

Texas Coop Power

Saturday, September 25

SSGT. Willie de Leon Civic Center | 300 E. Main Street | Uvalde | 78801

Registration and breakfast begin at 9 a.m.

Meeting begins at 10 a.m. | Registration ends at 10:30 a.m.

JOIN US IN PERSON TO:

- »Have a chance at winning the \$1,000 grand prize.
- »Win door prizes.
- »Get updates on your cooperative.
- »Meet with Medina EC staff and mingle with other members.
- »Get a registration gift.

Not able to make it in person? Join us virtually for the live meeting and be entered in a separate prize drawing! Learn more inside.

*In person: Must be present to win. Must be registered by 10:30 a.m. to be included in grand prize drawing.  
Virtually: Must be online by 10:30 to be entered to win prizes. Virtual attendees are not eligible for the \$1,000 prize.*



82<sup>nd</sup>  
Annual Membership Meeting

We hope to see you there!  
Details inside.

SSGT. Willie de Leon Civic Center | Saturday, September 25  
Registration and breakfast begin at 9 a.m. | Meeting begins at 10 a.m.  
300 E. Main Street | Uvalde | 78801

Registration Card / Grand Prize Entry  
for

Bring this card with you to the meeting. See instructions on other side.

RSVP Card  
You can also RSVP at MedinaEC.org/RSVP.

Fill out the information below and return this card in the enclosed envelope by September 15 so that we have enough food and gifts for you and other guests!

☐ Count me in for food and fun on Saturday, September 25, in Uvalde.

There will be \_\_\_\_\_ adults from my household at the meeting and \_\_\_\_\_ children.  
Number Number

☐ I will attend the meeting virtually on Zoom.

*(Be sure to register by September 15 at MedinaEC.org/AnnualMeeting2021.)*

**DO NOT MAIL** the Registration Card / Grand Prize Entry on the front of the magazine with this RSVP card. Bring the Registration card with you to the in-person meeting for registration.



TEXAN PADDLES INTO  
ENDURANCE CHALLENGES

FRANCE'S 1841 BEEF?  
WHY, IT WAS PIGS

READERS DISH UP  
SWEET SPUDS

# Texas Coop Power

FOR MEDINA EC MEMBERS

SEPTEMBER 2021

## More Vets on the Way

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# September 2021



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Texas Tech University's long-awaited veterinary school begins mission of bolstering rural communities.

*By Chris Burrows  
Photos by Dave Shafer*

## Current Events His Way

When West Hansen needs an escape from society, he just goes with the flow.

*By Pam LeBlanc  
Photos by Erich Schlegel*

### ON THE COVER

Paris veterinarian Wally Kraft with his sons—Jack, left, who is in veterinary school at Oklahoma State University, and Trey, also a vet.

*Photo by Dave Shafer*

### ABOVE

West Hansen negotiates boulders in the Rio Gashan in Peru.

*Photo by Erich Schlegel*

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*By Babs Rodriguez*



# Ocean Currents

**UNDERWATER VOLCANOES** generate so much energy that they could power entire continents. But there's a catch, say the British scientists researching such eruptions.

"I would say there is effectively zero chance of capturing the energy for all sorts of reasons, such as we don't know when or where the eruptions will happen, very tricky to access, etc.," volcanologist David Ferguson, of the University of Leeds, told Vice. "The point of the comparison was really just to illustrate how powerful/energetic these things are."



**"I never think of the future. It comes soon enough."**

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

THE SWEETEST SOUND IN THE WORLD 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. Below are some of the responses to our July prompt: **I should have paid more attention ...**

To my mother's way of preparing hearty and flavorful meals with simple ingredients on a shoestring budget for our family of seven.

DEBORA MARINO  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES  
KOPPERL

To my retirement 30 years beforehand.

THOMAS ALAN MOORE  
VIA FACEBOOK

To my parents telling me to enjoy childhood because once you're an adult, you're an adult FOREVER.

KAY RAY  
VIA FACEBOOK

To the fine print.

GARY L. GALLOWAY  
TRI-COUNTY EC  
WEATHERFORD

When he said "sign here" at the draft board.

ED FAHSOLTZ  
VIA FACEBOOK

To see more responses, read Currents online.





## STEP UP TO SAFETY

Aluminum ladders can conduct electricity and so can nonmetallic fiberglass ladders when they're dirty or wet. When working outdoors with a ladder, keep it at least 10 feet away from power lines and always carry it horizontally to avoid hitting a line.



# Earliest Inconvenience

**ON HIS PREGNANT WIFE'S BIRTHDAY** last year, Casey Walls wasn't celebrating. Instead, the Wood County Electric Cooperative lineworker was packing his bags August 28, preparing for long days of hard work after Hurricane Laura left tens of thousands of East Texas electric cooperative members in the dark.

Walls wasn't worried either because Shea wasn't due until November.

But around 5 a.m. about four days into his trip, Walls was awakened by his cellphone, which showed dozens of missed calls. His father was on the line. Shea had gone into labor hours earlier. Walls rushed to Tyler, where Shea gave birth just 20 minutes after he arrived.

Twins Braxten, above left, and Casen celebrate their first birthdays September 1.



## Fungi to the Rescue

Don't ever underestimate the power of a fungus, the extraordinarily versatile life-form that produces mushrooms. Fungi can be trained to eat cigarette butts, used diapers, oil spills and even radiation.



### **TCP** Contests and More

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### More About McVea

*Groundbreaking Cougar* [Currents, July 2021] reminded me of a game Warren McVea played in 1963. San Antonio Brackenridge faced crosstown Robert E. Lee in one of the most entertaining high school football games ever played. My dad and I watched it together at Alamo Stadium.

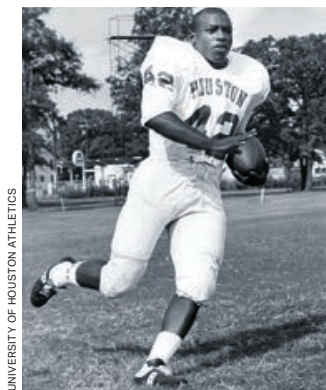
It had two of the most explosive running backs in the country, McVea and Lee's Linus Baer. Each team scored just about every time they got the football—McVea dancing and speeding around Lee defenders, and Baer running through and over Brackenridge defenders. Lee won, 55-48.

Rick Covington  
Pedernales EC  
Cedar Park



I loved the story and the illustration [Parent Imperfect, June 2021]. Martha Deeringer wrote a wonderful tribute to her father while also reminding us to forgive ourselves for having once been teenagers embarrassed by a parent or grandparent.

LINDA PIAZZA  
VIA FACEBOOK



UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON ATHLETICS

### An Unlikely Blueprint

“Your story of John S. Chase is about the kind of man whose can-do spirit is so lacking in society today.”

DANIEL SVETLIK  
PEDERNALES EC  
VICTORIA

### Slice of Heaven

We agree Dala Burk's Tangy Tomato Slices [June 2021] are a winner.

We used Big Beef tomatoes, Texas 1015 onions, fresh basil and parsley—all grown in our garden.

We read *Texas Co-op Power's* recipes enthusiastically every issue and have for the past 25 years. However, we had never made any of them. But with a counter full of tomatoes from the garden this year, we couldn't resist.

We could not wait for the dish to marinate in the refrigerator and had to try it once done. OMG!

Marilynn Schmidt  
Bluebonnet EC  
Somerville

### Minor Typo, Major Figure

Chet Garner's article about the funeral museum was interesting, but I need to correct one thing [A *Serious Undertaking*, July 2021]. The millions of Catholics in Texas will know that we buried our beloved Pope John Paul II. We haven't had a III yet.

Theresa Phinney  
Bryan Texas Utilities  
College Station

### 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.

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Paris veterinarian Wally Kraft, with help from his son Jack, wraps a quick-set cast on a horse. OPPOSITE As Texas Tech University graduates new vets, relief from long workdays could be on the horizon for rural vets like the Krafts.



Texas Tech University's long-awaited veterinary school begins mission of bolstering rural communities

# Second to *None*



BY CHRIS BURROWS • PHOTOS BY DAVE SHAFER

**B**ethany Solomon Schilling still cringes when she hears the ring tone. The ring tone that years ago interrupted dinners, events and sleep to let her know there was an emergency at one of the Central Texas clinics where she worked as a veterinarian.

She grew up surrounded by animals on a ranch and earned a scholarship to help pay for her veterinary schooling. The field combined everything she loved: science, medicine and agriculture.

But then Solomon Schilling went to work caring for animals at those clinics in Lockhart and Luling, where workweeks ran into weekends and that ring tone stretched workdays into nights. Gone were the “referral zebras” of her university’s teaching hospital, she said, replaced by the everyday rigors of mixed-animal veterinary medicine, where demand far outpaces supply in many parts of Texas, leading to burnout among vets.

“At some point you think, ‘Is this sustainable?’” Solomon Schilling said. She and her husband were trying to start a

family, but working 50–60 hours a week made that a challenge. “I was like, ‘If we go into rural practice, we are never going to have a life.’”

Solomon Schilling and 31 other faculty members began reshaping that reality in August, when they welcomed the inaugural class to the Texas Tech University School of Veterinary Medicine in Amarillo—Texas’ first new vet school in more than a century. Decades in the making, Tech established

the school with the specific intent of recruiting passionate students from small towns and forming them into career-ready practitioners prepared to help address the shortage of veterinarians, especially in rural Texas.

“There’s a high demand in Texas, but it’s not being met in these rural communities where we need them,” said Clayton Cobb, another professor. “That’s where Tech comes in.”

Texas counts 6,600 practicing veterinarians but needs 1,300 more to reach the national average for the state’s population, according to Tech. Fewer than 200 of those vets work exclusively on livestock in rural parts of the state that has nearly double the number of cattle of any other state and hundreds of thousands more horses and almost a million more goats than any other state.

But many Texas vets say a new veterinary school—especially one focused on rural students and underserved communities—is long overdue.

“If you’re going to select all the kids out of Houston, Dallas and places like that, you’ve got very little hope of getting very many of those to ever go out past those metropolitan areas,” said Kynan Sturgess, a Panhandle veterinarian whose clinic is





served by Deaf Smith Electric Cooperative. “They didn’t grow up around farming and ranching; there’s no guarantee they’re going to stick around. But you’ve got a lot better shot of taking a kid from Dimmitt, Texas, and maybe expecting him to go back to some area like that.”

Sturgess is one of just four veterinarians permanently based in Deaf Smith County, where more than 600,000 cattle outnumber humans about 33 to 1. The Panhandle has the highest density of cattle in the country, but three veterinary schools in three other states are closer than Texas’ only other vet school—at Texas A&M University.

Sturgess has had to advertise openings at his Hereford clinic in other states—one reason he’s advocated for a school like Tech’s for years.

“The whole state, from a rural standpoint, is having problems,” he said. “I have colleagues all over the state that are constantly looking for somebody.”

About 40% of Texas’ working vets earned their degree outside the state; the rest went through Texas A&M University’s College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences—founded in 1916 and one of the best and largest vet schools in the nation.

As the second school in the state, Tech has the advantage of a specialized focus. “We don’t have to cater to everybody,” Cobb said.

Cobb grew up on a ranch in Northeast Texas and as an

**‘A slow day is kind of unusual. We pretty much have to take care of everybody who walks in the front door. If you don’t love it, you’re not going to do it.’**

undergraduate at Tech about 20 years ago, he advocated for a veterinary program before moving on to vet school at A&M. So when he heard about the Legislature including just that in the state’s 2019 budget, allocating \$17.35 million in operational support for the program (which donors supplemented with \$90 million for construction costs), he was thrilled. Then he got the call to come work there.

“When they said, ‘We’d like to extend you an offer. When do you think you could start?’ I told them, ‘Six hours and 36 minutes. Give me time to get there. We are starting today,’” Cobb said.

With firsthand experience in rural animal care, Cobb has tremendous respect for those who do it—and especially for Wally Kraft, his childhood vet, who still treats animals of all sizes at his Paris clinic.

“A slow day is kind of unusual,” said Kraft, 76, a member of Lamar Electric, who still pulls calves, sews up horses,





LEFT Kraft, assisted by vet tech Emily Odell, removes a benign tumor from a Doberman pinscher. BELOW In August, Texas Tech welcomed the first 64 students to its Amarillo campus—the 33rd veterinary school in the country.



and vaccinates and treats more and more dogs and cats as the Metroplex creeps toward the country. “We pretty much have to take care of everybody who walks in the front door. If you don’t love it, you’re not going to do it.”

Two of Kraft’s veterinarian sons are on their way to one day taking over his practice, but most of Texas’ aging vets don’t have that kind of security—even while demand swells. Texas added 4 million people since 2010—more than any other state—according to census data, but 41% of vets in rural Texas are older than 60.

“Everything has grown,” Sturgess said. “I’ve taken on more feedlots; I’ve got more horse clients and way more small animal clients.”

**T**ech is hoping to stem that tide using what it calls a distributed veterinary learning community to turn out well-rounded, practice-ready generalists. Unlike traditional vet schools like A&M, where fourth-year vet students practice at a teaching hospital, Tech students will do 4- to 6-week rotations at private practices across the state in their final year.

“If you want to go into dairy, we’ll send you to dairies. If you want to go into feedlots, we’ll send you to feedlots,” Cobb said. It’s a way to immerse students in the life and lifestyle of rural animal care, preparing them for the everyday rigors and rewards of the job.

That’s part of what Solomon Schilling was missing from her own vet school experience.

“I felt very prepared intellectually but not for things that I saw day in and day out,” she said. “Communication, training, interpersonal relations, stress management, work-life balance, financial management ... things like that are the reasons people leave the profession or leave practice. It’s not the medicine that runs them off.”

Tech’s model aims to turn out confident, competent vets who are ready for that late-night phone call—because they’ve already experienced it.

“When you’re at a teaching hospital, certain services will only see a handful of patients a day, whereas in a very busy private practice, you can see 25, 30 patients a day per doctor,” Solomon Schilling said. “It’s a lot more volume and a lot more exposure.”

The 64 students who comprise Tech’s first class started their studies in Amarillo at the newly completed School of Veterinary Medicine, which houses 185,000 square feet of labs, offices and classrooms. A large-animal clinical

skills facility is about 2 miles northwest.

Access to the state-of-the-art facility won’t cost the class of 2025 as much as some schools. The average in-state veterinary medicine degree costs more than \$200,000, according to the VIN Foundation, but Tech students will pay \$88,000 for tuition (plus more for books and supplies). The hope is that saddling vets with less debt will allow them to work wherever they’re needed.

“A lot of people think we’re just raising country vets to work cows,” Cobb said. “That is not true at all. We could graduate our first four classes of veterinarians and send them all to El Paso and Laredo, and they would still be underserved communities.

“The people in those clinics and those communities out there are in desperate need. Nobody is really looking at them and trying to help them. That’s exactly the point of what we’re doing.” ■

**TCP WEB EXTRA** See a timeline of veterinary education in Texas.



# Current Events **His Way**

RIGHT Austin adventurer West Hansen at the San Marcos River. BELOW Hansen, right, and a guide navigate Mantaro River rapids in Peru. OPPOSITE Hansen makes a satellite phone call after his team's raft flipped in white water.



When **West Hansen** needs an escape from society, he just goes with the flow

BY PAM LEBLANC • PHOTOS BY ERICH SCHLEGEL



**n a warm fall afternoon,**

West Hansen glides a sleek, narrow racing canoe beneath a row of towering cypress trees on the San Marcos River.

He dips in a paddle, steers nimbly around a partially submerged log, then rides a riffle of blue-green water over a natural rock spillway as he makes his way from the tiny town of Martindale to the even tinier community of Staples, downstream from San Marcos.

The 6-mile, leisurely cruise takes less than two hours—barely a blip on the odometer for Hansen, 59, an endurance paddler who led an expedition 4,200 miles down the entire Amazon River in 2012 and paddled 2,100 miles down the Volga River in Russia two years later. As he pulls ashore, he tips back his cowboy hat—a trademark piece of attire for the leader of the Arctic Cowboys, who next year plan to become the first paddlers to kayak 1,900 miles through the Northwest Passage in the Arctic Archipelago.

“As our world has gotten busier and technology has evolved and we have 24/7 news cycles, it’s nice to get away,” he says.

Hansen, a social worker who helps seniors navigate the ins and outs of health care through his family’s home health care business in Port Arthur, is opinionated and bull-headed, traits that serve him well as an expedition leader. He tucks a notepad and pen in his front pocket, scribbling thoughts wherever he goes. In 2018 he ran unsuccessfully for U.S. Congress in the 25th district of Texas and won’t rule out the possibility of running again.

Hansen started paddling in the early 1980s when he took a whitewater kayaking class at what was then Southwest Texas State University. A few years later, he learned about the Texas Water Safari, a 260-mile paddling race from San Marcos to Seadrift on the Texas coast. Since then he’s finished the event—during which sleep-deprived paddlers navigate rapids, drag their boats over bobbing logjams, endure heat and exhaustion, and dodge alligators—21 times. He is also a

four-time winner of a 340-mile paddling race down the swift Missouri River. He endures miseries like chafing, sucking mud, nausea and biting insects, he says, because he enjoys the camaraderie and the escape from modern life.

“In every race, I think about quitting, even the ones I’ve won,” he says. “But I know how bad it’ll feel to pull out.”

Hansen funds his trips through donations and hard work, taking on odd carpentry jobs on weekends and raising money through his nonprofit organization, Worldwide Waterways.

In 2008, Hansen, who lives in Austin with his wife, Lizet, traveled to Iquitos, Peru, for the Great River Amazon Raft Race, where teams use eight 16-foot balsa logs to build a raft and sprint nearly 100 miles. Until that year, competitors lined all their logs side by side to make a wide raft. Hansen’s team instead spliced two rows of logs end to end. They won and set an overall record of 12 hours and 19 minutes.

More importantly, Hansen was hooked.

“The [Amazon] river really is the biggest river on the planet. It’s shocking to see that amount of anything in motion,” he says. “It was just so powerful, and it really moved me.”

On the flight home, one of his race partners lent him Joe Kane’s book, *Running the Amazon*. “Before I got back to Houston, I had pretty much read the entire thing,” he says. “By the time I landed in Austin, I thought, ‘OK, I can do this. I can paddle the entire Amazon River.’”

**Hansen spent the next** few years researching the river and lining up sponsors. He made a scouting trip to Peru in 2011. In 2012 he launched his expedition—the first to paddle the Amazon from a newly determined source high in the Andes Mountains to the sea. His wife and daughter, Isabella, who graduated from Georgetown University last spring, traveled there to watch for a few days.

“It’s very shallow, just a stream [at the start],” he said. “A lot of times we had to get out and drag our boats. A lot of times we were in whiteout snow conditions.”

Hansen wrote a book about the experience, *The Amazon From Source to Sea: The Farthest Journey Down the World’s Longest River*, which details the 111-day adventure, including the day they spotted a sloth swimming across the river and other days when they saw frolicking pink dolphins. They were held at gunpoint five times, discovered floating bales of marijuana and dodged boulders as big as refrigerators that rained from canyon walls where crews were building a dam.

Longtime friend Jeff Wueste was part of the Amazon team and Hansen’s only partner on the Volga trek. They met in 1992 and have teamed up for the Texas Water Safari several times. Wueste, who will paddle the Northwest Passage with the Arctic Cowboys, describes Hansen as determined and well prepared, someone who does the due diligence needed to accomplish big things.



'I love to be far away from everybody and the stimulus that's constantly coming at us.'



"He's good to the core," Wueste says. "Ultimately, he's driven to an end goal. But as many expedition leaders are, they're as egotistical as they can be. You're not going to find any wallflowers leading expeditions."

**When the originally** planned trip through the Northwest Passage in 2020 was postponed because of the pandemic, Hansen and four others set out to paddle 420 miles up the Texas coast instead.

They started at the state's sandy tail on South Padre Island and chugged to its refinery-studded tip at the Louisiana border, enduring tent-wrecking storms, campsites covered in enough ooze to host a mud-wrestling competition and swells so big they lost sight of one another. Their fingernails grew soggy and loose, and they labored to find a proper rhythm,



but they also paddled alongside pods of dolphins; pitched tents on small barrier islands covered in lush, lime-colored grass; and watched serene sunrises and sunsets.

When they finally pulled their 18-foot Epic sea kayaks ashore at Walter Umphrey State Park in Port Arthur, Hansen announced: "Well, that's done."

Underwater explorer and filmmaker Nancy McGee, who knows Hansen through the Explorers Club, a global organization whose members include astronauts, mountain climbers and aviators, describes him as the epitome of the 21st-century explorer.

"His goals are the stuff of dreams," she says, adding that he "has helped create a deeper understanding of the cultures he has encountered and the physical geography he has mastered."

For Hansen, who is already working on a second book, which will detail a history of Amazon expeditions, those accomplishments are only part of the motivation to explore.

"I love to be far away from everybody and the stimulus that's constantly coming at us," Hansen says. "I like doing things that haven't been done before, and that list is getting smaller and smaller." ■

ABOVE Hansen paddles down the Mantaro River. LEFT Hansen cruises the San Marcos River with author Pam LeBlanc.

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Check out more photos from West Hansen's 2012 Amazon River expedition.

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Actual Size  
30.61 mm  
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## Before they were carved in stone, they were struck in SILVER.

**JUST RELEASED: One of America's FIRST Civil War Silver Half Dollars.**

Civil War collectibles are among today's most popular and sought after artifacts. But no Civil War collection can be complete without including one of the very FIRST-EVER Civil War commemorative coins struck by the United States Mint: The 1925 Stone Mountain Silver Half Dollar.

Both the coin and the Stone Mountain Memorial near Atlanta, Georgia feature Generals Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson on horseback. The Stone Mountain Memorial was designed by famed sculptor Gutzon Borglum, whose next masterpiece would be the magnificent Mount Rushmore.

### Etched in History, Carved in Stone, Struck in Silver!

These 90% silver half dollars were minted in 1925 to raise money for the memorial. Over the years since they were minted, many were spent during the Great Depression, or melted down to obtain their precious silver. Today, they can be difficult to find.

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We are now releasing our entire supply of these historic and valuable coins to the public. Each is in lightly circulated condition and comes with an informative story card and a certificate of authenticity.

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Genuine Civil War items like this don't appear every day. We expect our small supply of these historic silver coins to disappear quickly. We urge you to call immediately to avoid disappointment.

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# 3,000-Year-Old Beauty Secret Revealed

Turquoise — the original fashion icon — comes full circle for an amazing price.

She's been around for thousands of years, but she's never gone out of fashion. We're talking turquoise, one of the world's most ancient gems. Egyptian queens adorned themselves with turquoise jewelry more than 3,000 years ago. And the blue beauty is even more coveted now than she was a millennia ago.

Do you know someone who's even more beautiful now than when you first met? Then the Timeless Turquoise Pendant is for them — a stylish circle formed from seven total carats of natural turquoise and exquisite sterling silver metalwork. And the price? Let's just say we made sure timeless was attainable for less than you'd think.

Time is running out for timeless turquoise. Just because turquoise is timeless, doesn't mean supplies of it will last forever. Turquoise is only found a few places on Earth. Typically unearthed in arid climates like the American Southwest and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, turquoise requires a delicate balance of minerals and water to achieve its gorgeous range of blues. But even when conditions are optimal for turquoise to form, finding stones of gem-worthy quality is a challenge. There are very few turquoise mines left, and then, less than 5% of turquoise mined worldwide is of jewelry condition, making it rarer to come by than even diamonds.

There are turquoise and sterling silver pendants out there for over \$1,200. And while genuine turquoise can garner a pretty penny, there's no reason to be paying a designer price when we can bring you designer pieces for a remarkable price.

**100% Satisfaction Guaranteed.** Try the Timeless Turquoise Pendant for 30 days. If it fails to delight, just send it back for a refund of the item price.

**Limited Availability.** These are handcrafted artisan pieces, and we only have so many. Call today.

## Jewelry Specifications:

- Natural turquoise in .925 sterling silver settings

## Timeless Turquoise Collection

A. Pendant (7 ctw) ~~\$299†~~.....\$79 Save \$220

B. 18" 3-Strand Sterling Silver Cable Chain \$79

Pendant & Chain ~~\$378†~~.....\$99 Save \$279

C. Earrings (14 ctw) ~~\$399†~~.....\$129 Save \$270

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genuine turquoise  
**ONLY \$79**

B.



A.

Pendant  
enlarged  
to show  
luxurious  
color

*"...turquoise is becoming rarer and more valuable because less of it is being discovered... the very best turquoise is more valuable than diamonds."*

— The Jewellery Editor, 2021



C.



Rating of A+



Stauer... Afford the Extraordinary.®





MESSAGE  
FROM BOARD  
PRESIDENT

KENNETH  
WHITE

## Challenges Strengthen Your Cooperative

When the going gets tough, the tough get going

**IT IS AN HONOR** to have been elected president of the Medina Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, and I appreciate the support and cooperation of the board and the staff.

We are living in some very different times to say the least and with that comes many different challenges. When we think back to 1938, when local people went door to door to form the first cooperatives, I imagine they felt they were living in very different times and were facing many challenges as well.

In 2020, we were faced with COVID-19 and living with many different guidelines that seemed to be changing daily. It affected all of us in many ways and, as we always do, we adapted to a new way of doing things. We were looking forward to 2021 and better times ahead. Things were progressing, then the February storm hit Texas. It, too, was unprecedented and presented a great number of challenges for our members, employees, the ERCOT market and participants in the electric industry across the state. I know that event was very difficult for all. I commend the employees of Medina Electric who braved the harsh elements and worked tirelessly to restore power to the membership. Many of these employees left their own homes and families alone without electricity or running water. Once again, we adapted and made it through very difficult and challenging times.

We were then especially looking forward to springtime after dealing with the polar vortex. Spring had the potential to bring warmer weather, wildflowers, some welcome rain and the subsiding of the pandemic. If you have lived in Texas long enough, you well know that springtime is beautiful but can also bring some disastrous hail, rain and wind storms. In 2021, our entire service area experienced those exact things as many storms blew through. Once again, many members and employees experienced major damage to their homes and property. Parts of Medina EC's electric distribution system were left damaged, as was South Texas Electric Cooperative's, who Medina Electric purchases power from, causing major outages for the membership. Once again employees worked as fast as safely possible to restore service to all members. There is an old saying, "When the going gets tough, the tough get going."

The past two years have been extremely tough and cooperative members, being the tough individuals they are, did what cooperative members do: They jumped right in and helped each other any way they could. We have heard numerous stories of members helping each other out during all these trials; you are to be commended for your efforts.

Medina EC had 39,138 service locations to maintain as of December 2020. This includes idle services, where the cooperative still has equipment and poles but there is not an active meter at this time. The cooperative has one of the largest service areas in the state, serving 10,750 square miles in 17 South Texas counties. Over 62 miles of new distribution lines were added in 2020, bringing the total to over 9,760 miles of line to be maintained. We are fortunate to be a cooperative that is experiencing growth, but with growth comes challenges. The board of directors is committed to ensuring the cooperative continues providing the most reliable service at the most affordable price to you, the member-owners.

People sometimes ask, "What is the benefit of being a cooperative member?"

One of the benefits is the cooperative returns capital credits to members. The Medina EC Board of Directors approved the return of \$2 million to members in 2020, and the cooperative has returned a total of \$33 million to members since its inception.

Due to the pandemic, we did not have an annual membership meeting in 2020, but plans have been made for this year's meeting in Uvalde on September 25. There will be an online option for members who wish to participate virtually. Either way you choose to attend, we look forward to seeing you there! ■



REPAIRS IN MEDINA COUNTY FOLLOWING THE APRIL 28 TORNADO AND RECORD-SETTING HAIL EVENT.



MESSAGE  
FROM CEO

**MARK  
ROLLANS**

**THE FINANCIAL DETAILS IN THIS REPORT** are for 2020, when things in the world shifted to masks, hand sanitizer and social distancing.

In mid-March, COVID-19 arrived in a way that felt quite sudden to many. As a business, we were forced to make changes very quickly. Employees adapted to new ways of working—some from home, some from individual vehicles instead of shared transportation to job sites—and members adapted to new ways of doing business—utilizing more online payment options and applications. We made every change possible to ensure employees and members were kept safe.

As we dealt with COVID-19, other challenges did not pause. Crews dealt with substantial Memorial

Day storms and Hurricane Hanna, in addition to outages caused by animals, vehicle accidents and more.

Our mission is to exceed member expectations in everything we do, and we kept that at the forefront of all our decisions in 2020, as we always have. Throughout all the unknowns, your cooperative has maintained financial stability and implemented new technologies to help us continue our

mission in the future.

So far, 2021 has also brought challenges to members and staff, with the February storm, issues on the ERCOT grid hampering Medina EC's ability to deliver electricity to our members and weather that has been worse than we have seen in recent years.

The board is currently in the process of selecting a new CEO, as I will retire at the end of this year. After 37 years in the business, I am ready to close my computer and start a new chapter in life.

As we get ready for 2022, I know there will be additional challenges—there always are—but I know that the staff and processes in place will allow your cooperative to continue to serve you and work to exceed your expectations. I hope you all stay healthy and happy. ■



## Medina Electric Cooperative



### CONTACT US

**Toll-Free** 1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532)

**Email** Info@MedinaEC.org

**Web** MedinaEC.org - Chat Feature Available

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Voting District 1

Larry Huesser, (830) 363-7651

Wayne W. Scholtz, (830) 426-1328

Ken Weynand, (830) 426-0762

#### Voting District 2

Jimmie Raines, (830) 591-8437

Chris Surles, (830) 965-5538

Kenneth White, (830) 232-6541

#### Voting District 3

Annette Sorrells, (361) 231-0173

J. L. Gonzalez, (956) 286-1863

Rodolfo H. Rodriguez, (210) 846-1092

### CEO

Mark Rollans, 1-866-MEC-ELEC, ext. 1045

## Outage? Call us.

### TOLL-FREE

1-866-MEC-ELEC (632-3532)

Option 2: Report an outage

Option 3: Pay bill, get account balance

Option 5: Speak to a representative

### OFFICE LOCATIONS

**Bruni** 1300 FM 2050 N., Bruni 78344

**Dilley** 1718 W. FM 117, Dilley 78017

**Hondo** 237 Hwy. 173 N., Hondo 78861

**Rio Grande City** 601 N. FM 3167,  
Rio Grande City 78582

**Uvalde** 2604 Hwy. 90 E., Uvalde 78801

**Corporate Office** 2308 18th St., Hondo 78861

### VISIT US ONLINE

MedinaEC.org



This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Información sobre todos los programas y servicios que ofrece Medina Electric Cooperative están disponibles en Español al llamarnos al 1-866-MEC-ELEC o visitando una de nuestras oficinas.



## Operating Statistics

<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Total Utility Plant	\$225,688,243	\$213,154,923
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(34,955,828)	(32,955,851)
Net Utility Plant	190,732,415	180,199,072
Cash and Temporary Investments	1,292,687	2,355,905
Investments in Associated Organizations	60,236,376	55,143,288
Accounts Receivable	10,892,392	10,268,886
Materials	0	0
Deferred Charges & Other Assets	1,129,511	1,626,619
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$264,283,380</b>	<b>\$249,593,770</b>

<b>EQUITIES AND MARGINS</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Memberships	\$98,130	\$95,460
Patronage Capital	107,419,096	97,054,152
Other Equities and Income	13,885,068	16,428,377
<b>Total Equities and Margins</b>	<b>\$121,402,294</b>	<b>\$113,577,990</b>

<b>LIABILITIES</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Long-Term Debt	\$118,198,039	\$107,324,396
Accumulated Provision for Pensions and Benefits	3,330,336	3,205,798
Accounts Payable	10,592,183	9,913,608
Consumer Deposits	2,757,751	2,866,967
Other Current and Accrued Liabilities	1,545,140	1,410,855
Deferred Credits	6,457,637	11,294,157
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$142,881,086</b>	<b>\$136,015,780</b>
<b>Total Equities and Liabilities</b>	<b>\$264,283,380</b>	<b>\$249,593,770</b>

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Sales of Electric Power	\$123,846,487	\$124,443,284
Miscellaneous Electric Revenue	443,774	1,636,414
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$124,290,261</b>	<b>\$126,079,698</b>

<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Purchased Power	83,785,357	85,929,609
Maintenance and Operations	6,912,598	14,369,786
Consumer Accounts and Member Services	335,013	3,216,799
Administration / General	6,367,464	6,611,897
Depreciation	7,453,623	7,024,549
Interest and Other Deductions	4,680,106	4,432,830
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$109,534,161</b>	<b>\$121,585,471</b>

<b>MARGINS</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>
Operating Margins	\$3,947,990	\$4,494,226
Generation and Transmission / Other Capital Credits	5,716,955	7,055,487
Nonoperating Margins	279,464	812,688
<b>Total Margins</b>	<b>\$9,944,409</b>	<b>\$12,362,401</b>

### ANNUAL AUDIT

Medina EC is audited annually. The audit of the 2020 financials was performed by Certified Public Accountants Bolinger, Segars, Gilbert & Moss, L.L.P. of Lubbock.

The audit covered the period from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

Per the auditor's February 25, 2021, report, "in our opinion, the financial statements ... present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Medina Electric Cooperative, Inc. as of December 31, 2020 and 2019, and the results of their operations and cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

# Dollar Breakdown

Medina EC is a **not-for-profit** business, so each dollar you send the cooperative covers **business costs**. Here is how your dollar was spent in 2020, by percent.

## **POWER COST**

69.62%

## **MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS**

12.38%

## **DEPRECIATION**

6.19%

## **ADMINISTRATION**

5.29%

## **INTEREST**

3.89%

## **CONSUMER ACCOUNTS & MEMBER SERVICES**

2.63%

## Where Your Electricity Came From

**THERE ARE MANY STEPS** involved in getting electricity to your home. The first step is procuring the fuel used to produce it.

As a cooperative, we purchase our power from our wholesale power supplier, South Texas Electric Cooperative. With all fuel sources for energy production, there are advantages and disadvantages. The goal, very much like with a financial portfolio, is to take a balanced approach and to adjust as the market changes.

Here are the resources that made up the fuel for the power the cooperative provided to members during 2020.

**Natural Gas—64.1%**

**Texas Lignite—21%**

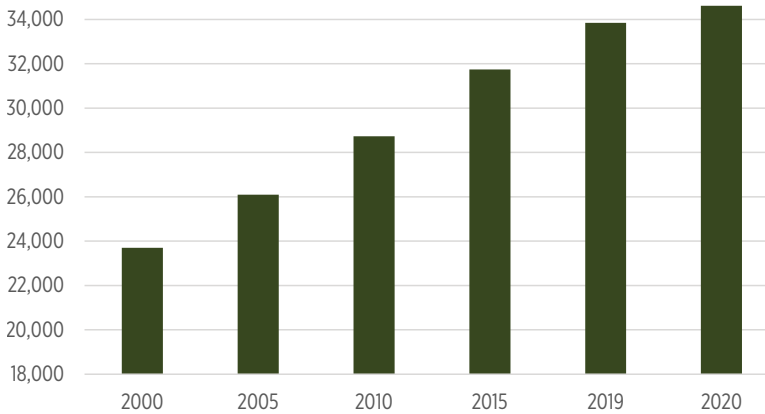
**Renewables (Wind & Hydro) —14.9%**





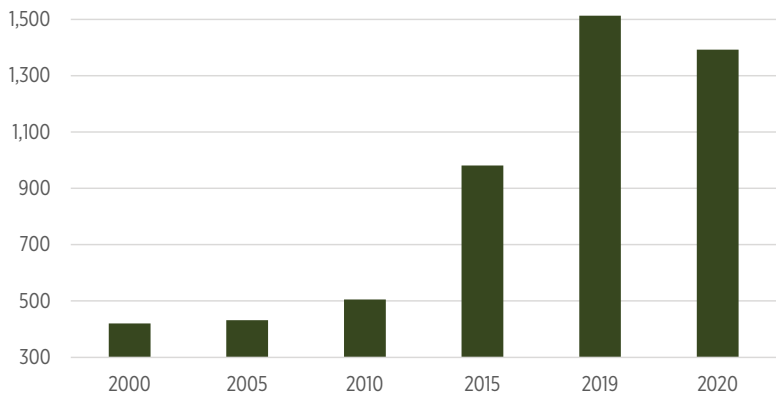
# Active Services (Meters & Security Lights)

2000: 23,702    2020: 34,622



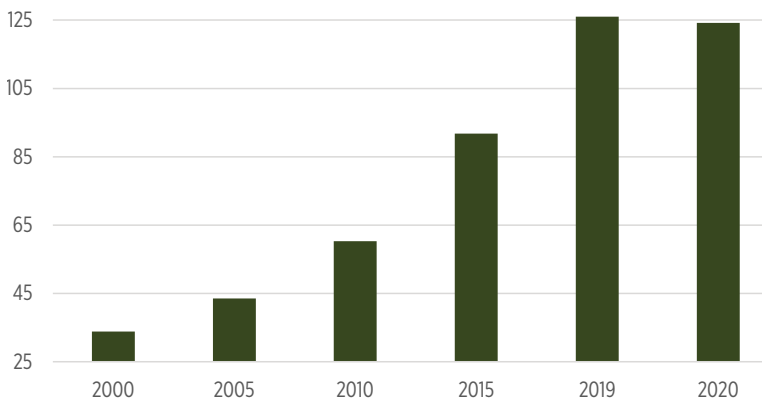
# kWh Sold (in millions)

2000: 420M kWh    2020: 1,392M kWh



# Revenue (in millions)

2000: \$33.8M    2020: \$124.3M



ALL NUMBERS AS OF 12/31/2020

## MILES OF LINE

With 9,760 miles of line, Medina EC has enough to stretch along the driving route from our Rio Grande City office to Anchorage, Alaska, and back—and still have more than 1,000 miles of line left over. Our power lines stretch across the 17 South Texas counties we serve. At 10,750 square miles, Medina EC’s service area is 1,000 square miles larger than the land area of Maryland as well as eight other states.

**For comparison:**

Year-end 2010—9,043 miles

Year-end 2000—8,824 miles

## HELPFUL LINKS AND RESOURCES

**WEBSITE:**  
[MedinaEC.org](https://MedinaEC.org)

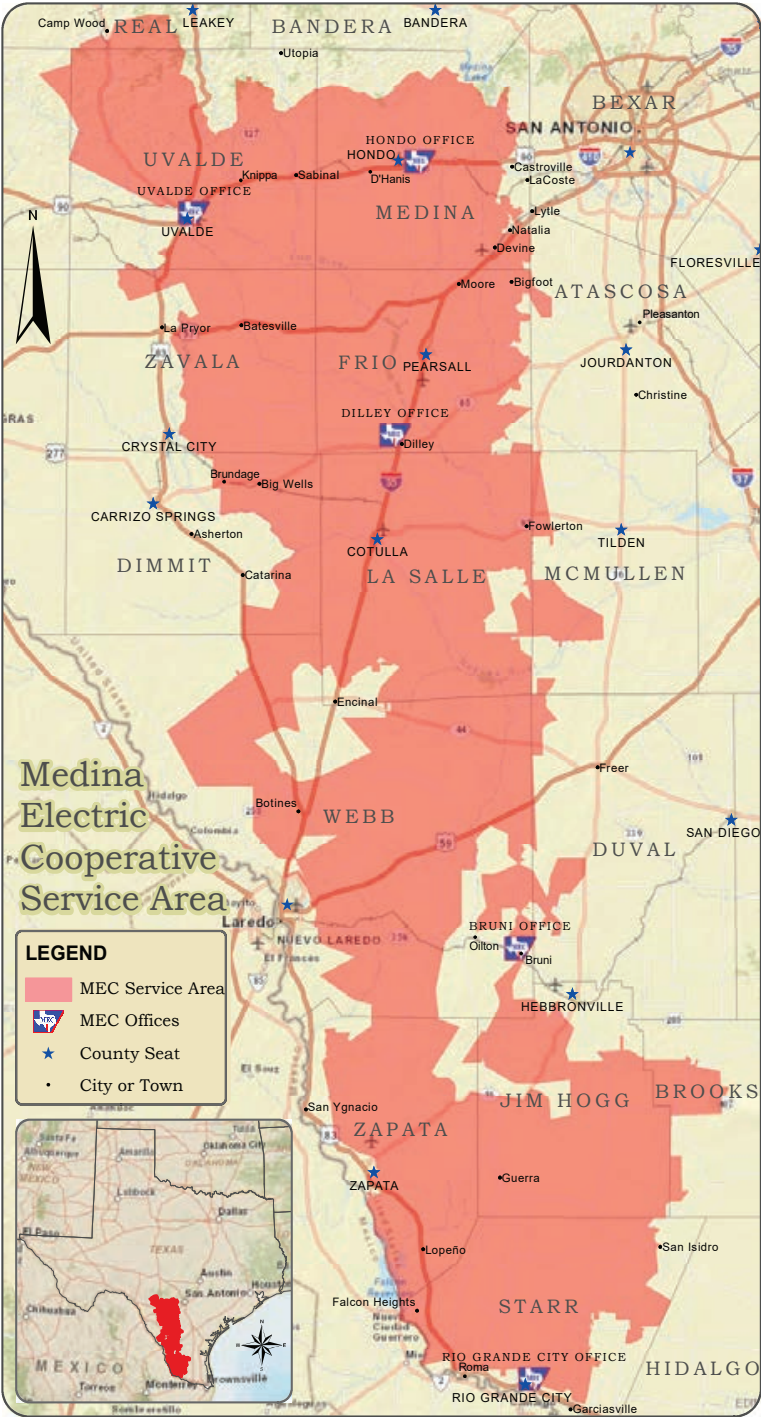
**RATES:**  
[MedinaEC.org/Rates](https://MedinaEC.org/Rates)

**CORPORATE DOCUMENTS:**  
[MedinaEC.org/CorpDoc](https://MedinaEC.org/CorpDoc)  
 Includes Tariff, Bylaws and Your Rights as a Member

# Our Service Area

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE may be our name, but we serve more than just Medina County. Medina EC actually serves all or parts of 17 counties across South Texas.

We have five offices that members can visit for business, located in Uvalde, Hondo, Dilley, Bruni and Rio Grande City, and two additional offices where internal staff operate, the corporate office in Hondo and a Laredo facility that houses materials and vehicles for staff in that area. ■



## Benefits of Membership

### SOLAR

You can now purchase a ground-mount solar panel system with installation from your cooperative. Learn more at [MedinaEC.org/Solar](https://MedinaEC.org/Solar).

### SMARTHUB

Have your account information at your fingertips with this free tool. Available at [MedinaEC.org](https://MedinaEC.org) or as an app for Android and Apple devices. Pay your bill, review past use, report outages and more.

### REBATES

You can take advantage of rebates for multiple energy efficiency upgrades. Get all the details and information at [MedinaEC.org/Rebates](https://MedinaEC.org/Rebates).

### PREPAID ELECTRICITY

PrePaid Electricity is a great option if you want to pay for your electricity as you use it. Learn more about the program at [MedinaEC.org/PrePaid](https://MedinaEC.org/PrePaid).

### PAYMENT OPTIONS

We offer many payment options. See details at [MedinaEC.org/BillPay](https://MedinaEC.org/BillPay).

### CO-OP CONNECTIONS CARD

This discount card can save you money on purchases with local and national retailers and on prescriptions. Details at [MedinaEC.org/Connections](https://MedinaEC.org/Connections).

### FILTER CHANGE PROGRAM

Order discounted HVAC filters and have them shipped to your home or business. Then get an email reminder when it is time to change them. Find details at [MedinaEC.org](https://MedinaEC.org). Just click on Filters under the Products tab.

### LIFE-SUPPORT REGISTRY

If someone in your home depends on an electrically operated health aid, they need to be on the life-support registry. The form and details are at [MedinaEC.org/Registry](https://MedinaEC.org/Registry).



# Board Election

Election ballots were mailed to Medina EC members on August 18. Voting closes at 5 p.m. on September 17. For specific instructions on voting by mail or online, please see the ballot you were mailed. Every member's vote is important. If you didn't receive your ballot for the election, please contact Medina EC at 1-866-MEC-ELEC or MyCoop@MedinaEC.org.

A brief biography for each candidate in Medina EC's contested races is listed. The content is written in the candidates' words and has not been edited by Medina EC staff. Acknowledgement of the campaign policy and disclosure reports, if applicable, are available for each candidate upon request.

Only Voting District 1 has a contested race this year. Candidate profiles for uncontested positions in Voting Districts 2 and 3 are available at MedinaEC.org/BoardElection.

**All Medina EC members are eligible to vote for a candidate in any of Medina EC's contested races even if the member does not have a meter in those voting districts.**

Medina EC is a democratic organization controlled by its members. Members elect representatives, called directors, who participate in setting policy and making decisions. Directors are accountable to the membership through the annual election process.

Nominees for board candidates were accepted at nominating meetings held in February and by petition.

Election results will be announced at the 82nd Annual Membership Meeting in Uvalde on September 25 and posted at MedinaEC.org.



## LEVI MCKENZIE VOTING DISTRICT 1 CANDIDATE

**Medina EC Member (# of Years):** 9

**Occupation (Former if retired):** Continuous Improvement Manager

**Work Experience:** 16 years of operations and leadership experience. 8 Years in the automotive industry and another eight years with HEB here in San Antonio. During the last eight years with HEB I have worked with the manufacturing division, as well as retail operations to understand, and improve processes in order to reduce waste and improve the experience of our customers and partners. throughout my professional career I have developed and maintained budgets, capacity analyses, ROI & capital expenditures, as well as facility layout design, and research & development for many new products.

**I Would be a Good Director Because:** I am passionate about our community. My background in operations and continuous improvement have given me strong skill sets in things like problem solving as well as understanding & targeting improvement opportunities. My goal is to share my experience and knowledge with Medina Electric Coop. in order to better support our community.

**Please Contact Me At:**

Phone: 210-355-6241 Email: levi.mckenzie@gmail.com



## WAYNE SCHOLTZ VOTING DISTRICT 1 CANDIDATE

**Medina EC Member (# of Years):** 26

**Occupation (Former if retired):** Medina County Extension Agent (Retired)

**Work Experience:** Worked for 25 years with agricultural producers and the public in providing research based information from Texas A&M University. Also helped administer the 4H program in Medina County. Retired in 2004.

**I Would be a Good Director Because:** As a County Extension Agent, I gained valuable experience working with people through different boards committees and community organizations. This work has definitely helped me as a Medina EC director. As an incumbent director on the Medina EC Board, I have gained knowledge about the co-op system of providing energy to its members. As required by Medina EC, I completed my Certified Credential Director training the first few months of my first term. I continue to attend Director conferences and training and in doing so have also received my Board Leadership Certification. This is the highest certification level a co-op director can achieve. I am committed to explore all energy sources to provide our members the most affordable and reliable electricity. I will continue to serve you to the best of my ability.

**Please Contact Me At:**

Phone: 830-426-1328 Email: wwscholtz@gmail.com

**CANDIDATE PROFILES FOR UNOPPOSED RACES CAN BE FOUND AT MEDINAEC.ORG/BOARDELECTION**

## Seven Cooperative Principles

As an electric distribution cooperative, Medina EC operates under the Seven Cooperative Principles. These principles guide all decisions made at the co-op.

**VOLUNTARY & OPEN MEMBERSHIP**

**DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL**

**MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION**

**AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE**

**EDUCATION, TRAINING & INFORMATION**

**COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES**

**CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY**

Since the cooperative did not hold an Annual Membership Meeting in 2020, the business meeting agenda in 2021 will include a vote on approval of minutes from the 81st Annual Membership Meeting, held in 2019. Below are minutes from that meeting for members to review.

# Annual Membership Meeting: September 28, 2019

The Medina Electric Cooperative, Inc. 81st Annual Membership Meeting was held at the Graff 7A Ranch in Hondo, TX beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 28, 2019.

The welcome and opening comments were delivered by CEO Mark Rollans who noted that this Annual Meeting celebrates 81 years of serving electricity to South Texas.

1. The invocation was given by CEO Rollans followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem.
2. CEO Rollans then recognized veterans, current service members, and first responders in attendance. Further, he introduced special guests in attendance at the meeting. CEO Rollans then introduced the Board of Directors and the Medina Electric employees who have reached service milestones, asking them to stand and be recognized.
3. Board President Glenn Schweers called the meeting to order, asking Board Secretary Annette Sorrells to address the next order of business including:
  - a. The notice of the meeting: Secretary Sorrells reported this notice was provided in the September Texas Co-op Power magazine.
  - b. Registrar's Report: Secretary Sorrells read the following Registrar's Report,;
  - c. Reading of the Membership Roll and 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes: Secretary Sorrells stated that she could hold the roll call of the members and read the 2018 Annual Meeting minutes, noting that the minutes were included in the September Texas Co-op Power magazine

At this time, President Schweers stated he would entertain one motion to: 1) Accept the Registrar's Report, 2) Dispense of the Reading of the Membership Roll, and 3) Approve the 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes as presented in the September 2019 issue of the Texas Co-op Power magazine.

- Motion was made and seconded to 1) Accept the Registrar's Report, 2) Dispense of the Reading of the Membership Roll, and 3) Approve the 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes as presented in the September 2019 issue of the Texas Co-op Power magazine. Motion carried.
4. CEO Rollans then presented his annual report.
  5. CEO Rollans read the names of the 2019 director nominees as well as the dates and places of the Voting District Nominating Meetings. The nominees were asked to stand and were thanked for their support and for taking an active interest in their cooperative.
  6. The results of the 2019 director election were announced. It was noted that Medina utilized Survey and Ballot Systems to coordinate the election. This third party company collects and tallies all votes made by members online and through mail-in ballot, ensuring that the election is secure and confidential. CEO Rollans called upon Medina County Judge Chris Schuchart who reported the following results:

Director Election	
District 1: Kenneth Weynand	Unopposed 1,306 Votes
District 2: Chris Surles	Unopposed 1,251 Votes
District 3: Annette Sorrells	Unopposed 1,314 Votes

7. President Schweers then asked whether there remained any new or unfinished business. None was indicated by the membership.
- There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Annette Sorrells, Secretary

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kenneth White, Vice-President



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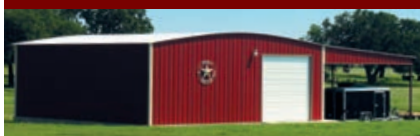
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**TCP WEB EXTRA**

Listen to W.F. Strong read this story.

# France's Beef? Pigs

Ill-mannered hogs ruin France's attempt at a relationship with the newly independent Texas

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY MOLLOY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**AFTER SECURING** independence at San Jacinto, Texas was an independent country but one with no money and a shaky government. With no military force to secure its vast territory, Texas needed friends on the international stage and needed them quickly.

Texas turned first to the United States. Just months earlier, Stephen F. Austin had written, "We ought to get united to the United States as soon as possible."

Though the U.S. was not ready to pursue annexation, it was the first country to formally recognize the new sovereign nation. Congress made that move because it feared Britain or France might gain an inside track to the wealth of Texas.

The next country to recognize Texas

was France. A commercial treaty was signed September 25, 182 years ago, and it established import duties on Texas cotton in France and reduced import duties on French wines, brandies and silks in Texas ports. The French Legation was opened in Austin, and the Texas Legation was opened in Paris.

This recognition from France was of enormous significance because most European countries saw the Texas Revolution as internal unrest within Mexico and believed that Santa Anna might crush the rebellion and reclaim the wayward state.

Once recognized internationally, Texas needed support for its banking system. In 1841, Gen. James Hamilton, the Texas commissioner of loans, walked

into a French minister's office in Paris and asked for a \$5 million loan. The minister asked if he had any collateral, and the Texan said, "a territory as big as the kingdom of France."

At the time Texas was actually about 50% larger than France. It looked like this loan would sail through the French bureaucracy. Then some Texas pigs caused an international incident.

Back in Austin, hogs owned by the innkeeper Richard Bullock wandered onto the grounds of the French Legation and ate corn in the stable, tore up gardens and invaded the house. Dubois de Saligny, the chargé d'affaires of the legation, ordered his servant to shoot the pigs. An outraged Bullock wanted Saligny arrested, but Saligny claimed diplomatic immunity.

Bullock caught the servant outside the legation, beat him up and threatened to do the same to Saligny. The Frenchman cut off diplomatic relations with Texas before traveling to New Orleans. A year later, he returned to his post, but the pig war had effectively killed the loan.

Even so, Saligny's glowing reports of the unfathomable wealth and prosperity for which Texas was destined fueled France's interest in the nation.

By keeping close ties with Texas, France wanted to make a grab at the last foothold available for it in North America. Negotiations for a French colonization and stationing of 30,000 French troops along the Texas frontier continued unconsummated until Texas was annexed by the U.S. in 1845.

France sacked Saligny for his ineptitude, and the trouble was all traced back to those pigs. As one French minister said of Saligny, "We can make mistakes, but we can't afford to look ridiculous." ■



# Sweet Potatoes

Traditional holiday staple proves plenty versatile—from waffles to brownies

BY MEGAN MYERS, FOOD EDITOR

Sweet potatoes are an ingredient that doesn't often get much love outside of the holidays, but these versatile spuds deserve a spot in your regular rotation. I try to make them at least once a week, changing up the preparation to keep my family from having dish fatigue. Mashed sweet potatoes are a great preparation, but we tend to have lots of leftovers each time. Enter sweet potato waffles, a lightly spiced way to brighten up any weekend breakfast.

## Sweet Potato Waffles

**2 cups flour**  
**¼ cup packed dark brown sugar**  
**2 teaspoons baking powder**  
**1 teaspoon baking soda**  
**1 teaspoon salt**  
**1 teaspoon cinnamon**  
**½ teaspoon ground ginger**  
**¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg**  
**1½ cups milk**  
**1 cup mashed sweet potatoes**  
**¼ cup vegetable oil**  
**2 eggs**  
**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**  
**Spray oil, as needed**

**COOK'S TIP** If you don't have a waffle maker, this recipe works beautifully for pancakes too.

1. In a large bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg.
2. In another bowl, whisk together milk, sweet potatoes, oil, eggs and vanilla until smooth.
3. Pour wet mixture into dry and stir until completely incorporated and no dry bits remain.
4. Preheat your waffle maker. Once hot, spray cooking plates with oil if needed, then scoop batter onto plates, close and cook according to the manufacturer's instructions. Keep waffles warm on a sheet pan in an oven set to low heat while you repeat with remaining batter.

**SERVES 4**

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Follow along with Megan Myers and her adventures in the kitchen at [stetted.com](http://stetted.com), where she features a recipe for Persimmon Sweet Potato Soup.





## Oven-Roasted Sweet Potato Medley

BECKY POE  
WOOD COUNTY EC

This easy side dish is excellent served with grilled proteins such as sausage or fish. Fresh cherry tomatoes added just before serving lend a pop of juicy sweetness, while the fresh jalapeño layers in heat.

- 1 pound sweet potatoes, cubed**
- 1 large poblano pepper, diced**
- 1 small red onion, cut into slivers**
- 1 cup cubed fresh pineapple, or 1 can (8 ounces) pineapple tidbits, drained**
- 2 tablespoons olive or avocado oil**
- Salt and pepper, to taste**
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh cilantro**
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and minced**
- Juice of half a lime**
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, quartered**

1. Place a 12-by-18-inch rimmed baking sheet in the oven and preheat to 425 degrees.
2. In a large bowl, combine sweet potatoes, poblano, onion and pineapple. Add oil, salt and pepper and stir well to coat. Remove baking sheet from oven. Spread sweet potato medley onto heated baking sheet and roast 25 minutes, stirring halfway through.
3. Remove pan from oven and stir in cilantro and jalapeño. Drizzle with lime juice, then add cherry tomatoes and season to taste.

SERVES 4

MORE RECIPES >



\$500 WINNER

## Texas Turkey Hash

HEATHER CARPENTER  
TAYLOR EC



Spicy with a bit of sweetness, this hash makes an excellent breakfast, brunch or even dinner. Carpenter created the dish based on a favorite at an Abilene restaurant, making a few healthy substitutions along the way. Serve with a poached or fried egg for a more complete meal.

SERVES 4

- 2 cups cubed sweet potatoes, or 20 ounces frozen sweet potato cubes**
- 1 onion, chopped**
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped**
- 2 jalapeño peppers, sliced**
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt**
- 4 tablespoons grapeseed or olive oil, divided use**
- 1 pound turkey breakfast sausage**
- 2 pinches crushed red pepper flakes (optional)**
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Toss sweet potatoes, onion, garlic, jalapeños and garlic salt together with 2 tablespoons oil and spread onto a rimmed baking sheet. Roast in the oven 25–35 minutes or until fork-tender.
3. In a large skillet over medium heat, brown turkey sausage with red pepper flakes, if using. Transfer sausage to a bowl and set aside.
4. Using the same skillet, increase heat to medium high and add remaining oil and roasted vegetables. Add the maple syrup and stir once. Let potatoes cook, undisturbed, for a few minutes. Turn over a few pieces to check for browning; you want a crispy, brown potato.
5. Once potatoes are browned, stir in sausage and serve.

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**PASTA** DUE SEPTEMBER 10

From angel hair to ziti and manicotti to macaroni, pasta is a pantry staple. What's your prized dish? Enter at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/contests) by September 10 for a chance to win \$500.





## Volcanic Sweet Potato Brownies

KANINA HADEL  
PENTEX ENERGY

These brownies will surprise everyone at the dessert table. Supremely fudgy and rich, they're excellent topped with a dollop of whipped cream. This recipe makes a large batch but can easily be halved.

**3 pounds sweet potatoes**  
**Butter, for the pan**  
**2¾ cups (about 24 ounces) smooth almond butter**  
**⅔–¾ cup molasses or pure maple syrup**  
**1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon vanilla extract**  
**1 cup cocoa powder**  
**½ cup almond flour**  
**1 tablespoon baking soda**  
**1 teaspoon salt**

**COOK'S TIP** For a less gooey brownie, refrigerate overnight before serving.

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees and place sweet potatoes on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake 50 minutes or until sweet potatoes are soft when pressed. Let cool.
2. Lower oven temperature to 350 degrees and butter a 9-by-13-inch pan.
3. In a large-capacity blender or food processor, purée sweet potatoes until smooth. Add almond butter and blend to mix well. Add molasses or maple syrup and vanilla and blend to mix.

4. In a medium bowl, stir together cocoa powder, almond flour, baking soda and salt. Add dry ingredients into sweet potato mixture and blend until uniform.

5. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake 40–45 minutes. Let cool completely before serving.

MAKES 32 BROWNIES

**TCP WEB EXTRA** We have more than 900 searchable recipes at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com), including a salad, casserole and stew that feature sweet potatoes. Just search for "sweet potatoes."

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

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## La Grange's Tribute

Monument Hill tomb honors Texans killed in two notable clashes

BY CHET GARNER

**WE CELEBRATE THE** Battle of San Jacinto as the grand finale of the Texas Revolution. In reality, the struggle was far from over in 1836. Mexico never officially ratified Gen. Antonio López de Santa Anna's treaty of surrender and made numerous attempts to retake Texas.

I tripped to the Central Texas town of La Grange to learn more about a group of men who gave their lives in the name of Texas sovereignty.

La Grange is a charming town with an impressive 19th-century courthouse and plenty of places to grab an authentic Czech kolach. I discovered the best views just south of the square, on a bluff overlooking the Colorado River. At this scenic spot sits the Monument Hill State Historic Site along with the ruins of the Kreische Brewery, one of the state's first commercial beer producers. I wasn't looking for a historic pint; I wanted to learn more about the stories that had intrigued me since childhood.

Just past the visitors center, I found an above-ground tomb and a 48-foot-tall shellstone obelisk engraved with the story of the men laid to rest here. Many were killed outside San Antonio in the 1842 Dawson Massacre, after Mexican forces had successfully retaken control of the city. Others were from the 1843 Mier expedition in Mexico. Known as the Black Bean episode, 176 captured Texans had to draw beans to determine their fates. Those who drew one of the 17 black beans immediately faced a firing squad.

In 1848 residents of La Grange exhumed the remains of the fallen men from both sites and reinterred them in a tomb on this bluff. Even Sam Houston attended the ceremony. I paused for a solemn moment. Looking out over the Texas landscape, I pondered the lives lost to claim Texas. ■

ABOVE Chet at the Kreische Brewery State Historic Site.

**TCP WEB EXTRA** Join Chet in his latest video, which takes in this site overlooking the Colorado River. See all his Texplorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.

## Know Before You Go

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

## SEPTEMBER 09

**Addison Vitruvian Nights Live:** Bidi Bidi Banda, (972) 590-8866, [udr.com/vitruvian-park/vitruvian-park-events](http://udr.com/vitruvian-park/vitruvian-park-events)

## 10

**Fredericksburg [10-12] Fall Planting Days Kick-Off,** 1-800-848-0078, [wildseedfarms.com](http://wildseedfarms.com)

## 11

**Conroe American Cancer Society Relay For Life/Bark For Life,** (936) 520-0718, [relayforlife.org/mocotx](http://relayforlife.org/mocotx)

**Luckenbach LuckenRod Car Show & Music Festival,** (830) 997-3224, [luckenbachtexas.com](http://luckenbachtexas.com)

**New Braunfels Gruene 10K/5K,** 1-877-806-3987, [athleteguild.com](http://athleteguild.com)

**New Braunfels Lady A: What A Song Can Do Tour 2021,** (830) 964-3800, [whitewaterrocks.com](http://whitewaterrocks.com)

**Gainesville [11-19] Gainesville Area Visual Arts Fall Art Exhibition,** (940) 613-6939, [gainesvilleareavisualarts.org](http://gainesvilleareavisualarts.org)

**Palestine [11, 17-18, 24-25] Texas State Railroad Diesel Roundtrip,** 1-855-632-7729, [texasstaterailroad.net](http://texasstaterailroad.net)

## 16

**New Braunfels Come and Taste It,** (830) 606-0093, [grapevineingruene.com](http://grapevineingruene.com)

**Grapevine [16-19] GrapeFest,** 1-800-457-6338, [grapevinetexasusa.com/grapefest](http://grapevinetexasusa.com/grapefest)

17

**Grandview [17-19] Antique Alley Texas**, (817) 666-5024, antiquealleytexas.com

**Amarillo [17-25] Tri-State Fair and Rodeo**, (806) 376-7767, tristatefair.com

18

**Bay City Jason Anderson Memorial Golf Tournament**, (979) 240-4575, jamgt.com

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

**Bullard Wine on Main**, (903) 894-4238, m6winery.com

**Flower Mound Christ Child Fiesta**, (972) 816-3862, christchildsfestdfw.org

**Ponder Labor Day Roping**, (940) 479-2043, dentoncountycowboychurch.org

**Huntsville [18-19] Antique Show**, (936) 661-2545, facebook.com/huntsvilleantiqueshow

**New Braunfels [18-19] Old Gruene Market Days**, (830) 832-1721, playinnewbraunfels.com

21

**Kerrville [21-25] Paint Kerrville**, (830) 895-2911, kacckerrville.com

24

**Brenham Aaron Barker and Allen Shamblin**, (979) 337-7240, thebarnhillcenter.com

**Austin [24-25] Capital of Texas Vintage Postcard & Paper Show and Sale**, (512) 775-6796, ctxpc.org

MORE EVENTS >

## TCP Submit Your Event

We pick events for the magazine directly from TexasCoopPower.com. Submit your event online for November by September 10, and it just might be featured in this calendar.

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## Hit the Road

### Event Calendar

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## Pick of the Month

### Leander Educational Excellence Foundation MUDstacle & Family Fun Run

Cedar Park, September 18  
 (512) 570-0027  
[leeflx.org/mudstacle](https://leeflx.org/mudstacle)

The name is a mouthful, and the event itself can be too if you're not careful. Participants pass through seven levels of a mud forest and a sea of swirly noodles and then walk the plank before reaching the finish line.

## SEPTEMBER EVENTS CONTINUED

24

**Galveston [24-25] Galveston Island Shrimp Festival**, (409) 770-0999, [galvestonislandshrimpfestival.com](https://galvestonislandshrimpfestival.com)

**Harper [24-25] Frontier Days Celebration**, (830) 864-5048, [harpercommunitypark.org](https://harpercommunitypark.org)

**Victoria [24-25] Memories in the Making Quilt Show**, (281) 506-8465, [quiltguildvictoria.org](https://quiltguildvictoria.org)

25

**Lakehills Medina Lake Cajun Festival**, (830) 460-0600, [cajunfestival-medinalake.com](https://cajunfestival-medinalake.com)

**Mason Old Yeller Day**, (325) 347-5758, [masontxcoc.com](https://masontxcoc.com)

**Paradise Main Street Festival**, (940) 389-2654, [paradisehistoricalsociety.org](https://paradisehistoricalsociety.org)

**Ingram [25-26] Texas Arts and Crafts Fair**, (830) 367-5121, [txartsandcraftsfair.com](https://txartsandcraftsfair.com)

26

**Rosanky St. Mary of the Assumption Homecoming Festival**, (512) 359-2448, [stmarysp.church](https://stmarysp.church)

30

**New Braunfels [30-Oct. 2] Hollydays Market**, (281) 788-4297, [homefortheholidaysgiftmarket.com](https://homefortheholidaysgiftmarket.com)

OCTOBER

01

**Arlington [1-3] Ramblin' Roads Music Festival**, (817) 303-2800, [ramblinroadsfest.com](https://ramblinroadsfest.com)

**Fredericksburg [1-3] Lone Star Gourd Festival**, (512) 964-5540, [texasgourdsociety.org](https://texasgourdsociety.org)

**Fredericksburg [1-3] Oktoberfest**, (830) 997-4810, [oktoberfestinfbg.com](https://oktoberfestinfbg.com)

**Georgetown [1-3] Popptoberfest**, 1-800-436-8696, [popptoberfest.georgetown.org](https://popptoberfest.georgetown.org)

**Kerrville [1-11] Kerrville Folk Festival**, (830) 257-3600, [kerrvillefolkfestival.org](https://kerrvillefolkfestival.org)

02

**Boerne Book and Arts Festival**, (830) 249-3053, [boernebookfest.com](https://boernebookfest.com)

**DeKalb Oktoberfest**, (903) 277-3519, [facebook.com/dekalb.oktoberfest](https://facebook.com/dekalb.oktoberfest)

**Kerrville Kerr County 4-H Wild Game Dinner**, (830) 257-6568, [kerr.agrilife.org](https://kerr.agrilife.org)

**Mason Mason County Republican Women's Home Tour**, (325) 294-4016, [masontxcoc.com](https://masontxcoc.com)

# Rust and Decay

Some say it's better to wear out than to rust out. But our readers see more than an old rust bucket. We're nowhere near the Rust Belt, but just look at these beauties, weathered by the elements and taken over by nature.

BY GRACE FULTZ

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT

BRITNEY CASTILLO  
CENTRAL TEXAS EC  
Overgrown.

BETTY ALVARADO  
COSERV

An old tractor near a city park in Round Rock.

KAY BELL  
NUECES EC

"This car lies where it died,  
and the desert is slowly  
reclaiming the rusting hulk."

RAY LITTLE  
KARNES EC  
Granddaddy's Jeep.



## Upcoming Contests

**DUE SEP 10** Fired Up!

**DUE OCT 10** Public Art

**DUE NOV 10** The Texas Experience

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

**TCP WEB EXTRA** See Focus on Texas on our website for more Rust and Decay photos from readers.





## Sowing Perspective

Getting outdoors grants long-awaited inner peace

BY BABS RODRIGUEZ  
ILLUSTRATION BY MITCH BLUNT

LIKE SO MANY Americans, as I've gotten older and with grown and flown children, I've found myself filling my time with more hours of my "day" job. When the pandemic had me stuck at home, I almost never left my desk. It was as if I came to believe that my industry—manacled nouns to verbs—was needed to keep the world ticking on.

Meanwhile, the backyard I worked so hard to tame when I first bought my house was manicured by a crew of strangers and less and less often enjoyed by loved ones. After winter's brutal last blast, I decided it was time to change all of that. I forced myself to put my phone down, turn off the cable news channel and wander outside.

I found the dandelion digger, es-chewed gardening gloves and, for two hours, stretched my back, legs and

arms pulling and twisting handfuls of weeds from the beds of drought-resistant natives. I was grateful for the gentle surrender the damp, soft soil afforded. I spoke to the pink buds of my Mexican buckeye and welcomed back the desert willow while whispering words of encouragement to the freeze-traumatized American beautyberry.

I did not curse the agave when it stabbed me, and I took the time to salute the bright yellow dandelion blossoms and profusion of purple buds on the henbit. I apologized that they had to go and acknowledged that in another world or age or garden, they might be the stars. Being assigned the status of weed seems subjective, after all. "Clover," I said, "the luck is not yours today." It offered up no four-leaf rebuttal.

And when my labor was done, I sat in my most seasoned lawn chair and listened to the birds. I tilted my head back and, with my eyes closed, I watched the patterns of clouds dart across my inner eyelids. I heard an ambulance siren in the distance and, without thinking, said the prayer the nuns taught me 50 years ago to say for those in need.

I took deep breaths and sat still for a long time, grateful that I have such a spot in which to gather myself. And I followed that mental garden path to plant seeds of gratitude for lessons learned in this past year, corners turned, memories recovered and priorities reorganized.

Now I am vowing to reap daily the harvest fruits of that day's labor, whether for 10 minutes or an hour of outdoor time on my creaky deck, watering my herbs, learning the names of the birds who visit. Sowing perspective has me harvesting an inner peace that had proved elusive while I labored so long without looking up. ■



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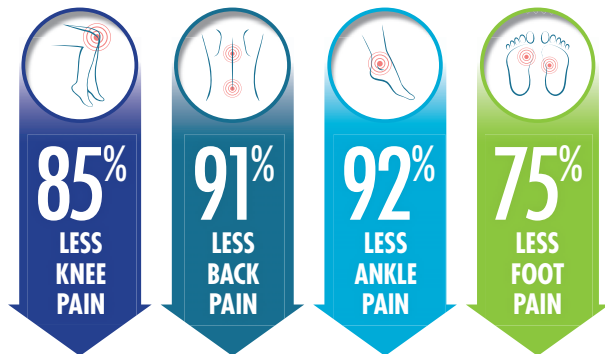


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# 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday, September 25 | SSGT. Willie de Leon Civic Center  
300 E. Main Street | Uvalde | 78801

## IN-PERSON SCHEDULE

Registration and breakfast begin at 9 a.m.

Meeting begins at 10 a.m. | Registration ends at 10:30 a.m.

*Must be present to win prizes.*

*Must be registered by 10:30 a.m. to be entered in grand prize drawing.*

## TO JOIN US VIRTUALLY:

If you want to join the meeting from the comfort of home, you can do so live via Zoom!

Register at [MedinaEC.org/AnnualMeeting2021](https://MedinaEC.org/AnnualMeeting2021). Once your membership information has been confirmed, you will receive a link to attend virtually. You must register by September 15.

## VIRTUAL MEETING

Meeting begins at 10 a.m. Must be online by 10:30 a.m. to be considered registered and entered to win prizes. Prizewinners will be drawn on October 1 and winners will be notified.

# Official Notice of Membership Meeting To All Members:

The Annual Membership Meeting of Medina Electric Cooperative, Inc., will be held at SSGT. Willie de Leon Civic Center in Uvalde on Saturday, September 25, at 10 a.m. to take action upon the following matters:

1. Introduce and hear reports of officers, directors and committees.
2. Election of Directors.
3. All other matters that may come before the meeting or any adjournment thereof.

## Aviso Oficial de la Junta Anual de la Membresia Para Todos Los Miembros:

La Junta Anual de la Membresia de la Cooperativa Medina Electric, Inc., se llevara acabo en SSGT. Willie de Leon Civic Center en Uvalde el sábado 25 de septiembre, a las 10 a.m. para tomar accion sobre los siguientes asuntos:

1. Introducir y oír los informes de oficiales, directores y comités.
2. Elección de directores.
3. Todas otros asuntos que se presenten antes o despues de la junta.

## Translation Services Available Upon Request

Let Medina EC know if you need an American Sign Language or Spanish translator during the 82nd Annual Membership Meeting on September 25. Call 1-866-MEC-ELEC (ext. 1008) before Friday, September 3, to request the service.

Este seguro dejar a Medina EC saber si usted necesita a un traductor de espanol durante la 82nd Junta Anual de Miembro el 25 de septiembre. Llame 1-866-MEC-ELEC (ext. 1008) antes de el viernes, 3 de septiembre para solicitar el servicio.

# 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Membership Meeting

**DO NOT MAIL THIS CARD.** If you are attending in person, bring this card with you to the meeting for registration and to be entered in the grand prize drawing. You must be present at the meeting or participate virtually to win prizes. If you mail this card to the cooperative, you will not be eligible for the drawing.

If you are attending the meeting virtually, don't forget to register at [MedinaEC.org/AnnualMeeting2021](https://MedinaEC.org/AnnualMeeting2021) by September 15. You will be entered in a separate prize drawing once you log in using your meeting link the morning of the meeting. You must log in by 10:30 a.m. to be entered in the prize drawing.



## Verify / Update Your Contact Information

Please fill in your contact information below. We will verify your account to be sure we have your most current information. Any other information on your account (such as address or name(s) shown on front label) needs to be changed by contacting one of our member services representatives at 1-866-632-3532.

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the number above a mobile? Yes No

Alternate Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Is the number above a mobile? Yes No

Check what you are interested in learning more about or seeing offered by the cooperative.

\_\_\_\_ Standby Generators

\_\_\_\_ ERCOT Notifications

\_\_\_\_ Electric Vehicles

\_\_\_\_ Online Account Access

\_\_\_\_ Residential Solar Generation

\_\_\_\_ Outage Text Messaging

Other: \_\_\_\_\_