

GRANDMA IS A
TIKTOK STAR

HOLIDAY SIDE DISHES
FOR YOUR GATHERINGS

WHEN TEXAS REACHED
INTO WYOMING

Texas Coop Power

FOR TRINITY VALLEY EC MEMBERS

NOVEMBER 2022

Prize Catch

High school anglers
reel in championships
and scholarships

**TRINITY
VALLEY EC
NEWS**

SEE PAGE 18



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November 2022



08

Grandma Goes Viral

She's a TikTok star whose down-home videos have amassed a global following.

*By Mark Wangrin
Photos by Scott Van Osdol*

12 Lakes' Allure

High school anglers get their hooks into lucrative tournament prizes and experiences.

*Story and photos
by Erich Schlegel*

ON THE COVER

Tyler Anderson of Lake Travis High School lands a bass during a tournament.

Photo by Erich Schlegel

ABOVE

Dawn Hodges has put her Bellville kitchen on the social media landscape.

Photo by Scott Van Osdol

04

Currents

The latest buzz

06

TCP Talk

Readers respond

18

Co-op News

Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

29

Footnotes in Texas History

Everything Was Bigger ...
By W.F. Strong

30

TCP Kitchen

Holiday Sides
By Megan Myers

34

Hit the Road

Toe Tappin' in Turkey
By Chet Garner

37

Focus on Texas

Photo Contest: Aerials

38

Observations

The Arable Twos
By Martha Deeringer

Over the Moon

WANT TO SEE a total lunar eclipse?

The moon will pass through the darkest part of the Earth's shadow November 8, a phenomenon that will be visible in Texas wherever skies are clear.

Check it out 2:01–7:58 a.m. It's the last chance to see a total lunar eclipse from Texas until March 14, 2025.



Edible Edifice

The Traditions Club near Texas A&M University holds the world record for the largest gingerbread house, built in November 2013 in Bryan.

The brown gingerbread bricks lacquered in frosting required 1,800 pounds of butter, 7,200 eggs, 7,200 pounds of flour and nearly 3,000 pounds of brown sugar.

All told, the house stacked up to be 60 feet long, 42 feet wide and 10 feet tall. Oh, and it contained nearly 36 million calories.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I ...

TCP Tell us how you would finish that sentence. Email your short responses to letters@TexasCoopPower.com or comment on our Facebook post. Include your co-op and town.

Below are some of the responses to our September prompt: **Rural life is ...**

Seeing the dust rise a mile away and knowing you better get the laundry off the line and folded before mother pulls into the driveway.

BARBARA TWEED
TRI-COUNTY EC
FORT WORTH

Seeing more tractors go by your house than cars.

JOHN AND SHERRIE MOORE
BLUEBONNET EC
PAIGE

When you see every star in the sky and you can hear every sound that nothing makes.

COREY JACOB
PEDERNALES EC
DRIPPING SPRINGS

Knowing and helping your neighbor even though he's acres away.

ROBERT LANKFORD
HOUSTON COUNTY EC
APPLE SPRINGS

Far from Walmart.

ANGEL GORKA
CECA
MAY

Visit our website to see more responses.

75 Years of Insight

Meet the Press, the longest-running program on American TV, first aired November 6, 1947.

Dig This

NOVEMBER 4 is Arbor Day in Texas.

Your electric cooperative wants to keep you safe and your power on, reminding you that regardless of where you're planting, never dig without first calling 811 to locate underground utilities.



Landmark Election

Edith Wilmans became the first woman elected to the Texas Legislature when Dallas County voters chose her 100 years ago this month—November 7, 1922.

She served one term in the House and then ran unsuccessfully for governor.

Make sure to cast your vote on Election Day, November 8.



S-U-R-R-E-A-L

That's how San Antonio teen Harini Logan, above, described winning the 2022 Scripps National Spelling Bee in June.

Surreal could also describe Texans' prowess at spelling. Three of the other 12 finalists call Texas home. And Logan joins six other Texans who have won outright or shared titles since 2014.

That includes three from the state who were among the octo-champs in 2019—the only time eight contestants were co-champs.

Contests and More

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TAYLOR CALLERY

Roll Call

“In 1959 my bus driver, Mr. Wisely, gave me a Standing Liberty quarter when he saw me crying over losing my Big Chief tablet.”

DAN KING
LAMAR ELECTRIC
PARIS

Returning Home

I loved the article showcasing young people returning to the family farm as entrepreneurs [*Connecting With the Land*, September 2022]. I am in a similar circumstance with my rancher father in a San Saba nursing home.

We have been in the area for five-plus generations, but I have lived all over and find I, too, am a “weirdo.” Glad to see I am not alone.

I was also pleased to see the article highlight how one family set up a business inviting more diverse communities, including LGBTQ and people of color, to the area to camp.

Michelle Pollock
Hamilton County EC
Lometa

This is a delicious burger [Homemade Popper-Topped Burgers, August 2022]. And the topper can also be tweaked into a topper for something hot off the grill. Yum.

MELINDA WOOD
SASARAK
VIA FACEBOOK

Costly Payoff

Kirk Tidwell’s statement, “I only get paid once a year, and this is my payday right here,” shook me [*Prized Fibers*, July 2022]. I guess I have always known that farmers only get paid when crops are sold, but seeing it in writing made it so real. Farmers and others in agriculture should be the most appreciated workforce in this country.

Roberta McLaughlin
Heart of Texas EC
Lorena

Landry’s Followers

As I traveled around the country, I tried to schedule trips to coincide with a Cowboys game [*The Most Glorious Autumn*, August 2022]. I watched Coach Landry sign autographs in every hotel lobby for almost 30 minutes before he could make it to the elevator.

Bill “Cowboy” Lamza
San Bernard EC
Hempstead



JULIA ROBINSON

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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

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

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This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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Watch Grandma Cook

She's a TikTok star whose down-home videos have amassed a global following

THE MOST UNLIKELY TIKTOK INFLUENCER

in Texas lives in an old country house behind a scattering of oak and hickory off Highway 36 about 5 miles north of Bellville, which is about the time it takes to drink a beer, judging by the number of empties Dawn Hodges usually finds beside the roadway in front of her farm.

Quick-witted and flashing a smile beneath her piercing blue eyes, this Houston native is 76 years old, not quite 5 feet tall, uses glasses sparingly and can hear a visitor knock on the back door from her kitchen at the other end of the house.

We mention the kitchen because that's how we got here. Dawn cooks—well. And she loves to share her recipes on a social network most septuagenarians are as likely to use as a skateboard.

"I don't have the big head," says a bemused Dawn. "I'm not feeding off it—but I am enjoying it. I never thought people would be so interested in watching a grandma cook."

And yet, here she is, a TikTok star who has posted 173 videos and boasts more than 200,000 followers; her three-minute video on how to make pickles has 1.9 million views. At a follower's request, she filmed a shorter video with her 17-year-old grandson, Caden, and his friend, sampling the pickles, crunching loudly and looking happy. It got 166,800 views. Heck, a TikTok of her riding a tractor got 42,400 hits.

If there's one thing about a grandmother being a TikTok star that makes sense, it's that Dawn loves to talk. A visitor could come with 30 minutes' worth of questions and leave



OPPOSITE Dawn Hodges serves up a plate of fresh-baked oatmeal chocolate chip cookies. ABOVE Hamburger steak, as TikTok viewers see it come together.

four hours later with a notebook full of scribbling and a belly full of her delicious chocolate zucchini cake. (Yes, her recipe is on TikTok.)

A question about her cooking might lead to a yarn about Willie, the ill-fated family pig. One about how many critters she has on her farm turns into a tale of Squeaky, a sturdy, good-tempered feral cat who likes to kill gophers and drag them above an open door in her garage, much to the dismay of her two dogs—and anyone standing there when the door comes down.

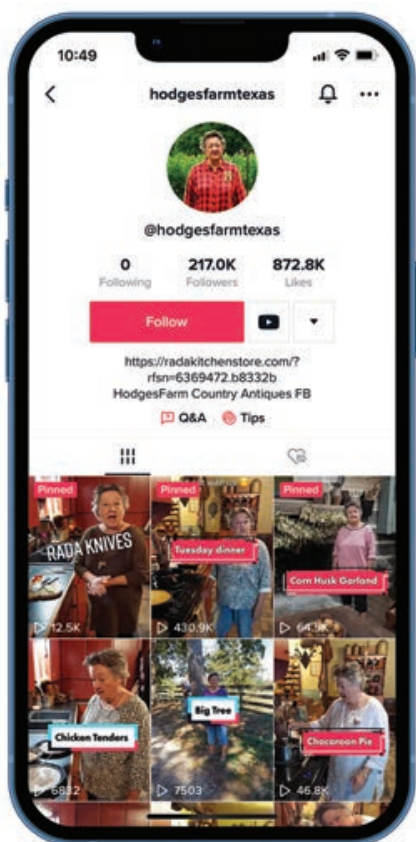
Outside the house, cobbled together from homes and parts of homes from the 1800s and filled with antiques of the same period, is the rest of the L-shaped, 95-acre

spread. There's the potting shed, a garden, a log cabin and an older structure surrounded by an overhanging porch that served as a commercial kitchen when Dawn and her late husband, Doug, gave a go at a business—a result of her fame as the Pimento Cheese Queen of Bellville, a story for another day—but now houses antiques and a refrigerator she stocks with farm eggs that neighbors can stop by and pick up on the honor system. Out back is the barn, a chicken coop, pasture, pond and the home of her daughter, Amy Owens.

Amy sparked Dawn's TikTok adventure because she wanted others to enjoy her mom's prowess in the kitchen.

"Well, I've always wanted to do that," Amy says, "because she's really good at telling people what to do. Anybody will tell you that."

And Dawn could always cook. Anybody will tell you that, too.



FROM LEFT Millions of viewers like seeing what Hodges is up to in her kitchen. Grandson Caden Owens shows the simplicity of producing a TikTok video. “I never thought people would be so interested in watching a grandma cook,” Hodges says.

In October 2020, Doug passed away. He spent 31 years as an office and then business manager at San Bernard Electric Cooperative before retiring in 2005, and he slowly succumbed to dementia. “It was the worst time of my life,” Dawn says.

Looking to lift her mother’s spirits, Amy suggested producing videos for YouTube and later Facebook. Dawn admits the videos were long and unfocused, but it was valuable experience.

One evening about a year ago, Amy, Caden and Dawn were eating supper when Caden said, “You should put them on TikTok. That’s where the videos go crazy.”

So they posted a blackberry custard pie video, and it has since gotten over 54,000 views. “And we’re like, whoa,” Amy recalls.

Her fame took off from there, with Dawn getting to share her passion with strangers all over the world.

“I don’t care whether you believe it or not, but God puts stuff on your heart,” she says. For her, that has almost always been cooking.

As a child, Dawn spent summers on her Aunt Mary’s farm. Mary was a superb cook, and Dawn was inspired. Dawn’s mom “cooked because she had to,” so Dawn became the self-

taught family chef-in-residence.

Enter TikTok, where creators can make short videos, ranging from a few seconds to up to 10 minutes, often set to music and modified by filters. It skews young—almost half its users are under 25.

After making its international debut four years ago, TikTok has captured short attention spans among Americans. The platform boasts 3.5 billion mobile app downloads worldwide. It’s a popular platform for businesses, marketing and entertainers trying to make it big and people who create memes, attempt unusual challenges and generally try to go viral.

Dale Blasingame hates the expression. “I think marketers use it too much,” says the assistant professor of practice in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Texas State University, where he specializes in social media. “They promise everything will go viral. If you’re producing consistently good content, you have a much greater chance of something finally hitting than if you’re doing nothing but trying to go viral all the time.”

Which brings us back to Dawn. Blasingame can see why she’s successful.

She looks different from many TikTok performers, he says. She’s genuine, displaying a rare comfort level with the platform, unlike many her age. Her videos have solid production value (“Just me and my fancy Samsung phone,” Amy says), aren’t overproduced and are clear, simple and easy to understand.

And she’s typecast for her role.

“When you stop to think about who you trust with cooking



tips, she kind of fits the exact bill, right?” Blasingame says. “Especially when you think about the typical TikTok user, who’s probably between 15 and 30. She’s Grandmother’s age.”

Not much is known about the algorithm TikTok uses, but one thing that’s obvious, Blasingame says, is that it’s equal opportunity.

“The greatest aspect of TikTok’s algorithm is that you don’t already need to be a celebrity, a superstar or a big name or have a big following to become a shining star on TikTok,” he says. “Unlike Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, it’s the one platform where anyone, literally anyone, can produce one piece of content that can catapult them to tens of thousands, even a million, followers.”

That’s not lost on Dawn, who ponders the ridiculousness of becoming a TikTok influencer.

“This blows my mind,” she says, shaking her head. “I thought TikTok was just a bunch of kids jumping around and acting crazy.”

She has also become aware of the flip side of TikTok fame—the trolls. Commenters will rag on her for using Velveeta instead of traditional cheese, for mentioning God a lot or any one of a dozen or more things.

“I had to almost ban a troll last night for just being tacky

“This blows my mind. I thought TikTok was just a bunch of kids jumping around and acting crazy.”

because Mom used a packet of gravy on her hamburger steak instead of making it homemade,” Amy says.

Dawn has her go-to reply for those instances: “I just respond with a heart emoji.”

The rest of her followers bring her joy. She hears from fans in Finland, Mexico, Canada, Germany and France, to name a few, and some ask for recipe substitutes when they can’t find some of the ingredients she grows in her spacious garden. And then there’s the Corpus Christi artist who created an oil painting of Dawn in 80 minutes, recorded a time-lapse video of the process and sent the TikTok to her.

She’s got a new fan, too. Blasingame, who became a vegetarian in May, still is intrigued by Dawn’s videos. There are the biscuits and sweet potato casserole, of course, but there are also memories of his own mother, who passed away in 2021.

“She kind of even looks like my mom a bit; they have a very similar hairdo,” he says sweetly. “When I watched her videos, that was the first thing that popped into my mind. My mom was a great cook.

“I wish I had videos like this preserved in time, you know, to try to remember all of her amazing recipes.”

Thanks to TikTok and Dawn Hodges, he kind of already does. ■



Lakes' Allure

High school anglers
get their hooks
into lucrative
tournament prizes
and experiences

How about a big fish tale?

Within the first few casts at the 6 a.m. start of one of the biggest Texas high school fishing tournaments this year, Hunter Boren and Joe Fleming hooked the biggest catches of the day—within seconds of each other. Captain and boat driver Mike Boren had to scramble to figure out which fish to net first.

“Mine weighed 7.95 pounds, and seconds later Joe caught his that weighed 7.6 pounds,” Hunter Boren says. “Those first few minutes were insane madness.”

With those fish, the Pearland High School seniors won the Texas High School Bass Association’s Angler of the Year tournament on Lake Conroe in June. Three weeks earlier, the team scored nearly the same quick hits to finish seventh in the THSBA State Championship on Belton Lake in Temple.

On the first day of the state championship—within minutes of the sunrise start—Fleming caught the first and biggest fish of that day. The 5.81-pound bass jumped once, then Fleming quickly wrangled it into the net, pumped his fist and high-fived Hunter Boren.

The Angler of the Year event is the final tournament in the THSBA circuit, which includes more than 50 tournaments. According to Matt Tolnay, who heads operations for the series, more than 3,100 anglers from 300 Texas schools compete for more than a half-million dollars in scholarships.

Boren and Fleming each won \$3,000 scholarships and \$1,000 gift cards from Academy Sports + Outdoors for winning Angler of the Year. Because THSBA isn’t part of the state’s University Interscholastic League, it can award prizes and scholarships.

The THSBA is the largest fishing circuit for high school anglers, but there are several smaller series, including Deep East Texas High School Fishing, based at the Sam Rayburn



OPPOSITE Early positioning—4 a.m.—helped Joe Fleming, left, and Hunter Boren land 30 pounds of bass and first-place trophies. ABOVE Boat captain Mike Boren prepares to net one of Fleming’s bass.

Reservoir; the Central Texas High School Tournament Trail; and Texas B.A.S.S. Nation, run by Bassmaster.

On THSBA tournament days, boat ramps are busy with teams backing their crafts into a lake in the dark well before dawn, their glowing red and green navigation lights reflecting on the water. The tournament organizer gathers the teams to announce the rules and time for weigh-in.

Then, as dawn’s colors creep into the sky, anglers stand on their bows as the national anthem is played over a loudspeaker. When the starting horn goes off, teams zoom off to their first fishing spots, which they had identified in their preparation for the day. Tournaments are typically won in the first hour of fishing.

The rules are similar at most tournaments: one or two anglers per boat, driven by a registered adult “captain” (usually a parent). One- and two-day tournaments will usually start at 6 a.m., with weigh-in starting mid-afternoon. Anglers keep fish in live wells in their boats, then transfer them into oxygenated water troughs using a perforated bag for weigh-in. The heaviest bag of fish wins. The fish are then released back into the lake.

Most tournaments hold a practice fishing day before the competition begins, offering crucial preparation for competitors learning a new lake. Experienced anglers will know the fish patterns for that time of year—a serious advantage. Another way to get a leg up: Rise early on tournament day.

“In the Angler of the Year tournament, we were in our spot just after 4 a.m. and waited there to hold that spot until we could start fishing at 6 a.m.,” Hunter Boren says. “Fishing tournaments is competitive, but after weigh-in, it gives you the opportunity to walk around and meet new people from around the state.”

More than 3,100 anglers from 300 Texas schools compete for more than a half-million dollars in scholarships.

Mark Hooker, coach for the high school fishing teams from Montgomery, north of Houston, calls his program the most decorated in the state. “This year we have 92 anglers and are very competitive within our own team,” he says.

That competitive spirit led one of his teams to a historic national championship.

Although most high school anglers are boys, more and more girls are getting out on lakes. Montgomery anglers Fallon Clepper and Wyatt Ford, students at Lake Creek High School and members of MidSouth Electric Cooperative, won the 2022 High School Bass Fishing National Championship—the top tournament in the U.S. for high schoolers—in June at Pickwick Lake near Florence, Alabama.

The team spent 11 days practicing at the lake, researching fish patterns and water levels. Their hard work paid off, and Clepper became the first female national champion. “We definitely had our game on,” says Clepper, who split the \$10,000 cash prize with Ford. “My parents and grandparents were jumping up and down and cheering at the weigh-in.”

There’s big money to be made in professional bass fishing. But these days, there’s another route for turning passion for the sport into a career.

Tyler Anderson founded the Lake Travis High School fishing team when he was a sophomore, finishing fourth at state his senior year, in 2015. When he got to Texas A&M University, he joined the school’s fishing team and started expanding a YouTube channel he started back in 2013. Nine years, 782 videos and a quarter-million subscribers later, Tyler’s Reel Fishing boasts more than 32 million views, and Anderson is able to make a living off his content and sponsorships.

“I’m pulling my new 2022 FXR21 Skeeter bass boat with a Yamaha 250-horsepower engine and Native Slayer 10 kayak on my truck roof rack—all sponsors of mine,” Ander-

son says over the phone as he drives to Michigan to film smallmouth bass fishing. “I get paid by them and from YouTube ads.”

Anderson, a Pedernales Electric Cooperative member, helps pro anglers Alton Jones and Alton Jones Jr. of Lorena, outside Waco, with their video content.

“I enjoy being outdoors with friends and family, making memories,” Anderson says. “As soon as I realized I could make a living fishing, I compared that to my friends’ jobs and realized that I could make a career out of my passion if I worked as hard as I could.” ■

ABOVE Wyatt Ford, left, and Fallon Clepper teamed up to win the 2022 High School Bass Fishing National Championship, making Clepper the first girl to do so.



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FRESH OUTTA TEXAS



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

JEFF LANE

How Natural Gas Costs Affect Electricity Prices

IN THE PAST YEAR, consumers have felt the effects of price increases at gas pumps, grocery stores and with most goods. Unfortunately, these increases have affected wholesale power prices as well.

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative has worked diligently to keep our controllable costs as low as possible, but the price of natural gas continues to rise, affecting the price of power through your cooperative.

To help members understand why, I want to answer some frequently asked questions about the situation.

Who controls the power market in Texas?

The Public Utility Commission of Texas and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas collectively manage the power market for most of the state. The PUCT is the regulating authority, and ERCOT ensures there's enough power being generated to meet the demand of consumers.



FG TRADE | ISTOCK.COM

Why is the cost of natural gas so high?

There are several factors recently influencing natural gas prices:

1. The Texas power market began operating much more conservatively after the electricity shortage during the severe winter storm in February 2021. ERCOT plans to hold more electricity in reserve to aid during times of

disaster. Holding onto this extra power has a cost associated with it; however, the hope is the reserve will make the grid more stable for all of us in the future.

2. The war in Ukraine has disrupted energy markets across the world, particularly as Russia reduced the amount natural gas it supplies to Europe, which has historically been very reliant on Russian gas. As the largest natural gas-producing state in the U.S., Texas has been exporting natural gas to other countries at a higher price than it would sell for here. This contributes to the tightened supply.

3. Due to federal regulations, drilling for natural gas has slowed down, driving the price higher.

Is TVEC the only electric utility that is being affected?

No, electric utilities across Texas are experiencing impacts from higher natural gas prices. Still, Texas co-ops' electric rates remain comparable to or lower than the national average.

How is TVEC helping members during this time?

We have programs in place to help manage your usage. We encourage all members to use the myTVEC mobile app or the TVEC Member Portal on tvec.net, which allow you to set notifications if your daily usage strays beyond your high threshold. Other options include average monthly payment and prepaid billing.

What can I do to lower my electricity bill?

Changing your habits is the easiest way to lower your electricity usage. Simple changes like adjusting your thermostat to a comfortable level, swapping incandescent bulbs out for LEDs, opening blinds to bring in the

sunlight and unplugging electronics when not in use help conserve electricity.

Please feel free to reach out to me or one of our member service representatives if you have any questions about your electric bill or need suggestions on ways to save energy. ■



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5 Ways To Prepare Your Home for Winter

COLD WEATHER, ICE and snow can do real damage to your home if you don't take the time to prepare it before winter arrives. These five tips will help winterize your home and make it more comfortable.

Insulate windows. Reducing drafts can lower your home's energy costs by up to 20% per year. Some inexpensive items you can get at the hardware store are V-seal weatherstripping to use along window sashes, rope caulk, shrink film and draft stoppers.

Trim tree branches. Any tree limbs or branches hanging over your home should be cut back to at least 3 feet away from your house.

Inspect and repair the fireplace. In addition to your own visual inspection, you may want to have a chimney sweep or other expert inspect your chimney, inside and out. Check that the roof flashing is tight against the chimney. 60195820-002

Check and repair the roof. Do a visual inspection from the ground with binoculars, or hire a roof inspector. Check for cracked caulk or rust spots on flashing; shingles that are buckling, curling, blistering, missing or broken; cracked rubber boots around vent pipes; and masses of moss and lichen, which may indicate the roof is decaying underneath.

Clear out and repair gutters and downspouts. Clogged rain gutters or downspouts can damage your home's foundation or cause ice dams. Also make sure the gutters aren't sagging and trapping water, and tighten gutter hangers and downspout brackets. ■

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative

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CONTACT US

1800 E. Highway 243
Kaufman, Texas
Local (972) 932-2214
Toll-Free 1-800-766-9576
Web tvec.net

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Jo Ann Hanstrom, Secretary, District 4
Jeff Priest, District 2
Paul Weatherford, District 3
Edward Reeve, District 5
Jack Endres, District 7

General Manager/CEO

Jeff Lane

24/7

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TOLL-FREE
1-800-967-9324

AUTOMATED ASSISTANCE
1-800-720-3584

ABOUT TRINITY VALLEY EC

TVEC operates in Anderson, Dallas, Henderson, Hunt, Kaufman and Van Zandt counties.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Kaufman District Headquarters

1800 E. Highway 243, Kaufman

Athens District Office

909 W. Larkin St., Athens

Cedar Creek District Office

1012 W. Main St., Ste. 102
Gun Barrel City

Wills Point District Office

582 N. Fourth St., Wills Point

Lobby Hours

Monday–Friday, 8:15 a.m.–4:45 p.m.

VISIT US ONLINE

tvec.net



Prepare Your Fridge for Thanksgiving

IF THANKSGIVING DINNER is at your house this year, your family members aren't the only ones who will be stuffed. So will your refrigerator.

If your fridge is more than a decade old, it might not be ready for the holiday. New refrigerators bearing the Energy Star label use at least 15% less energy than federal standards require.

Follow these tips for more efficient refrigerator use around the holidays:

- ▶ Brush or vacuum your refrigerator's coils regularly to improve its energy efficiency by as much as 30%.
- ▶ Keeping your refrigerator full shouldn't be hard at this time of year, and doing so will help your unit retain the cold better. If you have trouble keeping it stocked, fill the extra space with bottles or containers of water.
- ▶ If your milk is frosty in the morning, reduce the refrigerator's temperature. Refrigerators should be set between 36 and 40 degrees. Freezers should stay between 0 and 5 degrees.
- ▶ Put a dollar bill in the door's seal to see if it's airtight. If the dollar slips out easily when the door is closed, so will cold air. ■



MCANDY / ILLUSTRATION



ADOBESTOCK 422428 150



Remodeling Isn't Just About Looking Good

TVEC ENERGY
MANAGEMENT
SUPERVISOR

CHRIS WALKER, BAP

IF YOU'RE PLANNING to remodel around the house, it's a good idea to go beyond new kitchen countertops and bathroom tile that look good and think about changes for

energy efficiency. Particularly in older homes, these considerations will actually pay for themselves over the long run with energy savings.

Replace an older refrigerator, dishwasher, washer, dryer or other major appliance with a model that's more energy efficient. Energy Star-certified appliances use 10%–50% less energy than other models, which can accumulate into some serious savings.

Update your windows. Swapping older, single-pane windows for double-pane windows with low-emissivity, argon-filled glass will keep heat out of your home during the summer and keep it in during the winter.

Upgrade your furnace. If your furnace is on its last legs, consult with an expert before replacing it with something similar. One of the most important features for energy efficiency in a furnace is its size. If you buy one that's too small, it won't be able to keep your home warm on the coldest days. A furnace that's too big can warm your house up too quickly and then shut itself off because the house is too warm, so parts of the house are hot and others are cold.

Use energy-efficient lighting. When you replace fixtures, choose LED lighting. Over the years, manufacturers have added tons of styles. They're long-lasting, energy efficient, hard to break and cool to the touch.

Install a smart or programmable thermostat. This technology allows you to automatically adjust the temperature according to your schedule. During winter months, set the temperature a few degrees cooler while you're away and at night, then return it to a comfortable temperature when you're at home and awake.

Look at new water heater technologies like tankless systems or heat pump systems, which are much more energy efficient. ■



Saving Together Helps Us All

ENERGY CONSUMERS, INCLUDING CO-OP MEMBERS, buy the final product in the electric energy market. That means all of the costs—from buying the fuel for the generation plants to the wire that leads to your home—are eventually paid for by you, the consumer.

As a nonprofit co-op, however, we do have a big advantage in knowing that, for our distribution lines to all of our nearly 60,000 TVEC members, this is an at-cost service. No profits are sent to investors and our local employees are here to serve you as neighbors and friends.

One way we are trying to help save money for members is in reducing the cost of payment transactions. For those of you who have already changed to bank draft or e-check payments, thank you! If you haven't taken that step, please consider doing so and help us all save together.

Thank you from all of us here at TVEC. ■

Average Transaction Expense by Payment Type

Payment Method	Average Cost per Payment
Auto Bank Draft	\$.15
Electronic Check	\$.50
Mailed Check	\$.67
Phone/In-Person Payments	\$1.48
Credit Card Payments	\$1.63



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Daylight Saving Time Ends

Sunday,
November 6
Set clocks back 1 hour.

Election Day

Tuesday,
November 8

Veterans Day

Friday,
November 11

Thanksgiving

Thursday,
November 24
Our offices will be
closed November
24–25 for the holiday.



TVEC | ELAINE FROSCHE

2022 TVEC Annual Meeting Fills Canton Civic Center

After two years of online meetings, co-op members get together again for a family picnic.

More than 600 Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative members and their guests converged on the Canton Civic Center October 6 for the 2022 TVEC Annual Membership Meeting. Another 50 registered to view the meeting online.

TVEC staff was on hand to serve a light meal, and answer members' questions at information booths for the co-op's various programs and departments, including energy efficiency, public relations, technology and member services.

Co-op General Manager/CEO Jeff Lane addressed a number of pressing topics that have affected members, including the current state of energy prices, follow up from the 2021 winter storm, and the co-op's efforts to reduce costs in the face of rising inflation.

Regarding the cost of doing business, Lane noted that despite the rapidly rising costs of materials, TVEC has managed to avoid raising the base rate of electricity or monthly service charges since 2008.

"Since then, inflation is up 37.6 percent," he said. "And just like you've seen at the grocery store or the gas pumps we've seen the cost of business going up, especially over the last couple of years."

Lane listed several ways the co-op is working to avoid rate increases including asking members to consider the most cost-effective ways to pay to avoid the high costs of credit card processing fees. He noted that those fees cost the co-op \$750,000 in 2021 alone.

Other revenue-generating ideas that have been implemented or are under consideration include connect/disconnect fees, renewable energy application and inspection fees and potential fees to cover the cost of the aforementioned credit card payment processing costs.

On a positive note, Lane touched on an upcoming software switch that should save money while also improving customer service experience for members.

"We believe this software will not only make us more

efficient internally, it will also provide you with better tools to manage and monitor your accounts," Lane said. "During this process, we will be redesigning the layout of your monthly bill, making it easier to read and providing more useful information. We expect to save approximately \$1 million in expenses over the course of the first five years with this software, so we are pretty happy about that. We will be providing updates on this through all of our communication channels as we approach the implementation next year."

TVEC Assistant General Manager/COO Tony Watson was next to address the meeting, with a focus on the co-op's rapid growth.

"In 2021, over \$26 million dollars in system upgrades and improvements were completed to accommodate growth and improve system reliability," he said. "More than 53 miles of new overhead line and 106 miles of underground lines were added to the system and we connected 4,035 new services."

Much of the growth is residential neighborhoods, which in 2021 included 34 developments totaling 2,650 new lots.

All of that growth comes with increased demands on all aspects of service from the co-op, and managing a smart growth strategy has been another focus of TVEC's operation.

"We take great pride in our ability to communicate with members," Watson said. "In 2021, our member services department handled over 290,000 phone calls with our average answer time of 17 seconds. That is 48,000 more calls

Win \$100 Just for Reading

Hidden somewhere on pages 18-25 is a TVEC account number. Read closely. If the account number is yours, contact the member services department by November 30 to receive a \$100 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be our winner.





TVEC employees were in attendance to assist members and answer questions regarding co-op programs, service issues and energy efficiency.

than in 2020.”

System reliability improvements have also been addressed with additional right-of-way clearing, engineering plans for future upgrades and proactive pole and line maintenance efforts.

“In 2021 we increased our right-of-way budget by \$500,000 for a total of \$5.2 million, with a current six-to-seven-year rotation to clear all of our lines,” Watson said. “Our continuing line and pole inspection program allows us to recognize potential problems relating to equipment that may need replacing, and our engineering department is preparing extensive work plans for future upgrades and preparation for increased load growth.”

Chief Financial Officer Bobby White’s remarks spoke to the co-op’s growth as well, along with the variable nature of electricity sales, which are affected largely by weather. White introduced David Copeland, partner with the accounting firm Bolinger, Segars, Gilbert and Moss LLP, to tell members about the co-op’s financial condition and 2021 annual audit.

Copeland noted that TVEC’s bylaws required a yearly audit, and that the firm had issued an



Door Prizes remain a popular feature of the TVEC Annual Meeting, with more than 100 items, gift cards and bill credits given away at the event.

unmodified, clean opinion of the financial statements.

Regarding the TVEC Board of Directors election, board secretary Jo Ann Hanstrom announced that the total valid ballot count of 1,738 did not meet the three percent quorum requirement of 1,835. According to the TVEC bylaws, that results in incumbent board members retaining their board seats for another three-year term.

While the outcome was determined by the lack of a quorum, voting results were presented by Kenneth Von Tungeln of the auditing firm Calvetti Ferguson, which conducted the election count.

In District 2, incumbent Jeff Priest received 1,076 votes, and Kim Marszalek received 623 votes. Additional write-in ballots were received for Roy Rand, Reeves, Mark Wise and Rodney Whiddon.

In District 6, incumbent Howard Tillison received 1,605 votes. Additional write-in ballots were received for Mark Wise, Bill Palmer and Gayle Whiddon.

In District 7, incumbent Jack Endres received 1,588 votes. Additional write-in ballots were received for Jeff Priest, Mark Wise, Rodney Whiddon, Bill Palmer, Jean Riggs, Wilma Wheat, Coy Prather, William Wise and Austin Jones.

After adjournment of the meeting, attendees enjoyed a door prize raffle of more than 100 items, bill credits and various gifts donated by TVEC vendors and local craftspeople.

A video of the annual meeting, along with the annual meeting booklet will be posted for members to view in the TVEC member portal at tvec.net.

Thank you to all who attended the TVEC annual meeting. Mark your calendar for the 2023 meeting next October, and plan to join us for a great night of fun and co-op information. ■

AUSTIN & D.C.

MEMORIES | FRIENDS | EXPERIENCES

Visit the "reel" Washington D.C. with the Government-in-Action Youth Tour!

TEXAS DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Hurricane Preparedness Guidelines

Hurricane season is June 1–November 30

Preparedness Checklist

- ▶ **Make an evacuation plan.** Find activated evacuation routes at drivetexas.org or by dialing 1-800-452-9292. Call 211 to find out if you live in an evacuation zone.
- ▶ **Sign up for emergency alerts.** Make sure your mobile device is enabled to receive wireless emergency alerts.
- ▶ **Prepare an emergency supply kit.** Learn how to build an emergency kit at ready.gov/build-a-kit.
- ▶ **Review your home insurance policy.**
- ▶ **Register with the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry** at stear.tdem.texas.gov or by dialing 211 if you live in an evacuation zone and:
 - Have a disability or medical needs and do not have a car or other vehicle to use in an evacuation.
 - Have a disability or medical needs and do not have friends or family to help in an evacuation.

Information collected for STEAR is confidential.

Hurricane Preparedness Online Resources

Texas Division of Emergency Management: tdem.texas.gov
Texas Department of State Health Services: texasready.gov
American Red Cross: redcross.org
U.S. Department of Homeland Security: ready.gov
Office of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott: gov.texas.gov

DIVISIÓN DE ADMINISTRACIÓN DE EMERGENCIAS DE TEXAS

Preparación para huracanes

La temporada de huracanes es del 1 de junio al 30 de noviembre

Lista de verificación de preparación:

- ▶ **Haga un plan de evacuación.** Encuentre rutas de evacuación activadas en drivetexas.org o marcando 1-800-452-9292. Llame 211 para averiguar si usted vive en una zona de evacuación.
- ▶ **Regístrese para recibir alertas de emergencia.** Asegúrese de que su dispositivo móvil esté habilitado para recibir alertas de emergencia inalámbricas.
- ▶ **Prepare un kit de emergencia.** Aprenda como construir un kit de emergencia en ready.gov/build-a-kit.
- ▶ **Revise su póliza de seguro de hogar.**
- ▶ **Regístrese con el Registro de Asistencia de Emergencia del Estado de Texas** en stear.tdem.texas.gov o marcando el 211 si vive en una zona de evacuación y:
 - Tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas y no tiene un auto u otro vehículo para usar en una evacuación.
 - Tiene una discapacidad o necesidades médicas y no tiene amigos o familiares para ayudar en una evacuación.

La información recolectada para STEAR es confidencial.

Recursos en línea para la preparación para huracanes

División de Administración de Emergencias de Texas: tdem.texas.gov
Departamento de Servicios de Salud del Estado: texasready.gov
Cruz Roja Americana: redcross.org
Departamento de Seguridad Nacional de los Estados Unidos: ready.gov
Oficina del Gobernador de Texas Greg Abbott: gov.texas.gov

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TVEC

TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Energy Quiz

How many miles of electricity distribution line are operated by TVEC?

- A. 5,500
- B. 2,500
- C. 10,200
- D. 8,000

Win **\$100!**

Send your answer and contact information to contest@tvec.coop or contact TVEC Member Services by November 30. One \$100 bill credit winner will be chosen from all correct replies. Look for the correct answer in a future *Texas Co-op Power* magazine.

October Energy Quiz: ERCOT

THE MAJORITY OF THE TEXAS electric grid, including all of the TVEC service area, is managed by ERCOT—the Electric Reliability Council of Texas.

With the fallout from grid failures and insufficient power generation during Winter Storm Uri in February 2021, ERCOT, along with the Public Utility Commission of Texas, received a great deal of scrutiny and new leadership.

Congratulations to Sarah Page of Terrell, who correctly answered our September quiz about wind generation.

TVEC

Charitable Foundation
Your Generosity in Action

Operation Round Up Spotlight: Miss Fran's Teaching Garden



(Top row) Carol Schnatzmeyer, Brandi Sutton, Joy Long, TVEC public relations representative, Fran Sonka, Billie Hathaway, Susan Hall and Tool Elementary students Mercy Williams and Rance Williams.

TVEC | ELAINE FROSCH

SPREADING THE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PLANTS AND FOOD—while also spreading the love of a green thumb—occurs each week at Miss Fran's Teaching Garden on the grounds of Tool Elementary.

The garden is the result of a collaboration of three organizations: The Cedar Creek Garden Club, Tool Elementary School and the Community Food Pantry. The school and the garden club have a great partnership to integrate a garden-based curriculum into existing classes, and the food pantry receives the garden's harvest to deliver those fresh fruits and vegetables to some of their 350-400 families and individuals needing assistance each month.

Studies show that school gardens provide an effective environment for students to learn about gardening, stewardship, healthy eating choices, and much more. Gardens encourage the students to think critically about the food they eat and gain lifelong skills in making healthy choices.



TVEC | ELAINE FROSCH

Fran Sonka displays a basket of vegetables that students grew in the Tool Elementary garden named in her honor.

The school started work on the garden in July of 2021 right outside of the school building. When the school knew they would be bringing in a teaching garden, it was no question that they would name the garden in honor of Fran Sonka.

Sonka is a longtime resident and living legend in the community of Tool. She has been on the board for Tool's city council, mayor, volunteer and more. When Sonka was the mayor, there was not a school on the west side of Cedar Creek Lake for students who were a part of Malakoff ISD. Sonka made it her mission to get a school in Tool, and she did just that. In 2007, Tool Elementary opened its doors, greeting hundreds of students.

Sonka was present at the school each morning to greet the students as they went into school and made sure to give them a hug because, "For some, it may be the only hug they got that day." At the age of 92, Sonka is changing bright minds for the better with her thoughtfulness and persistence to bring in an entire school. ■

September 2022 Operation Round Up Awards

Grants:

Miss Fran's Teaching Garden, \$5,000
Martin Luther King
Celebration of Terrell, \$1,000

Bill Assistance:

Salvation Army of Kaufman, \$3,000

Thanksgiving SALE



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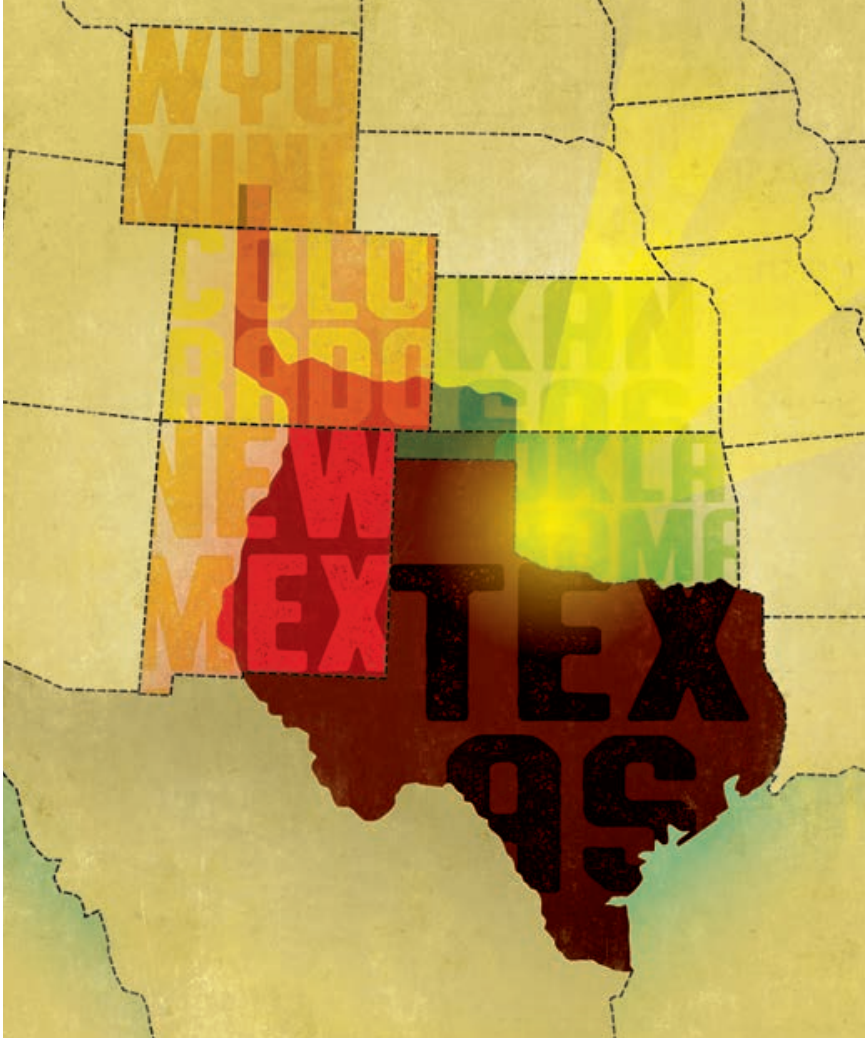
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Everything Was Bigger ...

Lucky folks in modern-day Wyoming were Texans in 1845

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY TRACI DABERKO

TEXANS HAVE A kind of proverb that goes like this: “Driving across Texas isn’t a trip; it’s a damn career.”

Texas is big, no doubt about that. But it used to be a lot bigger—by about one-quarter.

When the Republic of Texas joined the U.S. in 1845, Texas’ borders were dramatically different. The northern boundary stretched all the way up into what is today southern Wyoming. The northernmost town in Texas wasn’t Kerrick; it was Rawlins—some 1,400 miles from Brownsville. A trip like that in 1845 would have been measured in seasons, not days. “We’ll leave in early spring and get there before

winter sets in.”

That slice of land was Texas’ original panhandle, encompassing part of the Rockies. They called that area the stovepipe because that’s what it looked like: a long skinny stovepipe jutting northward. You can still find vestiges of Texas up there. For instance, there’s a stream in Wyoming named Texas Creek.

Texas used to include what is today the panhandle of Oklahoma. That territory comprises three counties, one of them still named Texas County. So some Oklahomans still live in Texas—well, Texas County, anyway. Today the northern Texas border aligns with the latitude

TCP Listen as W.F. Strong narrates this story on our website.



established in the Missouri Compromise that restricted slavery to states south of that line.

The southwestern corner of Kansas was also originally Texas. That’s when Dodge City was in Texas. *Gunsmoke* always did seem like a Texas series. We know that Marshal Matt Dillon was born in San Antonio, and his father was a Texas Ranger. It’s all coming together.

New Mexico used to be about half its current size because Santa Fe, Taos and all of the eastern part of the state were Texas. In fact, Texas was so big in 1845 that if you had put a hinge on the northernmost part and flipped it northward, Brownsville would have been in Northern Canada, next to Hudson Bay.

So what happened to all our land? The U.S. government bought it in 1850 for \$10 million. They bought our claims in present-day Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Kansas and Oklahoma for what amounted to 15 cents an acre. It may seem like we sold out cheap. But that’s \$380 million in today’s money, and Texas desperately needed the money.

Texas’ leaders had a state to build, but the only true assets were land—and a hardened people with unbreakable spirits. So we sold the land, paid off debts and got a much more appealing shape—one that fits nicely on T-shirts.

Even without all that land, we’re no slouch of a state. You know if you’ve ever driven it. We still measure distance in time. We still feel like we’re crossing an enormous frontier when driving Interstate 10 through West Texas or Interstate 35 north and south. And this old Texas saying is still valid: “The sun has riz, the sun has set, and here we is in Texas yet.” ■

Holiday Sides

Tasty servings that just might take center stage

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

During the holidays, I gravitate toward the side dishes over any turkey or ham. Rolls are always a must at my house, and these Cheesy Ranch Rolls have become a family favorite. They're wonderfully soft with a zesty flavor, and any leftovers are perfect for sandwiches the next day. For a larger crowd, simply double the recipe.

Cheesy Ranch Rolls

2 cups flour, divided use, plus more as needed
2 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons (1 packet) ranch seasoning
2¼ teaspoons (1 packet) instant yeast
½ teaspoon salt
¾ cup milk
2 tablespoons (¼ stick) butter, plus more for topping
1 cup shredded Gouda or cheddar cheese

1. In a bowl, combine 1 cup flour, sugar, ranch seasoning, yeast and salt.

2. In a microwave-safe bowl or liquid measuring cup, combine milk and butter. Microwave in 15-second increments until milk is warm to the touch but not hot. Butter does not need to completely melt; it will melt as you mix the dough.

3. Pour milk and butter into dry ingredients and mix well to combine. Add ¼ cup flour and shredded cheese and mix well. Stir in remaining flour in increments, just until dough forms into a ball. Scoop onto a lightly floured surface and knead dough 6–8 minutes, until smooth and springy, adding flour as needed to prevent sticking. Shape into a ball, cover with a towel and let rest 10 minutes.

4. Cut dough into 12 pieces and roll each piece into a ball, then place in a greased square baking dish. Cover again and let rise 30 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 375 degrees.

5. Once rolls have risen, bake 20–25 minutes, until golden brown. Let cool slightly, then brush with melted butter and serve.

SERVES 12

TCP Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at stetted.com, where she features a recipe for Brussels Sprouts With Walnuts and Cranberries.





Praline Sweet Potatoes

LANELL MCDANIEL
SAM HOUSTON EC

This easy sweet potato dish has a wonderfully crunchy crumble topping. It's equally at home served as a side or dessert. You'll need 2–3 pounds of sweet potatoes. Excess potatoes can be used to make sweet potato waffles or pancakes.

POTATOES

3 cups cooked, mashed sweet potatoes

1 cup brown sugar

2 eggs, beaten

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

½ cup milk

½ cup (1 stick) melted butter

TOPPING

1 cup chopped pecans

½ cup brown sugar

⅓ cup flour

⅓ cup (¾ stick) melted butter

1. POTATOES Preheat oven to 350 degrees and butter a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. In a large bowl, combine sweet potatoes with brown sugar, eggs, vanilla, milk and butter. Pour into prepared dish.

2. TOPPING In small bowl, combine pecans, brown sugar and flour. Stir in melted butter with a fork until a crumble forms. Scatter evenly over the top of the sweet potatoes.

3. Bake 30–40 minutes, until topping is golden brown and crunchy.

SERVES 8

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

Caramelized Onion Potato Medley Gratin

MARIAN EVONIUK
PEDERNALES EC



Potato fans, this one is for you! With three kinds of potatoes, caramelized onions and a pop of dill, Evoniuk's gratin will have you reaching for seconds and thirds.

SERVES 8–12



- 2 tablespoons (¼ stick) unsalted butter**
- 2 large sweet onions, peeled and sliced**
- ⅓ teaspoon pepper**
- 1½ teaspoons salt, divided use**
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced**
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh dill**
- 2½ cups heavy cream, divided use**
- 1 pound Yukon gold potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced**
- 1 pound sweet potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced**
- 1 pound red potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced**
- 2½ cups shredded Gruyere cheese, divided use**
- 1 green onion, chopped, or 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives**

1. Set a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium heat and add butter, onion, pepper and 1 teaspoon salt, and cover. Cook 25–30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions are lightly caramelized. Add garlic and dill and cook uncovered 1 minute more.

2. Pour in 2 cups heavy cream and bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 3–4 minutes, stirring, until mixture is slightly thickened. Remove from heat and set aside.

3. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with butter and set aside.

4. In a large mixing bowl, combine potatoes, remaining ½ teaspoon salt and 2 cups Gruyere. Pour in creamed onions and mix well, then pour into the prepared baking dish. Combine remaining ¼ cup cream and ½ cup Gruyere in a small bowl and spread over the top of the potatoes.

5. Cover with foil and bake 45 minutes, then uncover and bake until golden brown and bubbly, 30–45 minutes. Remove from oven and let stand 10 minutes, then garnish with chopped onion or chives and serve.

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

INCREDIBLE EGGS DUE NOVEMBER 10

Perfect for breakfast, lunch and dinner, eggs make for a versatile main. What great dish do you hatch? Submit your recipes on our website by November 10 for a chance to win \$500.





Sweet Sour Red Cabbage

NANCY FILER
COSERV

Filer's family has been serving this dish during the holidays for nearly 100 years, and it's easy to see why. Tangy and lightly sweet, it goes well with any of your favorite main dishes.

1 head red cabbage, about 1½ pounds
4 slices bacon, diced
½ cup packed brown sugar

2 tablespoons flour
½ cup water
¼ cup white vinegar
1 teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper

1. Shred cabbage and measure 5 cups. Boil a large pot of water and add cabbage; bring back to boil and boil 5 minutes. Drain, transfer to a mixing bowl and set aside.
2. In a large sauté pan, fry diced bacon over medium heat until crisp. Remove and drain on paper towels.
3. Discard all but 1 tablespoon bacon drippings. Return pan to medium heat and whisk in brown sugar and flour, taking care to break up any lumps. Whisk in water, vinegar, salt and pepper. Cook, stirring often, until the mixture thickens, about 5 minutes.
4. Add the bacon and sauce to the cabbage, stirring gently to combine. Garnish with extra fried bacon if you like.

SERVES 6-8

Planning Makes Perfect

BY MEGAN MYERS

Wondering how much to serve at your next gathering? Use these guidelines when choosing dishes for the big meal.

Meat: 6 ounces per person (not including bones).

Appetizers: 6 pieces per person.

Potatoes: ½ cup per person.

Stuffing and casseroles: ½ cup per person.

Salad: 2 cups per person.

Vegetable sides: 1 cup per person.

Gravy and cranberry sauce: ¼ cup per person.

Rolls: 1-2 per person.

Keep in mind that as the number of side dish options grows, guests will likely eat less of each. Also, don't forget to plan for your favorite leftovers.



Fredericksburg

Getaway Contest

Enter online for a chance to win a two-night getaway in Fredericksburg, including midweek lodging for two, dining and things to do.

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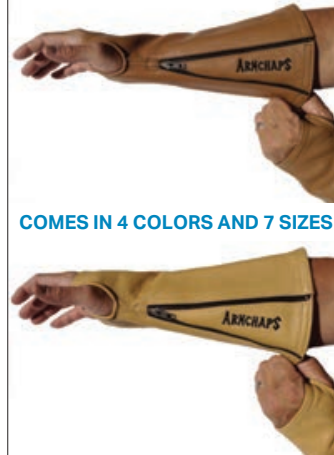
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Toe Tappin' in Turkey

Learn all about Bob Wills—the King of Western Swing—in his Panhandle hometown

BY CHET GARNER

IF YOU ASK someone to name the king of music, they'll likely mention Elvis Presley (the King of Rock 'n' Roll) or George Strait (the King of Country). However, true students of music genres will give credit to the everlasting King of Western Swing—Bob Wills. I took a trip to the Panhandle town of Turkey to pay homage to the legacy of this Texas-sized king.

Days generally pass by quietly in Turkey, unless you're here on the last Saturday in April, when thousands attend the Bob Wills Day celebration and keep string-pickin' circles going into the morning hours. I visited on a normal Thursday afternoon and found the main drag nearly empty, save for a few folks filling their bellies at Galvan's Restaurant. After polishing off a Mexican Platter No. 9, I scooted over to the old elementary school that's now the Bob Wills Community Center.

I wasn't too familiar with Wills other than a few of his hit tunes, like *San Antonio Rose* and *Bubbles in My Beer*. But inside this museum, I received a full-on education.

Wills spent much of his childhood in Turkey and began playing music right out of the crib, as his father was a champion fiddle player. Over time, Wills became enamored with musical styles that included jazz and blues. By the early 1930s, he had formed the Texas Playboys and created a new genre called Western swing, which blended all his favorite styles. It's a feat that landed Wills in both the Country Music and Rock & Roll halls of fame.

The museum is full of artifacts and stories of Wills' rise to stardom. Visitors are sure to leave with a new appreciation for the King of Western Swing—and a foot that won't stop stomping. ■

ABOVE Chet has fun fiddlin' around the tranquil town of Turkey.

TCP Chet tunes in to Turkey's pride and joy in his latest video on our website. Watch all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

Call ahead or check an event's website for scheduling details.

NOVEMBER 09

Harlingen [9–13] Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, (209) 227-4823, rgvbf.org

11

Fort Worth Tarrant County Veterans Day Parade, tcvc@tcvc.us, fw2022parade.org

Lubbock Lubbock Symphony Orchestra: Madam Butterfly, (806) 792-8339, buddyhollyhall.com

Victoria Golden Crescent CASA Wine Pairing, (361) 573-3734, goldencrescentcasa.org

Salado [11–13] Scottish Gathering and Highland Games, (254) 947-5232, saladomuseum.org

Ingram [11–Dec. 16] ArtMart, (830) 367-5121, hcaf.com

12

Alvin Novemberfest, alvinrotaryclub@gmail.com, alvinrotary.org

Bastrop Red, White & Blue Veterans Appreciation Banquet, (330) 418-9164, rwbveterans.com

Burton Big Star Texas Night, (979) 251-4078, burtontexas.org

Elgin Veterans Appreciation Parade, (512) 281-5724, etx150.com

Henderson Heritage Syrup Festival, (903) 657-4303, hendersontx.us

Kerrville Veterans Day Car Show and Parade, (830) 792-2580, kerrvilletexascvb.com

13

Pearland Country Music Showcase, (281) 997-5970, visitpearland.com

14

Brazoria Henry Smith Day, (979) 345-3335, brazoriahf.org

15

New Braunfels [15-17] Festival of Trees, (830) 832-0089, facebook.com/festivaloftreesnb

17

Temple Taste of the Holidays, altrusatemple.org

Palestine [17-20, 23-27, Dec. 2-11, 16-Jan. 1] Walk of Lights, (903) 723-3014, visitpalestine.com

18

Bryan Lights On!, (979) 721-9506, destinationbryan.com

Alpine [18-19] Artwalk, (210) 218-1114, artwalkalpine.com

Henderson [18-20] The Magic of Christmas, (903) 392-0691, visithendersontx.com

New Braunfels [18-20] Weihnachtsmarkt, (830) 629-1572, newbraunfelsweihnachtsmarkt.com

Ingram [18-19, 25-27, Dec. 2-4, 9-11] A Christmas Carol, (830) 367-5121, hcac.com

19

Corpus Christi Wine Festival, info@corpuschristiwinefestival.com, corpuschristiwinefestival.com

MORE EVENTS >

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(1) Mailed Outside-County		
(2-4) In-County, Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Other Mailed Circulation	none	none
c. Total Paid and/or Requested	1,814,529	1,848,492
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Karen Nejtcek, Managing Editor October 1, 2022



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NOVEMBER EVENTS CONTINUED

19

Henderson A Very Merry Market, (318) 780-0620, kvne.com

Luling Grinchmas Arts and Crafts Show, (830) 875-0123, lulingcc.org

Boerne [19-20] Fall Antique Show, (830) 329-2870, ci.boerne.tx.us

Fort Worth [19-20] Funky Finds Holiday Shopping Experience, (903) 665-7954, funkyfinds.com

Granbury [19-20] Winter Wine Walk, (817) 488-6789, crosstimberswinetrail.com

22

Wharton Christmas Holiday Parade, (979) 532-1862, whartonchamber.com

26

Jefferson Christmas Parade and Enchanted Forest Tree Lighting, (903) 665-3733, visitjeffersontexas.com

Nacogdoches Wassail Fest, (936) 559-2500, nactx.us

San Angelo Santa's Santa Fe Christmas, (325) 486-2140, sanangelorailway.org

DECEMBER

01

Cameron Christmas Parade, (254) 697-4979, cameron-tx.com

Kerrville Symphony of the Hills: The Miracle of Christmas, (830) 792-7469, symphonyofthehills.org

La Grange Schmecken-fest, (979) 968-3017, visitlagrangetx.com

Tyler Rotary Clubs of Tyler Christmas Parade, (903) 593-6905, visittyler.com

Paris [1-3] Texas BBQ Blowout, (903) 784-2501, cbabbq.com

02

Fredericksburg Light the Night Christmas Parade, (830) 997-5000, fredericksburg-texas.com

Brenham [2-3] Christmas Stroll & Lighted Parade, (979) 337-7580, jingle.cityofbrenham.org

03

Bowie Fantasy of Lights Christmas Festival and Lighted Parade, (940) 872-6246, cityofbowietx.com

Fredericksburg Kinderfest, (830) 990-8441, pioneermuseum.org

Round Top Houston Masterworks Chorus, (979) 249-3129, festivalhill.org

Aerials

We're flipping over the bird's-eye view these reader photos offer. Come along as they soar to capture the beauty of the Lone Star State.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

1 JIM BLAKE
COLEMAN COUNTY EC
Springtime over Trickham, taken with a Typhoon H drone.

2 ROY O'REAR
TRI-COUNTY EC
"Interference patterns in the waves made by a boat on Lake Arrowhead near Wichita Falls."

3 MIKE ZARELLA
PEDERNALES EC
"A hawk's-eye view of the Pedernales River in Blanco County before the current drought."

4 MIKE PRESTIGIACOMO
BARTLETT EC
Palo Duro Canyon State Park.



1



2



3



4

Upcoming Contests

DUE NOV 10 Land, Sea or Sky

DUE DEC 10 Riding the River

DUE JAN 10 Taking Flight



Enter online at TexasCoopPower.com/contests.

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



The Arable Twos

Thankfulness and hope for a toddler's trials and travails on the farm

BY MARTHA DEERINGER
ILLUSTRATION BY
CHANELLE NIBBELINK

MY GREAT-GRANDSON, Waylon, is 2 and carries all the baggage that that designation suggests. His temper tantrums are epic, but he also finds joy in everyday things and loves with his whole heart—except when his little sister wants to play with his toy tractors and trucks. “Look!” and “Wow!” are his favorite expressions, although I fear that someday soon the dreaded “No!” will find its way onto this list.

But when I watch carefully, I can already see roots sinking into the earth beneath his constantly moving (and usually grubby) feet.

Waylon is a fourth-generation Texas farm boy finding his place among the hay fields and rocky cow pastures of his Coryell County home. When he hears the rattley roar of a diesel engine starting up,

he runs toward it as if the possibility of Grandpa or Uncle Justin leaving the machine shed on a tractor without him might mark the end of the world. When the mad dash works and I see his red hoodie perched on Grandpa's lap inside the cab of that big green tractor, I know he is in 2-year-old heaven. I can still hear the echo of our son's excited voice when he was that age, yelling for a yank on the throttle: “Pull the smoker, Daddy!”

It's not just the boys. My daughter, an elementary school librarian, can still drive a hay truck with the best of them, and granddaughter Hannah, helping scoop silage into a cow trough at the age of 8, once leaned on her shovel and announced, “You know, I may run this place someday.”

Waylon has already watched a calf being born. He has learned to be quiet so the livestock won't be disturbed. He has checked cows in the pasture from Grandpa's lap on the seat of the Kawasaki all-terrain vehicle, and he's learning to count calves (although so far, he's not very reliable beyond six).

This is how farm kids learn who they are and find their places in the world. They pick tomatoes and squash in the garden and see firsthand where their food comes from, feed and water livestock, and drop fresh eggs in the dirt on the way to the kitchen. Waylon has stepped on stickers, stirred up fire ants and been knocked down by the new Lab puppy, but none of these experiences discourage him from his never-ending quest to be outdoors.

Waylon may grow up to be an electrician or a brain surgeon, but right now he is developing a respect—perhaps even a love—for the land that feeds us. I hope that will last a lifetime. ■

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— Don W., Sherman, TX

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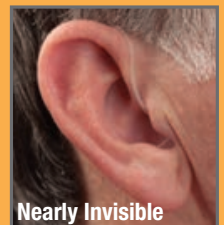
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