

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER



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# August 2008

VOLUME 65 NUMBER 2



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By Rob McCorkle

Photos by Will van Overbeek

*Estate-grown Texas olive oil is now on the market.*

### 12 Electric Highways in the Sky

By Kaye Northcott

Illustrations by A.J. Garcés

*What does it take to deliver your electricity?*

## FAVORITES

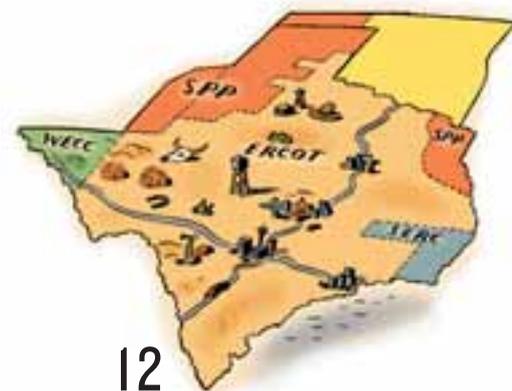
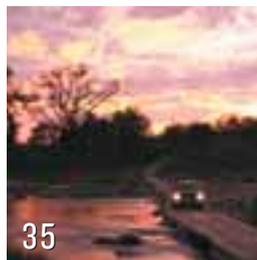
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## TEXAS CO-OP POWER

*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.

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# letters

## MORE STORIES NEEDED

Two pieces [on wind power] in your June issue and not a single mention of the possible



effect of bird strikes on migratory bird populations? I believe you owe your readers a look at all

sides to this story. You also did not mention the increased number of homeowners erecting micro-turbines in their own yards, the lawsuit over wind turbines at the King Ranch (not everyone wants to see these enormous structures in their backyard or on the nearest ridge) and the current situation with regards to state and federal incentives supporting wind energy. It would be nice to see more in a future issue.

**JOHN ABRAMS**

*Pedernales Electric Cooperative*

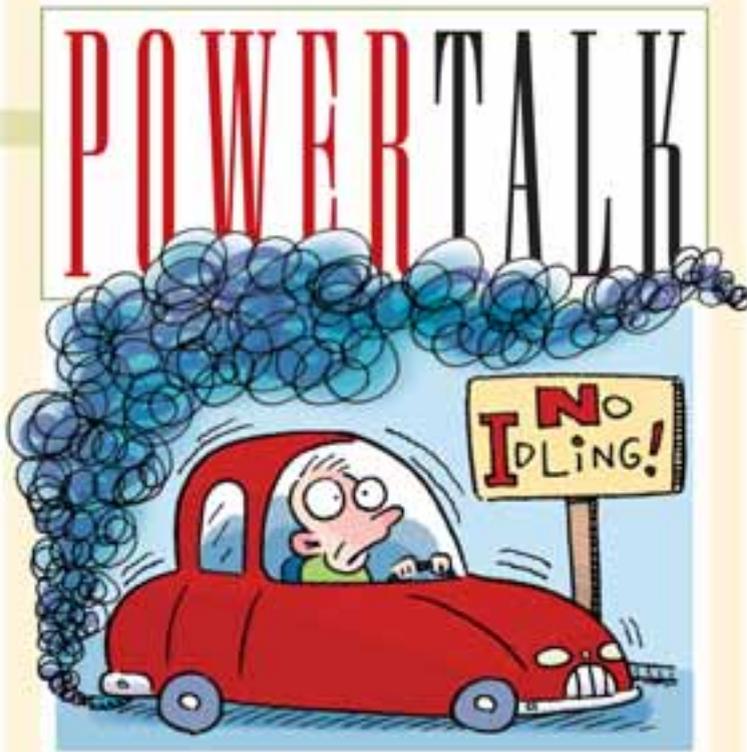
## ANOTHER PERMANENT MEMORY

Celia Yeary brought me home to my own childhood memories in her article "A Permanent Memory" [April 2008]. It transported me back to those days, identical to hers, of my mother's kitchen and home perms. Some of my memories of those perms are not good ones! Also, I thank you for the reassurance that I am not the only one in the whole world who is afraid of a pressure cooker!

**JEAN HENRY**

*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](mailto: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. Read additional letters at [www.texascoopower.com](http://www.texascoopower.com).



## DON'T IDLE AWAY YOUR TIME AND MONEY

It's not only idle hands that are the devil's workshop but also idling vehicles. Idling an auto for 10 minutes a day pollutes the air and uses up approximately a whole tank of gas a year, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Idling for periods as short as 30 seconds consumes more gasoline than turning off the engine and then starting it again. And you'll save even more if you park and go inside rather than using a drive-through.

What's more, excessive idling can cause a buildup of fuel residues on cylinder walls, spark plugs and other engine components, which eventually leads to even greater inefficiency and can increase fuel consumption by 4 to 5 percent.

To conserve gasoline while driving, accelerate and decelerate slowly and smoothly, and anticipate stops and coast to a stop gradually. Anticipate delays and take an alternate route to avoid stop-and-go or standstill traffic ... or travel earlier or later when roads are not so congested.



## Summer Cooking on the Patio

To reduce heat generation inside the house and to minimize use of the air conditioner in the summer, we do most of our frying, deep-frying and toaster-oven baking outside on the patio.

These appliances can be plugged into an outdoor electrical outlet.

**SHELLY ALMOUSLLI**

*Central Texas Electric Cooperative*

## Buyers Beware

Seeking ways to save on your electric bill? If you're looking at a device that purports to reduce power consumption, you might take a closer look. Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott has obtained a restraining order against a company called Forum Trading, Inc., for its marketing of the "XPower Saver" and the "MEGA Power Saver." The company claims the devices significantly reduce power consumption, extend the life of household appliances and save consumers money.

The power savings offered by the devices, which sell for as much as \$300, are negligible, according to Abbott.

"Experts who reviewed the defendants' products discovered no actual savings for well-intentioned purchasers," he said.

If something sounds too good to be true, then it probably is.

## “QUOTABLE”

*If we ignore the little things that seem rather insignificant, like leaving a light on all day in our closet, what difference will that make in the grand scheme of things? As a life-long cooperative professional, I've learned that when we all pitch in, we can accomplish anything we set our minds to. In contrast, if none of us do what needs to be done, what fruit will the future bear? All the little contributions we make in this world do have an impact.*

—Ray Beavers

CEO/General Manager,  
United Cooperative Services



## H A P P E N I N G S

No matter how you slice it, the **YOAKUM COUNTY WATERMELON ROUNDUP** is all about serving up summertime fun—and lots of ice-cold watermelon—to thousands of attendees in the sweltering August heat.

Set for August 30 in Plains, the 13th annual event is expected to draw a crowd of 5,000 people who will enjoy free, unlimited slices of watermelon all day long. The roundup also features arts and crafts booths; a classic car show and motorcycle show; 5- and 10-kilometer runs; activities for children, including games, a petting zoo and train rides; and food aplenty.

But this roundup revolves around one delicacy in particular. So as the sweat trickles down your back, think about juicy watermelons chilling in ice-packed tubs. Ahhh. Don't you feel cooler already? For more information about the roundup, call (806) 592-4594.

### HISTORY ON THE BANKS OF THE BIG CYPRESS

Jefferson, on the banks of the Big Cypress Bayou in East Texas, once granted steamboat captain William Perry a parcel of land near the town's docks. On it, he built a home for his family that today is open as the Excelsior House. But the Excelsior once nearly faded into history.

After Perry died and Big Cypress Bayou was rendered unnavigable, the inn in the heart of the failed inland port changed hands and names several times. By 1961, the building was in such disrepair that it was nearly torn down. But members of the Jessie Allen Wise Garden Club got a loan, bought the property and spent years restoring it.

During the restoration, the hotel continued to accept guests, so today the 15-room inn can truthfully claim to be continuously operated since 1858. Its whitewashed exterior walls and mix of antiques and collectibles harken back to Old South gentility. Garden club members offer afternoon tours of the building, where ghostly encounters have been reported.

—From *Historic Hotels of Texas: A Traveler's Guide*, Texas A&M University Press, first edition, 2007



## WHO KNEW?



The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department manages 90 recycled oil platforms as artificial reefs at 45 sites ranging from less than 10 miles to more than 100 miles off the Texas coast. Nearly all the reefs are at depths suitable for sports diving.

**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 [www.texascoopower.com](http://www.texascoopower.com). Call (512) 454-0311 or e-mail [knorthcott@texas-ec.org](mailto: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 \$7.50. Individual copies and back issues are available for \$3 each.

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## FUTURE TALK

### HARNESSING TERMITE POWER

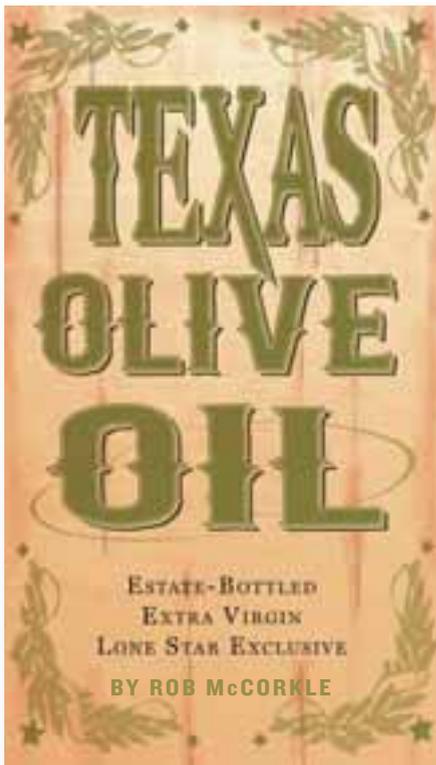
Termites can be incredibly destructive creatures. But the insects—or more precisely, the bacteria in their stomachs—have the potential to benefit humans in the production of biofuels. That's the aim of research by the Joint Genome Institute at the



U.S. Department of Energy.

Termites process the wood they ingest in a series of stomachs, each with a distinct set of bacteria. Those bugs within bugs release enzymes that break down cellulose, the sugar chains in wood, into acetate, a fatty acid that provides the termite's energy.

Scientists hope to develop a process to harness the power of these bacteria on an industrial scale to break cellulose down into ethanol and provide biofuel without using food crops as a source. The Energy Department plans to invest in six biorefinery projects that could, when completed, turn out more than 130 million gallons of cellulosic ethanol a year.



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *An article on growing olive trees in Texas, published in the March 2002 edition of Texas Co-op Power, produced a flurry of calls from people who were interested in getting into the olive-oil business. Here, we return to the Texas fields to see how the Texas olive oil pioneers are faring.*

**A** giant, boxy, blue beast on wheels lumbers through Southwest Texas farmland, belching smoke and harvesting row after row of silvery-leaved trees laden with marble-sized fruit, some the color of a cactus pad and others a fine merlot. The much-anticipated fall harvest for the Winter Garden region's newest—and one of the world's oldest—crops has finally arrived at the Texas Olive Ranch near Carrizo Springs.

At the edge of the orchard inside the cavernous frantoia, or olive press house, on Jim Henry's 67-acre ranch, a new mechanized press is doing its job under the supervision of California olive experts. Thousands of the Texas-grown olives flow along a conveyor belt, where they are washed and woody debris is extracted, before yielding a stream of amber-green oil to be stored in 48-gallon drums. The press processes an amazing 3,000 pounds of olives an hour.

After the harvest, Henry reflected on the yield of almost 100 tons.

"We accomplished a great deal," he says. "It's finally materialized where there really is something to this. We have to look at the big picture that there is now an olive industry, and it works. The hope is that people can make a living doing this."

It certainly appears that they are. With a yield of 50 gallons per ton of

olives, and the precious oil selling for \$12 to \$25 per 12.5-ounce bottle, the Texas Olive Ranch partners already have recouped a big chunk of their \$1 million investment in the first year of commercial production. (There is less expensive extra virgin olive oil in grocery stores, but Texas olive oil is still rare and pulls a hefty price. It could be argued that Texans—think wine industry—are buying the olive oil because they're proud of Texas' agricultural products.)

As the farm's 40,000 trees of mostly Spanish stock acquired from California mature—it takes about four years on average for them to do so—the company's future olive production and profits should increase exponentially.

Henry, a Dallas businessman, numbers among a handful of entrepreneurs who are "betting the farm" that the nascent olive oil industry in Texas will be the state's next wine industry, which is now more than a quarter of a century old. After more than 10 years of fits and starts, unbridled optimism and dashed hopes, a new breed of 21st century "wildcatters," from Dimmit County in southern Texas to Hays County in Central Texas, struck pay dirt last year with a bumper crop of olives. The first 100 percent estate-bottled Texas olive oil has finally hit the market.

Henry helped found the Texas Olive



Collecting olives for oil often is done the old-world way, but the stainless-steel pressing equipment is modern.

Oil Council in the 1990s and has been fine-tuning olive tree cultivation in the Lone Star State for more than a decade. With Americans' love affair with all things olive, the stakes for the state's dogged olive growers are huge.

Henry and his partners believe the successful 2007 harvest will translate into a burgeoning crop of olive growers, especially in South and Southwest Texas, where winters are typically mild and not as likely to produce extreme temperature fluctuations—perhaps the biggest threat to younger trees that make up the bulk of the state's olive orchards. Established olive trees, by contrast, are hardy and can tolerate dry conditions and grow in marginal soil.

Harvesting methods are important, too, when it comes to gathering olive crops. Unlike the Texas Olive Ranch, most Texas olive operations depend on family, friends and workers to pick the fruit by hand. It's a much more tedious process, but one that produces less bruised fruit and damage to the trees than farm machinery.

#### SOAPS AND SCENTS

Sandra Winokur, who operates an organic olive orchard south of San Antonio within earshot of Interstate 37, imported an ancient stone-wheel press from Egypt to do her limited

pressing. Because the oil is processed outdoors, it can't be sold for human consumption, but she reports that the "taste was fabulous."

Instead of marketing the oil from her crop, Winokur pickles most of her olives and uses olive-tree leaves to produce an extensive line of handcrafted, all-natural skin-care products; she also offers chocolate truffles infused with olive oil and unusual soaps made with olive oil, olive leaves, lavender, flowers and grains. Look for Sandy Oaks products at Shades of Green and the Guenther House in San Antonio.

Winokur returned from extensive travels abroad with the idea of planting her own olive trees to complement her family's ranching tradition. Today, she runs cattle on 218 acres and oversees a 40-acre orchard planted with 10,000 olive trees bearing names such as arbosana, frantoio, pendolino and mission. The latter is the only variety developed in America, and the root stock was brought up from Mexico by Franciscan friars more than 400 years ago.

"We're still in the experimental stages," Winokur said. "I figured the trees that would grow in North Africa or Spain would do best in Texas, and that has pretty well proved true."

Sandy Oaks boasts 22 varieties of Spanish, Greek, Italian and Tunisian

olive trees that line fences, decorate the ranch's handsome grounds and undulate in a sea of shimmering silver toward the orchard's distant tree line.

Faring best in Sandy Oaks' 2007 harvest were the cold-tolerant Spanish arbequina and Italian pendolino, as well as manzanilla and the hardy Texas mission variety. But Winokur has high hopes for two young Tunisian varieties and koroneiki trees that originated on the Isle of Crete. The Texas rancher was so buoyed by last year's harvest that she has purchased her own olive press for this year's crop.

Like Henry's Texas Olive Ranch, Sandy Oaks is experiencing a growing demand from customers who want to grow their own trees. Winokur sells trees wholesale to places like the Natural Gardener in Austin, Rainbow Garden in San Antonio and online via the Olive Barn website. Her trees cost from \$10 to \$95 and are sold in 4-inch to 15-gallon containers. Texas Olive Ranch Foreman Tony Correa propagates and sells several varieties of olive trees—arbequina, koroneiki and arbosana—in 1-gallon pots that sell from \$6 to \$12.50.

Most Texas-grown olive trees put on clusters of white blossoms in April and set fruit during the warmer summer months. Most varieties are ready to harvest in August or September.

#### THE SCOOP ON TEXAS OLIVES

A good clearinghouse for olive information is the Texas Olive Oil Council, [www.texasoliveoilcouncil.org](http://www.texasoliveoilcouncil.org). Call Jim Henry at (214) 325-5787 for more information. Another good website is [www.oliveoilsource.com](http://www.oliveoilsource.com), based in California.

For more information, contact:

Sandy Oaks Olive Orchard, (210) 621-0044, 25195 Mathis Rd., Elmendorf, TX 78112, [www.sandyoaks.com](http://www.sandyoaks.com)

Bella Vista Ranch, (512) 847-6514, 3101 Mount Sharp Rd., Wimberley, TX 78676, [www.bvranch.com](http://www.bvranch.com)

Other established commercial olive operations in Texas are: Anderson Ranch Olive Oil, Dilley, (830) 378-5511, and Moro Creek Olive Company, Asherton, (830) 468-3536.



Several Texas-grown olive products are now on the market.



Jack Dougherty, who founded Bella Vista Ranch, says, 'I don't think we'll really know for 20 years if Texas has a viable industry.'

facilities, where horses pace a corral and a handful of cats skulk about. Cooking classes have been added to the ranch lineup, and dinner under the stars is on Sandy Oaks' menu for this summer.

### BELLA VISTA MEETS SUCCESS

Jack Dougherty, who founded Bella Vista Ranch near Wimberley in the mid-1990s, finally experienced an excellent harvest last year after a decade of trying. Nonetheless, he sounds a note of caution amid the general optimism.

The straight-talking entrepreneur views raising olive trees in Texas as anything but a get-rich-quick scheme. He says Texas growers need to approach the olive industry as a business and exercise patience in seeing it mature. Dougherty believes it may take a little longer to understand the dynamics of what it takes to grow olive trees successfully in Texas.

"Everybody in Texas thinks he can go out and plant olive trees and make a million dollars," says the former Silicon Valley computer executive who witnessed the rise of California's olive industry in the 1970s and '80s. "I don't

think we'll really know for 20 years if Texas has a viable industry."

Dougherty, who in 2001 completed the first commercial pressing of a Texas-California olive oil blend, notes that olive trees are an alternate-bearing crop, meaning they typically produce well every other year. Therefore, olive production this fall may not reach last year's bumper-crop level.

Dougherty and other Texas growers extol the olive's myriad health benefits and uses. Olive oil tastes good, feels good on the skin and contains healthy omega-6 oil. In addition, an enzyme (olecanthal) in extra virgin oil is an anti-inflammatory thought to play a role in preventing heart disease and cancer.

"People in the United States don't look at olive oil as a food product that's like a butter substitute as they do in other parts of the world," Dougherty says. "That's the true opportunity we have in Texas—to create an olive oil that serves as a main dietary intake."

*Rob McCorkle is a Kerrville-based writer and media relations specialist with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.*

**ENTRY DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 10!**

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

## 4TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY RECIPE CONTEST

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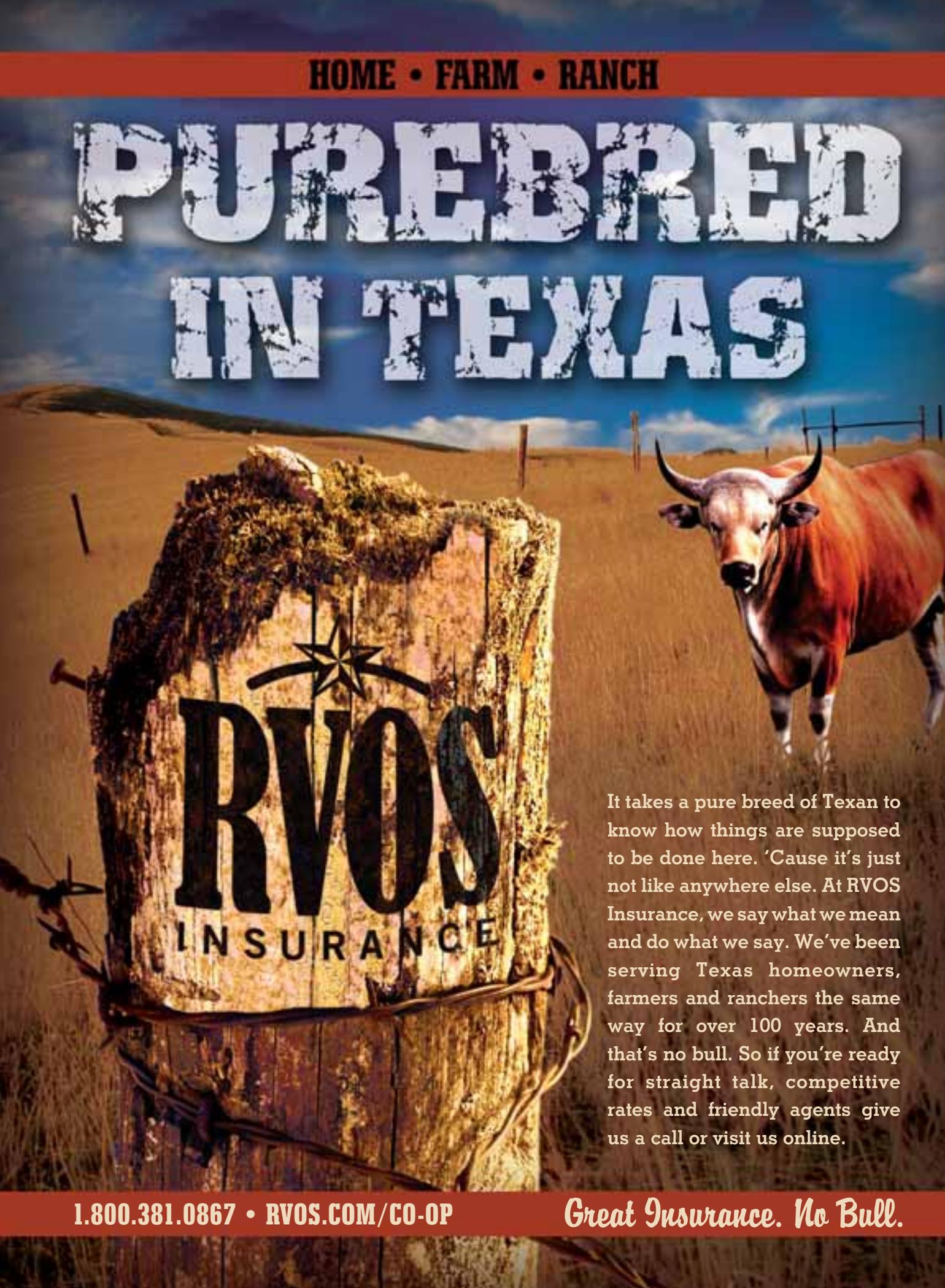
GRAND-PRIZE WINNER TAKES HOME \$3,000. FOUR RUNNERS-UP WILL EACH WIN \$500.

**Attention, cooks:** We'd like to share your best *original* holiday recipes with 2.8 million *Texas Co-op Power* readers and give you a chance to win cash prizes and the acclaim of your friends and family. All recipes must include a Pioneer Brand product such as flour, gravy mix, microwaveable gravy, biscuit & baking mix, or pancake mix. **Deadline for receipt of entries is September 10, 2008.** Winners will be announced in our December 2008 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. 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](mailto: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.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com) or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address above.

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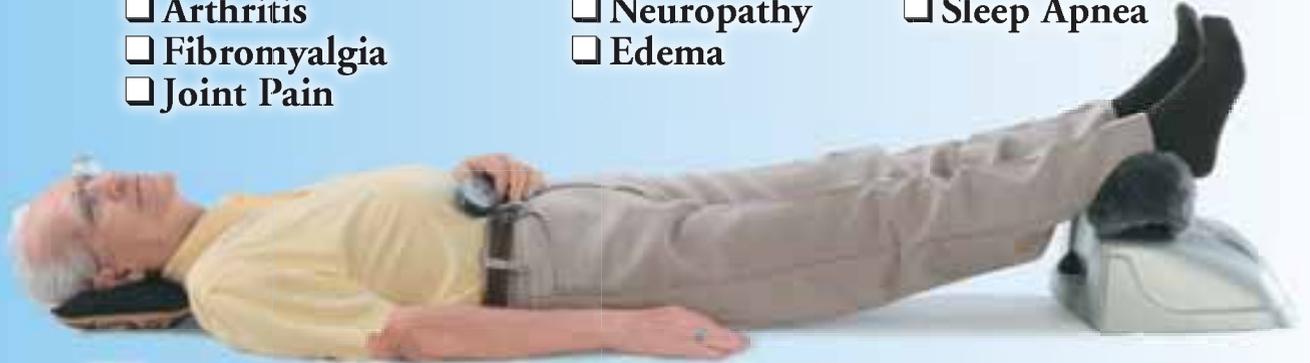
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## You will enjoy using the **Exerciser 2000 Elite™**

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These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA.  
Not intended to treat, cure or prevent any diseases.

**Don't be fooled by cheap imitations**

# What people are saying about the Exerciser 2000 Elite™

After using the Exerciser 2000 Elite™ twice a day for one week the swelling in my ankles went away. It has also helped my breathing, as I can get out and walk without having to stop and catch my breath! Thank you. —*Shirley H., Florida*

As a Chiropractor, I would like to say that the Exerciser 2000 Elite™ enables people to benefit themselves at home. It is a valuable asset in moving lymph fluid, oxygenating the blood, increasing immune system function, maintaining mobility in the spine, and additionally freeing up a spine that has become stiff and arthritic. —*Garry Gorsuch, D.C.*

The ad I saw almost sounded “too good to be true”. With your no risk money back guarantee I figured I had nothing to lose so I purchased the machine... and boy, am I glad I did! I am 75 years old and suffer from sciatica, which makes my back and legs tighten up and causes numbness. I was taking 8-10 Aleve™ every day. After using the machine for only 4 minutes, I noticed my lower back loosening up. Since I have been using the machine I haven't taken any pain pills and have been pain free. My sciatica is not giving me problems anymore and my body stays loosened up. I have also had a snoring problem for quite some time, however, since using the machine my snoring has subsided. My wife is so excited! I cannot tell you how much this machine has turned my life around. —*C. Cummings*

After having a stroke, I could no longer exercise the way I used to. As a result, I developed edema. A friend of mine introduced me to the Exerciser 2000 Elite™. I loved it and I purchased one for myself. After using the machine daily for a few weeks, my symptoms of edema were completely gone. I now use the machine twice a day for 16 minutes each time on speed 3. What a wonderful way to exercise.—*Robert M.*

I love using the Exerciser 2000 Elite™ after my morning workout. It is an excellent way to cool down and it helps to start my day off right.—*Deanna C., Kansas*

My husband and I have been into natural products all of our lives but nothing has ever affected us like the Exerciser 2000 Elite™. My husband is 72 and delivers flowers. He carries 5 gallon buckets of water. Since using the machine, his back hasn't hurt him at all. My hips would hurt if I stood too long and I would get weak and have to sit down. Now I can walk and sit as long as I want. I don't take pain medication anymore. In the morning, when I get out of bed I'm not stiff anymore. At 65, wow, this is great! Thank you for offering such a great machine. We are going to tell everyone we know about it. —*Cheryl J.*

I have had constipation problems for over 25 years. Since I have been using the Exerciser 2000 Elite™ I have been regular every day and have begun to lose weight. This is truly a blessing and is so easy to use. —*Jeannie*

I am in my late 80's and have diabetes. The first thing I noticed when I started using my machine was that my feet were warm when I went to bed. They were always ice cold before. Because one of my problems is poor circulation, I use the machine three times a day for 10 minutes each; in the morning, late afternoon and just before bed. I almost forgot to mention that I have not been able to lift my arms above my head. Now I can do it. You think that's no big deal until you can't do it anymore. —*Ralph K.*

I had suffered with sleep apnea for many years and had been taking drugs for it. I was told I would have to use a breathing apparatus. In the meantime, I was introduced to the Exerciser 2000 Elite™ and decided to purchase one. Within two weeks, I was sleeping more deeply and restfully than ever before. —*David B.*

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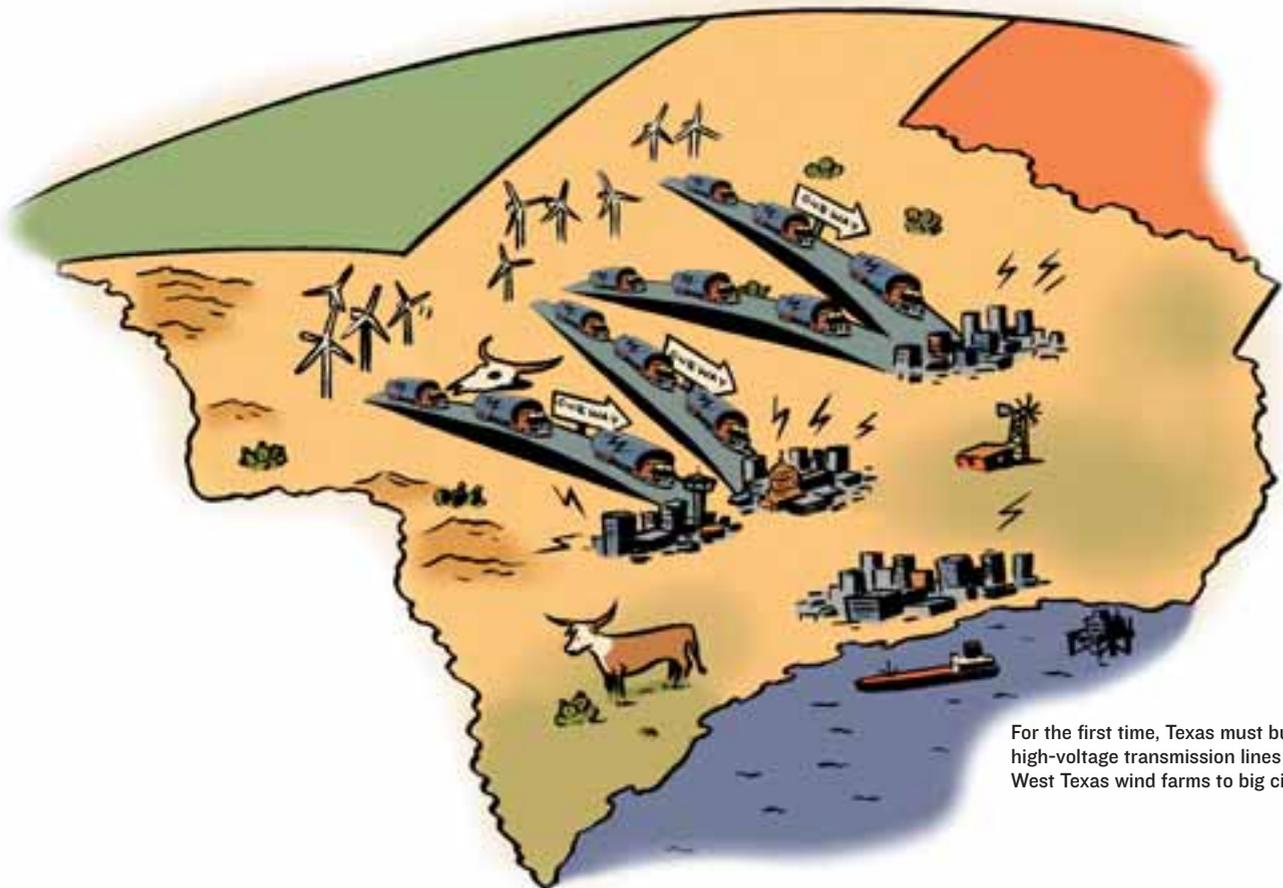
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# electric highways in the sky

BY KAYE NORTHCOTT

ILLUSTRATIONS BY A.J. GARCÉS



For the first time, Texas must build high-voltage transmission lines from West Texas wind farms to big cities.

Texas is requiring utilities to generate 5,880 megawatts of electric power from renewable sources by 2015 and 10,000 megawatts by 2025. No problem there. Wind power entrepreneurs have created a new energy boom in West Texas. There's already more wind electricity available than the limited transmission system in the region can handle. And hundreds of private companies have proposed new electric highways. They are waiting for the Public Utility Commission of Texas to determine who will get the cost-plus contracts and where the lines will be constructed.

*'There continue to be more and more parts of your electric bill over which we simply do not have control.'*

ROLAND WITT, GENERAL MANAGER,  
*Coleman County Electric Cooperative*

MOST OF US WOULD LIKE TO BE SPARED THE GRITTY DETAILS about the cost of producing electric power. Talking about the cost and reliability of transmission seems even more deadly dull. But *Texas Co-op Power* feels obliged to bring co-op members an explanation of what we have control over and what we don't. Today's subject is transmission, the electric highway in the sky that needs new routes, just like our vehicular highways do.

If you need motivation to read this, all you need to know is that you will pay the cost of these new transmission lines in your monthly electric bills.

The new energy kid on the block—nonpolluting wind—is strongest in the Panhandle and West Texas, but the greatest power need is in the more populous region farther east. So to get those cheaply generated electric volts from sparsely populated West Texas to the big markets, billions of dollars must be spent to build electric lines. And new procedures must be designed to harmonize the output of wind farms with electric energy generated from other sources, mainly natural gas, making sure the instantaneous production of power meets the instantaneous needs of millions of Texans. The new lines must also alleviate congestion around Dallas/Fort Worth, San Antonio/Austin and Houston.

A ballpark figure on the cost of constructing a mile of 345,000-volt transmission line is \$1 million, about the cost of building a mile of asphalt highway. The Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), the nonprofit grid operator, issued a report in April indicating that constructing transmission lines to transport wind-generated electricity from west to east will require an investment of anywhere between \$3 billion and \$6.4 billion over the next few years. The ERCOT grid covers about 75 percent of the state and represents 85 percent of the state's electrical load, including that generated by cooperatives.

## The wind is free, but the highway is not.

The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* estimates that the most ambitious transmission plan could cost Texans within ERCOT \$320 per capita. Barry Smitherman, chairman of the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT), estimates that new wind power transmission should cost individual consumers no more than \$4 a month. The Wind Coalition, an association of wind energy businesses, promptly responded to the ERCOT estimates by saying that savings from wind-powered electricity can offset

the transmission construction costs within two years by replacing more expensive forms of energy. This could be correct, but the figures come from wind-farm entrepreneurs who are proposing to build more wind farms than Texas could possibly accommodate in the near term.



New transmission lines will cost between \$3 billion and \$6.4 billion.

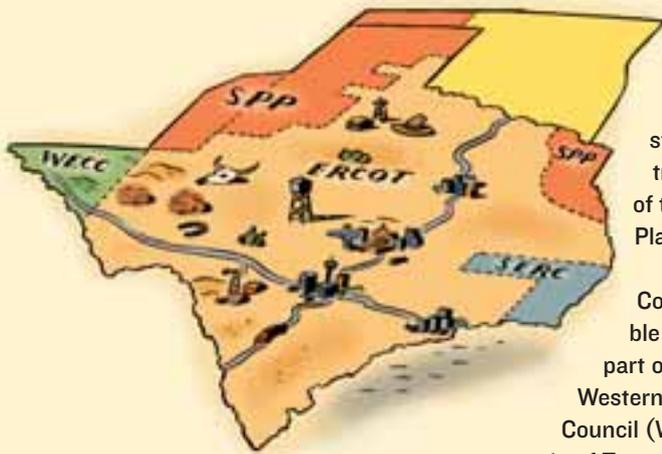
Cooperatives have a limited number of transmission lines (Brazos Electric Cooperative has 2,577 miles of transmission line, the most of any Texas co-op generator). Although cooperatives can monitor the transmission expansion plans of others and propose new routes that they consider necessary to meet their member loads, co-ops have no authority over where the lines will go or what they will be charged to use them. PUCT makes those decisions.

**ERCOT estimates that between 1,600 and 3,000 circuit miles of transmission will have to be constructed in the next five years.** The latter figure would be sufficient to carry 17,956 megawatts (MW) of wind-generated electricity. One megawatt provides approximately enough energy to light 500 to 700 homes when the wind is blowing. That equals between 9 million and 12.5 million homes. As of 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the state had 7.4 million households.

## Wind must have a parallel power.

Even if transmission facilities were constructed to connect and transmit all this proposed wind generation, wind energy alone still could not provide reliable service. **Because wind energy is intermittent, there always must be conventional generation, primarily natural gas or coal, ready to supplement electricity when the wind either dies down or blows so hard wind generators cannot operate.** Electric generation (continued on page 16)

## The Other Grids



Four grids touch Texas. Each grid performs intricate adjustments to transmit exactly the amount of electricity customers need at the instant they want it. Since electricity can't be stored, this balancing act involves thousands of calculations over the state's various grids at five-minute intervals. Generators must respond instantaneously to changes in consumers' load.

ERCOT, the state's largest grid, is not the only regional transmission organization experiencing growing pains.

The need for new transmission infrastructure is just as crucial in the

Southwest Power Pool (SPP) and two other grids that serve parts of Texas.

SPP serves parts of eight states. SPP supplies electric transmission paths for portions of the Texas Panhandle, South Plains and Northeast Texas.

The SERC Reliability Corporation (SERC) is responsible for transmission services in part of Southeast Texas, and the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) picks up the western tip of Texas, including El Paso.

All these organizations are charged with ensuring the reliability of electric service by setting standards governing the operation of both generation and transmission facilities and monitoring the flow of power over transmission lines.

Grid operators must handle transmission congestion, which is much like highway congestion. It occurs when large amounts of energy (cars) want to travel on limited-capacity transmission lines or flow paths (roadways).

The system operator will manage the output of the various generation resources and may limit the amount of energy that can flow on congested lines

or paths to assure that maximum operating limits for the transmission lines are not exceeded.

If the grid becomes unstable due to the loss of generation or transmission facilities, the grid operators will take corrective action, including such measures as ordering rolling blackouts.

In order for grids to freely exchange energy, they must be synchronized with each other. SPP and SERC are part of the Eastern Interconnect, which is not synchronized with either ERCOT or WECC.

SPP has proposed transmitting wind electricity from the Panhandle east across Oklahoma until it reaches a point where it could be transferred to the ERCOT grid to serve Dallas/Fort Worth. The idea has been nixed by ERCOT. Under the ERCOT plan, wind power from the Panhandle and West Texas will move over new lines that will be directly connected to the rest of the ERCOT grid.

Spokespeople for all the grids say they are improving their services. In January, the SPP board approved a \$2.2 billion transmission expansion plan for 2008-17.

—Kaye Northcott

## Q & A

Some of the thorny ERCOT transmission issues before the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) include:

**Q. Who will be selected to build the transmission lines needed to reap wind electricity?**

**A.** Many companies are competing for PUCT approval to build the transmission lines needed to transmit wind energy from the Panhandle and West Texas to other parts of ERCOT. Under the PUCT rules, transmission owners are guaranteed recovery of their costs and a return on their investment. This makes investment in transmission facilities very attractive.

**Q. Where will the new transmission lines be built?**

**A.** The PUCT has already designated

*four zones in the Panhandle and West Texas that have the most active wind-energy businesses and the greatest potential for production. Detailed transmission routes are being studied.*

**Q. Who pays for what?**

**A.** Wind farms must finance the "gathering system" of lower-voltage lines needed to move wind energy to the "backbone" system of higher-voltage lines, including new 345,000-volt lines, that will then move electricity from the western part to the eastern part of the state. The cost of the backbone system is paid by all users of electricity in ERCOT, whether or not they actually receive any wind energy.

**Q. Will all wind farms have the same**

**access to the new transmission facilities?**

**A.** The ultimate routing of the new lines will have a significant impact on how much it costs a wind generator to connect to the high-voltage lines. The farther a wind farm is from the new high-voltage transmission lines, the greater the cost to construct gathering system lines needed to reach the high-voltage lines.

**Q. How will costs be allocated to electric users throughout the system?**

**A.** Like Americans pay for postage stamps. A first-class stamp costs the same whether a letter is carried across town or across Texas. All retail electric users in ERCOT will pay the same transmission cost per kilowatt-hour for the electricity they use.

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(continued from page 13) is also needed to provide what are called “ancillary” transmission services, such as maintaining proper voltage throughout the transmission grid.



The ERCOT grid is the traffic cop for competing electricity sources.

Are consumers going to be required to pay for more transmission lines than are needed because more wind farms are being built than can be used? When there’s more electric power available at a particular time of day because the wind is blowing, will conventional plants that burn coal or natural gas have to curtail their output for a few hours? Who decides which electricity uses the grid and who profits? These issues

unused. The utilities say they need the extra capacity for emergencies, for reliability. The utilities have to plan for the worst possible scenario because the available electric power changes all the time.”

Although the new transmission facilities will raise costs for co-op customers in ERCOT, there is no question that the existing shortage of transmission facilities also can affect what people pay. When transmission lines are not adequate to bring the lowest cost power to an area, they are called “congested,” and the lost opportunities to use lower-cost power are called congestion costs.

In West Texas, one also hears about “stranded” wind. That’s the potential available electricity from already constructed wind farms that has no transmission outlet. Sometimes the fate of electricity generated by wind and coal (a major source of CO<sub>2</sub>) are conjoined. For example, when the state of Kansas denied an air permit to construct the Holcomb coal plant, developers scrapped plans to build transmission lines from Kansas to the Texas Panhandle. Those same lines would have scooped up stranded wind power and transmitted it to waiting customers on the Southwest Power Pool grid.

Ultimately, PUCT must decide how much additional transmission should be built, where it will be built, who will build it and, of course, who will pay for it. There also will be

Ultimately, PUCT must decide how much additional transmission should be built, where it will be built, who will build it and, of course, who will pay for it. There also will be questions regarding just how much wind can be reliably integrated into the ERCOT grid.

will be in play with wind power and perhaps later with large-scale solar power.

Renewable power, particularly wind, will absolutely be part of all Texas electric companies’ generation portfolios in the future, no matter what kind of new construction is needed. State law requires increasing use of renewables. The bulk of the power is to be transmitted to the populous areas of Dallas/Fort Worth, Austin/San Antonio and Houston. PUCT is studying four proposals that would transmit from 12,000 to 24,000 MW. The agency also will designate specific routes. Wind farm entrepreneurs are participating in routing negotiations. Transmission construction for this round of wind farms should be complete in five years. Proximity to a transmission line may mean the difference between financial success and failure.

There’s even disagreement about how much capacity is available in existing facilities when wind developers who want to use the lines come up against the reliability concerns of transmission operators. As **Kenneth Starcher, director of the Alternative Energy Institute at West Texas A&M University, explained, “Imagine a pipeline is half full. Wind farm developers look at a line with only 50 percent of load and see 50 percent**



Some West Texas wind electricity can’t reach transmission lines.

questions regarding just how much wind can be reliably integrated in the ERCOT grid. “Hopefully, the Public Utility Commission will give thoughtful and objective consideration to these complex issues,” said Greg Jones, chairman of the board of Texas Electric Cooperatives and manager of Cherokee County Electric Cooperative Association.

*Kaye Northcott is editor of Texas Co-op Power.*

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## Hey, Gamers: Remember To Power Down

The electronic universe that your kids or grandkids (or perhaps even you) enjoy when they turn on a console gaming device could end up costing you plenty if you are not diligent about shutting your game system down after the last point has been scored.

The energy used annually by leaving the most power-hungry console, the Playstation 3, switched on is nearly enough to power five refrigerators and will cost you almost \$250, according to a study performed by the Australian consumer agency Choice. The Xbox 360 didn't fare much better, racking up usage of 25.6 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per week (about \$185 a year, assuming electricity costs 15 cents per kWh). Electricity consumption while using the systems was only slightly greater. In standby mode, where the console is switched off but the device is still drawing power, the Playstation 3 drew a mere 15.5 kWh (\$2.33) a year; the Xbox 360 clocked in at 21 kWh (\$3.16).

By contrast, the Nintendo Wii is a relative power sipper. It requires just more than 3 kWh a week for continuous, round-the-clock play (nearly \$25 a year) and only about a tenth of that in standby mode, the agency found.

Among other popular home electronics Choice tested, the plasma



When it's 'game over,' you can save electricity by unplugging your game system.

screen television ranked high on the list of power guzzlers. One 42-inch set the group tested, if left on 24/7, would use more than 1,500 kWh annually, racking up a bill of more than \$225 at 15 cents per kWh.

Besides costing you money, the electricity wasted by leaving appliances unnecessarily turned on increases your "carbon footprint" by causing more fuel to be burned at generation plants.

Remember to power down once you're done having fun. Even better, pull the plug when you're through playing to avoid using standby power—common in devices with instant-on features. Those tiny sips of electricity can seem insignificant by themselves, but added up, they can create a hefty total.

For more results of Choice's investigations, visit [www.choice.com.au](http://www.choice.com.au).

## BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR TO POWER LINES

When thinking about your home or neighborhood, chances are you will not be thinking about the power lines. It is easy to overlook their presence, but power lines can pose serious electrical hazards if completely forgotten.

Trees can be a power line's worst enemy. Strong winds and storms can blow trees over or break branches, pulling power lines down from poles or supporting towers. It is possible for the line to remain energized and potentially electrify the tree and nearby objects.

Arcing or flashovers between power lines and trees can also cause potential damage or danger. A voltage surge on a power line from a nearby lightning strike can cause a tree to become "electrified" as well.

During warm weather or when power lines are carrying heavy electrical loads, they can heat up and stretch, making the lines longer. Thus, power lines can sag as much as 15 or 20 feet, bringing them even closer to trees.

The electric current caused by arcing or flashovers between power lines and trees can easily injure or even kill an individual caught nearby. It is important to pay attention to power lines in your neighborhood. Here are some tips to help:

- Always make sure to look for power lines nearby before you begin to cut down any tree or trim branches. If a tree falls into a power line, do not attempt to move it. Contact your local electric co-op immediately.

- Treat all power lines as energized. Never climb or attempt to handle a tree that has a limb caught in a power line. You may not see any visible evidence that the tree is "electrified" or dangerous.

- Make sure to maintain required clearances between equipment and power lines. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet away from power lines at all times.

### TAMPER-RESISTANT OUTLETS

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 2,400 children receive emergency room treatment every year for injuries caused by inserting objects into electrical receptacles.

One way to prevent these tragedies involves installing tamper-resistant outlets that prevent foreign objects from touching electrically live components. A shutter mechanism prevents children from sticking things into receptacles, while a spring-loaded system lets electricity flow only when equal pressure is applied simultaneously to both shutters (such as from an electrical plug).



Special outlets can prevent shocks and burns.

# Keep Tabs on Electricity Use

**E**nergy-saving practices—such as using compact fluorescent lightbulbs, changing air-conditioning filters and washing full loads of laundry—will collectively reduce your electric bills.

Still, it's not always easy to save energy, especially if you don't know how much you're using.

Do you want to know? Invest in an electricity-use monitor. It's a small tool that records the amount of energy each appliance or gadget uses. Some can even predict how much energy that appliance will burn in a day, month or year, based on what it already has used. Depending on the model you buy, you can learn how much energy a single appliance uses, or you can track your home's total energy use.

Try it on several large appliances.

Knowing how much energy your refrigerator consumes, for example, could encourage you to close the door quicker. Estimating your oven's energy use for a month could persuade you to keep the oven door closed or to use your microwave instead.

Here's a trick for teaching your kids to turn off the lights before they leave a room: Have them plug their bedroom lamps into a monitor that will show them how much energy they're wasting when the lights are on in an empty room. When they—and you—can quantify your energy use and realize how much you could be saving, you may find it is easier to save more.

If you ever really want to know which devices are the major contributors to your monthly power bill, then this is the device that can help you answer the question.

## SAFETY TIPS FOR SUMMER CHORES

**N**o matter the season, it seems there's an endless list of chores. Outdoor chores present some particular concerns.

For example, contacting power lines with ladders causes 9 percent of electrocution-related deaths each year. Landscaping, gardening and farming equipment cause another 7 percent.

To avoid electrical hazards, make sure you and your family follow these simple tips:

- Teach children to stay away from electric transformers and substations and explain what posted warning signs mean.
- Avoid damp conditions when using electricity. Keep all electrical devices and cords away from water.
- Place waterproof covers on all outdoor outlets.

- Install ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) in outlets where water may be present.

- Use only extension cords marked for outdoor use; match the power needs of an electric tool or appliance to the cord's label information.

- Dial 811, the national "Call Before You Dig" phone number, at least 72 hours before engaging in any type of excavation work. Local utilities will be notified to mark the approximate location of any underground lines on your property.

- Inspect power tools and appliances for frayed cords, broken plugs and cracked or broken housing, and repair or replace damaged items.

- Store power tools indoors.

- Unplug power tools when not in use.

- Do not carry power tools by the cord.

- Use only a fiberglass or wooden ladder if you must work near overhead wires.

- Never touch a person or object that has made contact with a power line.

## KEEP THE COOL WHERE IT BELONGS

**R**efrigerators use more power than any other appliance in the home and deserve special attention.

- Although rushing out to buy a new refrigerator may not be in your budget, it is important to know that new models are more efficient and use as little as half the electricity of older units.

- Full refrigerators run more efficiently than ones that are only partially full. So buy more food and save some energy.

- If you have two refrigerators, or an additional freezer, decide if the extra expense is really worth it. Cram as much as you can into your primary refrigerator or consider disposing of two older refrigerators and replacing them with one larger, newer and more efficient model.

- Make sure the refrigerator door seals are tight. Test them by closing the door over a piece of paper or a dollar bill so it is half in and half out of the refrigerator. If you can pull the paper or bill out easily, the latch may need adjustment or the seal may need replacing.

- Place food and liquids in airtight containers. Uncovered foods release moisture and make the compressor work harder.

- Move the refrigerator away from the wall and vacuum its condenser coils yearly unless you have a no-clean condenser model. Refrigerators will run for shorter periods with clean coils.

- Maintain a consistent temperature in the refrigerator and freezer.

Recommended temperatures are 37 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit for the fresh food compartment of the refrigerator and 5 degrees for the freezer section. If you have a separate freezer for long-term storage, it should be kept at 0



# The Last Vacation

*What stays close to my heart are the ordinary moments.*

BY HARRY CLIFFORD

# M

y legs were numb, and I needed a bathroom. Bad. Sister was cranky, Dad wasn't speaking, and Mom just stared. A four-hour August road trip on the ever-shrinking seat of a 1969 pickup will do that to you. But all of that changed at the Yegua ranger station. The whole family shifted gears driving past those park gates. Adrenaline flowed, jokes were cracked and giddy laughter broke out faster than a case of shingles. Our annual last vacation of the year at Lake Somerville had begun.

This was the big yearly event, a full seven days at Lake Somerville's Yegua Creek Park. Our favorite campsite was nestled at the edge of a sand-bottomed cove midway between the boat ramps and public restrooms. Black-barked oaks protected the campsite with thick, sturdy limbs just right for hanging lanterns and clotheslines. In their shade, we'd hammer stakes, rattle tent poles and maybe do a bit of cussing before the glorious sight of our upright, 9-foot-by-12-foot Wenzel tent, our castle, announced our official arrival.

That green and gold Wenzel at the Yegua campsite was a mecca for kinfolk. Throughout the week, relatives would invade our camp in drizzles and droves. They'd come from all over Texas, some staying for hours and others for days. Those oak trees shaded millionaire and hog farmer alike. Grandma Donna, with her new Lincoln, loaded pistol and fishing pole, was always the first to come and the last to leave.

No matter what horde of kin occupied our camp, everyone respected the solemn magic of the Yegua mornings. Soft voices and reverential whispers accompanied breakfasts of gritty eggs and burned potatoes as a rising sun warmed the lake mist. Reverence, however, was no match for hormones and adrenaline. When the mist disappeared, the quiet went with it, making way for screaming outboard motorboats that rocketed skis and catapulted wakeboards. There was rafting and marathon swimming with no one allowed to quit until tired arms couldn't be lifted. Then it was a race to the barbecue or fish fry or wiener roast with lots of juicy, sweet watermelon to follow.

Everyone was included on the shoulder-to-shoulder fishing trips in the afternoons. It was quite the task to keep the lines of the young and the old rebaited and untangled while dodging Grandma's roundhouse casts.

Thunderstorms were about the only thing that could slow the day's busyness,

and they were packed with excitement. Their howling winds churned the lake into a malevolent black froth while lightning ripped and sizzled across the sky and thunder exploded with ear-shattering crashes. Thunderstorms were more than a match for hormones and adrenaline.

As fantastic as the days were, the nights were even better. Darkness on the lake was a time for dramatic moments like when Dad was trapped in the Wenzel by a nosy skunk or Grandma threatened to shoot a singing camper. That was dramatic stuff, but it was nothing compared to the drama of night fishing. Dad, Grandma and I were serious about it. More than once, a night's worth of fillets provided a battered-fried main course for the entire camp and sometimes the adjacent camps as well.

Those wonderful night sounds of chanting insects, hissing lanterns and the splash and splop of small fish and frogs served as a backdrop for many an argument over how to pronounce Yegua (it's pronounced YAY-wa). There was even more speculation on what it meant. Everybody had an opinion, but no one ever correctly explained that yegua means mare in Spanish.

There were lots of wonderfully dramatic moments crammed into our last vacations. I'm sure lots of families had even greater adventures than ours. But 30-something years later, what stays close to my heart are the ordinary moments like Dad's obstinate packing and repacking until everything was just right, the cool touch of Mom's hand on a blistered shoulder or the intimate closeness of a long truck ride.

It was one of those unremarkable August moments, at the sunburned end of the magic and the mosquitoes, that our last vacation actually became our last vacation. Somehow, like Grandma and Dad, they just slipped away. I'm not sure how an annual ritual that was every bit as solid and anticipated as Christmas was replaced by short trips and quick getaways, but it was. Maybe it's time that I learned to pack something more than a three-suiter and a carry-on. Maybe it's time for another "last" vacation.

---

*The late Harry Clifford, who lived in Pflugerville, had decided after spending many years in the international oil industry to try his hand at writing.*



## PAINT ROCK

# The Music of the Loom

*Weavers are busy spinning rugs at Ingrid's in Paint Rock.*

by Camille Wheeler



At Ingrid's Custom Hand Woven in Paint Rock, it takes a while to learn the lingo of the loom: Warp. Weft. Shuttle. Reed.

But after just a few seconds, visitors to Ingrid's know the sounds of the loom: The whooshing of air that packs the yarn. The screeching of the reed that draws the threads tight as workers churn out custom-ordered, hand-made rugs on homemade looms. All at once, the weaving process sounds like the opening and closing of sliding glass doors and the falling of bowling pins or wooden blocks.

But it's music to the ears of Reinhard Schoffthaler, owner and operator of Ingrid's in the tiny West Texas town east of San Angelo.

"It's not that noisy, is it?" Schoffthaler asked above the din one January afternoon as he explained how his looms operate. "It sounds like somebody's working."

Mostly, the noise sounds like success at Ingrid's, where visitors are invited to watch—and listen—as workers weave rugs on the looms, creating designs by laying in yarns of contrasting colors. Giant spools of yarn in a rainbow of colors—including apricot, midnight blue, black cherry and blush pink—line the shelves behind the looms.

Almost three decades ago, the Austrian-born Schoffthaler owned a restaurant on Long Island, New York. For Schoffthaler, a chef, the future seemed well-defined. But in 1981, in an abrupt turn of events, he bought Ingrid's from a second cousin and his wife, Ingrid, for whom the store is named.

Every day, the 61-year-old Schoffthaler looks over his looms, which produce roughly 45,000 square feet of rugs every year. But he's never looked back. "As fate has it, you don't always do what you had planned," said Schoffthaler, who was raised on a dairy farm in Austria.

Schoffthaler's customers, such as Cindy Ruckman of Mount Vernon, Ohio, keep coming back because things do go as planned. Ruckman boxes and ships her llama fleece to Schoffthaler and then sells the rugs.

"I tell him what sizes I want and tell him to have his designers have fun and make me pretty rugs, and I've never been disappointed," Ruckman said in a telephone interview.

Ingrid's, which opened in 1979, does business with about 150 alpaca and llama owners nationwide and in Canada who send their fleece to Schoffthaler, pay him to make it into rugs and then sell the rugs themselves. The business even weaves buffalo rugs for one client.

But Ingrid's caters to walk-in customers as well, selling custom-ordered wool and mohair rugs in the store. The wool is imported from New Zealand, and the mohair comes from the vast West Texas region, the nation's No. 1 mohair producer. According to the San Angelo-based Mohair Council of America, West Texas trails only Africa in worldwide mohair production.

Rugs come in various sizes—from 10 inches wide to 12 feet wide by any length—and are as colorful as buyers’ imaginations. Ingrid’s carries 76 colors of dyed wool and mohair, including periwinkle and garden green. Fleece from alpacas and llamas comes complete with its own natural palette of colors. For example, alpaca fleece can yield shades of white, brown, fawn and black and features silver gray and rose gray. Llamas produce white, dark mahogany, coffee brown, brown red and appaloosa colors, just to name a few.

The different colors of alpaca and llama fleece, most of which arrives in boxes, are blended per customers’ instructions and then thrown into a blower to eliminate dust and small particles. From there, the fleece goes into a spinning machine, which turns it into yarn. First, the fleece is carded, meaning its raw fibers are straightened and smoothed. Then it’s spun around something called a jute core, which gives it extra heaviness and durability and adds a stiffness and flatness to the rug. “Without that, we’d have a blanket,” Schoffthaler said.

From there, the yarn goes to the loom. A handheld device called a shuttle—a piece of PVC pipe that weaves in yarn and looks like a tiny boat—is filled with yarn (called the weft) and shoved back and forth between the warp: strong polyester threads that run lengthwise in the loom and go up and down. Heddles lift the strings, and the air-driven reed draws the threads tight, packing the yarn.

“What you do is you put your shuttle through here,” Schoffthaler said, pointing. “Now watch, the upper strings will go down and the bottom strings will go up. Did you see that? It weaved it in.”

“We’re making one-of-a-kind items that you can’t buy somewhere else. That’s why they come here,” he said.

When Ruckman wants new rugs, she shears some llamas—one llama produces about 1½ pounds to 2 pounds of usable fleece—boxes up their fleece and ships it to Ingrid’s. There, her boxes join hundreds of others on the shelves of a warehouse. After her fleece has been blended, blown, spun and woven, Schoffthaler mails Ruckman the end result: intricately designed rugs that she sells or keeps for herself and her family on their llama farm.

Ruckman, who last year sold a rug to a buyer in New Zealand, said at any given time, she might ship 5 to 100 pounds of fleece to Schoffthaler. He then tells her how many square feet of fleece she has, including per color. Five pounds of fleece will make about 15 to 16 square feet of rugs.

Ingrid’s rugs are reversible, and Schoffthaler recommends using both sides.

Ruckman keeps some rugs for herself, such as the 3-year-old runner inside her house that gets dog and human foot traffic. The rug looks brand-new, Ruckman said, explaining that she runs the sweeper over it or hoses it off outside.

Nobody weaves rugs like Schoffthaler, Rucker said. “He’s like a one-stop shop. I don’t know of anyone else who does what he does.”



**Visitors to Ingrid’s Custom Hand Woven in Paint Rock are welcome to watch as workers weave rugs on the looms, creating designs by laying in yarns of contrasting colors. The store’s looms produce roughly 45,000 square feet of rugs a year.**

### GETTING THERE

Ingrid’s Custom Hand Woven is open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday and on Saturdays by appointment only. For more information, call 1-800-752-8004 or go to [uts.cc.utexas.edu/~llama/Ingrid](http://uts.cc.utexas.edu/~llama/Ingrid).



*Camille Wheeler is Texas Co-op Power’s staff writer.*

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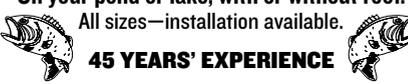


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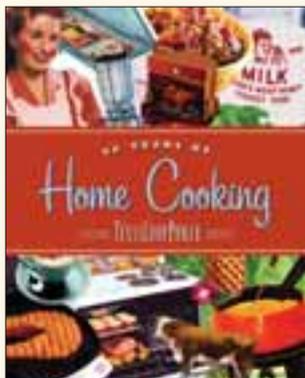


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| Burnet • 800-301-8150                  | Victoria • 800-677-2428                 |
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| Corpus Christi (Mathis) • 800-677-0632 | Waxahachie • 800-677-2503               |
| Ft. Worth (Weatherford) • 800-677-2504 | Wichita Falls • 800-677-2598            |

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# Texas White House

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

The gnarled limbs of a giant live oak partially shroud the stately white ranch house and sprawling green lawn, offering passing motorists across the Pedernales River a glimpse, but nothing more. The setting's serene, idyllic even ... and off limits to the public.

That will change August 27 when festivities there mark the centennial of President Lyndon B. Johnson's birth. For the first time, National Park Service staff will open part of Johnson's lovely two-story home—once known as the Texas White House—for public tours at the LBJ Ranch near Stonewall. His restored office (circa 1968) will be the only room opened to the public; more will be opened as they become ready.

In 1951, Johnson, then a U.S. senator, and his wife, Lady Bird, bought the badly rundown home from relatives. Deep family ties anchored him there. He was born just down the road in a dogtrot farmhouse on August 27, 1908. At age 4, he'd run over to a one-room schoolhouse and sit in the teacher's lap for reading lessons. Five years later, his family moved to Johnson City, where Johnson spent the rest of his childhood. Later in life, he fondly recalled the frequent trips his family made back to the Pedernales River, where an aunt and uncle hosted family celebrations at their grand home.

After extensive renovations, the Johnsons and their two young daughters, Lynda and Luci, moved into the ranch house in 1952. Johnson's frenetic senatorial schedule soon took over. Activity at the ranch intensified when he became vice president in 1961. On some days, one vehicle after another wheeled in and out of the driveway. On a nearby airstrip, private jets landed and took off.

Thrust into the Oval Office in November 1963, Johnson ably took the reins and steered the nation through the dark days after President Kennedy's assassination. In his new, high-stress role, Johnson flew home often to relax and work, too. In fact, logs indicate that Johnson lived there 490 days—about one-fourth of his five-year presidency. It wasn't long before the press referred to the ranch as the Texas White House.

When home, Johnson ran the nation via telephones, radios and office staff. As many as 15 phone lines and 72 rotary phones serviced the house, other ranch buildings and numerous vehicles. Every room in the main house, including Johnson's bathroom, had a telephone. Staff often joked that there "was a telephone behind every tree."

With true Texas hospitality, Johnson hosted nearly 100 barbecues beneath the live oaks on the Pedernales during his presidency. International dignitaries, Cabinet members, national leaders and reporters, as well as neighbors and relatives, enjoyed the Western-style spreads, complete with red-checked tablecloths, oil lanterns and plenty of beer.

A humble camel-cart driver from Pakistan ranks among the ranch's more memorable visitors. While on a tour of Asia



©BETTMAN/CORBIS

Johnson and guest camel-cart driver Bashir Ahmed

as vice president, Johnson extended an offhand invitation to Bashir Ahmed, who stood shirtless and shoeless in a crowd at a market. The next day, a Pakistani newspaper reported the invitation, much to Johnson's surprise. In October 1961, sponsored by an international group, Ahmed put on shoes for the first time and flew to New York, where Johnson met him. At the LBJ Ranch, Ahmed—well-spoken though illiterate—toured the ranch via horseback. "Smoother than a camel," he later said of the ride. Both countries pronounced Ahmed's visit a resounding success. He even got a tour of Pedernales Electric Cooperative.

Every chance he got, Johnson drove guests around the ranch in his Lincoln Continental. With the top down, he'd cruise down bumpy caliche roads to see his cattle, sheep, pigpens, the family cemetery, his birthplace and the old schoolhouse. Sometimes, he used the time to politick and think. One eight-hour riding session in 1967 with Gov. John Connally and U.S. Rep. Jake Pickle ended with Johnson's decision not to seek re-election.

Retired in 1969, Johnson spent his last years at the ranch. In December 1972, he and Lady Bird gave "our heart's home" to the National Park Service but retained life estates for themselves. A month later, Johnson died. Lady Bird continued to live on the ranch and in Austin until her death in July 2007. Beneath the gnarled limbs of giant live oaks, both are buried in the Johnson Family Cemetery that overlooks the Pedernales River, not far from the Texas White House they both so loved.

*LBJ National Historical Park, (830) 868-7128, [www.nps.gov/lyjo](http://www.nps.gov/lyjo). Bus tours of LBJ Ranch are available daily 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tour fees: 62 and older, \$3; 18-61, \$6; 7-17, \$3; and 6 and under, free.*

*Sheryl Smith-Rodgers wrote about wildscape gardening in the March edition of Texas Co-op Power.*

# Sauerbraten Offers an Essence of the Past

**BY ISABEL BEARMAN BUCHER** Freelance writer Isabel Bearman Bucher has collected her family's stories and created a book for her daughters. Here is one example of a recipe with a story attached.

*I don't remember your German great-grandmother very well because she died when I was 5. But I do remember smells. Her small house in New Haven, Connecticut, was always pungent with vinegar. She cleaned windows and floors with it; she put it in her large crock of homemade sauerkraut laced with caraway seeds; she made me drink a teaspoon, saying it was good for the health. She boiled it and made me breathe the vapors because it warded off TB.*

*Born in Wiesbaden, Germany, in 1858, Antonia Marquis Miller was a tall, willowy woman with an acerbic persona and crackling voice. She was out working by the time she was 12 in the town baths, where rich Americans came to soak. She was noticed by a wealthy woman from New Haven because of her cooking skills. That family sponsored her and brought her to America in 1872, where she became the family cook. She later brought her three sisters over, single-handedly.*

*Grammy Miller's German Sauerbraten has always been a family favorite of Poppert, you girls and a houseful of Christmas Day guests. Your Grandpa George always followed his mother's recipes exactly. I've always thought that in doing this, we honor that memory. There was always red cabbage, with just the right amount of bacon and nutmeg, and satiny mashed potatoes laced with the rich gravy from that good brisket that had been pickling in spices in the garage for a week. Those recipes are included in other sections.*

*With the business of Christmas Day, it's an easy thing to just put Grammy's sauerbraten on the stove and forget it.*

## GRAMMY MILLER'S GERMAN SAUERBRATEN

- 1 large rump roast
- 8 bay leaves, hand crushed
- 1 cup red wine vinegar
- 8 whole allspice
- 2 cups red wine
- Dash cinnamon
- Dash ground cloves
- Dash salt
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 cup strong coffee (you can use instant)
- 1 cup prunes, raisins and dried apricots
- 3-4 beef bullion cubes
- 1 tablespoon peppercorns
- 2 baskets pearl onions

Rump roast has the best meaty taste. Cover the large iron kettle holding the rump with all the ingredients and make sure the meat is totally immersed. Put in the cool garage or the bottom of the fridge for one week. Christmas Day, simply put it on the stove on warm about 11:30 a.m. if you're having dinner at around 5. Let it go slowly until about 4:30. Do not overcook, as you want it to slice in firm, but tender, slabs. Remove meat from the pot and set aside.

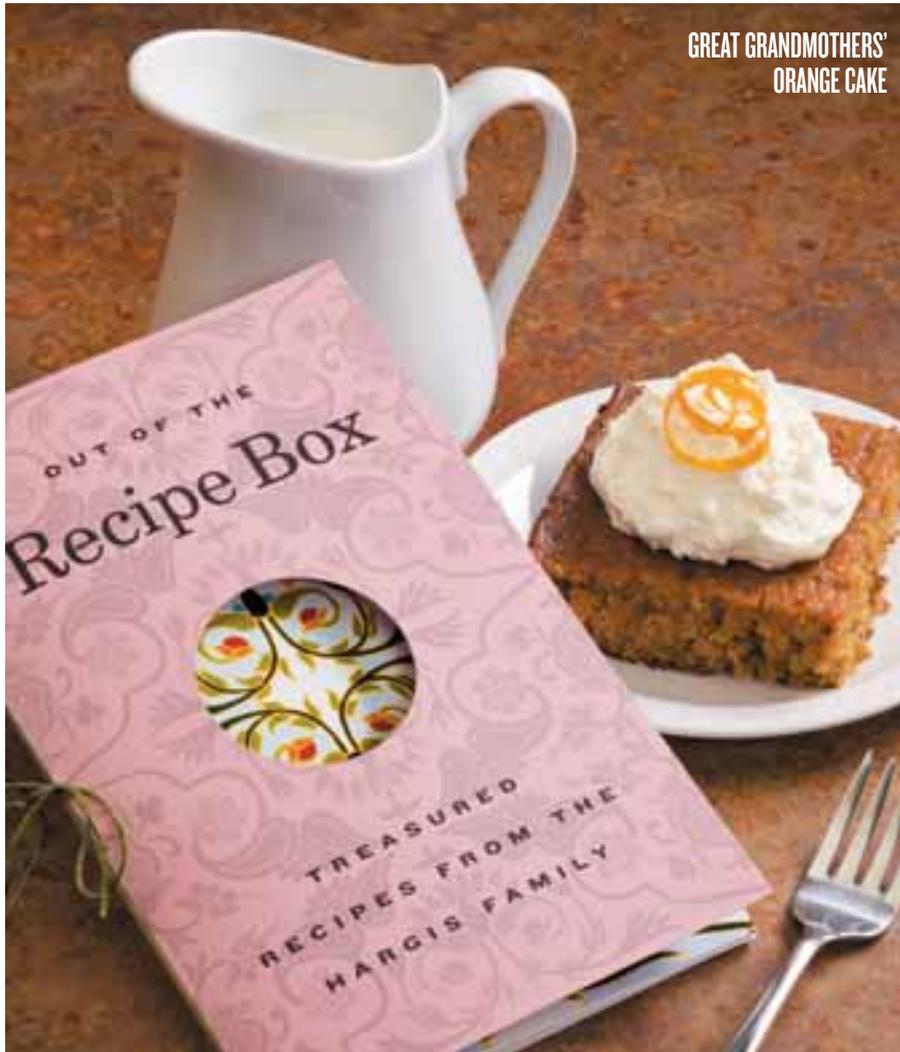
Put two baskets of pearl onions with skins into boiling water for five minutes. You can do this at any time. Cut the bottoms off and squirt them out in a glass bowl for later. Strain all the juices from the sauerbraten into another pan. Coat with ice to skim off all the fat. Remove 1 cup of the thin gravy and mix this with 3 tablespoons of arrowroot thickening. Arrowroot is a health-food herb and is similar to corn starch, except for its benefits, which I've forgotten. But the family always used it in gravies.

Heat the gravy, and slowly stir in the arrowroot thickening using a whisk. Add beef bullion cubes. Whisk. Cut the meat in thin slices. Add to the gravy, cover and keep warm until ready to serve the dinner. About 10 minutes before serving, add the pearl onions. Serve with loads of mashed potatoes and red cabbage.

Isabel Bearman Bucher's website, [oneitaliana.com](http://oneitaliana.com), offers a step-by-step guide to building a family recipe book. She can also be reached by e-mail at [nonosmonkey@q.com](mailto:nonosmonkey@q.com).



GREAT GRANDMOTHERS' ORANGE CAKE



## Writing a Family History in the Kitchen

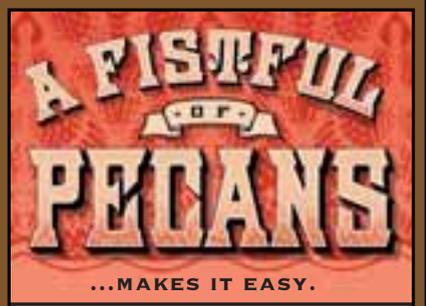
**BY KEVIN HARGIS** Cookbooks can be more than just collections of recipes. The best of them tell a story—whether it's about the author's experiences, the cuisine being discussed, or the history and tradition behind a particular dish. The top books give a novice clear instructions about how to prepare food and what ingredients to buy and give an expert advice to hone his or her skills.

Then there are other, more personal cookbooks, preserving a family's culinary heritage and memories of food and the people who prepared it.

Those kinds of books might not bring you riches, but they can enrich your life by preserving treasured memories and family history that otherwise might be lost.

Publishing your own cookbook takes some effort. You'll have to collect and organize recipes, stories and photos, but there are plenty of resources out there to help you along. Several small-press publishers specialize in putting together professionally bound copies of cookbooks with your own recipes and photos.

But if you can't afford such an



### DOES MEAL PLANNING DRIVE YOU NUTS?



*Think pecans. This nutritious, delicious granola is a snap to make and a treat to eat. Roasted pecans balance maple's sweetness and the tartness of dried fruit in this mix that's sure to be a favorite in your student's lunchbox.*



#### DID YOU KNOW?

PECANS CONTAIN AN ABUNDANCE OF UNSATURATED FATS, AND STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THEY CAN HELP LOWER CHOLESTEROL LEVELS.

### MAPLE-PECAN GRANOLA

- 2 cups chopped pecans
- 2 cups oats
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- Dash salt
- 1 cup dried fruit (raisins, cranberries, blueberries, etc.)

Mix pecans, oats, syrup, sugar and oil thoroughly in a bowl. Spread on a jelly roll pan that has been prepared with cooking spray. Bake in slow oven (300 degrees) for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Allow to cool, then mix in dried fruit of choice.



FOR MORE TEXAS PECAN RECIPES, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [TEXASPECANS.ORG](http://TEXASPECANS.ORG)



undertaking, which can run you \$30 or more per copy, a local copy center or office supply store can help you produce a simple book that you can put in a three-ring binder or staple together.

In my collection is one of these simpler books, called *Recipes and Reflections*, which contains recipes, memories, poems and photos honoring my Aunt Ruth on her 80th birthday.

These family collections make wonderful gifts and become treasured keepsakes.

### COOKING UP A BOOK

The first step in starting such a book is gathering the recipes—and the stories that go along with them. Poll your relatives. Listen to their tales. Get them to write down their memories and share copies of old photos. Or, write down your own recollections for your descendants.

A computer and a photo scanner are invaluable tools for this process. You can easily gather photos and match them with recipes. If you can use desktop publishing software, you can put together the book yourself.

When you're entering the recipes,

remember that recipe and food styles change over the years. What was commonplace in one generation could be a rare commodity in another. Instead of "a handful of flour," include a precise measurement (even if you have to make the recipe a couple of times to get it right). If a recipe has been in your family for years, consider updating it to fit the times.

Beyond the personal, groups that are trying to raise money have long turned to sales of self-published cookbooks. There are several companies out there that will help you with every aspect of the process.

Here is a recipe from *Recipes and Reflections* that was contributed by my mom, Mary. Her note on the recipe says: "Ruth gave me this recipe in lieu of the set of silver spoons promised to me as Mrs. Gilkey's namesake."

This gingerbread, especially when served warm and topped with whipped cream, is a treat much more treasured than silver.

### MRS. GILKEY'S GINGERBREAD

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons shortening

- 1 egg
- 1/2 teaspoon ginger
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 1 heaping cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 cup boiling water
- Pinch of salt

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix all ingredients and bake in square 8x8 or 9x9 pan for about 20 minutes. Insert toothpick in center of bread to check for doneness. Cut into 12 slices. Especially good with whipped cream.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 137 calories, 1.6 g protein, 2.6 g fat, 27 g carbohydrates, 116 mg sodium, 18 mg cholesterol

### GREAT-GRANDMOTHER'S ORANGE CAKE

Another old family recipe is just loose in my recipe box. It is for an orange cake my paternal grandmother prepared when the family lived in the Rio Grande Valley in the middle of an orange grove. Perhaps someday I will tackle the family recipe book and include this sweet, moist, sticky treat carrying a full, fresh orange flavor.

- 2 medium oranges
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 3/4 cups sugar, divided
- 2 eggs, well beaten
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup ground raisins
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- Lemon juice

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Wash one orange, cut into sections and remove and discard seeds. Put orange, peel and all, in food processor or blender and chop fine. Cream butter and 1 cup sugar, then blend in eggs. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Pour into greased and floured oblong pan and bake for about 45 minutes. Just before cake is done, juice remaining orange and half a lemon and place into saucepan. Add 3/4 cup sugar. Heat on medium and stir to dissolve but do not allow to boil. Pour over top of hot cake. Makes 10 servings.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 403 calories, 5.7 g protein, 10.2 g fat, 73 g carbohydrates, 164 mg sodium, 68 mg cholesterol

## COUNTRY ROADS

Country roads lead us home, and readers went the extra mile in submitting their favorite photographs this month. So sit back and let us do the driving as we tour some of the prettiest roads—and scenes—in Texas.

—CAMILLE WHEELER



▼ This ribbon of a road rolls away before bending out of sight in Washington County, outside Brenham. **Courtney Sander**, a Boston University student, captured the photo while home at Christmas visiting her grandparents, who are served by Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative.



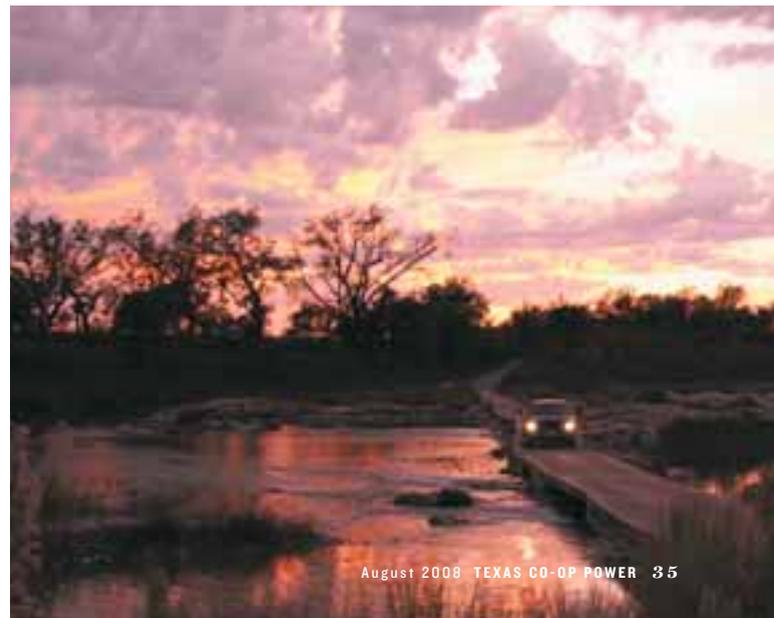
► **Rosemary Galloway**, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member, took this photo between Llano and Castell as the sun cast its final light of the day.

◀ Both the caliche road and blue sky seem to go on forever as **Quade Anderson**, 2 years old in this photo, does some exploring on his great-grandparents' ranch north of Lampasas. Quade's mom, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative member **Tracy Anderson**, snapped the photo.

▼ A windmill stands sentry over a lonesome pasture road on **Eleanor Forgey Glazener's** ranch east of Canadian on the Canadian River. Glazener, a North Plains Electric Cooperative member, submitted this photo taken by her son, **Jeff Worsham**.



▲ Redbud tree blossoms decorate a dirt county road in this photo submitted by **John N. Morgan Jr.**, a Houston County Electric Cooperative member. "Driving up the redbud-adorned hill near my home is a rare, fleeting springtime blessing that my family and neighbors anticipate each spring," he said.



### Upcoming in Focus on Texas

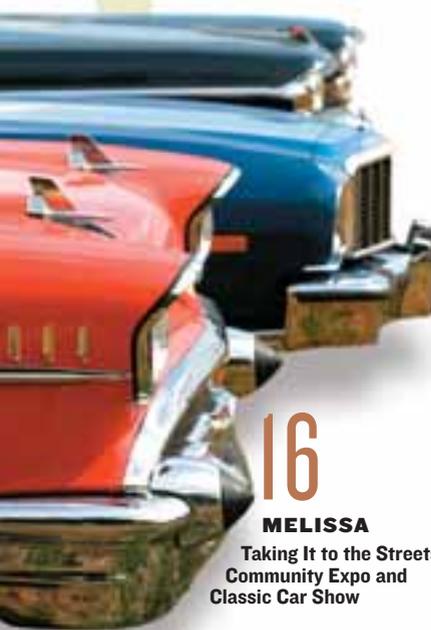
ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Oct	Old Houses	Aug 10
Nov	Signs	Sep 10
Dec	Costumes	Oct 10
Jan	Odd Farm Equipment	Nov 10
Feb	Silly Poses	Dec 10
Mar	Caught in the Act	Jan 10

**OLD HOUSES** is the topic for our **OCTOBER 2008** issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to **Old Houses, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704**, before **August 10**. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must 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. Please note that we cannot provide individual critiques of submitted photos. If you use a digital camera, e-mail your highest-resolution images to [focus@texas-ec.org](mailto:focus@texas-ec.org), or submit them on our website at [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com).

# AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

## AUGUST

**1** **OLTON** [7/29-8/2]  
Sandhills Celebration,  
(806) 285-7798



# 16

**MELISSA**  
Taking It to the Streets  
Community Expo and  
Classic Car Show

**2** **CANYON LAKE**  
Animal Shelter  
Anniversary Celebration,  
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**KEMAH**  
Salsa on the Boardwalk,  
1-877-285-3624,  
www.kemahboardwalk.com

**PAIGE**  
VFD Barbecue Benefit-  
Auction, (512) 626-0846

**TYLER**  
Kiepersol Estates Harvest  
Festival, (903) 894-9330,  
www.kiepersol.com

**WIMBERLEY**  
Market Day, (512) 847-2201

**BURTON** [2-3]  
Highway 290 Trade Days,  
1-888-693-1243

**WASHINGTON** [2-3, 9-10,  
16-17, 23-24, 30-31] School  
Daze, (936) 878-2214,  
www.birthplaceoftexas.com

**3** **LINCOLN**  
Volunteer Fire Department  
Fried Chicken Dinner,  
(979) 542-0869

**SAN ANGELO**  
Biscuits & Gravy Bike  
Ride, (325) 949-4757

**8** **HITCHCOCK** [8-9]  
Good Ole Days Festival,  
(409) 986-9224

**CROCKETT** [8-10]  
Hunting Expo, (936)  
544-2359, www.crockett  
areachamber.org

**9** **CHAPPELL HILL**  
Lavender Fest, (979)  
251-8114, www.chappellhill  
lavender.com

**COLEMAN**  
Heroes Day Parade,  
(325) 625-2163

**HEMPSTEAD**  
Waller County Fair  
Association Sportsman  
Extravaganza,  
(979) 826-2825

**9** **LBJ RANCH**  
Movies Under the Stars,  
(830) 868-7128, ext. 231,  
www.nps.gov/lyjo

**POST**  
Celebrations & 68th  
Annual Post Stampede  
Rodeo, (806) 495-3461

**11** **ALVARADO** [11-16]  
Johnson County Pioneers  
& Old Settlers Reunion,  
(817) 790-3503

**15** **LIVINGSTON** [15-17]  
Trade Days,  
(936) 327-3656,  
www.cityoflivingston-tx  
.com/tradedays

**16** **DRIFTWOOD**  
Burke Rally, (512) 775-1839,  
www.burkerally.com

**MELISSA**  
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www.impactweek.org

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Scott & White's Genitourinary Cancer team will oversee this research. The primary study site for this trial is the Scott & White Cancer Center in Temple, and is sponsored by Protox Therapeutics, Inc., with Dr. Scott Coffield acting as principal investigator.

To receive more information on this study or find out how to participate in the trial, contact our research coordinators at 800-882-4366.

Nancy Bowman  
nbowman@swmail.sw.org

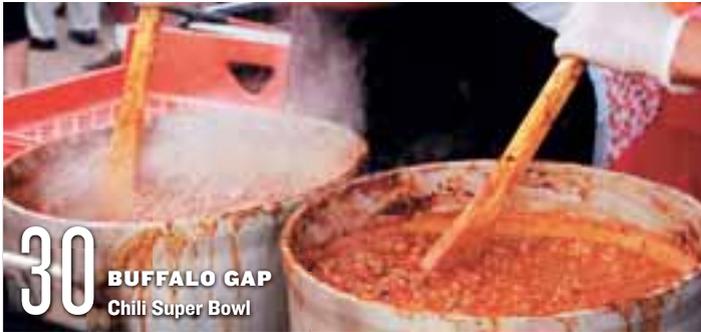
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# AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS



**30 BUFFALO GAP**  
Chili Super Bowl

**16 NEW BRAUNFELS**  
Summer Model Train Show, (830) 214-3759

**PORT ARANSAS**  
Texas Grand Slam, (361) 815-5158, www.ccbgfc.org

**21 FREDERICKSBURG [21-24]**  
Gillespie County Fair, (830) 997-2359

**WICHITA FALLS [21-24]**  
Hotter 'n Hell Hundred Endurance Bicycle Ride, (940) 322-3223, www.hh100.org

**23 TIOGA**  
Western Trade Days, (940) 390-7886, www.westerntradedays.com

**EMORY [23-24, 30-31]**  
Ravens Loft Renaissance Faire, (903) 366-3637, ravens-loft-faire.tripod.com

**24 MARAK**  
Annual Homecoming Picnic, (254) 593-3021

**27 LBJ STATE PARK**  
LBJ Centennial Texas White House Office Opening, (830) 644-2252, www.lbj100.org

**28 BELTON [28-31]**  
Central Texas State Fair, (254) 939-3551, www.beltonchamber.com

**29 BERTRAM [29-30]**  
Oatmeal Festival, (512) 355-2549

**KERRVILLE [29-31]**  
Wine & Music Festival, (830) 257-3600, www.kerrvillefolkfestival.com

**30 LUCKENBACH [30-9/1]**  
Labor Day Weekend Celebration, 1-888-311-8990, www.luckenbachtexas.com

**BUFFALO GAP [30-31]**  
Chili Super Bowl, (325) 675-6164

**ROCKPORT [30-31]**  
Fiesta en la Playa, (361) 463-7737

**UVALDE [30-31]**  
Texas Labor Day Festival, (830) 591-7351, www.TexasLaborDayWeekend.com

**31 PLANTERSVILLE**  
Labor Day Weekend Bazaar, (936) 894-2223, www.smsj.org

## SEPTEMBER

**6 SPICEWOOD**  
VFD-EMS Annual Destruction Derby, (830) 693-4726

**7 DACOSTA**  
German Fest, (361) 578-6658

Events are listed according to space available; see the full listing at [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com).

Event information can be mailed to **Around Texas**, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, faxed to (512) 486-6254, e-mailed to [aroundtx@texas-ec.org](mailto:aroundtx@texas-ec.org), or submitted on our website at [www.texascooppower.com](http://www.texascooppower.com). Please submit events for October by August 10.

**GO NUTS.**  
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Abstract sculptures. Polka music. Jaegerschnitzel.

And you thought that eastern Williamson County, where cattle graze and livestock trailers travel narrow roads, was all about barbecue and honky-tonk dancing.

Which, of course, it is. But if you've got a cultural hankering for something more in these rural parts northeast of Austin—say a sculpture garden in Coupland or a plate of jaegerschnitzel in the tiny German community of Walburg—then I've got just the short trip for you.

To reach Coupland, take U.S. 290 to Elgin, turn left onto State Highway 95 and go 7 miles. From Coupland, it's 8 miles to Taylor and then another 20 miles to Walburg on State Highway 95 and FM 972, a two-lane road that gently winds past picturesque farm scenes.

## COUPLAND

If you simply drive past this little town, there's not much to see. So from State Highway 95, turn right at the post office, go about 300 yards and then look left. Wow. It's not just a sculpture garden, it's an evocative sculpture forest of about 40 granite and stainless-steel pieces, some 10 feet tall.

One Saturday afternoon, sculptor **JIM HUNTINGTON**, who moved from Brooklyn, New York, to Coupland in 1994, was outside his studio cutting granite. Huntington, his shirt tail untucked and the dirty collar on his white shirt upturned to protect him from the sun, said he's created the garden's sculptures over the past seven years.

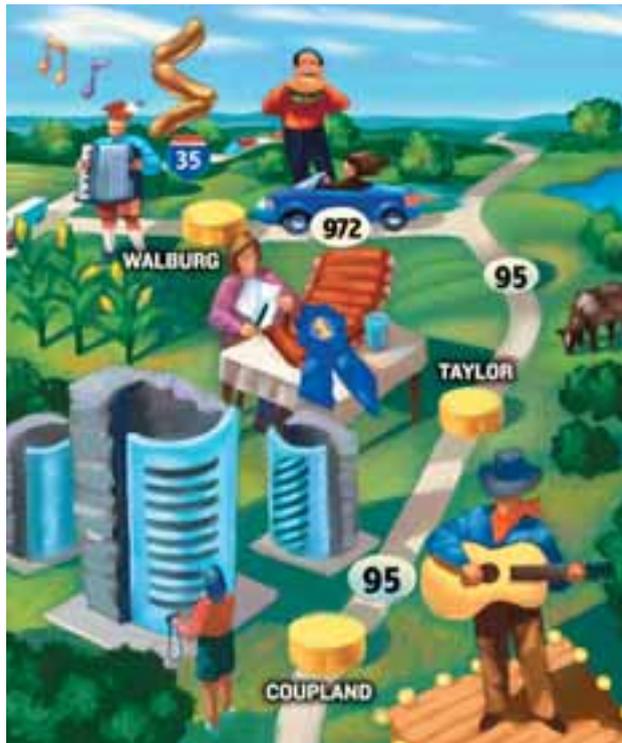
"It's been the most prolific seven years of my life," said the 67-year-old Huntington, who has sculptures displayed in Japan and the United States, including at the prestigious Storm King Art Center in New York. "I saved the best for last."

Elsewhere in town, Saturday night is barbecue night at the famous **OLD COUPLAND INN AND DANCEHALL** where

# COUPLAND to WALBURG

*Bring a big appetite when visiting these small towns.*

**BY CAMILLE WHEELER**



people come from miles around to eat, dance and belly up to a 100-plus-year-old bar that sports a bullet hole. Housed in two century-old buildings—the 8,000-square-foot dance hall packs 'em in by the hundreds—the operation includes a restaurant and bed-and-breakfast.

**Jim Huntington sculpture**, [www.huntingtonsculpture.com](http://www.huntingtonsculpture.com), (512) 856-2334

**Old Coupland Inn and Dancehall**, (512) 856-2226, [www.couplanddancehall.com](http://www.couplanddancehall.com)

## TAYLOR

I came here for one thing: brisket. And brisket I got at **LOUIE MUELLER BARBECUE**, winner of a 2006 James Beard Foundation national award.

After stuffing myself with brisket (succulent with the smoky flavor of oak), potato salad, beans, pickles, onions and

a Big Red, I talked with owner Bobby Mueller, who's seen some famous people walk through the restaurant's creaky screen doors such as actors Martin Sheen and Dennis Hopper.

It's a laid-back atmosphere here, where everybody eats off butcher paper inside a 1906 building.

**Louie Mueller Barbecue**, (512) 352-6206, [www.louiemuellerbarbeque.com](http://www.louiemuellerbarbeque.com)

**Taylor Chamber of Commerce**, [www.taylorchamber.org](http://www.taylorchamber.org), (512) 352-6364

## WALBURG

My half-pound burger at **DALE'S ESSENHAUS** restaurant felt like a bowling ball in my hands. Owner Dale Cockerell beamed as I bit into the hamburger—called a Walburger—and muttered something about needing a fork. I've eaten lots of burgers in my day, but this one—complete with grilled onions that are cooked under the meat to let the flavor seep upward—just may be the best I've ever had.

The secret, Cockerell said, is that he uses fresh ground meat from the **TAYLOR MEAT MARKET**—which, by the way, makes fabulous beef jerky—to make the restaurant's most popular item.

Not to be outdone in this quaint town is the **WALBURG RESTAURANT**, a world-famous establishment that sports a biergarten and a yodeling German band that plays polka music on Fridays and Saturdays. The two-level restaurant sits inside the old **WALBURG MERCANTILE** building, which was built in 1882.

I sampled several foods I could barely pronounce—including schweinebraten and spaetzle—and picked my favorite: the sauerbraten, which is marinated beef roast in a sweet and sour cream sauce.

**Dale's Essenhaus**, (512) 819-9175, [www.dalesessenhaus.com](http://www.dalesessenhaus.com)

**Walburg Restaurant**, (512) 863-8440, [www.walburgrestaurant.com](http://www.walburgrestaurant.com)

*Camille Wheeler is staff writer for Texas Co-op Power.*

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