

SHRIMPING'S
UNLIKELY DUO

STEINBECK HAS
A GO AT TEXAS

A MOST SPLENDID
SET OF SPURS

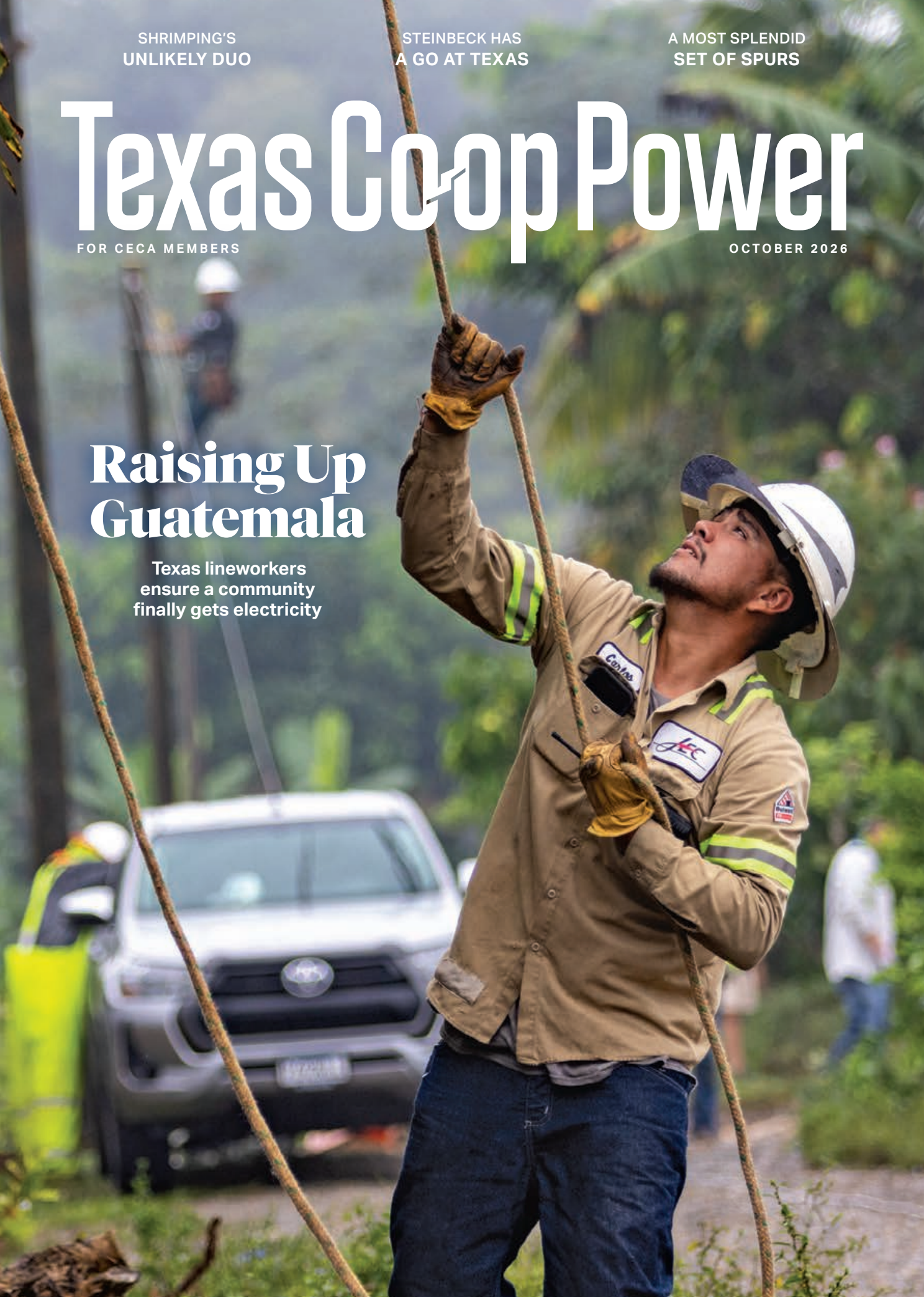
Texas Coop Power

FOR CECA MEMBERS

OCTOBER 2026

Raising Up Guatemala

Texas lineworkers
ensure a community
finally gets electricity





MOTORIZED SCREENS AND AWNINGS

HURRY!
LIMITED TIME OFFER!

**\$250
OFF***

**Motorized Outdoor
Screens & Awnings**

★ **SCHEDULE A
FREE ESTIMATE** ★

Call Today
1-844-967-1314

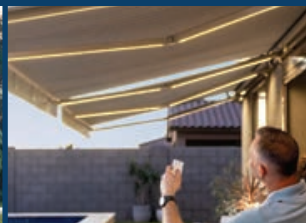
Or Scan to
Learn More!



Bug Screens & Awnings



Storm Screens



Retractable Awnings



Privacy Screens

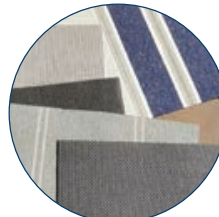
**Transform Your Deck, Patio, Pool, Garage & More
With Outdoor Screens & Awnings**



**Proudly
made in
the USA**



**In-house
professional
installation**



**Fabric
choices by
Sunbrella®**



10-Year Limited Lifetime Warranty on Hardware, Motors and Mesh

*Offer valid on SPF brand motorized awnings and screens only. Offer includes installation, sales tax, shipping, and handling. Excludes prior purchases and cannot be combined with other offers or discounts. This offer supersedes any prior offers or advertisements. Free LED Lights offered on motorized awnings only.

October 2026



10

06 'That's What We Do'

Texas lineworkers bring life-changing light to a grateful community in Guatemala.

Story and photos by Chris Burrows

ON THE COVER
Lineworker Carlos Rubio works in Yalicar, Guatemala, about a thousand miles from home.
Photo by Chris Burrows

ABOVE
Nikki Johnson-Kunz works alongside her husband, Jason Kunz, on the shrimper St. Vincent.
Photo by Erich Schlegel

An Old Salt and a Seafaring Diva

As the Gulf shrimping industry dwindles, this 93-year-old—with his savvy first mate—still works the nets.

*By Pam LeBlanc
Photos by Erich Schlegel*

04

Currents
The latest buzz

05

TCP Talk
Readers respond

16

Co-op News
Information plus energy and safety tips from your cooperative

25

Footnotes in Texas History
Steinbeck's Texas
By W.F. Strong

26

TCP Kitchen
Campfire Favorites
By Vianney Rodriguez

30

Hit the Road
Horror in the Court
By Chet Garner

33

Focus on Texas
Photo Contest: Tailgating

34

Observations
A Most Splendid Set of Spurs
By Hugh Edmondson



Before electricity,
a kerosene lamp
was about the only
reprieve from total
darkness.

Bartlett Lit the Way

YOU'RE HOLDING THIS magazine because you're a member of an electric cooperative.

You're a member of an electric cooperative because you live in what used to be one of the darkest spots in the country—where utility companies refused to build infrastructure for rural Texans.

You're benefiting today from one of the earliest examples of crowdfunding, starting in 1935, when farmers and ranchers put up seed money and then secured loans from the Rural Electrification Administration to create their own power companies. Grassroots efforts like this took hold all across rural America.

But the first one was in Bartlett, a little Central Texas town.

And this month, Bartlett Electric Cooperative will hold its 90th annual meeting. The timing is perfect: October is National Cooperative Month.

“I want my people out of
the mud, and I want my
people out of the dark.”

—U.S. REP. SAM RAYBURN,
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE PIONEER

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

My favorite Halloween
costume was ...

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

Here are some responses to our August prompt: **The headline for my life, in five words, is ...**

It keeps getting better, friends.

GINA MARIE
BANDERA EC
BANDERA

Still becoming my best self.

MI-HYUN PARK
COSERV
FRISCO

Keep trying and keep smiling.

JOYCE GRISHAM
PEDERNALES EC
BLANCO

I am superwoman after all.

JANE PATTERSON
BOWIE-CASS EC
TEXARKANA

Uno mas cerveza, por favor.

BARNEY BASDEN
NAVARRO COUNTY EC
CORSICANA

Visit our website to see more responses.



TCP Contests and More

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Winner, Winner Chicken Dinner

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Swamps

RECOMMENDED READING

With Cooperatives, You've Got a Friend, a feature story from 2009, sheds some light on a business model that shines brightly across Texas. Find it on our website.



AUGUST 2026 TCP Kitchen

“Grammie’s Rice Krispies Squares took me back to my childhood in Ohio. I have a 1971 booklet in which I wrote ‘very, very good’ by the scotcheroos recipe.”

RAE ANN ELDER
SOUTH PLAINS EC
LUBBOCK



JASON DAVID PAGE

Yahoo for Scotcheroos

Scotcheroos [TCP Kitchen, August 2026] originated on Rice Krispies cereal boxes in the 1960s. And, yes, they remain popular in the Midwest. My family continues to enjoy them at nearly every gathering 60 years later.

Alice Darland
GVEC
Schertz

Cool Song Details

Cool Water [Currents, August 2026] was made famous by the Sons of the Pioneers, of which Roy Rogers was the original leader. Dale Evans was not.

The songwriter, Bob Nolan, was one of the group’s original members. He penned it in 1936, and Rogers’ band recorded it in 1941.

Chris Jones
Bowie-Cass EC
Linden

That Sonorous Voice

It’s About Time [August 2026] is classic W.F. Strong writing. Without looking at the author’s name, I knew who wrote the lazy, quiet story after the first paragraph. I heard him read it in my head.

Mr. Strong is a Texas treasure like Terlingua or J. Frank Dobie. Thanks for including the QR code so we can hear that sonorous voice read about cowboy time on a quiet Sunday morning. It touched my Texas soul.

Cela Clay
Bluebonnet EC
Austin

Rewarding All Month

Just wanted to let you know how much I enjoy the magazine. I try to limit my reading to make it last an entire month. It has made me laugh, smile and cry on occasion.

Mona Mather
GVEC
New Braunfels



BRYAN PETERSON

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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

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

 Texas Co-op Power

TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair Cameron Smallwood, Burleson
Vice Chair Jim Coleman, Edna
Secretary-Treasurer Robert Walker, Gilmer
Board Members Ryan Bartlett, Merkel
Matt Bentke, Bastrop • Kerry Kelton, Navasota
Zac Perkins, Hooker, Oklahoma

PRESIDENT/CEO Mike Williams, Austin

COMMUNICATIONS & MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE

Mike Ables, Bellville • Kathi Calvert, Crockett
Tachi Hinojosa, Fredericksburg
Kendall Montgomery, Olney • Trena Quinn,
Corsicana • Bryan Story, Blossom
Grace Subealdea, Dalhart

MAGAZINE STAFF

Vice President, Communications

& Member Services Martin Bevins

Editor Chris Burrows

Associate Editor Tom Widlowski

Production Manager Karen Nejtek

Creative Manager Andy Doughty

Advertising Manager Elaine Sproull

Communications Specialist Samantha Bryant

Digital Media Specialist Cayt Calhoun

Senior Designer Stacy Coale

Assistant Production Manager Alex Dal Santo

Print Production Specialist Grace Fultz

Communications Specialist Erin Perez

Food Editor Vianney Rodriguez

Communications Specialist Claire Stevens

Communications Specialist Kelly Tran

Proofreader Louie Bond

TEXAS CO-OP POWER Volume 83, Number 4 (USPS 540-560). *Texas Co-op Power* is published monthly by Texas Electric Cooperatives. Periodical postage paid at Austin, TX, and at additional offices. TEC is the statewide association representing 77 electric cooperatives. *Texas Co-op Power*’s website is TexasCoopPower.com. Call (512) 454-0311 or email editor@TexasCoopPower.com.

SUBSCRIPTIONS Subscription price is \$5.53 per year for individual members of subscribing cooperatives and is paid from equity accruing to the member. If you are not a member of a subscribing cooperative, you can purchase an annual subscription at the nonmember rate of \$7.50. **Co-op members:** Please notify your co-op of address changes or other subscription requests.

POSTMASTER Send address changes to *Texas Co-op Power* (USPS 540-560), 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. Please enclose label from this copy of *Texas Co-op Power* showing old address and key numbers.

ADVERTISING Contact Elaine Sproull at (512) 486-6251 or espru@texas-ec.org for information about purchasing display ad space in *Texas Co-op Power* and/or in our 26 sister publications in other states. Advertisements in *Texas Co-op Power* are paid solicitations. The publisher neither endorses nor guarantees in any manner any product or company included in this publication.

COPYRIGHT All content © 2026 Texas Electric Cooperatives Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduction of this issue or any portion of it is expressly prohibited without written permission. Willie Wirehand © 2026 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

 **Texas Electric Cooperatives**
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

 **American MainStreet Publications**



Texans work to deliver electricity to a remote Guatemalan village. "It's a lot more than turning wrenches," says co-op worker Oscar Medrano. "It's changing lives."



Texas lineworkers bring life-changing light
to a grateful community in Guatemala

‘That’s What We Do’

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CHRIS BURROWS

An unexpected sound interrupts the morning routine in the remote small town of Yalicar, Guatemala, on November 6, 2025. Between the usual rooster crows, the guttural calls of howler monkeys and rumbling motorbikes, someone shouts “Headache!” in plain English.

Then, around a corner, another warning: “Headache!” as bits of wire clatter to the ground at the feet of electrical lineworkers and onlookers gathered around a power pole along a dirt road.

This is the sound of history.

More than 115 families live in Yalicar, about a mile from Mexico, along the Río Chixoy in northern Guatemala. Twenty-five years ago, this patch of rolling tropical lowlands was a rubber farm. After the farm shut down, around the year 2000, many workers stayed behind. They built homes, churches, a school—a community—without electricity. Until last November.

That’s when a group of 22 lineworkers from 10 electric cooperatives in South Texas traveled hundreds of miles, by air and treacherous roads, to this remote corner of Central America, where they rendezvoused with more than \$270,000 worth of donated materials for a life-changing construction project. With the help of the local electric utility and engineers from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Texans built a power grid and wired 135 homes in 20 days.

As a man named Santiago watches workers wire the home where he lives with his wife and five kids, he says, “*Pienso que lo cambia todo* (I think it changes everything).”

Making Connections

On the first day of work in Yalicar, the Texans split into groups: construction and house wiring. The construction team climbs poles, mounts hardware, and raises lines and transformers. The other crew goes house by house, installing light bulbs, switches and power outlets.

They are welcomed into small, ramshackle homes where families sleep in hammocks and small beds in one or two rooms.

“I’ve never been somewhere where the people have dirt floors and thatched roofs and no insulation in their houses,” lineworker Greg Seiler says. “It puts a lot of things in perspective.”



LEFT Lineworkers Cipriano Amaro, below, and Robert Holloway wire a home.

ABOVE "It will benefit the children because they have the chance to study at night. In the past that was impossible," says a pastor named Alberto, whose last name can't be written in English.

OPPOSITE Locals watched the Texas crew's progress over the three weeks they worked in Yalicar.

Residents, who have little means, show their gratitude however they can.

"We were wiring a house, and this older gentlemen brought all of us a cup of Coke," Seiler says. "It wasn't cold, but we drank it. And I thought, this is pretty neat. He doesn't have much to give, but he's trying to be hospitable and show us his appreciation."

The lineworkers support local businesses, buying and munching on sweet, fresh rambutan, a fruit grown in Guatemala, and sourcing fresh socks. Saul Leyva needs a pair after he succumbs to a hidden stream. Unbowed by his wet pants and boots as he drives to the next pole, he says, "I still can't believe I'm actually here."

In addition to lineworkers from the local utility, Empresa Municipal Rural de Electricidad, the Texans are helped along by men in the village and eager and curious kids.

"I was up on the pole, and somebody was handing me up material that I asked for," Taylor McGaugh says. "I look down, and there's about five kids working the handline, which I was not expecting."

The Co-op Way

While the South Texans may feel at home in these warm surrounds, where cattle graze, pigs and chickens run wild, a Texas flag is raised alongside those of EMRE and Guatemala, and the chorus to *Take Me Home, Country Roads* is belted out from pole tops—they are hundreds of miles away and 90 years in the past.

In 1930s Texas, when investor-owned utilities refused to build lines to rural areas, farmers, ranchers and their families banded together and, with help from the newly formed federal

Rural Electrification Administration, created electric cooperatives that now serve millions of Texans connected by more than 340,000 miles of power lines. This project in Central America came about because of a similar kind of cooperation.

"It's really an eye-opener to know that literally a mile from this village, people have had electricity for years and years," says Paul Bourland, a line superintendent, "and it's just because that's a private investor that refuses to build because there's no money out there.

"It's kind of like the reason co-ops exist."

For a lot of the lineworkers, it's a hard reality.

"Your emotions kind of got to you when you realized what you're actually doing for these people. Everything that they had in their house, I could put in the back of my pickup truck," Jeff Bilski says. "You see these people every day. The language barrier was difficult, but you could tell they were happy to see you. It was incredible.

"Sometimes at night, laying in bed, it would bring tears to my eyes."

Some of the families used jury-rigged solar systems or batteries to power small electronics or even charge cellphones, but for the most part, when the sun set, schoolwork, soccer and life stopped. Food was prepared over fires.

A man named Marcelino, whose native last name cannot be spelled out in English, is the elected leader for Yalicar. Like most natives of the area, he speaks Q'eqchi', a Mayan language.

"We never thought something like this could happen," he says through a translator. "But now I see the people working on the poles, I see the people working around us, and I'm really grateful and I'm really excited."

He has a message for the Texans in his town.

“From the bottom of my heart, I would like to say ‘Thank you,’” he says. “Unfortunately we don’t speak the same language, so we can’t have a conversation, but I would like to thank them.

“They left their families, and they are giving their time to help us.”

A New Era

Jesse Rivera isn’t sure what to think one morning when he pulls up to a jobsite adjacent to the village’s soccer field.

The Texan is used to being greeted by a gaggle of curious kids. But this morning, one of the older children, named Randy, is sweaty and wiped out.

“In Spanish, I’m like, ‘¿Qué pasó que tienes? (What’s wrong?)’,” Rivera says. “And he’s like, ‘Jugué fútbol toda la noche.’ They played soccer all night long. He gave me a hug, and he thanked me for it.”

In ways big and small, life is changing in Yalicar.

“Most linemen never get an opportunity like this,” Rivera says as he suits up to climb a pole in a marshy field far from modern comforts but perilously close to venomous pit vipers and tarantulas. “This is what we live for.”

Texas is one of 19 states that have sent co-op crews to Guatemala and Bolivia since 2012 through NRECA International. All told, over the course of the past 14 years, more than 600 American lineworkers have built 155 miles of line in 40 communities as part of a commitment to the co-op principle of Concern for Community.

All told, this Texas crew outfits 87 poles, strings 5 miles of power lines and hangs six transformers—working sunup to sunset without bucket trucks or many of their usual tools—to bring power to 135 homes, a school, and a handful of churches and stores across the villages of Yalicar and neighboring Entre Ríos.

Toward the end of the trip, as they prepare to connect the newly built lines to the existing grid, lineworkers scatter around the village to watch for signs of trouble. EMRE workers insert a fuse, and popping noises ring out.

A frantic search confirms: It’s just fireworks—the start of festivities.

“Every house was a celebration,” Rivera says. “They were full of joy.”

A new age has dawned in Yalicar, and hundreds of grateful Guatemalans enter the 21st century.

“I look over, and there’s an iPhone plugged in, charging,” lineworker Glenn Kelley says. “And then the very next neighbor, I go over there, and there’s a kid sitting there, and a man’s giving him a haircut with a pair of clippers plugged in.”

The work has been grueling, but this moment is uniquely gratifying.

“Anytime you get the chance to help somebody out—that’s kind of what we do in this

industry,” lineworker Matt Trenck says. “It’s kind of a calling—overseas or next door, that’s what we do.”

Before the lineworkers leave town for the two-day trek back to Texas, they are invited to play in a village-wide soccer tournament. Ringing out when a rogue pass sails toward onlookers: “Headache!” ■

TCP Watch the video on our website to get to know the lineworkers and the folks they helped.



2025 Guatemala Delegation

Jackson EC: Paul Bourland, Martín Flores Jr., Carlos Rubio

Karnes EC: Glenn Kelley, Paul Rodriguez

Magic Valley EC: Felix Gauna, Manny Yanez

Medina EC: Edward Varnador

Nueces EC: Robert Holloway, Oscar Medrano, Manny Pina

Rio Grande EC: Cipriano Amaro, Saul Leyva

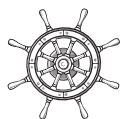
San Bernard EC: Jeff Bilski, Kevin Dvorak

San Patricio EC: Jesse Rivera, Martin Villarreal

South Texas EC: Taylor McGaugh, Greg Seiler

Victoria EC: Laddy Brown, Matt Trenck, Zeke Ybarra





An OLD SALT *and a* SEAFARING DIVA

**As the Gulf shrimping industry dwindles, this 93-year-old—
with his savvy first mate—still works the nets**

BY PAM LEBLANC • PHOTOS BY ERICH SCHLEGEL



The sky looks as thick and gray as dryer lint when the St. Vincent glides away from Pier 19 and into the Galveston Ship Channel with Capt. Jerome Kunz at the helm early on a Sunday morning.

Pops, as Kunz is called, knows this channel well. He's been shrimping here since he was 10, and at 93 he's still dragging the nets twice a week.

I've come to Galveston in mid-May to join Pops and his daughter-in-law Nikki Johnson-Kunz, known as the Texas Shrimp Diva, on the St. Vincent and learn more about the shrimping business in Texas. Jason Kunz, Nikki's husband and the youngest of Pops' 10 children, is here too.

But this is no glamour tour. I'm warned that I'm likely to get wet, that the back-and-forth between shrimpers on the radio will get raunchy, and that the bathroom, if I need it, is a bucket. I have planned accordingly.

When we meet at the dock at 5:45 a.m., Pops nearly crushes my hand in his welcoming grip. Nikki, wearing a pink skirt and a pink-and-black checked cap that says "Texas

Shrimp Diva," leads me on board and shows me where I can stand without getting in the way.

It's welcome advice. Moving around a working shrimp boat feels a little like jumping into a rumbling engine, with heavy moving parts that could tear off a finger or flatten a toe. But it's peaceful, too, with dolphins surfacing in the boat's wake and pelicans flapping overhead.

Pops, wearing faded jeans held up by suspenders, steers the 53-foot St. Vincent past a cruise ship roughly 20 times its length. As we approach the historic tall ship Elissa, docked in the harbor, he tells me how he got his start in the shrimping business.

When Pops was a boy, his father bought a small boat and, with no firsthand experience, rigged it as a shrimping vessel.

ABOVE The St. Vincent drags its nets near the cruise ship port in Galveston.

OPPOSITE Jerome Kunz, best known as Pops, embraces daughter-in-law Nikki Johnson-Kunz.





When Pops was 10, he quit school to help his dad provide for the family. At 15, he was patching and making his own nets, something he still does today.

“When I was just a little guy, I’d go out with him,” Pops tells me. “I thought I was pretty good at it, and I guess I was because I’m still doing it.”

Eventually, he bought his own boat. But the work has taken its toll. Pops walks with a stoop earned from decades of bending over the sorting box. He extends a finger to show me where the tip was cut off in an accident. He’s suffered too many cuts and bruises to count. The work was hard, but after Pops married, it supported his growing family.

For years, he worked alone, getting up before dawn and driving 18 miles from his home in Hitchcock to the pier seven days a week. Now that he’s older, he only heads out on weekends. Nikki, a 56-year-old retired property manager, started joining him in 2018, when she noticed her father-in-law’s injuries.

“I’m only out here for him,” she says. “His mentality is ‘I can either hurt at home or hurt while I’m working.’ He’s the most honest and dedicated man I’ve met in my life—but he does wear me out.”

It took about a year to learn the ropes, but now Nikki’s at home working the winch, raising and lowering nets, and culling and sorting the catch. She’s taken on a new mission, too—raising awareness about wild-caught Gulf shrimp. Her Texas Shrimp Diva page on Facebook has attracted 89,000 followers who tune in to watch videos of her and Pops on the job.



After half an hour, the boat slows. Nikki ducks into the cabin to yank on a pair of waterproof coveralls and boots. Her makeup is perfect; her nails are manicured.

"You ready?" Pops says.

Nikki nods and the pair head out on deck, where Pops cranks the winch that lowers a pair of 1,200-pound metal trawl doors into the water. The net spreads out between the doors, and Pops returns to the cabin to steer the boat forward. Fifteen minutes later, he raises the nets from the water while Nikki and Jason maneuver the load over a live well and guide a stream of shrimp in.

Suddenly, everyone's moving at once. Nikki scoops up batches of the catch and spreads them onto a table. She and Jason use metal blades the size of license plates to quickly cull out small fish, squid and crabs, which they carefully return alive to the Gulf. Larger shrimp are separated out for table use; smaller shrimp will be sold as live bait or to buyers who dry it for snacks. Everything will be sold off the boat back at the pier.

Three times the nets go into the water, and three times the shrimpers sort and cull, their arms moving so quickly they're a blur. Just after 8 a.m., Nikki gets a call.

"Woo-hoo!" she hollers, throwing her arms in the air. "Donny wants live bait!"

An hour later, as Pops turns the boat around to head back to the pier, he tells me that shrimping is a lot like gambling.

"It's just like going to Las Vegas and rolling the dice," he says. "One day you'll get 1,000 pounds, the next day 10 pounds. You don't know what's coming up. I still get a charge out of that."

Back at the pier, Donny Stanfield, the owner of Bait Daddys on the west end of Galveston Island, meets the boat. Nikki, Pops and Jason are ready with 40 pounds of live shrimp. Stanfield pays them \$5 a pound; he'll sell it at his shop for \$13 a pint or \$23 a quart. Business is just gearing up now, but during the summer, Stanfield will sell 700 pounds or more of live bait on a busy weekend.

"She's done an amazing job of getting attention to an industry that needs it," Stanfield says of Nikki. "The markets have changed. It's just not the way it was, and there are no young ones coming up to take the place of the people doing it now."

OPPOSITE, FROM TOP Johnson-Kunz talks to a pelican, which the Shrimp Diva's 89,000 Facebook followers know she has dubbed Jasmine. Sorting shrimp fresh from the Gulf.

ABOVE The St. Vincent in its berth at Pier 19 in Galveston.



"We're just asking you to buy a product of the United States. That's what keeps us on the water."

For Pops, it's a different world than when he started. Gulf shrimp populations have remained stable, according to data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, but declining profits have pushed out most shrimpers. Gulf-harvested shrimp accounted for 28.7% of the U.S. market in 1984 but just 4.5% in 2023. Shrimp imported from Ecuador, Indonesia and India has flooded the market, and American shrimpers can't compete with their prices, especially as diesel costs have climbed.

With profits down and the number of independent shrimpers down, jobs in welding, seafood processing and boat repair also have declined.

Exacerbating the problem, some restaurants, either inadvertently or knowingly, advertise Gulf shrimp when they're selling imported shrimp. (A December 2025 study by Houston-based SeaD Consulting, which developed a genetic test that can determine the source of shrimp, found that eight of 22 area restaurants it tested were selling imported shrimp advertised as Gulf shrimp.)

Last September, a state law requiring sellers to accurately label shrimp as wild caught, farm raised or imported went into effect. Look for the Wild Caught Texas Shrimp logo.

"It's simple. When you're at the grocery store, flip over that bag of shrimp and see if it reads product of Ecuador, Indonesia or China," Nikki says. "We're just asking you to buy a product of the United States. That's what keeps us on the water." ■



Some Watches Tell Time. This One Steals the Moment.

Brilliant by design. Unbelievable by price.



*"What a beautiful watch...
just putting it on makes me
feel like a movie star."*

— Meredith H.



Introducing the Ladies Soirée Bracelet Watch, a dazzling fusion of jewelry and timekeeping designed for evenings that deserve a little extra sparkle. **Draped in shimmering crystals from case to clasp**, it catches the light with every movement, turning even the simplest gesture into a statement of elegance. Whether you're raising a glass at a celebration or slipping into a candlelit dinner, this is the piece that completes the look.

But don't mistake its brilliance for fragility. Beneath the glamour lies a thoughtfully crafted timepiece, built to keep perfect time while you shine. The silver-tone finish delivers classic sophistication, while the bracelet design ensures it wears like your favorite piece of jewelry—comfortable, secure, and impossible to ignore.

And here's the part that truly sparkles: originally \$199, **now just \$49**.



That's not just a deal—it's your invitation to own a showstopping watch at an almost unbelievable price.

Because at Stauer, we believe **elegance shouldn't be reserved for special occasions...** or special budgets.

But don't wait. This eye-catching beauty tends to disappear just as quickly as the night itself. Claim yours while supplies last!

Watch Specifications:

- Alloy case, bezel, and band
- Stainless steel case back
- Fold-over clasp
- Fits wrists up to 7"

Ladies Soirée Bracelet Watch

~~\$199~~ \$49* + S&P **Save \$150**

*Special price only for customers using the offer code.

1-800-333-2045

Your Insider Offer Code: LSW118-01

14091 Southcross Drive W. | Dept. LSW118-01, Burnsville, MN 55337 | www.stauer.com

Stauer® | **AFFORD THE EXTRAORDINARY®**

WHY WAIT ANY LONGER?

TOTAL OFFER

DETAILS

BUY \$100,000 LIFE INSURANCE

FREE INFORMATION

GLOBE LIFE AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE COMPANY

FREE INFORMATION



7460

PAY THE
AMOUNT OF

One Hundred Thousand Dollars

\$100,000.00

Non-Negotiable

MONTHLY RATES AS LOW AS:

ADULTS: \$3.49

CHILDREN AND

GRANDCHILDREN: \$2.17

EASY TO BUY

NO MEDICAL EXAM - SIMPLE APPLICATION

NO WAITING PERIOD

BUY DIRECT

SCAN QR CODE FOR A FREE QUOTE



SCAN TO
VISIT US
ONLINE

For Immediate Service Call 1-855-766-4181
Or Visit ForGlobeLife.com

PERSONAL OFFER CODE:

XCCX1ACZ

\$100,000 Adult Life Insurance

- Rate schedule is based on your current age and is guaranteed for the life of the policy.
- Monthly rates as low as \$3.49.
- Coverage is also available for your spouse and other family members.
- Benefits will NEVER be canceled or reduced for the life of the policy if premiums are paid on time.

Policy Form #SRTC/SRTC R13 or R17, or #SRTC/V90MA in MA

\$30,000 Children's Life Insurance

- Rates are based on your children's or grandchildren's present age and never increase for any reason.
- Monthly rates as low as \$2.17.
- Benefits will NEVER be reduced or canceled if premiums are paid on time.
- Give your children a financial head start right now. Your policy builds CASH VALUE for your family's needs.

Policy Form #GWL2001 or GWLA001

(Offer may vary, \$100,000 coverage not available in all states.)

CHOOSE \$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000, \$30,000 OR UP TO \$100,000 COVERAGE



Genuine Eisenhower Dollar FREE!

- ★ Minted from 1971-1978
- ★ America's last large-dollar coin
- ★ Honors WWII Hero, 5-Star General & 2-Term U.S. President

You'll also receive a handpicked trial selection of fascinating coins from our No-Obligation Coins-on-Approval Service, from which you may purchase any or none of the coins – return balance within 15 days – with option to cancel at any time. Order today and **SAVE!**



Serving Collectors Since 1945

**Mail Coupon Today!
For Faster Service Visit:
LittletonCoin.com/Respond**

**Offer Code:
55Z201**

©2026 LCC, Inc.

FOR NEW CUSTOMERS ONLY AGES 18+

☒ **YES** Please send me the following:

QTY	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
1	Eisenhower Dollar (limit 1)	FREE!
	Shipping	FREE!
	TOTAL	FREE!

REQUEST MUST BE RECEIVED WITHIN 7 DAYS

Name _____

Address _____ Apt# _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-Mail _____

Mail to: Littleton Coin Company



Offer Code: 55Z201

1309 Mt. Eustis Rd
Littleton NH 03561-3737



MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER

ALAN
LESLEY

What It Means To Be a Member

THERE'S SOMETHING A little different about getting your electricity from CECA. You're not just a customer—you're a member and an owner of this cooperative.

That's something I understand from both sides. I've spent 28 years working for CECA, including the last 17 as general manager, but I'm also a CECA member. I was raised here. I've lived here my whole life, and this is home to me just as it is for the people we serve.

Most of us probably don't spend much time thinking about what it means to be a co-op member. We flip a switch and expect the lights to come on. When they don't, we expect somebody to answer the phone and crews to get to work. That's the way it should be.

But there is something worth remembering about the cooperative way of doing business: CECA belongs to you.

condition allows, those capital credits are returned to you. That's why receiving a capital credits check or bill credit is more than just getting a little money back—it's a reminder that you have an ownership interest in CECA.

Ownership also means having a voice. When you vote in a board of directors election, you help determine who represents you. When you come to our annual meeting, you have the opportunity to visit with your directors and CECA employees, ask questions, and learn more about the co-op you own.

October is National Cooperative Month, and each year it's an opportunity to reflect on what makes this way of doing business different.

I've been around CECA long enough to see a lot of changes. Technology has changed. Our electric system has grown and improved. The way we do many parts of our job today look pretty different from when I started. But the things that matter most haven't changed.

We still believe in working hard, treating people fairly and doing business the right way. The people who answer your calls, maintain your lines and restore your power aren't strangers working for some faraway company. They live here. They raise their families here. You see them at the grocery store, school, church and around town. They're your friends and neighbors.

That local connection means something to me, and I believe it means something to our members too. We know we have to earn your trust by the way we do our jobs and the way we treat people—not just by what we say.

So during National Cooperative Month, I want to simply say "Thank you." Thank you for your trust, for your participation, and for allowing all of us at CECA the privilege of serving you and this community.

I'm proud to be a CECA employee. I'm proud to be a CECA member. And after 28 years, I'm still proud of what the cooperative way of doing business stands for.

CECA is not just the company that provides your electricity. It's your cooperative—and mine. ■

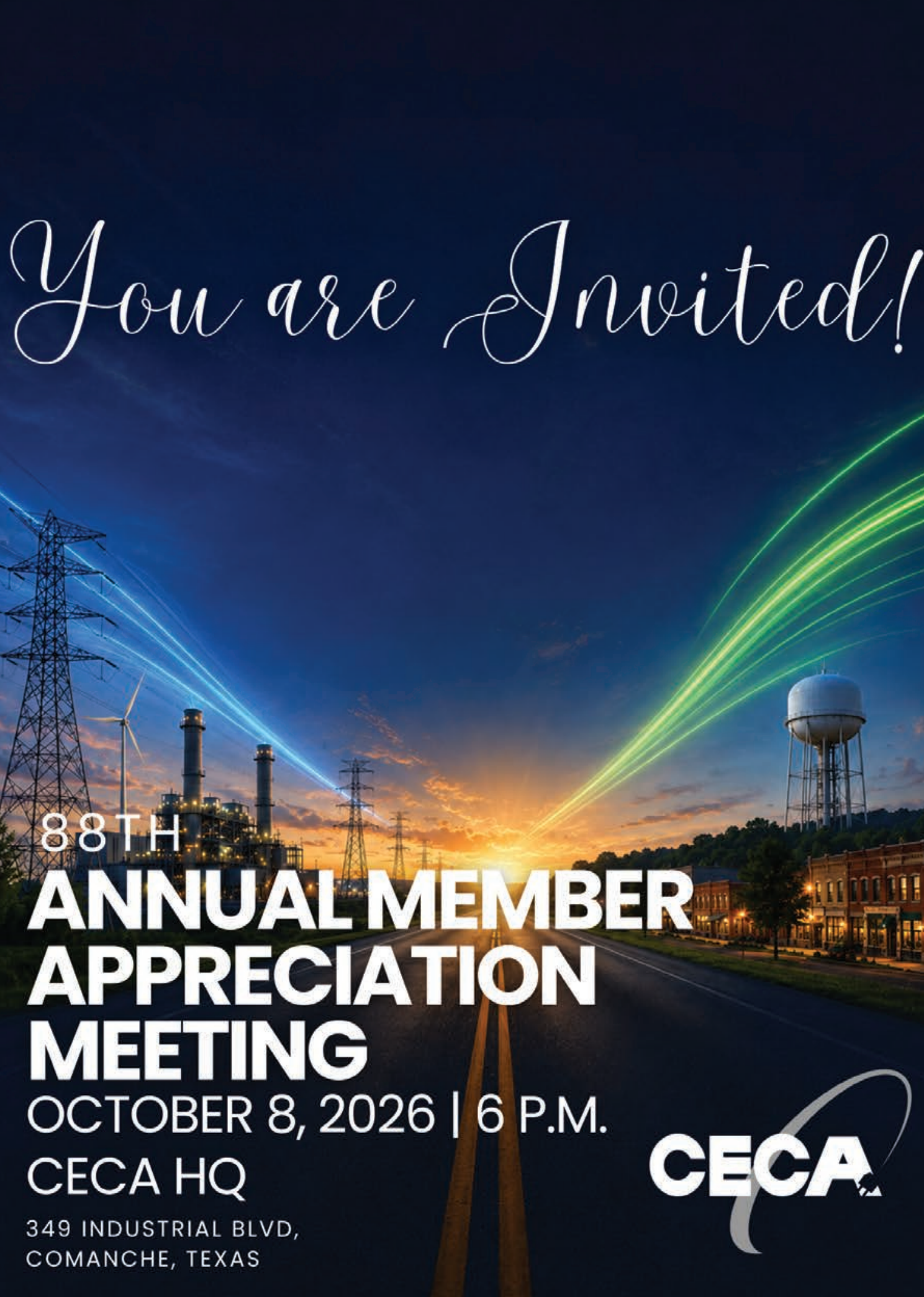


Alan Lesley speaks with members during a district meeting, sharing updates on Texas' changing electric landscape and answering questions about preparations for the future.

We don't have outside stockholders or investors expecting a return from the electricity you use. Our responsibility is to the members we serve. The money we collect goes toward operating and maintaining the electric system, investing in the

equipment that keeps your power flowing, and paying the local employees who work every day to provide you with safe and reliable service.

When revenue exceeds the cost of doing business, those margins are allocated back to our members as capital credits. When the cooperative's financial



You are Invited!

88TH
**ANNUAL MEMBER
APPRECIATION
MEETING**

OCTOBER 8, 2026 | 6 P.M.

CECA HQ

349 INDUSTRIAL BLVD,
COMANCHE, TEXAS

CECA

Youth 2027 Tour



**JUNE
15-23
2027**

150 TEXAS TEENS 7 DAYS IN D.C. 0 DOLLARS

High school students: Get ready to pack your bags! You can join 2,000 teens from across the U.S. to make new friends and share experiences in Washington, D.C., all paid for by your electric co-op.

Museums. Memorials. Monuments. Memories. Friends. History. There's something for everyone on this trip of a lifetime!

APPLY NOW!

ceca.coop/government-action-youth-tour

EXPERIENCE THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME!

CECA Members Select Director Nominees at District Meetings

SUMMER HEAT DIDN'T keep CECA members from gathering for the district 2 and 4 meetings in July. District meetings are an opportunity for members to take part in the cooperative's director nomination process, hear updates on issues affecting the electric industry and ask questions about CECA's role as the energy landscape continues to evolve.

The District 2 meeting welcomed 18 member families July 21 at CECA's headquarters in Comanche. Incumbent director Pete McDougal was the only nominee for District 2.

The District 4 meeting drew 32 member families July 23 to Mullin First Baptist Church. Incumbent director Monty Carlisle was the only nominee for District 4.

McDougal and Carlisle will appear on the ballot October 8 at the cooperative's annual meeting, when members from across the co-op will vote to elect the two directors to three-year terms.

At the district meetings, Alan Lesley, CECA general manager and CEO, discussed how Texas' electric landscape is changing as population growth, manufacturing, electrification, artificial intelligence and data centers drive demand. He answered members' questions and said CECA is preparing where it can within its role as the local electric provider, carefully evaluating new electric demands and planning to protect reliability and affordability for existing members.

Several lucky members left the meeting with prizes. District 2 prizewinners were Curtis Lackey, who won a saw; David Steele, who won a fan; and Rachel Hilliard, who won a drill. District 4 prizewinners were Ronald Calder, who won a drill; Allen Gastinger, who won a saw; and Darlene Leonard, who won a fan.

Refreshments at the meeting offered members a welcome break from the summer heat and a chance to visit with neighbors while taking part in cooperative business. ■

Monty Carlisle, left, District 4 incumbent director, and Pete McDougal, District 2 incumbent director, were the sole director nominees for their respective districts and will appear on the ballot October 8 at the CECA Annual Meeting.



Comanche Electric Cooperative Association

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

CONTACT US

349 Industrial Blvd.
Comanche, TX 76442
Toll-Free 1-800-915-2533
Web ceca.coop

General Manager

Alan Lesley

Board of Directors

Randy Denning, District 1
Pete McDougal, District 2
Bryan Morris, District 3
Monty Carlisle, District 4
Troy Stewart, District 5
Loren Stroebel, District 6
Phil Taylor, District 7

24/7

Outage Hotline Number

CECA crews are available 24/7 in the event of a power quality issue.

TOLL-FREE
1-800-915-2533

ABOUT CECA

CECA operates in Brown, Callahan, Comanche, Eastland, Mills, Shackelford and Stephens counties.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Esta institución es un proveedor de servicios con igualdad de oportunidades.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Headquarters

349 Industrial Blvd., Comanche, TX 76442
Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Early

1801 CR 338, Early, TX 76801
Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Closed from 1–2 p.m.

Eastland

1311 W. Main St., Eastland, TX 76448
Tuesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

VISIT US ONLINE

ceca.coop



Check us out at
TexasCoopPower.com/comanche



RYAN LANE | GETTY IMAGES.COM

No Tricks, Just Treats

NO OTHER HOLIDAY matches the sheer fun of Halloween's costume parties and trick-or-treating. However, the season also brings the potential for distinct hazards, including food-related illnesses and allergic reactions as well as serious tragedies like child pedestrian fatalities.

To keep the holiday safe and enjoyable, follow these essential health and safety guidelines from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and safety advocates.

Before Heading Out

Preparation is your best defense against hunger and accidents. When choosing clothes, accessories and makeup, take these precautions.

Fit and visibility: Wear costumes that are fireproof and include reflectors and bright colors. Avoid trips and falls by making sure costumes and shoes fit well and that accessories like swords and knives are soft and won't drag on the ground.

Ditch the masks: Opt for makeup over masks, which can obscure vision. But test makeup in a small area first to monitor the skin's reaction, and be sure to remove it before bed to prevent irritation from developing overnight.

Pre-trick-or-treat snack: Give children a light meal or snack before they leave the house; don't send them out on an empty stomach. Urge kids to wait until they get home and to let you inspect their treats before they eat any of them.

On the Treat Trail

Halloween and New Year's Day are the deadliest days of the year for child pedestrians, according to the Children's Safety Network. Use extra caution as you go door to door.

Street smarts: Cross streets at intersections with traffic signals, where possible, and crosswalks. Look left, right, then left again when crossing the street, and make eye contact with driv-

ers to make sure they see you. Beware of cars backing out of driveways.

Group safety: Have an adult accompany children, especially those under 12. Take flashlights or glow sticks.

Curbside logic: Only visit well-lit homes. A home with the lights off is an indication that the resident does not want trick-or-treaters.

Sorting and Safety

Whether inspecting the goody bag or hosting a party at home, don't let bacteria or other food safety hazards ruin the fun.

Safe treats: Tell children not to accept—and especially not to eat—anything that isn't commercially wrapped. Inspect all treats for signs of tampering, such as an unusual appearance, coloration, tiny pinholes or tears in wrappers. Throw away anything that looks suspicious.

Allergies and choking: If your child has a food allergy, check the label of each treat to ensure the allergen isn't present. Don't allow children to eat any home-baked goods they receive. If you have very young children, be sure to remove any choking hazards such as gum, nuts, hard candies and small toys.

Kitchen cautions: "Scare" bacteria away by keeping all perishable foods chilled until serving time. Bacteria will creep up on you if you let foods sit out too long. Don't leave perishable goodies out of the fridge for more than two hours.

Party staples: Beware of cider! Unpasteurized juice and cider can contain harmful bacteria such as salmonella. To stay safe, always serve pasteurized products. And no matter how tempting, don't taste raw cookie dough or cake batter that contains uncooked eggs. ■

Community Calendar

Brownwood

Little Shop of Horrors; October 16–18, 23–25 and 30–November 1; Brownwood Lyric Theatre, 318 Center Ave. A little shop. A strange plant. A lot of trouble! This delightfully dark musical comedy follows a meek flower shop clerk, a mysterious man-eating plant and the price of fame and fortune. With its 1960s rock ‘n’ roll vibe, over-the-top humor and toe-tapping songs, this cult classic is wickedly funny and surprisingly sweet. For more information, call (325) 600-4303.

Brownwood’s Got Talent—Grand Finale, November 20, 7:30 p.m., Brownwood Lyric Theater, 318 Center Ave. Brownwood’s Got Talent concludes its yearlong competition with the top performers from Brownwood and Brown County returning to the Lyric Theatre for the grand finale. Finalists will present their strongest acts, and the audience will vote on the winner. The champion will receive a \$1,000 cash prize and a Brownwood’s Got Talent trophy. The annual competition also serves as a fundraiser benefiting the ARK domestic violence shelter.

Brownwood Fly-In Fair, October 24–25, Brownwood Regional Airport, 6251 Airport Road. The two-day event will feature helicopter rides, a car show, antiques, militaria, crafts, art, a vintage pinup contest, food trucks and plenty of aviation fun. For more information, call (325) 643-1482 or email bwairport@brownwood.texas.gov.

Cisco

Cisco Chamber of Commerce Car Show, October 17, 10 a.m.–2 p.m., downtown. Check out an assortment of vehicles,

held in conjunction with the Cisco Pie Fest in downtown Cisco.

8th Annual Cisco Pie Fest, October 17, 10 a.m.–5 p.m., downtown. Enjoy a day devoted to all things pie in downtown Cisco. Festivities include family activities, a pie baking contest, pie eating contest, arts and crafts vendors, entertainment, and food. A 40-foot pie buffet will be featured inside the historic Conrad Hilton Center.

Halloween in Cisco, October 31, 4–8 p.m., downtown. Celebrate Halloween with downtown activities 4–6 p.m., followed by residential trick-or-treating 6–8 p.m.

Christmas at the Hilton Vendor/Craft Show, November 14, Conrad Hilton Center. Get an early start on holiday shopping at the Christmas at the Hilton Vendor/Craft Show. Time to be announced.

Events, dates and times are subject to change. For questions call (254) 442-2537 or email ciscochamberofcommerce@gmail.com.

Comanche

Veterans Day Luncheon and Tribute to Our Veterans, November 8, 11 a.m.–2 p.m., Comanche County Historical Museum. The museum will honor area veterans with a Veterans Day luncheon and tribute. The community is invited to recognize and thank veterans for their service. Admission is by donation.

CECA 88th Annual Membership Appreciation Meeting, October 8, 5:15 p.m., CECA headquarters, 349 Industrial Blvd. CECA members are invited to the annual meeting. Registration and dinner begin at 5:15 p.m., followed by

the business meeting at 6 p.m.

Steve Clemons Chili Supper, November 6. Join the community for a longtime tradition that welcomes local residents and hunters traveling through Comanche on their way to deer leases. Whether you’re preparing for a weekend in the pasture or simply looking for a warm meal and good company, the chili supper is a welcoming stop for all. For more information, call (325) 356-3233 or email director@comanchechamber.org.

For more information, contact Comanche Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture at comanchetxchamber@gmail.com or (325) 356-3233.

Lake Brownwood

Reptiles With a Ranger; October 3, 17, 31, and November 14 and 28; 2:30–3:45 p.m.; Group Dining Hall, Lake Brownwood State Park, 200 State Highway Park Road 15. Observe and touch several live, harmless native reptiles, including a Texas indigo snake and speckled kingsnake. A park ranger will discuss the animals’ biology and ecological importance. Pictures, snake sheds, turtle shells and other materials also will be available. Free with park admission. For more information, call George Dudich at (325) 784-5223 or email george.dudich@tpwd.texas.gov.



POWER TIP

Insulating your water heater could reduce standby heat losses by up to 45% and save about 16% in water heating costs.

NC PHOTO | GETTYIMAGES.COM

Comanche Electric Cooperative Association welcomes your local event submissions.
If you have events you would like listed in the Community Calendar, please contact Triston McGehee. Event information must be submitted two months in advance for the magazine. The calendar is published monthly and includes events scheduled for the month of publication and the following month. CECA reserves the right to edit or exclude events based on space availability and other considerations. We do not certify the accuracy or reliability of any information posted in the Community Calendar. To confirm event details, please contact the event organizers directly. Email tmcgehee@ceca.coop; write to CECA at P.O. Box 729, Comanche, TX 76531; or call 1-800-915-2533.

CO-OP MONTH QUIZ



October is National Co-op Month

Did you know there are many different kinds of cooperatives? A cooperative, or co-op, is a business that's owned by the people who use it. Some co-ops help people buy groceries, some help farmers sell their crops and some—like your electric co-op—bring power to your home. Read each clue below and guess the type of cooperative you think it is.

Answer Choices:

Worker	Producer	Consumer	Utility	Retail	Financial	Housing
--------	----------	----------	---------	--------	-----------	---------

1. Your local electric cooperative

It keeps the lights on, restores power after storms and is owned by the members it serves.

Type: _____

2. REI

People can become members to shop for outdoor gear, enjoy special benefits and help support the business.

Type: _____

3. Ocean Spray

Thousands of cranberry and grapefruit farmers work together to grow fruit and produce juice sold across the country.

Type: _____

4. Your local credit union

Members save money, open checking accounts and apply for loans through a financial institution they own together.

Type: _____

5. A grocery co-op

Local shoppers become members to help support a community grocery store and buy fresh foods.

Type: _____

6. A cooperative apartment building

People work together to own and manage the place where they live.

Type: _____

7. A cooperative bakery

The people who bake the bread, decorate the cakes and serve customers also own the business together.

Type: _____

Answer Key:

1. Utility 2. Retail 3. Producer 4. Financial 5. Consumer 6. Housing 7. Worker



LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS: HAVE A PROJECT?

SMALL CHANGE BIG LOCAL IMPACT



Over \$38,000

given back locally in 2026

Through Operation Round Up, CECA members round their electric bills to the next dollar, turning spare change into meaningful support for local needs.

Community Needs We Support

- School & Youth Programs
- Volunteer Fire Departments
- Food Pantries & Hunger Relief
- Community Improvement Projects
- Local Economic Development



**SEEKING
LOCAL
COMMUNITY
PROJECTS**

Scan
to
apply:



Deadline

October 30, 2026 @ 5 p.m.

Learn More  www.ceca.coop/operation-round-up

Target Safety When Hunting

THIS HUNTING SEASON, CECA encourages hunters to be aware of electrical equipment and take necessary precautions. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.

- ▶ Take notice of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- ▶ Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- ▶ Know where power lines and equipment are located on the land where you hunt.
- ▶ Be especially careful in wooded areas, where power lines might not be as visible.
- ▶ Don't place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles—energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity through anyone who comes into contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.
- ▶ Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment; any nonelectrical equipment attached to a pole can obstruct and pose a serious hazard to our line crews. ■



REALPEOPLEGROUP | GETTYIMAGES.COM

Give friends and family the Best of Texas.

Texas Co-op Power has combined favorite recipes from the *Typically Texas Cookbook* and *The Second Typically Texas Cookbook* into one delicious collection.

Inside this cookbook, you'll find more than 700 recipes, including over 300 desserts.

Put the *Best of Typically Texas Cookbook* in your kitchen for only \$29.95. Order online at TexasCoopPower.com.

To order by mail, send a check or money order payable to TEC for \$29.95 to:

Best of Typically Texas Cookbook
1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor
Austin, TX 78701

From the publishers of
TexasCoopPower
Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.



\$29.95

includes tax,
shipping &
handling



Beachcombing at home.

Texas Co-op Power presents an illustrated *Seashells of Texas* poster by artist Aletha St. Romain, 20x16 inches, suitable for framing.

Order online at TexasCoopPower.com for only \$20 (price includes tax, shipping and handling).

Bonus offer: Get 2 posters shipped to the same address for just \$30.

From the publishers of
TexasCoopPower
Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.



\$20
or 2 for
\$30





Steinbeck's Texas

The acclaimed author traced our roads in 1960 and couldn't outrun our pride

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN JAY CABUAY

I'M RATHER CERTAIN that most Texans have heard these words: "Texas is a state of mind, but I think it is more than that. It is a mystique closely approximating a religion."

John Steinbeck wrote that in *Travels With Charley: In Search of America*. Charley was a standard poodle and Steinbeck's traveling companion in 1960, when together they cruised America's highways and back roads in a GMC pickup truck with a makeshift camper that Steinbeck called Rocinante (named after Don Quixote's horse).

What may be news to many is that Steinbeck's comments about Texas went well beyond this sentence—10 pages beyond. The Pulitzer- and Nobel-winning

novelist from California (and later New York) had a lot to say about our state in this nonfiction work, but, as people on the border say, he wrote it *con cariño* (with affection).

"When I started this narrative I knew that sooner or later I would have to have a go at Texas, and I dreaded it," Steinbeck wrote. "I could have bypassed Texas about as easily as a space traveler can avoid the Milky Way. Once you are in Texas it seems to take forever to get out, and some people never do."

Steinbeck's third wife, Elaine Anderson Steinbeck, was from Austin. "Even if I wanted to avoid Texas, I could not, for I am wived in Texas and mother-in-lawed and uncled and aunted and cousinsed

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



within an inch of my life," he wrote.

"Staying away from Texas geographically is no help whatsoever, for Texas moves through our house in New York, and our fishing cottage at Sag Harbor. ... It permeates the world to a ridiculous degree."

Steinbeck lamented the struggles all writers have in trying to define Texas and Texans. He said they all end up "floundering" and lose themselves in "generalizations" that have little meaning. He said that he was no exception to this rule, but he tried anyway.

"Texas," he wrote, "is a state of mind. Texas is an obsession. Above all, Texas is a nation in every sense of the word."

But, Steinbeck noted, "A Texan outside of Texas is a foreigner." He said his wife claimed to be a "Texan that got away."

But he didn't buy it. He wrote, "She has virtually no accent until she talks to a Texan, when she instantly reverts. Soon she is saying yes, air, hair and guess with two syllables: yayus, ayer, hayer and gayus."

Texans claim "the right to secede at will," he wrote. "They want to be able to secede, but they don't want anyone to want them to."

And he learned about the serious business of football. "Sectional football games have the glory and despair of war," he wrote, "and when a Texas team takes the field against a foreign state, it is an army with banners."

Above all, Steinbeck knew well that Texans are tight. If you attack one Texan, you attack them all. They circle the wagons. There may be no "geographical unity in Texas," he wrote. "Its unity lies in the mind. And this is not only in Texas. The word Texas becomes a symbol to everyone in the world." ■

Campfire Favorites

Gather 'round the blaze, and we'll bring the treats

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

It's not a camping trip without s'mores! The 1927 recipe for s'mores, as written in a Girl Scouts guidebook, says to toast marshmallows over a fire "to a crisp gooey state." Today I'm sharing a skillet version that you can easily whip up in your trusty cast iron.

Skillet S'mores Dip

4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter

1 bag semisweet chocolate chips
(12 ounces)

4 cups mini marshmallows

Chocolate graham crackers, for serving

1. Preheat a charcoal or gas grill for indirect cooking over medium-high heat.
2. Place a 10-inch cast-iron skillet on grill for 5 minutes.
3. Remove skillet from the heat and melt butter, covering the entire cooking surface evenly.
4. Add chocolate chips to evenly cover the bottom of skillet. Top with marshmallows.
5. Place skillet over indirect heat. Close grill or cover skillet with a lid. Grill 10–12 minutes or until marshmallows are slightly melted and lightly toasted.
6. Serve warm with chocolate graham crackers.

SERVES 6

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in Cocina Gris at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Dulce de Leche S'mores.





Cowboy Soup

CAROLYN CRUMP
CHEROKEE COUNTY EC

After a day of camping, a hearty bowl of Cowboy Soup would really hit the spot. Budget-friendly to feed a hungry crowd, this soup has all the flavors of something that simmered all day.

- 1½ pounds ground chuck
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 can ranch-style beans (15 ounces)
- 1 can tomatoes with green chiles (10 ounces)
- 3 cans minestrone soup (15 ounces each)
- Salt, to taste
- Ground black pepper, to taste

1. Place a grill-safe medium pot on a preheated grill grate or coals. Add ground chuck, garlic and onion. Brown chuck, breaking up with a spoon, until fully cooked. Remove from heat, drain and discard drippings.
2. Return to heat and add beans, tomatoes and minestrone. Bring to a boil, then move pot to area of indirect heat on grill. Simmer 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Serve warm.

SERVES 6-8



\$500 WINNER

Fireside Banana Boats

DANIEL BATES
COSERV



I want to sit around sharing campfire stories and enjoying these banana boats every weekend. Warm banana, melted chocolate and ooey gooey marshmallows: the taste of a fun camping trip.

- 5 bananas, peel on
- ¼ cup chocolate chips
- ¼ cup mini marshmallows
- Optional toppings: peanut butter chips, crushed graham crackers, nuts, caramel drizzle

1. With the peel still on, slice bananas lengthwise, cutting about halfway through so they open like a pocket.
2. Stuff each pocket with chocolate chips and marshmallows. Wrap each banana loosely in aluminum foil.
3. Place foil packets on hot coals or a grill grate 5-10 minutes, turning once or twice.
4. Carefully unwrap, add optional toppings and eat with a spoon.

SERVES 5

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

WINNER, WINNER CHICKEN DINNER DUE OCT 10
Here's a staple protein you can cook in countless ways. Scratch out your recipe, and you could fly home with \$500. Watch for them in March. Best of cluck!
UPCOMING: MAC AND CHEESE DUE NOV 10





Dad's Dutch Oven Peach Cobbler

EMILY TEMPLETON
BANDERA EC

Like all good camp recipes, the ingredient list for this one is short, though the taste is anything but. This cobbler is a warm delight after a day outdoors. Add everything to the Dutch oven and sit back to enjoy the fire while your dessert bakes.

- 2 cans sliced peaches (15 ounces each)
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 box vanilla cake mix (13.25 ounces)
- 4–8 tablespoons (½–1 stick) butter, sliced
- Whipped cream or ice cream, for serving

1. Lightly grease a seasoned Dutch oven and add sliced peaches, spreading to cover the bottom.
2. Sprinkle peaches with cinnamon and brown sugar. Stir to combine. Sprinkle cake mix over the peaches to evenly coat, breaking up clumps if needed. Place slices of butter, spaced evenly, on dry cake mix.
3. Cover and place directly on bed of coals, then carefully place 10 coals on lid. Bake 30–45 minutes, rotating every 15 minutes to evenly bake.
4. Serve warm with a heaping spoonful of whipped cream or scoop of ice cream.

SERVES 10

Before That Fire Goes Out

Why not go ahead and grill dessert too? When fruit is exposed to heat, the flavor intensifies, the fruit becomes sweeter and its natural sugars caramelize.

My favorite fruits to grill: pineapples, peaches, nectarines, plums, pears and bananas.

Select fruit that is ripe but still firm to the touch. Slice it in half or make the slices thick to prevent them from falling through grates.

Brush with a little oil to prevent sticking to the grill. Grill 2–3 minutes on each side, until slightly charred.

—Vianney Rodriguez

BEFORE

AFTER

SHOWER SALE

SAFER. BEAUTIFUL.

BUILT FOR YOU.

WALK-IN SHOWERS & WALK-IN TUBS

\$500 OFF

YOUR NEW TUB OR SHOWER

Must mention ad. Not valid with any other offer. Expires 10-31-26

LOW ENTRY

Easy in. Easy out.

SOLID SURFACE

Beautiful. Durable. Easy to clean.

LIFETIME WARRANTY

Built to last. Backed for life.

FINANCING AVAILABLE

Flexible options to fit your budget.

FROM

\$149

PER MONTH*

Stylish. Modern. Worry-Free.

A better bathroom for your home, your family, and your future.

BEST BUY WALK-IN TUBS

FEATURING "SEALTITE" TECHNOLOGY

22 YEARS OF QUALITY & TRUST

VISIT OUR SHOWROOM

311 Kings Plaza

Granbury, TX 76049

A+ RATING

ACCREDITED BUSINESS

CALL TODAY FOR YOUR FREE IN-HOME CONSULTATION!

877-416-5289

bestbuywalkintubs.com



HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

In the magazine and on TexasCoopPower.com, we make it easy to shop for friends and family.



Texas Bluebonnet Calendar

Large 20-by-15-inch calendar with 12 watercolor scenes. Enjoy nature's beauty year-round with this 2027 calendar by Texas State Artist George Boutwell. \$20 plus tax and \$4.50 shipping. See website for quantity pricing.

1-800-243-4316
gboutwell.com



All Things Pecan Shipped to You!

**6 Generations of Pecan Growers
3 Generations of Candy Makers**
We use the finest Texas-grown, Orchard Fresh pecans to create handmade treats, including gift tins, candied pecans, honey butter, pies, chocolates and more! Shop in store or online!

325-372-5771
oliverpecan.com



COMES IN 4 COLORS AND 7 SIZES

Ideal Arm Protection for Any Activity

Helps Prevent Bruising and Protects Those With Thin Skin!
Soft leather protective sleeves help protect you from 100's of injury-prone chores you do at work, home, farm, or ranch. Even has adjustable airflow!

(651) 492-4830
armchaps.com



Texas Red Grapefruit and Avocados

Always a gift in good taste.
Orchard-fresh grapefruit and other Texas products are all hand-selected, carefully packed and shipped to be delivered just in time for the holidays.

1-800-580-1900
crockett farms.com



Fudge and Divinity for the Holidays

**The Best Fudge in Texas.
The Best Divinity in the World.**
Bring back those childhood memories of Christmas with the sweet gift of fudge and divinity from Holiday Farms.

holidayfarmscandy.com
divinitybydave.etsy.com



The Perfect Taste of Texas

Looking for a gift that's always remembered?
Berdoll's has been making pecan pies, honey glazed pecans, and chocolate favorites for 45 years. Stop by our store or let us ship Texas pecan goodness right to your door.

800-518-3870
berdoll.com



Horror in the Court

Some say a ghost still haunts the scene of a grisly courthouse attack

BY CHET GARNER

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT historic Texas courthouses that makes them seem haunted even before anyone starts telling ghost stories. Maybe it's the ominous architecture, the creaking staircases, or the fact that generations of drama, heartbreak and attempts at justice have unfolded inside their walls.

In Gatesville, west of Waco, the Coryell County Courthouse doesn't just *feel* haunted. According to the folks who work in the building, it absolutely is.

The building is undeniably beautiful with its ornate statues and domed clock tower standing like a limestone castle in the center of town since 1898. Stepping inside feels like entering another century as sunlight spills into the marble rotunda and portraits of long-forgotten judges stare down from the walls.

But ask the courthouse employees, law officers and late-night visitors, and they'll tell you there's much to this building that can't be seen. Many claim they've heard footsteps echoing through the empty rooms while some describe cold spots drifting down the halls. Objects move without explanation, and some even claim to have seen figures and faces. Mysterious things were happening so frequently that the workers decided to name (and blame) a ghost from 1909.

Folks believe the spirit goes back to a shooting that took place in the 52nd District courtroom, where a man named John Hanes was killed by his alleged victim, 16-year-old Verna Ware, through a courtroom window. The hailstorm of bullets also killed two bystanders. There are still bullet holes in the door behind the witness stand.

Standing in that courtroom, I couldn't help but glance over my shoulder more than once. The old wooden floor and benches groaned, and the silence carried a strange weight as if the building was watching me. Or maybe that was just the ghost. ■

ABOVE Chet outside the Coryell County Courthouse in Gatesville. Inside, an eerie presence remains from 1909.

TCP Watch the video on our website and see all of Chet's Explorations on *The Daytripper* on PBS.



Know Before You Go

Call ahead or check an event's website for scheduling details, and check our website for many more upcoming events.

OCTOBER

6

Floresville [6, 8–10] Peanut Festival, (210) 317-7094, floresvillepeanutfestival.org

8

Groves [8–11] Pecan Festival, (409) 962-3631, grovescofc.com

9

Grapevine Barn Dance at Nash Farm, (817) 410-3185, grapevinetexasusa.com

Fredericksburg [9–11] Texas Mesquite & Fine Art Spectacular, (830) 481-9601, texasspectacular.com

Muenster [9–11] Oktoberfest, (940) 759-2227, muensterchamber.com

10

Burnet Texas State Button Society Fall Workshop and Sale, (903) 815-4771, texasstatebuttonssociety.com

Eagle Lake Scarecrow Stroll, (979) 234-2640, coeltx.net

Luling Night in Old Luling, (830) 875-0123, lulingcc.org

Tehuacana College Hill Festival, (512) 667-6500, savetexashall.org

Chappell Hill [10–11] Scarecrow Music Festival, (979) 530-7582, scarecrowmusicfestival.com

Edom [10–11] Art Festival, (903) 258-5192, edomarts.com

16

Brenham [16–18] Texas Arts & Music Festival, (979) 337-7580, texasartsandmusicfestival.com

17

China Spring Fall Festival, (254) 836-1825, facebook.com/stphilipchinaspring

Kerens Cotton Harvest Festival, (903) 396-2665, kerenscottongharvestfestival.com

Huntsville [17-18] Fall Festival, (936) 295-8159, saintthomashuntsville.org

Slaton [17-18] St. Joseph Sausage Festival and Oktoberfest, (806) 828-3944, slatonsausage.com

18

Fredericksburg Alias Brass, fredericksburgmusicclub.com

22

Corsicana Boo on the Block, (903) 654-4850, visitcorsicana.com

30

Burton Wine & Wander, (979) 289-3378, bit.ly/wineandwander

Grapevine Bewitched by the Barn, (817) 410-3185, grapevinetexasusa.com

Kerrville [30-Nov. 1] Texas Fleece & Fiber Festival, (361) 537-0503, texasfleeceandfiber.com

31

Garland Spooky Sprint, (760) 669-6471, runsignup.com

NOVEMBER

7

Prosper Out of the Darkness Denton & Collin Counties Walk, (972) 837-3322, afsp.org

TCP Submit Your Event

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

Don't turn a blind eye to WILDFIRE SAFETY



Do Not Park on Dry Grass | Check Burn Bans | Keep Campfires Small




TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE

linktr.ee/tamfwildfireprevention tfsweb.tamu.edu/prevent-wildfires

37th Annual HERITAGE SYRUP FESTIVAL

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 14 9 AM - 5 PM

DEPOT MUSEUM | HISTORIC DOWNTOWN HENDERSON




- Syrup Making Demonstrations
- Folk Crafts & Old-Time Skills
- Live Music on 3 Stages
- 350+ Vendors
- Car Show
- Children's Zone

SHOP • EAT • PLAY • LEARN • BE ENTERTAINED

Bank C.D.'s Due? CALL US NOW

1-800-359-4940 TEXAS TOLL-FREE

www.mattsonfinancialservices.com

BLAKE MATTSON, CFP™
Signal Securities, Inc., 5400 Bosque, 4th Floor, Waco, TX 76710
Serving Customers All Over Texas

All C.D.'s are insured to \$250,000 per institution by the F.D.I.C. All C.D.'s are subject to availability. Securities offered thru Signal Securities, Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC 700 Throckmorton, Ft. Worth, TX 76102. (817) 877-4256.

STEEL MOBILE HOME ROOFING

PERMA-ROOF from Southern Builders

Built for Strength. Designed for Life.



PERMA-ROOF OFFERS:

- Eliminates Leaks
- Eliminates Roof Rumble
- Is Maintenance-Free
- Has Lifetime Warranty
- Save on Utilities
- Expert Installation

www.roofover.com
CALL NOW! 1-800-633-8969



SINCE 1983

War Between Financiers Creates First \$11 Million Watch

Stauer
Impossible Price
ONLY
\$129



"It is a beautiful timepiece that calls back to a time when craftsmanship was appreciated."

— F.A., Edina, MN

Inspired by the legendary \$11 million Graves watch of 1933

In 1933, millionaire Henry Graves commissioned what many consider to be the most important watch ever built — a mechanical masterpiece that later sold at auction for more than **\$11 million** before disappearing into a private vault. Today, few collectors will ever see the original again.

Inspired by that legendary timepiece, the Stauer Gold-Finished Graves '33 Wristwatch revives the elegance and complexity of the famed original at a fraction of the cost. Its antique-style enameled dial features four interior complications, including

day, date, 24-hour clock, and celestial sun and moon displays — details once reserved for the world's elite.

Inside beats a sophisticated **27-jewel automatic movement** with over 200 precision-crafted parts, powered by the natural motion of your wrist.



Fine automatics of this caliber often sell for thousands, but the Graves '33 can still be yours for under \$150. **Supplies are limited**, and once this special offering disappears, it might never return.

Watch Specifications:

- Day, date, 24-hour clock, sun and moon displays
- 39 mm stainless steel case
- Automatic movement water resistant to 5 ATM
- 27-jewel movement
- Croc-embossed brown leather band fits wrist size: 6 ½" - 9"

Stauer Gold-Finished Graves '33 Wristwatch

~~\$499~~ **\$129*** + S&P **Save \$370**

or 2 credit card payments of \$64.50 +S&P

**Special price only for customers using the offer code.*

1-800-333-2045

Your Insider Offer Code: GVS143-01

14091 Southcross Drive W. | Dept. GVS143-01, Burnsville, MN 55337 | www.stauer.com

Stauer® | AFFORD THE EXTRAORDINARY®

Tailgating

Taking a break from a hard day's work, attending a parade and celebrating the big game are all good excuses for a tailgate party. These readers show us how it's done.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1



2

1 KORO CURRIE
SAN BERNARD EC
A patriotic pup.

2 JANVIER WERNER
COSERV
"Our little bottle-baby goat, Chloe, loves to join in any activity, especially if it involves friends and food."

3 LINDA STEINHEBEL
COSERV
"Grandpa and grandson take a break after working on the lawn mower."

4 ALMA GARZA
MEDINA EC
"Back when tailgating meant blankets in the back of a pickup truck bed, folding chairs and family making memories the South Texas way."



3



4

Upcoming Contests

SWAMPS DUE OCT 10

IN THE GARDEN DUE NOV 10

COUNTRY CHURCHES DUE DEC 10



ENTER
ONLINE

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



A Most Splendid Set of Spurs

Cowpunchers couldn't buy La Espuela Grandes No. 222, nor can this collector

BY HUGH EDMONDSON

ILLUSTRATION BY
JOHN KACHIK

WHEN MY FATHER found a single old spur on our ranch along the Goodnight-Loving Trail outside San Angelo more than 60 years ago, that sparked in me a lifelong fascination and a collection of hundreds of spurs representing dozens of craftsmen and more than 120 years of history.

But one eludes me, and it's a marvel.

Anyone with an interest in Kelly spurs has seen the cover of P.M. Kelly's Catalog No. 20 from 1927, with a picture of La Espuela Grandes No. 222. They were showy, oversized and, apparently, rare. They carried a hefty \$100 price tag while most spurs in the catalog were \$15 or less. Diamond Dicks, for example, were \$10.

That cover image has little or no similarity to the first spurs crafted by Kelly, starting in the Panhandle in 1903 and

later in El Paso. All this begs the question: Why did he make this elaborate, rather impractical spur? He was a businessman focused on efficiency, productivity and output.

I suspect it was a marketing ploy. Of course, this is just speculation. But placed in a storefront window, a pair of extravagant La Espuela Grandes would loudly announce: We sell spurs!

That was the case at the R. E. Donaho Saddles & Cowhand Saddlery in San Angelo when Gov. Allan Shivers visited, according to a recorded interview between historian and writer Jane Pattie and Dr. Tom Reagan of Beeville, who was a knowledgeable resource on the topic of spurs and bits. The Donaho shop had La Espuela Grandes in the front window, and Shivers, governor from 1949 to 1957, borrowed them to wear to a special event.

Reagan says he tried unsuccessfully to purchase the spurs a few times, but they remained in the shop, on display, until one spur disappeared under suspicious circumstances. The remaining Kelly spur was copied by spur-maker Wallie Boone, creating a new pair—one marked "Kelly," the other "Boone"—and remained on display, until the "disappeared" spur was returned after a saddle shop employee died.

The employee's embarrassed wife returned the original. These three spurs a Kelly pair and Boone copy—now reside in the collection of Jay C. Lyndes in Montana.

There have been copies of La Espuela Grandes over the years, by Randy Butters and Jerry Wallace. They're exceptional in workmanship and fit the catalog description, and Gatesville collector Lloyd Mitchell included the Butters reproduction in his collection.

But I've never seen a genuine Kelly pair No. 222. I called Lyndes and offered \$20,000 for his. "Well," he said, "I gave over \$50,000 for them."

So, as I've done for decades, I'll just own them in my dreams. ■

NEW 2025
JUST RELEASED AND IN STOCK

**5 Countries,
5 Pure Silver
Coins!**

Your Silver Passport to Travel the World

The 5 Most Popular Pure Silver Coins on Earth in One Set

Travel the globe without leaving home with the world's five most popular pure silver coins. Newly struck for 2025 in one ounce of fine silver, each comes in Brilliant Uncirculated (BU) condition. Your trip includes stops in the United States, Canada, South Africa, Australia, and Great Britain.

We've Done the Work for You With This Extraordinary 5-Pc. World Silver Coin Set

Each of these coins is recognized for its breathtaking beauty, and for its stability even in unstable times, since each coin is backed by its government for weight, purity and legal-tender value.

2025 American Silver Eagle: The Silver Eagle is the most popular coin in the world, with its iconic Adolph Weinman Walking Liberty obverse backed by Emily Damstra's Eagle Landing reverse. Struck in 99.9% fine silver at the U.S. Mint.



2025 South African Krugerrand: The Krugerrand continues to be the best-known, most respected numismatic coin brand in the world. Struck in 99.9% fine silver at the South African Mint.

2025 Canada Maple Leaf: A highly sought-after bullion coin since 1988, this 2025 issue was struck in highly pure 99.99% silver at the Royal Canadian Mint.

2025 British Silver Britannia: One of The Royal Mint's flagship coins, this 2025 issue features Lady Britannia, defender of Britain, struck in 99.9% fine silver at The Royal Mint.

2025 Australian Silver Kangaroo: For the first time ever, the kangaroo has rounded out the top 5 in the top 5 coins in the world. This gorgeous coin continues the Australian Kangaroo series' tradition of combining high precious metal purity with stunningly detailed designs. Struck in 99.99% fine silver at the Perth Mint.

SAVE with this World Coin Set!

You'll save both time and money on this world coin set with **FREE shipping** and a **BONUS presentation case**, plus a new and informative Silver Passport! You'll also receive a **FREE mystery gift**. A \$25 value, it's yours at no extra charge!

FREE Mystery Gift with every order!
(A \$25 value!)



Just Released and AVAILABLE NOW!

These amazing, just released 2025 Silver Passport 5-Coin Sets featuring five popular Silver Dollars from around the world are in stock now. Don't wait. Order now and your 2025 Set will ship directly to your door. Order your Silver Passport Set right now—while they last!



2025 World Silver 5-Coin Set

Regular Price \$279 – Only \$219 per set!

SAVE \$60.00 (over 20%) + FREE SHIPPING

AND FREE Gift! Total Value of \$304 – FOR ONLY \$219!

FREE SHIPPING: Standard domestic shipping. Not valid on previous purchases.

For fastest service call today toll-free

1-888-201-7070

Offer Code WRD444-17

Please mention this code when you call.

SPECIAL CALL-IN ONLY OFFER

GOVMINT • 1300 Corporate Center Curve, Dept. WRD444-17, Eagan, MN 55121

GOVMINT® is a brand of Asset Marketing Services, LLC (AMS). AMS is a retail distributor of coin and currency issues and is not affiliated with the U.S. government. The collectible coin market is unregulated, highly speculative and involves risk. Prices, facts, figures and populations deemed accurate as of the date of publication but may change significantly over time. All purchases are expressly conditioned upon your acceptance of our Terms and Conditions (www.amsi-corp.com/terms-conditions); to decline, return your purchase pursuant to our 30 day Return Policy (www.amsi-corp.com/product-return-policy). ©2025 Asset Marketing Services, LLC.

Share the Joy



The GRAPEVINE Christmas Capital of Texas

- Peace Plaza Ice Rink
- ice! at Gaylord Texan Resort
- Shop & Dine at Grapevine Mills & Historic Main Street
- Christmas concerts & movies
- Enormous Christmas displays & decorations

Visit ChristmasCapitalofTexas.com for all the details and to plan your Christmas Getaway in Grapevine.

