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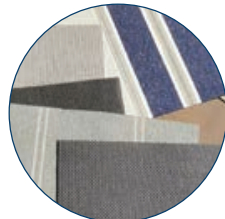
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April 2026



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Growing Tradition

Rio Grande Valley volunteers gather each fall to replant a thorn forest, seedling by seedling.

*By Eileen Mattei
Photos by Larry Ditto*

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Nineteen species of hummingbird call Texas home, and these West Texans can help you see many of them.

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ON THE COVER

A male ruby-throated hummingbird fuels up on a zinnia bloom.

Photo by Laurie Lawler

ABOVE

Reforestation volunteers gather at sunrise on a patch of federal land near the Rio Grande.

Photo by Larry Ditto



Lori and Gregg Belcher

“To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.”
—AUDREY HEPBURN

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

If I could use only one electronic device, it would be ...

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

Here are some of the responses to our February prompt: **The perfect Valentine's gift is ...**

The love shown by Cicero to Olla [*What Love Looks Like*, February 2026].

MARILYN WERKHEISER
BLUEBONNET EC
BASTROP

Giving from the heart and expecting nothing in return.

JIM DUNGAN
VIA FACEBOOK

To be thought of as special by someone.

KAT CROSS
HOUSTON COUNTY EC
CROCKETT

Spending time with the ones you love.

ANITA BURT
BIG COUNTRY EC
SNYDER

Having popcorn and Diet Dr Pepper with my husband of 68 years.

SANDRA LEA
BARTLETT EC
MILANO

Visit our website to see more responses.

Mutual Appreciation

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES TAKE time every April to recognize the heroes of the power lines on National Lineworker Appreciation Day—April 13 this year.

For one Central Texas lineworker, appreciation came last summer. Gregg Belcher lay in a Dallas hospital after an electrical injury in June 2025. The foreman at Hamilton County Electric Cooperative had suffered horrific burns on his back and chest and lost his left arm.

Co-workers and friends in Hico and Hamilton and at neighboring co-ops rallied to help with expenses, collecting \$93,000 at a benefit event in August and through other donations.

“We were just blown away by the love that people have shown us,” said Lori Belcher, his wife.

TCP Visit our website to read about Gregg Belcher's recovery.

TCP Contests and More

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST
Pancakes and Waffles

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS
Underwater Life

RECOMMENDED READING
This month's Pancakes and Waffles contest reminds us of *Breakfast in Texas*, our May 2015 feature story. Find it on our website.



ENTER ONLINE



FEBRUARY 2026

“Loved the pics of animals at the rehab center, especially the cross-eyed opossum [Giving a Hoot]. And the artwork by Pete Lloyd was beautiful [What Love Looks Like].”

SANDY KEOGH
PEDERNALES EC
CANYON LAKE



TIFFANY HOFELDT

Noble Deeds

Big thanks to Martha Deeringer and Tiffany Hofeldt for the informative and interesting article on wildlife rehabbers: such noble and generous volunteers [Giving a Hoot, February 2026].

Lee Turner
MidSouth EC
Montgomery

Setting the Record Straight

President Franklin D. Roosevelt did not sign an executive order integrating the armed forces [Currents, February 2026]. While he signed Executive Order 8802 in 1941 to prohibit racial discrimination in the defense industry, he upheld segregation within the military.

The desegregation of the armed forces was achieved later, by President Harry S. Truman via Executive Order 9981 on July 26, 1948.

Don F. Davison
Central Texas EC
Fredericksburg

Floored by Willie

In 1974 I was a young lieutenant in San Antonio. A friend suggested that we go out to John T. Floore’s Country Store because a guy named Willie Nelson was playing [Honky-Tonk Heaven, February 2026].

For three hours Willie and his band never left the stage. When the band would take a short break, they would just pass a bottle of whiskey around. I’ve been a Willie fan for over 50 years.

Joe Kreimborg
CoServ
Highland Village

Road Trip

My old high school boyfriend lived in an old Army house on Fort McIntosh back in the 1960s, and I also took a couple of classes at Laredo Junior College one summer [From Posts to Pillars, February 2026].

An interesting trip would be to visit each of those old Rio Grande forts.

Sheri Sweet
Bluebonnet EC and Central Texas EC
Lexington and Fredericksburg



PETE LLOYD

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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

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

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FAST and *CURIOUS*



HUMMINGBIRDS THIS SPREAD: LAURIE LAWLER

ABOVE An interaction between ruby-throated hummingbirds.

LEFT A male Allen's hummingbird at rest.

OPPOSITE, FROM TOP A male ruby-throated hummingbird. Since the 1990s, Dan and Cathy Brown have been guardians of a thriving hummingbird habitat near Christoval in West Texas.

Nineteen species of hummingbird call Texas home, and these West Texans can help you see many of them

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

Thousands of black-chinned hummingbirds nest during the summer among the live oak and pecan trees on Dan Brown's family ranch near Christoval in West Texas. And for nearly six decades, Brown has helped feed the tiny birds. Well into his 90s, his hearing has dulled but not his eyesight nor his energy.

One afternoon last June, Dan and his wife, Cathy, take a break from chores and relax in folding chairs in their observation room, an air-conditioned spot for watching the birds zip around sugar water feeders hung beneath roof eaves.

Beyond the room's huge plate-glass windows, a wild bird community is on full display. A painted bunting ruffles his wet feathers on a tiered water feature surrounded by flowering native plants. Black-crested titmice and northern cardinals snatch sunflower seeds and white millet from ball-shaped feeders. From an iron skillet nailed to a live oak, a golden-fronted woodpecker swoops in for a mouthful of suet, then flies off to feed his nestlings.

"This has become more than a hobby," muses Dan, focusing his blue eyes on the various birds. "Here it's developed into an enterprise. I couldn't do it without Cathy."

The couple call their business the Hummer House, a wooded wildlife habitat just east of the South Concho River that includes three rentable guest cottages. Since 1996, visitors from across the country and around the world have come to witness the aerial antics.

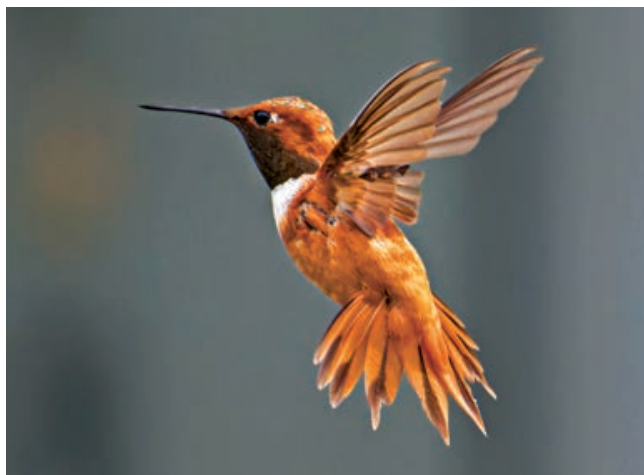
Altogether, the Browns put out 25 gigantic feeders that each hold 48 or 80 ounces of sugar water. Since one 48-ounce feeder lasts only 24 hours, keeping them filled is a daily job.

Production of the hummingbird fuel starts in a storage room, where Dan measures and pours sugar into 1-gallon plastic jugs, then sets them on shelves. As needed, the jugs are carried via golf cart to the observation room. At a sink, Cathy fills the jugs with water and shakes them well. Then she scours empty feeders with a long-handled brush and refills them with fresh sugar water.

In the 1990s, Dan bought sugar in annual amounts that ranged from 390 to 685 pounds. "Now we average about 1,500 pounds of pure cane sugar each year," Cathy says.



TIFFANY HOFELDT



HUMMINGBIRDS: LAURIE LAWLER

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT A male Anna's hummingbird, with its iridescent pink-red throat; male rufous hummingbird; and male broad-billed hummingbird, with its black-tipped, long red bill.

OPPOSITE, FROM TOP A female ruby-throated hummingbird feeds at a red salvia plant. The Browns found this hummingbird nest, built from plant fibers, lichen and spider silk, on their property.

"We're a very large nesting site for black-chinned hummingbirds. Within a quarter-mile radius, we estimate that there are probably about 3,000 hummingbirds."

But they're not just here for the sugar water. "Hummingbirds are insectivores," Cathy explains. "We have thousands of native pecan trees that have aphids. Aphids are like T-bone steaks to hummingbirds. They're very high in protein and very sweet. You could take down every one of these feeders, and we'd still have hummingbirds."

Fueling Fighter Jets

The next time a hummingbird streaks past, imagine you've been buzzed by a miniature fighter jet. That's how fast nature's smallest bird can fly relative to its size. In flight, a hummingbird beats its wings in a figure eight up to 40 times or more per second. This rapid motion enables it to spin, hover, and fly backward and upside down at speeds of 30 mph or more.

To fuel such a high metabolism, a hummingbird, which can weigh 2–20 grams, slurps up nectar that's at least double its weight every day. One fill-up lasts 20 minutes, then it's off to find more flowers and insects or return to a feeder—dining territory that a hummer will fiercely defend, even remembering which blooms it has already drained (and pollinated).

At night, a hummer may go into torpor to stave off starvation. During this deep sleep, its heart slows from 1,200 beats a minute down to 50.

Nineteen hummingbird species have been recorded across Texas. In summer breeding months, the two most common species are black-chinned hummers in West Texas and ruby-throated hummingbirds in East Texas. Depending on the species, hummingbirds can breed as far away as Alaska and Canada and migrate as far south as Central America.



Since 2010, federally licensed bird bander Charles Floyd and other permitted volunteers have banded more than 10,000 hummingbirds at the Hummer House. Based on his research, about 95% of all the black-chinned hummers there are returning females from prior years.

"It wouldn't make a difference if the Browns hung a thousand feeders," says Floyd, a retired school principal who lives nearby. "What matters most is that the Browns are preserving the trees, the understory and the natural habitat."

Floyd and his banding partner—master bander and retired biologist Kelly Bryan of Rockport—collect banding data for West Texas Avian Research, a nonprofit they founded in 2011 to support bird banding research and bird conservation in West Texas.

"Banding has led me to understand the life cycle and migratory habits of hummingbirds," Floyd says. "Their established pattern of habits and movements has continued for centuries. Certain factors, such as the widespread introduction of feeders, have made some changes in that behavior. But overall patterns have remained the same."

So far, Floyd has banded 162 bird species at the Hummer

House, including half of Texas' hummingbird species. Many are banded Saturday mornings April through July at the ranch. That's when the Browns welcome visitors free of charge to watch Floyd and his wife, Nancy, band hummers and other species. Children and overnight guests are often allowed to release birds after they've been banded.

Travel Plans

At the Hummer House, male black-chinned hummingbirds arrive first in mid-March and stake out their breeding territories. By April, females show up and begin gathering unbleached cotton the Browns put out for nest building. "They keep pulling it through mid-July," Cathy says. "That's a good indication that they breed twice."

Males woo mates by performing dramatic aerial dives and buzzing their tails. They also flash their iridescent gorget, the colorful throat patch that sets males apart.

Female hummers—drably feathered for camouflage—build nests and tend the young with no help from mates. Their tiny nests are made of plant materials and held together with spiderwebs. Mothers usually lay two white eggs smaller than jelly beans and feed their hatchlings regurgitated insects and nectar.

By late June and into July, males start leaving. "They've proven through banding that they may go out west or to the Hill Country," Cathy says. "They take their time migrating back to southern Mexico for the winter. During that time, we may see male hummingbirds from farther north."

From the second week in May through the end of June, "we have a constant population of hummers," Cathy continues. "But after that, a lot of males have started to migrate. Then ruby-throated males come through. The last to leave are black-chinned females and their young ones. Our population is ever evolving."

In late August, more ruby-throated hummingbirds than black-chinneds show up. "We're on the western edge of ruby-throated migration, so we see a lot of those," Cathy says. "During fall migration, you'll see the biggest variety here, like Allen's and rufous, but not in great numbers."

The Browns get up from their chairs in the observation room and head off to refill sugar water feeders. "It's like having a dairy farm," Cathy says. "You make the circles in the morning and fill what's empty. Then in the evening, you do it all again."

Dan smiles. "If you love to work," he says, "this is the place to fall in love with." ■

TCP Watch the video on our website and get to know Dan and Cathy Brown and the hummingbirds they love.



LAURIE LAWLER

LURING LONG BEAKS

Hummer-friendly gardens provide a variety of nectar sources to meet the birds' high energy needs. They're drawn to red tubular flowers, such as salvias and honeysuckles. The trumpet shape accommodates their long bills and forked tongues. Once they discover nectar sources, hummers will also feed on other shapes, sizes and colors of flowers. Try these Texas natives:

- Autumn sage (salvia)
- Trumpet creeper
- Coral honeysuckle
- Turk's cap
- Flame acanthus



TIFFANY HOFELDT

Valley volunteers gather each fall to replant a thorn forest, seedling by seedling

Growing Tradition

BY EILEEN MATTEI • PHOTOS BY LARRY DITTO

David Alvarado remembers digging holes alongside other volunteers near the Rio Grande when he was in high school, almost 20 years ago. Nowadays he has lots of little helpers.

“I wanted to share this with my family,” says the San Juan resident, plunging his shovel into the earth again—this time with the help of his 14-year-old son, Jeremiah. His daughter, Adalee, 3, uses a trowel and her hands to pat soil around freshly planted seedlings that his wife, Berenize, places in the ground and backfills.



The Alvarados are among some 1,800 volunteers on this October morning who traveled to this 9-acre patch of federal land south of the rusty-red slats of the border wall and less than a mile north of the Rio Grande. They’re here with a lofty goal: plant 10,000 native seedlings.

The 2025 gathering marked the 31st year volunteers have come out to revegetate a piece of the Lower Rio Grande Valley on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service land. The Tamaulipan thorn forest once covered 1 million acres along the Rio Grande, but just 10% of it remains intact today.

Green Goals

By reintroducing native seedlings like Texas ebony, wild olive, fiddlewood and snake-eyes to former farm fields, the Rio Reforestation project aims to restore the thorn forest. The plants attract bugs, which bring birds, rabbits, snakes, bobcats, tortoises and javelinas. Extending the wildlife corridor allows plant and animal populations to thrive and avoid genetic isolation.

“Rio Reforestation is the biggest community planting event in the U.S. Nothing else comes close,” says Jon Dale, a senior director for American Forests. The nonprofit collects seeds and grows native plants for the USFWS at Marinoff Nursery in Alamo.

“In the last 30 years, we have restored 18,500 acres of USFWS-owned farmland by planting over 10 million native thornscrub seedlings,” says Imer de la Garza, a USFWS project leader.

Over those years, they discovered best practices that increase seedlings’ chance of survival, now around 90%. One factor is high-density planting: 10,000 plants on 9 acres works out to more than 1,000 per acre.

The native seedlings are drought- and heat-tolerant as well as freeze-, flood- and fire-resistant. Reforestation goes beyond canopy trees like mesquite and Texas persimmon to include understory plants such as allthorn, cenizo and coyotillo, plus ground covers like heliotrope and frogfruit.

LEFT After a selfie, volunteers will get the waiting plants into the ground.

OPPOSITE Three-year-old Adalee Alvarado does her part as a Rio Reforestation volunteer. She says she had a great time “playing with dirt.”





It takes a year of preparation to put crates jammed with an assortment of 35 native species into the field with an army of volunteers. Seeds are collected from the wild and Marinoff's orchard year-round, with ripe seeds intercepted before the wind or animals carry them off.

Many seeds require finicky processing techniques for successful germination. For example, wolfberry fruit must be squeezed to disgorge the seeds. Texas persimmon fruits are rolled on hardware cloth to release their large seeds. Hard ebony seeds are abraded with sandpaper.

“In the last 30 years, we have restored 18,500 acres of USFWS-owned farmland by planting over 10 million native thornscrub seedlings.”

Marinoff staff fills biodegradable plant bands with a mixture of vermiculite, local soil, fertilizer and a seed in the spring. Through the summer the plants sit on grow-out benches under shade cloth. Rio Reforestation's fall planting gives seedlings months to establish strong root systems before the next summer's heat.

The nursery contracts with private growers to help it supply this project and the other 185,000 native seedlings USFWS needs to revegetate about 200 acres annually.

From Field to Forest

Last year the 9 acres of the Milagro tract produced a crop of organic cabbage for Rio Fresh, a third-generation produce grower and packer. Before the Reforestation volunteers arrive, a tractor has plowed the soil into east-west rows. A dense thicket of 100-year-old mesquites, ebony trees and understory bushes borders the tract to the west and north.



OPPOSITE, FROM TOP The planting crews use 6-foot ropes to ensure adequate spacing between seedlings. A manzanita fruit is collected at Marinoff Nursery in Alamo, where seeds are prepared for planting.

RIGHT A volunteer plants a Texas ebony seedling.

Volunteers sign in near a banner that reads, “Let’s Restore the Thornforest Together.” It outlines the work ahead: Get your shovel. Go to one of the 200 rows where a leader awaits. Pick up a blue crate. Use a 6-foot rope to measure the distance between seedling holes. Dig a hole as deep as the top of the plant band. Put it in and backfill.

Small groups of family or friends work eastward down each row. Some organize a division of labor: the leads measuring the spacing and wielding shovels or post-hole diggers. Then come the planters with a crate of seedlings. In other rows, two or three dig, then plant and then measure to the next site. Dragonflies flit past while a turkey vulture tilts overhead.

Wearing hats and leather gloves, Mitchell, Michelle, Lindsey and Joaquin Sternberg of Mission show they know about getting down and dirty. “It’s different every year—the people, the location, the weather,” says Mitchell, who has been participating since the 1990s.

School buses of elementary, middle and high school students arrive. Idea Los Encinos of McAllen sends three buses of students. Another school sends nearly 200 students.

Berta Palacios of Pharr oversees 20 Hidalgo County 4-H kids participating as a community service project. She spies high-spirited fifth graders larking and asks them, “Is that safe, the way you’re holding that shovel?”

Low humidity and a constant breeze temper the 85-degree air, which is filled with happy chatter. “It’s really fun, something to do on the weekend with friends. We all like doing it,” says Jennavie Juarez, one of 15 from the Weslaco High School National Honor Society here for their third year.

Girl Scout Troop 269 from La Feria has returned as well. “The girls enjoy it,” says Krystal Cruz, a scout leader and parent of a volunteer. “This is something we hope to continue every year.”

Maria Ortega and her three young children tackle a row themselves. “This is the very first time we have planted anything,” she says. Near them Victor Ostolaza Jr. is digging holes with his father while his wife, Cynthia, and daughter Kiara follow with the seedlings. He explains that Kiara’s school involvement brought them out. “We participated before because of her.”

Row leader Chad Wilmoth, a retired Rio Hondo science teacher and member of Magic Valley Electric Cooperative, grew some of the seedlings Marinoff distributes. Row leaders know not to fuss if seedlings are not planted at the exact spacing or depth. Volunteers familiar with the event under-



stand that engaging and energizing the community is an important part of the work.

A young boy jumps on a shovel his mom holds steady, upright. A teen girl empties her water bottle onto a newly planted Western soapberry. After completing their rows, 23 kids in the Green Club of Idea Mission lean on their shovels, listening to Tejano music from a small speaker.

“It’s controlled chaos,” Dale says as the event winds down. “Survival could be 100% this time since the tract is surrounded by agriculture and its moisture. Tight proximity results in a more diverse habitat.”

Set Up for Success

Dropped gloves and empty crates litter the field as volunteers head home after picking up a boxed lunch. If they want, workers can take home a pot of chile pequin, crucita or Mexican hat. After all, they now know how to plant them.

Soon after Rio Reforestation, contractors insert a 3-foot-tall durable tree tube around each plant. Besides thwarting plant nibblers, morning moisture collects on the tubes and trickles down to the seedlings. That’s the only moisture the young plants get besides rain.

Over time, wild seedlings will pop up under the taller trees, taking advantage of the shade and moisture. Insects, birds and other creatures will spread out into restored habitat. ■



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CEO

HERBERT "TREY"
GREBE III

Linemen Power Life—Whatever It Takes

AS CEO OF MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, I have the unique privilege of seeing firsthand what it truly takes to keep the lights on for our members. In April, we take time to pause and recognize the brave men and women who make that possible every single day—our lineworkers.

When storms impact our communities and outages occur, many people experience the inconvenience, but our lineworkers see a call to action. Our crews are always ready when it matters most—leaving family dinners, working through the night and heading into challenging conditions to restore power as safely and quickly as possible. That readiness is not accidental. It comes from rigorous training, deep experience and a shared commitment to serving others.

Electric cooperatives like Medina EC were built on the principle of neighbors helping neighbors, and our lineworkers embody that spirit every day. They are the first to respond and the last to leave, often working long hours behind the scenes. At times, serving our neighbors means going beyond our own service territory through a process known as mutual aid. During major outage events, Medina EC crews stand ready to assist neighboring co-ops—sometimes close to home, and sometimes across state lines—to help restore power. This spirit of mutual aid strengthens all cooperatives and ultimately benefits the members we serve.

We understand any time the lights go out can be frustrating, bringing everyday life to a halt. We are incredibly grateful to our members for your

patience and encouragement during these times. Linework is demanding, physical and at times, it can be dangerous. Our crews approach each job with a focus on safety and teamwork. They take pride in their craft and in the trust our members place in them.

On April 13 we celebrate Lineman Appreciation Day, but one day is hardly enough. Every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and dedication, which are the backbone of our cooperative.

To our lineworkers: thank you for your hard work, your readiness and your commitment to the communities we serve. We are proud to stand behind you and grateful for all that you do.

Until next time,
Trey Grebe



What makes lineworkers especially remarkable is that they aren't just restoring power to a system—they're restoring power to their own communities. They live here. They raise their families here. They understand that electricity is more than a convenience; it's essential to daily life, to local businesses, to schools, farms and emergency services. Powering the places we call home is personal to lineworkers.



Bruni and Laredo Linemen

From left: Josh Perez (13 years), Justin Cortez (7 years), Joseph Perez (<1 year), Javi Ruiz (1 year), David Perez (4 years), Ben Soto (5 years), Trey Guerra (6 years), Elias Tobias (14 years), Albert Vela (21 years) and Felipe Moreno (10 years).



Dilley Linemen

From left: Cat Aranda (<1 year), Jonathan Garza (1 year), Rene Alvarez (2 years), Javy Sanchez (1 year), Edward Varnador (30 years), Tony Banda (11 years), Gerald Trevino (<1 year), David Hernandez (8 years), Marcus Cortez (9 years), Joselito Morales (7 years), Martin Gonzales (11 years) and Joe Stone (8 years).



Hondo and Devine Linemen

From left: Cristian Escobar (2 years), Kaden Keller (<1 year), Jacob Barron (1 year), Justin Lopez (3 years), Jay Rodriguez (3 years), Wesley Menges (3 years), Michael Cardoza (3 years), Tony Benavidez (2 years), Mario Molina (13 years), Justin Moncada (2 years), Raymond Schawe (23 years) and Silver Elizondo (2 years).
Not pictured: Ace Gaucin (40 years), Reynold Muñoz (6 years), Scott Schulte (32 years) and Gus De Hoyos (3 years).



Rio Grande City Linemen

From left: Jose Olivarez (4 years), Jerry Lopez (4 years), Eric Hinojosa (11 years), John Rodriguez (14 years), Victor Garcia (2 years), Luis Gutierrez (4 years), Wicho Garcia (4 years), Jorge Zapata (18 years), Johnny Rosa (7 years), and Anniel Lopez (<1 year).



Uvalde Linemen

From left: Johnny Garza (6 years), Jason Gomez (17 years), Philip Carleton (<1 year), Jim Aviles (2 years), Eddie Lopez (3 years), Marcus De La Cruz (5 years), Ben Garcia (14 years), Seb Suarez (34 years) and Sapo Guzman (14 years).

Management Personnel (not pictured): Mando Castillo (21 years), Norby Salazar (32 years) and Leonard Geyer (31 years).



DMITRY I DOBESTOCK

Operate Your Generator Safely

THE PRIMARY HAZARDS to avoid when using a generator are carbon monoxide poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust, electric shock or electrocution, and fire. Here are some tips for safely using a portable generator.

- ▶ Always thoroughly read and follow the directions supplied with the generator. Also understand the requirements for generator installations by your utility.
- ▶ Never try to power the house by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. Known as “backfeeding,” this practice puts utility workers, your neighbors and your household at risk of electrocution.
- ▶ To avoid electrocution, keep the generator dry and do not use in rainy or wet conditions. Operate it on a dry surface, and do not touch the generator with wet hands.
- ▶ Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Make sure it’s at least 20 feet away from your garage, doors, windows and vents. The carbon monoxide generated is deadly.
- ▶ Be sure to turn the generator off and let it cool before refueling. Gasoline spilled on hot engine parts could ignite.
- ▶ Store fuel for the generator in an approved safety can and outside of living areas in a locked shed or other protected area. Use the type of fuel recommended in the instructions or on the label on the generator.
- ▶ Plug appliances directly into the generator, or use a heavy duty, outdoor-rated extension cord that is rated (in watts or amps) at least equal to the sum of the connected appliance loads. Check that the entire cord is free of cuts or tears and that the plug has all three prongs, especially a grounding pin.
- ▶ Remember, even a properly connected portable generator can become overloaded, resulting in overheating or generator failure. Be sure to read the instructions.
- ▶ If necessary, stagger the operating times for various equipment to prevent overloads.

Learn more to ensure proper generator installation per Medina EC guidelines and options to purchase a generator at [MedinaEC.org/Generator](https://www.MedinaEC.org/Generator).

Medina Electric Cooperative



CONTACT US

Toll-Free 1-866-632-3532

Email Info@MedinaEC.org

Web [MedinaEC.org](https://www.MedinaEC.org) - Chat Feature Available

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Trey Grebe, 1-866-632-3532, ext. 1046

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Option 2: Report an outage

Option 3: Pay bill, get account balance

Option 5: Speak to a representative

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Dilley 1718 W. FM 117, Dilley 78017

Hondo 237 Highway 173 N., Hondo 78861

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

Uvalde 2604 Highway 90 E., Uvalde 78801

Corporate Office 2308 18th St., Hondo 78861

VISIT US ONLINE

[MedinaEC.org](https://www.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 1-866-632-3532 o visitando una de nuestras oficinas.

IMAGEFLOW / ADOBESTOCK



Have Your Say as a Co-op Member

Support your co-op by knowing the issues and getting involved

AT MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, we believe in the power of our members' voices. Your participation in making your voice heard is essential to ensuring our community's needs are met and carried out by state and federal legislators. When you speak up, you help shape energy policies that directly impact our community's access to safe, reliable and affordable energy.

Here are a few ways you, as a Medina EC member, can make your voice heard:



Rural Friends of Electric Cooperatives focuses on the representatives of and in the state of Texas. Founded in 1976, Rural Friends supports candidates who will speak for and protect the interests of electric cooperatives and our consumer-members.



Scan this code or visit texas-ec.org/about/coop-advocacy to make a donation.



Voices for Cooperative Power is a grassroots network of co-op members that was created to help elected officials better understand the many ways your electric co-op supports you and your community. By joining the VCP movement, you can receive updates on the issues that matter most and, when needed, information on how to contact your elected officials to voice your opinions.



Scan this code or visit VoicesforCooperativePower.com to get involved.



**SAFETY IS IN YOUR HANDS.
EVERY DIG. EVERY TIME.**

Call 8-1-1 Before You Dig

IF YOU'RE GETTING READY to knock out spring projects, be sure you are prepared to do so safely. If your outdoor projects require any digging, be cautious of underground utility lines. Underground lines may include electric, oil and gas, telecom, water, and sewer lines. Unsafe digging can be dangerous and cause damage.

Follow these steps for safe digging:

1. Notify 8-1-1 at least two to three days before your work begins.
2. Wait for the locator to visit your property and to mark any found underground lines.
3. Confirm that all affected utilities have responded.
4. Dig carefully, avoiding the marked areas.

You can call 8-1-1 or visit Texas811.org to submit a locate request.



SHOWCAKE | ADOBESTOCK

Save on Emergency Preparation Supplies

Texas Sales Tax Holiday

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for the Emergency Preparation Supplies Sales Tax Holiday, April 25–27. Texas shoppers wanting a break on emergency supplies can buy certain preparation supplies in stores, online or by phone, mail, custom order—or any other means—tax-free, when: The item is both delivered and paid for during the exemption period, or you order and pay for the item and the seller accepts the order during the exemption period for immediate shipment, even if delivery is made after the exemption period ends. If you pay sales tax on qualifying items during the sales tax holiday, you can ask the seller for a refund of the tax paid or a refund form to send directly to the Texas comptroller’s office.

Qualifying Products

- Portable generators (less than \$3,000)
- Emergency ladders (less than \$300)
- Axes and hatchets
- Batteries, single or multipack
- Nonelectric can openers
- Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors
- Coolers, ice chests and ice products
- Fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and first aid kits
- Portable, self-powered light sources—candles, flashlights and lanterns
- Radios and mobile telephone batteries and chargers

Nonqualifying Products

- Extension ladders and stepladders
- Cleaning supplies and gloves
- Toilet paper
- Camping supplies and stoves
- Chain saws
- Plywood
- Batteries for motorized vehicles

Learn more at Comptroller.Texas.gov.

Assign a Voter Designee for Your Organization

IF YOUR MEDINA ELECTRIC

Cooperative membership is in the name of an entity instead of an individual, you should have a voter designee on file. The voter designee is the person authorized to vote on behalf of the entity, per Section 3.10 of Medina EC’s bylaws. The entity must have a completed Voter Designation Form on file and it must be signed by the owner of the entity. Voter designees will need to be on file by the record date approved by the board of directors when an election takes place.

If you have made any changes to your entity, or you just want to update the voter designee on your account, complete the form at MedinaEC.org/Designee or contact us to get a form.

Contact us at:
1-866-632-3532
OR
Info@MedinaEC.org



TINYAKOV | ADOBESTOCK

Reminder: Rate Adjustment Effective April 1

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE wants to remind members of the rate adjustment effective April 1.

After holding our customer charge steady for nine years, this adjustment is necessary to cover the rising costs of materials like poles and transformers, as well as essential grid modernization. As a not-for-profit co-op, our goal remains providing safe, reliable power at the lowest possible cost.

What to Expect:

Members in the general service, seasonal, and small commercial rate classes will see a \$3 increase per meter to their monthly customer charge. The minimum monthly bill amount will also increase \$3.

Customer Charge:

- Single phase: Customer charge increases from \$29 to \$32.
- Three phase: Customer charge increases from \$39 to \$42.

Minimum Monthly Bill:

- Single phase: Minimum bill increases from \$35 to \$38.
- Three phase: Minimum bill increases from \$45 to \$48.

These flat fees cover the fixed costs of maintaining the infrastructure that brings power to your meter, regardless of how much energy is used.

For more information about the rate adjustment, please visit MedinaEC.org/RateChange2026.



Do Not Tamper with Your Electric Meter

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE would like to remind our members that meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and will result in additional fees.

Never break a meter seal.

Never open a meter base.

Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.

For safety reasons, only Medina EC personnel are permitted to remove meters from a meter socket. This includes situations where the meter needs to be removed, even if there is a licensed electrician present and even for temporary work to be done. These instances must be scheduled ahead of time with the cooperative.

If Medina EC finds evidence of meter tampering at a location or receives notice a meter was removed from a socket, it will result in a trip fee of \$125-\$175 and a \$500 tampering fee.

Medina EC Celebrates Administrative Professionals Day

IN HONOR OF National Administrative Professionals Day on April 22, Medina Electric Cooperative would like to recognize our administrative team, Brittany Meyers and Savannah Persyn.

From coordinating both our volunteer time off and lineman testing programs, to booking all

Medina EC-related trainings and travel, facilitating meals, helping with administrative tasks, and so much more, these two ladies are valuable members of Medina EC's staff.

Meyers has been with the cooperative since 2019, and Persyn joined the co-op in 2024.



Brittany Meyers
Administrative Clerk



Savannah Persyn
Administrative Specialist



SANYA KUSHAK | ISTOCK.COM

Tornado Season Spins In

PREPARATION FOR VIOLENT and unpredictable storms, including tornadoes, can be a matter of survival in Texas.

Tornado season is generally in the spring, with spinning storms more prevalent from April through July—and May and June being the peak months. But tornadoes can form any time of the year and occur in every state in the country.

Be Prepared

One of the most alarming aspects of tornadoes is their unpredictability. There's no formula to predict whose home a tornado will miss and whose it will hit. Your best defense is to be alert and prepared—and the time to begin preparing is now.

- ▶ Pay attention to local weather reports. You can get reliable information from broadcasts on a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio and via free alerts provided by apps on your phone or other devices. Make sure you have a fully charged portable charger for your cellphone in case the power goes out.

- ▶ Develop a family emergency plan. Ensure everyone in the family knows where to go in case a tornado warning is issued while they're in the house, at school or work, or on the road.

- ▶ Assemble a family emergency supply kit. Make certain everything you need is in one specific, easy-to-access location. Perishable items should be changed or replaced as needed. More information on making a kit can be found at fema.gov.

- ▶ During any emergency, pay attention to the instructions issued by local emergency management officials. Take time before bad weather hits to learn about emergency plans.

Stay Alert Afterward

In the aftermath of a tornado, potential hazards must be considered during response and recovery efforts. Keep yourself and your family members alert with these general precautions.

- ▶ Continue to monitor local radio or TV stations for emergency information and the potential of additional storms.

- ▶ Be aware of possible structural, electrical or gas leak hazards in and around recovery sites. If you see these hazards, report them to the proper authorities and utilities.

- ▶ Do not touch downed power lines or objects that are in contact with downed power lines.

- ▶ Wear proper clothing, including boots and gloves, when walking on or near debris.

- ▶ Be careful around sharp objects, including nails and broken glass.

- ▶ Use proper safety precautions when operating generators, chain

saws or other power tools. Generators must only be used outside, well away from windows and doors.

- ▶ Take steps to prevent heat illnesses and dehydration in yourself and others.

Resources

The following websites and apps can help you stay informed, connected and prepared before, during and after a tornado.

- ▶ **National Weather Service:** nssl.noaa.gov/education/svrwx101/tornadoes

- ▶ **FEMA:** Ready.gov/Tornadoes

- ▶ **American Red Cross:** RedCross.org/Prepare/Disaster/Tornado or download the ARC's apps:

- ▶ **Emergency: Severe Weather app** offers step-by-step instructions on how to prepare for and recover from a tornado (and other weather emergencies). It provides live tornado warnings and a map, and an "I'm Safe" button for those affected by recent tornadoes to notify family and friends.

- ▶ **First Aid app** offers safety tips specifically for bad weather and natural disasters, including tornadoes. All information is downloaded within the app so an internet connection is not required, and a 911 integration feature allows emergency phone calls to be made directly from the app.



Improving Reliability Through System Updates

MEDINA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS ALWAYS WORKING to enhance both reliability and safety. To achieve this, here are a few projects we're investing in to optimize operations and reinforce our infrastructure.

SCADA Updates

This year, we'll continue the deployment of our state-of-the-art supervisory control and data acquisition system. This will improve our operations by enabling faster fault detection, contribute to quicker restoration times and provide advanced analytics to proactively identify potential issues. Additionally, by allowing remote control of circuit breakers and other equipment, we'll enhance safety for our linemen, first responders and the public, as well as improve overall system reliability. This multiyear project benefits our members with a more robust and local electric system.

Circuit Plan

Medina EC crews are patrolling our power line rights-of-way, sometimes on foot, to help identify and fix any potential problems that may lead to large power outages. This is being done in conjunction with the inspection of 20,000 poles, the replacement of 1,100 poles this year and our ongoing vegetation management program.

Equipment Upgrades

Medina EC is working to improve our infrastructure to ensure reliable electric service through upgrading our equipment to handle electric load. This is being done in an effort to accommodate projected growth in our service area. These conversions do cause temporary outages for our members but are done to prevent potentially large outages in the future. For this type of project, members are notified prior to planned outages.

Partnerships

Medina EC works closely with our generation and transmission provider—South Texas Electric Cooperative—to identify areas of improvement that can be addressed together. Projects include installing more lightning arresters, transmission switching stations and updating line design standards.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Easter

Sunday, April 5

National Linemen Appreciation Day

Monday, April 13

Earth Day

Wednesday, April 22

Administrative Professionals' Day

Wednesday, April 22



WIRAKOM | ADOBESTOCK

OPERATION ROUND UP

If you or someone you know needs financial assistance, apply for an ORU donation. Applicants must live in one of the 17 counties served by Medina EC.

Applications due May 1.
[MedinaEC.org/ORU](https://www.MedinaEC.org/ORU)



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Painting by Numbers

His countless big ideas brought dazzling color to hills and highways

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY JASON RAISH

WE WERE SITTING in John R. Thomas' big pickup overlooking about 60 acres of bluebonnets in bloom when he said something I'll always remember. "If we could get a good rain in the next day or two," he said, "it would be a million-dollar rain."

I asked Thomas just how a rain could be worth \$1 million. He said, "It'll push those bluebonnets up another few inches and double their seed yield."

Thomas owns Wildseed Farms, southeast of Fredericksburg in the Hill Country. He doesn't grow those enormous plots of petals just for their photographic beauty. He grows them for the seeds—bluebonnet, Indian blanket, Texas paintbrush and dozens of other native varieties.

The seeds are harvested with processes he pioneered and machines he invented. They're bagged and sold in his big country store along U.S. Highway 290 then shipped to customers around the world.

Thomas grew up on a ranch near Eagle Lake, west of Houston, where he learned early that the land could break your back and your heart in the same season. He studied business at Sam Houston State University before coming home to start a grass-seeding company that restored eroded land along highways.

People began asking him for wildflower seed—especially bluebonnets—but there was no dependable source. That was all the spark he needed.

In 1981, Thomas began experimenting.

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



He bought land, studied soil types and planted test plots. He tinkered endlessly, building equipment that didn't exist and modifying machinery that did. He risked much and slept little. When something failed, he tried again.

He eventually had a gorgeous field of bluebonnets every spring, and he noticed people stopped in droves to photograph them. His entrepreneurial side said, "These folks need a place to get out of the sun and have a Coke and enjoy the view." He created such a place for them.

Over the next decade, Wildseed Farms blossomed—literally and figuratively. In 1993, he moved his operation to Fredericksburg, building what would become the largest working wildflower farm in the U.S.

Visitors who come in March or April see fields so bright they seem backlit by divine intervention. People stroll among the blooms, sip a little Hill Country wine and buy packets of seeds to take a piece of Texas home with them.

Thomas designed the J-Thom 42 Wild-seeder, a contraption that can sow a dozen species or more at once without damaging delicate seeds. He built a vacuum harvester that collects seeds by suction instead of by force, which preserves their fragile husks. Those inventions made large-scale wildflower farming possible.

Today, more than 20 states use Thomas' seeds to color their highways each spring. And Wildseed, which now fills hundreds of Hill Country acres, also grows grapes and sells its own wine.

But for all his business acumen, Thomas remains a farmer at heart. His face still turns upward when he hears thunder. As we sat in his pickup that spring afternoon, he squinted toward the horizon and said, "There's a cloud building out west. Maybe it'll come this way." ■

Five-Ingredient Dinners

Five stars for dishes that minimize ingredients and maximize flavor

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

After a long day of editing recipes, there's nothing I crave more than an oven-baked meal. This recipe, which I can pull together in a snap, hits the spot every single time with its spice and citrus notes. Be sure to store the leftover chipotles in the fridge.

Orange Chipotle Baked Salmon

1 pound salmon fillet
1 chipotle pepper in adobo sauce, with 4 teaspoons adobo sauce reserved
1 cup orange juice
½ teaspoon salt
Steamed rice, for serving

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place salmon on a baking sheet.
2. Finely dice chipotle. In a small bowl, combine chipotle, reserved adobo sauce, orange juice and salt. Spoon sauce over salmon.
3. Bake salmon until it flakes easily with a fork, about 15–20 minutes.
4. Serve over rice.

SERVES 4

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in Cocina Gris at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Creamy Chipotle Lime Shrimp.





Pea Salad

GINGER CLARDY
BANDERA EC

I was skeptical when I first tested this recipe, but little did I know this classic salad is the perfect virtually no-cook dinner. The salad is creamy with crunchy pieces of onion and chunks of cheese. Next time I will definitely double the recipe to enjoy with my family.

- 1 can English peas (15 ounces), drained**
- 2 tablespoons chopped onion**
- ¼ cup diced cheddar cheese**
- ½ boiled egg, diced**
- ¾ cup mayonnaise**

1. In a bowl, mix together peas, onion, cheddar, egg and mayonnaise.
2. Cover and refrigerate. Serve chilled.

SERVES 2

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >



\$500 WINNER

Birds

LORI KIRKPATRICK
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC



This recipe was given to Kirkpatrick 30 years ago by a dear friend and has remained a family favorite. I see why Birds has stood the test of time in her household. Buttery crescents filled with chicken and swimming in a cream sauce hit all the comfort food notes. Kirkpatrick likes to serve the birds over steamed rice.

- 1 can refrigerated crescent rolls (8 ounces)**
- 2 cups cooked chicken, diced**
- 1 can cream of chicken soup (10.5 ounces)**
- 1 can chicken broth (10.5 ounces)**
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a 9-by-13-inch pan.
2. Unroll the crescent rolls and separate into 8 triangles. Place ¼ cup chicken on the wide end of each triangle, roll up dough and place in pan.
3. In a bowl, whisk together soup and broth. Pour over the prepared crescents. Top each crescent with 2 tablespoons cheddar.
4. Cover with foil and bake 20 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 20 minutes.

SERVES 4

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

PANCAKES AND WAFFLES DUE APR 10

Never mind which is better doused in syrup—we'll take either! The winning recipe will stack up \$500. We'll share our favorites in the September issue.

CAMPFIRE FAVORITES DUE MAY 10



ENTER
ONLINE

Parmesan Ranch Chicken

CINDY HANDY
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

Nothing beats oven-baked chicken, especially when it's coated in ranch dressing. I loved the ease of this recipe—no frying and coating the chicken in a plastic bag makes for less cleanup. Handy says this recipe works best with shelf-stable Parmesan that comes in a shaker. Serve with a salad or mashed potatoes for an easy weeknight meal.

- 1/3 cup flour**
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese**
- 1/3 cup Italian-style breadcrumbs**
- 1/2 cup ranch dressing**
- 5 chicken drumsticks**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil and coat with cooking spray.
3. In a large, resealable plastic bag combine flour, Parmesan and bread-



crumbs. In a large bowl, add ranch dressing.

4. Dip a drumstick into ranch dressing and coat well. Seal drumstick in plastic bag.
5. Shake bag to coat drumstick, and place on prepared baking sheet. Repeat with remaining drumsticks.

Keep Your Cool

A well-stocked freezer keeps me sane through a hectic week. Knowing I have food on hand makes meal planning easier. Here's what you'll find in my freezer.

PROTEIN: Chicken thighs and breasts, ground beef and turkey, shrimp, salmon

VEGGIES: Corn, peas, asparagus, broccoli, cauliflower

FRUIT: Berries, mangoes, peaches

READY TO BAKE: Pie crusts, pizza dough, bread, rolls

CONVENIENCE: Fries, Tater Tots, steamed rice, burger patties, waffles, meatballs

—Vianney Rodriguez

6. Bake 20 minutes, turn drumsticks over and bake an additional 20 minutes.

SERVES 2



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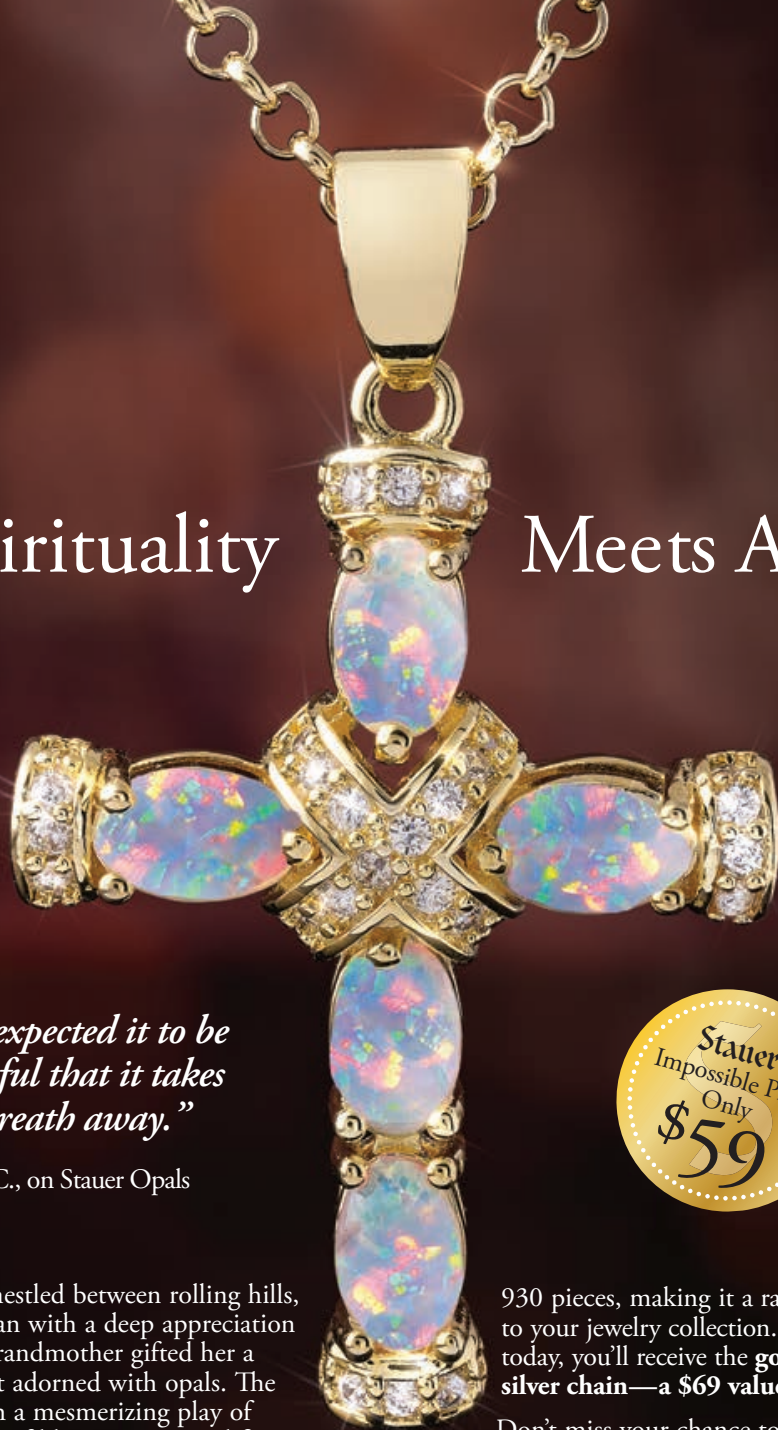
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"I never expected it to be so beautiful that it takes your breath away."

— Kaya C., on Stauer Opals



In a quaint village, nestled between rolling hills, lived a young woman with a deep appreciation for gemstones. Her grandmother gifted her a delicate cross pendant adorned with opals. The opals shimmered with a mesmerizing play of colors, reflecting hues of blues, greens, and fiery oranges. Her grandmother shared the legend of the opals, believed to bring hope, purity, and luck to those who wore them.

Using this story as inspiration, Stauer brings you the **Opal Spirit Cross Pendant**. With over 2 total carats of Kyocera lab-created opals set in .925 sterling silver encased in yellow gold, this pendant is a radiant celebration of beauty and craftsmanship. Each opal captivates with a kaleidoscopic dance of fiery oranges blending into oceanic blues, streaked with flashes of vibrant green that seem to come alive with every movement. The shimmering opals are skillfully arranged to create an enchanting, otherworldly glow, embodying the spirit of hope and harmony.

This breathtaking combination of color and craftsmanship is available as a limited availability of only

930 pieces, making it a rare and treasured addition to your jewelry collection. Plus, when you order today, you'll receive the **gold-finished sterling silver chain**—a \$69 value—absolutely free!

Don't miss your chance to own this exclusive tribute to timeless elegance and meaningful symbolism.

Necklace Specifications:

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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Tragedy on the Prairie

Step into the hard life of frontier Texas at Old Fort Parker

BY CHET GARNER

JUST OUTSIDE THE SMALL TOWN of Groesbeck, east of Waco, tucked between cow pastures and the Navasota River, stands an old wooden fort that feels less like a destination and more like the stories of Jamestown and Plymouth Rock.

The spiked, wooden palisades of Old Fort Parker rise from the prairie grass like a movie set, but this isn't Hollywood—it's the site of a pivotal and tragic moment. You can almost hear the creak of the gate and the echo of gunfire that changed the course of a family and history.

In 1833, the fort was strategically built beside a natural spring with fertile soil in every direction. The settlers, led by brothers James and Silas Parker, had come to claim a piece of the frontier and begin a new life. However, in May 1836 their dream became a nightmare when a coalition of Native American warriors attacked the fort, killing several settlers and abducting 9-year-old Cynthia Ann Parker, her younger brother and three others.

The fort was abandoned, but over the next 24 years Cynthia assimilated into the Comanche tribe and married Chief Peta Nocona, becoming the mother of famed Chief Quanah Parker—the last great Comanche war leader.

Today, the replica fort, built in the 1930s and renovated in 1967, stands as a stark reminder of life nearly 200 years ago. It feels like a living time capsule, especially on special weekends when it's full of reenactors showing visitors how to do everything from blacksmithing to shucking corn.

You can wander through the cabins, peek through the rifle lookouts and imagine the fort bustling with frontier life. There's even a small museum detailing the Parker family saga, complete with artifacts and old maps. Here, among the oak trees and whispering prairie wind, history feels close enough to touch. ■

ABOVE Chet pulls guard duty, at least for this photo, at Old Fort Parker outside Groesbeck.

TCP Watch the video on our website as Chet visits the replica of Fort Parker. And find all of his Texplorations 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.

APRIL

9

Fort Worth [9–12] Late Nite Catechism, (817) 212-4280, www.basshall.com

10

Richardson The Boho Market, info@thebohomarket.com, thebohomarket.com

Canton [10–11] Tractor Show & Swap Meet, (214) 837-8861, lonestarihc25.org/canton

11

Comfort Why Old Places Matter Tour, (830) 995-2641, comfortheritagefoundation.com

Jacksonville Flamin' J BBQ Fest, jvillecpaaa@gmail.com, facebook.com/jvillecpaaa

Levelland Centennial Celebration, (806) 894-0113, bit.ly/levellandcentennial

Schulenburg Sausagefest, (979) 743-4514, schulenburgsausagefest.com

Spicewood Asleep at the Wheel, (512) 264-2820, spicewoodarts.org

12

Fredericksburg Friends of Gillespie County Country Schools BBQ Meal and Raffle, (830) 685-3321, historicschools.org

17

Granbury [17–19] North Texas Gourd Festival, texasgourdsociety@hotmail.com, texasgourdsociety.org

18

Burton Cotton Gin Festival, (979) 289-3378, cottonginmuseum.org



Pick of the Month

Art, Herb & Wine Festival
Bertram, April 25-26
 (512) 882-2992
 bertramchamber.com

At this festival northwest of Austin, attendees can enjoy artisan and herbal vendors, free seminars and demonstrations, Texas wine, food trucks, craft beer, an artist showcase, a 5K run, and live music throughout the week-end. Children can participate in the art zone.

Fort Worth Bubble Run,
 (602) 926-0995, bubblerun.com

McKinney [18-19] Spring Native Plant Sale,
 (972) 562-5566,
 heardmuseum.org

19 **Lufkin Dr. Seuss' Cat in the Hat,** (936) 633-5454,
 angelinaarts.org

22 **Corsicana [22-25] Derrick Days,** (903) 654-4850,
 derrickdays.com

23 **Levelland [23-25] Caprock Region South Plains College Rodeo,** (254) 396-1341,
 caprockregionrodeo.com

MORE EVENTS >

Submit Your Event

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



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WWW.HISTORICSCHOOLS.ORG 

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

APRIL EVENTS CONTINUED

24

Kerrville [24–June 6] Roundup Exhibition and Sale, (830) 896-2553, museumofwesternart.com

25

Avinger Wildflower Trails, (903) 562-2222, avingertxchamber.org

Huntsville Gen. Sam Houston Day, (936) 294-1832, samhoustonmemorialmuseum.com

Lakehills Medina Lake Volunteer Fire Department BBQ, (830) 751-2525, facebook.com/medinalakevfd

Temple [25–26] Texas State Button Society Spring Show and Sale, (325) 247-4955, texasstatebuttonssociety.com

MAY

1

Gun Barrel City [1–2] Gun Barrel Quilters Guild Quilt Show, (817) 896-7891, gunbarrelquiltersguild.org

Sargent [1–2] Volunteer Fire & Rescue BBQ Cookoff, (281) 794-4933, facebook.com/sargentvolunteerfiredept

2

Vernon Doan's May Picnic, (214) 244-1883, doansmaypicnic.com

Willow City Volunteer Fire & Rescue Department Benefit, (830) 685-3376, willowcityfd.com

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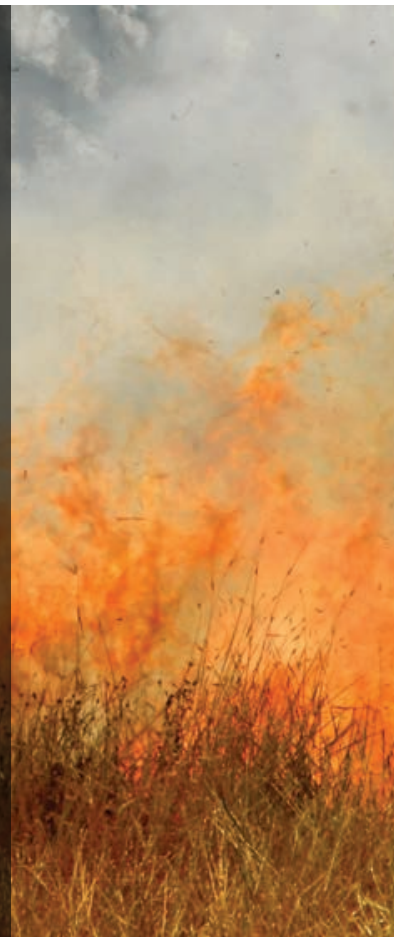
Create defensible space around your home.

Identify two evacuation routes incase one becomes compromised.

Communicate with local officials and learn how they will send emergency notifications.



tfsweb.tamu.edu/PreventWildfire



Gates

It's been said that the creaking gate hangs the longest, and these readers made themselves heard. Whether they're keeping someone in or out, Texas gates are as unique as the folks behind them. So take a detour with us this month and, as the dust settles, let's see what awaits us at the gates.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1

1 JODY SEDGWICK
PEDERNALES EC
"Springtime at a Hill Country gate. Flowers, deer and a kitty."

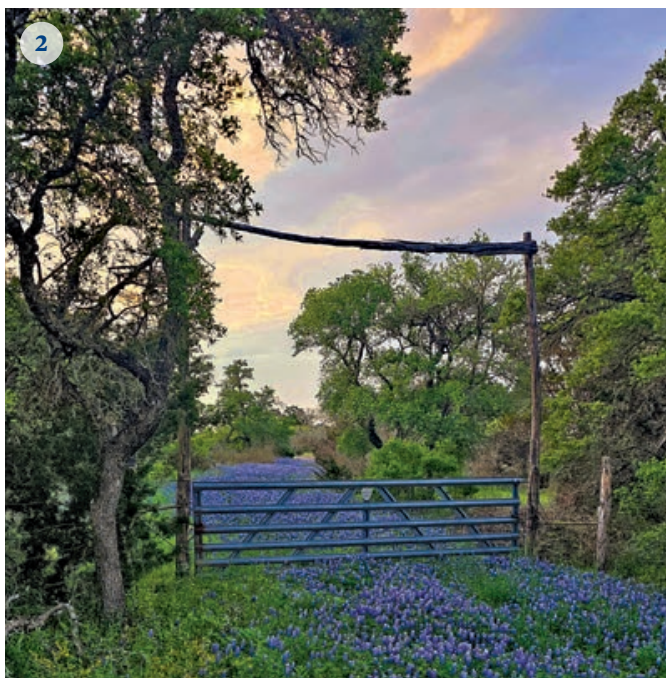
2 DEANNE LAUMER
PEDERNALES EC
"Bluebonnets on a back road."

3 LISA WOODS
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES
"Next to the Steel Bender off-road trail in Moab, Utah."

4 GAYLEE WATSON
FARMERS EC
"Two paints and a mule waiting at the gate for treats."



3



2



4

Upcoming Contests

- UNDERWATER LIFE** DUE APR 10
- RODEO** DUE MAY 10
- TAILGATING** DUE JUN 10



ENTER ONLINE

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



Kickin' Ashe

The perfect spring workout awaits in the Hill Country

BY BOB MCCULLOUGH
ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE URBAN

A RANGE OF CELEBRITIES market workout routines that promise to burn calories and slow the aging process—for a price.

I'm certainly no celebrity, but as a ranch resident of the Hill Country with its ubiquitous, evergreen Ashe juniper (or mountain cedar), I myself have developed a workout that delivers heart-pumpin', muscle-buildin', weight-sheddin' results at no charge.

Cedar is an easy enemy. The prolific pollen producer native to the Edwards Plateau punishes seasonal allergy sufferers with "cedar fever." It's also incredibly thirsty, soaking up scarce rainfall to the detriment of other vegetation.

Cutting it back is like peeling an onion. You keep removing the trees' relatively soft wooden outgrowths—or layers, if you will—until you achieve the desired

clearance for trails, pathways and roads. Hand-to-branch combat fosters fitness as well as fulfillment. To take advantage of the Ashe-Kickin' Workout, I have some field-tested recommendations.

Check, please! Cedar-slaying can be strenuous, so check with your doctor and get the OK before beginning any exercise regimen.

Rags to britches: Attire yourself in the oldest, toughest, raggediest clothing in your closet because this workout surely will damage whatever you're wearing.

Covering all the spaces: Speaking of attire, opt for long sleeves and heavy pants or jeans to minimize cuts and scratches. And wear sunscreen and a wide-brimmed hat to prevent sunburns. Thick leather gloves complete the ensemble.

Make no mis-snake: Cedar survives in rugged territory where snakes also thrive, so boots should be worn for extra protection.

Bug off: Likewise, bugs and other creepy crawlers could cross your path. Spraying repellent on pants, gloves or tops of boots helps.

The cutting edges: The workout requires relatively inexpensive tools—21-inch bow saws for cuts up to 5 inches and 31-inch lopping shears for overhead branches. Chain saws are strictly prohibited in the interest of maximizing fitness!

Bind the wounds: Now and then, an oak tree will get in the way, and oak trimming should be followed immediately with pruning paint to prevent the spread of deadly oak wilt.

Muscles in knead: After a vigorous session with cedar, the ultimate reward is an appointment with a massage therapist or a sympathetic spouse who can soothe away any soreness.

Through sawing, stretching, stooping and bending, the Ashe-Kickin' Workout offers an inexpensive way to stay fit throughout the calendar year. So if you're looking for me, chances are, I'm just cuttin' up in the great outdoors. ■



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Mexico Copper Canyon Train	10	1895
Mexico Ancient Civilizations	10	1695

USA and Canada Tours	Days	Price
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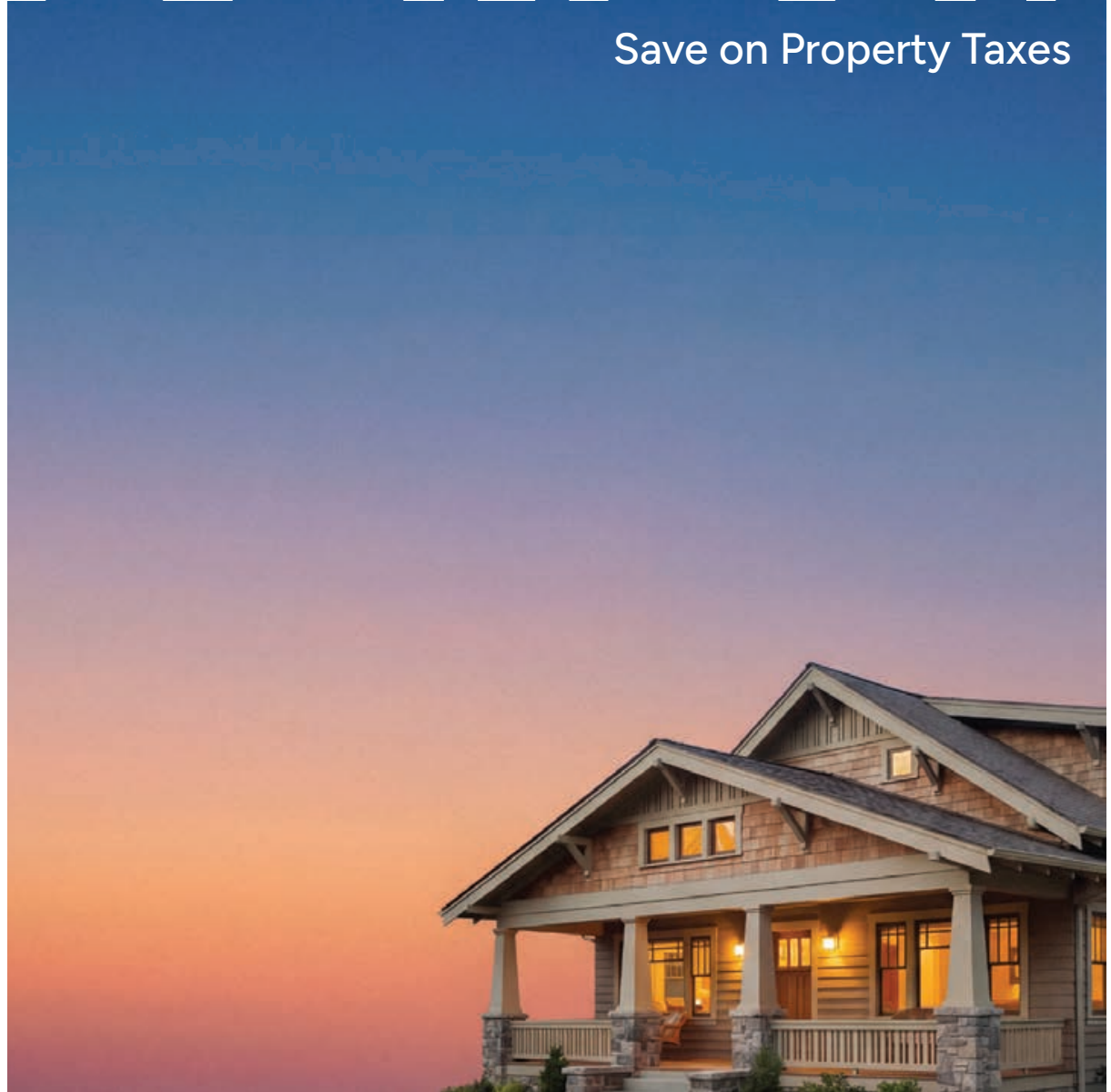
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