TEXAS CO-OP POWER

SOLAR POWER

Waiting for the Clouds To Part
If you want to save money on energy and reduce your impact on the environment, a Mueller metal roof is the natural choice. By reflecting the sun’s radiation, a Mueller roof decreases heat transfer into your home – keeping the inside much cooler. And a naturally cooler home means summer energy bills you can afford. Visit our website for more information on Mueller’s ENERGY STAR approved products. Whatever you want your home to be, let Mueller help make it happen.
Texas Co-op Power is published by your electric cooperative to enhance the quality of life of its member-customers in an educational and entertaining format.
Beware of Con Artists or Thieves Posing as Utility Workers

Sam Houston and CoServ electric cooperatives in Texas and a major utility in Iowa have reported that scam artists posing as collection agents have been calling utility customers and demanding that a payment be sent by check or the Internet to the scam agency to preclude disconnection of service. Sometimes they ask for a credit card number.

Most cooperatives do not use collection agencies. And electric payments should go only to your cooperative. If you receive a questionable call, please contact your cooperative or law-enforcement authorities.

While we’re on the subject of people preying on trusting folks, from time to time we hear of someone posing as a utility employee and wanting to gain entry to a home to check electric service. If you let someone into your house without verifying credentials, you may discover later that cash or a small valuable has disappeared.

Be on the safe side:

1. Always ask for company identification or an employee identification number.
2. Don’t provide any personal or banking information to anyone who calls you. Instead, you should dial the coop or other business to ensure you are talking to a legitimate party.
3. Employees may, on occasion, be dispatched to a customer’s home for an unscheduled maintenance call. If a visitor or caller is unable or unwilling to provide his or her name or employee identification number, please call your cooperative and report the incident.

Chris Burnett
cburnett@ectisp.net

Hooray for Heat Pumps

There is legislation in Congress to outlaw the resistance electric light bulb and require use of fluorescent bulbs. But if you are going to save energy, you have to go to the heat pump. Congress should require every new house that is going to use electricity for heat to be built with heat pumps. Property owners should be required to notify their tenants about the source of heat used in their buildings.

John D. Bennett
Pedernales Electric Cooperative

Mesquite Makes Music

I can’t help but respond to the letter in June from Guy Matthews saying, “mesquite wood’s most useful purpose is its embers, which flavor Texas barbecue…”

Maybe mesquite’s purpose of flavoring Texas music has not been considered before turning it to embers! I’ve been building guitars out of mesquite for about 10 years. It has proven to be a great sounding tonewood, not to mention its natural beauty and durability.

Vince Pawless
Cooke County Electric Cooperative

We want to hear from our readers. Send letters to: Editor, Texas Co-Op Power, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704; e-mail us at letters@texas-ec.org, or submit online at www.texascooppower.com. Please include the name of your town and electric co-op. Letters may be edited for clarity and length and are printed as space allows. Read additional letters at www.texascooppower.com.
HAPPENINGS

Don those swimsuits and spring into SPRING HO, Lampasas’ annual festival that invites participants to make a big splash while enjoying events galore, such as a carnival and county fair.

The 36-year-old festival, scheduled for July 7-13, honors the rejuvenating powers of Lampasas’ mineral springs.

One of the coolest—or coldest—ways to celebrate during the festival is to jump into the Hancock Free Flow Swim Area, a spring-fed swimming pool. Meanwhile, there are so many activities scheduled, festivalgoers won’t know what to dive into first. For example, there’s the Spring Ho Beauty Pageant, the Hayloft Party Talent Contest, the Kiddie Fishing Derby, the Keystone Square Museum special exhibits, a pet parade, a barbecue cook-off, a 10-kilometer race and the Spring Ho Dance on the Square in the National Registered Historic District in downtown Lampasas.

For more information, call (512) 556-5301 or go to www.springho.com.

THE QUEEN OF THE GULF

Weathering hurricanes and economic downturns, the Hotel Galvez has stood proudly for decades on the south shore of Galveston Island, offering elegant accommodations to thousands of visitors. The hotel, built in the mission/Spanish revival style, opened in 1911 and was instrumental in helping rebuild the island city’s economy after the devastating 1890 hurricane.

The “Queen of the Gulf,” which had faded after a tourism downturn sparked by raids in 1957 on the city’s illegal gambling establishments, was restored to its former glory in the mid-1990s and now gives guests magnificent views of the Gulf along the city’s protective seawall, just blocks from the historic Strand District.


GOOD VIBRATIONS

The next time the floor vibrates beneath your feet, think of it as renewable energy in the making. You’ve probably experienced this phenomenon someplace such as a multistory shopping mall during the Christmas rush. Thousands of shoppers walking the corridors at the same time can create a mini-earthquake. Buildings are designed to withstand this motion, which structural engineers call “dynamic load.”

A London architectural firm has unveiled a proposal for capturing all that footloose energy and converting it into electricity. Plans are under way to build an energy-harvesting stair-case with small hydraulic generators embedded in the floor of a London subway. Estimates are that each foot-step can generate 3 to 5 watts of power. Multiply that by tens of thousands of walkers each day, and you could light an entire building.

Harnessing energy from human and natural activity is a growing enterprise. Don’t be surprised if someday your workout at the gym will help power the facility’s air-conditioning system.

FUTURE TALK

WHO KNEW?

There were no PR people around when these places were named (counties in parentheses).

CALAMITY CREEK (Brewster)
COW TRAP LAKE (Brazoria)
DEADMAN CREEK (Callahan)
DEVIL’S SINKHOLE (Edwards)
FOOL CREEK (Glasscock)
SHORTERS DEFEAT (Cherokee)
STAMPEDE CREEK (Bell, McLennan)
STARVATION CREEK (Hutchinson)
SWINDLER CREEK (Newton)

Illustrations by Edd Patton

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Illustrations by Edd Patton

July 2008 TEXAS CO-OP POWER 5
THE ENERGY FROM SUNSHINE FALLING ON A SINGLE ACRE OF LAND IN WEST TEXAS IS CAPABLE OF PRODUCING THE POWER
SAN ANTONIO’S CITY-OWNED POWER PROVIDER HAS THE SUN IN ITS EYES. LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE, CPS ENERGY HAS TEAMED WITH A SAN ANTONIO COMPANY TO INSTALL A ROOF FULL OF SOLAR PANELS AT A 67,000-SQUARE-FOOT FORMER WAREHOUSE BEING REBUILT AT THE SHUTTERED PEARL BREWERY ON THE NORTHERN EDGE OF DOWNTOWN. THE PANELS ARE CAPABLE OF GENERATING 200 KILOWATTS OF ELECTRICITY—EQUAL TO ABOUT ONE-FOURTH OF THE BUILDING’S TOTAL ENERGY NEEDS. IT IS THE LARGEST SUCH PROJECT IN THE STATE.
TEXAS HAS THE MOST SOLAR POTENTIAL IN THE UNITED STATES, FOLLOWED WELL BEHIND BY MONTANA.

The solar power unit is not cheap, but it will have many benefits, CPS Energy officials say. For one thing, it will be a valuable test bed and learning laboratory for solar power. For another, it will help educate architects, engineers and CPS Energy’s own municipal researchers as well as the general public about this emerging technology. And it just might provide the needed spark to get other businesses and public utilities to give solar energy a try, too.

The solar project is part of an ambitious effort by Silver Ventures, a San Antonio real-estate investment firm, to redevelop the 22-acre Pearl Brewery site into a multipurpose urban village on the San Antonio River. The company has been reworking historic structures at the old brewery and adding new construction to create an urban center that includes residential, commercial, retail, educational and entertainment facilities.

Because Silver Ventures is emphasizing environmental stewardship in the redevelopment, solar energy and energy and water conservation are an important part of the effort.

“We think that the Pearl Brewery redevelopment is great for San Antonio, and we are excited to be a part of it,” said Valerie von Schramm, CPS Energy’s senior research manager for renewables, distributed energy and environment. “By participating in the solar project, CPS Energy is stepping out front in a big way for solar energy in the community while helping [the utility] to diversify our energy sources.”

CPS Energy will monitor the solar project closely, using state-of-the-art metering equipment to test its viability in a real-world setting. The utility also will share what it learns to assist public and private organizations that may be interested in installing their own solar electric systems, von Schramm said.

A public display will allow visitors to the Pearl site to see for themselves how the solar unit is operating, she said. “We believe the project will be a useful educational tool for students and the public as well as a model for future commercial uses of solar energy,” von Schramm added. “We have received many inquiries about the solar project and expect the high level of interest to continue.”

The solar electric panels were installed in June, and tenants are scheduled to move into the building in August. Known as the Full Goods Building, where beer once was temporarily stored before being shipped out, the building has been converted from a warehouse into a combination residential, office and retail facility. Besides the solar panels, the building has one of the most energy-efficient air-conditioning systems available. It also has a system to capture, store and recycle rainwater for landscape irrigation.

WITH AN OPERATING LIFE OF MORE THAN 40 YEARS, THE PROJECT EVENTUALLY WILL HAVE A POSITIVE CASH FLOW, ACCORDING TO ANDREW McCALLA, PRESIDENT OF MERIDIAN ENERGY SYSTEMS. BUT WHILE PAYBACK IS IMPORTANT, THIS KIND OF PROJECT IS NOT JUST ABOUT THAT, HE SAID. IT IS ABOUT USING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY THAT ALSO BENEFITS THE ENVIRONMENT BECAUSE ITS OPERATION DOES NOT POLUTE THE AIR OR WATER.

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Silver Ventures and CPS Energy have committed $1.35 million for the solar project: $950,000 from Silver Ventures and $400,000 from CPS Energy. CPS Energy is the nation’s largest municipally owned energy operator, providing electricity and natural gas service in and around the country’s seventh-largest city. It serves about 680,000 electric customers and 320,000 natural gas customers.


Hooking up with CPS Energy for the solar project made sense because both organizations saw the potential benefits and both were willing to invest in it, said Darryl Byrd, development director for Silver Ventures.

“It has been a good partnership and a very positive thing for the community,” Byrd said.

The project uses solar cells, or photovoltaic cells, that convert sunlight directly into electricity. Solar cells have been around for decades and are used in everything from pocket calculators to orbiting satellites. They are not cheap, but costs have come down considerably as the technology has continued to improve. Also, increased demand has reduced production costs.

Solar cells have no moving parts. They are made of special materials that can generate a small amount of electrical current when sunlight strikes their surface. A large number of cells can be packaged to form a panel. An installation of a large number of panels is called a photovoltaic array.

The Pearl project is the largest solar-cell array in Texas, said Andrew

**SHEDDING LIGHT ON SOLAR**

BY KAYE NORTHCOTT AND KEVIN HARGIS

Practically speaking, solar-generated electricity is still but a glimmer in our future, but new technologies hold great promise for sunny Texas. Our electric cooperative members use photovoltaic arrays primarily to pump water for remote stock tanks or to heat swimming pools and household water tanks. Many cooperatives have rules and procedures for members who wish to supplement their grid power with home arrays. Contact your cooperative to see if it has solar programs.

**COST CHALLENGES**

The primary drawbacks to solar are the necessity to back up this source of electricity with a conventional energy source that works on cloudy days and at night, and the current high cost of solar technology. The good news is that the solar industry anticipates solar technology will get cheaper. Current costs are about 25 to 50 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for solar-generated electricity compared to 13 cents per kWh for electricity from coal or natural gas.

Austin Energy, a leader in Texas municipal utilities, gives a generous $4.50-per-watt rebate for customers who install solar energy. The city estimates that this pays between 45 percent and 75 percent of the cost of installing a system. But a 1,000-watt (1 kilowatt) photovoltaic system, which is considered the smallest practical residential array, would still cost between $6,000 and $10,000. Even with this rebate, less than 1 percent of the city’s residential and commercial customers have installed solar systems.

**TEXAS SHINES LIGHT ON SOLAR**

The Texas State Energy Conservation Office, or SECO, has several programs designed to promote increased use of solar energy, both photovoltaic and passive. The agency has sponsored or is in partnership on several demonstration projects, ranging from lighting systems for city parks to a parking garage installation at the University of Texas-Houston Health Sciences Center.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department is working with the Alternative Energy Institute at West Texas A&M University in Canyon, which focuses mainly on wind power research, to monitor photovoltaic output at a demonstration project at Sheldon Lake Environmental Center.

For Texas electric cooperatives, SECO offers the Stand-Alone Photovoltaic program, which aims to educate co-op workers and leaders about stand-alone systems without grid ties. They are usually photovoltaic panels used for water pumping, electric fences and other small-scale uses in areas away from power lines.

One of the agency’s biggest solar projects is Texas Solar for Schools. Under the program, which began in 2001, SECO has supplied 1- to 3-kilowatt solar systems to school districts across the state. The systems allow schools to save money on their electric bills while giving students the opportunity for hands-on learning. The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) has partnered with SECO over the past three years in the program.
**INCENTIVES FOR SOLAR**

The state of Texas provides some incentives for solar power installation for consumers, mainly in the form of a property tax exemption for certain solar systems. For businesses engaged strictly in solar energy sales, installation or manufacturing, there is a franchise tax exemption. In addition, Texas corporations can deduct the cost of a solar energy device they own and use from their franchise taxes. SECO provides a guide to federal tax credits for solar installation on its website, www.seco.cpa.state.tx.us.

**INTO THE FUTURE**

Photovoltaic arrays, roof-mounted silicon solar panels, are the most common technology for solar electricity and could soon be replaced by flexible solar film that is relatively inexpensive to produce.

- Many companies offer thin film that requires glass to hold it in place.
- Even better, perhaps, are the new thin-film solar cells being developed by HelioVolt and Ascent Solar Technologies. HelioVolt has announced plans for a manufacturing facility in Austin. Ascent plans to be selling rolls of solar cells by 2010.
- Farther down the road may be quantum dot solar cells as small as a nanometer (a billionth of a meter). The theoretical efficiency of normal solar cells is about 43 percent, according to the EnergyPulse newsletter. Quantum dots could increase that efficiency to as much as 60 percent.

**EVEN SMARTER BUILDINGS AND WINDOWS**

What if your windows and walls could automatically reflect light when it is hot outside and let light in when it is cold, helping to keep inside temperatures relatively stable? Such windows and walls are expected to be available this year from RavenBrick of Denver (www.ravenbrick.com). Its thermo-reflective filters are transparent at low temperatures and highly reflective at high temperatures.

**LARGE-SCALE SOLAR COLLECTORS**

Just as there are huge wind farms now providing backup power for conventional electricity generation, central solar power towers will likely do the same in the future. The facilities generate electric power from sunlight by focusing concentrated solar radiation on a tower-mounted receiver. Hundreds of thousands of small sun-tracking mirrors reflect sunlight to the receiver. In some technologies, liquid salt is pumped and heated through the receiver and then stored until power is needed from the plant. The molten salt is then pumped into a steam-generating system that turns a conventional electric generator.

In November, an Australian company signed a $500 million agreement with Pacific Gas and Electric to produce 177 megawatts at a solar-thermal plant in California’s Central Valley. The project should be on line in 2010.

The experimental Solar Two project in California’s Mojave Desert used molten salt to store heat from the sun. The hot salt was used to produce steam to drive an electric generator. A similar project, Solar Tres, is under way now in Spain.

McCalla, president of Meridian Energy Systems, an Austin-based firm that designed and installed the equipment.

“We are elated to be a part of this important project,” McCalla said. “We have projects around the state and nation, but this one is our shining star.”

With an operating life of more than 40 years, the project eventually will have a positive cash flow, according to McCalla. But while payback is important, this kind of project is not just about that, he said. It is about using advanced technology that also benefits the environment because its operation does not pollute the air or water.

Bill Sinkin, founder of a nonprofit solar advocacy group called Solar San Antonio, agrees.

Solar energy brings many benefits that are not always easy to calculate, according to Sinkin, whose group has been credited with helping Silver Ventures and CPS Energy get together on the project.

“We love that solar project,” Sinkin said. “The new Pearl Brewery owner [Silver Ventures] is a good environmentalist and is setting the tone here in San Antonio for building with the environment in mind. And, thanks to the owner and CPS Energy, we believe this solar project is also setting the tone that will encourage and promote the future use of solar energy.”

Bill McCann is a retired communications manager and journalist who takes on freelance writing and editing assignments when the fish aren’t biting.
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What people are saying about the Exerciser 2000 Elite™

After using the Exerciser 2000 Elite™ twice a day for one week the swelling in my ankles went away. It has also helped my breathing, as I can get out and walk without having to stop and catch my breath! Thank you. —Shirley H., Florida

As a Chiropractor, I would like to say that the Exerciser 2000 Elite™ enables people to benefit themselves at home. It is a valuable asset in moving lymph fluid, oxygenating the blood, increasing immune system function, maintaining mobility in the spine, and additionally freeing up a spine that has become stiff and arthritic. —Garry Gorsuch, D.C.

I had suffered with sleep apnea for many years and had been taking drugs for it. I was told I would have to use a breathing apparatus. In the meantime, I was introduced to the Exerciser 2000 Elite™ and decided to purchase one. Within two weeks, I was sleeping more deeply and restfully than ever before. —David B.

I am in my late 80’s and have diabetes. The first thing I noticed when I started using my machine was that my feet were warm when I went to bed. They were always ice cold before. Because one of my problems is poor circulation, I use the machine three times a day for 10 minutes each; in the morning, late afternoon and just before bed. I almost forgot to mention that I have not been able to lift my arms above my head. Now I can do it. You think that’s no big deal until you can’t do it anymore. —Ralph K.

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Mini Blessings at the Monastery of St. Clare

Miniature Horses Offer Visitors Gentle Greeting
It's October, and the sky is a deep blue color that occurs only on a perfect autumn day. It's warm but not hot, and the sky is so clear that it seems you could see a thousand miles from the right hilltop. It's a great day to be headed out of the city and into the country on a drive that will take me to Brenham to see the miniature horses at the Monastery of St. Clare.

The monastery is run by the Franciscan Poor Clare Nuns, a nonprofit religious organization devoted to a contemplative life of prayer. In an operation called Monastery Miniature Horses, the nuns raise and sell the tiny equines to support their community.

When I arrive, I check in with Sister Angela, the abbess of the monastery as well as chief miniature horse wrangler. She is busy with customers in the gift shop, so I agree to talk with her later. It's the annual AutumnFest at the monastery, and there are dozens of families out for the day to play games, eat snacks and pet the horses. While I wait for Sister Angela, I wander out to a pasture where several of the horses are standing in the shade.

As I lean against the fence, three of the little guys come over to take a look. They stand quietly, gazing at me with gentle curiosity. I gaze back and find myself mentally slowing down and breathing deeper. It feels almost like meditation. The horses are just hanging out, being themselves, but their gaze is attentive and accepting. By some mysterious process, they transfer their calmness to me. This moment alone is worth the drive to Brenham.

Though each horse has a personality all its own, the horses are bred to be calm and friendly, Sister Angela says. Approach a corral fence, and they’ll almost always come over to check you out. Their coats are denser and fuzzier than that of most standard-sized horses, and the fuzz on their faces is particularly soft. When they poke their heads through the fence, it’s obvious that they want to be touched.

The nuns first began raising the miniature horses in Corpus Christi in 1981, at the behest of Sister Bernadette, the abbess at that time. Sister Bernadette, who died in 1990, was an animal lover and believed that the horses could provide the revenue needed to support the community.

Sister Angela, who became abbess and manager of the horse farm after Sister Bernadette's death, says the monastery sells 12 to 15 horses a year, earning from $500 to $5,000 each, depending on the horse's age, training and breeding ability. The nuns supplement this income with entrance fees from an estimated 20,000 visitors each year and the sales of ceramics produced in their Art Barn.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the monastery bred and trained 70 to 100 horses a year, but not all of the horses belonged to the monastery. Some of the horses were bred at the monastery, while others were brought there for training. During those years, a well-trained horse might have sold for several thousand dollars.

In 1984, the Sisters of St. Clare bought a former cutting-horse farm 7 miles outside Brenham on State Highway 105...
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If You Go
The monastery is open to visitors from 1:30 to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Admission is $4 for adults, $3 for seniors and $2 for children ages 3 to 12. Self-guided tours are available every day (stop in at the Art Barn to pay your fee and get a map of the property). Late afternoon (between 3 and 4) is often a good time to visit, as the horses in the pastures tend to come to the fences to wait for their supper.

Guided group tours are available by reservation. For more information, call the monastery at (979) 836-9852 or go to www.monasteryminihorses.com. Autumn Fest is October 11 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

To reach the monastery, take State Highway 105 about 7 miles northeast of Brenham. The monastery will be on your right.

One tip: Don’t wear a straw hat. The little horses will think you’ve brought them a yummy treat, and the nuns don’t want you to feed the horses. (My own hat came away a little worse for the wear.)

Karen Branz Leach is an Austin-based freelance writer.
For decades, Americans have benefitted from a reliable supply of relatively low-cost energy—both electricity and transportation fuels. But increased demand for energy in emerging markets and developing countries, such as China and India, means more competition for limited supply in countries with energy-intensive economies, such as the United States.

Concern about global climate change is contributing to uncertainty in the global and domestic energy markets. There is bipartisan support in Congress for legislation that would address global climate change by requiring significant reductions in carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions.

These reductions could be accomplished by switching from fossil fuels, such as coal and natural gas, to renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar and geothermal, which are more expensive. Both Democrats and Republicans in Congress support legislation that would levy a carbon tax or create a carbon cap-and-trade system in which carbon credits would be traded in a government-regulated stock market-like system.

One such piece of legislation recently debated in the Senate, the Lieberman-Warner Climate Security Act, would have required power companies, manufacturers, refineries and other industries to reduce carbon emissions to 4 percent below 2005 levels beginning in 2012, and 71 percent by 2050. Under the Lieberman-Warner Act, carbon credits would have been issued to companies and a cap-and-trade system would have been established where companies would buy or sell excess carbon credits.

Whether it is because of economic forces, such as increased demand, supply not keeping pace with demand, and more competition for dwindling resources; or whether it is due to science, politics and public opinion leading to legislation that limits and reduces carbon emissions, the result will be American businesses and consumers paying more for energy.

As energy costs increase, efficiency and conservation are becoming more and more important to American consumers. Energy efficiency is defined as using less energy while getting the same result. For example, if I use a compact fluorescent light for 10 hours, I get the same amount of light as I would have with an incandescent light, but I used considerably less energy. Energy efficiency can be achieved by changes and improvements in technology, such as compact fluorescent lights, Energy Star appliances and hybrid cars, to name a few.

Energy conservation is defined as the minimization of energy consumption. Conservation can be achieved through energy efficiency, but also requires changes in our behaviors, habits and lifestyles, such as turning our thermostats up when not at home and during peak usage hours, carpooling, or working from home.

Supply-side issues in the energy market are mostly beyond the consumers’ control. However, demand-side management, conservation and energy efficiency, gives consumers tools to control and reduce their energy usage and save money. Education and technology are the keys to demand-side energy management.

Technology, such as smart meters that tell you when you have exceeded your predetermined monthly electricity usage, or that tell you which appliances in your home are using the most electricity and when, can provide you with the information you need to manage your energy usage. With that information, homeowners or business owners can evaluate their energy usage, and take the necessary steps to conserve energy by changing behaviors or replacing less-efficient appliances with ones with an Energy Star rating.

It appears Congress is going to give us the challenge of conserving our resources and paying more at the pump and the meter as members of Congress try to balance the need to address global climate change and the need to meet the demand for reliable, competitively priced energy.

Next in the series: Transmission
W

we must never forget or take for granted the freedoms we all enjoy by living here in the United States of America. Each year, the Fourth of July should bring to mind those who fought to make it possible for us to be a nation where we are free to have our own ideals, follow our own beliefs, and to live independently, free from tyrannical rule. As a way of celebrating, it is a day we spend with family and friends, cooking out, and for the kid in all of us, watching or setting off FIREFWORKS.

What would the Fourth be without a spectacular fireworks display, fabulous exploding colors, beautiful designs and grand finales with lots of oohs and aahs?

Bluebonnet takes community involvement seriously, and with that comes an element of fun. Every year Bluebonnet sponsors or donates money, time and volunteer hours to events all over our service territory to help provide a Fourth of July show that will top any you have seen before.

“Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative is a strong supporter of the Lockhart community through active participation in the community and through its support of the Lockhart Chamber of Commerce,” said Wayne Bock of the Lockhart Chamber of Commerce. “Joyce Buckner (Bluebonnet Community Representative), our direct connection to Bluebonnet, serves as the Chairman Elect on the Board of Directors for the Chamber. She is key in coordinating the needs of the Chamber with what Bluebonnet can supply.”

“Bluebonnet is very visible in many areas from employee volunteers to displayed banners and Bluebonnet trailers, the water-cooled fans and Bluebonnet signs. The Fourth of July fireworks celebration draws hundreds of families to the Lockhart City Park every year. The Chamber events would not be what they are today, if not for the support of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative. What a fantastic show of support to the Lockhart community,” Bock said.

Bluebonnet is also a major sponsor in the Bastrop Patriotic Festival (previously called the Old Iron Bridge Festival) held on the first Saturday in July at Fisherman’s Park in historic downtown Bastrop. The festival is free to the public with games and food available; and music is provided by local bands and the Austin Symphonic Band.

“Bluebonnet has sponsored more than just chamber events, they are huge supporters of the Bastrop community, in general,” said Troyanne Bush of the Bastrop Chamber of Commerce. “By sponsoring events, from non-profit organizations to school related events, Bluebonnet is always there to help.”

The Lexington Fourth of July celebration will be held at the Lexington Park with an exhibition given by the Texas Stars Drill Team at the Memorial American Legion Arena. Admission is free but free-will donations are accepted. The Lexington Fire Department will sell hamburgers and drinks. Lawn chairs are encouraged so you can enjoy the fireworks display at dark.

“Without the help of Bluebonnet we would not be able to provide fireworks for the people of the Lexington area,” said Sharon Tucker, President of the Lexington Chamber of Commerce. “We truly appreciate Bluebonnet’s involvement in our Fourth of July celebration.”

The 8th Annual Spirit of Rosanky Jubilee will be held on July 4, this year on the property owned by Owl’s Western Wear and the Waggon Wheel, at Hwy 535 and FM 304. The Jubilee has gotten bigger every year and this year is no exception. Food and drink booths and kids’ games are available beginning at 4 p.m.; live music by The Midnight Owls and special guest Bruce Dickson (seen on American Idol this year) and his band starts at 7 p.m.
“We absolutely could not put this event on without Bluebonnet,” said Ronnie Frerich of Owl’s Western Wear. “They have really bent over backward to help us more and more every year. There are plans to expand the Jubilee next year to include more stages for bands, and restrooms. This could become the next Luckenbach and we owe it, in large part, to Bluebonnet.”

The Giddings Volunteer Fire Department’s annual fundraiser is held every Fourth of July at Fireman’s Park on Hwy 290, two miles west of Giddings. Barbecue is sold by the pound beginning at 8 a.m., and the BBQ lunch begins at 10 a.m. A live auction is held from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. Joe Boyd Reynolds and The JBR Band play from 4:30 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Bullfighting/bull riding begins at 6 p.m. at the Lee County Sheriff’s Posse Arena.

There are arts and crafts booths all day and fireworks at 10 p.m. The Fourth of July dance by Ricky Calmbach and Texas Standard Time goes from 8:30 p.m. until 12:30 a.m., with free admission. Chartered buses from all around the central Texas area come in to enjoy the Class A fireworks.

Spencer Schneider and David Burttscshell of the Giddings Fire Department said that without the support of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative for the Giddings Volunteer Fire Department’s Fourth of July activities and fireworks, their fundraising event would not be as successful.

Many Bluebonnet employees live in the communities we serve, so we have a personal interest in everything that goes on. Contributing to the community by donating to safe and beautiful events like fireworks on the Fourth of July is a way for Bluebonnet to let our communities know that we care.

For more information on Fourth of July happenings:

Lockhart Fourth of July at Lockhart City Park
Wayne Bock (512)398-2818

Dale Community Center in downtown Dale
Herbert Brite (512)601-3304

Rosanky Jubilee at Owls Quickstop
Ronnie Frerich (512)304-5760

Lexington Fourth of July
Sharon Tucker (979)773-4337
Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative’s 68th Annual Meeting was held on May 13, 2008, at the Sons of Hermann Hall in Giddings. More than 250 Bluebonnet members attended the Annual Meeting to cast their votes to fill four positions on the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative’s board of directors. The Annual Meeting gives Bluebonnet members the opportunity to meet their board members on a personal level, have their important voices heard and to become more informed and involved in the operations of the cooperative.

Bluebonnet business is overseen by a 10-member board of directors, who must also be members of the cooperative, and are elected at-large for three-year, rotating terms. A large portion of the Annual Meeting is devoted to the election of board members. This year, incumbent board members Byron Balke, representing Austin County; Gary Gerdes, representing Lee County; Adlinie Rathman, representing Bastrop County; and floor-nominated Robert Mikeska, representing Washington County, were elected to the Bluebonnet Board of Directors.

In addition to the election of Board Members, our General Manager and CEO, Mark Rose, gave an informative presentation, speaking about the last five years and the changes made during that time, detailing the progress made by Bluebonnet and offering insight to the future of the cooperative.

“"We are rapidly becoming an urban co-op, an urban utility, but we do not want to lose our rural heritage, which is our very roots," said Mark Rose. “We have done more than just build buildings and I would like for our members to know what we have accomplished.”

Beginning with an explanation of Bluebonnet’s renewed commitment to values and how our Board of Directors endorsed a strategic vision five years ago, challenging staff to modernize our electric delivery and business systems, keep rates competitive and establish a five-year plan with a 38 percent equity ratio goal at completion, Mark explained the progressive nature of the cooperative.

Along with our financial commitment, came a renewed commitment to values and a new visible presence recognized by our members and community, in the form of a new logo. To further member assurance that their best interests are in the forefront of our work, Bluebonnet adopted a set of Foundation Values. Our values: Safety, Courage, Respect, Reliability, Community and Love are apparent in the service provided by Bluebonnet employees on a daily basis.

Each month, to maintain a level of accountability, Bluebonnet provides the board with a monthly report card so they can track how we are doing regarding budget. For every dollar of revenue, 63 cents goes to our electric provider, the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA), operating expenses require 26 cents, debt services under 6 cents and less than 6 cents goes to infrastructure.

For every dollar Bluebonnet members spend on their bill, 63 cents goes to pay for power purchased from the Lower Colorado River Authority.

“We have consistently beaten inflation every year by not borrowing money to pay our expenses so administrative costs have gone down in the last five years and stayed down," Rose said.

“Time is compressed more now than ever and as an electric cooperative we need to be ahead of the curve when it comes to technology,” Rose continued. “We used to have more than 20 meter readers out there in all types..."
of weather conditions, just to get a reading each month. This took a lot of time and believe me, there were more estimated reads than we cared to admit; we realized it was time for a change.

“Our systems were literally crumbling, buildings were crumbling.” In response to the need for new infrastructure, Bluebonnet staff made a commitment to the board that we would maintain a sound equity ratio while still holding the number one position in our peer group, as we modernized our business.” Bluebonnet’s upgraded infrastructure is made up of improved facilities such as new Member Service Centers and Call Center, new or improved Service Centers and new Bastrop Headquarters and Control Center. New, reliable vehicles, equipped with computers, provide crews with data while in the field. New communications systems, which includes the SAP Enterprise Resource System, a system we will never outgrow, can support one million meters and still not need replacement.

More than $11 million dollars was spent changing over to the AMR system, which enables us to read meters in real time. It is very important that Bluebonnet has a technological base that will not be outgrown as we double in size.

A business plan was developed, along with a Strategic Plan that featured restructured debt and budgets. We signed a long-term contract with LCRA, which requires that 70 percent of our load is purchased from LCRA. This gives Bluebonnet the flexibility to release 30 percent for competitive pricing and invest in our own generation of electricity.

In an effort to keep our finger on the pulse of our members, Bluebonnet conducts a member survey each year, that provides direct feedback from the membership and identifies areas within the cooperative that need improvement. Another avenue for member communication is the "Texas Co-op Power" magazine; every member has a paid subscription. "Texas Co-op Power" provides informative articles about electric generation, environmental issues, ways to conserve energy and local community news.

Of course there are always new sets of challenges, such as the need for greater generation capacity, rising material costs and the growth and urbanization of our service area. Currently, LCRA’s generation capacity is exceeded by demand from its customers, which means they have not built low-cost, base-load generation to keep pace with demand. Seventy percent of LCRA’s load is not signed to long-term power purchase agreements and LCRA is reluctant to invest in new generation without long-term purchase power contracts. Bluebonnet’s position on the LCRA Generation Advisory Board allows us to have a voice in generation decisions made by LCRA, in order to ensure that the needs of our members are met.

Another challenge we are already facing, which will only become worse, is the rising cost of distribution materials. Material costs have risen due to copper and aluminum market increases and soaring delivery costs due to fluctuation in fuel prices. From 2003 to 2007, the cost of a 40-foot class 5 pole has increased 41 percent and the cost of a 15KVA transformer has increased 136 percent. Considering the significant growth and urbanization expected in the next 10 years, the increasing cost of these and other

Since the electric market in Texas was deregulated in 2002, on average Bluebonnet has held its rate increases to less than increases during regulation.

Bluebonnet has averaged a lower or comparable rate as compared to other utility providers.

Bluebonnet buys about 90 percent of its power from the Lower Colorado River Authority, which is one of the state’s lowest cost wholesale power providers due to its diverse generation portfolio.

continued on page 22
essential materials will have a dramatic impact on how we do business.
Within the next 10 years, growth and urbanization will pose a significant challenge. In the last ten years Bluebonnet has only built one new substation, however, in order to keep up with projected growth in our service area, there are plans to build six new substations at a cost of $2 million each, in the next five years. Staying true to our mission, Bluebonnet embraces the challenge of determining how to keep rates competitive, maintain a healthy equity ratio and meet the demands of growth.
In his closing remarks, Mark asked, “How did we do?” The answer is that we have accomplished the goals set five years ago by keeping our rates below market averages, keeping our equity ratio at 39 percent, returning $2 million to our members in capital credits this year and being poised to meet the demands of growth.
After the general manager’s presentation, the board election was held, and while ballots were being counted, door prize drawings were held.
Thanks to our many sponsors, twenty door prizes were given out at the meeting. Some of the prizes included: a Dell computer, a full-size freezer, a cedar glider, power tools and a gas grill. Lucky member, Hattie Lovaasen of Giddings was the winner of our grand prize, the Cub Cadet riding lawn mower. All members casting a vote by proxy were eligible to win cash prizes or credits on their electric bills ranging from $50 to $1,000; 48 proxy voters’ names were drawn. Additionally, 12 names were drawn from members who voted by proxy or in person at the meeting; they won Chill ‘n Grill barbecue coolers.
Everyone from members to employees, management and our Board had a huge part in making this year’s Annual Meeting one of the best yet. Thank you to all of our members, your participation is vital to our success.
Thank you to our 2008 Platinum Level Trade and Technical Golf Tournament sponsors.

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative awarded 16 Trade and Technical Scholarships to our Service Area graduating seniors. Thanks to all our sponsors for sponsoring the 2008 Bluebonnet Scholarship Golf Tournament that was held June 5, 2008 at Colovista Country Club in Bastrop benefitting the Trade and Technical Scholarships.

The 2008 Trade and Technical Scholarship recipients:

BACK ROW (l-r)
Josh Shelby; Kody Kliebert; Cody Autry; Dustin Schneider; Gary May; Phillip Markert

FRONT ROW (l-r)
Lindsey Jones; Lauren Call; Ashley Martinez; Krystal Wilkins; Caitlin Hahn; Kandace Namken; Haley Hundemer; Chasidy Luetge; Wesley Manno

Not pictured: Brenda Garcia
BLUEBONNET ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Market Square

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BLUEBONNET MARKET SQUARE ADVERTISING SCHEDULE

All Market Square ads should be sent to Bluebonnet at least two months in advance. Information can be emailed to: magazine@bluebonnettelectric.coop or mailed to:

Magazine
c/o Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative
P.O. Box 729, Bastrop, Texas 78602

Area Events and ad information for the September 2008 issue are due by July 15.

We reserve the right to refuse any ads due to space limitations or questionable content. Ads must be resubmitted each month. Please indicate “For Sale,” “Free,” or “Wanted.”

Thank You

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the men and women who serve our country daily so that we may live in freedom.

Photographer Kitten Matus captured Army Specialist Chad Bennett spending some quality time with five-and-a-half-month-old daughter Kyra before being deployed to the Middle East. In addition to Kyra, wife Gwen, parents Jim and Roxanna Bennett, and many other family members said goodbye to Specialist Bennett on June 2, 2008, sending him off to defend freedom for all Americans. Across the country, soldiers and their families make this great sacrifice for each and every one of us. We owe them a debt of gratitude. Remember them this Fourth of July.

BLUEBONNET ENERGY TIP: SAVE ENERGY AND MONEY!

Check refrigerator temperatures. You are losing money and wasting energy if your refrigerator temperature is lower than 37-40 degrees and the freezer temperature is lower than 0-5 degrees. Check temperatures using a refrigerator/freezer thermometer, in a glass of water in the middle of the refrigerator and between packages in the freezer. Leave the thermometer in place and check it after 24 hours.

Bluebonnet offices will be closed July 4, 2008 in observance of Independence Day.
In Wichita Falls, they’ve turned the state’s bragging art form on its head. Can you tell me another place in Texas where townspeople proudly boast of having the smallest tourist attraction?

Dallas and Houston may have sparkling skyscrapers so tall that they require oxygen in the penthouses, but has Ripley’s Believe It or Not ever paid them attention? Do travelers make special detours to gaze in wonder?

Visitors to the North Texas city of Wichita Falls are routinely given directions to the edge-of-downtown corner of Seventh Street and LaSalle where, since 1919, the World’s Littlest Skyscraper has stood. The four-story red brick structure, just 40 feet tall with 118 square feet per floor, has survived tornadoes and fire and years of neglect to stand as a monument to the greed and graft of the region’s long-ago oil boom days.

This is the story visitors are told: When the discovery of black gold in nearby Burk Burnett turned thousands of Wichita County residents into instant millionaires, mineral rights deals were being made on street corners and in the shade of quickly erected tents that served as oil company headquarters. There was a desperate need for office space in Wichita Falls, and a Philadelphia oil man/promoter named J.D. McMahon came running to the rescue.

With blueprints in hand, he set about quickly selling $200,000 in stock to investors caught up in the quick-buck frenzy of the day. What would result, McMahon promised, was a multistory office building that would go up just across the street from the thriving St. James Hotel.

What the promoter failed to mention, legend has it, was that the scale of his blueprints was in inches rather than feet. Apparently too busy to keep an eye on construction, investors ultimately found themselves owners of a building that looked more like an elevator shaft than high-rise office space. The completed building’s outside dimensions were a closet-sized 11 feet by 19 feet. Stairwells that led to the upstairs floors occupied 25 percent of the interior.

And by the time construction was completed, McMahon was nowhere to be found. Duped investors unsuccessfully chased after the scam artist and sought legal remedy only to be told they had no case. McMahon had built exactly according to the blueprints they’d signed off on.

Still, with office space in such demand, oil companies squeezed desks into the tiny space and called it home until the boom finally fell silent. Then came the Depression, and the little building was boarded up and forgotten.

In 1986, the city deeded the building to the Wichita County Heritage Society, which attempted to preserve it. In time, however, it was again orphaned, and there was steadily growing talk of having it demolished before the architectural firm of Bundy, Young, Sims & Potter was hired by the city to stabilize the downtrodden structure. So fascinated did Dick Bundy and his partners become with the historic site that in 2000 they arranged a partnership with Marvin Groves Electric, purchased the building and spent $180,000 remodeling it.

“Frankly,” says Bundy, “it wasn’t a very smart investment, but so many people wanted it preserved. And, it’s a unique part of our local history.” Plus, he says, it is a great conversation piece. On a recent visit to Harvard University for a conference on the construction of high-rise office buildings, Bundy casually mentioned his firm’s involvement with the World’s Littlest Skyscraper. Before the gathering ended, he was asked to the podium to tell the story of the building and his history.

Today, it serves as more than an attraction for a steady stream of curious tourists. Local antiques dealer Glenda Tate recently leased the building, which now houses her business, The Antique Wood. Upstairs, Bundy’s artist wife, Merri, has converted the third floor into her studio.

Her husband, meanwhile, is off on a new quest. He is trying to confirm that author-adventurer Robert L. Ripley gave the building its nickname and publicized it in Ripley’s Believe It or Not cartoons.

Play with Your Food

BY KEVIN HARGIS I love to eat good food. And since I love to eat good food and didn’t want to eat at a restaurant every night, I learned how to cook.

I was blessed with parents who both knew their way around a kitchen. They gave me an appreciation of well-prepared meals and taught me the art and science of cooking. I remember those dinner staples my mom or my dad would whip up—beef enchiladas, a pot of slow-simmered beans, Sunday fried chicken and fresh-off-the-boat shrimp made into creole or fried golden brown and served with homemade hush puppies and coleslaw.

My folks didn’t just stick with those standards; they also liked to shake things up. A fondue set brought more than one evening of melted cheese heaven. A visit to a German restaurant inspired home-cooked potato pancakes and applesauce. Dad’s culinary experimentation led to many successes and one memorable—if not appetizing—conglomeration of macaroni and cheese with ham and pineapple, proving to us that the sum was sometimes less than the parts. But it was his willingness to try something different that stuck with me.

Dad died several years ago, but Mom is still a great cook. She can toss off those old family favorites with practiced ease. And her cakes, pies and cookies fly off the table at bake sales. I picked up much of my cooking knowledge from her, and Dad imparted to me a willingness to play around with a recipe, to cook by feel as much as rote. I love sampling new cuisines and enjoy the challenge of trying to re-create a dish I have eaten.

So I will approach my new position as food editor with the attitude of exploration. I will share with you the best of the many good recipes that are sent to our offices by our loyal readers every month. And I’ll share my thoughts as I broaden my food horizons.

I’d like to hear your suggestions for recipe topics you’d like to see in the future. It could be a new twist on an old favorite or an area of cooking you’d like to explore. Turn on your creative minds and send me your suggestions. I’ll send a copy of our 60 Years of Home Cooking cookbook to the person who sends me the most interesting topic.

You can mail suggestions to: Recipe Topics, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704 or e-mail them to recipes@texas-ec.org.

BASIC BARBECUE RUB

One of my earliest memories of food are the barbecues my parents used to throw for friends and family. It wasn’t just the meat itself, but the heaps of potato salad, coleslaw, beans and other side dishes covering tables. And the meat that came off the old pit smoker Dad had made from a surplus drum just seemed to melt in my mouth, especially the chicken with beautifully browned and crisp skin that had been spiced with a simple rub. So good, you didn’t even need his homemade sauce.

Use marinade in addition to a rub to impart maximum flavor, but if you don’t have time to marinade, rubs are a quick way to spice up your grill. Here’s a good, all-purpose barbecue rub that you can use as a base for your own cooking explorations. I’ll give it to you in proportions so you can make as much or as little as you like.

4 parts salt
4 parts brown sugar
4 parts cracked or coarse-ground black pepper
4 parts paprika
2 parts garlic or onion powder
1 part chili powder
Ground red pepper (cayenne, ancho or chipotle, for example) to taste

Thoroughly mix spices in a bowl with a tight lid. Rub generous amount on all surfaces of meat before grilling or smoking. Keep surplus rub covered.

When using this rub with pork, try adding ginger, dry mustard or turmeric. For beef, crank up the red pepper. Toss in a little lemon pepper or citrus zest with chicken.

Play with your food. You might like what happens. And even if your dish is a dud, you’ve learned something.
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DOES MEAL PLANNING DRIVE YOU NUTS?

Think pecans. One bite of this catfish, and your family will be hooked on this recipe, which replaces cornmeal with pecans for a savory twist on an ordinary meal.

PECAN-CRUSTED CATFISH

2 cups pecans
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
cayenne pepper
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 large egg
11/2 tablespoons milk
4 catfish or red-snapper fillets, about 4 ounces each

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Grind pecans in a food processor with on-off pulses, leaving some larger pieces intact and some of the pecans almost a powder. Set aside.

Mix all ingredients in bowl. Rub generous handful on both sides of chicken. Cover coated chicken and let sit at least 30 minutes before cooking.

Serving size: 1 tablespoon (approximate). Per serving: 14 calories, .8 g protein, .7 g fat, 2.8 g carbohydrates, 1.5 g fiber, 304 mg sodium

ALLISON JORDAN
Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative

ANYTHING RUB

4 tablespoons paprika
4 teaspoons coarse ground black pepper
4 teaspoons chili powder
1 tablespoon salt
1 tablespoon brown sugar
2 teaspoons garlic powder
2 teaspoons onion powder
1 tablespoon cayenne pepper
4 teaspoons orange zest, fresh or dried

Mix all ingredients in bowl. Rub generous handful on both sides of meat. Best on ribs or pork butt; will work fine on any barbecue. Makes enough rub for several applications.

Serving size: 1 tablespoon (approximate). Per serving: 32 calories, .5 g protein, .2 g fat, 7.5 g carbohydrates, .5 g fiber, 1,138 mg sodium

DONNA TINSLEY
Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative

HOLY MOLY CHICKEN RUB

1 tablespoon cocoa powder
2 teaspoons cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon paprika
1 teaspoon cumin
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
2 teaspoons chili powder

Mix all ingredients in bowl. Rub generous handful on both sides of chicken. If using on poultry, rub its skin with olive oil before applying spices.

Serving size: 1 tablespoon (approximate). Per serving: 23 calories, .8 g protein, .5 g fat, 5 g carbohydrates, 1.8 g fiber, 709 mg sodium

ATTENTION CO-OP MEMBERS

November’s recipe contest topic is COOKIE SWAP. We want your fanciest cookie recipe suitable for trading at the holidays. The deadline is JULY 10.

Send recipes to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You may also fax them to (512) 486-6254, e-mail them to recipes@texas-ec.org, or submit online at www.texascooppower.com. Please include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op. The top winner will receive a copy of 60 Years of Home Cooking and a Texas-shaped trivet. Runners-up will also receive a prize.
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The free 2008 edition of the Texas State Park Guide can help you escape to more than 90 state parks and historic sites offering fun activities, natural beauty and Texas history. This free publication is packed with maps, photos and useful information. From parks that are close to where you live, to parks that are great for road trips, this new guide has everything you need to plan your family getaway!

Pick up the 2008 guide at any Texas state park, or visit www.tpwd.state.tx.us/parkguide to view it online, have one mailed to you, or to receive free e-mail updates about state parks!

Special thanks to Toyota, whose generous support made this guide possible.
FOCUS ON TEXAS

UNDERWATER

Take a deep breath as we go underwater—or almost all the way underwater, in some cases—to explore readers’ photographic creativity. Several people sent in beautiful photos from such places as Cozumel, Mexico, and the Bahamas, but our focus is on Texas as reflected in the pictures below.—CAMILLE WHEELER

Leeedrider Steve Carlson and his horse Drifter are hat and ears above water as they traverse a pond near Wheelock in northern Brazos County. Photographer Ronda Weston, a Bryan Texas Utilities member, says that besides enjoying a good swim, Carlson and Drifter have also competed in working cow-horse events.

Much to Kaitlyn Muckleroy’s delight, Otis, a golden retriever puppy, sticks his nose underwater and blows bubbles in their wading pool. The picture was submitted by grandmother Lisa Everitt, a Sam Houston Electric Cooperative member, who says that Kaitlyn—2 years old in the photo and now 5—is celebrating her first year in remission after being diagnosed with neuroblastoma cancer before she turned 3. “We thank God for each day we have together,” Everitt says.

Linda Riley, a Bandera Electric Cooperative member, snapped this photo of her granddaughter Paige Jannise in the Frio River. “It’s so clear you can hardly tell she is about 2 feet underwater!” Riley says of Paige, who is signing “I love you.”

Glenda Self, a United Cooperative Services member, submitted this photo of her grandson Brody Self, who seemingly is suspended in water during a swimming lesson at the age of 3.

Upcoming in Focus on Texas

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PERFECT PETS is the topic for our SEPTEMBER 2008 issue. Send your photo—along with your name, address, daytime phone, co-op affiliation and a brief description—to Perfect Pets, Focus on Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, before July 10. A stamped, self-addressed envelope must be included if you want your entry returned (approximately six weeks). Please do not submit irreplaceable photographs—send a copy or duplicate. We regret that Texas Co-op Power cannot be responsible for photos that are lost in the mail or not received by the deadline. Please note that we cannot provide individual critiques of submitted photos. If you use a digital camera, e-mail your highest-resolution images to focus@texas-uc.org or submit them on our website at www.texascooppower.com.
JULY 03
Caldwell
July Third Celebration & Fireworks Display, (979) 567-4286

Waxahachie [3–4]
Crape Myrtle Festival & Driving Trail, (972) 937-2390

ANDICE
July Fourth Celebration, (254) 793-2502

BUFFALO GAP
Old-Fashioned Fourth of July Celebration, (325) 572-3365

CHAPPELL HILL
Fourth of July Parade, (979) 337-9910, www.chappellhillmuseum.org

CLEAR LAKE
July Fourth Fireworks, (281) 488-7676

COMFORT
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Fourth of July Extravaganza, (512) 601-3304

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July Fourth Celebration Parade, (830) 997-6891

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LBJ STATE PARK
Fourth of July in the 1900s, (830) 644-2252, www.lbj100.org

LITTLEFIELD
Fireworks Display, (806) 385-9001

McMAHAN
Whizzerville SummerFest, (512) 376-9073, www.whizzerville.com

MARBLE FALLS

PORT ARANSAS
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www.luckenbachtexas.com

CANYON LAKE
Fourth of July Fun Fair,
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www.habitatforsafeseniors.com

SHEPHERD
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BOERNE
Triple-H Wild West Funfest,
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McDADE
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UVALDE [12–13]
Animal Shelter Arts & Crafts Fair,
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EARTH [18–19]
Annual Rodeo,
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FRIONA
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CHILDRESS [19–20]
Old Settlers Rodeo & Reunion,
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HICO [22–26]
Old Settlers Reunion,
1-800-361-4426

QUITMAN [31–8/2]
Old Settler’s Reunion,
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FRELSBURG
Sts. Peter & Paul Church Festival,
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AMHERST
Celebration,
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BONHAM
Heritage Day Celebration,
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CORN HILL [25–26]
Moravian Hall’s Annual Barbecue Cook-Off,
(912) 746-2591,
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LEAKEY [25–27]
2008 Texas Open Fly-In,
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Events are listed according to space available; see the full listing at www.texascooppower.com.

Event information can be mailed to Around Texas, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, faxed to (512) 486-6254, e-mailed to aroundtx@texas-ec.org, or submitted on our website at www.texascooppower.com. Please submit events for September by July 10.

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Deadline for receipt of entries is September 10, 2008. Winners will be announced in our December 2008 issue.

Up to three entries are allowed per person. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper. Entries MUST include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your electric cooperative, or they will be disqualified. Send entries to: Holiday Recipe Contest, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, or fax to (512) 486-6254. To enter by e-mail (recipes@texas-ec.org), you must include “Holiday Recipe Contest” in the subject line and submit one recipe per e-mail (no attachments). For official rules, visit www.texascooppower.com or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address above.
Up in the Panhandle, where flat land abruptly gives way to ancient, rugged canyons, it’s easy to imagine dinosaurs digging their claws into the earth millions of years ago.

Those dinosaurs vanished long ago, but some of their bones are on magnificent display at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon.

Just outside Amarillo, I studied the bones of modern-day dinosaurs—vintage tail-finned cars—at Cadillac Ranch. And within city limits, I strolled the skeleton of the legendary Route 66 in a historic district designed to bring the road and its commerce back to life.

Our trip starts in the Route 66 district and then heads 3 miles west of Amarillo on Interstate 40 to Cadillac Ranch (the cars are just south of the interstate on the eastbound side). Next, we travel 15 miles south on Interstate 27 and U.S. 87 to Canyon to visit Texas’ largest history museum.

AMARILLO

Born in 1926, ROUTE 66 symbolized freedom and mobility on the open road.

Ultimately, Route 66 was replaced by bigger interstates, such as I-40 that roars through Amarillo. But the city’s historic district, the heart of which is a 15-block section on Southwest Sixth Avenue between Georgia and Western streets, is trying to pull in tourists and business. Business owners believe that their eclectic mix of antique stores and others—not to mention the allure of Route 66 itself—is sufficiently attractive.

Some of the district’s buildings are listed on the National Register of Historical Places.

One such building, the NAT, which houses a gigantic used bookstore and ballroom, originally was an open-air natatorium built in 1922. The reportedly haunted building was enclosed in 1923 and later converted to a dance hall with 10,000 square feet of maple flooring covering the pool area.

The highlight for me was supper at the GOLDEN LIGHT CAFE, which opened in 1946. I spent $7.58 on a burger, soft drink and not-so-small basket of fries. Now that’s a price from yesteryear.

CANYON

Here’s my advice for anyone visiting the PANHANDLE-PLAINS HISTORICAL MUSEUM: Give yourself a whole day. Or two.

With 2 million artifacts, 102,004 square feet of total exhibit space, 33,095 photographs, 300 works of art available for viewing at any time and 15 permanent collections that include ranching and Native American life, transportation, firearms, geology and a replica of a pioneer town—just to throw out a few numbers—the museum simply can’t be savored on a quick walk-through.

The museum’s collections range from the strange—a large autograph collection includes a lock of George Washington’s hair—to the bigger than life: Among many impressive findings, the paleontology exhibit boasts one particularly scary-looking specimen, a labyrinthodont amphibian. The large aquatic animal sported a medial third eye on its flat, bony skull.

The museum’s art galleries alone are worth the trip and, among several high-profile artists, feature the works of Frank Reaugh (1860-1945), known as the dean of Texas painters.

Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum, (806) 651-2244, www.panhandleplains.org

Camille Wheeler is staff writer at Texas Co-op Power.
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