

MEMBER SERVICES

Q&A

Q. I had my bill with me when I made a payment at a Bluebonnet member service center recently, but do I need to have my bill handy any time I contact the co-op with a question?

A. Thanks so much for bringing your bill with you. Whether you come into a member service center or call us, having your account number ready will save you a lot of time. Although we can look up the account with other information, the account number is the most accurate way for us to ensure we're handling the correct account.

Quick tips: At a member service center, one of our representatives can write your account number on a card to store in your wallet. If you typically call us, you might find it helpful to store our number – 800-842-7708 – in your contacts and include your account number in the Notes field of your contact information.

Before we conduct any transaction with you, we also will ask for two forms of personal identification, which could be your date of birth, government-issued ID number or the last four digits of your Social Security number.



This procedure is required by law and keeps your account safe.

Protecting our members' information goes hand in hand with our commitment to outstanding member service. We understand that some members might find it to be a hassle to provide this information. You have another option: You can do most of your co-op business online at bluebonnet.coop or via our mobile app. To get the mobile app, search for "Bluebonnet Electric" in Apple's App Store for iPhones or Google Play for Android smartphones.

For more information, please contact a member service representative by emailing memberservices@bluebonnet.coop, by calling 800-842-7708 or in person at a member service center in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart or Manor. Our business hours are 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

— **Kathy Holmes,**
member service call center supervisor

Bluebonnet to elect Board members May 9

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting will be May 9 at the Sons of Hermann Hall in Giddings. Four of 11 seats on the Board of Directors will be up for election that day, and co-op officials will present members with the annual State of the Co-op report.

Board members serve staggered three-year terms. Seats up for election this year represent District 3 for Bastrop County; District 4 for Lee, Milam and Williamson counties; District 6 for Austin, Colorado and Fayette counties; and District 7 for Washington County.

The deadline to declare candidacy and file required documentation and fees in order to seek a seat on the Board was Feb. 8. Look for information about all candidates and more details about this year's Annual Meeting in Bluebonnet's pages inside the April edition of Texas Co-op Power magazine or on our website.

Sons of Hermann Hall is at 1031 County Road 223, Giddings. Registration will begin at 1:30 p.m. May 9, and the meeting will begin at 2:30 p.m. If you are unable to attend, you can vote by proxy. Proxy forms will be mailed to Bluebonnet members this month and must



Sarah Beal photo

Each year at the Annual Meeting, members elect the people who sit on the co-op's Board of Directors.

be postmarked by, or dropped off at any of Bluebonnet's member service centers in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart or Manor, by 5:30 p.m. May 2.

If you have questions about the meeting, call 800-842-7708 from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday or email memberservices@bluebonnet.coop.

Bluebonnet, LCRA help fund projects in community

Three regional volunteer fire departments and a community center will be able to build, upgrade or repair facilities and buy new equipment with a total of \$109,407 in grants from Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative and the Lower Colorado River Authority.

The grants were awarded through the LCRA's Community Development Partnership Program, which helps cities, counties, volunteer fire departments, regional development councils and other nonprofit organizations in LCRA's electric and water service areas. Bluebonnet is one of LCRA's wholesale electric customers and a partner in the grant program.

The Chappell Hill Volunteer Fire Department received \$50,000 for a 70-by-110-foot addition to its fire station in downtown Chappell Hill, 10 miles east of Brenham. The addition will be used primarily for training area fire departments as well as a staging site for first responders and an emergency shelter for people displaced during a disaster. It will also be a venue for community meetings, events and voting.

The Dale Community Center, just northeast of Lockhart, received \$39,600 to air condition its gymnasium, repair windows and flooring in the gym, and replace wiring and lights on the gym stage and in the equipment room.

Caldwell County Emergency Services District No. 3 received \$12,000 to buy a thermal imaging camera, medical bags and water rescue bags. The emergency services district, now in its second year, is a funding resource for emergency response organizations that serve Caldwell County.

The York Creek Volunteer Fire Department, 10 miles south of San Marcos, received \$7,807 for new fire protection suits.

For information about the grant program, visit lcr.org/cdpp.

York Creek VFD check presentation, right. From left, Milton Shaw, Bluebonnet Board member; Joyce Buckner, Bluebonnet community representative; Scott Robinson, York Creek VFD training chief; Lori A. Berger, LCRA Board member; Andrew Munk, York Creek VFD chief; Gill Powers, York Creek VFD president; and Rick Arnic, LCRA governmental affairs representative.



Sarah Beal photos

Chappell Hill VFD check presentation, above. From left, Lori A. Berger, LCRA Board member; Hondo Powell, Bluebonnet community representative; Marcy Kmiec, Chappell Hill VFD vice president; Clint Harp, LCRA chief of staff; Michael Kmiec, Chappell Hill VFD fire chief; Mat Kolajajek, Chappell Hill VFD assistant fire chief; Deb Calderone, Chappell Hill VFD secretary; Bryce Armstrong, Chappell Hill VFD captain; Joseph Fritz, Chappell Hill VFD captain; and Kate Holman, LCRA governmental affairs representative.



Dale Community Center check presentation, left. From left, Milton Shaw, Bluebonnet Board member; Joyce Buckner, Bluebonnet community representative; Lori A. Berger, LCRA Board member; Jerry West, Dale Community Center president; Beverly West, community center secretary; and Rick Arnic, LCRA governmental affairs representative.



Caldwell County Emergency Services District No. 3 check presentation, above. From left, Cole Jackson, Martindale VFD firefighter; Drew Schulle, Martindale VFD firefighter; Milton Shaw, Bluebonnet Board member; Joyce Buckner, Bluebonnet community representative; Lori A. Berger, LCRA Board member; Richard Salmon, Caldwell ESD No. 3 vice president; Bill Hamilton, Caldwell ESD No. 3 secretary; Randy Bunker, Martindale mayor; and Rick Arnic, LCRA governmental affairs representative.



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air-conditioning system after moving into a new building in 2008. "We're well insulated, and we keep a curtain closed over our one big window in the front of the church," said Senior Pastor John Abraham. When the church is occupied, the thermostat is set to 75 degrees during the day and 68 at night, he said, and he usually turns off the system when the church is empty. "I've informed our people not to change it because we're limited in funding."

Powering up

Back at the Family Worship Center outside Elgin on a cold winter night, the activities hall was warm and cozy. Families had gathered for the Wednesday "Power Up" service, a midweek boost members get from fellowship and faith.

Dozens of people of all ages lined up for bowls of hot vegetable soup and cornbread prepared by two members of the congregation. Some of the families had begun the evening playing pool on three billiard tables.

Charles and Michelle McInnis, both state employees in Austin, said they looked for a church soon after moving to Elgin 10 years ago. He grew up Baptist and she Methodist, but they were open to any church rooted in the Bible.

At the Family Worship Center, "What we noticed right away was the friendliness. Some other places you have to go three or four Sundays in a row before someone recognizes you are there. That's not the case here where everyone is so accepting," Charles said.

"The leadership is great, and the church as a whole is a really good example of what family life looks like," he added.

McInnis said his 8-year-old son, C.J., and 18-year-old daughter, Jordan, have many friends at the church. Jordan is also a singer on the praise team.

After the meal, children and teenagers headed upstairs for music, games and religious lessons.

In the high school group's room, 15 young people joined Jordan singing along with a Christian music video. The darkened room was decorated like a disco.

Next door, the middle school group answered a group leader's question about what they would change in their lives if they could. "Spend less," one boy said. "Stop fighting with my sister," another said.

Downstairs, the adults sat at big round tables to hear Edmon talk about a Bible verse and then family matters. He pulled out his cell phone as a prop and questioned the pressure to answer every call immediately.

"It's supposed to be such a time-saving device, yet we have less time.... God didn't overschedule your life; you did.... Kids can't do every sport and every activity from noon 'til night.... Take time to sit together and read and talk," he said.

The Family Worship Center nonetheless presents a modern face with digital communications to reach families on Facebook and Twitter. Videos of Edmon's talks and sermons are posted on the church's website along with parishioners' feedback. Clips show events such as the church's annual Backpack Outreach where 500 free backpacks loaded with supplies are handed out to Elgin public school students.

It's all part of the well-rounded worldly and spiritual life that Edmon tries to build.

"I love what I'm doing," he said. "There is something so rich about being there for people through every stage of their lives." ■