

# KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. 86TH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

KARNES CITY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

JUNE 11, 2024

5:30PM - 7:00PM WALK-THROUGH MEETING

7:00PM IN-PERSON MEETING



*POWER TO SERVE OUR MEMBERS*

**POWER TO SERVE**



*POWER TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITIES*



## KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# Official Notice of Annual Meeting of Members

In accordance with Article III of the cooperative's bylaws, the annual meeting of the members of Karnes Electric Cooperative is to be held at Karnes City ISD Performing Arts Center, 400 Texas Highway 123, Karnes City, TX 78118, at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 11, 2024, to take action upon the following matters:

1. Reports of officers, directors and committees.
2. The election of three (3) directors.
3. All other business that may come before the meeting or any adjournment or adjournments thereof.

In connection with the election of three (3) directors, which is scheduled for this meeting, the members listed have been nominated for directors by the committee on nominations appointed by the board of directors of the cooperative or by petition pursuant to the bylaws. The members of the nominating committee were Kenneth Foster, District 2; Sam Kotara Jr., District 5; Joe Hughes, District 6; and Daphne Bianchi, at large.

Each nominee for director must meet the qualifications specified in Article IV of the cooperative's bylaws. The results of the election will be reported at the annual meeting. Each member (as so defined in Article I of the cooperative's bylaws) of legal voting age under the laws of the state of Texas is entitled to one vote, regardless of the number of meters held. The bylaw-required voter qualifications are as follows:

1. The voting member must be the same person holding the membership.

2. If two spouses hold a joint membership they shall jointly be entitled to one (1) vote and no more.

3. Persons casting votes for organizations, i.e., corporations, churches, associations, partnerships, trusts, or other types of associations or businesses, must have on file at the cooperative's office, or in hand, a resolution certified by the appropriate officer naming and authorizing a person, and/or an alternate person, to vote as its authorized representative for such organization.

4. All estates shall be voted by the duly appointed executor, administrator or, if the membership is a joint membership, the joint survivor, or any one of the three. Before any of the three shall be allowed to vote, there shall be on file with the cooperative, or person voting shall have in hand, a duly signed request naming the executor or the administrator or the surviving joint member of the deceased member.

A copy of the bylaws may be obtained from the cooperative's website, [karnesec.org](http://karnesec.org).



**Larry R. Schendel**  
Secretary-Treasurer

## 86th Annual Membership Meeting

Tuesday, June 11, 2024 • Karnes City ISD Performing Arts Center

**Members can choose between attending a walk-through meeting or an in-person meeting.**

### Walk-Through Meeting 5:30 p.m.–7 p.m.

Walk-through attendees will be able to view co-op informational reports in the auditorium, visit with employees and board members, vote in the directors election, and pick up a gift on the way out. All walk-through meeting participants who register for the meeting will be entered in a drawing to win a door prize. Members do not have to be present to win.

### In-Person Meeting 7 p.m.–8 p.m.

The in-person meeting will be in the traditional format, similar to past Karnes EC annual meetings. Members will have the opportunity to pick up a gift, participate in the business meeting and vote in the directors election. Every member who registers the day of the meeting will be entered in a drawing to win one of many door prizes.

**We hope you'll join us as we celebrate 86 years of service!**



# June 2024



06

## Trailblazer

How a college professor became the first Texan to visit every state park in a year.

By Anna Mazurek

## 12 Following in Dad's Bootsteps

Three generations of West Texas lineworkers keep the lights on.

Story by Tom Widlowski  
Photo by Caytlyn Calhoun

04

### Currents

The latest buzz

05

### TCP Talk

Readers respond

16

### Co-op News

Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

25

### Footnotes in Texas History

A Town Called Toadsuck  
By W.F. Strong

26

### TCP Kitchen

Simply Salads  
By Vianney Rodriguez

30

### Hit the Road

We Brake for Steak  
By Chet Garner

33

### Focus on Texas

Photo Contest: Food and Cooking

34

### Observations

Renewal in Blue  
By Claudia Sullivan

ON THE COVER

One of the breathtaking sights in Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

Photo by Chase A. Fountain | TPWD

ABOVE

Dale Blasingame and his trekking sidekick, Lucy.

Photo by Anna Mazurek



## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

### The Next Book You Should Read Is ...

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

Here are some of the responses to our April prompt: **Wow! The eclipse was ...**

One of those events that reminds us how magnificent our little corner of the universe really is.

SUSAN SINGLETARY  
TRINITY VALLEY EC  
ATHENS

Cool, literally.

LESLIE KRAICH  
TRI-COUNTY EC  
GOODWELL, OKLAHOMA

Way cooler than I expected. I was really looking forward to it, but when it actually happened, I almost cried.

CAROL DUNAGAN  
VIA FACEBOOK

Totally amazing. I love how the sun united people together for this lifetime event.

MOCEDADES ESQUIVEL  
FARMERS EC  
LAVON

Visit our website to see more responses.

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Climbing High

**RECOMMENDED READING**  
On National Olive Day, June 1, we hope you'll remember Texas' place in the harvesting of this ancient fruit. Read *Texas Olive Oil: Pressed for Success* from August 2008.

# Growing Influence

**JUNETEENTH**, commemorating June 19, 1865, when African Americans in Texas learned of their emancipation from slavery, continues to spread across the U.S. as a public holiday.

At least 28 states and the District of Columbia recognize Juneteenth as a holiday. Texas was the first to do so, in 1980. President Joe Biden signed the legislation that made Juneteenth a federal holiday in June 2021.

Read an excerpt from *On Juneteenth* by Annette Gordon Reed on our website.

## June 14 World Blood Donor Day

Blood donation centers continue their call for the lifesaving resource—noting that just 3% of the eligible U.S. population donates blood each year. Learn more at [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org).



APRIL 2024 Thorny Task

“I have many night-blooming cereus plants in pots. I bring them indoors before it freezes every year. I get new plants from cuttings.”

KATHERINE ALLEN  
PEDERNALES EC  
BURNET



DAVE SHAFER

**Don't Forget Obedience**

I appreciated your article on dog agility [Top Dogs, March 2024]. My only issue with the list of dog sports was that no mention of basic obedience or competitive obedience was made.

Obedience is the foundation of all the sports mentioned. If a dog does not have the most basic of obedience commands in its repertoire, all the other things become much harder to teach.

Cindy Hyde  
San Bernard EC  
Columbus

**Around and Around**

I skied at Sea-Arama Marineworld in Galveston in the 1970s [The Green Carpet, January 2024]. Occasionally we put on a show at the Shamrock Hilton—in the swimming pool. It required a pretty constant left turn.

Kelley Farmer  
Pedernales EC  
Dripping Springs



TOM HUSSEY

**Planting Ideas**

Native flora and fauna should be of great interest to all of us, so it is heartening to hear of people rescuing and protecting them [Thorny Task, April 2024]. And Sheryl Smith-Rodgers' *Seedy Behavior* [April 2024] was both entertaining and inspiring. I once rescued a pint of rain lily seeds just days before the city mowed them down.

Paula Stone  
Central Texas EC  
Fredericksburg

**A Budding Friendship**

The April issue was a “blooming success.” I loved reading about the employees who went to Guatemala [Currents, *Wiring the American Dream*], the urgent need to care for our declining native plants [Thorny Task], caring for the less fortunate in Banderita [Holding Promise] and seeing the pictures of pollinators [Focus on Texas].

Your magazine puts the focus squarely on what there is to love about Texas: the place; people; and the vital, tenuous and beautiful connections between them.

Michael Davis  
CoServ  
Wylie

**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.

Texas Co-op Power

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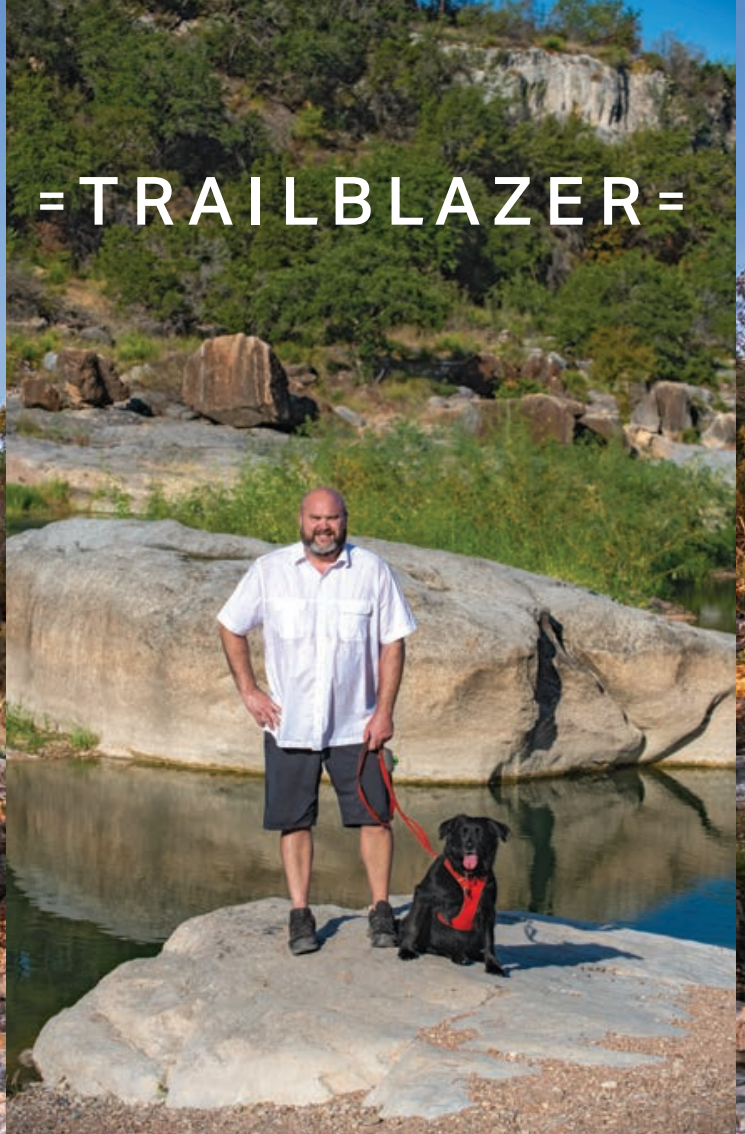
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# = TRAILBLAZER =



BY ANNA MAZUREK

**He was the first to visit every state park in a year, and he can tell you where to start your own adventure**

**WHILE** Dale Blasingame was waiting in the car line to enter Hamilton Pool Preserve in July 2014, a ranger walked over with bad news—the popular Hill Country swimming hole was full. Sensing his disappointment, the ranger suggested an alternative, nearby Pedernales Falls State Park.

“Would you like a day pass or an annual pass?” A simple question at the entrance to Pedernales Falls prompted Blasingame to inquire about the number of state parks. The ranger’s reply—95 at the time—inspired Blasingame to respond immediately with “I’m going to buy the annual pass, and I’m going to do them all in one year.”

LEFT Pedernales Falls State Park, where the idea to visit every state park in one year first struck Dale Blasingame. ABOVE Blasingame and Lucy, his hiking companion.



This spontaneous decision would transform his life and spill over into his career.

With his annual pass in hand, Blasingame, an associate professor of digital media and journalism at Texas State University in San Marcos, started ticking state park properties off his list, beginning with those in Central Texas and followed by ones near Dallas and Houston.

While he had never considered himself outdoorsy, a bad breakup in 2013 led him to spend more time in nature, starting with a trip to Santa Fe, New Mexico, with his brother. That inspired a solo road trip to Montana through Yellowstone National Park and the Rocky Mountains.

Halfway through his state park quest, he met a man hiking with his dog at Buescher State Park in Bastrop County.

“I asked him if he liked hiking with the dog, and he was like, ‘Oh man, you’ll never regret it.’” Blasingame says. “The whole way home, I was just thinking about [how] it would

be really great to have a dog to hike with.”

Coincidentally, the PetSmart near Blasingame’s home was having an adoption event that same day. He brought home a medium-sized black rescue pup he renamed Lucy, who resembles a mix between a black golden retriever and a border collie. Since then, the pair have been inseparable.

Blasingame decided Lucy needed to be the first dog to visit every Texas state park. Since hiking and photography were the main draws for him at the parks, the pair focused on long day hikes, mostly ranging from 11 to 14 miles.

In July 2015, as his annual pass expired, Blasingame visited his 95th state park—becoming the first known

FROM LEFT A family enjoys horseback riding at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Swampy Caddo Lake State Park captivated Blasingame.





person to hit all of them in one year.

“I do have to be totally honest,” he says. “It actually took me 367 days. I was two days late.” The final park, Cedar Hill State Park, near Dallas, had been closed due to flooding, so he had to wait for it to reopen.

Lucy completed her goal in December 2018 after finishing a West Texas route that included a private visit to Balmorhea State Park, where dogs are normally not allowed. When they reached the last park, Blasingame let Lucy off her leash, and she went nuts. “It was like she knew that was a celebration of something,” he says.

His newfound love of the outdoors led Blasingame to create a park-focused storytelling class at Texas State University in 2017 that has evolved to include visits to state and national parks across the U.S. “It’s one thing to get to know students over the course of the semester and a regular class,” Blasingame says, “but when you’re traveling on the

road with students, you really do make lifelong friends.”

Now Blasingame has a new goal: “I decided to do every national park property, which is different from saying ‘I’m going to do every national park,’” he explains, pointing out that this includes park designations like national historic sites and battlefields.

So far, he’s set foot on 251 of the 429 national park properties.

While Blasingame’s Texas adventures have been filled with awe-inspiring moments, like observing the Milky Way from West Texas, and downright scary ones, like being chased by wild boars at Lake Somerville State Park and Trailway, it’s impossible for him to have only one favorite state park.

Here are some of his top picks by region.

## =THE PANHANDLE=

**PALO DURO CANYON STATE PARK** is special to Blasingame because of its landscape and a family connection. Located



near Amarillo, it's home to steep, multicolored mesas and the second-largest canyon in the country, known as the Grand Canyon of Texas. Since his parents lived nearby, he often took them to the park.

"My dad loved to go there and just sit in the car and wait for me and Lucy to finish hiking and being able to share those moments," he says. When Blasingame's parents died in late 2020 and early 2021, friends had a memorial bench built for them overlooking the Lighthouse, the park's iconic rock formation.

Despite roughly 30 visits to nearby Caprock Canyons State Park and Trailway, Blasingame hasn't witnessed large crowds and never tires of the scenic views and hikes through the red rocks.

"It's got the state bison herd, which are always just incredible to watch," he says. The animals have free range over 10,000 of the park's 15,313-acre prairie.

## =EAST TEXAS=

"CADDO LAKE is one of my favorite parks out in East Texas," Blasingame says, reminiscing about the swampy environment where he captured some of his favorite nature photographs of Spanish moss-covered trees on a sunrise boat ride. "The great thing about the environment in Texas is we have every element. We've got beaches. We've got mountains. We've got canyons. We've got lakes."

Dense fog on his first trip to Martin Dies, Jr. State Park, located at the confluence of the Neches and Angelina rivers, was also memorable. "It literally [felt] like I was just sitting on a cloud and looking out over all these trees coming up out of the fog."

ABOVE Gorman Falls at Colorado Bend State Park has made Blasingame a repeat visitor. OPPOSITE He loves the sparkling water of the world's largest spring-fed pool at Balmorhea State Park.



## =CENTRAL TEXAS=

**CLOSER TO HOME**, Blasingame's favorite park is Colorado Bend State Park, along the Colorado River. A 70-foot spring-fed waterfall is a highlight of every visit.

"Gorman Falls is one of the most unique spots in all of Texas—a slice of the rainforest about an hour outside of Austin," he says.

## =WEST TEXAS=

**BLASINGAME'S** first glimpse of the Milky Way from West Texas in 2013 was one of the moments that molded him into an outdoorsman.

The region's parks have remained a favorite, including Balmorhea, home to the world's largest spring-fed swimming pool, and the lesser-known Big Bend Ranch State Park, the largest state park in Texas. Big Bend Ranch is adjacent to Big Bend National Park and has only one paved road, River

Road (FM 170), along the southern boundary. Even if people can't get into the "very rugged" park interior, Blasingame encourages them to just drive River Road.

"You're driving along the Rio Grande the entire time with huge cliffs behind it," he says. "It feels like a roller coaster, too, based on all the dips and turns the road takes. My single favorite part is the big overlook, which seemingly goes on forever."

**THE NUMBER OF STATE PARKS** has fluctuated since Blasingame hit his record of 95 and currently stands at 88 (including state parks, historic sites and natural areas). Several more are scheduled to open in the next 12–15 years.

He hopes to get a sneak peek of the newest park, Palo Pinto Mountains State Park, between Abilene and Fort Worth, when it opens this year or next. "I'm sure we'll be some of the first visitors there," Blasingame says. "New parks don't happen every day in Texas, so this is big." ■



# Following in Dad's Bootsteps

**Three generations of West Texas lineworkers keep the lights on**

**SOMETIMES CHILDHOOD** dreams come true. Other times they veer down an unexpected path.

Three generations of Nixon men in the South Plains ended up on the same path, leaving earlier ambitions in the dust.

Danny Nixon, 66, grew up wanting to be an anesthesiologist. But he fell in love and ran out of money, and he left Texas Tech University after one semester. Soon thereafter he began a career at Lighthouse Electric Cooperative that has lasted nearly 47 years, the first 20-plus spent as a lineworker.

Son Scott, 40, who grew up in Floydada with a dad often away on call, wanted to be a firefighter, but by the time he went off to college, he planned to pursue a career in agriculture. He left Tarleton State University after two years and has been a lineworker at neighboring South Plains Electric Cooperative for 20 years.

Camden, 21, a tall, strapping grandson and son in this family, was sure he'd be a pro baseball player. Did he come close? "Not very," he admits.

Camden remembers how his dad, Scott, missed too many of his childhood games as co-op duties called. "He's not ever at any of my baseball games. What the heck?" Camden says he wondered. "But then my mom talked to me about it, and she was like, he's at work. I was like, well, he's always at work."

Fast-forward to 2024, and Camden is often—if not always—at work, 2½ years into his career as an apprentice lineworker at another neighboring co-op, Lyntegar Electric Cooperative.

Their shared mission of serving co-op members from atop a pole, especially when storms knock out power, is a great source of satisfaction for the patriarch.

"Am I proud? Yes. I'm extremely proud," says Danny, who in 1999 became superintendent at Lighthouse EC and has since been promoted to operations manager.

Camden, the youngster, is proud, too, but he's quick to point out it's not always easy bearing the Nixon name in the West Texas co-op world. He looks first at his dad and then at the man he calls Pops. "A lot of people know him, but *everybody* knows *him*," Camden says. "I say my last name and they're like, oh, OK.

"You don't want to mess up," Camden says. "You don't want to do something wrong. I mean, everybody's going to do something wrong, but you don't want it to be bad enough to where they tell my granddad or tell my dad and we're going to have to talk about this at Christmas."

Of course, they might not be together at Christmas. The crews who keep the power on don't get to schedule when storm recovery and other mishaps call them out on jobs. Thus, the Nixons sometimes find it all but impossible to get together for birthdays and holidays—like Father's Day. It's been that way since Danny started his career, and Scott grew up knowing that.

But he also saw the rewards of the job.

"Dad made a good living and provided us with nice things," Scott says. "I got to do a lot of stuff and go on nice vacations and such that most kids didn't get. It makes it worth the hardships to get to provide my wife and kids with the same things.

"It's also kind of a pride thing. I'm proud to be a lineman. There are not very many people in the world who can do my job."

Danny Nixon—with grandson Camden, left, and son Scott—remembers once telling a member who was stunned to see a crew out in a nasty storm, "Ma'am, when it's the worst, that's when we're at our best."

## "I'm proud to be a lineman. There are not very many people in the world who can do my job."

As parents tend to do, Danny remembers hoping Scott would find his own way in the world.

"Did I put my wishes and dreams on him? No, I did not," Danny says. "I wished for both of these young men anything but becoming a lineman. And I don't mean that in a bad way, but I'd rather him been a doctor or a lawyer or an animal husbandry guy or a vet.

"Both of these guys. You always want better for your kids and certainly your grandkids."

Scott certainly wanted better for the final home football game in Camden's high school career. Senior night is always a big deal—even more so because the Shallowater Mustangs were closing out an undefeated regular season. But an early winter storm socked West Texas that week in October 2020, coating most everything in ice and whipping power lines with wind gusts up to 50 mph.

South Plains EC crews, including Scott, were working on short rest to restore power, and it seemed impossible that he could get away to walk onto Todd Field with his wife and Camden for the traditional senior tribute.

"We worked 16-hour shifts in this ice storm, and I begged my supervisor to [let me] walk out on the field with him—and then I'd get in that truck and go to work," Scott says. With permission granted, Scott, dressed in his fire-retardant work clothes, briefly joined his family in the stadium.

"My bucket truck was sitting in the parking lot—running, ready to roll," he says. "I didn't get to see him play."

By that age, Camden understood—as co-op families do—that Dad had a responsibility to the community. "I was just glad he was able to be there for a little bit," Camden says. "It meant a lot."

The Nixons agree: Working for a co-op is a calling.

"It does set us apart from Acme brand," Danny says.

"We don't go home till the lights are on," Scott says.

"For the members," Camden says.

Yes, Camden walks the path of Scott and Pops. And as has been the case since September 1977, a Nixon is quite likely to rush down that path when a storm strikes the South Plains. ■



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**2023  
ANNUAL  
REPORT**

# Report of the President and General Manager



GENERAL  
MANAGER

ERIC  
HALFMANN



PRESIDENT

PAUL T.  
BRYSCH JR.

## Power to Serve

**THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS** and employees of Karnes Electric Cooperative would like to personally invite you to our 86th annual meeting. The annual meeting provides an excellent opportunity to participate in the cooperative's business through the election of directors. Additionally, the annual meeting provides a forum for members to come together, meet your dedicated cooperative team, and learn about the activities of the cooperative and our goals.

As we reflect back on 2023, we sincerely thank you for the opportunity to serve you. The cooperative team is passionate about serving the needs of our members and is committed to the mission of providing quality service to empower communities and improve lives. Last year was a successful year that brought new opportunities from the transitioning electric industry landscape.

In 2023, supply chain disruptions from the pandemic-induced downturn started to improve, but shortages of raw materials and increased costs still presented challenges. The cooperative worked hard to maintain efficient

operations despite these disruptions by identifying alternative suppliers, increasing material inventories and adjusting operations to align with material availability. Moving into 2024, while supply chain conditions continue to improve, some transformers, meters, utility vehicles and substation equipment are still experiencing lead times as long as one to two years.

Regulatory and market reform issues impacting the grid's power supply and costs continued to be dynamic in 2023. At the federal level, multiple new regulations were proposed that could significantly force the transition of power generation away from dispatchable power plants, like natural gas and coal. If this regulatory-driven transition is not done in a reasonable manner that prioritizes reliability and affordability while aligning with the reality of available technology, then it will further magnify today's reliability challenges and could result in unacceptable costs to our members when the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine.

This past summer brought new peak loads onto the grid from the hot temperatures and continued economic growth throughout the state. The Electric Reliability Council of Texas grid now depends on renewable resources to meet demand. As a result, the afternoon solar generation down ramp pushed tighter conditions later in the evening, times of low wind output led to conservation appeals and energy storage resources played a meaningful role in meeting energy needs. The increased demand on the ERCOT grid also continues to strain the transmission system, driving investments in transmission infrastructure.

Our board of directors and staff are actively engaged in regulatory affairs and work closely with other cooperatives and the statewide and national electric cooperative associations to monitor and provide

constructive input to legislators, regulatory agencies and ERCOT concerning policies that impact electric cooperatives. Exemplifying the cooperative principle of Cooperation Among Cooperatives, we have been successful in working together through local, national and regional structures to effectively influence these complex issues.

## Empower Communities

The cooperative maintained steady growth in 2023, with annual sales totaling 1,358,753,499 kilowatt-hours, a 4.3% increase over 2022 sales. The system grew by 441 services and 37 miles of energized line, all contributing to the economic development of our communities. Additionally, progress continues on the Loxley substation in north Atascosa County to meet the demand for power in that area and is expected to be completed in 2025.

The cooperative's financials show a reduction in total expenses primarily due to the lower price of natural gas contributing to lower power costs. The lower cost of purchased power is passed through to our members through the power cost recovery factor.

In 2023, the average residential rate members paid for power, based on monthly usage of 1,000 kWh, was 11.1 cents per kWh, as compared to 11.4 cents per kWh in 2022. To achieve the best possible costs for our members, we work together with South Texas Electric Cooperative, the generation and transmission cooperative that supplies our wholesale power, to manage generation resources and transmission infrastructure.

The continued growth of the cooperative has helped us to overcome increases in materials and operating and maintenance expenses. As such, Karnes Electric Cooperative has not increased its base rates in 15 years, since its 2009 cost-of-service study. In 2023, a new cost-of-service study was completed, which did not identify the immediate need for a cost increase to provide additional revenue for operations. The board and staff will continue to evaluate the cost of service to determine if and when additional revenues will be needed in future years.

As you will see in the financial report, the cooperative performed well in 2023 and continues to maintain a strong financial posture for serving the future needs of our members. Based on this financial position, in September 2023, the board of directors authorized a total of \$1,707,279.59 in capital credits to be returned to our members. A capital credits return is a benefit you receive for being a member of the electric cooperative. Since 1989, Karnes EC has returned a total of \$23,422,181.95 in capital credits.

## Quality Service

Achieving a high level of safety and system reliability performance are core components of the quality service that the cooperative is dedicated to delivering. We are extremely proud of our team's safety performance in achieving a year with no lost-time accidents. Additionally, numerous safety and training initiatives were completed to continually improve the team's expertise. This included the implementation of a lineman apprentice progression program and completing the construction of field training facilities at both office locations.

To improve system reliability, we continue to regularly inspect and complete preventative maintenance and system



improvements. In 2023, this included clearing and trimming over 252 miles of line, inspecting over 6,300 poles, sectionalizing to reduce outage impacts, and investing \$12,960,000 in work plan system improvements.

Additional strategic investments that improve the co-op's quality of service while reducing expenses are the upgrades to the advanced metering infrastructure and growth of the geographic information system (GIS) mapping.

Effective GIS mapping is a foundational technology for improving the intelligence of system operations and collecting critical information to manage assets and outages. GIS links asset data with meter information to streamline the response to system issues. We are excited about the value already realized from GIS technology as well as the growth planned in this area, including pole audits in 2024. The team's dedication to system reliability contributed to a 53% reduction in interruption minutes experienced by our members in 2023.

To support the increasing reliance on technology to serve our members, improvements were made to our network infrastructure. This included the upgrade of data center servers, field communication equipment and the protection of backup data from ransomware. In 2023, the team completed the milestones established by the NRECA's Co-op Cyber Goals program, which outlines initiatives aimed at achieving high-priority security measures and improved response to cyber threats.

Providing excellent member service that meets the changing needs of our members is always a focus for the cooperative. To improve outage communication, service descriptions were added to outage notifications to clarify which accounts are experiencing an outage. Additionally, outage descriptions were added to SmartHub reporting, providing more information to our service personnel to assist with efficient troubleshooting and restoration.

In 2023, the cooperative began offering digital signatures on membership applications as a secure and efficient method of capturing signatures. In the fourth quarter of 2023, 65% of our membership applications were completed digitally. Looking forward to 2024, we plan to update the membership application to further streamline this process and increase participation in text message notifications.

To gather valuable member feedback, a member interaction-based survey was launched in 2023. In 2024, two key initiatives are planned to increase feedback from members. The interaction-based survey will be expanded to collect feedback following additional service activities, and an American Consumer Satisfaction Index survey will be completed to collect in-depth information to guide strategies that improve service to our members. We appreciate our members' feedback from these surveys and are excited about continuing to improve how we serve your needs.

## Improve Lives

Access to reliable and affordable electricity is a critical component to empowering a community's economic growth and improving the quality of life. After the establishment of the Rural Electrification Administration in the 1930s, farmers and ranchers created rural electric cooperatives to secure electricity to better their lives. The program was very successful, and the quality of life for those living in rural areas was forever changed.

As a result of the success in electrifying rural America, NRECA International was established to share this model with rural areas in developing countries. Through partnering with NRECA International, electric cooperatives can donate their time, talent and resources to empower communities around the world.

In 2023, Karnes Electric Cooperative had the opportunity to

participate in an NRECA International project located in Matasanos, Zacapa, in Guatemala. Two Karnes EC lineworkers traveled to the project and helped construct an electrical distribution system that provided electricity to rural villagers for the first time.

This was an extremely rewarding experience for those lineworkers and for the entire co-op team to share in this experience that fundamentally exemplifies the value of our purpose and the service we began providing to our members 86 years ago.

## Concern for Community

As a part of our commitment to support our local community, we award scholarships to graduating students pursuing higher education.

We are proud to announce that in 2023, we awarded scholarships of \$1,500 each to 10 students from across our service area. Eight scholarships were awarded to students attending a qualifying four-year university, and two scholarships were awarded to students attending a two-year or vocational college. Including 2024, the cooperative is proud to have provided 288 scholarships totaling \$322,200 through the years.

We also partnered with CoBank, one of our financial lenders, through their Sharing Success program to support not-for-profit agencies. In 2023, KEC proudly awarded donations to three organizations with CoBank generously matching each donation for a combined total of \$20,000 in support. The recipients were Courage Ranch, Cowboys Ranch and NRECA International.

Courage Ranch is a nonprofit dedicated to supporting trauma patients through equine-assisted therapy for individuals of all ages. Established in 2019, the organization has delivered therapy services to more than 250 families spanning from Wilson to Karnes counties. Cowboys Ranch is a nonprofit organization committed to offering animal-assisted therapy and educational programs for youth and women in Atascosa County. The organization's mission encompasses fostering compassion, problem-solving abilities, leadership skills and self-confidence.

NRECA International brings a longstanding history and proven track record to empowering developing nations through electrification. With this mission, the organization illuminates not just homes, but also hope, resilience and a brighter future. We look forward to sustaining this partnership with CoBank to continue to empower our communities.

Our dedicated board of directors and employees work hard to provide for the needs of the cooperative and will continue to strive to improve all aspects of our business—from the safety of our employees to electric reliability, member service, technology and financial performance.

We hope you will join us at this year's annual meeting. Once again, we will offer our members a choice between attending a walk-through or traditional in-person meeting. Whichever choice you make, we look forward to seeing you.



**Paul T. Brysch Jr.**  
President



**Eric Halfmann**  
General Manager

# Statement of Income and Patronage Capital

AS OF DECEMBER 31	2023	2022
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>		
Residential	\$ 24,660,536	\$ 25,690,499
Irrigation	3,816,565	4,537,820
Commercial and Industrial	92,635,403	93,818,226
Rent From Electric Property and Other Electric Revenue	19,849	37,349
Other	643,606	595,776
Unbilled Revenue	(2,417,000)	2,550,000
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$119,358,959</b>	<b>\$127,229,670</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>		
Purchased Power	\$ 91,949,247	\$ 99,851,468
Distribution—Operation	2,825,350	2,585,202
Distribution—Maintenance	3,922,338	3,210,704
Consumer Accounts	1,803,113	1,678,673
Administrative and General	5,137,536	4,404,082
Depreciation and Amortization	9,923,554	9,283,543
Taxes	314,624	308,062
Other Interest Expenses	65,889	26,450
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$115,941,651</b>	<b>\$121,348,184</b>
<b>OPERATING MARGINS</b>		
Before Fixed Charges	\$ 3,417,308	\$ 5,881,486
Interest on Long-Term Debt	(800,525)	(686,508)
After Fixed Charges	\$ 2,616,783	\$ 5,194,978
Capital Credits—G&T	7,467,329	2,870,355
Capital Credits—Other	757,863	183,022
<b>Net Operating Margins</b>	<b>\$ 10,841,975</b>	<b>\$ 8,248,355</b>
<b>NONOPERATING MARGINS</b>		
Interest Income	\$ 448,241	\$ 140,604
Other Nonoperating Income	(83,672)	1,400,238
<b>Net Nonoperating Income (Loss)</b>	<b>\$ 364,569</b>	<b>\$ 1,540,842</b>
<b>Net Margins</b>	<b>\$ 11,206,544</b>	<b>\$ 9,789,197</b>
<b>NET MARGINS</b>		
Patronage Capital—Beginning of Year	\$157,777,141	\$152,013,829
Unbilled Revenue Transferred to Other Equities	2,417,000	(2,550,000)
Patronage Capital Retired	(1,734,177)	(1,475,885)
<b>Patronage Capital—End of Year</b>	<b>\$169,666,508</b>	<b>\$157,777,141</b>



MESSAGE  
FROM  
SECRETARY-  
TREASURER

LARRY R.  
SCHENDEL

To the members of  
Karnes Electric Cooperative,  
Karnes City:

The accounting firm of Bolinger,  
Segars, Gilbert & Moss LLP  
performed an audit of our  
financial statements for the  
year ended December 31, 2023.

We received a clean opinion on  
that audit. The complete audit  
report is on file at the  
headquarters office of Karnes  
Electric Cooperative.

**Larry R. Schendel**  
Secretary-Treasurer  
Karnes Electric Cooperative

# Balance Sheet

YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31

2023

2022

## ASSETS

### UTILITY PLANT AT COST

Electric Plant in Service	\$346,402,675	\$323,442,323
Construction Work in Progress	2,438,780	3,202,817
Aid to Construction	(183,889,933)	(171,209,095)
	<b>\$164,951,522</b>	<b>\$155,436,045</b>
Less: Accumulated Provision for Depreciation	41,950,068	33,986,315
	<b>\$123,001,454</b>	<b>\$121,449,730</b>

### OTHER PROPERTY AND INVESTMENTS AT COST OR STATED VALUE

Investments in Associated Organizations	\$ 61,528,092	\$ 53,567,478
Other Investments	375,457	346,753
	<b>\$ 61,903,549</b>	<b>\$ 53,914,231</b>

### CURRENT ASSETS

Cash—General	\$ 11,487,890	\$ 14,084,647
Short-Term Investments	3,000,000	3,000,000
Accounts and Notes Receivable (Less Allowance for Uncollectibles of \$118,106 in 2023 and \$139,159 in 2022)	6,916,718	8,243,458
Unbilled Revenue	8,683,000	11,100,000
Materials and Supplies at Average Cost	8,518,215	6,716,212
Other Current and Accrued Assets	230,493	221,029
	<b>\$ 38,836,316</b>	<b>\$ 43,365,346</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$223,741,319</b>	<b>\$218,729,307</b>

## EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES

### EQUITIES

Memberships	\$ 91,615	\$ 90,530
Patronage Capital	169,666,508	157,777,141
Other Equities	9,014,044	11,414,541
	<b>\$178,772,167</b>	<b>\$169,282,212</b>

### LONG-TERM DEBT

RUS Mortgage Notes Less Current Maturities	\$ 415,883	\$ 471,626
FFB Mortgage Notes Less Current Maturities	9,506,108	9,916,897
CFC Mortgage Notes Less Current Maturities	5,210,513	5,362,689
CoBank Mortgage Notes Less Current Maturities	4,110,382	4,662,016
	<b>\$ 19,242,886</b>	<b>\$ 20,413,228</b>

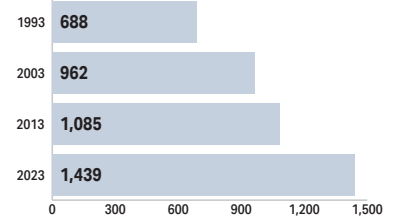
### OTHER LONG-TERM LIABILITIES

Deferred Compensation	\$ 81,700	\$ 53,782
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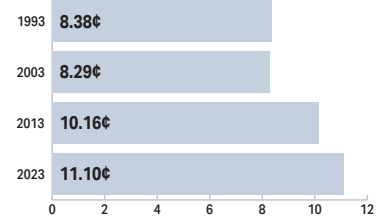
### CURRENT LIABILITIES

Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	\$ 1,164,000	\$ 1,295,000
Accounts Payable	295,334	207,729
Accounts Payable—Purchased Power	6,500,709	8,826,112
Consumer Deposits and Prepayments	4,554,010	5,097,057
Accrued Taxes	744,906	872,903
Other Current and Accrued Liabilities	894,461	740,967
	<b>\$ 14,153,520</b>	<b>\$ 17,039,768</b>
Deferred Credits	\$ 11,491,146	\$ 11,940,317
<b>Total Equities and Liabilities</b>	<b>\$223,741,319</b>	<b>\$218,729,307</b>

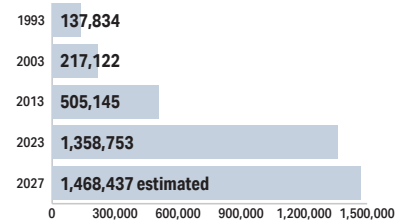
## Average Monthly KWh Usage per Consumer (Residential Classification)



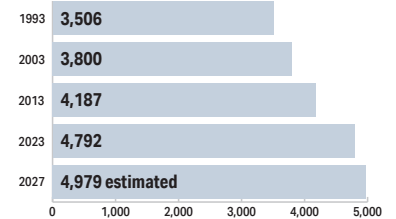
## Average Monthly KWh Cost per Consumer (Residential Classification)



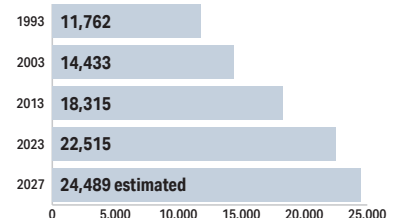
## Annual KWh Sales (In Thousands)



## Miles of Line



## Number of Meters



# Where Your Dollar Went



YEAR	PURCHASED POWER	OPERATIONS AND MAINTAINING SYSTEMS	DEPRECIATION	INTEREST	TAXES AND INSURANCE	MEMBERS' CAPITAL CREDITS AND MARGINS
2001	66.7¢	16.0¢	7.5¢	4.9¢	2.0¢	2.9¢
2002	63.8¢	14.8¢	7.3¢	4.0¢	2.4¢	7.7¢
2003	65.0¢	15.8¢	7.4¢	3.7¢	2.4¢	5.7¢
2004	69.0¢	15.5¢	7.3¢	3.7¢	2.4¢	2.1¢
2005	70.5¢	13.3¢	6.4¢	4.1¢	2.1¢	3.6¢
2006	70.8¢	13.4¢	6.0¢	4.4¢	2.0¢	3.4¢
2007	70.6¢	14.8¢	6.5¢	5.1¢	1.8¢	1.2¢
2008	76.4¢	12.2¢	5.5¢	4.3¢	1.5¢	0.1¢
2009	70.7¢	12.2¢	5.3¢	4.4¢	1.4¢	6.0¢
2010	67.9¢	13.0¢	5.4¢	4.3¢	1.4¢	8.0¢
2011	67.2¢	14.1¢	5.3¢	4.0¢	1.4¢	8.0¢
2012	66.2¢	14.6¢	5.2¢	3.7¢	1.4¢	8.9¢
2013	69.4¢	12.7¢	4.3¢	2.6¢	1.1¢	9.9¢
2014	70.5¢	10.8¢	3.1¢	1.8¢	1.0¢	12.8¢
2015	67.6¢	9.4¢	4.0¢	1.6¢	1.1¢	16.3¢
2016	68.3¢	9.3¢	5.2¢	1.3¢	1.1¢	14.8¢
2017	68.8¢	9.4¢	5.3¢	1.1¢	1.1¢	14.3¢
2018	69.8¢	9.0¢	5.2¢	1.0¢	1.0¢	14.0¢
2019	69.1¢	9.8¢	5.5¢	1.0¢	1.0¢	13.6¢
2020	72.5¢	11.4¢	6.5¢	1.0¢	1.5¢	7.1¢
2021	74.0¢	14.9¢	8.2¢	0.7¢	1.4¢	0.8¢
2022	78.0¢	9.3¢	7.0¢	0.6¢	1.1¢	4.0¢
2023	76.3¢	11.4¢	8.3¢	0.7¢	1.2¢	2.1¢

# Where Your Revenue Came From

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Farms and Ranches	15.2%	14.3%	14.4%	14.2%	15.2%	14.5%	12.4%	12.1%
Towns and Subdivisions	8.3%	7.7%	8.0%	7.9%	8.5%	8.5%	8.2%	8.1%
Irrigation	2.2%	2.6%	2.5%	2.5%	3.2%	2.5%	3.6%	3.1%
Small Commercial	8.0%	7.6%	7.6%	7.8%	7.5%	7.2%	9.3%	9.3%
Large Commercial	40.8%	42.5%	41.5%	41.2%	41.9%	41.9%	42.9%	42.5%
Public Buildings	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%
Oil Wells	24.7%	24.7%	25.3%	25.7%	23.3%	24.7%	23.0%	24.2%
Other Revenue	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

# Employees

NAME	TITLE	YEARS OF SERVICE
Jacob Asebedo	First-Class Lineman	6
Sonny Barrientez	Serviceman	28
Robert Bazan	Warehouse/Work Order Coordinator	37
Jesse Benavides	Operations Manager	8
Jennifer Berger	Member Service Representative II	3
Madelyn Braudaway	Assistant Staking Coordinator	Less than 1
Leroy Castillo	Warehouse Coordinator	5
Esperanza Cumpian	Member Service Representative II	15
Fredrick Currie	Line Locate Coordinator	17
Adolfo De La Garza	Warehouse Materials Handler	31
George De Los Santos	Apprentice Lineman II	2
Jessica De Los Santos	Member Service Representative I	1
Peter Dragon	Staking Technician III	46
Cory Ebrom	Purchasing Agent	21
Joe Escandon	Construction Foreman	25
Michael Espinoza	First-Class Lineman	2
Rebecca Frazier	GIS Technician	9
Suzanne Friesenhahn	Consumer Accounting Representative	12
Pedro Garcia	Operations Supervisor	20
Richard Garcia	Staking Technician III	13
Alejandro Gonzales	Warehouse Materials Handler	2
Daniel Gonzales	Groundman	Less than 1
Leslie Gonzales	Member Service Representative II	2
Justin Gray	Serviceman	14
Eric Halfmann	General Manager	1
Kole Hamilton	Apprentice Lineman II	2
Clifton Henke	Technology Manager	7
Bart Homeyer	Equipment Operator	2
Troy Hughey	Apprentice Lineman II	2
Emelia Janysek	Executive Assistant	22
Patrick Janysek	Construction Manager	37
Cody Jarzombek	Mechanic II	2
Justin Jarzombek	Staking Technician II	5
Steve Jonas	Apparatus and Maintenance Technician	24
Hunter Jurgajtis	Operations Supervisor	9
Teren Jurgajtis	Maintenance Foreman	18
Glenn Kelley	Aerial Bucket Operator	14
Christopher Knight	Distribution Services Manager	10
Russell Korzekwa	Engineering Manager	23
Barbara Kotzur	AMI Support Specialist	17
Thomas Kowalik	Building/Grounds Maintenance Technician	3
Nathan Krudwig	Apprentice Lineman II	2
Tammy Labus	Finance and Accounting Manager	39
Jesse Ledesma	Apprentice Lineman I	Less than 1

NAME	TITLE	YEARS OF SERVICE
Alfredo Lopez	Serviceman	9
Hector Lopez	Assistant Fleet Shop Foreman	22
Charles Luttrell	Second-Class Lineman I	5
Rebecca Mueller	Lead Member Service Representative	28
Randy Ortiz	Serviceman	12
Stephanie Ortiz	Member Service Representative II	6
Ernest Pacheco	Serviceman	36
Kevin Palermo	First-Class Lineman	13
Ryan Pate	Second-Class Lineman I	1
Donna Pawelek	Staking Coordinator	38
Gary Pawelek	First-Class Lineman	33
Tosha Pennington	Dispatcher	3
Irma Pesqueda	Member Service Representative II	3
Jonathon Puga	Groundman	Less than 1
Brenda Quintanilla	Operations Coordinator	22
Nicolas Quintanilla	Accountant I	2
Candace Reynolds	Accountant II	7
Xavier Ribble	IT Technician II	4
Paul Rodriguez	Serviceman	13
Andrew Rojas	Apprentice Lineman I	2
Clint Royal	Serviceman	26
Susanne Ruple	Member Service Manager	6
Cody Salas	Aerial Bucket Operator	9
Raul Salinas	Meter Technician	10
Jacob Sanchez	GIS Field Technician	7
Kimberly Sanchez	Member Communications Coordinator	4
Alicia Sandoval	Work Order Clerk	9
John Saucedo	Second-Class Lineman I	4
Tommy Shoemake	Staking Technician I	3
Sonya Sizemore	Dispatcher	14
Christopher Smith	Apprentice Lineman I	1
Steve Stanley	Aerial Bucket Operator	8
Zachary Swierc	GIS Administrator	1
Megan Thompson	Business Development Coordinator	2
Rudolfo Torres	Construction Foreman	18
Amanda Turner	Billing Coordinator	9
Christopher Vajdos	Meter Technician	12
Vanessa Villanueva	Lead Member Service Representative	3
Jason Vyvlecka	Fleet Shop Foreman	Less than 1
Austin Walker	Groundman	Less than 1
Bonnie Wiatrek	Human Resources Coordinator	40
Darlene Woelfel	Senior Accountant	40
Robert Zuniga	Safety Coordinator	8

# Service Awards

NAME	TITLE	YEARS OF SERVICE
Bonnie Wiatrek	Human Resources Coordinator	40
Darlene Woelfel	Senior Accountant	40
Pedro Garcia	Operations Supervisor	20
Christopher Knight	Distribution Services Manager	10
Raul Salinas	Meter Technician	10
Leroy Castillo	Warehouse Coordinator	5
Justin Jarzombek	Staking Technician II	5
Charles Luttrell	Second-Class Lineman I	5

## Annual Meeting Program

Tuesday, June 11 • 7 p.m. • In-Person Meeting

1. Call Meeting to Order
2. Invocation
3. Welcome Address
4. Introduction of Guests
5. Secretary's Report of Number Present/Reading of Official Notice
6. Approval of 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes
7. Election of Directors
8. Naming of Canvassing Committee
9. Treasurer's Report
10. Annual Management Report
11. Unfinished Business
12. New Business
13. Report of Election
14. Adjournment of Meeting
15. Drawing of Attendance Prizes

# 2023 Minutes

## Karnes Electric Cooperative, Inc., Annual Membership Meeting Karnes City, Texas • June 13, 2023

**THE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP** Meeting of Karnes Electric Cooperative, Inc. (KEC) was held at the Karnes City ISD Performing Arts Center in Karnes City, Texas, on Tuesday, June 13, 2023. KEC Board President Paul T. Brysch, Jr. Called to Order the Annual Meeting at 5:30 p.m. and announced that the walkthrough phase of the meeting would now begin. Members present during this phase of the meeting were allowed to cast their vote in the Director Election and view a prerecorded President's Welcome Address, Treasurer's Report and Annual Management Report.

At 7:00 p.m. Mr. Brysch announced the continuation of the Annual Meeting with the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance. He then called on Minister James Schendel to give the invocation. Mr. Brysch then led the Membership in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Brysch then introduced the prerecorded President's Welcome Address. In his address he welcomed all in attendance, introduced the Board of Directors and thanked them for their leadership and dedicated service to the Cooperative. He commented on the Texas 88th Legislative session touching on market reform issues, grid stability and the rising cost of transmission rates in the aftermath of Winter Storm Uri. He mentioned the unprecedented disruptions in the supply chain for critical electrical equipment and how KEC's cost to provide service has increased as a result.

He then explained that 2022 wholesale power costs were greater than expected primarily due to the increase in the market price of natural gas, used for power generation, resulting in an increase in the cost per kilowatt hour. He commented on how we continue to work closely with our wholesale power supplier, South Texas Electric Cooperative, to manage generation resources and ensure that we get the best possible savings for our members. He concluded his message by thanking the membership for their attendance and support.

Mr. Brysch then called on General Manager Brad Bierstedt for the Introduction of Guests. Mr. Bierstedt recognized all past and present military personnel in attendance and introduced special guests.

Secretary-Treasurer Larry R. Schendel was now given the floor to present the Secretary's Report on Number Present and announced that 192 members were present at the Annual Meeting as indicated by registrations submitted at check-in and that a quorum was present. He then turned the floor back over to Mr. Brysch.

Mr. Brysch asked those in attendance if they wished to dispense with the Reading of Official Notice of the Annual Meeting that was published in the June 2023 issue of Texas Co-op Power magazine, which was mailed to the membership on May 26, 2023, or have it read now. A motion was made and seconded to dispense with the Reading of Official Notice of the Annual Meeting. Motion carried.

Mr. Brysch then asked those in attendance if they wished to dispense with the reading of the minutes from the June 6, 2022, Annual Meeting, published in the June 2023 issue of Texas Co-op Power magazine or have them read. A motion was made and seconded to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve them as published. Motion carried.

Counsel for the Cooperative, Melissa Sykes, with the law firm of McGinnis Lochridge LLP was then given the floor to conduct the Election of Directors. She summarized Article IV Section 5 of the Bylaws explaining the nomination process for directors.

She recognized the Nominating Committee who met on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, and nominated the candidates for districts 3 and 7. Mrs. Sykes then informed the Members that the incumbent directors were nominated for election by the Committee for District No. 3 and District No. 7 and there were no nominations by petition.

Mrs. Sykes then named the members appointed to serve on the 2023 Canvassing Committee and instructed all the voting members to mark their ballots.

The ballots were collected by the Canvassing Committee, who then retired to count the votes.

Mr. Brysch then introduced the prerecorded 2022 Treasurer's Report presented by the Secretary Treasurer Larry R. Schendel. Mr. Schendel reported that the Cooperative remains financially sound, ending the year with a very strong equity ratio and total net margins of \$5,108,327 and finished the year with total assets of \$218,729,309. He shared that the Cooperative refunded capital credits totaling \$1,454,099 increasing the total amount of capital credits returned to members to date to \$21,714,902. He concluded by reporting that the Cooperative is in excellent financial condition.

Mr. Brysch then called on General Manager Brad Bierstedt to give the Annual Management Report. Mr. Bierstedt expressed his appreciation to the Board and Employees for their hard work and dedicated service.

He then introduced the prerecorded Annual Management Report. In his report he discussed the impacts of inflation and supply chain issues. He then called on Purchasing Agent Cory Ebrom to expand on these issues. Mr. Ebrom provided an update on the challenges of acquiring the necessary materials to build new lines and maintain existing lines for the membership. He commented on lead times over the past year for utility poles, transformers, wire, metering equipment and the rising cost of the materials. He explained how the larger warehouses have facilitated in the process of storing inventory to stay ahead of the ever-changing supply chain issues.

Mr. Bierstedt then discussed various system improvement projects throughout the KEC service territory including new service line extensions, distribution line installations, voltage conversion, service capacity increases, pole replacements, wire replacements and right-of-way clearing.

He stated that the Cooperative finished 2022 with no lost time accidents and successfully completed the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) which utilizes a framework for continuous improvement in the Cooperative's safety program.

Mr. Bierstedt then introduced Technology Manager Clifton Henke to discuss Cybersecurity and the Cooperative's strategy in mitigating cyber threats. Mr. Henke reported on the Cooperative's practice of protecting networks, devices, applications and data from damage, loss or unauthorized access in order to keep members' information safe and secure.

Mr. Bierstedt then introduced Member Service Manager, Susanne Ruple, to discuss the upcoming developments of the Member Service Department. Mrs. Ruple reported that the Cooperative has created an event-driven survey as a way to obtain feedback as soon as a service request is completed to better serve our members. She informed

the membership that the Cooperative has developed and implemented an emergency response communication plan which includes pre-drafted notifications for various types of emergencies. She concluded by explaining how the Cooperative has made an impact in the communities by partnering with local schools and organizations.

Mr. Bierstedt then introduced Kimberly Sanchez, Member Communications Coordinator. Mrs. Sanchez then reported on KEC's concern for the communities it serves and stated that the Cooperative partnered with CoBank Sharing Success Program. She announced that the Cooperative awarded three local nonprofit organizations with \$2,500 donations with CoBank generously matching each donation for a combined total of \$15,000 in community support. The recipients included the Children's Alliance of South Texas (CAST), Kenedy ISD Education Foundation and McMullen County ISD Partners for the Accelerated Learning of Students (PALS).

Mrs. Sanchez then mentioned that over the past 25 years the Cooperative has awarded a total of 268 scholarships, totaling \$272,200. She then recognized the following 10 2023 winners of \$1,500 scholarships:

<b>Brynn Harris</b>	Poth ISD
<b>Cali Hinds</b>	Jourdanton ISD
<b>Cecilia Korzekwa</b>	Poth ISD
<b>Jace Ruiz</b>	Three Rivers ISD
<b>Emery Gillespie</b>	Pleasanton ISD
<b>Kirby McNeill</b>	Jourdanton ISD
<b>Ricardo Marquez</b>	Pleasanton ISD
<b>Riley Huser</b>	Karnes City ISD
<b>Sydney Blair</b>	Jourdanton ISD
<b>Zane Raabe</b>	Poth ISD

Mrs. Sanchez concluded her presentation by announcing the 2023 Government-In-Action Youth Tour winner, Shelby Dambek from Pleasanton ISD.

Mr. Bierstedt then recognized the linemen that competed in the Annual Coastal Bend Lineman Rodeo.

<b>Randy Ortiz</b>	Journeyman Lineman Division
<b>Paul Rodriguez</b>	Journeyman Lineman Division
<b>Hunter Jurgajtis</b>	Apprentice Lineman Division
<b>Kole Hamilton</b>	Apprentice Lineman Division
<b>Ryan Luttrell</b>	Apprentice Lineman Division
<b>John David Saucedo</b>	Apprentice Lineman Division

Mr. Bierstedt then recognized the following employees and directors for their dedicated service to Karnes Electric Cooperative:

<b>Jacob Asebedo</b>	Second-Class Lineman II	5 Years
<b>Stephanie Ortiz</b>	Member Service Representative II	5 Years
<b>Susanne Ruple</b>	Member Service Manager	5 Years
<b>Cory Ebrom</b>	Purchasing Agent	20 Years
<b>Clint Royal</b>	Serviceman	25 Years
<b>Adolfo De La Garza</b>	Warehouse Materials Handler	30 Years
<b>Ernest Pacheco</b>	Serviceman	35 Years
<b>Peter Dragon</b>	Staking Technician	45 Years

Mr. Bierstedt concluded his report by thanking all the Cooperative employees for their hard work and dedication, the Board for their service, and the Members for the opportunity to serve them.

Mr. Brysch then opened the meeting up for Member comments. Members were asked to limit their comments to five minutes or less. There were no comments from the Members.

Mr. Brysch then asked if there was any Unfinished Business to come before the meeting. There being none, Mr. Brysch asked if there was any New Business. Mr. Brysch then announced that General Manager Brad Bierstedt will be retiring at the end of the year and the process the Board of Directors will undertake for his replacement. Mr. Brysch called on Mr. Bierstedt to comment on his pending retirement. Mr. Bierstedt thanked the Board, employees and the membership for the opportunity to serve as the General Manager for the past eight years and the trust they placed in him to lead the Cooperative.

Mr. Brysch then called upon Mrs. Sykes for the Report of Election. She reported the official election results:

<b>District No. 3</b>	Frank A. Geyer Jr.	150
<b>District No. 7</b>	David R. Nieschwitz	158

There being no further business, upon motion made, seconded and carried, the meeting adjourned.

Mrs. Sanchez then conducted the drawing for door prizes, which included a combination of thirty (30) gift cards, twenty (20) \$100 bill credits, three (3) RTIC Coolers, and a \$250 bill credit for those registrants that brought in their preprinted registration card and a Grand Prize of a Pit Boss Grill.



**Paul T. Brysch Jr.**  
President



**Larry R. Schendel**  
Secretary-Treasurer

# Cool Pool Safety Tips

**Remember these rules for safe pool-time fun this summer.**

**Keep electric radios, TVs, grills, lights and other electrical appliances at least 10 feet from pools and wet surfaces.** Use battery-powered appliances whenever possible.

**Electric appliances** should not be used outdoors unless they have a heavy-duty cord and three-pronged plug.

**All outdoor** electrical outlets should be weatherproof and equipped with a ground-fault circuit interrupter.

**Swimming pools** should be well away from overhead wires to avoid contact when using long-handled equipment.

**If you think** you are being shocked while in the water, move away from the source of the shock. Get out of the water, if possible, without using a metal ladder.

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

**Your electric cooperative encourages you to always practice safety.**



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# A Town Called Toadsuck

Long removed from maps, it was home for a governor as colorful as its name

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY TRACI DABERKO

TEXAS HAS PERHAPS more than its share of cities and towns with unusual names. There's Cut and Shoot, Dime Box, Bug Tussle.

But perhaps the strangest was Toadsuck. You won't find it on a map today because it eventually became Collinsville, near the Oklahoma border in western Grayson County. For a relatively brief and shining period, though, Toadsuck was a real Texas town.

How did it get that strange name? I learned the story mostly from the Texas State Historical Association's Handbook of Texas, which is a priceless resource.

Toadsuck got its start as the name of a saloon near the eventual eponymous town. Settlers arrived in the area in the late 1850s, and in 1869, a townsite was surveyed near the saloon, about a half-mile southeast of Collinsville today.

"The town of Toadsuck took the name of the saloon," the handbook says. "It may have been named by John Jones, an early settler and mill owner, after the city of Toad Suck, Arkansas" (which, by the way, does still exist).

"According to legend, the name was originally a reference to men consuming liquor until they swelled up like toads.

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



However, the word 'suck' was also commonly used in the region as a term for a whirlpool in a river. Hence, the town name may have simply meant 'toad whirlpool.'"

Bill Cannon, who wrote *Tales from Toadsuck Texas*, tells the story of William "Alfalfa Bill" Henry Davis Murray, who was born in Toadsuck in 1869. Murray would go on to become a colorful governor of Oklahoma in 1930. When he was running for president two years later, he returned to the place of his birth for William Murray Day.

The town of Toadsuck had a statue of Murray ready for dedication, but Alfalfa Bill was so drunk he could barely speak, Cannon wrote. You might say he was "swole up like a toad." The townsfolk were so exasperated and embarrassed that they had a team of horses pull the statue down and break it into pieces. Then they buried it.

Toadsuck faded into history when the Texas and Pacific Railway built its line west of the town in 1880, according to the TSHA. By 1887, most of its businesses and residents had moved to the tracks. The new town was named Collinsville when it was incorporated in the 1890s.

Thus, sadly, Toadsuck was no more. But the beautiful memory of that august name remains. ■

# Simply Salads

Keep cool in the kitchen with these tasty garden mixes

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

I always find myself craving a Cobb salad when temperatures begin to rise. It's a hearty dinner with abundant toppings that deliver a variety of flavors in every bite. My Texas Cobb Salad is a fun twist on the classic that is so simple to make.



## Texas Cobb Salad

### SALAD

- 1 head romaine lettuce, coarsely chopped**
- 6 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and halved**
- 8 slices bacon, fully cooked and cut into bite-size pieces**
- 2 avocados, sliced**
- 1 can pinto beans (15 ounces), drained and rinsed**
- 2 ears corn, roasted and sliced off the cob**
- 16 ounces cooked beef fajitas, sliced**

### DRESSING

- ¼ cup olive oil**
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar**
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard**
- 1 chipotle pepper in adobo sauce, minced, sauce reserved**
- 2 teaspoons reserved adobo sauce**
- 1 small shallot, thinly sliced**
- 2 teaspoons salt**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper**

- 1. SALAD** Spread lettuce evenly across a large platter.
- 2.** Arrange eggs in one row across the lettuce. Continue arranging each topping in its own row: bacon, avocado, beans and roasted corn. End by adding fajitas to edge of platter.
- 3. DRESSING** In a small bowl, combine all dressing ingredients and stir to combine. Serve dressing with the salad.

**SERVES 6**

**TCP** Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in Cocina Gris at [sweetlifebake.com](http://sweetlifebake.com), where she features a recipe for Tomato Cucumber Panela Salad.



## Strawberry Salad

KATHRYN SULLIVAN  
BANDERA EC

Beautiful, simple and elegant, this salad will leave an impression. Whip up Sullivan's salad for your mother-in-law, a first date or for a gathering. Summer sweet berries stun when paired with creamy goat cheese and a balsamic dressing.

### SALAD

- 1 package 50/50 blend baby spinach and spring salad mix (10 ounces)**
- 1 carton strawberries (16 ounces), hulled and sliced**
- 1 pint blueberries**
- 4 ounces goat cheese, crumbled**
- 6 slices bacon, fully cooked and broken into pieces**
- ½ cup chopped pecans**

### DRESSING

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar**
- ¼ teaspoon Dijon mustard**

- 1. SALAD** In a large bowl, combine all salad ingredients.
- 2. DRESSING** In another bowl, whisk together all dressing ingredients.
- 3.** Pour dressing over salad. With a serving spoon, gently toss to coat.

SERVES 4-6

[MORE RECIPES >](#)

\$500 WINNER

## Thai Peanut Summer Salad

REESE JOHNSON  
TRINITY VALLEY EC



This salad from Reese, 14, has me grinning from ear to ear. The recipe, developed by Reese and her mother, packs in flavor, texture and tang. "I love to cook and bake," Reese says. "It all started when I was about 7. I had started making breakfast for myself as well as my family."

SERVES 10



### SALAD

- 4 cups chopped napa cabbage**
- 2 cups thinly chopped red cabbage**
- ½ red bell pepper, thinly sliced**
- ½ yellow bell pepper, thinly sliced**
- 1 medium carrot, julienned**
- ½ medium cucumber, cut in half lengthwise and thinly sliced**
- ¼ red onion, thinly sliced**
- ½ cup honey-roasted peanuts**
- ½ cup chopped cilantro**
- 6 radishes, thinly sliced, reserving a few slices for garnish**

### DRESSING

- ½ cup peanut butter**
- Juice of 1 lime**
- 2½ teaspoons sesame oil**
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce**
- 3 tablespoons honey**
- 2 cloves garlic**
- 1 tablespoon fresh peeled and minced ginger**
- ½ cup chopped cilantro**
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- ¼ teaspoon salt**
- 2 teaspoons Sriracha sauce, or more to taste**
- 1 tablespoon seasoned rice vinegar**

- 1. SALAD** In a large bowl, combine all salad ingredients.
- 2. DRESSING** Add all dressing ingredients to a blender. Blend until smooth.
- 3.** Pour half the dressing over the salad. With a serving spoon, mix to coat. Add more dressing as desired and garnish with reserved radish slices.

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**HOLIDAY BITES** DUE JUNE 10

We want the best from Co-op Country kitchens for our November issue. Send us your holiday favorites by June 10 for a chance to win \$500.





## Texas Tabbouleh

CINDY BROWN  
PEDERNALES EC

Chilled salads are the ultimate summer meal. Prep, tuck away in the fridge and you're set for lunch or dinner. Brown's tabbouleh can be served alone or topped with fish or baked chicken. It's yummy the first day and even better the next.

### SALAD

- ½ cup bulgur wheat
- 1½ cups water
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 ears corn, sliced off the cob
- ¾ cup diced carrots
- 1 bunch green onions, diced
- 1 large red bell pepper, stem and seeds removed, diced
- 4 stalks celery, diced
- 1 cucumber, peeled, seeded and diced
- 1 bunch parsley, finely chopped
- 1 can pinto beans (15 ounces), drained and rinsed

### DRESSING

- Juice of 2 lemons or limes
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

1. SALAD Place bulgur wheat in a heatproof bowl. Bring water to a boil over

medium-high heat. Carefully pour boiling water over bulgur wheat. Let stand for 45 minutes, then drain well.

2. Heat olive oil in a medium skillet over high heat. Sauté corn and carrots until tender, about 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat.
3. In a large bowl, combine bulgur wheat, corn, carrots, green onions, bell pepper, celery, cucumber, parsley and beans. Stir to combine.
4. DRESSING In a separate bowl, whisk together all dressing ingredients.
5. Pour dressing over salad, stir to combine.
6. Refrigerate 24 hours. Serve chilled.

SERVES 6

**TCP** Want more options? You'll find dozens more on our website with just a simple search for "salad."



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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## We Brake for Steak

There's no need for menus at the Leona General Store

BY CHET GARNER

**IN MY LINE OF WORK**, it's normal to pass through a small town with ailing buildings and few visible signs of life. It isn't normal for one of those old wooden storefronts to have a line 150 Texans long, stretching clear into the next parking lot. I pulled over to find out what was happening at the Leona General Store, and after someone told me it was steak night, I had no choice but to get in line.

This special event on Friday and Saturday nights draws hordes from hundreds of miles to this vintage storefront on Texas 75 in Leona, less than a mile off Interstate 45, midway between Dallas and Houston. When the doors opened, the small store swallowed the entire line as folks spread across the creaking wooden floor. The walls are covered with knickknacks and farming equipment, just as you'd expect inside a 100-year-old general store.

Part of the magic of "the best little steakhouse in Texas" is its simplicity. There's no written menu since they're known for one entrée: rib-eye steaks. Each one is hand cut and cooked over hot coals. Everyone gets the same sides and salad bar.

The only choice customers make is how big they want their steak. The smallest is 10 ounces, and the largest ever eaten was more than 90 ounces. I decided to let that record stand and ordered a 12-ounce steak, which was at least 16 ounces. They admittedly don't weigh anything in the back, which works to the customer's benefit.

Owners Jerry and Cynthia House made laps through the building, making sure everyone was happy and well-fed. The steak was certainly one of the best I've ever eaten, but it's the small-town hospitality that will keep me and hundreds of my closest friends coming back. ■

ABOVE Chet is about to savor the Leona General Store's trademark steak.

**TCP** Join Chet as he visits "the best little steakhouse in Texas." And see all his 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.

## JUNE 08

**Corsicana Endless Summer**, (903) 874-7792, [corsicanapalace.com](http://corsicanapalace.com)

**East Bernard Czech Kolache-Klobase Festival**, (979) 533-1902, [kkfest.com](http://kkfest.com)

**Terrell [8-9] North Texas Antique Tractor and Engine Club's Show and Pull**, (214) 497-1611, [north-texas-antique-tractor-and-engine-club.net](http://north-texas-antique-tractor-and-engine-club.net)

## 13

**Lockhart [13-15] Chisholm Trail Roundup**, (512) 398-2818, [lockhartchamber.com](http://lockhartchamber.com)

**Brenham [13-16, 20-23, 27-30] The Star-Spangled Girl**, (979) 830-8358, [unitybrenham.org](http://unitybrenham.org)

## 14

**Mount Pleasant Juneteenth Family Celebration**, (903) 575-4000, [mpcity.net](http://mpcity.net)

**Aransas Pass [14-16] Shrimporee**, (361) 758-2750, [aransaspass.org](http://aransaspass.org)

**Kerrville [14-15, 21-23, 28-30] The Charitable Sisterhood of the Second Trinity Victory Church**, (830) 896-9393, [caillouxperformingarts.com](http://caillouxperformingarts.com)

## 19

**Odessa [19-23] Juneteenth Celebration**, (432) 888-9276, [odessabcc.org](http://odessabcc.org)

## 21

**Stonewall [21-22] Peach JAMBoree**, (830) 644-2735, [stonewalltexas.com](http://stonewalltexas.com)

**Albany [21-22, 28-29] Fort Griffin Fandangle**, (325) 762-3838, [fortgriffinfandangle.com](http://fortgriffinfandangle.com)

22

**McKinney Night Out at the Heard**, (972) 562-5566, heardmuseum.org

25

**Corsicana [25, 27-30] Of Mice and Men**, (903) 872-5421, thewlac.com

27

**Luling [27-30] Watermelon Thump**, (830) 875-3878, watermelonthump.com

28

**New Braunfels [28-29] Red, White and Tuna**, (830) 627-0808, brauntex.org

**Pottsboro [28-29] Fink Fest**, (903) 786-6000, facebook.com/finktexas

29

**Brenham The Grand Ol' Americana Show**, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

## JULY

03

**Waxahachie [3-4] Crape Myrtle Festival and Parade**, (469) 309-4040, waxahachiecvb.com

04

**Chappell Hill Independence Day Parade**, (979) 337-9910, chappellhilltx.com

**New Braunfels July 4 Patriotic Parade and Program**, (830) 629-1572, sophienburg.com

**Amarillo [4-6] Will Rogers Range Riders Rodeo**, (806) 584-0733, wrrangeriders.com

**Rockdale [4-15] Sesquicentennial Event**, (512) 446-2511, rockdale150.com

### TCP Submit Your Event

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

*Come celebrate with us!*



# Rockdale's 150th Birthday

## July 4th - July 15th 2024

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 July 6th: Community parade  
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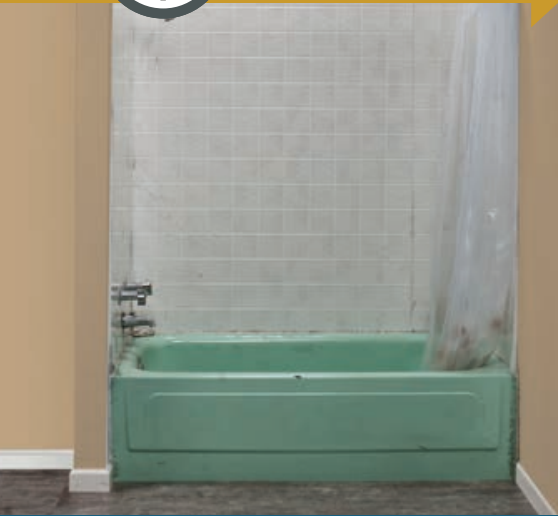
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# Food and Cooking

"We gonna need a big ol' sausage,  
A big ol' plate of ranch-style beans.  
I could eat the heart of Texas.  
We gonna need some brand-new jeans."  
—From *Texas Cookin'* by Guy Clark

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1

**1 DAVID MILLER**  
BANDERA EC  
A breakfast that shouts, "I love Texas!"

**2 ALLISON HEBERT**  
SAN BERNARD EC  
"This little guy is doing what he loves—cooking.  
Doesn't get any better than biscuits from scratch."

**3 MICHELE BENNETT**  
GVEC  
Fall cookies.

**4 KRISTEN BROWN**  
PEDERNALES EC  
Homemade wheat bread with blueberry jelly.



2



3



4

## Upcoming Contests

DUE JUN 10 Climbing High

DUE JUL 10 Mascots

DUE AUG 10 Young Photographers



Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/contests).

**TCP** See Focus on Texas on our website for many more Food and Cooking photos from readers.



## Renewal in Blue

Bucolic summers in the Piney Woods leave an indelible mark

BY CLAUDIA SULLIVAN  
ILLUSTRATION BY  
JAMES O'BRIEN

**EVERY SUMMER** of my youth, I eagerly packed my bags, left the big city behind and traveled to the Piney Woods to live the life of a farm girl with my grandparents.

Those East Texas summer days were idyllic. Mornings began with the smell of bacon or ham cooking on the stove and skillet-fried toast with homemade apple or plum jelly. Lunch was always accompanied with rice, yellow and thick, made rich with butter and milk. The meal wasn't complete without blackberry cobbler made from berries we picked ourselves, battling thorns and yellow jackets while gathering the tart, wild fruit.

Promptly at 12:30 p.m., Mema settled in to shell peas and watch her "stories" on TV while Pa took his afternoon nap. I spent those sultry afternoons outside

whispering secrets to Boy, the old bird dog, and to Lady Bird, the orphaned calf we raised on a bottle, or rocking in the tractor tire swing hung under the huge pecan tree.

Mema, Pa and I spent nights in the screened-in sleeping porch, cool and bathed in moonlight. Lying in my bed, I heard the whine of diesel trucks on the distant highway and the whirring of the summer breeze through the woven, mesh screen. The night air smelled of rose blossoms and honeysuckle.

It was the scent of summer.

The memories of those summer days have not faded. Mema and Pa are gone now and so is the old farmhouse. Some years ago, on a cold night not long after midnight, the house went up in flames. Some said it was itinerants carelessly discarding a cigarette. Others said it was lightning, though no one recalls a storm that night.

I believe the old house caught ablaze all by itself. The warmth of all those memories heated to spontaneous combustion. The house saved up all those memories until one night there was nothing but glowing embers—except for what lived on in the minds and hearts of those who were sheltered and loved there.

Nothing stands now except two large pecan trees and the old tractor tire swing.

But each spring something wondrous and beautiful happens. In the place where my grandparents' house once stood, a dense blanket of bluebonnets blooms.

Like the color of the sky or the gingham dresses little girls used to wear, the wave of flowers defines the layout of the house. No one recalls ever seeing bluebonnets in that part of town.

Maybe the heat of the fire raised dormant seeds to life. Or perhaps that little patch of earth needed something cheery and pretty to grace its sudden emptiness.

Whatever the reason, I know Mema and Pa would be pleased. ■

# Member Registration Card

**Karnes Electric Cooperative**  
**86th Annual Membership Meeting**  
Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Walk-Through 5:30–7 p.m. | In-Person Meeting 7–8 p.m.  
Karnes City ISD Performing Arts Center  
400 Texas Highway 123, Karnes City 78118



**Bring this card to the annual meeting to be entered in a special drawing for a \$250 bill credit!**

Door prizes will also be given away at the meeting including a smart TV, tool set, smart watch, pellet grill, bill credits and gift cards.

**Please tear off this card and bring it with you to the annual meeting. It serves as your registration card and ticket for prize drawings.**

## KARNES ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# Official Voting Representative Credential

**If you are the designated representative of a member company, corporation, firm, organization or estate, you will need this completed form to cast that member's vote.**

**The form must be signed by an officer or executor of the member company, corporation, firm, organization or estate, and the title must be designated.**

Please print or type your information below.

\_\_\_\_\_

FIRM

\_\_\_\_\_

ACCOUNT NUMBER

\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS

The following are hereby certified as official voting representatives of the above member-organization to represent it at the annual meeting, any specially called meeting or for any vote brought to the membership of the cooperative. We understand that the alternate is certified to act only in the absence of the voting representative.

\_\_\_\_\_

VOTING REPRESENTATIVE

\_\_\_\_\_

ALTERNATE

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED

\_\_\_\_\_

TITLE

\_\_\_\_\_

DATE

This form remains valid until Karnes EC is notified of any change.

# Registration Card

For use at the 2024 Annual Membership Meeting



## 86th Annual Membership Meeting

Please bring both parts of this card with you to the 86th Annual Membership Meeting. You can exchange this portion of the card for a gift at the meeting.

I hereby certify that I am a member of Karnes Electric Cooperative in personal attendance at the above meeting. I understand that only a member present is eligible to vote and receive an attendance prize.

MEMBER SIGNATURE

MEMBER PRINTED NAME

Please tear off this card and bring it with you to the annual meeting. It serves as your registration card and ticket for prize drawings.

## Board of Directors



**Paul T. Brysch Jr.**  
President



**Cliff Royal**  
Vice President



**Larry R. Schendel**  
Secretary-Treasurer



**Frank A. Geyer Jr.**  
Asst. Secretary-Treasurer



**Boyd Vaughan**



**L. Scott McClaugherty IV**



**David R. Nieschwitz**

## Director Districts



## Director Nominees

**District 2**  
Boyd Vaughan

**District 6**  
Cliff Royal

**District 5**  
Paul T. Brysch Jr.

EXPIRES DISTRICT	DIRECTOR	TERM
1	Larry R. Schendel	2025
2	Boyd Vaughan	2024
3	Frank A. Geyer Jr.	2026
4	L. Scott McClaugherty IV	2025
5	Paul T. Brysch Jr.	2024
6	Cliff Royal	2024
7	David R. Nieschwitz	2026