

Texas Coop Power

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NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

In accordance with the bylaws of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc. the nominating committee, duly appointed by the board of directors of the cooperative, met at the cooperative's Athens Office on Tuesday, July 28, 2026.

Present were committee members: Dave Bigley, Bonny Draper, Tommy Raymond, Charles Spencer, Maxie Turner, Peggy Yancey, Eric Gassman, Ralph Fortner, David Cadden, James Huggins, James McGehee, Jennifer Burns, Jerry Kelley, and Ronnie Payne.

The nominating committee submitted the following names as candidates for the board of directors.

DISTRICT 1

Carolyn Minor

DISTRICT 4

Derrick Hoelscher

DISTRICT 5

Ed Reeve
Clay Dishman

See Page 19 for Director Candidate Biographies



Co-op Principle No. 2: Democratic Member Control

If you are a new Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative member, or just new to co-op elections, you may be wondering, “Why would the power company hold an election?”

A key difference between your not-for-profit cooperative electric company and for-profit utilities is how the company is governed. The TVEC Board of Directors is made up of co-op members. They set goals, oversee the co-op's governance and work to make sure that TVEC is constantly working in the best interest of our members.

Electric co-ops are not government entities, but we do provide a service that has open membership and responsibility for maintaining critical infrastructure. In that way, the co-op model of ownership by our members and member representation at the highest level of the company means our responsibility will always be to our neighbors and community members, not investors or outside interests.

It is also essential to have member participation in order for the co-op to conduct business at our annual meeting. Your vote counts toward a quorum of members at the meeting. We think it is so important that we offer a drawing for \$2,000 in cash prizes just for participating.

Please take the time to vote, and we look forward to seeing you at the TVEC Annual Membership Meeting on October 8.

FOOD FESTS
ARE EVERYWHERE

WHERE EXACTLY
IS WEST TEXAS?

COMMUNING WITH
A TODDLER

Texas Coop Power

FOR TRINITY VALLEY EC MEMBERS

SEPTEMBER 2026

Oh, My Heavens

Check out the dazzling
displays at planetariums
around the state

TRINITY
VALLEY EC
NEWS

SEE PAGE 16

The most lightweight and stylish folding mobility scooter is redefining independence

Whether exploring abroad or handling your daily routine, the ATTO SPORT keeps you moving.

Everyday Freedom

Mobility scooters keep you independent, making daily life easier and more enjoyable. From errands to visiting friends, they help you stay active and connected. Mobility scooters open new opportunities and let you enjoy life your way.

Life Without Limits

Folding mobility scooters offer a lightweight, compact design that fits in car trunks, on planes, and cruises. They are easy to store and perfect for travel and everyday use. Whether exploring new places or handling errands, folding scooters provide convenience, independence, and the freedom to go anywhere.

The ATTO SPORT folding travel scooter delivers a perfect blend of style, innovation, and performance. It is designed for those who value independence and sophistication

Compact Convenience

The ATTO SPORT transforms effortlessly from a full-sized scooter to a compact trolley in seconds, making it perfect for travel, quick storage, and easy transport wherever life takes you.

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The ATTO SPORT's innovative design separates into two lightweight parts, with the heaviest **weighing only 37 lbs.** It's easy to lift, store, and transport in the trunk of a car.

Unmatched Comfort

The ATTO SPORT has an ergonomic and adjustable seat and handlebars, crafted to ensure a smooth ride every time, even on longer journeys.

Sleek and Stylish

The ATTO SPORT redefines mobility with a sporty, elegant design that looks as great as it feels. Its modern aesthetic and 3-wheel agility let you navigate tight spaces, and it is equipped with **electronic stability control for added safety on descents and turns.**

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September 2026



06 Making Space for Everyone

Light pollution blotting out the stars? Head to your local planetarium.

By Melissa Gaskill
Photos by Tiffany Hofeldt

10 The Fungus Among Us

The good times just mushroom when small-town festivals celebrate local produce.

By Pam LeBlanc
Illustrations by Jim Starr

ON THE COVER
Visitors enjoy a show at the Burke Baker Planetarium in Houston.
Photo by Tiffany Hofeldt

ABOVE
Mushrooms and tomatoes are among the dozens of locally grown products celebrated at street festivals.
Illustration by Jim Starr

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Among the Trees



Big Jake, the mascot of the Texas State Forest Festival, demonstrates ax throwing.

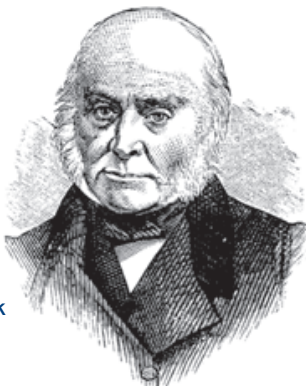
WHEN THE FOUR-DAY Texas State Forest Festival kicks off September 17 in Lufkin, it continues a tradition that began in 1938. The event, in the heart of the Pineywoods, features a variety of activities, including a carnival, barbecue competition, music and chain saw carving.

In 2022, Texas sawmills produced enough lumber to make two-by-fours that could reach the moon and back.

Did you know? Texas has 59 million acres of forestland, more than any other state except Alaska. About 93% of that is privately owned.

Hair Apparent

Only five elected American Presidents—John Adams; John Quincy Adams, right; Martin Van Buren; James Garfield; and Dwight Eisenhower—were bald or balding. Considering that 85% of men suffer hair loss by age 50, that's perhaps an astonishing record. Something to think about on **National Bald is Beautiful Day, September 13.**



TCP Contests and More

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Lemony Delights

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Barns

RECOMMENDED READING

Learn about William Johnson McDonald, the eccentric banker who funded the McDonald Observatory in West Texas against his family's wishes. Find our story from December 2020 on our website.



ENTER ONLINE

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

When I was a kid ...

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

Here are some responses to our July prompt: **Need a hobby? Learn to ...**

Volunteer in your community.

DEEDEE SIMPSON
CECA
CISCO

Appreciate and utilize all that the state parks have to offer.

KIT VAUGHN
PEDERNALES EC
LIBERTY HILL

Do tai chi. It will make you want to be a better person.

MARY BUSEMAN
COSERV
LEWISVILLE

Sign language—or any language.

CRISTI SWINNEY
TAYLOR EC
TRENT

Letterboxing: a secretive treasure hunt activity that combines hiking, puzzle solving and stamp carving.

STEVE YATES
PEDERNALES EC
WIMBERLEY

Visit our website to see more responses.

JULY 2026 A Big Leap From Doodles

“I probably have the only one of Jeffie Brewer’s works in San Angelo. It survived a wildfire while being relocated from Alto, New Mexico, to Lubbock.”

ROBIN LONG
CONCHO VALLEY EC
SAN ANGELO



Spotting His Critters

My mom and I recently visited a friend in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I think we ran into Jeffie Brewer’s Orange Cat on an art walk [A Big Leap From Doodles, July 2026]. Now I know the artist’s story. How fun!

Lisa King
Pedernales EC
Austin

Our regional bike trail network in east-central Illinois has commissioned several sculptures to place alongside the trails. People love them and even set their routes by the distance between critters. There are designated “critter loops” riders enjoy.

Thanks, Jeffie, for making our rides more fun and whimsical.

Betsy Carlson-Ward
Via Facebook

Historic Washout

I remember that Houston Astros rainout because I was at home waiting for my dad to come home from work while listening to what was supposed to be the start of the game on the radio [Currents, Under the Weather, June 2026]. They announced the game was called, noted the historic nature of the event and Dad didn’t get home until about 11 p.m.

Michael Knight
Via Facebook

Artifact No-No’s

As an archaeology steward for the Texas Historical Commission, I feel it important to remind readers that in the state of Texas, it’s illegal to search for and recover artifacts—be they projectile points or stone tools—on private property without permission and on public lands at all, ever [He Kept Digging, May 2026].

The penalties can be severe, including imprisonment. Readers can research this topic on THC’s website.

Françoise Wilson
Central Texas EC
Gillespie County



TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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Austin, TX 78701

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

Texas Co-op Power

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MAKING **SPACE** FOR EVERYONE

BY MELISSA GASKILL • PHOTOS BY TIFFANY HOFELDT

THIS PAGE The wonders of the night sky are always accessible at the Burke Baker Planetarium in Houston.

OPPOSITE, FROM TOP With more than a dozen planetariums around the state, visitors have access to celestial sites that can stir the imagination. Burke Baker was one of the first planetariums in Texas when it opened in 1964.

Light pollution blotting out the stars? Head to your local planetarium

In the 1950s, Harlingen Air Force Base used a domed planetarium building to teach pilots navigation by the stars. When the base closed in 1962, the building was donated to what is now the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, and it eventually fell into disrepair.

But in 2008, H-E-B funded renovations that added a digital projector system and, in 2012, a new dome. Now regular folks of all ages can visit and get a front-row seat to the stars in Edinburg.

“H-E-B asked that it be free and open to the public,” says Christian Hernandez, program specialist at the UTRGV planetarium. “They wanted to inspire a new generation, and I think they made good on that desire.”

The Milky Way shines high above in September, with the constellation Pegasus rising in the east. Venus will be bright in early evening, with Jupiter most visible at dawn. But if it’s cloudy or you live near a big city or industry, you won’t be able to see any of it.

At a planetarium, you can enjoy these constellations and planets as well as other astronomical wonders from a comfy chair with no worries about light pollution from cities or satellites, cloudy skies, heat or cold, bugs, or the hard ground. And in Texas—with at least 15 permanent planetariums



across the state—chances are good that there’s one just down the road from you and with technological advances you might not expect.

Space Over Time

The first modern planetarium opened in Munich, Germany, in 1925, displaying 4,500 stars and the planets of our solar system. Five years later, the first facility in the U.S., the Adler Planetarium, opened in Chicago. More quickly followed in Philadelphia, Los Angeles and New York City. Texas got its first, Fort Worth’s 40-foot-diameter Noble Planetarium, in 1955, and soon Houston and Abilene had their own.

Planetarium popularity soared after the Soviet Union’s Sputnik 1 satellite launched in 1957 and during the 1960s race to the moon. These days, as artificial light drowns out more of the night sky, folks flock to planetariums to see what they’re missing outside.

Those early planetariums used mechanical star projectors that beamed light through slides patterned with tiny holes to depict celestial bodies on a domed ceiling. Gears and motors simulated the movements of stars and planets, creating astonishingly realistic night skies.

Such machines, made by Zeiss, a German company that produced the original Munich projector, and Pennsylvania-based Spitz Laboratories, which developed its first system in the 1940s, remain in use at many planetariums.

But now most facilities have digital projector systems that





Sunset at the Burke Baker Planetarium, where, indoors, it can always be nighttime.

“Under the dome, phenomena that can seem abstract or distant become tangible and awe-inspiring. It’s like a time machine, looking back at how the universe was.”

blend multiple high-resolution images into an uninterrupted scene covering the entire dome. These systems can produce the likenesses of millions of stars and extremely detailed 3D objects and events in deep space. Advances in sound and control systems and improved dome surfaces help make planetarium experiences even more immersive and realistic.

For example, the Stephen F. Austin State University Planetarium in Nacogdoches, which opened in 2018, features a state-of-the-art 4K Digistar system, says Director Dan Bruton.

Abilene’s Morgan Jones Planetarium upgraded in 2004 from its original Spitz Star Projector to a digital projector, says Jason Barber, planetarium director, and in 2019, it installed a laser system.

“With modern projectors, you can go into the stars, you can model the entire Milky Way,” Barber explains. “It’s kind of like a video game, but the shape of a dome creates a 3D effect, so you feel like you’re there. It’s like being in a spaceship.”

Beyond Space

Nowadays, planetarium experiences go well beyond tours of the night sky, popular as those are. You can fly visually through space and time and view immersive films about the Great Barrier Reef, dinosaurs or Mars. Experience a laser light show set to music from artists like Pink Floyd, Queen and Taylor Swift.

The H-E-B Planetarium in South Texas shows educational films about space, Hernandez says, and others just for entertainment.

Bruton says SFASU designed its planetarium to connect the university with its East Texas community and make science accessible and engaging for all ages. Astronomy students at the university keep track of what’s currently visible in the sky—perhaps a constellation, planet or comet—and program the Digistar system to show it. Immersive shows include *Dark Universe*, which explores dark matter, dark

energy and the structure of the universe, and *Antarctica*, a dive into one of the most extreme environments on Earth.

Abilene presents monthly public shows, and Barber’s favorite is one produced by the European Southern Observatory in Chile, called *Unveiling the Invisible Universe*. It uses actual time-lapse imagery of stars, not a computer model, he says. Another, *Messengers of Time and Space*, shows how astronomers use land-based telescopes along with space-based facilities like NASA’s James Webb Space Telescope, currently orbiting the sun 1 million miles away from Earth, and Hubble, circling 300 miles above Earth since 1990.

“Planetariums give people a sense of perspective,” Hernandez says. “It’s one thing to talk about the scale of the universe, but that 360-degree dome screen does an amazing job of letting you feel it. Watching a film about searching for the edge of the solar system, it really hits you how big the solar system is.”

“Films that go into the universe, dark holes and cosmic matter really put into perspective that we are a blue dot in a grand tapestry of planets and stars. It’s an important and humbling experience.”

Bruton agrees. “Under the dome, phenomena that can seem abstract or distant become tangible and awe-inspiring. It’s like a time machine, looking back at how the universe was.”

So grab one of those comfy chairs at your local planetarium. You’re bound to have a stellar experience. ■



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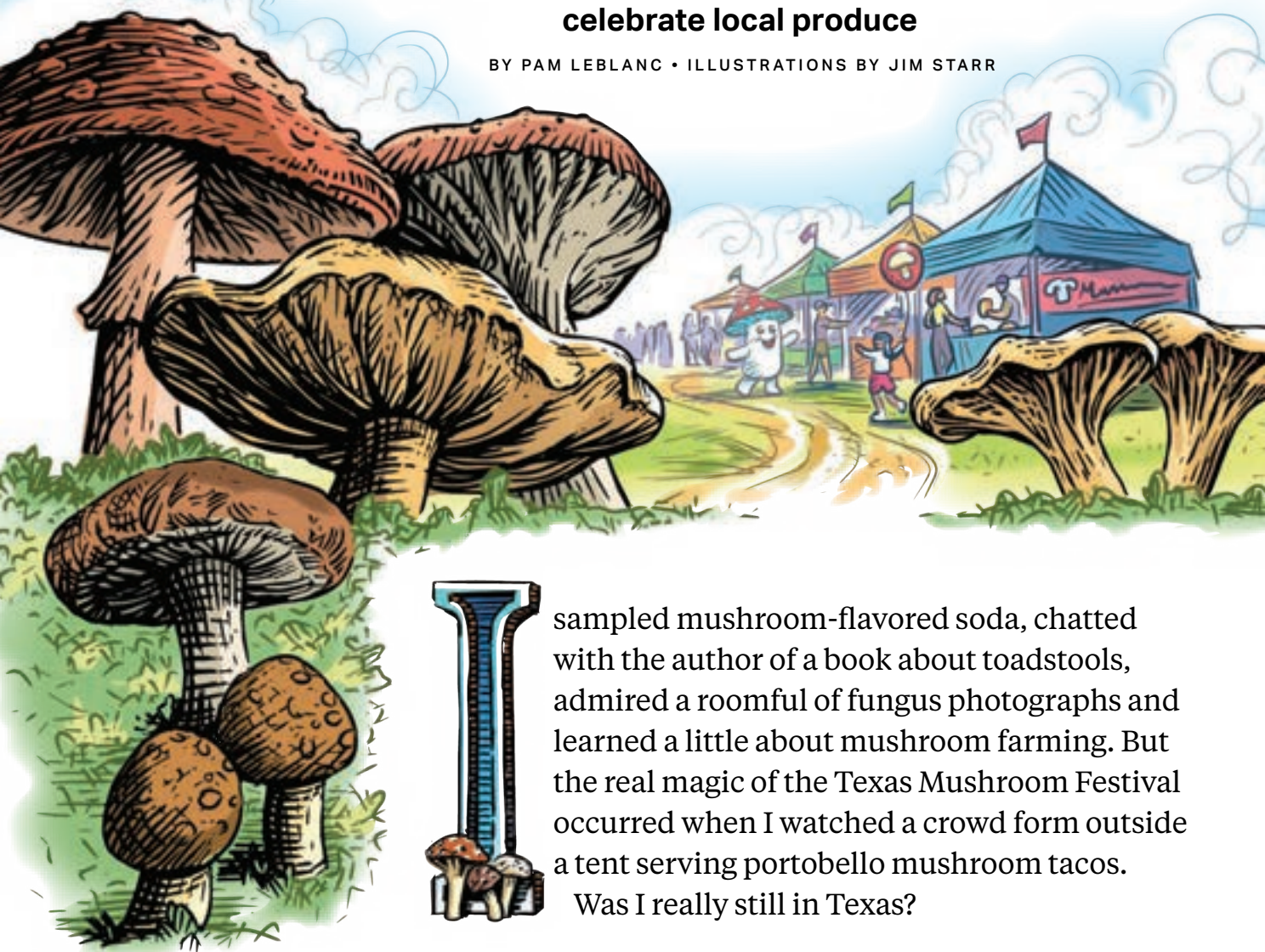
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THE FUNGUS AMONG US

**The good times just mushroom
when small-town festivals
celebrate local produce**

BY PAM LEBLANC • ILLUSTRATIONS BY JIM STARR



I sampled mushroom-flavored soda, chatted with the author of a book about toadstools, admired a roomful of fungus photographs and learned a little about mushroom farming. But the real magic of the Texas Mushroom Festival occurred when I watched a crowd form outside a tent serving portobello mushroom tacos. Was I really still in Texas?



A quick glance at the boots- and hat-wearing folks surrounding me as I strolled the courthouse square in Madisonville assured me I hadn't wandered off course. This city of 4,400, located 40 miles northeast of Bryan, is home to one of several farms operated by California-based Monterey Mushrooms, and in 2005, the Texas Legislature named it the official Mushroom Capital of the Lone Star State.

Madisonville clearly loves fungus, and its annual celebration draws mobs of mycophiles.

The Texas Mushroom Festival is one of dozens of street festivals around the state that celebrate local produce and growers. You can toast tomatoes in Jacksonville, salute strawberries in Poteet and Pasadena, honor onions in Weslaco, praise peaches in Stonewall and Weatherford, recognize rice in Winnie—and a whole lot more.

Many of the events have deep roots in Texas, which is known as a leading producer of specialty crops such as pecans, sweet potatoes, blueberries, watermelons and citrus. Each has its own quirky traditions.

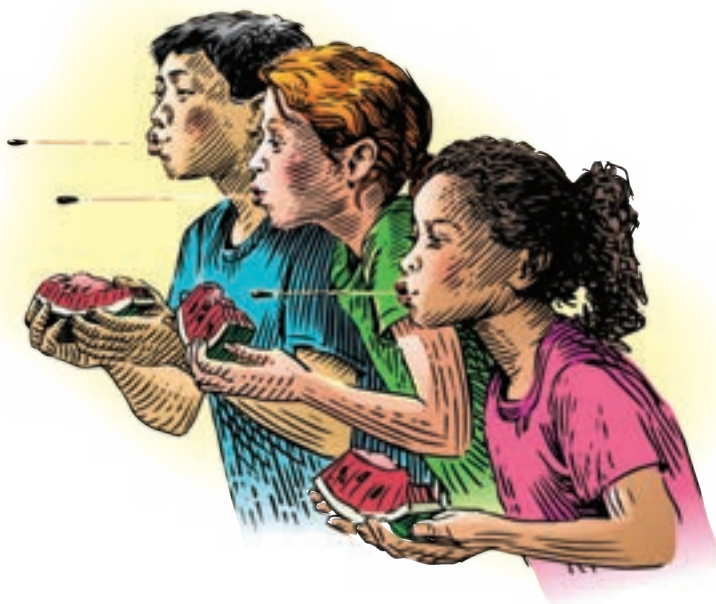
The Texas Citrus Fiesta in Mission, which started in 1932 as a nod to the Rio Grande Valley's winter harvest of grapefruit and oranges, has long included a style show featuring elaborate gowns made from citrus leaves, stems, fruit and peels that have been pulverized, dehydrated, blended and microwaved.

Visitors race to see how many tomatoes they can peel—using only their teeth—at the Jacksonville Tomato Fest. Growers compete to see who can bring the best price for their harvest during the auction at the Poteet Strawberry Festival. The Texas Onion Fest in Weslaco draws more than 25,000 attendees, all who come to celebrate the sweet Texas 1015 onion, the state vegetable of Texas, named for its suggested planting date of October 15.

Washer pitching, mutton bustin' and a full-blown rodeo are part of the action at the Stonewall Peach JAMboree, which also features peach pit spitting and peach eating contests. And at the Luling Watermelon Thump, which dates to 1954, visitors can pucker up for the watermelon seed spitting contest or square off in an (impressively messy) watermelon eating competition.

With all that to choose from, I couldn't resist the idea of spending a fall day in a small town, focusing on something that grows from a microscopic spore into one of nature's most perfect pizza toppings.

The Texas Mushroom Festival officially began in 2001 under a single tent, with a few vendors, a sole musician and about a dozen fungus-themed T-shirts. This year's event, set for October 17, is expected to draw between 10,000 and 15,000 visitors and 150 vendors. The day starts with the Shiitake 5K Run and includes such attractions as a quilt show, an automobile showcase, beer and wine tasting, live music, a kids' zone, silent auction, and mushroom picking contest.



"It just kind of sparked into this monster," says festival director (and confirmed mushroom lover) Denum Hudson, who was watching the action at last year's event from a sidewalk at the edge of the square, where she waxed poetic about edible fungus. "I love mushrooms any way—fried, grilled, sautéed, raw. And we have lots of pickled mushrooms here as well."

But mushrooms are an acquired taste for some. A few minutes after arriving at the festival on a muggy October afternoon, I spotted Miss Mushroom, Allie Brewer of

Centerville. The 20-year-old pageant winner, wearing a bedazzled silver crown, a rose-colored shirt, gold sandals and a red sash, confessed she doesn't much like them.

"But I'd be up for trying some of them for sure," she added quickly. Then she showed me her finds from a few laps through the festival's mushroom market—a pair of earrings, a shirt and a lavender lemonade snow cone.

Next, I wandered over to the Monterey Mushroom tent, where white, thumb-shaped shrooms sprouted from a mound of soft, dark soil. The farm's growing manager, Armando Juarez, told me that the company's local facility, located about 5 miles south of town, grows white, portobello and specialty mushrooms such as shiitake and oyster. It also makes dried mushrooms. In all, the facility produces more than a half-million pounds of the fleshy, spore-bearing fruits of fungus each week.

"They're extremely healthy," he told me, noting that mushrooms contain vitamin D and potassium. They're also low in calories and rich in fiber.

I learned a few other facts about mushrooms at the festival. Besides coming in handy for cooking—and dang, those portobello tacos were tasty—they're used for medicinal purposes and have been for thousands of years.

At its booth, Viking Farms, based in nearby Normangee, was selling an array of tinctures that purport to ease symptoms of menopause, improve mental clarity and boost recovery from injury. It also was selling a colorful lineup of gourmet mushrooms used for cooking, including pink and blue oysters, black pearl kings, shiitakes, and lion's manes, which look more like softball-sized pompoms than something you'd toss in a sauté pan.

I also learned that unless you're making soup or a liquid-based one-pot meal, you don't have to wash mushrooms. That just makes the caps slimy. Instead, brush off any dirt and wipe them with a damp paper towel.

At another booth I sampled mushroom coffee, which I can only describe as "earthy." (I'll stick to hot tea, thanks.) I perused a display of mushroom honey, a rack of mushroom jerky and bottles of mushroom kombucha. One vendor peddled energy shots made with a root-like fungal structure called mycelium, which looks like a wad of unspooled thread.

I chatted with Alisha Gabriel, author of the picture book *Fungi Are ... More Than Mushrooms*, and spent a few minutes listening to singer Wade Phillips belt out a few numbers next to the courthouse steps.

That's a lot of mushroom madness.

I ended my day at the Texas Mushroom Festival with a full belly and a newfound respect for the funky fungus. Who knew a *lowly* mushroom could do so many things?

The experience reminded me of the importance of Texas agriculture. Food doesn't magically appear in the grocery store; it comes from farms. And Texas farmers work hard to bring their crops to market.

Get out and celebrate them. If you're not into mushrooms, get fired up for Hill Country peaches or East Texas yams. And as a bonus, you'll get a side of small-town Texas, delivered with pride. ■

Best of the Fests

Across Texas, communities celebrate their annual harvests with old-fashioned festivals. Here are some of the better known.

Texas Citrus Fiesta
Mission, January

Texas Onion Fest
Weslaco, March

Poteet Strawberry Festival
Poteet, April

Pasadena Strawberry Festival
Pasadena, May

Jacksonville Tomato Fest
Jacksonville, June

Texas Blueberry Festival
Nacogdoches, June

Stonewall Peach JAMBoree & Rodeo
Stonewall, June

Watermelon Jubilee
Stockdale, June

Luling Watermelon Thump
Luling, June

Holland Corn Festival
Holland, June

Parker County Peach Festival
Weatherford, July

Gorman Peanut Festival
Gorman, September 12

Grapefest
Grapevine, September 17–20

Texas Rice Festival
Winnie, September 30–October 3

Floresville Peanut Festival
Floresville, October 6–10

Groves Pecan Festival
Groves, October 8–11

Avocado Festival
Pharr, October 10

East Texas Yamboree
Gilmer, October 14–17

Texas Mushroom Festival
Madisonville, October 17

Golden Sweet Potato Festival
Golden, October 24



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER/
CEO

JEFF LANE

A Labor of Love

EACH SEPTEMBER, WE celebrate Labor Day, a nationwide tribute to the contributions American workers make to the strength and prosperity of our country.

Labor is defined as an expenditure of physical or mental effort, especially when difficult or compulsory. The employees of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative know that definition well.

When the lights go off—whether due to thunderstorms, wildfires or ice storms—our lineworkers leave their families to work tirelessly in harsh and dangerous conditions to restore your power. Other employees handle phone calls and dispatch crews to get electricity flowing to your home as quickly and safely as possible.

But that doesn’t mean the job is a laborious punishment. It’s a labor of love.

When the weather gets rough and the calls come in, employees who were safe at home often call in to see if there’s anything they can do to help. We’ve had member service representatives simply show up to help answer calls during a crisis.

Our employees do this because they care about what they do. They care about the membership—their own friends, family and neighbors. And nothing is more important than making sure that every member is safe and sound—with the power humming—even during inclement weather.

And it’s not just when the lights are off that our employees work hard. Their dedication is evident every day.

Our lineworkers go through extensive training to ensure their safety and that of their fellow crew members. Along with our office staff, they maintain our system, ensuring you have a reliable flow of power. TVEC is always here to educate you about the dangers of electricity, and through *Texas Co-op Power* and other avenues, we pass along tips to help keep you safe and save you money by making energy-conscious decisions.

We don’t just do this because it’s our job. We do it because we care about you, our members, who are our friends, family and neighbors.

Today I want to ask you to thank a co-op worker if you see one. Thank them for their commitment, their talent, their hard work and their service to the membership of this cooperative. After all, even though our offices will be closed September 7 for Labor Day, if your power goes out, we’ll be on our way to fix it, holiday or not. ■



JITTAWIT 211 GETTYIMAGES.COM

When Life Gives You Lumens

NOW THAT WE’VE made the switch from selling incandescent light bulbs to energy-efficient LED bulbs as a country, it makes more sense to select bulbs based on lumens rather than watts. Watts measure how much energy a bulb uses, and lumens are a measure of a bulb’s brightness. The higher the lumens, the more light the bulb provides.

HOW BRIGHT ARE MY BULBS?	
INCANDESCENT BULB	LUMENS
100 watts	1,600
75 watts	1,110
60 watts	800
40 watts	450

Modern LED technology creates more light with fewer watts than incandescent bulbs ever could.

When you’re shopping for LEDs, think about the brightness you want in each room of your house, and compare lumens instead of watts. Look at the product label on the package to find the LED bulb’s brightness. ■



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Paul Weatherford, District 3

Edward Reeve, Secretary, District 5

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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

8:15 a.m.–4:45 p.m.

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Master Your Thermostat

Little changes can lead to big savings

THE THERMOSTAT IS one of the most powerful energy-saving tools at your disposal since about half of the electricity used in a typical home goes to heating and cooling. Used smartly, it can bring major energy savings while keeping you and your family comfortable.

During warm weather, the recommended indoor temperature is 78 degrees. During cold weather, set your thermostat to 68 degrees.

A properly configured programmable thermostat can save you 10% on your monthly utility bill. Program your thermostat to match your schedule, turning it up or down a few degrees when you'll be out of the house, at work or school.

A smart thermostat can lead to even more savings, as it allows you to adjust the temperature remotely from your phone. For example, on a hot summer day you can run your thermostat higher while you're out of the house, then cool things off before getting in the car to head home. If your schedule changes day to day, a smart thermostat can give you more control than a basic programmable system.

To keep things running efficiently, regularly clean or replace the filters of your HVAC system. Clogged filters make your system work harder to achieve your preferred temperature.

If you leave on a trip, don't leave the AC on full blast but don't turn it off either. If it's a programmable thermostat, use the "hold" or the "vacation" setting—or set it to 85 degrees. For every degree a thermostat is raised during the summer, you may save up to 2% on your electricity bill.

Your thermostat can do a lot, but it can't do it alone. A fan can be a great way to amplify the effects of your AC, keeping you cool in the summer. In the winter, adjusting your ceiling fan to turn clockwise can help distribute warm air. Turn off the fan before you leave the room.

Other energy-efficient upgrades to your home help too. Seal any leaks: Caulk and weatherstrip around windows and doors to prevent conditioned air from escaping to the outdoors. ■

Hunt Safely This Season

WITH THE ARRIVAL of dove season, Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative encourages members to be aware of electrical equipment while hunting. Shooting electrical infrastructure is dangerous and can cause power outages and result in expensive repairs.

Every year, members experience power and internet service interruptions when shotgun pellets hit electricity equipment and wires.

Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.

Keep clear of electrical equipment, and don't shoot at or near power lines or insulators.

Be vigilant in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.

Never place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment.

Don't shoot at birds perched on electrical wires.

Don't use electrical poles or towers to support shooting equipment or transformer boxes to steady a shot.

Know the effective range of your gun, and always identify your target before putting your finger on the trigger.

Never shoot at sound or movement—assume it's another hunter until you can clearly see an animal. ■



VISUALSPACE | GETTYIMAGES.COM

2026 TVEC Board Election Candidate Biographies



Carolyn Minor

Carolyn Minor is a resident of Wills Point and has been a Co-op member for more than 35 years. After retiring from the United States Postal Service in 1992, Carolyn looked for ways to give back to her community, leading to volunteering for the American Cancer Society, Van Zandt County Extension Education, supporting East Texas Hospice and leading her local Neighborhood Crime Watch.

Carolyn was elected to the Kaufman County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors in 1995, and in her first term was tasked with helping to lead the consolidation of KCEC and New Era Electric Cooperative in 1997.

"It was a challenge, but it was really the best thing for everyone involved," Carolyn said. "This was especially true for the co-op membership, which is always our number one priority."

Carolyn has earned the Director Gold Credential, the highest director certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. She has served as treasurer and acting chairwoman of the board, and currently serves as vice chairwoman.

"I consider it a privilege to serve as a TVEC board member with the knowledge that I have obtained over the last 31 years," Carolyn said. "This is an industry that changes constantly, so it is a constant effort to stay educated and up-to-date."

Carolyn is a widowed mother of five children, with 12 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.



Ed Reeve

Ed Reeve has been a cooperative member for more than 27 years and on the Board of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative since 2010. A Eustace area resident, he is a past city council member and mayor pro-tem.

Ed served on the board of Lone Star Credit Union for more than 20 years including a role as vice chairman, has been the finance chair for the First Baptist Church, a volunteer firefighter and president of Lighting Engineers of North Texas.

Ed held several positions in the electric and gas service industry during his 30-year career with TXU. Ed has earned the Director Gold Credential, the highest director certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He also has a Bachelor's and Master's degree from the University of North Texas.

"I believe my 30-year work experience with TXU Energy and many years of experience on other co-op boards will continue to bring value to TVEC," Ed said. "Since I was elected to the board, we have been working to improve the operation of our co-op and helping to keep our electric costs as low as possible."

Ed has two sons and four grandchildren.



Derrick Hoelscher

Derrick Hoelscher has been an active member of the Cedar Creek Lake Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis Club and the business community since moving to the area in 2000.

He was selected by the TVEC board to fill the district four seat after the sudden loss of Jo Ann Hanstrom.

"I just want to bring some value to the co-op as a board member and do the best I can for the co-op members," Hoelscher said. "I enjoy being involved in the community, and it really becomes like a big family. That makes it something I really enjoy doing."

Derrick is a graduate of Texas A&M with a background in business including running a dairy and his current career in insurance. Throughout his life and career he has been a member of several electric co-ops, and noted he still has a lot to learn for his role on the board.

"With all of the growth we are seeing, we have to be looking ahead to be prepared and making sure we are ready to meet the demand," he said. "That is true of the business sector, the schools and everyone trying to do the best with what they have."

Hoelscher lives in southern Kaufman County with his wife Tana. They have a daughter and a son.



Clay Dishman

Clay Dishman is a lifelong resident of Northeast Texas and has been a member of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative since 2006. He brings a strong background in governance and community service, having served in director roles for both the Markout Water Supply Company and his local church.

Clay began his professional career more than 20 years ago with TXU/Luminant as an engineer, focusing on emissions improvement initiatives aimed at delivering reliable power while promoting responsible environmental stewardship. After more than a decade with TXU/Luminant, he transitioned to CECO Environmental, where he has played a key role in leading emissions reduction projects from initial concept through commissioning in a highly demanding energy market.

With decades of experience in the energy sector, Clay offers a comprehensive understanding of industry challenges and priorities, including the critical balance between reliability, affordability, and environmental responsibility. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering and a Master of Business Administration from Texas Tech University.

Clay is committed to serving cooperative members with integrity and purpose. His guiding principle is:

"To prioritize the needs of our community by ensuring reliable and affordable power, while safeguarding the cooperative from external influences that do not align with our members' best interests."

Clay and his wife, Hannah, reside outside of Scurry, Texas. Together, they have combined family of seven children—four boys and three girls. He enjoys spending time with his family outdoors and supporting their involvement in local sports and community activities.



Here.
For You. Rodney Wesley

From The Brush Crew to the Leadership Team

TVEC's Director of Operations keeps setting the bar higher after 41 years

BY HIS OWN ADMISSION, RODNEY WESLEY did not fully apply himself to his work at Kaufman High School. It did not take long for him to find some motivation in the United States Army, however, which set the stage for an enduring career through the ranks of Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative where he serves members and employees as Director of Engineering and Operations.

"In a way, at the time, I feel like Kaufman was an unusual bubble to grow up in," Wesley said. "I was in town, but sheltered from some of the realities of the time. Once you get older you kind of realize that environment was set for you in small town Texas."

What was instilled in those formative years was a mentality that set Wesley up for finding success in any competitive environment.

"I grew up in a house where there were no excuses. You just figure it out and you can't use biases, prejudice or anything else as an excuse even where it existed," Wesley said. "It was also the family I come from, my brothers and sisters and trying to be as good as them and following in their footsteps. Wherever I went there was an identification as James or Gail's brother or

Ivory's son. Some people might say small legacies but for me these were giant legacies to live up to."

In the competitive environment of the Army, Wesley found



Rodney Wesley, right, started at TVEC doing right-of-way clearing on a brush crew, but soon made a career move into working on the power lines.

his competitive nature suited the task and he quickly rose through the ranks. Soon he was commanding Sherman tanks and leading men with more experience. Once his enlistment



For 41 years, Wesley has brought a competitive spirit and an Army veteran's resolve to each new role at the co-op.

was up though it was time to find another challenge.

"I had been pushed toward Officer Candidate School and so I had to decide what I wanted to do. Officers are in a different world in the Army and I had really just found a lot of favor moving up through the ranks and felt good there. So instead of going back in and making a career of it I decided it was time to get a job in Dallas or somewhere to start a normal life."

A family connection landed Wesley an opportunity at the co-op, but the climb to leadership would have to start from the bottom of the career ladder.

"On day one they put me on a brush crew, and I had never touched a chainsaw in my life. I'd never backed a trailer. Other than the Army I hadn't been driving trucks. It was hard work for that five dollars an hour," Wesley said. "But it is that mentality of just having to figure it out. And now I'm not just bragging to claim to be one of the best backhoe operators here. I could pick up an egg with it and I like the challenge of things like that."

Adjusting to a co-op career came with growing pains, and an adjustment to growing, succeeding and leading in a civilian environment.

"You spend a lot of time doing hard work with these guys like Danny Belcher, Gene Hagler, Floyd Choyce — They molded my co-op career in a way when my only goal was really just to get off that brush crew. When opportunities came up, and I was not even going to apply, they were there to push me and speak on my behalf."

With 41 years of co-op experience under his belt, Wesley has transitioned from working his way up the ladder to sharing the lessons he has learned with the next generation of company leaders.

"As the company grows, there is a challenge to hold on to that family mentality that we have," Wesley said. "Right now, I've maybe become less patient for the things that are unnecessary, but on the other side, my challenge is setting everyone up for going into what is next. As rapidly as things are changing in the community and in the industry, I may not get to be part of all of that, but right now it is a new challenge every day to make sure that the people we have are ready for those things on the horizon."

The rapid growth is a challenge for co-op members as well, with farmland becoming neighborhoods and quiet drives replaced by city traffic. Through it all, Wesley believes the co-op business model can provide a great value for members, even if it is a very different time and landscape.

"It is hard to put a value on it, but as a member, you are priceless to the co-op," he said. "We really do everything in our power to take care of member concerns and issues, and that is really hard to find. We aren't just an electric company. The co-op is a member of the community and we take that role seriously." ■

Member Service Minute



Bethany Norman

Career at the co-op

This coming January, I will have been with the co-op five years. I help at the offices cashiering as well as assisting with online chat and email with members.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I really enjoy the great people I get to work with.

What is the key to providing great service?

I think great customer service means treating people with empathy and respect. We genuinely want to help with whatever a member needs and we don't want things to go unresolved.

Who has inspired you in life, and how?

This would have to be my parents. They have always taught me to do the right thing and treat others how you want to be treated.



Chick'n Run / Simply Southern

More than a simple sandwich, with extraordinary flavor and service

IT IS EASY TO MISS CHICK'N RUN as you make your way through Canton. But according to Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative lineworkers, once you do find it, you may have a new regular stop.

"When you are on the road all day, finding a place that is quick, friendly and serving great food is always a win," said Bryan Hicks, journeyman lineman. "The prices are great and the ladies working there are always super helpful."

Gourmet chicken salad varieties and baked goods lead the menu, but there are a few other goodies as well, including soups and loaded baked potatoes.

"I usually go with a chicken salad sandwich, but if you are looking for something different, you've got to try the walking tacos," Hicks said.

Along with fresh lunch meals, the eatery also offers a large selection of pre-made ingredient starter mixes for casseroles, chilis and more. 36241001

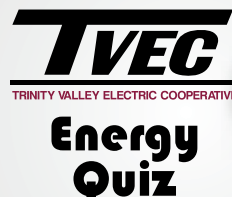
Of course you can also take a tub of chicken salad home for the whole family.

Chick'n Run is located beside Higgenbotham Brothers Hardware at 221 Hwy. 243 in Canton, on Facebook and online at simplysouthernmixes.com. ■



Win \$100 Just for Reading

Somewhere hidden on pages 16–23 is a TVEC account number. Read closely. If the account number is yours, contact the member services department by September 30 to receive a \$100 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be our winner.



This German scientist defined the relationship between power, voltage and current around 1826:

- A. Sir Humphry Davy
- B. Thomas Davenport
- C. Georg Ohm
- D. Thomas Edison

Win **\$100!**

Send your answer and contact information to contest@tvec.coop or contact TVEC Member Services by September 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** issue.

August Energy Quiz: Subatomic Particles

JUNIOR HIGH SCIENCE CLASS will teach you how to make an electrical circuit, but there is a lot more happening when batteries, wire and light bulbs meet.

At the very smallest level of matter, the particles that make up atoms carry the electrical charges and movement that make the modern world turn.

Electrons, spinning around an atom's nucleus, carry a negative charge, while protons in the nucleus carry a positive charge.

Congratulations to our July Energy Quiz winner, Sue Ellen Shaw of LaRue.

Look for the winner of this month's contest in the November issue of **Texas Co-op Power**. ■

2026 ANNUAL

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8

5:15 PM – Doors Open

6:00 PM – Dinner

7:00 PM – Annual Meeting

*Co-op updates, important news
& lots of great door prizes!*

**Canton Civic Center
800 Flea Market Rd.
Canton, TX 75103**



JULY 2026 Operation Round Up Awards



Grants

Caring for America, Inc.	\$1,500
Faith in Action Outreach	\$6,000
The Forney Arts Council	\$4,000
Forney Sports & Leadership Association	\$1,000
Pilot Club of Wills Point	\$4,000

Bill Payment Assistance

The Salvation Army, Malakoff	\$5,000
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Food Bank Assistance

Serenity Corner Church	\$5,000
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TVEC
Charitable Foundation



DON'T FUEL THE FIRE

Wildfires can start unexpectedly and move quickly and unpredictably, destroying everything in their path.

Learn how to prepare for and react to dangerous fire events.

If fire is reported nearby:

Place vital records and small items of value in your car and park it facing the direction of escape. Heed evacuation orders.

Clear a firebreak around buildings.

Shut gas off at the meter and turn off propane tanks.

Leave the electricity on, especially if it powers a well.

Turn on sprinklers. Wet down the house and shrubs close to structures.

Follow these home fire safety tips:

Mow grass short. Rake leaves. Clear away debris.

Keep hay bales and firewood away from structures and electric lines.

Make a family evacuation plan. Keep an inventory of home valuables in a fireproof box.

Your electric cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.

Give friends and family the Best of Texas.

Texas Co-op Power has combined favorite recipes from the *Typically Texas Cookbook* and *The Second Typically Texas Cookbook* into one delicious collection.

Inside this cookbook, you'll find more than 700 recipes, including over 300 desserts.

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Beachcombing at home.

Texas Co-op Power presents an illustrated *Seashells of Texas* poster by artist Aletha St. Romain, 20x16 inches, suitable for framing.

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Keeping Watch

Dedicated volunteers help keep Galveston's beaches a safe haven for fun in the sun

BY PAM LEBLANC • PHOTO BY ERICH SCHLEGEL

A **YELLOW FLAG** flaps from a pole along the Galveston Seawall, a notice to beachgoers that the surf is up slightly and they should stay alert if they venture into the water.

Robert Krout points out the marker, then leads the way down the steps onto a sandy beach streaked with sargassum. As part of the city's Wave Watchers program, Krout and about 30 other volunteers patrol these beaches, monitoring for people in trouble and talking with visitors about how to stay safe.

Krout, retired chair of the music therapy department at Southern Methodist University in Dallas and a part-time ukulele instructor, signed up to attend the city's first Wave Watcher Academy 10 years ago after reading a notice about the program in the Galveston newspaper. He had worked as a pool lifeguard in California and New York and enjoyed strolling the seawall.

As a Wave Watcher, he figured, he could help his community at the same time.

"One of the reasons I moved to Galveston was to be near a beach," says Krout, 70. "It's a great volunteer opportunity and a reason to talk to people."

Wave Watchers spend a week each year in training, where they learn about hazards such as venomous marine life and dangerous currents and how the professional first responders of the Galveston Island Beach Patrol operate. When Krout reports for duty, he wears a yellow whistle around his neck and packs a waist belt with bandages, antiseptic wipes, aloe vera gel, a CPR mask, insect repellent, hand sanitizer and water.

It's early in the season and skies are cloudy, so the beach isn't busy today. But as we walk past two children playing in the surf, Krout's eyes scan the beach, looking for their parents. Once he sees they're paying attention, we move on.

Farther down, we spot a venomous Portuguese man-of-war, puffed up like a blue plastic baggie on the sand. The jellyfish-like creature can deliver a powerful sting, even if it's dead. Krout, who knows fresh water can worsen the pain, carries a bottle of saline to douse any injuries.

Wave Watchers don't enforce beach rules but act as a force multiplier for the beach patrol's guard staff of about 80, says Patrol Chief Austin Kirwin. He hopes to expand the program.

"It's been very beneficial for us, just having local citizens who are already on the beach keeping an eye out," he says. "We train them on what to look for and how to spot a rip current and give beach safety talks."

Galveston sees an average of six to eight drownings each year. Many occur at night, often near places like jetties, where rip currents form. "The more trained eyes we have out there, the better it is for the whole community," Kirwin says.

Unless there's an emergency, lifeguards stay in their stands, where they focus on what's happening in the water. But Wave Watchers can walk the beach, interacting with visitors and dispensing advice, like what to do if you're caught in a rip current. (Don't fight it; let it carry you out, then swim parallel to shore to escape.)

They never enter the water to make rescues and can't provide medication, but they alert Beach Patrol to problems. They also help with crowd control in case of an incident, reunite lost children with their parents and remind beachgoers to tread carefully if they walk on the jetties.

The volunteers concentrate their efforts between the Galveston Fishing Pier and East Beach, a 10-mile stretch that includes Stewart Beach, where thousands congregate on summer weekends.

"They're a huge sigh of relief," says Genevieve Weber, a lifeguard working a stand just west of Pleasure Pier. "Things unfold so quickly out here. Everything happens in a matter of seconds."

For Wave Watchers, it's all about keeping people out of dangerous situations before they happen—and, sometimes, cheering up someone who's having a bad day. For that, Krout carries a pouch filled with shark's teeth he's found on the beach. If you get stung by a jellyfish, he might just hand you one. ■

Robert Krout is one of about 30 volunteers in Galveston's Wave Watchers program who patrol beaches looking for people in trouble and urging safety.



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3 SILVER COINS



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2026 Canada Silver Maple Leaf
Actual size is 37.97 mm



2026 British Silver Britannia
Actual size is 38.61 mm

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Reverse

2026 Canada Silver Maple Leaf:

A highly sought-after bullion coin since 1988, this 2026 issue was struck in highly pure 99.99% silver at the Royal Canadian Mint.



Reverse

2026 British Silver Britannia:

One of The Royal Mint's flagship coins, this 2026 issue features Lady Britannia, defender of Britain, struck in 99.9% fine silver.



Reverse

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and plan your itinerary with different silver coins from around the world. Your journey doesn't end with just three legendary silver coins. Inside your Silver Passport are two open spaces waiting to be filled with treasures from across the world. Continue your worldwide adventure by adding your own hand-selected silver coins from the world's most celebrated mints, creating a truly personalized collection that reflects the beauty, history, and artistry of destinations around the world.

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The Line in the Sand

Where does West Texas begin? The 100th meridian, more or less

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY THE BRAVE UNION

IF YOU EXAMINE any good map of Texas, you'll notice a natural division of East and West Texas that runs from the eastern edge of the Panhandle down to Abilene and San Angelo and on past Uvalde to Carrizo Springs and Laredo.

On the west side of that line is arid land, and on the east side, it's wetter and greener. It becomes increasingly dry as you go west and wet and humid as you go east.

This line is better known as the 100th meridian, and it maintains this calculus of wet and dry lands all the way up into Canada.

John Wesley Powell, famous for exploring and mapping the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon over 150 years ago, was one of the first conservationists to see that the 100th meridian served as a demarcation.

"Passing from east to west across this belt a wonderful transformation is observed," he wrote. "On the east a luxuriant growth of grass is seen, and the gaudy flowers ... make the prairie landscape beautiful.

"Passing westward, species after species of luxuriant grass and brilliant flowering plants disappear; the ground

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



gradually becomes naked, with bunch grasses here and there; now and then a thorny cactus is seen, and the yucca plant thrusts out its sharp bayonets."

Powell, for whom Lake Powell in Arizona and Utah is named, would become the head of the U.S. Geological Survey in 1881. He used his knowledge of the West to create a prescriptive map for water management.

Powell took his map to a Senate committee in 1890 and suggested dividing the Western U.S. into water districts that would be managed by the people living along the rivers rather than the states. He advocated for need over greed.

The senators practically rioted, as this flew in the face of the fever dream of Darwinian development that had dominated the Western states. The gold must be mined, the forests harvested, the rivers dammed and the railroads built.

Powell argued for sustainability and good stewardship of the Earth. Powell was against big dams—ironic, given that his namesake lake was created by Glen Canyon Dam. He preferred smaller, more democratic irrigation systems that he believed would be more efficient for the land and serve more people more equitably.

As we know, the arid West was not developed as Powell envisioned, but it's interesting to consider what might have been if Powell had had his way.

What's more interesting to me are the facts on the ground these days. The geological truths that defined the 100th meridian in Texas a century and a half ago are now truer for the 98th meridian, running just west of Fort Worth, east of San Antonio and west of Corpus Christi. This tells us that the Texas water challenges of the future will be far greater than any our ancestors faced. ■

Pancakes and Waffles

Breakfast will never be the same after tasting these morning staples

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

Growing up, there was always a jar of applesauce in our fridge. One morning we were greeted with apple pancakes, and I haven't looked at applesauce the same since. These are thicker and cakier than your typical pancake, but isn't cake for breakfast simply sweeter?

Apple Pancakes

TOPPING

4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter,
plus more for serving
2 medium apples, cored and diced
¼ cup brown sugar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon salt

PANCAKES

1½ cups complete buttermilk
pancake mix
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 cup cinnamon applesauce
¼ cup water, plus more as needed

- 1. TOPPING** In a skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Add apples, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the apples start to soften and the sugar is dissolved and syrupy, 3–5 minutes. Remove from heat until ready to serve pancakes.
- 2. PANCAKES** Preheat oven to 200 degrees. In a bowl, combine pancake mix and cinnamon. Stir in applesauce and water until just moistened. If batter is too thick to pour, add water. Preheat and lightly grease a nonstick skillet or griddle over medium heat.
- 3.** Pour ¼ cup batter onto skillet or griddle, repeating as allowed for pan size. Cook each pancake until bubbles form on the surface. Flip and cook until the second side is golden brown, 1–3 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low if the pancakes are cooking too quickly.
- 4.** Keep cooked pancakes warm in preheated oven, and repeat with remaining batter. Serve warm with butter and reheated apple topping.

SERVES 4

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in Cocina Gris at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Poblano Breakfast Scramble.



Oatmeal Waffles

BEVERLY ANTHES
FANNIN EC

Anthes' easy waffles are a delicious breakfast. They're crisp on the outside and fluffy inside. Serve warm, topped with fresh fruit or maple syrup.

- 1½ cups flour**
- 1 cup quick-cooking oats**
- 1 tablespoon baking powder**
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 1½ cups milk**
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten**
- ⅛ teaspoon vanilla extract**
- 6 tablespoons (¾ stick) butter, melted**
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar**

1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees. In a large mixing bowl, stir together flour, oats, baking powder and cinnamon.
2. In a small mixing bowl, whisk together milk, eggs, vanilla, butter and brown sugar.
3. Add wet ingredients to flour mixture and stir to combine.
4. Preheat and lightly grease waffle iron. Pour batter into waffle iron, close and cook according to manufacturer's directions. Keep cooked waffles warm in preheated oven, and repeat with remaining batter.

SERVES 6



\$500 WINNER

Sweet Potato Waffles

TRACEY STEWART
SAM HOUSTON EC



This is the most delicious way to transform dinner leftovers into brunch. Hearty, crispy and lightly spiced, I was blown away by these waffles. After testing this recipe, you can surely find me cooking up an extra batch of mashed sweet potatoes to whip up these waffles on the weekend.

- 2½ cups flour**
- ¼ cup sugar**
- 1 tablespoon baking powder**
- ½ teaspoon baking soda**
- ½ teaspoon salt**
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon**

- 1 cup mashed sweet potatoes**
- 1½ cups buttermilk**
- 4 eggs**
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**
- ½ cup (1 stick) melted butter, cooled**
- Maple syrup, for serving**

1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees. In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt and cinnamon.
2. In another large bowl, whisk together sweet potatoes, buttermilk, eggs, vanilla and butter.
3. Add the flour mixture to the sweet potato mixture and stir to combine, being careful not to overmix. If the batter is too thick, gradually add 2–4 tablespoons water.
4. Preheat and lightly grease waffle iron. Ladle batter onto waffle iron, being careful not to overfill, close and cook according to manufacturer's directions.
5. Keep cooked waffles warm in preheated oven, and repeat with remaining batter.
6. Serve warm with maple syrup.

SERVES 4

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

LEMONY DELIGHTS DUE SEP 10

When life gives you lemons, what do you make? Submit your delicious citrus treats for a chance at an easy-peasy \$500. Watch for the recipes in February 2027.

UPCOMING: WINNER, WINNER CHICKEN DINNER DUE OCT 10



CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >

Pineapple Upside Down Pancake With Pineapple Cream Syrup

JAN BOX
TRINITY VALLEY EC

Dessert for breakfast? Sign me up! I loved the presentation of these pancakes. They do take a little patience when flipping, but once you get the hang of it, these pancakes are so much fun to make—and even better to eat.

1 can pineapple slices (16 ounces) in syrup
1 cup sugar
4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter
6 tablespoons heavy cream
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 cups prepared pancake batter
Maraschino cherries, for topping
Whipped cream, for topping

1. Preheat oven to 200 degrees. Drain pineapple slices, reserving syrup. To a



saucepan, add reserved syrup and sugar. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, at a soft boil about 25 minutes or until syrup turns golden. Remove from heat and stir in butter, heavy cream, salt and cinnamon.

2. Preheat and lightly grease skillet over medium-high heat. Pour about ⅓ cup pancake batter onto skillet.

Don't Overdo It

Take care to mix pancake or waffle ingredients just until combined. A few lumps in the batter are OK. But overmixing overworks the gluten, which results in a dense pancake. Go easy and enjoy tender, fluffier pancakes and waffles.

—Vianney Rodriguez

3. Cook until bubbles form on the surface of the pancake. Place a pineapple ring into batter and press slightly. Flip pancake and press into skillet and finish cooking. Keep cooked pancakes warm in preheated oven, and repeat with remaining batter.

4. Serve warm with a cherry, pineapple syrup and a dollop of whipped cream on each pancake.

SERVES 6

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

The Mother of All State Parks

Explore history amid peace and quiet along the Leon River

BY CHET GARNER

EVERYONE WHO VISITS Texas' first official state park feels like they've been let in on a quiet secret. This 400-acre hideaway between Temple and Waco doesn't get the attention (or crowds) of Hill Country destinations like Enchanted Rock State Natural Area or Garner State Park.

But from its quiet perch along the Leon River, Mother Neff State Park waits patiently, like a front porch swing, inviting you to slow down and breathe in some fresh air—and maybe put your phone away for a little while.

The story of this park—and really our entire state park system—goes back to Isabella “Mother” Neff and her son, Gov. Pat Neff. The family owned this stretch of riverfront land that became a local hot spot for picnicking, swimming and fishing long before a “state park” was even a thing. When Mother Neff died in 1921, she made a very Texas-sized decision to leave the land to the state so everyone else could enjoy it too. Not a bad legacy.

I started my visit by hitting the limestone trails, winding beneath a canopy of oaks before dropping into a shady ravine. That's where I found one of the park's rock shelters—massive stone overhangs that Native American tribes used for thousands of years. Turns out, good real estate along the Leon River has always been in demand.

From there, I made my way to the park's iconic stone water tower, built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s. The climb to the observation deck on top isn't exactly Mount Everest, but it's enough to earn a view of the sprawling valley below—and justify a solid snack afterward.

Mother Neff State Park may not be the biggest or flashiest, but it just might be the most meaningful—a place where history, nature and a mother's generosity quietly collide. ■

ABOVE Chet at Mother Neff State Park, which used to be the property of Gov. Pat Neff's family. Neff held office in the 1920s.

TCP Watch the video on our website and see all of Chet's Explorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

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

SEPTEMBER

6

New Berlin Sausage Festival, (210) 343-9570, facebook.com/nbtksausagefest

10

Abilene [10–19] West Texas Fair and Rodeo, (325) 677-4376, westtexasfairrodeo.com

Corsicana [10–13, 17–20] The Guys, (903) 872-5421, thewlac.com

11

Brenham [11–19] Washington County Fair, (979) 836-4112, washingtoncofair.com

12

Chappell Hill Airing of the Quilts, (979) 337-9910, chappellhilltx.com

Fairfield Show of Wheels, (903) 389-5792, fairfieldtexaschamber.com

Luling Luling Foundation Youth Grill-Off, (830) 875-2438, lulingfoundation.org

Stephenville Morgan Mill Arts and Crafts Fair, (972) 467-8646, bit.ly/mmartsandcrafts

18

Royse City [18–19] North Texas Antique Tractor & Engine Club Show & Pull, (214) 934-2414, north-texas-antique-tractor-and-engine-club.net

19

Azle Silver Creek Lord's Acre, (817) 607-8039, facebook.com/silvercreekmc

Blanco Classic Car Show, (512) 632-0648, blancoclassiccarshow.com



Pick of the Month

Salt Festival

Grand Saline, September 24–26

gssaltfestival@gmail.com

facebook.com/gssaltfest

Celebrate the heritage, community and spirit that define this corner of East Texas. The festival includes street dances, cornhole and horseshoe tournaments, yoga, a parade, petting zoo, classic car show, 5K race, and three nights of live music. Country music artist Tracy Byrd, above, headlines Saturday night.

Fredericksburg Classic Car & Truck Show, (830) 990-4433, pecangrovestore.com

Fort Worth [19–20] Bluey's Big Play, (817) 212-4280, basshall.com

25

Giddings [25–26] Texas Word Wrangler Book Festival, (979) 542-2716, www.giddingspubliclibrary.org

26

Bertram Oatmeal Festival, (512) 882-2992, oatmealfestival.org

Bryan Brazos Valley Beekeepers Association Bee School, (979) 218-3070, bvbeeks.org

[MORE EVENTS >](#)

TCP Submit Your Event

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



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Hit the Road

Event Calendar

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WWW.HISTORICSCHOOLS.ORG 

All schools listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Member of Country School Association of America.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS CONTINUED

Fairfield Breakfast With Santa, (903) 389-5792, fairfieldtexaschamber.com

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

Kerrville [26-27] Supertri Kerrville, kerrvilletri.com

27

Giddings Texas Wendish Fest, (979) 366-2441, texaswends.org

Luling Quilts & Cars, (512) 567-5091, facebook.com/quiltsandcars

Meyersville Sts. Peter & Paul Catholic Church Fall Festival, (361) 275-3868, stspeterpaulloysius.org

OCTOBER

1

Smithville [1-Nov. 15] Airing of the Quilts, (979) 540-9222, bit.ly/airingofthequilts

2

Stephenville [2-3] Town N Country Quilt Guild Quilt Show, (817) 676-5165, bit.ly/townncountryquiltguild

3

Granbury Romancing the Monarch, (817) 579-3280, lakegranburymastergardeners.org

5

Corsicana [5-29] Piece-makers' Quilt Guild of Corsicana Quilt Show, corsicanaquiltguild.com

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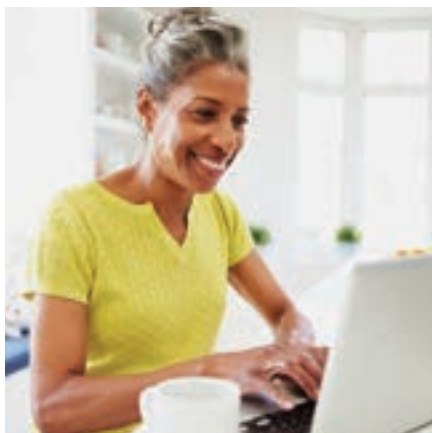
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Rodeo

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CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1

1 MIKE ZARELLA
PEDERNALES EC

"Youngsters gather on the arena railings for a better view of the opening ceremonies of the Blanco County Fair & Rodeo."

2 HOLLY BUFKIN
BIG COUNTRY EC

"Unwavering grit as this paint bronc shows the untamed heart that defines rodeo."

3 BOB NORRIS
PEDERNALES EC

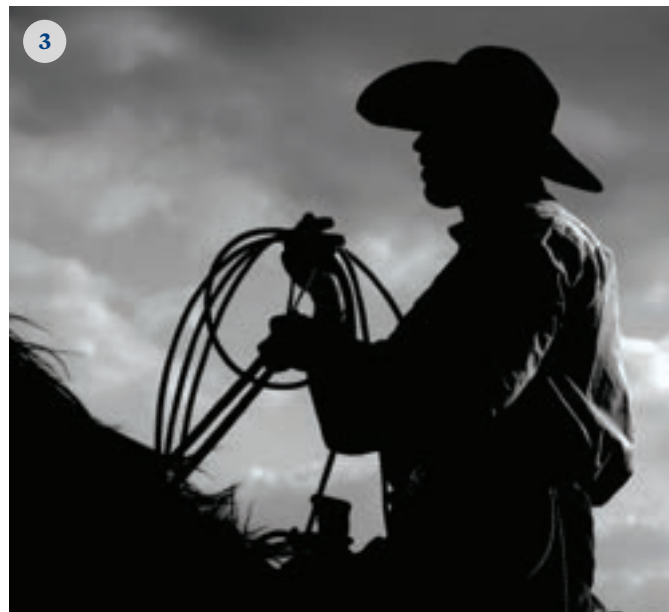
A silhouette of a cowboy at a rodeo.

4 LAURA BREWER
COSERV

North Texas Fair & Rodeo cowboys wait their turn to ride.



2



3



4

Upcoming Contests

BARNs DUE SEP 10

SWAMPs DUE OCT 10

IN THE GARDEN DUE NOV 10



ENTER
ONLINE

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



Speaking of Long Commutes

Finding silver linings—and snacks—when it's hard to find childcare

BY ERICA FLOCKE

ILLUSTRATION BY
GWEN KERAVAL

"HOW WAS YOUR day today?"

No response. "Did you have fun?" Still nothing.

At the stoplight on Ranch Road 12 and Hunter Road in San Marcos, I laughed to myself and thought about how silly this one-sided conversation must sound. I glanced in the mirror clipped to the backseat headrest and caught my 13-month-old daughter's grin. She can't talk yet, but I can't wait for the day she finally answers back.

I live and work in Wimberley, a town that prides itself on being family friendly. And it is—except when it comes to daycare. There's only one option in town for babies her age, and I've been on the waitlist for more than a year. So every weekday we make the 30-minute drive to San Marcos, where she goes to daycare. That

adds up to two hours of commuting each day: one hour with my daughter, one hour solo.

We've learned to make the most of it. Together we listen to audiobooks and albums I think she should know. While some babies get *The Wheels on the Bus*, mine gets Turnpike Troubadours. I like to tell myself it's making her smarter, or at least building character. Only time will tell.

I narrate the drive like a tour guide: "Look at that bird!" or "We're going over the river." She probably understands none of it, yet she looks at me and smiles like she's clued in anyway.

Some days, traffic crawls along so slowly that I have to break out the emergency snack stash I keep in the car. Fruit bars or a lone teething cookie. By the time we reach the next stoplight, she's happily munching or asleep.

I notice the same cars each morning and afternoon, their drivers as familiar to me as neighbors at this point. I wonder about the people inside. Do they have a baby in the backseat listening to a Lyle Lovett album for the very first time too?

I imagine a tiny community of parents and children, each of us on our own little journey, connected by the same roads, the same traffic lights, the same shared struggle of making it work.

Sometimes I think about it more broadly. In a state as rural as Texas, countless parents are on even longer drives for childcare, and I can't help but wonder how they fill those hours.

I know this is just a phase. We won't be commuting forever, and one day I know I'm going to miss these drives and how my baby smiled at me from the backseat. But for now, I think my daughter knows every curve of Ranch Road 12 better than most grown-ups. When she does learn to talk, she'll probably have plenty to say about it. ■



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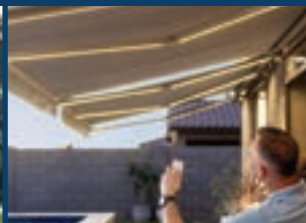
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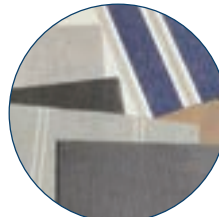
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OFFICIAL NOTICE

Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative Annual Membership Meeting

Thursday, October 8, 2026

Canton Civic Center

6 p.m. Meal

7 p.m. Meeting

Ed Reeve, Secretary

Program

- Welcome
- Invocation
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Determination of a Required Quorum
- Reading of the Notice of Annual Meeting
- Call to Order
- General Manager/CEO Report
- Audit/Financial Report
- Nominating Committee Report
- Election Results
- Unfinished Business
- New Business
- Drawing of Prizes and Adjournment

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