



## Comanche Electric Cooperative To Host 69th Annual Meeting

If you are in the mood for good food, good music and good prizes, Comanche Electric Cooperative has a treat in store for you! August 18 will mark the 69th annual meeting of the cooperative. The Comanche City Park will once again be the site for this meeting.

The Buddy and Tina Wright Group will provide this year's entertainment. Buddy and Tina Wright, along with their parents, Pat and Ray Wright, will play a combination of bluegrass and country music. Buddy and Tina both received scholarships to attend the New Conservatory of Dallas at age 6 and 8. Shortly after, Tina won the SMU Symphonic Music Festival award for classical violin at age 8. At 9, Buddy conducted the Dallas Symphony Orchestra with the assistance of Conductor Andrew Litton, which was televised on the A&E TV Network.

Buddy and Tina have both appeared in several documentaries on child prodigies. They have been spotlighted on CNN, TNN and CMT and have performed at the International Bluegrass Music Association in Louisville, Kentucky, the European World of Bluegrass Festival in Voorthuizen, Netherlands,

as well as the National Old Time Country Music Association. They received a 2006 Seal of Excellence award and are one of the top 100 Texas touring artists and members of the Texas Commission on the Arts 2002-08. This is one show you will not want to miss!

The guest speaker for this year's meeting will be Clifton Karnei. Mr. Karnei is the executive vice president and general manager of Brazos Electric Power Cooperative, the power supplier for Comanche Electric Cooperative, and is sure to give an interesting and timely presentation.

The food will once again be brought to us by J.C. and Katie Cook of Cook's Fish Barn. The meal will consist of fried catfish, chicken strips, hush puppies, french fries and coleslaw. J.C. and Katie have never failed to provide us with a wonderful meal that is always considered the main event of the meeting.

For the second year in a row, members will have the opportunity to visit a health fair. Members will be able to have their blood pressure and cholesterol checked and visit a number of booths where they can receive health information and register for

door prizes.

As member-owners of Comanche Electric Cooperative, the staff, employees and board of directors encourage you to attend this annual event where you will not only enjoy good food and fellowship, but also have the opportunity to exercise democratic control by voting in the director elections. We also encourage you to take this opportunity to meet and get to know as many of the employees and directors as you can.



Scout Noah Vanecek presented the colors for the Pledge of Allegiance at the 2006 annual meeting.



Boyce Donaway receives a retirement gift and thank you for a job well-done from General Manager Ronnie Robinson at the 2006 annual meeting.



The Buddy and Tina Wright Group, which plays bluegrass and country music, will provide the entertainment at this year's meeting on August 18.

Those who attend Comanche Electric Cooperative's annual meeting are always treated to good food.



## Can You Identify These People?

During World War II, Comanche Electric Cooperative experienced a lull in the building of electric lines due to a shortage of materials and manpower. Once the war was over and our men came home, Comanche Electric once again began the process of running lines to serve our rural families.

This picture was taken sometime around 1946 as the crews were preparing to resume construction. Most of the men have been identified but a few are unnamed. If you know any of these unnamed men please contact Shirley Dukes at 1-800-915-2533 or by e-mail at [sdukes@ceca.coop](mailto:sdukes@ceca.coop).



**Back Row:**

- 1. ?
- 2. ?
- 3. Pete Fritts
- 4. Bud Langley
- 5. Fount Wood
- 6. ?
- 7. Hardie Layman
- 8. ? Jones
- 9. L.K. (Bud) Lowver
- 10. Phillip McAlilly
- 11. Aubrey Davis
- 12. G.L. Stewart
- 13. Fred Hicks
- 14. Hab Cottrell

- 15. Dabald Colcleasure
- 16. O.T. Cottrell
- 17. ?
- 18. Freddie Scott
- 19. Billy Jack Scott
- 20. Jesse Ray Murphree
- 21. ?
- 22. ?
- 23. Marvin McNutt

- 5. Bill Elliott
- 6. (Little) Andy Johnson
- 7. Ardell Elliott
- 8. J.O. (Sweenie) Kirkland
- 9. Glenn Fritts
- 10. Travis Everett
- 11. Jim Hardy
- 12. McCoy Bradshaw
- 13. Milton McNutt
- 14. Marcellus Layman

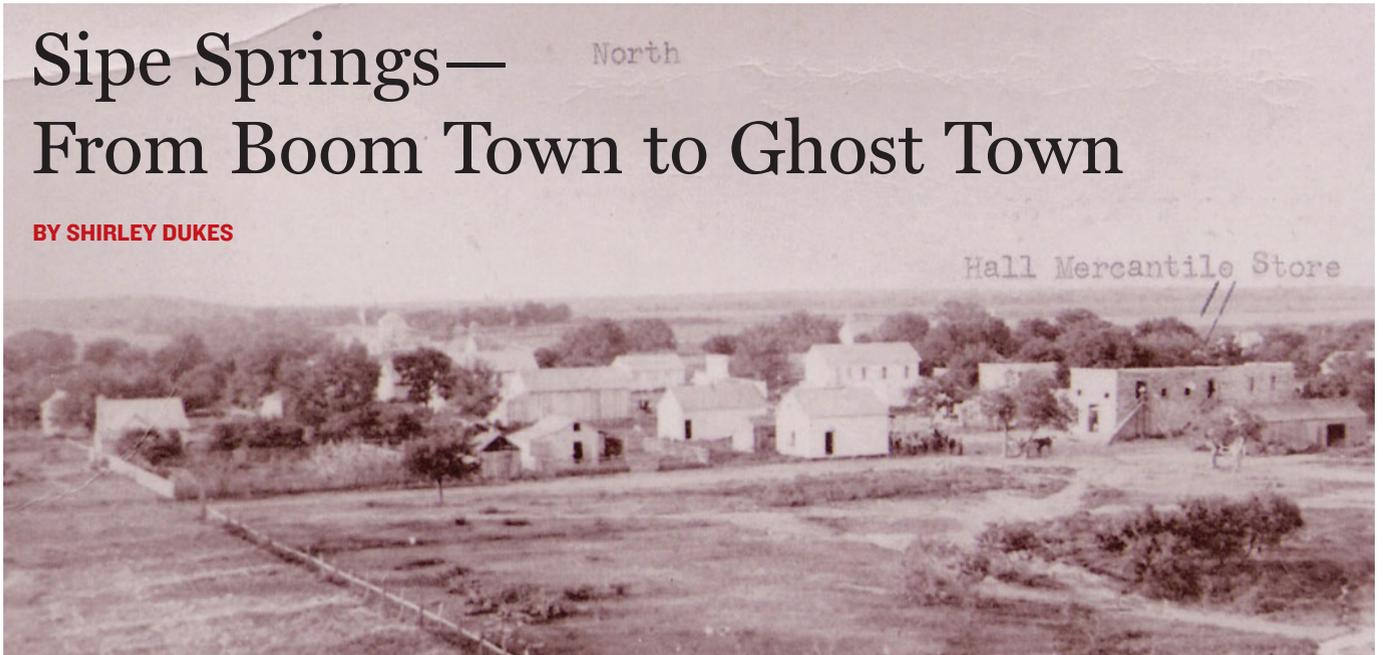
**Front Row:**

- 1. Marion Gaines
- 2. Andy Johnson
- 3. ? Woolsey
- 4. Cliff Flanagan

**Lying on ground in Front:**  
Jerry Scott

# Sipe Springs— From Boom Town to Ghost Town

BY SHIRLEY DUKES



The original Sipe Springs settlement, now known as “Old Town,” looking north.

A great number of years ago, I learned that the fastest way to offend a resident of Sipe Springs is to pronounce the name of the community as it looks. They will quickly tell you that it is pronounced “Seep” Springs, and you’d better not forget it. Sipe Springs is located about 17 miles northwest of Comanche at the intersection of FM 1477 and FM 587. Though you would not realize it to look at the community now, it was once a thriving town with stores, banks, hotels, cafés and various entertainment halls.

Settlers began to arrive around 1870, but the town was not formally organized until 1873. The naming of the town is just about as interesting as its history. Sipe Springs was built among an almost forest of live oak trees. The water that supplied the town came from the natural springs that seeped out of the rock formations to form a creek. In 1873, the town began the process of building a post office and a school, so it was imperative that they decide on a name for it.

There were discussions as to whether the town should be named Sipe Springs, for the springs that fed it, or Live Oak, for the stand of trees among which it was founded. The

inhabitants of the town agreed on Sipe Springs, and suddenly the town had a name and the beginnings of a heritage. While the spelling of the town’s name may appear to be somewhat unorthodox, I decided to look it up in the dictionary and see what Webster had to say about it. It appears that the word is indeed pronounced “seep,” and it is the Scotland/Northern England version of the word that dates back to sometime before the year 900. Its definition is to drip, ooze or soak through, the same as our modern, well-known “seep” spelling of the word.

The first person known to have settled here was W.D. Whitesides, who was reported to have traveled to the area from Arkansas in December 1869. One month later, his wife and children arrived, along with her parents and their families.

The summer of 1872 saw the arrival of more pioneers, followed in the spring of 1873 by an additional convoy of settlers. With the influx of settlers, the community was now well populated enough to start a town.

In 1870, a big cattle deal was made when a man named Peter Smith came from Arkansas and purchased 500 head of 6-year-old steers from Schmick and Folic for \$10 per head and paid for

the cattle with \$20 gold pieces.

Indians were still a problem at this time, and in 1873, a gentleman by the name of Captain Hall organized a company of Minute Men to protect the town. The last Indian raid came in 1874, wherein Bob Leslie was killed on Rush Creek.

Soon after the town was founded, Baptist and Methodist churches were organized. The Rev. James Buckmaster was a preacher of the gospel of United Brethren Faith. It was under his direction that a picket schoolhouse was erected, and that was where he also organized his first Sunday School class.

The post office officially opened its doors in 1884. The first postmaster was M.W. Hall, and for a while, the men of the town took turns carrying the mail from Comanche once a week. Sometime later, a 10-year-old boy named Nim Childress became the first Sipe Springs mail carrier, riding an old mule named Jude.

At that time, the town had a population of 130 with five general stores, two hotels and two gin-gristmills. By 1890, it boasted a weekly newspaper called the *Cyclone*. In 1914, when the population had reached 500, the *Cyclone* had competition from the *Sipe Springs Record*.

The year 1911 saw the arrival of the “iron horse” in the form of the Texas Central Railroad. The railroad ran just north of Sipe Springs on its trek from DeLeon to Cross Plains. This was a huge boon for Sipe Springs, and the town began moving from what is now referred to as “Old Town” closer to the railroad at what is now called “New Town.”

Sipe Springs saw its biggest growth when oil was found in 1918. As with many of the almost-abandoned towns in Texas, a short-lived oil boom erupted, with tent cities and a population of 8,000. Suddenly, there were hotels, drugstores, barbershops, cafés, banks, a cotton gin, a movie theater, a dance hall, an opera house and a professional baseball team. But, as with so many of the other oil booms, it soon ended. By 1924, both banks had failed, many of the buildings had been lost to fire, and the population was back down to about what it had been before the boom hit.

In 1922, during the boom, the first school was built, followed by the second in 1937. But with dwindling water supplies and the departure of the oil boom population, the schools closed in 1952 when they consolidated with the Sidney and DeLeon school districts.

North of Sipe Springs on CR 190 sits the Sipe Springs Cemetery. Founded in 1873 after the death of Pratt Scarlet, the cemetery is still in use with about 1,150 gravesites including veterans from the Civil and Spanish-American wars; World Wars I and II; and the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. Many of the graves date back to the mid to late 1800s.

Of course, no story of Sipe Springs is complete without mentioning the “Little Girl, Age 3.” Just outside of Sipe Springs on CR 185 is a lone grave with a crude headstone that simply reads “Little Girl Age 3 1870’s”. No one is certain who lies here, but legend has it that somewhere near 1870, a family stopped to rest in Sipe Springs while traveling west in a covered wagon. According to Mae Leonard, now deceased, the family passed through the area during a snowstorm. When the child died, they buried her and then sought shelter at a nearby cabin. The family’s main concern when they moved on was that there would be no one to care for their child’s grave, so the woman in the cabin where they had sought shelter assured them that she would mind the gravesite for them. The grave is still tended today by local residents of the community. Between those who tend the gravesite and those who come out of curiosity to see this unique landmark, the gravesite is visited almost daily. Gifts for the little girl are placed on the grave, and money is left to help with the upkeep of the girl’s final resting place. Legend also has it that if you toss coins onto the grave and make a wish, it will come true.

Sipe Springs still sits amid the live oak trees and the springs for which it was named. Small parts of New Town and even smaller parts of Old Town still exist. There is no official population count, but its unofficial population as of 2000 was approximately 15. And sadly, what was once a thriving and booming little town is now listed as one of 225 ghost towns in the state of Texas.



**This picture, taken in 1948, shows the oil station and Masonic Lodge, looking south on Main Street in Sipe Springs’ ‘New Town.’**



## COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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### YOUR “LOCAL PAGES”

This section of *Texas Co-op Power* is produced by Comanche EC each month to provide you with information about current events, special programs and other activities of the cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Shirley at the Comanche office or at [sdukes@ceca.coop](mailto:sdukes@ceca.coop).

COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# Biomass—A New Name For an Old Concept

With all the talk about a shortage of electric power, it's no wonder that so many of our members have questions regarding new and emerging energy technologies. One such technology that is being talked about is biomass energy. While biomass may appear to be a relatively new term, the concept of it is not. Biomass energy, or "bioenergy," is simply the process of burning renewable and sustainable products to produce energy. Humans have been doing this since the discovery of fire by burning combustible materials to cook food and keep warm. So, while the concept of creating energy by using fire is not an entirely new idea, using biomass energy to produce electric generation is.

The term biomass means any plant-derived organic matter available on a renewable basis, including dedicated energy crops and trees, agricultural food and feed crops, agricultural crop wastes and residues, wood wastes and residues, aquatic plants, animal wastes, municipal wastes, and other waste materials.

In a way, biomass is also a form of solar energy. All biomass products contain some sort of stored energy from the sun. Plants absorb the sun's energy during photosynthesis, and the chemical energy in the plants gets passed on to animals. When burned, the chemical energy in biomass is released as heat.

Biomass in the energy production industry refers to living and recently living biological material that can be used as fuel or for industrial produc-



tion. Trees, grasses, agricultural crops and other materials derived from living matter are all types of biological materials used for biomass energy. The most economical types of fuel used in biomass energy are the residues of organic products. These could include such items as the byproducts of food, fiber and forest production such as sawdust and rice husks, or pallets and woody yard trimmings.

Biomass fuel is converted to heat energy in a highly controlled reactor or boiler. The heat is then converted to mechanical energy with either a steam or gas turbine, or an internal combustion engine, and the mechanical device turns a generator that produces electricity.

The cost to generate electricity from biomass varies depending on the type of technology used, the size of the power plant and the cost of biomass fuel supply. Biomass power systems range from a few kilowatts

for onsite generation units, up to 80 megawatts (MW) for power plants. Each MW of biopower capacity generates enough electricity in a year to power about 525 average U.S. homes.

Creativity has become the norm when it comes to determining what products are used as biomass. Waste vegetable oil, cow manure, yard clippings, cornstalks and trees are being used as fuel for diesel engines. The dairy cows at one Minnesota farm produce 22,000 gallons of manure a day. The manure, in turn, yields about 80,000 cubic feet of biogas a day—enough to generate 3,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity. Because of its high alkaline content, turkey litter is a clean burning fuel. In Britain, three plants collectively generate 65 MW of electricity from 3 million tons of litter to provide power to 100,000 households.

Landfill gas cleanup is an important issue, and scientists are in the process of researching and harnessing

those gases to produce electricity. Municipal solid waste contains significant portions of organic materials that produce a variety of gaseous products when dumped, compacted and covered in landfills. Anaerobic bacteria thrives in the oxygen-free environment, resulting in the decomposition of the organic materials and the production of primarily carbon dioxide and methane. Carbon dioxide is likely to leach out of the landfill because it is soluble in water. Methane, on the other hand, which is less soluble in water and lighter than air, is likely to migrate out of the landfill. Landfill-gas energy facilities capture the methane and burn it for energy. And in Texas, where mesquite trees are a nuisance to be reckoned with, researchers at Texas A&M University are experimenting with the mesquite byproduct as a source of biomass.

The most common use of electricity from biomass is as a base load in the existing electrical distribution system. This base load power predictably produces electricity on a constant basis. Unlike other renewable energy technologies such as wind or solar, biomass power systems do not require backup from the more traditional power stations.

While biomass energy uses a cleaner fuel source than fossil fuels, it, too, can pollute the air when it is burned. Burning biomass fuel does not produce the sulfur that causes acid rain, but it does release carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas.

According to the Texas State Energy Conservation Office, “as one of the nation’s leading agricultural states, and with a large forest and cattle industry, Texas is poised to become a major biomass producer. If just half of Texas’ available biomass wastes were utilized for electricity production, they could supply 10 percent of the state’s needs.”

As proud Texans, let’s aid the decision-makers in our great state and encourage them to bring Texas to the forefront in this leading-edge technology.

## Why Is My Clock Blinking?



A power outage is inconvenient, whether it lasts for hours or just for a moment. But there is a difference between a prolonged power outage and a brief interruption.

Momentary power outages are split-second interruptions in service. They are a normal, unavoidable part of power delivery that have always occurred and used to go unnoticed.

Today’s sophisticated computers and other electronic equipment are

supersensitive, though, and can be affected by a momentary outage—even one as brief as a thousandth of a second.

Yes, they are annoying. But momentary power outages actually serve an important purpose. For example, when a tree limb falls on an electric wire, your co-op’s sensing equipment might detect a potentially dangerous condition and break the circuit for a split second. This very brief break in the flow of electricity protects essential parts of your cooperative’s delivery system from major damage and actually helps prevent wider outages.

However, the power may be off just long enough that home electronic equipment, such as your digital clock or microwave oven, detects it. That’s why you may sometimes find your clock blinking when you get home.

## ‘Summer’ School: Lessons on Keeping Cool

School may be out for the summer, but here’s a test: On a hot day, will setting the thermostat at a very low temperature cool your house faster?

If you answered yes, you’re in need of summer school. Lowering the thermostat beyond the temperature you desire only makes your air conditioner run longer, not faster. You could end up paying more money for an uncomfortably chilly house. Here are a few more lessons to add to your air-conditioning know-how:

Want to pay to be cool only when you’re at home? Install a programmable thermostat, which lets you set the thermostat higher for hours when the house is empty, but lower during your at-home hours. It takes less energy to re-cool your home when you return than it

does to keep it cool while you’re gone.

Set the thermostat at 78 degrees. You’ll save about 15 percent on your cooling bill over a 72-degree setting, while remaining comfortable.

Keep lamps and other heat-emitting devices—such as TVs and large electronics—away from the thermostat. Such appliances can trick the thermostat into “thinking” the air is warmer than it really is, so it will keep running when the house is already cool.

The morning sun might help you wake up, but don’t forget to close your curtains and window shades before you leave the house for the day to keep the sun’s heat out.

If you use room air conditioners, make sure they fit snugly into window frames, and close all heating ducts.