.

The recipes on these pages will give you a little taste of the great recipes you'll discover, or re-discover, in the cookbook.



1950s: HOORAY FOR MECHANICAL SERVANTS

For most American families, the Fifties were a time of plenty. Unlike children of the Forties, who had to live through rationing and shortages, children of the Fifties grew up expecting meat, starch and vegetables with every meal, plus a dessert like this fluffy white Bonnie Butter Cake to boot.

Labor-saving devices, both mechanical and culinary, made chores easier than ever before. As we wrote in the March 1950 issue of the magazine, "The hand that rocks the cradle now runs the washing machine, dishwasher, vacuum cleaner, sewing machine and an increasing number of other mechanical servants."

BONNIE BUTTER CAKE

- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup soft butter
- $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons vanilla
- 3 cups cake flour
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups milk

Beat butter, sugar, eggs and vanilla 5 minutes at high speed in mixer. Sift flour, baking powder and salt. Add in four additions alternately with milk. Start and end with dry ingredients. Blend on low speed until smooth. Bake 30 to 35 minutes in two 9-inch layer pans (greased and floured) at 350 degrees. Frost with Fluffy Marshmallow Icing and sprinkle with coconut.

FLUFFY MARSHMALLOW ICING

- 1 cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon cream of tartar
- 2 egg whites
- 8 large marshmallows
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 can flaked coconut

Combine sugar, water and cream of tartar in saucepan. Boil rapidly until syrup spins a 6- to 8-inch thread. While syrup cooks, beat egg whites stiff. As soon as syrup threads, stir in marshmallows until dissolved. Pour syrup over egg whites. Add vanilla. Blend well.



1950s:
BONNIE BUTTER CAKE

WILL VAN OVERBEEK

RECIPE ROUNDUP



1960s: CALM, COOL COOKOUT

WILL VAN OVERBEEK

1960s: THE BARBECUE YEARS

Barbecue was a popular topic in the Sixties, perhaps mirroring those meals served at the “Texas White House.” President Lyndon Johnson invited countless world leaders to his Hill Country ranch to sample Texas hospitality and barbecue.

As we noted in the July 1960 issue, Dad usually did the outdoor cooking, though Mom was expected to prepare the rest of the meal. She marinated the meat, cut the vegetables, and prepared the side dishes. We wrote: “The beauty of outdoor cooking is that most of the meal can be prepared in advance. This gives the homemaker a chance to relax and freshen up before the real excitement begins. With everything laid out in an organized manner, any man would love to take over the actual tending of the barbecue. Of course, he’ll brag about what a fine chef he is. Let him. It’s his privilege. Besides, this gives you time for those finishing touches that really ‘make’ a calm, cool cookout.”

TEXAS BARBECUE SAUCE

- 1 medium-sized onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon chili powder
- 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 3/4 cup condensed tomato soup
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/2 cup water

Cayenne pepper to taste

Mix together all ingredients and simmer for 15 minutes. If too thick, add small amount of water. Sufficient for two medium fryers, pieced.

CALIFORNIA BARBECUE SAUCE

- 1/2 cup honey
- 2/3 cup soy sauce
- 2/3 cup ketchup
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- 1 clove garlic, finely mashed
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup orange juice

- 1 cup wine vinegar
- Combine ingredients.

KIDNEY BEAN SALAD

- 2 cups canned kidney beans
- 1/2 cup diced pickles (dill or sweet)
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 hard-cooked eggs, sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise

Drain beans well. Mix together beans, pickles, onion, eggs and seasonings. Gently blend in mayonnaise. Serves 4 to 6.

PINEAPPLE COLESLAW

- 2 1/2 cups finely shredded cabbage
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
 - 1/4 cup milk
 - 1 small can crushed pineapple
- Paprika

Sprinkle salt over cabbage. Combine mayonnaise and milk; pour over cabbage. Drain pineapple and fold into mixture. Toss with fork to blend. Chill. Before serving, sprinkle paprika over top. Serves 4.

CORED APPLE RINGS

- 4 large apples
- 1/2 cup light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup melted butter

Peel and core apples, slice in rings and steam 5 minutes in saucepan. Drain well and arrange in foil-lined rotisserie pan. Sprinkle with brown sugar and pour melted butter over top. Place under broiler, allowing to brown slowly.

1980s: WHERE'S THE BEEF?

Do you remember Wendy's spokesperson Clara Peller, the cantankerous octogenarian who promoted hamburgers with the contagious catch-phrase "Where's the beef?" It echoed throughout the country in the mid-Eighties, even as Americans chose to eat less and less red meat.

This health-conscious decade brought lighter dishes to the pages of *Texas Co-op Power*, including brunch favorites such as this Appetizer Quiche and Seven-Layer Salad. In fact, brunch emerged as a fashionable trend in the Eighties, whether served after church on Sundays or as a family get-together on holidays. As we wrote in the January 1987 issue: "Hostesses enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and have a wide assortment of foods from which to build a menu. Guests enjoy the extra time to sleep late or socialize after church."



**1980s:
APPETIZER QUICHE
& SEVEN-LAYER SALAD**

WILL VAN OVERBEEK

APPETIZER QUICHE

- 1 unbaked 9-inch pie shell
- 1 package (10 ounces) frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well-drained
- 2 cups (8 ounces) shredded provolone cheese
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 1/4 cup chopped green onion
- 1 1/4 cups half-and-half
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Squeeze handfuls of spinach to remove excess water. Separate clumps and place between layers of paper towels; pat dry. Combine cheese, spinach and flour; mix well. Place cheese mixture in bottom of pie shell. Sprinkle green onion over cheese mixture. Lightly whisk together cream and eggs; pour over cheese. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake 40 to 50 minutes, or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Let stand 10 minutes before serving warm as an appetizer. Cut into 16 pieces or thin wedges.

RECIPE CONTEST

One sure way to stir up dinner-table debate is to discuss stuffing ... or do you call it dressing? Some families have to make two kinds for the holiday table just to keep the peace. Do you use stale white bread or cornbread? Do you include nuts, oysters, sausage or some other secret ingredient? Send your favorite STUFFING or DRESSING recipes to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704.

You may also fax them to (512) 486-6254 or e-mail them to recipes@texas-ec.org.

Please include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op. The deadline for entries in the November recipe contest is August 10. The top winner will receive a tin filled with Pioneer products. Runners-up will also receive a prize.



SEVEN-LAYER SALAD

- 1/2 head iceberg lettuce, torn into bite-size pieces
- 2 bunches green onions with tops, chopped
- 5 ribs celery, chopped
- 1 package (10 ounces) frozen green peas, cooked and cooled
- 3 carrots, sliced
- 2 cups mayonnaise
- 2 cups Cheddar cheese
- Croutons

To present this salad, serve in a clear glass bowl. Layer vegetables in order, topped with mayonnaise, so all sides are sealed. Spread grated cheese on top. When ready to serve, sprinkle croutons on top. This salad is best when made a day ahead.

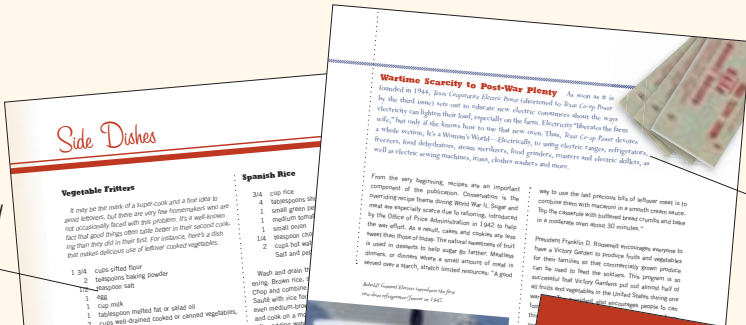
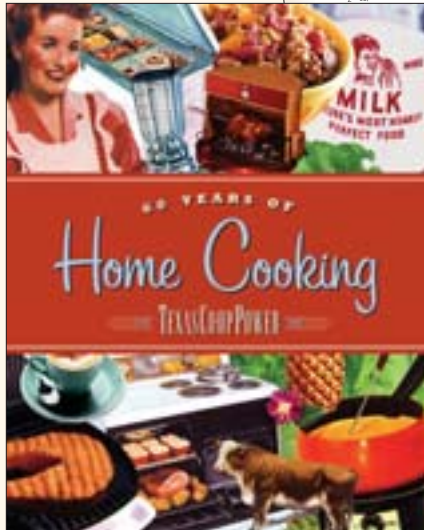
60 YEARS OF
Home Cooking
 1940 TEXAS CO-OP POWER 2000

Six Decades of Texas' Favorite Foods, Fads & Facts

Full Color, Hardbound, More Than 600 Recipes
 From 60 Years of Texas Co-op Power

Discover authentic recipes true to each decade from the readers and archives of Texas Co-op Power.

Remember what life was like "back when" with an introduction to each decade.



Learn about great, and not-so-great, moments in food history with our culinary timelines.



ORDER NOW!

Mail _____ copies to:
 Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____

Mail _____ copies to:
 Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____
 State _____ Zip _____

Make checks payable to Texas Electric Cooperatives. Send \$29.95 (\$24.95 plus \$5 tax, shipping and handling) for each cookbook to Cookbook, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. Also available online at texascoopower.com or by calling (512) 486-6253. Available soon in co-op lobbies across the state. Allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.

COOL TIPS FOR HOT WEATHER

It's time for another hot Texas summer. Time to enjoy all the outdoors has to offer. Take a little extra time to take precautions so you and your family can enjoy every day.


Keep cool—you could save a life

- Take frequent cooling-off breaks in the shade or air conditioning.
- Drink plenty of water before starting any outdoor activity, and drink water during the day. Drink less tea, coffee and alcoholic beverages.
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothes.
- Limit your physical activity during the hottest part of the day.
- Kids, cars and heat make a deadly combination. Never leave a child—or pet—in a vehicle, even for “just a few minutes.” That’s long enough for a closed vehicle to heat up to dangerous levels, even on a 60-degree day.

If someone has heatstroke-related symptoms—nausea, fatigue, muscle cramps, confusion, dizziness—act rapidly: Remove excess clothing and lower the person’s temperature with cold, wet sheets or a cool bath. Call a doctor immediately and transport the person to the nearest hospital—this is an emergency. This summer, don’t sweat it. Keep cool.



**Texas Electric
Cooperatives**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

This public service message is brought to you by your local electric cooperative. For more information, visit your local co-op.



▲ If you happen to see a Mayberry squad car being driven around the Burleson area, it's likely United Cooperative Services member **Ronnie Day** driving the replica inspired by the popular "classic" television series. The vintage 1965 Ford Galaxie is used for charities, families, school, law enforcement and various other organizations.



▲ "Old Blue," a 1932 Chevrolet roadster pickup, is one of only 454 that were built, and the only one in running condition in the Vintage Chevrolet Club of America. Old Blue belongs to **Willis Briggs**, a new member of Cherokee County Electric Cooperative.

▼ Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative member **Mike Mallory** took this photo while on vacation at Big Bend National Park. "I was heading out of the park one morning when I saw a group of antique cars traveling from the Chisos Mountains Basin. I stopped and got some great shots."



CLASSIC VEHICLES

If you haven't been to a classic car show or "cruise" lately, here's your chance to participate vicariously through our readers' photos. Anecdotes and reminiscences were overheard as our photo judges made their selections; it seems everyone has a soft spot in their heart for a certain make and model. Enjoy the photos and take a virtual cruise down memory lane—without paying at the pump! —**CHERYL TUCKER**



◀ This VW bus, complete with smile, belonged to the parents of South Plains Electric Cooperative member **Cora Mueller**, who writes, "Needless to say, the smile was a topic of conversation wherever we were camping!"

▼ Pedernales Electric Cooperative member **Donna Egenolf** sent this "otherworldly" photo of her husband, David, as he drove to work last Halloween. "David really did leave the house this way in his 1966 Mustang, but said he didn't last too long in the mask because it was too hot—and too hard to see those other alien drivers zooming by!"



Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Oct	Scarecrows	Aug 10
Nov	Mailboxes	Sep 10
Dec	Christmas Morning	Oct 10
Jan	Extreme Weather	Nov 10
Feb	Gates	Dec 10
Mar	Snapshots	Jan 10

SCARECROWS is the topic for our October issue. Send your photos—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to Scarecrows, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, before August 10. A stamped, self-addressed envelope should be included if you want your entry returned (approximately six weeks). Please do not submit irreplaceable photographs—send a copy or duplicate. We regret that Texas Co-op Power cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline. If you use a digital camera, e-mail your highest-resolution images to focus@texas-ec.org.

AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

AUGUST

1 BOERNE Abendkonzerte, (830) 537-4367

GRANBURY Just a Closer Walk with Patsy Cline, 1-800-547-4697, granburyoperahouse.net

WIMBERLEY [1-12] Shakespeare Under the Stars, (512) 847-6969, emilyann.org

2 QUITMAN [2-5] Old Settler's Reunion, (903) 763-4411, quitman.com

4 DEL RIO First Friday Art Walk, (830) 775-0888, drchamber.com

DRIPPING SPRINGS Knights of Columbus Fish Fry, (512) 894-4470

4 MARATHON [4-6] Living with Nature Festival II, (432) 386-4257, livingwithnature.net

SAN AUGUSTINE [4-5] Ranch Rodeo, Bull Bash & Queen's Contest, (936) 275-3610, sanaugustinetx.com

SCHULENBURG [4-6] Schulenburg Festival, schulenburgfestival.org

5 BEAUMONT Museum Blows Replica Gusher, (409) 835-0823, spindletop.org

PEARL Ole Time Music, (254) 865-6013, pearlbluegrass.com

6 KEMAH Blessing of the Fleet, (281) 334-9880, kemah.net

MOUNTAIN HOME [6-13] Cowboy Camp Meeting, (830) 866-3366

6 FRELSBURG Saints Peter & Paul Catholic Church Festival, (979) 732-3430

8 DE LEON [8-12] Peach & Melon Festival, (254) 893-2083, deleontexas.com

9 SONORA [9-12] Sutton County Days & Outlaw Pro Rodeo, (325) 387-2880, leavethecamera.com

10 ATHENS [10 & 24] Pea Pickers Square and Round Dance, (903) 675-1665

11 HITCHCOCK [11-12] Good Ole Days Festival, (409) 986-9224, (409) 986-7420

JUNCTION [11-12] Rodeo, Dance, Parade, Car Show, Class Reunions, (325) 446-3190, junctiontexas.net

12 CALVERT August Sale-abration, (979) 364-2710

GRAND PRAIRIE [12-13] Caribbean Music Weekend, (972) 647-2331

LUCKENBACH Cory Morrow Outdoor Show, 1-888-311-8990, luckenbachtexas.com

LAMPASAS Indian Artifact Show, (512) 556-5172

VICTORIA Karate Tournament, (361) 570-5420

THE WOODLANDS Midnight Bike Cruise, (936) 539-6686, midnightbikeride.com

HEMPSTEAD Sportsman Extravaganza, (979) 826-2825, wallercountyfair.org

ATHENS [12-13] Northeast Texas Paint Horse Show, (903) 675-6354

TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Holiday Recipe Contest

\$5,000 in Total Prizes!

SPONSORED BY 



GRAND-PRIZE WINNER TAKES HOME \$3,000. FOUR RUNNERS-UP WILL EACH WIN \$500.

We're looking for the best recipes from your holiday celebrations. All recipes must be original and the ingredients must include Pioneer Brand Gravy Mix, Pioneer Brand Biscuit & Baking Mix, or Pioneer Brand Frozen Biscuit or Roll Dough. Winners will be announced in our December issue.

Up to three entries are allowed per person. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper. Entries MUST include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your electric cooperative, or they will be disqualified. All entries must be postmarked by September 8, 2006. Send entries to Holiday Recipe Contest, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, or fax to (512) 486-6254. To enter by e-mail (recipes@texas-ec.org), you must include "Holiday Recipe Contest" in the subject line and submit one recipe per e-mail (no attachments). For official rules, visit www.texascoopower.com or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address above.

AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

- 13 MC KINNEY**
Living History Day,
(972) 562-8790
- BANDERA** Music Hall of
Fame Awards Ceremony,
(830) 796-4213
- WEIMAR**
St. Michael's Harvest
Feast, (979) 725-8203,
(979) 725-8478
- 14 MC DADE** Jamboree,
(512) 273-2307
- 15 SAN ANGELO**
Woolman Triathlon,
lillizardsyouthrunningpro
graminc.com/events
- 18 TERLINGUA** [18-19]
Bronze Buzzard Double
Trouble Chili Cook-Off,
1-888-227-4468, chili.org
- MARSHALL** [18-19]
Gold Wing Road Riders
Association Annual Spirit
Fest, (903) 789-3292

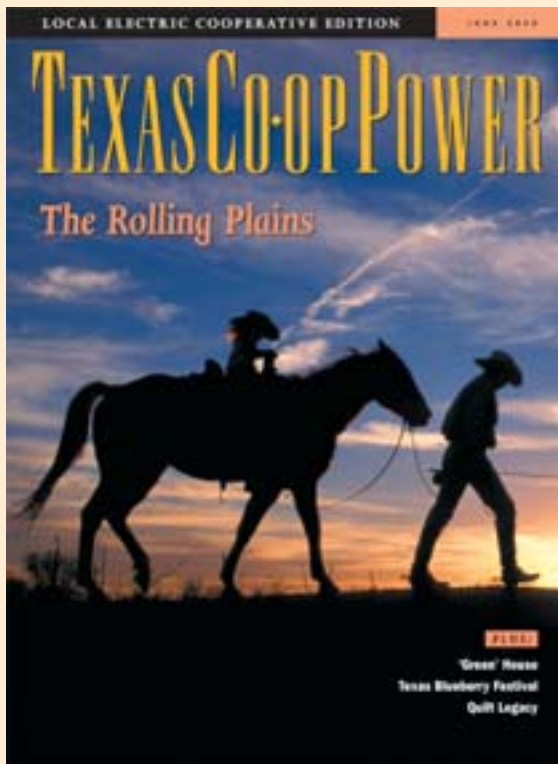
- 18 HARLINGEN**
Men's Hispanic State
Championship Softball
Tournament,
(956) 245-0264
- 19 DOSS** 150th Celebration,
(830) 669-2325
- KATY** Fall Hunting
Classic, (281) 644-2203,
basspro.com
- MT. VERNON** Last
Chance BBQ Cook-Off,
(903) 588-2482
- NEW BRAUNFELS**
Summer Model Train
Show, (830) 935-2517
- 24 FREDERICKSBURG**
[24-27] Gillespie County
Fair, (830) 997-2359,
gillespiefair.com
- 25 FT. STOCKTON**
HarvestFest, (432) 336-
8525, harvestfest.us
- 26 JEFFERSON** [26-27]
Bluegrass Music Show,
(903) 665-2672

- 26 WACO** Margarita & Salsa
Festival, (254) 776-1660,
hotfair.com
- BIG LAKE** [25-26]
Santa Rita Days, (325)
884-2980, biglaketx.com
- LOCKHART**
Smooches for Pooches
Silent Auction & Dance,
(512) 398-7320
- LINDEN** Texas Bluegrass
Show, (903) 756-9934,
musiccitytexas.org
- 27 MARAK** Annual
Homecoming Picnic,
(254) 593-3021
- JOHNSON CITY**
Lyndon Johnson's
Birthday Commemoration,
(830) 868-7128, ext. 244,
nps.gov/lyjo
- FLATONIA**
Saints Cyril & Methodius
Catholic Church Picnic,
destinationflatonia.com

SEPTEMBER

- 1 KERRVILLE** [1-3]
Wine & Music Festival,
(830) 257-3600,
kerrvillefolkfestival.com
- 2 GAINESVILLE** [2-3]
Antique Tractor &
Farm Machinery Show,
1-800-689-7861
- JASPER** Lunch with the
Rangers Labor Day Fun,
(409) 384-5231

Event information can be mailed to **Around Texas**, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, faxed to (512) 486-6254 or e-mailed to aroundtx@texas-ec.org. Please submit events for October by August 10. Events are listed according to space available; an expanded list is available at texascoopower.com. We appreciate photos with credits but regret that they cannot be returned.



TEXAS CO-OP POWER

EACH MONTH, WE BRING YOU THE VERY BEST TEXAS HAS TO OFFER!

Texas Co-op Power is the Texas living magazine with a rural, suburban and small town focus. Each month you will read entertaining articles about Texas people, Texas history, Texas nature, Texas travel and Texas food.

And, in every issue we feature a personal look at chosen towns in "Texas, USA" along with "Around Texas," featuring selected events around the state.

For just \$15 a subscription, you can share *Texas Co-op Power* with friends and family members who live far away or in big cities! See page 11 for an order form.

Not to sound disloyal, but there's just something compelling about the easternmost reaches of Texas that seems more like the Deep South than the Lone Star State. There's a gentle quality

1 In ATLANTA, check out the Miles Drug Company, 122 N. East St., (903) 796-2815.



about the forested land, lush and green and freckled with lakes, that slows the pulse and makes me long for a glass of lemonade, a hammock and the scent of magnolia blossoms in a warm breeze.

The drive outlined here is an easy one of roughly 50 miles, following U.S. Hwy. 59 from Atlanta through Linden to Jefferson, then veering off slightly to the southeast on FM 134 to Caddo Lake. Wander along, making these stops, and see if you don't just relax a bit.

ATLANTA Thick clusters of pines cloak the rolling hills and shrouds of honeysuckle-wrapped utility poles and fence posts. In the middle of the tiny downtown, I find the Miles Drug Company, carrying on as it has for 128 years as the town's heartbeat. There I get a good chicken salad sandwich and an old-fashioned chocolate soda.

Every morning the old-timers crank up the coffee klatch, often ignoring the rules about not discussing politics.

LINDEN The Cass County seat boasts a bevy of native sons who became noted musicians. Ragtime king Scott Joplin hails from this area, as does Eagles founder Don Henley and Aaron "T-Bone" Walker, the celebrated blues

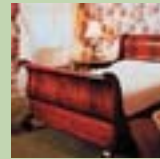
2 See LINDEN's post office mural at 200 E. Rush St., and the Music City Texas Theater, 108 Legion St., (903) 756-9934, musiccitytexas.org



ATLANTA to CADDO LAKE

Lush green forests ... the scent of magnolia blossoms and honeysuckle ... a sip of lemonade ...

BY JUNE NAYLOR

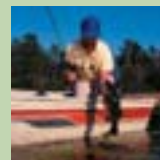


While you're in JEFFERSON, treat yourself to the Excelsior House, 211 W. Austin St., (903) 665-2513, theexcelsiorhouse.com.

3

Bayou, Jefferson boasts a prestigious heritage that I enjoy exploring at the historic museum inside the old federal courthouse downtown, on narrated boat tours on the bayou, and on the spooky evening ghost tours of some of the legendary haunted buildings in town. But the reason I've returned time and again is to eat breakfast at the Excelsior House, a genteel place where the orange blossom muffins should not be missed.

CADDO LAKE Just a few minutes away from Jefferson awaits one of the great wonders of Texas. The only natural lake in the state, the 35,000-acre sprawl of water is distinguished by its seven-centuries-old cypress trees, draped with heavy curtains of Spanish moss for a most ethereal effect. A place of haunting beauty and a baffling network of sloughs and canals, Caddo Lake is best explored with the help of a guided boat or canoe tour—unless your idea of a good time is to get lost on this giant spooky pond and possibly surprise an alligator. At Caddo Lake State Park, the Civilian Conservation Corps



Get away from it all at CADDO LAKE STATE PARK, 245 Park Rd. 2 off Texas 43, (903) 679-3351, tpwd.state.tx.us.

4

cabins are among the best affordable lodgings in the state.

June Naylor, a sixth-generation Texan, wrote the award-winning Texas: Off the Beaten Path. A seventh edition is due in stores soon from Globe-Pequot Press.

Bowie-Cass and Upshur-Rural electric cooperatives serve this area.

guitarist who inspired the likes of Jimi Hendrix. This wealth of talent gave rise to the Music City Texas Theater, where acts from around Texas play in the First Saturday shows, and big names like Henley star in the "Super" shows. I want to come back for next year's annual T-Bone Walker Blues Fest, held in mid-June. Meanwhile, I'm happy just gazing at "The Last Crop," a magnificent post office mural from the 1930s painted by Victor Arnautoff, in the Linden post office on Rush Street.

JEFFERSON This vaunted riverboat town was once the Texas version of New Orleans. Situated on the Big Cypress