

LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE EDITION

MAY 2012

HERITAGE TRAILS

TREAT MOM TO BRUNCH

BASTROP STATE PARK

# TEXAS CO-OP POWER

A man with a friendly smile, wearing a blue long-sleeved button-down shirt, blue jeans, a large silver belt buckle, and a baseball cap, is leaning against a large hay bale. The background shows a green field under a clear blue sky.

## COME TOGETHER

In This Year of Cooperatives,  
Members Tell Why Their  
Co-ops Are Worth Celebrating



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## FEATURES

### 8 Come Together

By Charles Boisseau

Photos by Will van Overbeek

*During this International Year of Cooperatives, member-customers tell why their electric co-ops—part of the essential glue that holds a community together—are worth celebrating. Are co-ops really so special? In a word: Yes.*

### 14 The Magical History Tour

By Carol Moczygamba

*Along the Texas Heritage Trails, you'll meet people living side by side with a rich past that isn't so much gone as it is transformed. The trails program helps preserve Texas' historic sites and sparks tourism.*

## DEPARTMENTS

Footnotes by Lori Grossman 'San Antonio Rose' 29

Recipe Roundup Spring Brunch 31

Focus on Texas Everything's Bigger in Texas 35

Around Texas Local Events Listings 36

Hit the Road by Kevin Hargis Bastrop State Park 38

## ONLINE

### TexasCoopPower.com

*The following May stories are available on our website.*

**Texas USA** by Patricia Strutz

*Wildlife Rehabilitators*

**Observations** by Mike Cox

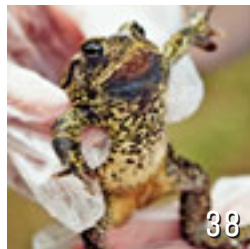
*Getting My TV Kicks on 'Route 66'*



29



31



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.

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**ACCREDITED  
BUSINESS**

# 'How will Texas meet its electricity needs this summer?'

In the interest of keeping our members informed about the adequacy of the state's electricity supply, and in view of last summer's extreme weather and the stress on the state's electricity grid, TEC posed that question to our state's top elected officials with oversight responsibilities of Texas' electricity infrastructure.

Here are their responses.



**Gov.  
Rick Perry**

While the state's business-friendly environment has encouraged investment that has led to sufficient generation and transmission capacity for the near term, Texas' continued growth will require expanded capacity in the years to come. Texas is pursuing multiple approaches to energy creation by expanding promising new technologies while continuing to develop traditional sources. Recent projections from the Electric Reliability Council of Texas indicate that, based on current weather expectations, Texas has the capacity to meet consumer needs over the 2012 summer months.

To prepare for this summer the Public Utility Commission and ERCOT have taken some specific steps. The PUC is working with transmission and distribution companies to make better use of demand-response programs, which were created as part of their energy-efficiency requirement. ERCOT is continuing to expand its interruptible load programs, which allow large industrial and commercial users to voluntarily reduce consumption during periods of peak usage.

I will continue working with officials at the PUC and ERCOT to ensure that we are utilizing all of our available energy options. That's the only way we can assure Texans have an adequate supply of electricity to power their homes, schools and businesses in the months and years to come.



**Lt. Gov.  
David Dewhurst**

In the past decade, Texas' population has grown by a whopping 4.2 million residents. Generally speaking, growth is a good thing, but it can also create many challenges—especially when it concerns the demand for affordable electricity.

As a lifelong businessman who built a successful energy company from the ground up, I believe that we must take a comprehensive approach. Texas' energy resources are as diverse and abundant as our booming population. Using traditional power sources and cultivating renewable fuels, Texas can supply the inexpensive homegrown energy we need to meet our state's future demands.

However, as we learned from the record hot summer in 2011, prolonged heat waves can put a tremendous strain on our electric grid—especially during hours of peak demand. Fortunately, our grid performed remarkably well last summer, using emergency reserves when necessary, while avoiding rolling power outages.

Since then, the Legislature has worked closely with state agencies and generators across Texas to ensure we are prepared for 2012. We have fought against regulatory overreach by the Environmental Protection Agency, encouraged private companies to develop new sources of generation, and formalized the process for bringing mothballed units online to meet demand if needed. We have also supported conservation. Texans can help by limiting their power use this summer during peak hours in the afternoon and early evening.

Rest assured, Texas will continue to partner with industry leaders to ensure that we have the dependable, low-cost electricity we need to power our economy long into the future.



**House Speaker  
Joe Straus**

Ensuring all Texans have an adequate and reliable power supply is essential to our state's economic viability. In some countries reliable power can be questionable, but in Texas when you hit the switch, the light must come on. Our citizens—and our economy—depend on it. That's why the No. 1 priority of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas market and the Public Utility Commission is reliability.

Texas has by far the largest electric usage of any state—roughly equivalent to Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Mississippi combined. Our state's population growth and economic prosperity are driving electricity demands even higher. Since the competitive market was established in 2001, electric generators have invested \$36.5 billion in the development of new generation and upgrades to existing plants to help meet this growth in demand.

Projected peak demand for this summer has recently been increased to 67,492 megawatts—1,297 MW higher than would be expected with "normal" summer temperatures. (One megawatt of power is enough to power 250 homes on average.) Several adjustments already implemented by ERCOT and the PUC at the direction of the Legislature have been well received by our competitive market.

But we know there is more to be done. In 2011, I directed the House Committee on State Affairs to examine the issue of adequate electric generation supplies. By collaborating with ERCOT and the PUC, I am confident we will continue to meet growing demand and keep the lights on to ensure our state can grow and prosper in the future.

# POWERconnections

Letters from Texas Co-op Power Readers; People, Places and Events in Texas

## THE LONE RANGER

I enjoyed Martha Deeringer's article about the Lone Ranger radio shows of days gone by [History, March 2012]. I wish that she had at least mentioned the voice that so many of us who had the radio as a companion during our Sunday evening dinners heard. The rich baritone voice belonged to Brace Beemer and was so identified with the radio performances that many of us could never accept the TV version. Nonetheless, thank you for the look back to those wonderful years.

**SCOTT CAMERON**

*Pedernales Electric Cooperative*

## SOLAR POWER

Reading the article about Catherine Ozer ["Meet the Solar Lady," March 2012 Co-op People], I couldn't help wonder: The purchase price of the

solar photovoltaic system, including installation, was \$29,292, less \$8,000 for a Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative rebate and a \$7,000 federal renewable energy tax credit. That would leave owing \$14,292 and would probably cost about \$500 a month for more than two years to pay off. I think we need to be a little more realistic about solar power for the average customer.

**LYNDA O'NEILL**

*Central Texas Electric Cooperative*

## KEYHOLE GARDENING

I loved the article on keyhole gardening [February 2012]. I have two damaged aluminum boats that I wanted to make into raised beds, but I worried about the lack of rain to support them. The best part is that it was free. No expense was incurred except for the

plants, which may have a chance of survival with this type of garden.

**BEVERLY NORD**

*Navasota Valley  
Electric Cooperative*

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May Table of Contents.*

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## THE WHEEL DEAL

I couldn't agree more about the joys that RVers experience in volunteering in state and other parks ["Campground Comrades," February 2012]. How wonderful for all involved—RVers, park management and the general public—a win-win-win situation. Folks who

would like more information are invited to visit our website. The entire site is dedicated to helping RVers who want to work while RVing. We even have pages of help-wanted ads for them to peruse. There is no charge for the information we provide.

**COLEEN SYKORA**

*Workers On Wheels editor  
www.workersonwheels.com*

## LIGHTING DISCUSSION

I learned a great deal from reading the article about lighting ["Illuminated Thinking," January 2012]. In fact, every issue contains helpful insights that I use to make my life in the country better.

**GREGORY EDDINGS**

*Hamilton County  
Electric Cooperative*

Re: Johnny Taylor's letter to the editor, "Dim View of Lighting," in the March 2012 issue: There will still be economical heat-producing lightbulbs available for such purposes as preventing well-pump and water-pipe freezing.

As for Mr. Taylor's comment that any heat-source alternative to his 60-watt lightbulb is going to cost a lot more, and he's going to send the bill to "you": I suppose he means his power co-op. The power co-ops and companies have nothing to do with this change, so how does he think the bill should go to them?

**JENELL BRINSON**

*Sam Houston Electric Cooperative*

## Who Is That Masked Man?



His identity is revealed: Arnie Hammer, as the masked Lone Ranger, and Johnny Depp, as Tonto, fill the top two roles in a movie scheduled for release in 2013.

I enjoyed reading about the Lone Ranger (yes, I have many silver strands) and the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum in Waco ["The Lone Ranger," March 2012]. We will go there someday. As for the Lone Ranger, they're planning a Western movie in 2013? Sounds great. Writer Martha Deeringer mentioned that Johnny Depp will play the role of Tonto. But if this is about the Lone Ranger, who is playing the masked man?

**Helen Fraser, Mid-South Synergy**

**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 76 electric cooperatives. Texas Co-op Power's website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email carolm@TexasCoopPower.com. **SUBSCRIPTION PRICE** is \$3.96 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. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Texas Co-op Power (USPS 540-560), 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. 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, sales director.

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## HAPPENINGS

*"Vitame vas!"* Right in time for the 46th annual **NATIONAL POLKA FESTIVAL**, you now know a heartfelt Czech greeting—"We welcome you!"—that an expected 50,000 attendees will hear over the course of Memorial Day weekend in Ennis, south of Dallas.

Known as the largest of its kind in the U.S., the festival attracts polka enthusiasts from around the country while putting Ennis' Czech heritage on center stage. The festivities, set for May 25–27, kick off with Friday night's King and Queen Dance Contest featuring fancy-stepping competitors in traditional costumes. And there's so much more, including a downtown parade, a kolache-eating contest, the Polkafest Run and the main attraction: three Czech dance halls filled with the sweet strains of polka, waltz and folk music.

For more information, call 1-888-366-4748 or go to [www.nationalpolkafestival.com](http://www.nationalpolkafestival.com). Find hundreds of happenings all across the state at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

## WHO KNEW?

### DINOSAUR CAPITAL OF TEXAS

More than 100 million years ago, dinosaurs left evidence of their time in Texas near modern-day Glen Rose, a North Texas town the Legislature declared the Dinosaur Capital of Texas in 1997. Find your inner paleontologist by camping at Dinosaur Valley State Park, where you can view some of the world's best-preserved dinosaur tracks; or visit Dinosaur World, a family park and outdoor museum featuring life-sized replicas of the ancient reptiles.



## 2012 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF COOPERATIVES

Alaska Village Electric Cooperative provides power for more than 7,000 customers in 53 villages throughout the state's remote western region—the largest service area of any retail electric co-op in the world. The co-op's members represent many native people, including Athabascan and Siberian Yupik. Village governments oversee operations of the co-op's power generating and distribution plants.

## CO-OP PEOPLE

*Egg-xacting Hobby: Mary Ellen Walls' Ukrainian Masterpieces*

BY ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER

In 1972, Mary Ellen Walls and her husband, Ray, were living in Minneapolis when they welcomed their second son, Eric, into the world. The day after Eric was born, Ray brought a recent National Geographic magazine into Mary Ellen's hospital room. An article on Ukrainian Easter eggs highlighted a Ukrainian community in Minneapolis and a gift shop that sold the eggs.

But Mary Ellen, who had long been fascinated with the eggs, figured it would take a lifetime to learn how to create them. And then, her doctor shared this coincidental news: He had bought his wife an egg-making kit, and she was now making them.

"I was floored," Mary Ellen said, who immediately sent Ray out for a kit. The birth of a hobby continues today from the family home in Sisterdale, where Mary Ellen and Ray are served by Central Texas Electric Cooperative.

The process begins with a raw white egg and a writing tool called a kistka that applies melted wax (dye colors don't adhere to the wax-covered areas). Then the egg is dipped in the lightest dye, usually yellow, and the waxed areas remain

white. The egg is drawn on again with wax, covering anything that should remain yellow, and dipped in the next color. This process is repeated, lightest to darkest, ending with the final dye bath, usually black or deep blue. Finally, the wax is removed, revealing the design. Each egg can take three to 10 hours to complete.

Called pysanky (from the word pysaty, meaning "to write"), the eggs, for centuries now, have customarily been given to friends and family to ensure health, luck and prosperity. Historically, pysanky were displayed in homes and sometimes carried as talismans.

For some, the eggs symbolize renewal. For Mary Ellen, they represent the birth of her second son. "It's a very spiritual thing for me to sit down and create these," she said. And, 40 years later, good fortune is still passed on: "Almost every time we have a visitor or guest, and they're on their way out, I tell them, 'Take an egg with you.'"



For 40 years now, Central Texas Electric Cooperative member Mary Ellen Walls has been perfecting her hobby of dyeing Ukrainian Easter eggs, an ancient art form that's taken on modern-day appeal.

Ashley Clary-Carpenter, field editor  
Send Co-op People ideas to  
[editor@TexasCoopPower.com](mailto:editor@TexasCoopPower.com).

PHOTO: RAY WALLS

# In This International Year of Cooperatives, Member-Customers Tell Why Their Co-ops Are Worth Celebrating

# COME TOGETHER



Pull up a tailgate, and let's talk business: During the 2011 drought, Leslie Lorenz (left) and other ranchers benefited from the swift action of Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative CEO/Manager Rick Haile, whose approval of powering a water pump at Rosebud Lake proved to be a livestock lifesaver. Here, Lorenz shows Haile the number of cattle and goats that received emergency water.



**O**n a gray and rainy Tuesday in mid-November, people poured into an East Texas gymnasium, where a sea of folding chairs covered the floor of perhaps the largest meeting space within 10 counties.

They came for the annual meeting of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative near Livingston. More than three hours before the official start, Cleo Railey arrived, the first of what would be a standing-room crowd of more than 1,100 co-op member-customers and their families.

Why come so early and on such a dreary day? “I just sat and visited with everyone,” Railey said following the meeting as she clutched a door prize and beamed after catching up with friends and co-op employees.

Railey expressed the spirit of what makes a co-op different: Electric cooperatives are part of the essential glue that holds a community together, and it’s a role that co-ops like Sam Houston EC proudly work to live up to.

With the United Nations having designated 2012 as the International Year of Cooperatives, we asked members of Texas electric co-ops what they value about their co-op and about being members.

Across the state, they offered many reasons: “My co-op provides good service.” We also heard: “they’re responsive,” “managed by good people” and “they’re good for our community.”

Railey put it this way: “If you have a problem, they’re Johnny-on-the-spot.”

Are co-ops really so special? In a word: Yes. For one thing, co-ops are a *special kind of business*. They use a different business model from many other companies: They are democratically governed and work for the benefit of their members and communities—not single owners or stockholders. These are not empty promises; these are among the seven principles (see at [www.nreca.coop](http://www.nreca.coop)) a co-op must embody to rightfully be called a cooperative.

## Democracy rules

Co-ops are democratically controlled. If you are a *customer* of a co-op, you are a member, and members have a vote in the direction their business takes. Democratic Member Control, one of the co-op principles, means you elect fellow members to serve on the co-op’s board of directors.

In practice, Democratic Member Control can take some interesting turns. Consider Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative’s annual meeting in May 2008 when a routine call went out for last-minute nominations from the floor to serve on the 11-member board.

Usually such an announcement goes without fanfare because the nominees are selected through a process stipulated in the co-op’s bylaws and publicized in time for the annual meeting. But there’s often the chance for an 11th-hour candidate.

That’s exactly what happened when Bluebonnet EC member Mike Hopkins stood up to nominate Robert Mikeska. Mikeska had a long history of public service as a former Washington County commissioner and Brenham City Council member.

The voting went without a hitch, with co-op staff passing around line-men’s hard hats to collect the ballots. When all the votes were counted, Mikeska was elected as a write-in candidate and became the co-op’s newest board member.

“It illustrates to folks that the process is open,” Mikeska said. “Any member can get their name on the ballot.”

## Responding to ranchers

Co-op members who ranch for a living were among the hardest hit during a prolonged drought that intensified in 2011. The soaring heat and lack of rain left pastures bare and stock tanks empty, forcing many ranchers—faced with higher prices for water, hay and feed—to sell all or parts of their herds at depressed prices.

Ranchers in Central Texas served by Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative banded together to seek approval from the City of Rosebud to use untreated water from Rosebud Lake for their livestock.

The city approved the request, but the ranchers had to find a way to get the water out. Enter Heart of Texas EC, which agreed to supply power to a water pump at the lakeside. The McGregor-based co-op quickly dispatched a crew to install a pole and meter and run a line to the pump at a storage tank.

Leslie Lorenz, a rancher who served as coordinator of the emergency water program, said the co-op imposed no

delays or red tape on the project at a time when speed was crucial.

Within 24 hours of the request, Heart of Texas CEO/Manager Rick Haile approved it, said Bryan Chandler, the co-op’s district line superintendent. “If it’s for the members, he’s all for it,” Chandler said. “That’s what’s good about being a cooperative. We have control to make decisions. We don’t have to go any further.”

Lorenz said the water project helped him and other ranchers maintain their herds. “I hauled 1,200 to 1,400 gallons a day. I went twice a day. I held onto my cattle,” he said.

## The locals have it

Time and again, co-op members say they prize local accountability of their co-op.

Buddy Alders, a member of Houston County Electric Cooperative who lives near Madisonville in Madison County, can directly compare the service he gets from Houston County EC—the co-op that supplies electricity at his ranch home—and that from a neighboring utility which serves a construction business he owns in Dayton.

Alders cited a recent example: His employees needed to have a utility pole moved at a subdivision. It took many calls, a monthlong delay and too much money to get the job done, he complained. If he were dealing with Houston County EC, he could have had it taken care of as he had done before: with a short meeting at the co-op’s Crockett offices with General Manager Melody Pinnell or Line Superintendent Jack Vickers.

“We would have gotten it done in a week, and it wouldn’t have cost \$1,100,” Alders said. “I’m a rural person. And this is a tremendous advantage for rural electric co-ops—they give *service* at a time service is almost a forgotten thing.”

On the South Plains, Paul Wilson tells a similar story. Wilson is general manager of United Cotton Growers Cooperative in Levelland, one of the state’s largest farmer-owned cotton gins. The cotton co-op also is a member of Tahoka-based Lyntegar Electric Cooperative, which provides electricity to a large area south of Lubbock.

A few years ago, Lyntegar proposed a rate change that would have increased the expenses of Wilson’s and other cotton gins, especially when gins

test new equipment during the summer. United Cotton Growers and other gins requested a meeting with the co-op to discuss the proposed increase.

"It was not contentious at all," Wilson said of the meeting with Lyntegar CEO Greg Henley and staff members, in which an agreement was worked out that all the parties liked.

"They encouraged the dialogue," Wilson said. "Small businesses were able to get together and influence the co-op's decision, and they were able to do it because we're member-owners, and they *want* to please us. And that's the real advantage of being a member of Lyntegar."

### Returning money to members

Being accountable to fellow members makes all the difference in how a co-op is run, said Mack Rose, who operates a bass fishing guide service on Sam Rayburn Reservoir.

In 2010, Rose, a former Jasper County commissioner, won an election against four others for a seat on the

board of his co-op, Jasper-Newton Electric Cooperative.

Last year, the board assessed the co-op's fiscal health and voted to return capital credits to members in the form of discounts on their summer electricity bills. "I'm proud of that," Rose said. "We want to run this as efficiently as possible ... We're not in it for profits."

At co-ops, positive cash flow—a necessary requirement for the bond and loan markets—funds maintenance and improvements to the system that delivers electricity. Income generated over expenses goes back as an investment in the cooperative and is eventually returned to member-customers as capital credits.

### Community first

Co-ops support projects that improve the quality of life for their members and communities. They provide scholarships to students, funded by unclaimed capital credits and voluntary contributions, and grants to local community organizations. Plus, they contribute

money to help volunteer fire departments, food banks, emergency medical services, libraries, schools and countless worthy causes.

Co-ops are often called to help with unexpected projects. For example, the City of Mineola needed a new home for a 60-foot-long, 30,000-pound historic bridge that had been replaced by a concrete one. City officials decided to install the bridge over the IG&N railroad slough at the Mineola Nature Preserve on the Sabine River, a 3,000-acre parcel being developed into a public wildlife and recreational space.

But before the bridge could be relocated, a sturdy piling structure needed to be built for its foundation. The little city of 4,500 residents didn't have the money to hire outside contractors to perform the work.

So Mineola Mayor Bo Whitus turned to Wood County Electric Cooperative, based in nearby Quitman. The co-op supplies power to the nature preserve and most of the rest of the county, and many of its members support the



Wood County Electric Cooperative CEO/General Manager Debbie Robinson (front row, third from left) and Mineola Mayor Bo Whitus (front row, third from right) celebrate the team effort of relocating this historic bridge to the Mineola Nature Preserve. In August 2010, a Wood County EC crew dug holes for poles to support the 30,000-pound bridge and walkway.



wildlife preserve and work in Mineola.

Wood County EC CEO/General Manager Debbie Robinson put the mayor in touch with a co-op supervisor whom Whitus knew. As soon as the utility construction crew had a little downtime, they spent two days in August 2010 in the heavily wooded nature preserve, using a digger truck to dig 8-foot-deep holes for 27 poles to support the bridge and walkway.

"They just seem to be looking for opportunities to assist," Whitus said. "You can't imagine how thrilled I was when they showed up. We had been pondering this for a long time."

At a time when big utilities have pulled out of local service areas and operate from distant call centers, co-ops provide a strong, ongoing local presence. "I really believe that co-ops have become the economic engines in a lot of communities," said Kerry Kelton, general manager of Navasota-based Mid-South Synergy, which provides electricity, Internet and water services to members in six counties in Southeast Texas.

## Saving lives

In 2010, Nueces and San Patricio electric cooperatives separately entered into agreements with a nonprofit air ambulance service, HALO-Flight, to fly members to hospitals in case of major medical emergencies. Instead of the \$10,000 or more typical cost of such a helicopter flight, members pay just a \$1 monthly subscription fee.

"We were very excited when HALO-Flight approached us with the idea," said San Patricio Electric Cooperative General Manager Ron Hughes. "About 10 percent of our membership now participates in the HALO-Flight program."

The Nueces EC board agreed to offer the program, in which the co-op handles billing, because so many members live in areas far from medical facilities and with limited ambulance service, said John Sims, CEO of Nueces EC. The co-op has supported the nonprofit group since 1996 with annual grants from its Operation Round Up—funds that helped HALO-Flight secure its first helicopters, said Sarah Fisher, chief compliance officer with Nueces EC.

## Response to power outages

For electric utilities, swift response to a power outage is the hallmark of good



**Nueces EC CEO John Sims (center) and San Patricio EC General Manager Ron Hughes (right) oversaw agreements offering their members \$1 monthly subscription fees to HALO-Flight, a nonprofit air ambulance service under the guidance of Executive Director Tom Klassen (left).**

customer service.

Last November, some of Sam Houston EC members arriving for the annual meeting had damp, grateful eyes as they greeted Keith Stapleton, who serves as the co-op's chief communications officer. Still on their minds, Stapleton said, was the co-op's response to Hurricane Ike, the September 2008 storm that pummeled East Texas and knocked out power to every one of the co-op's 67,000 electric meters.

Members recall co-op employees' tireless efforts to restore power as the storms from Ike followed a devastating path up the U.S. Highway 59 corridor, through the center of Sam Houston's system. The co-op set up camps and tent cities to house 3,000 workers, some of whom came in convoys from other co-ops nationwide. Costing more than \$50 million, the restoration was the most expensive event in co-op history. But it paid off: Power was restored to all customers within 12 days, up to three days sooner than to customers

who were served by other nearby utilities, Stapleton said.

Scores of members sent letters and emails to thank co-op employees for working around-the-clock to bring back power. "Your hard work and dedication to your job has stopped us in our tracks on more than one occasion during the power outage," lifelong Livingston resident Janie Kessler wrote in an email. "If we could stand as one and applaud, it would be a resounding roar."

To Stapleton, seeing tears in the eyes of meeting attendees three years after Ike communicated something without words. It said: "We know you are one of us—that we are all in this together."

*Charles Boisseau is an Austin-based writer.*

## On TexasCoopPower.com

The annual meeting is where it's clear that all electric co-op members have a say. Plus, read more about a wide variety of co-ops, all of which help make the world go 'round.

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**Nobody Beats Our Quality, Service and Price!**

**SUPER COUPON!**

**FREE!**  
WITH MINIMUM PURCHASE OF \$9.99

**3-1/2" SUPER BRIGHT NINE LED ALUMINUM FLASHLIGHT**  
ITEM 65020/69052/69111  
REG. PRICE \$6.99

Item 65020 shown

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 1** Free item only available with qualifying minimum purchase (excluding price of free gift item). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & Handling charges may apply if free item not picked up in-store. Coupon cannot be bought, sold or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the offer. Valid through 8/30/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.



**SUPER COUPON!**

**PITTSBURGH 12" RATCHET BAR CLAMP/SPREADER**  
LOT NO. 46807/68975/69221

Item 46807 shown

**SAVE 63%**  
**\$199**  
REG. PRICE \$5.49

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ANY SINGLE ITEM!

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 1** Use this coupon to save 20% on any one single item purchased when you shop at a Harbor Freight Tools store. \*Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on any of the following: gift cards, Inside Track Club membership, extended service plans, Compressors, Generators, Tool Cabinets, Tool Carts, Welders, Floor Jacks, Campbell Hausfeld products, open box items, Parking Lot Sale items, Blowout Sale items, Day After Thanksgiving Sale items, Tent Sale items, 800 number orders or online orders. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store in order to receive the offer. Valid through 8/30/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.



**SUPER COUPON!**

**7 FT. 4" x 9 FT. 6" ALL PURPOSE WEATHER RESISTANT TARP**  
LOT NO. 877/69137/69249

Item 877 shown

**SAVE 50%**  
**\$349**  
REG. PRICE \$6.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**36 LED SOLAR SECURITY LIGHT**  
Bunker Hill Security  
LOT NO. 98085/69644

Item 98085 shown

**SAVE 28%**  
**\$1799**  
REG. PRICE \$24.99

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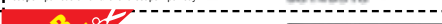
**SUPER COUPON!**

**MOVER'S DOLLY**  
HaulMaster  
100 LB. CAPACITY  
LOT NO. 93888

Item 93888 shown

**SAVE 46%**  
**\$799**  
REG. PRICE \$14.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 8** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 8/30/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.



**SUPER COUPON!**

**CENTECH AUTOMATIC BATTERY FLOAT CHARGER**  
LOT NO. 42292/69594

Item 42292 shown

**SAVE 57%**  
**\$549**  
REG. PRICE \$12.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 7** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 8/30/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.



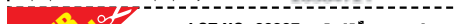
**SUPER COUPON!**

**9 PIECE FULLY POLISHED COMBINATION WRENCH SETS**  
PITTSBURGH  
SAE LOT NO. 42304/69043  
METRIC LOT NO. 42305/69044

Item 42304 shown

**SAVE 53%**  
**\$599**  
REG. PRICE \$12.99

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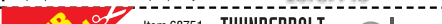
**SUPER COUPON!**

**2000 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH REMOTE CONTROL AND AUTOMATIC BRAKE**  
LOT NO. 68146

Item 68146 shown

**SAVE \$50**  
**\$4999**  
REG. PRICE \$99.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 5** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 8/30/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.



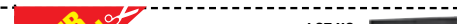
**SUPER COUPON!**

**PITTSBURGH RAPID PUMP® 3 TON HEAVY DUTY FLOOR JACK**  
LOT NO. 68048/69227

Item 68048 shown

**SAVE \$70**  
**\$6999**  
REG. PRICE \$139.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 4** This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 8/30/12. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.



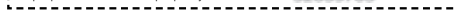
**SUPER COUPON!**

**LOT NO. 68287 drillmaster 18 VOLT CORDLESS 3/8" DRILL/DRIVER AND FLASHLIGHT KIT**

Includes one 18V NiCd battery and charger.

**SAVE 50%**  
**\$1999**  
REG. PRICE \$39.99

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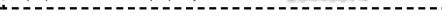
**SUPER COUPON!**

**THUNDERBOLT MAGNUM solar 45 WATT SOLAR PANEL KIT**  
LOT NO. 68751/90599

Item 68751 shown

**SAVE \$80**  
**\$14999**  
REG. PRICE \$229.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**US\*GENERAL 30", 11 DRAWER ROLLER CABINET**  
LOT NO. 67421

Includes:  
• 6 Drawer Top Chest  
• 2 Drawer Middle Section  
• 3 Drawer Roller Cabinet

**SAVE \$150**  
**\$14999**  
REG. PRICE \$299.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**SAVE 52%**

**4 PIECE 1" x 15 FT. RATCHETING TIE DOWN SET**

LOT NO. 90984

**\$7<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$16.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 8**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

Item 68868 shown

**12 PIECE CUSHION GRIP SCREWDRIVER SET**

**PITTSBURGH**

LOT NO. 68868/69421

**SAVE 58%**

**\$4<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$11.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 7**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**29 PIECE TITANIUM NITRIDE COATED DRILL BIT SET**

**drillmaster**

LOT NO. 5889

**SAVE 60%**

**\$9<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$24.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 8**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER**

**drillmaster**

LOT NO. 95578

**SAVE 50%**

**\$9<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$19.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**WIRELESS DRIVEWAY ALERT SYSTEM**

**Bunker Hill Security®**

LOT NO. 93068

**SAVE 53%**

**\$13<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$29.99

Requires one 9 volt and three C batteries (sold separately).

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 4**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**MECHANIC'S GLOVES**

**LARGE**

LOT NO. 93640

**X-LARGE**

LOT NO. 93641

**SAVE 50%**

**\$3<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$7.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**RECIPROCATING SAW WITH ROTATING HANDLE**

**CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS**

LOT NO. 65570

**SAVE 50%**

**\$19<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$39.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 5**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**ELECTRIC CHAIN SAW SHARPENER**

**CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS**

LOT NO. 68221/93213

**4-1/4" GRINDING WHEEL INCLUDED**

**SAVE 44%**

**\$27<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$49.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 3**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**TRIPLE BALL TRAILER HITCH**

**HaulMaster**

LOT NO. 94141

**SAVE 55%**

**\$19<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$44.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 7**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**4000 LB. CAPACITY CABLE WINCH PULLER**

**HaulMaster**

LOT NO. 30329

**SAVE 48%**

**\$12<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$24.99

For dead loads only; not for lifting.

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**500 LB. CAPACITY DELUXE CARGO CARRIER**

**HaulMaster**

LOT NO. 66983/69623

**SAVE \$50**

**\$49<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$99.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**AUTO-DARKENING WELDING HELMET WITH BLUE FLAME DESIGN**

**CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING**

LOT NO. 91214

**SAVE 50%**

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$79.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**800 WATT/900 MAX. WATTS PORTABLE GENERATOR**

**CHICAGO ELECTRIC GENERATORS**

LOT NO. 66619

**SAVE \$90**

**\$89<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$179.99

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**CENTRAL PNEUMATIC 3 GALLON, 100 PSI OILLESS PANCAKE AIR COMPRESSOR**

LOT NO. 95275

**SAVE 50%**

**\$39<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$79.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 4**

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**SUPER COUPON!**

**90 AMP FLUX WIRE WELDER**

**CHICAGO ELECTRIC WELDING**

LOT NO. 68887/98871

**SAVE \$60**

**\$89<sup>99</sup>**

REG. PRICE \$149.99

**HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 3**

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# THE MAGICAL HISTORY TOUR

Follow Your Inquisitive Spirit Along the Texas Heritage Trails

MARBLE FALLS ★ BURNET ★ LONGHORN CAVERN



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *The Texas Heritage Trails Program is based upon 10 scenic driving trails created in 1968 by the Texas Highway Department (now the Texas Department of Transportation) and Gov. John Connally. In the first of two stories about the program, join us as we tour parts of the Hill Country Trail and Forts Trail regions, encompassing several counties in Central Texas. In the second story, scheduled for our June issue, we'll visit three other locales—Lampasas, Mason and the Fort McKavett State Historic Site—in those same two regions.*

**I**t's a warm, sunny Saturday in January. I'm halfway into my three-day marathon of visiting places along two Texas Heritage Trails regions, the Hill Country Trail and Forts Trail. With only another day and a half to go, I realize I've made a big miscalculation. I can cover only



**Birdie Harwood, the first woman mayor in the U.S., took the reins in Marble Falls in 1917.**

MARBLE FALLS VISITOR CENTER AND MARK PERSYNE

a sliver of the current and historic offerings at my six planned destinations, which comprise a mere fraction of Heritage sites across the state. Sure enough, I left each place with that feeling you get when someone takes the

dessert off the table before you've had your fill.

For that reason, this is a two-part series. For now, I invite you to come with me to Marble Falls, Burnet and Longhorn Cavern State Park, then go explore wherever your inquisitive spirit leads you along the vast and deeply engaging Texas Heritage Trails. Who knows? You might discover something magical.

## Digging Into the Story of Texas

**T**he Texas Heritage Trails—found in 10 regions around the state—map out locations where the influence of people and events hundreds, even thousands, of years ago has been transmitted to the present and will continue into the future. Just as the sandstone blocks of Fort Mason are now part of Willow Creek Café in downtown Mason, the values and culture of those who came before us are now part of our heritage as Texans.

The Texas Historical Commission developed the Texas Heritage Trails Program, beginning with the Texas Forts Trail Region in 1998, to preserve the state's historic sites and simultaneously promote tourism, especially in economically challenged rural areas. In 2005, the program received the national Preserve America Presidential Award for "exemplary accomplishment in the preservation and sustainable use of America's heritage assets, which has enhanced community life while honoring the nation's history," according to the THC.

As I traveled through parts of the Hill Country and Forts Trail regions, I met people whose connections with their heritage and history left me wanting to dig into the story of Texas as they have, living side by side with a past that isn't so much gone as transformed. I discovered, too, that sometimes legend survives on the edges of the facts, making for some scintillating storytelling and incentive for history sleuths to practice their craft.

The suggestions for dining, lodging and touring are based on my personal experience and are far from comprehensive. Visit the Chamber of Commerce in each town to get the full menu of options. And for in-depth information



about the Heritage Trails, check out [www.thc.state.tx.us/heritagetourism/htprogram.shtml](http://www.thc.state.tx.us/heritagetourism/htprogram.shtml).

## Marble Falls

**A**dam Rankin Johnson was only 20, working as a surveyor, when he first laid eyes on a formation of thundering falls in the Colorado River in 1854. A native Kentuckian, he immediately envisioned a city with the falls at its heart and settled in Burnet County, where he married and raised a family. He left Texas to fight for the Confederacy in the Civil War and earned the rank of general for his leadership and bravery. Ironically, when he returned in 1865, the visionary of Marble Falls was blind, having been wounded by friendly fire.

Yet Johnson prevailed. He and a few investors founded Marble Falls ([www.marblefalls.org/chamber-commerce](http://www.marblefalls.org/chamber-commerce)) in 1887, naming the town for what he believed was its abundant marble, which turned out to be granite. Granite was so plentiful that in 1882 the owners of nearby Granite Mountain offered to donate enough to build the present-day Capitol in Austin. Granite Mountain, at the western edge of town, covers 180 acres and is still an active quarry.

Fifth-generation Marble Falls resident Jean Eades, manager of the Marble Falls/Lake LBJ Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center, carries the town's history in her bones. We visit the 1893 train depot, restored and relocated from its original site. It's now the visitor center, where the period fixtures and benches, the ticket counter and the old wooden desk make it easy to imagine yourself back in the day when town life revolved around the comings and goings of the train.

The waiting room, with its potbellied stove and wooden benches with iron arms, was the hub of Marble Falls' social life. "Back then, the depot was the center of everything," recalled Marble Falls resident Edwin Lacy in a 1976 local newspaper interview with historian Byrna Dean Moore. "The train came in from Austin once a day and went back after it went on over to Fairland and Llano and turned around. Everybody in town who could dropped whatever they were doing and went to the depot to see who came in on the train."

Get the whole story of how this town grew and prospered at The Falls on the Colorado Museum—learn more about Johnson's far-reaching accomplishments and Birdie Harwood, the first woman mayor in the U.S., elected in 1917, three years before women were guaranteed by the 19th Amendment the right to vote. Harwood was endorsed by President Woodrow Wilson, who at the time was advocating women's suffrage.

In a campaign letter she addressed to the all-male voters of Marble Falls, Harwood wrote: "There are several elective offices by women in the United States and Texas, so do not believe that in voting for women you will establish a precedent. One man actually had the nerve to run against his wife for Mayor, of course you know the result, she just snowed him under."

After getting a dose of Marble Falls history, roam through The Shops at Old Oak Square on the site of what used to be a lumberyard. Drop in at DeSpain Barber Shop—established in 1958. You'll think Eisenhower is still president. Stroll through Johnson Park, a lovely space to roam or

enjoy a picnic, and walk over the 1939 wood and steel bridge that has been relocated from its original home over Gridiron Creek.

**INSIDER'S TIPS:** *Enjoy a meal at the Blue Bonnet Café, famous for its legendary mile-high meringue pies. How do they do that? I was there for breakfast and ordered the works: two eggs over easy, grits, bacon, biscuits and cream gravy.*

## Burnet

**J**ust north of Marble Falls, the town of Burnet ([www.burnetchamber.org](http://www.burnetchamber.org)) grew around a frontier military post. Fort Croghan, established in 1849, was organized to provide protection against Comanche and Apache raids on white settlers arriving by wagon train from the East. Just as the Colorado River attracted settlers to Marble Falls, the spring-fed Hamilton Creek drew inhabitants to Burnet.



SUMMER MILES

Sixth-generation Burnet resident Carole Goble and her family are such avid boosters of their hometown that they have made the preservation of its history an intergenerational project. Goble authored a history of the town, appropriately titled *Burnet*. She and her children conceived of and helped raise money to create The History Plaza, a labyrinth-like maze on the courthouse grounds that visitors may walk, with markers of historic events set in chronological order.

Goble was also part of the Burnet County Heritage Society-supported creation of the Fort Croghan Museum and the reconstruction of Fort Croghan. Goble graciously leads me on a personal tour. Spend some time in the museum and enjoy the artifacts that take you from Native American arrowheads to a horse-drawn fire engine. The collection was gathered entirely from community donors. Behind the museum stands Fort Croghan, rebuilt on part of its original site, complete with the forge of Noah Smithwick, the fort's resident blacksmith, a tiny, one-room schoolhouse and the headquarters building restored to its original condition.

Although the building served as an ammunition repository during the Civil War, it's now outfitted as a post exchange with supplies for soldiers, such as gunpowder,

saddle and tack. All the buildings are furnished with period pieces. These days, a Comanche-style tepee stands prominently on the grounds. During Fort Croghan Day, scheduled for October 13, Native Americans join frontier re-enactors in educating visitors about the spectrum of influences that shaped the area. Christmas at Ole' Fort Croghan, set for the evening of December 8, presents another chance for visitors to get in the frontier spirit.

**INSIDER'S TIPS:** *Grab a bite at Tea-licious on the square. Try the signature Tuna-licious salad and order a tall glass of sweet peach tea, a house specialty. For dessert, the turtle cheesecake is a customer favorite.*

*And enjoy a restful night's sleep at Airy Mount Bed and Breakfast. Originally built as a barn and carriage house, this B&B was part of Johnson's spread. The General, aka the father of this part of the Hill Country, and his wife and six children lived upstairs in the barn while their spacious, two-story home was under construction just a few hundred yards away. Today, the B&B—run by Roseanne Hayman, who, with her husband, lives in the main residence—is a cozy, restful getaway with an eastward view of pastures and hills as far as the eye can see. Hayman is an enthusiastic and well-informed host who will gladly take a seat at the breakfast table and share the General's colorful and fascinating stories.*



Airy Mount Bed and Breakfast

SUMMER MILES

## Longhorn Cavern

**T**he torrents of water rushing through it millions of years ago; the Native American rituals sheltered by its deep, underground seclusion; the Texas Rangers' raid that rescued a white girl captured by Comanches; the Civil War soldiers hiding their gunpowder in its room-like formations; the lively crowds of the Prohibition-era underground nightclub and the 200 Civilian Conservation Corps men who excavated its entrance—all are part of the history and lore of Longhorn Cavern.

About 21 miles southwest of Burnet, Longhorn Cavern at Longhorn Cavern State Park ([www.longhorncaverns.com](http://www.longhorncaverns.com)) is a wonder of nature. My tour guide, retired geologist Al Gerow, has been leading visitors (about 45,000 a year)

through the two miles from entrance to exit for the past 12 years. He knows every stalactite and crystal, every hidden crevice and cave in this spacious palace of rock.



EARL NOTTINGHAM/TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

At one time, the cavern was home to millions of Mexican free-tailed bats, but they were scared away in the 1930s by noisy workers of the CCC. Taking advantage of the vacancy, Eastern pipistrelle bats moved in. These tiny creatures, unlike their Mexican cousins who live in colonies, are loners. I spot one hanging upside down, a 1½-inch oval of brown fur with ears the size of lentils. It's hibernating, Gerow says, shining his flashlight on its unmoving body. Come spring, this little guy and the rest of the bats will instinctively wake up and begin the nightly hunt for insects outside the cavern.

In addition to the animal life, the cave is alive with growing stalactites, resembling thick icicles made of rock. Normally, water seeping from above ground accumulates and calcifies to lengthen the stalactite formations, but the recent drought has caused them to stop growing.

The natural and human heritage of the cave is well documented, but just as interesting are the legends. One of the most repeated is about the notorious outlaw Sam Bass. According to the story, Bass and his gang used the cavern for a hideout, and somewhere in its vast network of hiding places they stashed \$2 million in never-recovered gold taken in a train robbery. Is it still there? More likely, says Gerow, the story was concocted. After all, he points out, the horses couldn't have carried that much gold in their saddlebags.

*Carol Moczygemba, executive editor*

### MORE INFORMATION

To request a Texas Heritage Trails travel guide, call 1-866-276-6219 or visit [www.thc.state.tx.us/travel](http://www.thc.state.tx.us/travel) to download materials.

Communities participating in the Texas Heritage Trails Program receive assistance from heritage tourism experts in developing and promoting historical and cultural attractions. For more information on becoming a participating historical community or site, email [community-heritage@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:community-heritage@thc.state.tx.us) or call (512) 463-6092.



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## Be Your Home's Private Investigator

*Do-it-yourself home energy audits reveal savings*

BY MAGEN HOWARD

**N**o matter the age of your home, it could benefit from a private energy investigation—also known as an energy audit.

To be an energy private eye, ask yourself a simple question: Does my home feel drafty and cold in the winter or stuffy and hot in the summer? If your answer is yes, then your home probably experiences air leakage.

To track down where those spots are, round up the usual suspects—culprits such as damaged seals around doors and windows. If you see daylight or feel air, then apply caulk and weatherstripping to keep outdoor air where it's supposed to be.

But don't forget spots you might not immediately think of, such as recessed canister lights and electrical outlets. Outlet insulation kits can be purchased for as little as \$2, and you can fix up your canister lights with some caulk around the edges.

Also look where walls meet the ceiling. Cobwebs mean you've got drafts.

Next, poke your head into the attic and check for sufficient insulation. Inspect the crawl space or basement, too. How much you need depends on your climate. To check out the insulation calculator from

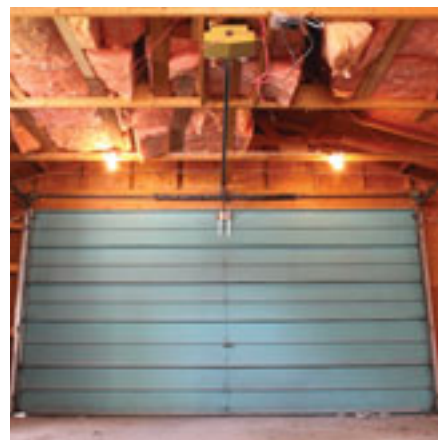
**Weatherstripping around doors is an inexpensive and easy way to save energy.**

the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, go to [www.ornl.gov](http://www.ornl.gov) and do a search for "insulation calculator." It's important to remember that insulation won't do its job well if there's not a proper air barrier working in tandem. That means all joints and cracks must be sealed between your living space and the insulation.

Finally, look to your light fixtures. Compact fluorescent lightbulbs are up to 75 percent more efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs, and they've come a long way in light quality, design and affordability. You can purchase CFLs in a variety of shapes and hues. They cost more upfront, but you'll make your money back in less than nine months, and after that, they start saving money. Make sure to purchase a CFL that's rated by Energy Star, the U.S. government's program that denotes products meeting specific energy-efficiency criteria. Energy Star-rated CFLs will typically last 10 times longer than a traditional incandescent bulb producing the same amount of light.

To learn more about ways to reduce your electric bill, contact your local electric cooperative.

*Magen Howard is a writer for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*



Insulating your garage will reduce the heat transferred to your home.

## Cool Off Your Garage

Most garages have little or no insulation in the walls or ceiling, but by adding insulation, you can help keep your whole house cool. At many homes, nobody spends much time out there with the cars, lawn tools and Christmas decorations, so keeping it cool in the summer or warm in the winter might seem like a waste of money.

Still, an attached garage that's as hot as a furnace in the summer can make your house hot, too. If your garage is heating up to 80, 90 or 100 degrees on sunny afternoons, some of that heat is going to transfer into the house.

That means your home's air conditioning system has to work double-time to keep the house cool.

It doesn't mean you should put an air conditioning unit in your uninsulated garage. That would be about as efficient as trying to air condition your backyard because the cool air will leak right through the door, ceiling and walls.

The solution is to add insulation to walls and ceilings to block the outdoor heat and keep it out of the garage.

Replacing an older garage door with a new, energy-efficient model can reduce energy loss through the door by up to 71 percent.



# CURBING COPPER THEFT

BY MAURICE MARTIN

Look at a piece of copper, and you can see why it's been popular with artists for 10,000 years. Its reddish-orange luster enhances jewelry and other decorative art. Ancient weapon makers also found it useful—axes with copper heads date back at least 5,000 years. More recently, engineers discovered that copper is an excellent conductor of electrical current.

In the past few years, copper's popularity has seen an uptick among another group: criminals. The increasing value of the metal has led to a wave of copper theft. Electric Safety Foundation International estimates that there are more than 50,000 copper thefts from electrical utilities in the U.S. each year.

## Substation Grounding

Copper is swiped from many places, including construction sites, warehouses and abandoned homes. In some areas, crooks drag away entire air conditioning units so that they can remove the copper tubing at their leisure.

But copper theft from utility poles and electrical substations carries a particular concern. Copper energizes current-carrying conductors (wires) and plays a key role in grounding.

Substations—which contain expensive equipment for controlling the flow of electricity from high-voltage transmission lines to your home—must be grounded to the earth to prevent damage from lightning strikes and fault currents. When your co-op grounds equipment in a substation, it makes an electrical connection to a buried network of wires, called a ground grid, that dissipates an excess charge safely over a wide area.

But burying wires causes them to corrode. Buried “aluminum undergoes galvanic corrosion and can turn to dust in two years,” explains Emory Barber, director of cable and systems engineering at Southwire Company, one of the nation's largest manufacturers of transmission lines. “Given the same conditions, copper can last 60 years or more.”

Despite the extreme danger that comes with entering a substation, the copper wire inside is an attractive target. For the relatively small value of the stolen copper, crooks risk their lives and leave a dangerous mess that can be very expensive to clean up.

ESFI estimates the value of copper stolen from utilities—whether grounding wire from substations, grounding wires off poles or even power lines themselves—to be about \$20 million each year. But the financial impact can run three times that amount. And when copper bandits strike, not-for-profit co-ops like yours have no choice but to pass the repair costs on to their members.

A substation or pole that's left ungrounded becomes a dan-

gerous place. Sometimes the thieves touch or cut the wrong conductors, exposing themselves to lethally high voltages. Errant currents can damage electrical equipment, taking the substation or line “down” and interrupting power to consumers. The electricity can even endanger co-op employees, causing injury or death. ESFI estimates that 35 Americans die each year because of copper or other metal theft.

## Foiling Thieves

To prevent theft before it happens, co-ops have embarked on multipronged initiatives. Many have launched intensive public relations campaigns about the issue; others have partnered with local Crime Stoppers chapters and posted rewards. Some co-ops are replacing much of the vulnerable wire with copper-clad steel. Copper-clad steel, which has been around since 1915, boasts the electricity-carrying properties of copper but contains very little scrap value. Although bendable, it can't be cut and removed with normal tools—even hydraulic bolt cutters.

Another technology co-ops are employing is copper wire with identification information, allowing recycling



**As the price of scrap metal remains high, copper has become a target for theft from electrical substations, which creates expensive clean-up for cooperatives and a potentially fatal risk for thieves.**

centers to quickly identify the wire as stolen and contact law enforcement.

Also, keep in mind that no one should be in an electric substation except trained employees. Report any suspicious activity to local law enforcement officials and your electric cooperative. Your diligence can help stop criminals and may even save a life.

*Maurice Martin is a senior program manager for the Cooperative Research Network.*

# Wildlife Ambassadors

*Permitted volunteers  
come to the rescue of  
orphaned, injured,  
sick and displaced  
animals.*

**By Patricia Strutz**



The ravages of wildfires and drought have taken a toll on Texas' wildlife, underscoring the crucial roles of approximately 320 state- and/or federal-permitted wildlife rehabilitation agencies and individuals operating in more than 70 counties.

Most of these wildlife rehabilitators are volunteers, and some work from their homes in coordination with nonprofit organizations. For all, the overarching goal is the same: Provide food, water, shelter and medical treatment to orphaned, injured, sick and displaced animals and return them to the wild whenever possible.

Even during the best weather years, it's not a Monday-through-Friday job, explains Carol Lee, who founded the Lubbock-based South Plains Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in 1988. Typically by early May, for example, many birds have mated and started families.

"We know that because the phone starts ringing," says Lee, who retired as the center's executive director in May 2011 but still serves on its board of directors. "Every call starts the same: I found a baby bird ... what do I do?" (Answer: Unless the bird is bleeding or obviously injured, it's usually best to leave it alone. Upon leaving the nest, fledglings can spend several days on the ground perfecting survival skills under the tutelage of their parents. If a young bird is trying to hop and flutter away from you, it probably doesn't need help.)

But during these harsh climatic times—State Climatologist John W. Nielsen-Gammon has said drought conditions could continue for several years—answers on how to help wildlife in general are not so easily come by. Wildlife rescuers across the state are trying to save the lives of starving animals, such as raccoons, opossums, migrating birds and Red-tailed Hawks struggling to find rodents to eat. There are reports of hawks being hit by vehicles as the desperate raptors chase prey across roads.

Brutal, unrelenting heat over the past year has dried up rivers, streams, springs, puddles and ponds, wreaking havoc on all species. Plants and grasses have suffered, and the insect populations that feed birds, bats and other creatures have been decimated as the circle of wildlife, in some regions, spins almost to a halt.

Severe drought conditions have radically affected the Lubbock area, Lee says. In 2011, native species, such as deer, were having little luck foraging for food, and some mothers, unable to produce enough milk, abandoned their fawns.

Preston Doughty, president and executive director of Austin Wildlife Rescue, says his facility is receiving many "extremely emaciated" animals. As larger areas are affected by drought, he explains, small animals are unable to travel far enough to find ample food and water to survive. "Starvation results and quickly moves up the food chain," Doughty says.

The suffering extends to animals whose habitats have been destroyed by wildfires. "Thousands of acres of forest land have burned here in the Northeast," says wildlife rehabilitator Nancy Holloman of Farmersville, near Dallas. "Animals are





Preston Doughty, president and executive director of Austin Wildlife Rescue, and his co-workers extend care to all animals brought through the doors, from juvenile raccoons to baby skunks.



quickly losing their homes. With the loss of habitat, they're looking for new housing, food and water sources."

Such agencies as Lubbock's SPWRC—the only rehabilitation facility within a 350-mile radius that accepts all native wildlife species—are housing, and releasing, as many animals as possible.

Wildlife rehabilitators generally operate under permits from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The nonprofit rehabilitation agencies receive no funding from state or federal regulatory agencies and rely almost exclusively on donations to offer services at no cost to taxpayers.

Rehabilitators urge people to learn wildlife rescue basics. Parents often leave their young unattended for several hours, says Gail Barnes, volunteer and education coordinator for the SPWRC. Observe an animal from a distance, she says, allowing the mother and baby to reunite. If you decide an animal needs rescuing—particularly if it is covered with insects, appears injured or ill or is in obvious danger—call your nearest wildlife rehabilitator for direction.

"If it's an emergency, keep the animal warm, quiet and in a dark environment," Barnes says. "Don't feed it anything—not even water, milk or bread. Food can kill a dehydrated animal; allow the rehabilitator to administer the proper hydration fluids."

Handle rescued wildlife as little as possible, Barnes continues, and wash your hands thoroughly or wear heavy gloves. Place a rescued animal in a cardboard box just slightly larger than the animal; punch air holes and tape the box shut. Remember, she says, it is illegal for the public to possess a wild animal or bird. The best course of action is to call a permitted rehabilitator.

Wildlife rehabilitators statewide echo the same compassionate refrain: "People look at me like I'm crazy when I tell them I do this for free," says Sheree Etie, president of the board of directors for the Angleton-based Gulf Coast Wildlife Rescue. "Caring about animals is contagious. I know what I do makes a difference."

*Patricia Strutz is a fishing guide and outdoor writer who splits her time among Wisconsin, Florida and everywhere in between. She often travels to Texas to visit family and friends.*

### On TexasCoopPower.com

Is the freezer full of rodents for hungry, rescued raptors? Read how expenses add up fast for wildlife rehabilitators. Plus, online resources detail how to help wildlife.

### WILDLIFE SMARTS

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department officials emphasize that in general, wild animals excel at taking care of themselves and their young until confronted by problems caused by humans. Other than emergency situations that require immediate action, it is always better to contact a rehabilitator before intervening with wildlife. Other tips:

- When driving, don't toss trash or food out of your vehicle. It attracts wildlife to the edge of the road, where animals can be injured or killed.
- Before mowing, walk through tall grass to check for small animals, such as baby rabbits or birds.
- Fledglings are vulnerable to free-roaming pets; keep your pets on leashes.
- Don't leave pet food outside; it attracts animals such as raccoons and opossums.
- Deer antlers can get entangled in netting—take down hammocks when not using them. As young bucks mature, their antlers are covered with a soft skin called velvet—tiny blood vessels in the velvet bring food and minerals to the antlers. When the fully developed antlers have hardened, the blood supply is cut off, and the velvet dies and begins peeling away. Bucks rub their antlers on trees and brush—and sometimes, backyard items such as hammocks—to remove the velvet. Extracting the deer from such netting can be dangerous work for rehabilitators.

# Getting My TV Kicks on ‘Route 66’

*For those willing to sit and watch, the road goes on forever.*

BY MIKE COX

I’ve been getting my kicks lately on “Route 66”—not the old song made famous by Nat King Cole, but the early 1960s television series starring a baby-faced Martin Milner as Tod Stiles and dark-haired George Maharis as Buz Murdock.

To pop-hit theme music composed by Nelson Riddle, the two young, handsome guys traveled the country in a Corvette convertible, looking for work, girls and themselves. They found all that, plus adventure. Aired weekly on CBS from 1960 through 1964, the show captured in artfully shot black-and-white footage a pre-homogenized America. From a modern perspective, the series is a time capsule of the nation’s culture and philosophy on the eve of the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War and the social upheaval of the latter half of the decade. And 12 of the shows were shot in Texas, though none were along Route 66—U.S. Highway 66, which opened in 1926, connecting Chicago to Los Angeles with hundreds of miles of road winding through eight states.

Two or three shows at a time, I’ve gone a far piece down the “Mother Road” toward my goal of seeing all 116 episodes. I have become the person I used to laugh about: a serial killer of time, someone who rents DVDs of vintage movies or TV shows and watches them over and over.

I first observed this phenomenon in my old friend Wayne, a former newspaper colleague now retired from big-time corporate public relations. He’s seen “Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid” 37 times.

Not only can he practically recite the 1969 film’s script word for word, Wayne’s seen the four-part “Lonesome Dove” TV miniseries seven times (run time 384 minutes), watched every episode of “The Andy Griffith Show” (249) in the order they aired, and is working on “Frasier” (264).

Asked why the needle of his figurative record player gets stuck so easily, he offers: “I’ve always believed that a show worth seeing once is worth seeing several times.”

Beyond that, Wayne continued, the human mind is capable of absorbing only so much at one time. He discovers something new every time he watches one of his favorite shows.

Even so, I used to see Wayne’s serial viewing habit as fairly eccentric, to say the least. Sure, I’m always up for seeing “Ghostbusters” one more time, but I never



would have thought about watching something 37 times.

Until recently.

Visiting with a co-worker, it somehow came up that he had seen every episode of “Route 66.” I told him about Wayne, and while shaking my head over someone else having the serial-viewing bug, I did agree that I had enjoyed the show back when. In fact, I remembered when Austin—decades before the shooting of the TV show “Friday Night Lights” there would become old hat—got all atwitter when a “Route 66” episode, “Even Stones Have Eyes,” was filmed in the capital city and Kerrville in 1962.

“Well, I have the whole series on DVD if you’d like to see that episode again,” my colleague said.

I took him up on his offer. But after viewing “Even Stones Have Eyes” for the first time since the Cold War, I was hooked. (In this episode, Buz is blinded when hit by a beam during the construction of the John H. Reagan state office building and ends up at a facility for the sightless at Kerrville where he falls in love with his blind counselor. When Buz regains his sight, he and Tod soon are back on the road, but not before viewers, along with them, have learned a fundamental truth or two about life.)

The first episode of the show filmed in Texas was “Sheba,” in El Paso. It aired on January 6, 1961. Tod and Buz didn’t get back to the Lone Star State until early 1962, when they spent several weeks here.

That year’s visit resulted in: “A Long Piece of Mischief,” Mesquite, January 19; “1800 Days to Justice,” Crandall, January 26; “Aren’t You Surprised to See Me?,” Dallas, February 16; “Even Stones Have Eyes,” Austin-Kerrville, March 30; “Love is a Skinny Kid,” Lewisville, April 6; and “Kiss the Maiden All Forlorn,” Dallas, April 13.

A couple of the Dallas-area installments are prime examples of what made the show good—interesting characters and storylines coupled with 100 percent on-location footage. “Love is a Skinny Kid” captures Lewisville when it was still a small country town. “Kiss the Maiden All Forlorn,” a tale loosely based on the story of convicted embezzler and expatriate Ben Jack Cage, shows Dallas as it appeared only 19 months before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. There are skyline views and exterior and interior shots at the Dallas police department as well as footage of the old Dallas Times-Herald building, including views of the newsroom and wire service teletype machines that would go berserk on November 22, 1963, the day Kennedy was slain.

Having hit North and Central Texas, the cast and crew returned in early 1963 for five more Texas episodes: “Somehow It Gets to Be Tomorrow,” Corpus Christi, February 15; “In the Closing of a Trunk,” Corpus Christi, March 8; “The Cage Around Maria,” Houston, March 15; “Fifty Miles from Home,” Houston, March 22; and “Narcissus on an Old Red Fire Engine,” Galveston, March 29.

The show’s producers never filmed in the Piney Woods of East Texas, along the River Walk in pre-HemisFair San Antonio, the citrus groves of the Rio Grande Valley, the vastness of far West Texas (except El Paso) or the Panhandle. But thanks to digital technology, with “Route 66” or any other favorite show, the road goes on forever for those willing to spend the time to take it.



© PAUL LINSE/CORBIS

‘Route 66’ characters Buz Murdock (left, played by George Maharis) and Tod Stiles (portrayed by Martin Milner) traveled the country in a Corvette convertible, looking for work, girls and themselves. Twelve of the show’s 116 episodes were filmed in Texas.

Mike Cox, frequent contributor



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The purpose of these coins was to give people the opportunity to own physical silver and gold in a form certified for weight and purity by the U.S. Mint. While the bullion coin program was a signal success, nobody took into account the profound effect it would have on the collector market.

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In the 1800s and early 1900s, the U.S. Morgan Silver Dollar was struck year upon year at various mints and circulated at face value. Their core value was in their precious metal content. However, in top grades, Morgan Silver Dollars can sell today for tens and even hundreds of thousands of dollars each!

For the same reason, many collectors today see the Silver Eagle series as a literal "ground floor" opportunity to acquire the top-grade coins as they are released. They started submitting Silver Eagles to the leading independent coin grading services, such as Numismatic Guaranty Corporation (NGC), praying that the coins would come back with the highest possible grade: MS70 (all Uncirculated coins are graded on a point system from a low of 60 to a high of 70, with 70 representing flawless perfection). Of all the Silver Eagles produced by the U.S. Mint in 2011, less than one out of every 788 earned the NGC MS70 grade!

### MS70 = \$\$\$\$\$!

In the rarified atmosphere of MS70, Silver Eagles have soared to market prices that I can only characterize as surreal. Consider this: MS70 Silver Eagles have been selling for truly stratospheric prices. Here are just a few eye-popping examples:

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1991 MS70 Silver Eagle	\$3,910
1994 MS70 Silver Eagle	\$1,660

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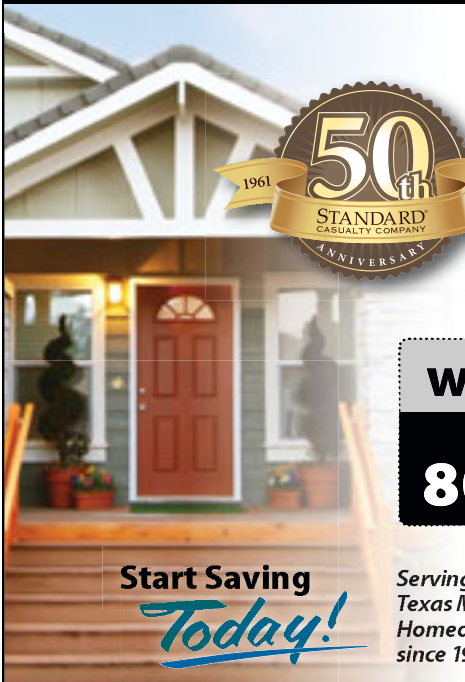
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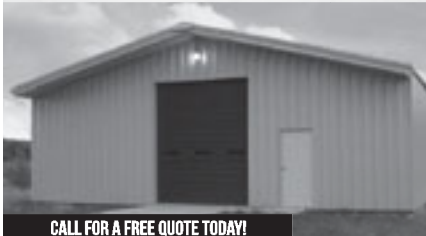
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# ‘San Antonio Rose’

BY LORI GROSSMAN

**B**ob Wills' records sold in the millions. But one extra-special song—"San Antonio Rose," which later became "New San Antonio Rose"—put him on the musical map to stay. A diverse group of artists, from Bing Crosby to Arthur Fiedler and the Boston Pops, recorded their own versions of the song. Apollo 12 astronauts Charles Conrad and Alan Bean even sang it from space—an honor that was truly out of this world. But the story all began with the birth of John and Emmaline Wills' first of 10 children, a son they nicknamed "Jim Rob."

James Robert Wills was born on March 6, 1905, on a farm near Kosse in Limestone County. A relative noted that the baby's fingers looked like those of a fiddler. Both of his grandfathers, his father and most of his uncles played the fiddle, so this was a good omen: Jim Rob first played the fiddle onstage with his family when he was about 10; and during his childhood, Jim Rob and his father wrote the melody for "Faded Love." It wasn't until 1950, courtesy of Jim Rob's youngest brother, Billy Jack, that the song gained lyrics.

In the early 1920s, the Wills family settled on a farm near Turkey. Jim Rob decided to strike out on his own. From 1921 to 1926, he held a variety of jobs, including farmworker and preacher, but he always returned to music. Now that he had a family to support (he married his first wife, Edna, in 1926), Jim Rob trained to become a barber, figuring that it would keep his hands in good condition for fiddle playing.

After graduating from Dendy's Barber College in Amarillo in 1927, he and Edna moved several times, first to Roy, New Mexico, where he barbered by day and fiddled by night, then back to the Wills family farm in early 1928.

Jim Rob got a job at Ham's Barber Shop in Turkey and played at many of the teenage dances in area towns. But the need to move on soon struck again. In 1929, the family moved to Fort Worth, where Jim Rob—who became known as Bob Wills—met several other musicians and formed a band. Wills made his first radio recordings in 1929, and in January 1931, he and his band played on radio station KFJZ during the first broadcast of a show sponsored by Burrus Mill and Elevator Company, which made Light Crust flour. On air, Wills jokingly referred to the band as the Light Crust Doughboys, and the name stuck.

Wills left the Doughboys in 1933 to start a new band, and at midnight on February 10, 1934, the first live show featuring Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys was broadcast on radio station KVOO in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The band's popularity grew quickly. In 1935, New York's Brunswick Record Corporation (later part of Columbia Records) offered the Texas Playboys a recording contract.

Three years later during a recording session, Art Satherley, the artists and repertoire man, asked Wills for more fiddle tunes. Wills tinkered with an earlier composition that he called "Spanish Two Step," creating a new instrumental. Satherley suggested calling the song "San Antonio Rose," and the rest is history.

Songwriter Irving Berlin's publishing company offered to publish the song if Wills would compose lyrics. Several band members submitted lyrics that were rejected. Playboys trumpeter Everett Stover collaborated with Wills on the final set of lyrics. Ultimately, this new version was named "New San Antonio Rose."

Columbia Records set up a recording session on April 16, 1940, probably at Burrus Mill Studio in Saginaw. The Playboys had grown into a big swing band with about 18 musicians participating in the session. The next-to-last song recorded was "New San Antonio Rose."

As noted in Charles R. Townsend's book *San Antonio Rose* (University of Illinois Press, 1976), Wills often said that the song—which produced a gold record, eventually selling more than a million copies—took him "from hamburgers to steaks." The 1940 recording of "New San Antonio Rose" was the biggest-selling record he ever cut and became an American classic known and loved around the world.

Wills, the King of Western Swing, died on May 13, 1975. But at least one group, Austin's Asleep at the Wheel, has kept his brand of music alive and thriving since the 1970s. The words of the group's frontman, Ray Benson, as quoted by a country-music author, sum up this music legend's life: "Western swing would have just been a footnote in American music if it weren't for Bob Wills."



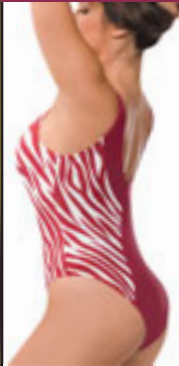
*Dallas-based freelance writer Lori Grossman is a native San Antonian.*

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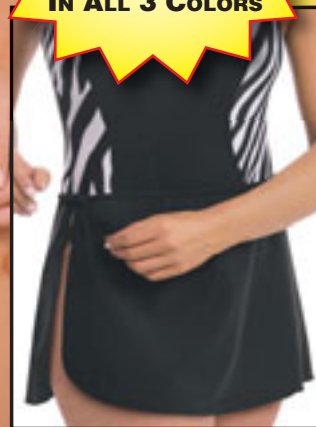
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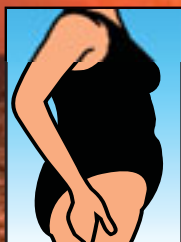


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## Good Morning, Mom!

**BY KEVIN HARGIS** Around my house, brunch is a rare occasion reserved for a relaxed weekend morning. I especially like brunch because it's a meal at which almost every kind of food (or beverage) is appropriate. It's fun to see what the cook of the day will put on the table or to plan a surprising dish for your guests if you're the chef.

May brings two perfect excuses for enjoying the special midmorning meal: The springtime weather and the second Sunday of the month—the day we honor mothers.

What nicer gift for the moms in our lives than to be treated to a leisurely meal, al fresco if the day is nice, made by devoted family members? This after, perhaps, being allowed to sleep in.

Looking for something special to serve her? Here's a recent favorite we've been enjoying at my house. It's a colorful vegetable dish with a bit of meat thrown in for additional flavor. It can stand as a main dish or side and is a healthy complement to any brunch.

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| 1 medium yellow onion or 2 shallots diced | 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese, optional     |
| 1 large red bell pepper, seeded and diced |  |

Trim ends from eggplants, peel and cut each lengthwise into about four slices, about 1/4 inch thick. Line baking sheet with paper towels and generously sprinkle both sides of each slice with kosher salt. Lay slices flat on baking sheet and cover with more paper towels. (This "sweating" step draws moisture from the eggplant and shrinks its cells. This helps eliminate bitterness and allows slices to be fried without absorbing excess oil.) Allow salted slices to sit for at least 20 minutes. Meanwhile, heat 1 tablespoon oil in small sauté pan over medium-low heat. Add onion or shallots and cook, stirring occa-

sionally, until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add bell peppers and continue to cook until vegetables are soft. Turn burner off and let mixture rest. When ready to cook eggplant, blot surface liquid from slices with paper towel, removing any remaining salt. Sprinkle smoked paprika evenly over both sides of each slice. Heat remaining oil in large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add eggplant and cook, turning occasionally, until surface begins to brown, about 10 minutes. Turn heat to low and top each eggplant slice with a piece of ham. Divide pepper mixture evenly among eggplant slices. Sprinkle each with Parmesan, if using. Cover and simmer for 2 minutes, or until cheese melts slightly. Serve immediately.

Servings: 4. Serving size: 2 slices eggplant with topping and cheese. Per serving: 207 calories, 8.3 g protein, 9.4 g fat, 25 g carbohydrates, 9.8 g dietary fiber, 225 mg sodium, 11.3 g sugars, 11 mg cholesterol

**COOK'S TIP:** Thorough drying of eggplant is important; excess moisture will yield a greasy texture.

For a little something sweet to go with a savory dish, try a fruit smoothie. Combine fruit, ice and milk, or a milk substitute, and you get a refreshing beverage that is good for you, too. A flavor combination that I've enjoyed recently pairs banana with the tang of lime and the richness of coconut milk.

### LIME IN THE COCONUT SMOOTHIE

- 1 ripe banana
- Juice of 1 medium lime
- 1 cup (about half a 14-ounce can) coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon, or to taste, honey, sugar or other sweetener
- Ice

Combine banana, lime juice, coconut milk and sweetener in blender and process until smooth. Add enough ice to double level of liquid in blender jar and process until ice is crushed and consistency is as you like it. If too thin, add more ice and process. If too thick, add small amount of coconut milk and process.

Servings: 2. Serving size: 1 1/4 cups. Per serving: 314 calories, 3.1 g protein, 24.3 g fat, 27.9 g carbohydrates, 1.7 g dietary fiber, 15 mg sodium, 16.4 g sugars, trace cholesterol



**RICK LANDWEHR**, *Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative*

Prize-winning recipe: **Eggs New Orleans**

Elegant, easy and delicious: That's definitely a winning combination for a brunch recipe. The smoky flavor of the salmon and richness of the sour cream sauce made this dish a winner. "One of the most enjoyable things about this dish is that it requires only a very short preparation time and is very simple," wrote Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative member Rick Landwehr, who submitted this first-place brunch dish.

## EGGS NEW ORLEANS

- 1/4 cup diced onions
- Butter or oil for sauté
- 1 dozen eggs
- 4 ounces shredded smoked salmon
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup shredded Swiss cheese
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 2 ounces sherry, optional
- 6 English muffins to serve

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Lightly sauté onions in butter or oil. Break 1 dozen eggs into lightly greased 9-inch casserole dish. In separate bowl gently combine onions, salmon, sour cream,

cheese, mustard and, if using, sherry. Spoon mixture over eggs, being careful not to break yolks. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, or until yolks are cooked. Serve over toasted English muffin halves.

Servings: 6. Serving size: 2 eggs and 1 muffin. Per serving: 534 calories, 32.7 g protein, 27.8 g fat, 32.1 g carbohydrates, 1.7 g dietary fiber, 930 mg sodium, 4.3 g sugars, 432 mg cholesterol

## SAVORY CABBAGE STRUDEL

- 1 pound bulk Italian sausage
- 1 large head green cabbage, cored
- 1 large or 2 medium sweet onions
- 1 cup butter, divided

Dash salt

- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 8 ounces sour cream
- 20 sheets phyllo dough, thawed
- 1 cup pecan pieces

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Cook sausage until crumbly and no longer pink; drain excess fat, place in large mixing bowl and set aside. Shred cored cabbage into strips about 1/4 inch wide. Chop onions in medium dice. In large, deep-sided skillet, melt 2 tablespoons butter and sauté onion until translucent and tender, about 5 minutes, then add to sausage. In same skillet, melt 6 tablespoons butter, then add cabbage and cook on medium-low heat, turning often, until completely wilted. Add salt and pepper, then add to sausage mixture along with remaining butter from pan. Toss ingredients to mix. Add sour cream and toss again to coat. Set aside to cool. Melt 1/2 cup butter in small saucepan. Working quickly (or using a damp, lint-free towel) separate one

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sheet of phyllo, brush with butter, then sprinkle with pecan pieces. Add next piece of phyllo and repeat process, making 10 total layers. Place half of cabbage mixture in center of dough, leaving about 1½ inches on each end and 3 inches on each side. Fold ends in over filling, then fold sides and place seam-side down on nonstick baking sheet. Repeat process for other half of phyllo and filling. Brush tops and sides of finished loaves with more butter and bake 35 to 40 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven, slice on diagonal and serve.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 494 calories, 10.6 g protein, 36.8 g fat, 26.9 g carbohydrates, 4.3 g dietary fiber, 466 mg sodium, 5.8 g sugars, 79 mg cholesterol

**MARJI BUELL**

*Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative*

## PEACH CHAMPAGNE SOUP WITH PINWHEEL COOKIES

### PEACH CHAMPAGNE SOUP

- 1 pound frozen peaches
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup white champagne
- ¾ cup granulated sugar

Combine all ingredients in blender. Blend on high until well combined and smooth.

Servings: 4. Serving size: 1 cup. Per serving: 269 calories, 3.6 g protein, 1.4 g fat, 53 g carbohydrates, 1.7 g dietary fiber, 55 mg sodium, 50.7 g sugars, 4 mg cholesterol

**COOK'S TIP:** This can be made using almost any kind of frozen or fresh fruit.

### PINWHEEL COOKIES

- 1 box (11 ounces) puff pastry dough
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅓ cup granulated sugar

Roll out one sheet of puff pastry about ¼ inch thick on lightly floured surface. Beat egg with 2 tablespoons water. Brush puff pastry with egg wash. Combine cinnamon and sugar in small bowl and sprinkle evenly over puff pastry. Start at one end of puff pastry and roll dough into spiral. Place rolled dough in freezer for about 10 minutes, or until

dough is firm. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Remove dough from freezer, cut into slices about ½ inch thick and place onto baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake at 350 degrees for 12 to 14 minutes. Allow to cool for 10 minutes before removing from baking sheet.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 2 cookies. Per serving: 179 calories, 2.6 g protein, 9.7 g fat, 19.5 g carbohydrates, 0.6 g dietary fiber, 69 mg sodium, 5.8 g sugars, 13 mg cholesterol

**AMANDA SILVA**

*Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative*

## COUSCOUS AND VEGGIE STUFFED BELL PEPPERS

- 1 medium onion
- 1 large green onion
- 1 stalk celery
- 1 carrot
- 2 cloves garlic
- 4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- Basil, salt and pepper to taste
- 10 button mushrooms
- ⅓ cup pecans, chopped
- ⅓ cup chopped parsley
- 1 cup cooked couscous
- 4 large bell peppers (cut in half or topped)
- 1 large egg, whisked with 2 teaspoons water or stock

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Chop onions, celery, carrot and garlic. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in sauté pan over medium-high heat. Sauté onions and garlic for 2 minutes; add celery and carrot. Season lightly with basil, salt and pepper. Continue to sauté for another 2 to 3 minutes. Slice mushrooms and add to sauté. Stir well. Add remaining 2 tablespoons oil and incorporate well. Reduce heat to low and add pecans,

parsley and couscous; season lightly again. Cook to heat through. While mixture is heating, cut peppers and remove seeds and membranes. For 4 larger servings, top peppers; for 8 smaller servings, cut peppers in half. Place peppers in glass baking dish. Remove couscous mixture from heat and let it cool slightly. Quickly blend egg mixture into couscous mixture, then fill each pepper to top. Cover dish with foil and bake 15 minutes, then remove foil and bake another 15 to 20 minutes or until filling browns.

Servings: 4. Serving size: 1 pepper. Per serving: 320 calories, 11.6 g protein, 20.8 g fat, 27 g carbohydrates, 6.3 g dietary fiber, 51 mg sodium, 9 g sugars, 46 mg cholesterol

**PEPE LAFLAMME**

*Cherokee County Electric Cooperative Association*

## ROCK CREEK ALMOND TEA

- 2 tablespoons unsweetened instant tea
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 can (12 ounces) frozen lemonade concentrate
- 1 tablespoon almond extract
- 1 tablespoon vanilla

Mix together tea, sugar and 3 cups water and boil for five minutes. Then add remaining ingredients and 8 cups cold water.

Servings: 12. Serving size: 1 cup. Per serving: 142 calories, 0.1 g protein, trace fat, 35.2 g carbohydrates, 0.1 g dietary fiber, 2 mg sodium, 33.1 g sugars

**PAM KINKEMA**

*United Cooperative Services*

**SEE MORE RECIPES ONLINE AT TEXASCOOPPOWER.COM.**



## \$100 RECIPE CONTEST

**September's recipe contest topic is In a Pickle. A variety of veggies and fruit can be preserved through pickling. Share your favorite recipes with us. The deadline is May 10.**

Submit recipes online at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/contests). Or mail them to Home Cooking, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. You may also fax them to (512) 763-3408. Please include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op. Also, let us know where you found the recipe or whether it's one you developed yourself. The top winner will receive \$100. Runners-up will also receive a prize.

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▲ **Stephanie Molina** says Beaumonters love to brag that “our hydrant is bigger than yours.” The Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative member snapped this shot of Marisa McClain on her visit to The Fire Museum of Texas in Beaumont.

Bigger-than-your-face pancakes? Sure, why not? CoServ Electric members **Mark** and **Diana Price** say son **Daniel's** eyes got round when the heaping plate arrived at their table in Lewisville. ►

#### Upcoming in Focus on Texas

ISSUE	SUBJECT	DEADLINE
Jul	Yard Art	May 10
Aug	Up Close and Personal	Jun 10
Sep	Pet Tricks	Jul 10
Oct	Ooops!	Aug 10
Nov	Water Towers	Sep 10
Dec	Night Photography	Oct 10

**YARD ART** is the topic for our **JULY 2012** issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to **Yard Art, Focus on Texas, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701**, before **MAY 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.** If you use a digital camera, submit your highest-resolution images online at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](http://TexasCoopPower.com/contests). 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.



Now, that's what you call a turnip. Five-year-old **Zareya Bonner**, granddaughter of Panola-Harrison Electric Cooperative members **Arono** and **Joyce Jeter**, picked the biggest of the bunch—an approximate 3-pounder—from her grandfather's patch. ►

## EVERYTHING'S BIGGER IN TEXAS

You've heard it before: “Everything's bigger in Texas.” But this doesn't just go for 10-gallon hats, big hair and the famous 72-ounce steak at The Big Texan in Amarillo. If you've paid attention, you might also have noticed the world's largest cowboy boots in San Antonio. Or Paisano Pete, the world's largest roadrunner, in Fort Stockton. So keep a keen eye. Texas-sized sights are everywhere—not too far from where you hang your hat.

—ASHLEY CLARY-CARPENTER

Pedernales Electric Cooperative member **Amanda Gregory** says Titus, their gentle giant of a Siberian cat, is sweet to children—including 3-year-old son **Gabriel**—but tough on scorpions. “A true Texan!” she affirms. ▼



▲ Honey, they shrunk the girls! Central Texas Electric Cooperative member **Dallas Gorman** says he and daughters **Bailey**, left, and **Lizzie Gorman** drive past these larger-than-life “bluebonnets” on each back-road trip from Lakeway to Cleburne.





# AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS

This is just a sampling of the events and festivals around Texas. For the complete listing, please visit [TexasCoopPower.com/events](http://TexasCoopPower.com/events).

## PICK OF THE MONTH

**MAY 12**  
**VICTORIA**

Soap Box Derby, (361) 485-3230  
[www.victoria.org](http://www.victoria.org)



SOAP BOX DERBY RACER: 2012 © EVAN SHARBONEAU. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM. CHIHUAHUA: 2012 © ERIC ISSELÉE. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM. TEA CUPS: 2012 © JABIRU. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM. DANCER: 2012 © JEFF SCHULTES. IMAGE FROM BIGSTOCK.COM.

# MAY



**5**

**HILLSBORO**  
Outlets at Hillsboro  
Chihuahua Races

**03**

**FLORESVILLE**  
Floresville Opry, (830)  
393-6512, <http://wilsoncountyhistory.org>

**HELOTES** [3-6]  
Cornyval, (210) 695-2103,  
[www.cornyval.org](http://www.cornyval.org)

**04**

**HUNTSVILLE** [4-5]  
6th Ever Chigger Hill BBQ  
Cook-Off, (936) 291-0129,  
[www.samhoustonpost95.org](http://www.samhoustonpost95.org)

**05**

**BELLVILLE**  
Animal Friends Shelter's  
Hound Dog Ball, (979)  
865-2525, [www.animalfriendsshelter.org](http://www.animalfriendsshelter.org)

**CLUTE**  
GoClute.com Car & Bike  
Show, (979) 265-2508

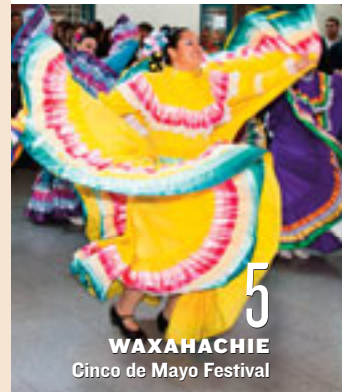


**5**

**MONTGOMERY**  
Antiques Festival

**05**

**HILLSBORO**  
Outlets at Hillsboro  
Chihuahua Races,  
(254) 582-2047,  
[www.outletsathillsboro.com](http://www.outletsathillsboro.com)



**5**

**WAXAHACHIE**  
Cinco de Mayo Festival

**WAXAHACHIE**  
Cinco de Mayo Festival,  
(972) 937-2390,  
<http://waxahachie5de5.com/default.aspx>

**MONTGOMERY** [5-6]  
Antiques Festival, (936)  
597-5004, <http://hmmba.biz>

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# AROUND TEXAS AROUND TEXAS



12

**LAKE JACKSON**  
Birds and  
Bottomlands Blitz

11

**MINEOLA** [11-12]  
Mineola May Days,  
(903) 569-2087,  
[www.mineolachamber.org](http://www.mineolachamber.org)

12

**GRANGER**  
Lakefest, (512) 859-2755,  
[www.cityofgranger.org](http://www.cityofgranger.org)

**LAKE JACKSON**  
Birds and Bottomlands  
Blitz, (979) 480-0999,  
[www.gcbo.org](http://www.gcbo.org)

**WINNSBORO** [12-13]  
Spring Festival, (903)  
342-5267, [www.winnsboro  
onlineguide.com](http://www.winnsboroonlineguide.com)

17

**LULING**  
84th Annual Field Day,  
(830) 875-2438,  
[www.lulingfoundation.org](http://www.lulingfoundation.org)

18

**MOUNT PLEASANT** [18-19]  
Moonlight Festival &  
Outhouse Races,  
(903) 572-8567,  
[www.mtleasanttx.com](http://www.mtleasanttx.com)

19

**CLEBURNE**  
Johnson County  
Community Fest & Chili  
Cook-Off, (817) 776-1300,  
<http://jcfest.org>

**HONDO**  
Hondo Army Airfield Fly-In,  
(830) 426-3037,  
[www.hondochamber.com/](http://www.hondochamber.com/)  
Hondo-Army-Airfield-Fly-  
In.php



19

**MARSHALL**  
Cajun Dance

19

**MARSHALL**  
Cajun Dance,  
(903) 935-4484,  
[www.marshallartscouncil  
.org](http://www.marshallartscouncil.org)

**VALLEY SPRING**  
VFD Fish Fry Fundraiser,  
(325) 247-4023

20

**BLEIBLERVILLE**  
VFD Fish Fry,  
(979) 249-6382

25

**FREDERICKSBURG** [25-27]  
Crawfish Festival,  
(830) 997-8515,  
[www.tex-fest.com/  
crawfish/index.htm](http://www.tex-fest.com/crawfish/index.htm)

JUNE

01

**CANYON** [1-2]  
Night at PPHM,  
(806) 651-2244,  
<http://panhandleplains.org>

01

**CASTROVILLE**  
1st Friday "Party on the  
Porch" at the Jail Haus,  
(210) 275-0506,  
[www.jailhausboutique.com](http://www.jailhausboutique.com)




**CANYON**  
Night at PPHM

We pick events for the  
magazine directly from  
[TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).  
Submit your event for July  
by May 10, and it just might  
be featured in this calendar!

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JUNE 2 @ 8:30a-2p  
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 [escapetodenton.com](http://escapetodenton.com)  
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# BASTROP STATE PARK

*Finding hope in the ashes of the Lost Pines*

BY KEVIN HARGIS



Shock and sadness ... those were my predominant feelings as I made my first visit to **BASTROP STATE PARK** since September's devastating Bastrop County Complex wildfire ripped through the 6,500-acre loblolly pine forest preserve.

Virtually everywhere I looked on a cloud-scattered December afternoon, I saw the path of the firestorm that had engulfed the park: scabs of charred bark clung to tree trunks; bare earth, in some spots covered by a thin layer of dead pine needles; vast swaths of empty floor of the forest known as the Lost Pines, where underbrush once stood thick. Everywhere my eyes landed, I found evidence of loss and destruction.

But there were also hopeful signs.

The park's signature cabins built decades earlier by the Civilian Conservation Corps were untouched. Its **18-HOLE GOLF COURSE**, unique among Texas state parks, was relatively unblemished. Thanks to the efforts of firefighters, the swimming pool area and **HISTORIC CCC-CONSTRUCTED REFECTORY** had been spared from the flames.

The foundation for the park's return to its pine-scented glory was intact. But much recovery lies ahead.

A torrential downpour in late January revealed another problem facing the park: erosion. Plants that had held the soil in place were now ash. The 5 inches of rain that fell during the one-night deluge washed out a portion of Park Road 1A, part of a winding network of roads that connects Bastrop State Park to its sister, Buescher State Park.

Beset by these problems, and a subsequent loss of visitors and revenue, park staff members are fighting back. Restoration of campgrounds, roads and trails is ongoing. Almost all campgrounds are again open. Many trails are accessible, and dead trees that pose a danger to visitors are being marked and cut.

And nature is showing her resilience—saplings have sprouted through the soil enriched with ash from their burned ancestors. Birdsong echoes through

the bare trunks, and even the calls of the endangered Houston Toad, which some biologists feared had been wiped out by drought and conflagration, have been heard.

I, like many who have visited the park through the years, wondered what I could do to help. A volunteer workday provided the answer for me.

Led by Volunteer Coordinator/Park Interpreter Katie Raney, the volunteer days have set hundreds of hands to work on projects where people power can make a difference.

That's how on a sunny February morning, I found myself with about 50 other hard hat-clad volunteers traipsing toward Pond No. 8, a Houston Toad hangout near the route of the Lost Pines Trail. Our mission: spread mulch made from fallen trees around the perimeter of the pond to give the toads a place to hide and help promote regrowth of underbrush that will provide the amphibians with habitat.

We formed a bucket brigade stretching from the large mulch pile atop a rise down several hundred feet to the pond's edge. The shivering of a cool winter morning was quickly forgotten as a steady stream of filled, five-gallon buckets were passed hand-to-hand downslope with mulch to be spread on the ground and stacks of empties handed back up to be refilled. Jackets were doffed as we made quick progress, with friends and strangers, young and old and in singles, couples and groups tackling the work at hand with smiles, jokes and laughter.

A little more than two hours later, the last bucket was passed down and dumped, and the toad oasis of Pond No. 8 was ringed with a layer of protective mulch.

I returned to my truck with weary arms and a tight back but was left with the satisfying feeling that perhaps I'd made a difference. Maybe because of the efforts of myself and the other volunteers, a toad on the brink of extinction would have a fighting chance to survive and a park I love to visit will someday fully recover.

*Kevin Hargis, food editor*



**The endangered Houston toad, along with its Bastrop State Park habitat, has gotten a helping hand in recovering from a devastating wildfire. Do you want to lend a hand? Learn how to help state parks at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).**



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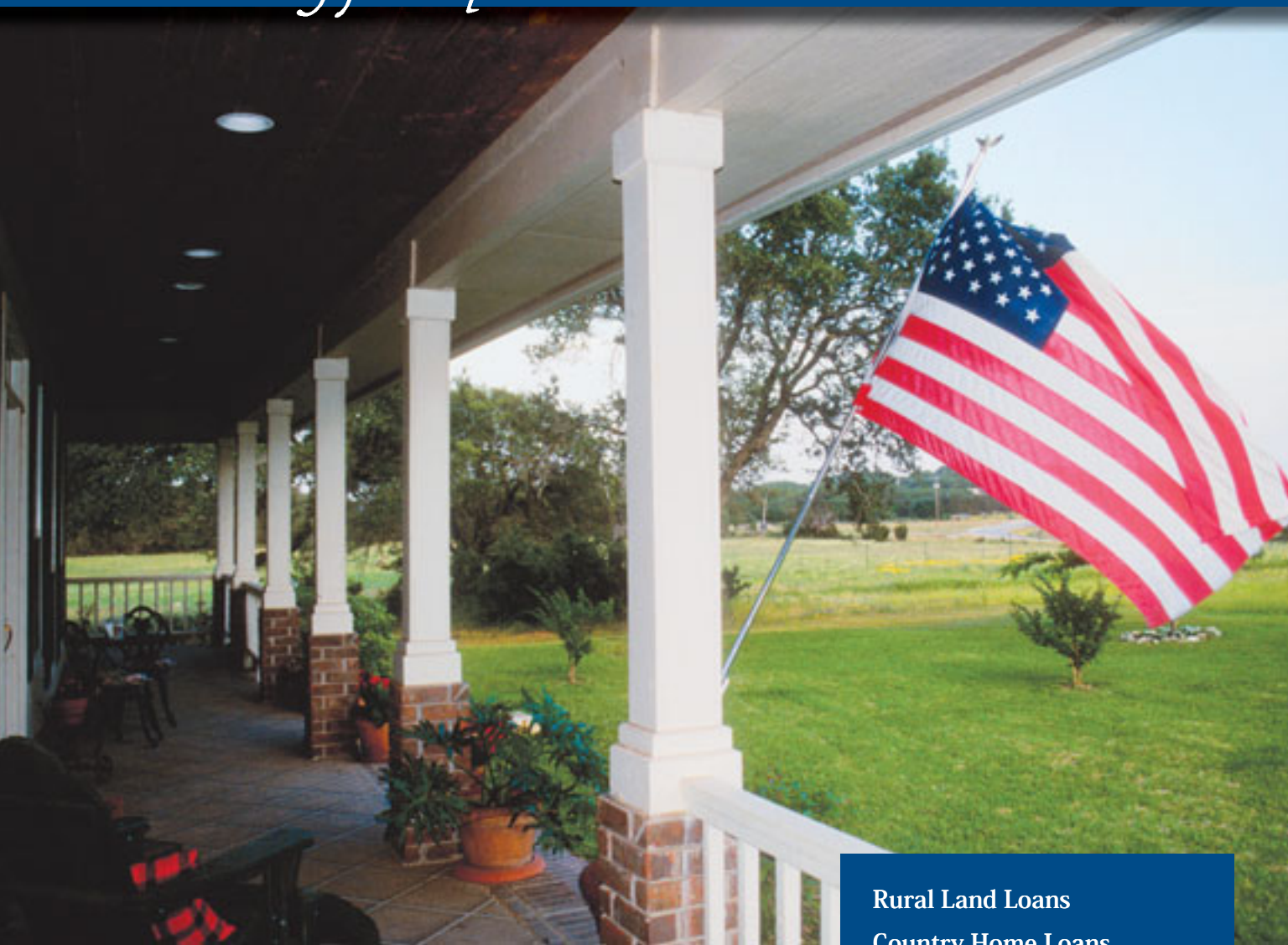
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