

# James Kershaw retires from Board after 36 years

## Bluebonnet director 'made a difference that will serve ... for generations'

By Melissa Segrest

In 1982, the year James Kershaw joined Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors, the first mobile phone hit the market. It weighed 2 pounds and cost about \$4,000.

Today, cell phone technology is lightweight, more affordable and has revolutionized communications. And in those 36 years, Kershaw helped lead changes and modernization advances at Bluebonnet that have transformed the business of providing electric power to a 3,800-square-mile swath of Central Texas.

This month, Kershaw retires from his position as a Bluebonnet Board member representing Bastrop County.

"Jimmy Kershaw is one of the most humble, kind and giving men I've met, and it has been an honor to serve with him for so many years," Bluebonnet Board Chairman Ben Flencher said. "He continues to be an inspiration to me and those who have worked with him. Throughout his career, he has always had a smile and a positive attitude. He is an amazing man, and we will miss him on the Board."

Kershaw was born in Brenham in 1926, attending Alamo School there and then Stephen F. Austin High in Bryan. He achieved his goal of attending Texas A&M, but during his third semester, he was drafted into the Navy. He served for three years as a code translator and transmitter on a patrol torpedo boat in waters off the West Coast.

He returned to A&M to graduate in 1948, then earned a degree from the University of Texas School of Law in 1951.

After two short stints with law firms, Kershaw was elected Bastrop County attorney. Four years later, he became district attorney for Bastrop, Burleson, Lee and Washington counties, a position he

held from 1956 to 1972. He returned to practicing law until retiring in 2016 after a 62-year law career.

"James Kershaw is an amazing gentleman and an incredible board member," said Roderick Emanuel, Bluebonnet board member. "He has made a difference that will serve the members of Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative for generations to come. It has been an honor to serve with him for so many years."

A generous and civic-minded man, Kershaw was chairman of the Salvation Army of Bastrop and rang the fundraising bell during the holiday season for 25 years. He was chairman of the board and an attorney for the Aqua Water Supply Corporation, and a board member of Bastrop County FEMA.

Kershaw joined the board of the First National Bank of Bastrop in 1973 and was chairman for 25 years. Last year, he was named chairman emeritus. In February, he received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Bastrop Chamber of Commerce. He and wife, Doris, are active in the Bastrop Museum and the county's historical society. They are both chalice bearers at Calvary Episcopal Church of Bastrop.

Kershaw appreciates Bluebonnet's employees. "The ladies and gentlemen who work there are the most enthusiastic folks," he said. "There are so many people who want to work for Bluebonnet because employees there are happy and always trying to do a good job. I hope



they treasure the opportunity they've been given, and I encourage them to keep working by the principles of the cooperative."

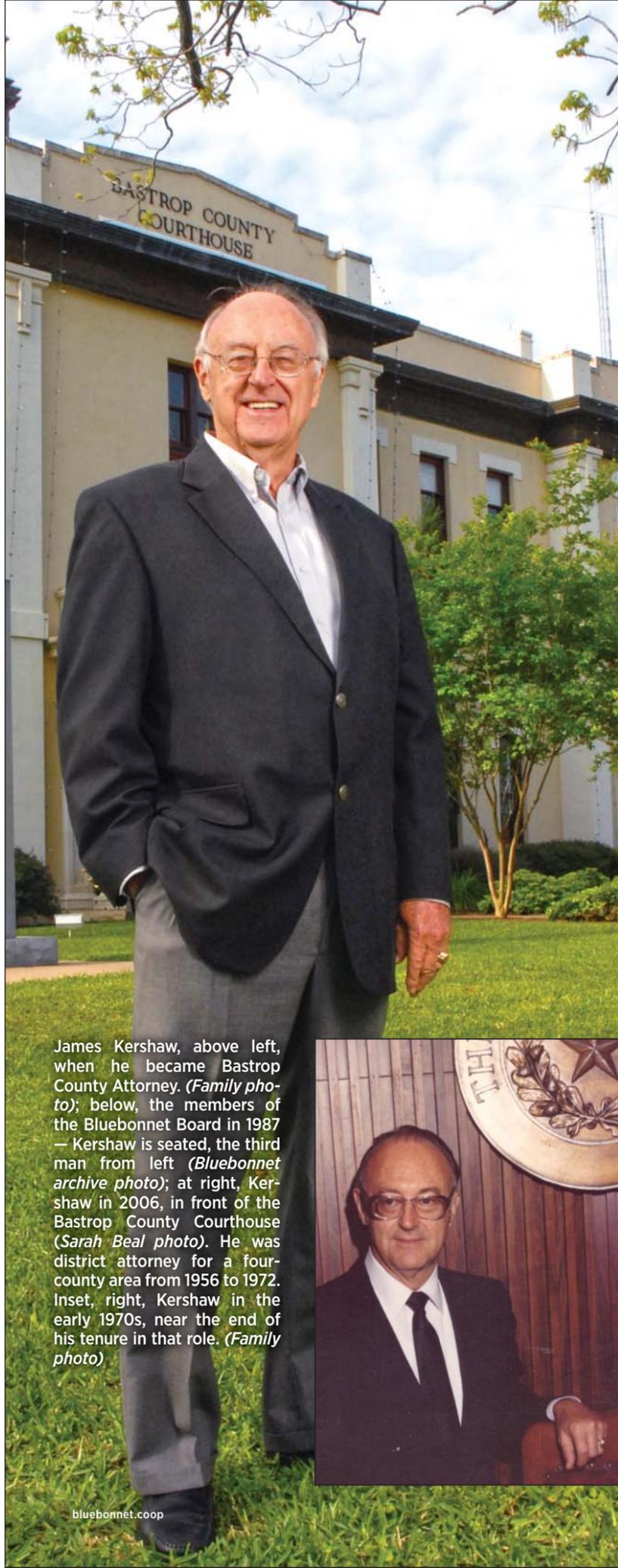
"Mr. Kershaw has had an enormous influence on Bluebonnet during his tenure on our board," said Matt Bentke, Bluebonnet's general manager. "He's always been courteous

and kind when interacting with our members and employees, but fierce when advocating on their behalf. We will certainly miss his presence on the board."

To the members of Bluebonnet, Kershaw offered a "huge thank you" for electing him to serve on their board of directors for so many years.

On a recent, sunny spring day, sitting in his home office, he made a bold assertion. "In all of my years on the Bluebonnet board, I never received a complaint about the co-op. Ever!" That could be as much a testament to the work of gentlemanly James Kershaw as it is to satisfied members and the work of cooperative employees.

He and Doris look forward to more travel, but these days, his favorite pastime is the simple joy of working in the front yard of his Bastrop home. Kershaw remembers the days before electricity reached rural Central Texans, when family members and friends gathered on front porches to stay cool and wave to neighbors. Today, almost 80 years later, his Bastrop neighbors can expect to see the same friendly wave from Kershaw. □



James Kershaw, above left, when he became Bastrop County Attorney. (Family photo); below, the members of the Bluebonnet Board in 1987 — Kershaw is seated, the third man from left (Bluebonnet archive photo); at right, Kershaw in 2006, in front of the Bastrop County Courthouse (Sarah Beal photo). He was district attorney for a four-county area from 1956 to 1972. Inset, right, Kershaw in the early 1970s, near the end of his tenure in that role. (Family photo)



### CAPITAL CREDITS

## Money in your pocket

Most Bluebonnet members will see a credit on their bill this month. It's called "capital credits" and is one of the benefits of being a member of an electric cooperative.

The co-op shares its excess revenue — money it collects above what is required to run the business — with its members, much like stock dividends. The amount that members receive depends on how much electricity they used in the previous years and how long they have been Bluebonnet members.

The Board of Directors voted on the amount in April. Last year, the co-op returned \$3.14 million to its members and former members. In the past five years, Bluebonnet has returned \$23.73 million to its members.

Questions? Contact a member service representative at 800-842-7708 or [memberservices@bluebonnet.coop](mailto:memberservices@bluebonnet.coop).



## New hours in July!

Do you need to speak to a representative by phone at 800-842-7708? Or talk to someone in person through the drive-through or in a lobby at one of our five member service centers? The business hours for Bluebonnet's member services will change starting July 2. The new hours will be 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

We have member service centers in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart and Manor. Find the addresses by clicking on "Contact Us" at the top of any page of our website, [bluebonnet.coop](http://bluebonnet.coop).

### OFFICE CLOSING

Bluebonnet offices will be closed May 28 for Memorial Day. Report outages at 800-949-4414, [bluebonnet.coop](http://bluebonnet.coop) or via our mobile app. Pay your bill any time online, on our mobile app or by calling member services at 800-842-7708.