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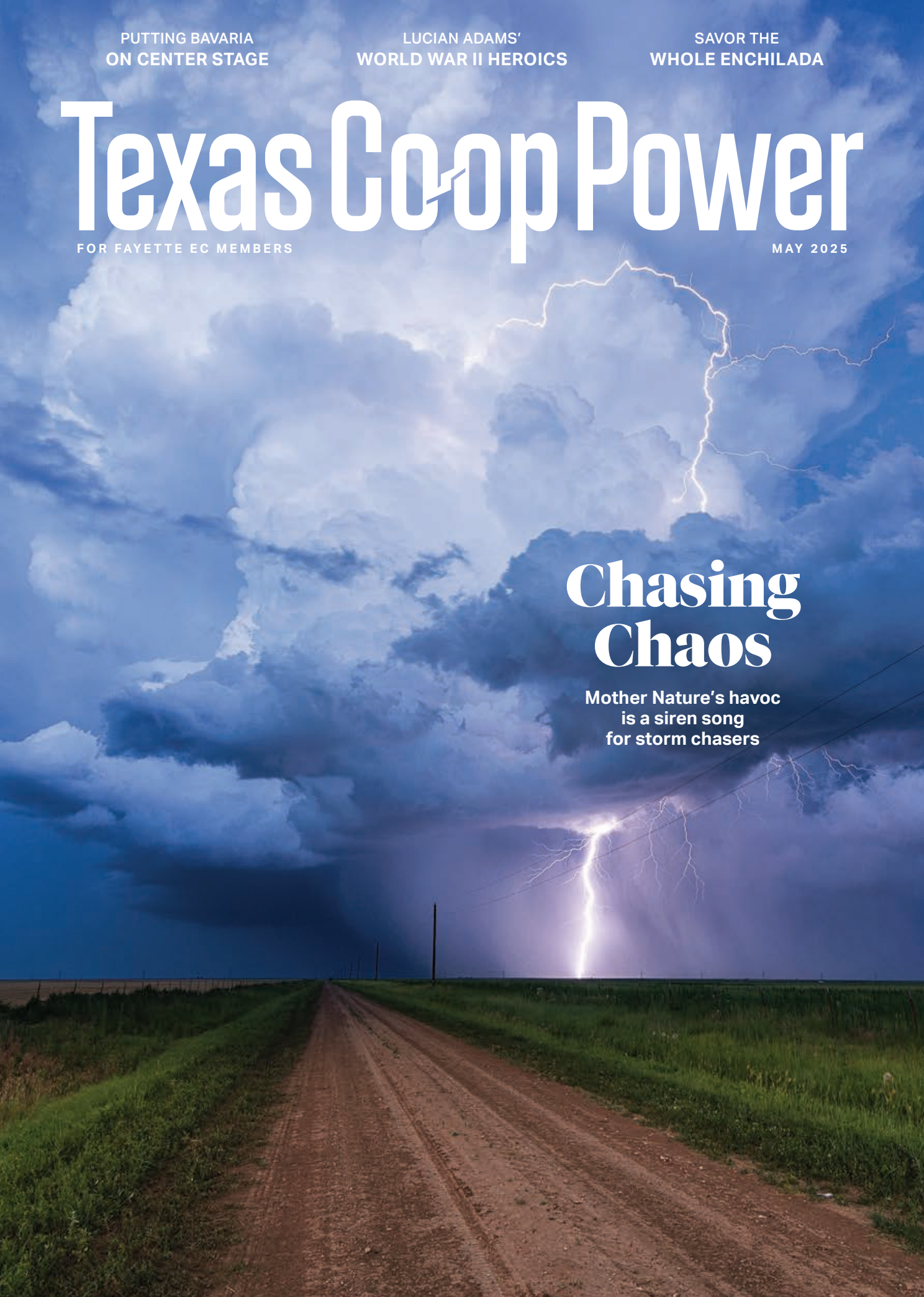
# Texas Coop Power

FOR FAYETTE EC MEMBERS

MAY 2025

## Chasing Chaos

Mother Nature's havoc  
is a siren song  
for storm chasers





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2. ENERGY STAR rated units qualify for 30% through 2032,  
26% through 2033 and 22% through 2034



# May 2025



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Storm chasers go to great and dangerous lengths for thrills and scientific research.

*By Sheryl Smith-Rodgers*

## Bavaria, By Way of Texas

Yodeling takes this German back home, even after decades of running a restaurant and entertaining in tiny Walburg.

*Story and photo by Erich Schlegel*

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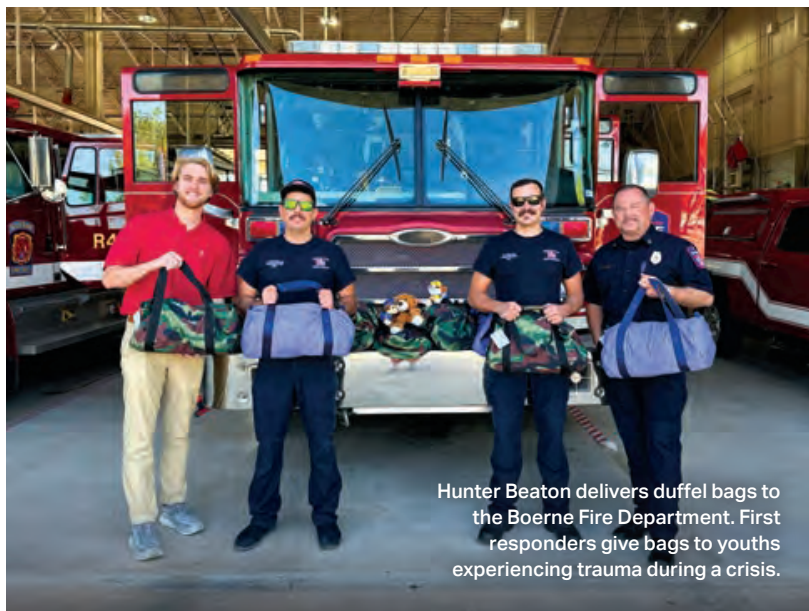
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**Observations**  
Stepping Up  
*By Martha Deeringer*

ON THE COVER  
Supercells like this one near Claude trigger an adrenaline rush for storm chasers.  
*Photo by Jenny Brown*

ABOVE  
Ronny Tippelt and the Walburg Boys entertain in the Bavarian style.  
*Photo by Erich Schlegel*

# A Case Study in Compassion



Hunter Beaton delivers duffel bags to the Boerne Fire Department. First responders give bags to youths experiencing trauma during a crisis.

**NATIONAL FOSTER CARE DAY** is the first Tuesday in May—May 6 this year.

For Hunter Beaton, every day is foster care day. Beaton, disturbed that foster children showed up at adoptive homes carrying all their possessions in trash bags, used his 2016 Eagle Scout project to offer some measure of dignity for them.

He raised \$10,000 and filled 100 duffel bags to give to Texas foster kids.

When requests for duffels kept pouring in, Beaton knew he found his lifelong mission. He started the nonprofit Day 1 Bags, which has since delivered 224,000 bags in 47 states and drove 2023 legislation in Texas requiring the state to maintain a supply of proper luggage for foster youths.

Beaton said in 2018, when we first wrote about the Bandera Electric Cooperative member, after his parents adopted three foster children, “They had all their possessions in a black trash bag. How awful is that? I decided to find a way to say, ‘No, no kid deserves this.’”

To help Beaton in his mission, go to [day1bags.org](http://day1bags.org).



## Cinco Celebrations

Cinco de Mayo has become a day to commemorate Mexican culture and heritage in the U.S., where it is more celebrated than in Mexico. May 5, 1862, is when the Mexican army defeated invading French forces at the Battle of Puebla. Outside of that city, the day doesn't get much attention in Mexico.

The big celebrations south of the border come on *Diez y Seis*, when Mexicans mark their independence from Spain, on September 16, 1810.



## TCP Contests and More

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### RECOMMENDED READING

From our archives: In May 2005 we took readers to Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, where endangered and threatened species have found safe haven since 1984. Download the issue at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

**I blush whenever ...**

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

Here are some of the responses to our March prompt: **Making my bed every morning is ...**

What keeps me from climbing back into it.

MARSHA MOORE  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES  
GRANBURY

Means I've made it through another night, saw another sunrise. Hope I get to make my bed tomorrow.

KENNY COGBURN  
CECA  
COMANCHE COUNTY

Totally useless since, at 76, I need a nap every day.

CAROLYN SUE HAMMONS  
SOUTH PLAINS EC  
LUBBOCK

A ritual that started as a requirement and is now a source of happiness.

MARK W. OWEN  
BLUEBONNET EC  
ELGIN

Visit our website to see more responses.



## MARCH 2025 Home of the Brave

“Brig. Gen. George ‘Bud’ Day made me to want to be a pilot growing up, but I did not have the eyesight for it.”

ARTHUR RICHARD TROELL III  
VIA FACEBOOK



ROBERT SEALE

## Unforgettable Honor

As an Army lieutenant, I was charged with researching and commissioning a series of paintings showing the actions of the Medal of Honor recipients from South Carolina [*Home of the Brave*, March 2025]. It was my privilege to talk directly with some of the honorees or with their families. It was an honor I won't forget.

Ed Rowland  
CECA  
Eastland

## Return of the Bluebonnets

*Nanny's Blessing* [March 2025] struck me, as the same miracle happened to me. Our ranch was destroyed by the Eastland Complex Fire three years ago. By a divine hand, bluebonnets returned where the house once stood the following year when there were none for at least 15 years.

Bill Dakin  
CECA  
Eastland County



SARAH FERONE

## Sancho's Long Reach

I enjoyed the J. Frank Dobie tale of the tamale-loving longhorn [*Sancho's Long Road*, March 2025]. It took me back to my childhood when Walt Disney took the story and made it an episode of his long-running Sunday night TV show. It was about Texas, so I had to watch it.

Michael Bolton  
CoServ  
Little Elm

## Dancing Memories

I would like to see an article about polka and waltz music/dancing/bands being handed down through the generations [*It's Hip To Be a Square*, February 2025].

These bands play at church picnics, festivals, old dance halls—you name it—almost the whole year in south Central Texas. I learned to dance to Joe Patek in Shiner.

Del Jean (Leck) Bauer  
GVEC  
La Vernia

## 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

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## Storm chasers go to great and dangerous lengths for thrills and scientific research



COURTESY CHELSEA BURNETT

BY SHERYL SMITH-RODGERS

Nearly everyone has their passion. Some people love to garden, hike or travel. Others play video games, dance or volunteer.

Chelsea Burnett chases storms. Her unusual passion surfaced at age 2 in the late 1980s, when, upon hearing thunder, she'd rush to a window and search the skies.

"As I got older, I watched the Weather Channel and local weather updates," recalls Burnett, who lives in Little Elm, north of Dallas. "I had weather calendars, and I'd cut out newspaper articles about weather in the region. I also had a weather radio alarm clock that played local forecasts."

Today, Burnett, a member of CoServ, makes a living from weather-related work. So does her husband, Adam Lucio. Their mutual passion led them to become storm chasers—a term for professional and amateur weather watchers who pursue tornadoes, hurricanes and other severe weather.

Why? Some want to see their first tornado. Many crave the adrenaline rush. Others photograph storms for spectacular images, scientific research or news coverage. And these days, social media, mobile devices and even tour groups are making it easier than ever to find and share stunning storms despite extreme risks.



COURTESY ERIC BURNS

# Twisted





# *Approach*

OPPOSITE A storm cell produces lightning beyond a church in Gainesville.

ABOVE A Tornadoic Expeditions tour in April 2021 came across a rare weather phenomenon in Lockett: a tornado alongside a rainbow.



COURTESY ERIK BURNS



COURTESY CARRIE CUNNINGHAM

ABOVE A Tornadic Expeditions tour pursued this supercell for 125 miles across West Texas, from Spur to Tuscola.

LEFT Tim Marshall and Carrie Cunningham met in 2010 chasing storms for the Vortex2 research project.



*“The first people I see coming into a disaster area are the power crews. It’s amazing how many of them get ready and are there once law enforcement clears the roads.”*

Modern-day chasers follow in the wake of David Hoadley, considered to be the father of storm chasing. In 1956, he photographed the aftermath of a severe thunderstorm in his hometown of Bismarck, North Dakota. His fascination led him to drive after and document storms using his own forecast maps. From 1977 to 1986, he published *Storm Track* magazine for the growing chaser community.

At 86, Hoadley, who lives in Falls Church, Virginia, still chases.

“It’s a challenge,” he says. “I enjoy intersecting storms and getting pictures. I just do what I like to do.”

Some words of warning: Chasing is dangerous, sometimes deadly. And even despite the best of safety precautions, accidents happen. In June 2013, three veteran chasers were killed by a tornado near Oklahoma City. Other chasers have died in car crashes while on the road.

In 1996, daring risk-takers came to life when *Twister* tore into theaters nationwide. The disaster film—which inspired a generation of weather scientists—stars Helen Hunt and the late Bill Paxton as storm chasers trying to release data-gathering sensors into a tornado in hopes of improving early warning systems.

The same goal returns in *Twisters*, the action-packed 2024 sequel that features scientists and chasers going up against tornadoes in the social media era using more sophisticated technology.

Tim Marshall of Flower Mound, in the Metroplex, Hoadley’s protégé, started storm chasing in 1978. In those days, he’d stop at pay phones to call the National Weather Service for radar updates. Then he and his partner would take off for a location where a storm might intensify. Or not.

“In the ’70s and ’80s, the odds of catching a tornado were 1 in 20 times when you went out,” says Marshall, who has seen hundreds of twisters. “Now it’s 1 in 8 or 10. It’s still more miss than anything, but the odds are better because of our technology.”

Marshall and Hoadley were among the six inaugural inductees to the National Storm Chaser Hall of Fame in February. Professionally, Marshall, a CoServ member, has worked since 1983 as a meteorologist and forensics engineer. As part of his job, he assesses damaged buildings after catastrophic weather events.

“Before a storm, power crews prestige their trucks,” he says. “So the first people I see coming into a disaster area are the power crews. It’s amazing how many of them get ready and are there once law enforcement clears the roads.”

Most chasers carry first-aid supplies in case they’re the

first on the scene of a disaster.

Carrie Cunningham of Boerne, near San Antonio, met Marshall in 2010 when she volunteered with Vortex2, which was the largest tornado research project of its kind. As a driver, she was among a team of more than 100 scientists and crew members, with 40 support vehicles and 10 mobile radars, who raced after supercell thunderstorms for six weeks across seven Midwestern states.

On June 10, 2010, she witnessed her first tornado with Marshall near Denver. Every season since, she and her husband, Doug, have chased with Marshall. When forecasts and weather models predict risky conditions, the couple pack up and head north.

“We call them ‘chase-cations,’” says Carrie Cunningham, a member of Bandera Electric Cooperative. “It’s not always about seeing a tornado. I just love to drive, visit the small towns, eat in cafés and meet new people. For me, it’s spiritual being with the storms and nature.”

Then there’s the tradition among the community of eating a steak after a sighting.

## Myths Busted

**MYTH:** Areas near mountains, cities and rivers are safe from tornadoes. **FACT:** Twisters can go up mountains, through cities and across rivers, like the 1925 tri-state tornado, which crossed the Mississippi and Wabash rivers and killed nearly 700.

**MYTH:** Open windows in your house during a tornado to equalize pressure. **FACT:** Do not do this! Your house will not explode, and opening windows will only let in powerful winds. Seek shelter in an interior room.

**MYTH:** If you’re on the highway with a tornado approaching, find an underpass. **FACT:** As the opening scene of *Twisters* showed, this is a dangerous myth. High-speed flying debris is channeled through underpasses, where winds move at incredible speeds. If a tornado is imminent, seek a ditch, and duck and cover.

Source: National Weather Service



COURTESY ERIK BURNS

“Some of our family think we’re crazy,” she says. “A lot of friends are fascinated, and some say they’d love to go with us.”

For more casual storm adventure seekers, chasing tours can be booked through many companies in Texas and beyond. That is, if they’re not booked up, thanks to renewed interest inspired by *Twisters*.

For example, Tornadic Expeditions completely sold out for 2025 tours by the end of 2024, and 2026 will fill soon. Erik Burns, a Grayson-Collin Electric Cooperative member who lives in Whitesboro, near the Oklahoma border, launched the niche business in 2015.

“On a seven-day tour, we cover about 2,500 miles,” says Burns, who met his Australian wife, Emma, on one of his 2019 excursions. “Our tours are laid-back and personable. We only put four guests in a van, so everyone’s got a window seat.”

The U.S. experiences more tornadoes than any other country—about 1,150 per year, which is about five times what Europe will see in a year. And 2024 was the second-worst tornado season on record in the U.S., with more than 1,735 confirmed twisters, including 169 in Texas—more than any other state. On average in the U.S., 73 people die in tornadoes per year.

Burns and his chaser guides conduct five- to 10-day trips from April into July across Tornado Alley, a twister-prone area that roughly spans north from Texas up to Nebraska and South Dakota. Tours may also venture into neighboring states, depending on weather. Guests travel in vans equipped with Wi-Fi, cameras and laptops loaded with radar and satellite-tracking software.

Since 2018, Ray Myers of Plano has been on three Tornadic Expedition tours. He’s also accompanied Burns on numerous

## *Early Eyes on the Sky*

**Some of America’s Founding Fathers were avid weather watchers. Thomas Jefferson bought a thermometer while in Philadelphia for the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. He noted that the high temperature there July 4, 1776, was 76. He also owned one of the only barometers in the colonies. George Washington also made regular weather notes. The last weather entry in his diary was made the day before he died.**

Source: National Weather Service

solo trips. On April 23, 2021, the two witnessed five tornadoes near Lockett, west of Wichita Falls, including twin tornadoes and one that spiraled next to a rainbow. What was his reaction to seeing his first?

“I said, ‘Oh, look at that! Oh, look at that—look at that—look at that!’ ” recalls Myers. “There are just no words. You are witnessing one of the most powerful things in nature. Some people go speechless. Some cry.”

Storm chasing has even joined the collegiate world. Since 2020, the department of atmospheric sciences at Texas A&M University has offered a spring course called convective storms field studies. Students are trained on how to storm chase, forecast tornadoes and conduct field research.



*“There are just no words. You are witnessing one of the most powerful things in nature. Some people go speechless. Some cry.”*



COURTESY CHRIS NOWOTARSKI



COURTESY ERIK BURNS

CLOCKWISE FROM OPPOSITE A Tornadoic Expeditions tour watched this twister in Hawley stay on the ground for 24 minutes. Texas A&M University students studying atmospheric sciences launch balloons for National Weather Service research. A Tornadoic Expeditions tour poses with a tornado in 2022 in Crowell.

“Then for two weeks in May, we go out storm chasing,” says Chris Nowotarski, an associate professor. “The students take turns forecasting and navigating where they think there will be storms in the Great Plains. They also launch weather balloons and send the data to the National Weather Service.”

After graduation, “our meteorology majors go on to become forecasters for the National Weather Service, private forecasting companies or aviation companies that need weather forecasts,” Nowotarski says. “Some go into grad school to do research related to severe weather or other weather. Some go into television.”

Schooled or not, storm chasers provide information that advances scientific understanding of weather.

“Many amateur storm chasers are more focused on collecting photography and videos of tornadoes, which may be less useful in improving our understanding and prediction,” Nowotarski says. “But these chasers report tornadoes to the National Weather Service. These reports are critical to developing an accurate record and climatology of tornadoes that can be used for future studies.”

Although she has no meteorology degree, Chelsea Burnett has years of hands-on training and experience. She’s a tour guide for Tornadoic Expeditions and a public speaker with Storm Science, which conducts educational weather programs. She’s also a member of Girls Who Chase, an online group that encourages and connects women who want to storm chase, and is a chaser and speaker with Texas Storm Chasers.

In her chasing career, Burnett has gone after 70 twisters (and three hurricanes). But—like all storm chasers—she’ll never forget her first. On the night of December 26, 2015, she was standing outside a gas station near Red Oak, south of Dallas, when power flashes and lightning illuminated the sky—and a tornado.

“I couldn’t believe I was seeing one,” she recalls. “It was the most incredible moment of my life! You’re eye to eye with one of Mother Nature’s most raw processes. To see a tornado come together truly is a spiritual moment.” ■







# Bavaria, By Way of Texas

**Yodeling takes this German back home, even after decades of running a restaurant and entertaining in tiny Walburg**

**T**ake Exit 268 off Interstate 35, head east on FM 972, make a pair of 90-degree jogs past mobile homes and rolling farmland, and suddenly you're in Germany. Well, the German settlement of Walburg, formerly known as Concordia.

The Williamson County community, about 40 miles north of Austin, was founded in 1881 by Henry Doering, a German immigrant. The following year, Doering opened the Hy. Doering Co. mercantile store. Doering eventually changed the name of the community from Concordia to Walburg, his German birthplace.

Today, instead of groceries, dry goods and hardware, the shelves of the former general store are now filled with more than 200 beer steins.

Iconic flags of Bavaria hang from the high ceiling, with matching blue and white tablecloths in the dining room. Of course, there's a cooler full of imported German beer. And opposite the buffet table and kitchen is a stage where Ronny Tippelt and his band, the Walburg Boys, play Friday and Saturday nights. Tippelt is also co-owner of the venue, which is now called Walburg German Restaurant & Biergarten.

Tippelt, founder of the band, was born in Munich. He learned to yodel at the age of 7 from his "vocal hero," Franzl Lang, a world-renowned *Jodlerkönig*, or Yodel King. Lang was an expert in Bavarian alpine yodeling.

Humans have yodeled for tens of thousands of years, mostly for calling livestock, but across Switzerland and Bavaria (a state in southern Germany), the calls began to be incorporated into songs, accompanied by accordion, in the 19th century.

Some Native American cultures yodeled, Liz Tracy writes in *No Depression* magazine. Then cowboys picked up on the custom. "The yodel is used as a call to herds across lonely landscapes; the pastoral, solitary life of cowboys made them a prime conduit for the yodel," Tracy writes.

Ronny Tippelt, a music-maker in Walburg, has been yodeling since he was 7.

By age 12, Tippelt was learning accordion. At 16, he won a Bavarian yodeling competition in Munich. By then, he had started a musical group called the Lerchenauer Baum with some friends and had been playing Oktoberfest in Munich—the largest and oldest such German festival in the world.

In 1982, Tippelt was 23 when his band was at Oktoberfest. "After the show, I went over to a table of cute American ladies, and I ended up marrying one of them," Tippelt says. "She was a Braniff Airlines flight attendant from Austin, Texas."

They moved to Texas that year, and though the marriage didn't last, Tippelt stayed. He opened his restaurant a few years later. "I just thought Texas was the Wild West," Tippelt says. "I figured out pretty quickly that it wasn't like the movies."

He started a duo called the Bavarian Boys. They're now a five-piece band featuring, in addition to accordion and yodeling, a keyboard, guitar, saxophone, bass, fiddle and drums.

When he performs, Tippelt wears traditional lederhosen with beautifully embroidered scrolls stitched in and a T-shirt with the Bayern—the German name for Bavaria—state coat of arms. He plays a chromatic accordion with keys like a piano.

He typically sings in German, flowing smoothly from German lyrics into yodeling and back. "When I play and yodel," Tippelt says, "I feel pride in representing my homeland. People get to hear a true German music style."

Another Texas musician who plays in the Bavarian style is Alan Walling, leader of Metroplex band AlpenMusikanten, a friend of Tippelt's and a self-taught yodeler.

"I met Ronny at a Fredericksburg German festival in 1990," Walling says. "He's a fantastic yodeler in the Bavarian style. The best yodeler in Texas and perhaps in the United States."

In 2019, Walling and Tippelt organized their own festival, Walburg Fest, which became an annual event over Labor Day weekend.

About 35 years ago, the boys were playing one of the stages at Austin's former Aqua Fest. Tippelt came up to the headliner and introduced himself. "Hello, I'm Ronny Tippelt from Germany. Who are you?" he said.

"Well, I'm George Strait from Texas," answered the famous country singer.

Ronny Tippelt from Texas now covers a handful of Strait's songs, with *Amarillo By Morning* being a favorite.

And that isn't his only foray into the country realm. He's especially proud to sing Merle Haggard's sentimental hit *Silver Wings*. Tippelt ends it with his signature yodeling. ■

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The ATTO SPORT has an ergonomic and adjustable seat and handlebars, crafted to ensure a smooth ride every time, even on longer journeys.

## Sleek and Stylish

The ATTO SPORT redefines mobility with a sporty, elegant design that looks as great as it feels. Its modern aesthetic and 3-wheel agility let you navigate tight spaces, and it is equipped with **electronic stability control for added safety on descents and turns.**

## Airline Approved Battery

The ATTO SPORT is equipped with a TSA-approved battery. Its compact size and optional split mode make it the only mobility scooter that can fit in the aircraft's overhead compartment.

## Reliable for Every Adventure

With a driving range of up to **12.5 miles** (extendable to **25 miles** with the XL battery), a **6.2 MPH top speed**, a **weight capacity of 300 lbs**, flat-free, shock-absorbing tires, and **4-inch ground clearance**, it is ideal for air travel and outdoor exploration and built for longevity.

## Front and Rear Lights

ATTO SPORT's powerful front and rear LED lights enable riding in dark conditions.

## It's Never Too Soon

Time waits for no one, so why should you? There's no better time to reclaim your mobility and make the most of every moment.

**Don't wait! Call now and buy your ATTO SPORT and receive a free front/rear basket and phone holder, a \$184 value.**



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MESSAGE  
FROM  
GENERAL  
MANAGER

DOUG  
LAMBERT

## FEC Modernizes for You

How your electric co-op is enhancing service and efficiency

**FOR DECADES**, the Fayette Electric Cooperative headquarters in La Grange has been the backbone of our operations. However, as our cooperative has grown, so have the demands on our facilities.

After occupying the same space since the 1960s, it became clear that our outdated and overcrowded offices could no longer support the level of service and excellence our members deserve. In particular, the building lacked the adaptability needed to accommodate modern grid monitoring and response capabilities, making an upgrade essential for the future.

Last year, we moved into our new, state-of-the-art headquarters. The move represents more than just a new building—it lays the foundation for a smarter, more responsive and more resilient cooperative.

By modernizing our business and operational practices, we are ensuring we can continue delivering safe, reliable and high-quality electrical service for generations to come.

Designed to enhance operational efficiency, improve customer service and support the evolving needs of our members, this investment incorporates key advancements, including:

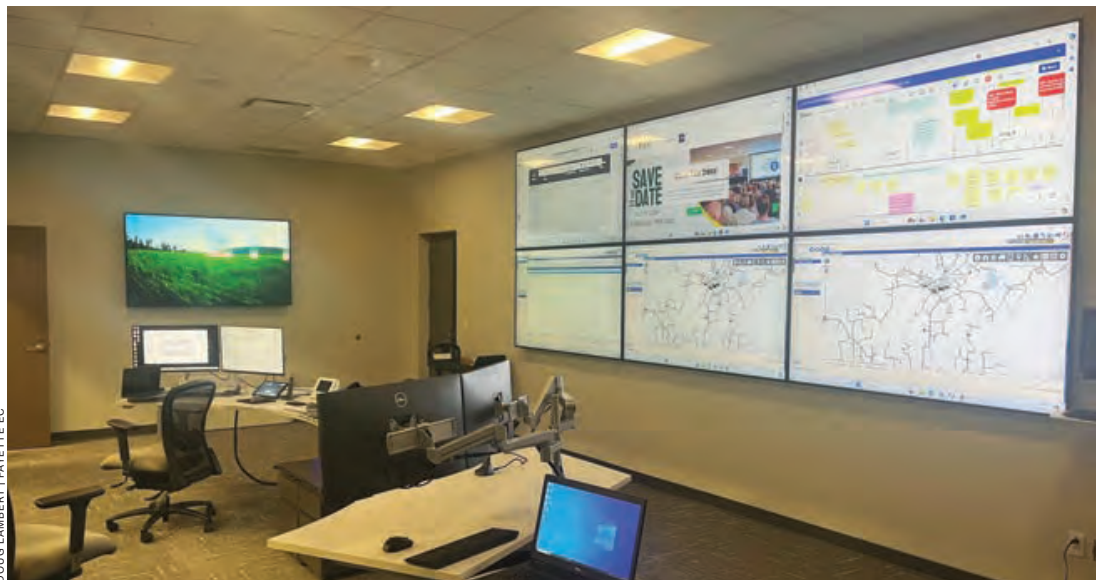
**Real-time outage monitoring:** Members can now track the progress of outage restorations in real time through a live outage map available on our website and report outages with the SmartHub app on their smartphone.

**24/7 system operations center:** To ensure faster response times to outages and service issues, we have partnered with Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative through a shared services agreement.

This collaboration allows our members to receive top-tier service from qualified electric cooperative personnel during after-hours, holidays and weekends—saving FEC over \$330,000 in avoided annual salary costs while demonstrating our commitment to Cooperation Among Cooperatives and Concern for Community as core cooperative principles.

**Advanced grid resilience:** One of the major causes of power outages is vegetation interference. To address this, we have partnered with a company that utilizes advanced data analysis, high-resolution satellite imagery and machine learning algorithms to optimize our vegetation management. These techniques have proven to reduce storm-related outages by more than 15% while improving overall grid reliability.

We deeply appreciate the support of our members as we take these important steps toward the future of Fayette EC. These advancements reflect our commitment to delivering the reliable service you depend on while embracing innovative solutions to enhance our operations. ■



DOUG LAMBERT | FAYETTE EC





DRIETLESSSTUDIO | ISTOCK.COM

## Thunderstorm Safety Tips From the American Red Cross

**THEY SAY APRIL SHOWERS** bring May flowers, but May in Texas often has its own share of showers, so it's a good idea to be prepared for thunderstorms. **Here are some safety tips from the American Red Cross.**

Listen to local news or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, like darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing wind.

If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, take shelter in a substantial building or a vehicle with the windows closed. Get out of mobile homes that can blow over in high winds.

Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are likely to occur, even if it's not raining. Lightning can strike well outside the area where rain is falling.

If you can hear thunder, you're close enough to be struck by lightning. If thunder roars, go indoors. The National Weather Service recommends staying inside for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap.

Avoid electrical equipment and corded phones. Use battery-powered TVs and radios instead.

Close outside doors securely and shutter windows. Keep away from them once closed.

Do not take a bath, shower or use plumbing.

If you're driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. Avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.

If you're outside and cannot reach a safe building, avoid high ground, water, tall and isolated trees, and metal objects such as fences or bleachers. Picnic shelters, dugouts and sheds are not safe. ■

## Fayette Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



### CONTACT US

2111 N. Von Minden Rd.  
P.O. Box 490  
La Grange, TX 78945  
**Local** (979) 968-3181  
**Toll-Free** 1-866-968-3181  
**Email** [electric@fayette.coop](mailto:electric@fayette.coop)  
**Web** [fayette.coop](http://fayette.coop)

### Your Board of Directors

Joseph D. Kruppa, President  
Gale Lincke, Vice President  
James A. Anderle, Secretary-Treasurer  
David Lehmann  
David A. Stancik  
Leo C. Henke

### Your General Manager

Doug Lambert

**24/7**

## Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and  
to report outages,  
please contact us.

**LOCAL**  
(979) 968-3181

**TOLL-FREE**  
1-866-968-3181

### ABOUT FAYETTE EC

FEC serves Austin, Bastrop, Colorado, Fayette, Lavaca, Lee and Washington counties.

### CONVENIENT PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Pay by Bank Draft
- Pay Online Using SmartHub
- Pay by Phone at 844-971-1048
- Pay in Person
- Pay by Credit Card Draft
- Pay by Mail

### TEXAS CO-OP POWER

Fayette EC provides *Texas Co-op Power* and [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com) to give you information about events, safety, special programs and other activities of your cooperative. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact the co-op office.

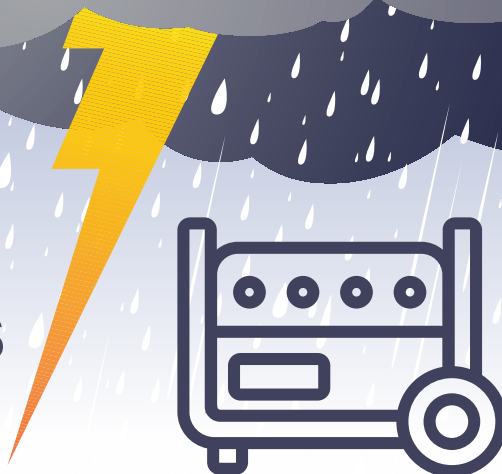
### VISIT US ONLINE

[fayette.coop](http://fayette.coop)



# A QUICK GUIDE TO GENERATORS

With proper use and maintenance, generators provide great convenience during a power outage. Before you purchase a generator, determine your backup power needs to select the right size. Make a list of essential appliances and devices you'll want to power during an outage, then total the required wattage.



## RECOMMENDED IF YOU...

... **rarely** lose power.

### Recreational Inverter | Up to 2,500 Watts

Lightweight, about 60 pounds

Quiet, easy to store

Power: Fridge and a few smaller items (i.e. lamp, phone charger and home security system)

### Midsized Inverter | Up to 3,500 Watts

Weights up to 150 pounds

Power: Fridge, laptop, five to 10 lights, phone charger, home security system and 10K BTU air conditioner

... **occasionally** lose power.  
Transfer switch required.

### Portable Generators and Large Inverters | Up to 7,500 Watts

Weights about 300 pounds

Power: Fridge, gas furnace, 10K BTU air conditioner, dishwasher, multiple lights, TV, laptop and more

Ability to connect to home's breaker panel

... **frequently** lose power.  
Transfer switch required.

### Home Standby | Up to 20,000 Watts

Must be permanently installed; starts automatically during outage

Power: Nearly all home appliances and electronics (simultaneously)

Can run indefinitely on natural gas or propane

Recommended if you frequently lose power

## SAFETY FIRST!

- ▶ Let us know if you purchase a generator that you plan to connect to an electric panel.
- ▶ Improperly installed generators can create back feed, which is dangerous to our crews and the community.  
**Before using the generator, disconnect the normal source of power coming into your home/business.**
- ▶ Never operate a generator indoors or in an enclosed space.

SOURCE: CONSUMER REPORTS

## DISCLAIMER

Please note safety requirements may differ based on the type of generator you purchase. Thoroughly read the operator's manual and know how to shut off the generator quickly.







HOLDEN HENRY | ISTOCK.COM

## What's in Your Attic?

**A PEEK IN MOST** attics will reveal tried-and-true materials commonly used to insulate homes: fiberglass, cellulose, mineral wool or spray-foam insulation. Regardless of type, the keys to effective insulation are the same—getting the right R-value, a measure of insulation's ability to resist heat flow, for your home; proper installation; and air sealing.

So what's in your attic?

**Fiberglass:** This is the insulation that looks like cotton candy, commonly seen in long strips—called batts or rolls—between wall studs and ceiling joists. It might be pink, white or yellow, and it also comes in a loose-fill form, which is often blown into attic spaces. Made of tiny glass fibers, it can be uncomfortable to touch. Wear gloves and a mask while handling it.

**Cellulose:** Grayish in color, cellulose is a loose-fill insulation that can be blown in between attic joists. It is chemically treated to be resistant to moisture, fire, insects and nesting rodents. Over time, it can settle, reducing its insulation value and requiring an additional layer to bring it back to the recommended R-value for your home.

**Mineral wool:** Like fiberglass, this comes in batt, roll and loose-fill forms. It's made from natural and recycled materials and often appears greenish-brown in color.

**Spray-in foam:** More expensive than other types of insulation, spray-in foam is becoming a more common choice because it provides more insulation and better air sealing. Sprayed on the interior of your roof, it wraps the attic into your home's envelope; if your HVAC unit is in the attic, it will operate more efficiently if the attic is better insulated. It's more expensive than blowing in another 6 inches of fiberglass or cellulose, but it's certainly worth getting a price estimate. For new construction, it's a no-brainer.

If you're climbing up to look at what you've got, be sure to protect yourself. Bring a flashlight, so you can check your insulation in every nook and cranny and also see where you're stepping. Only walk where you're sure there's secure footing. Wear gloves, eye protection and a dust mask if you'll be handling any insulation. Limit your time up there if temperatures are very hot or cold.

If the depth of the insulation in your attic is less than 13 inches, your home would probably benefit from some additional insulation. Depending on the type and condition of the existing insulation, it may be recommended that it be removed and completely replaced rather than supplemented. Proper attic insulation is key to keeping your home's temperatures comfortable and your energy bills manageable year round.

However, making sure your attic—and whole house—are properly sealed should be the step you take before upgrading your attic insulation. Even if your attic insulation is adequate, it's a good idea to check these areas of your home to make sure they are all in good shape so that the air you are paying to cool in the summer and heat in the winter is staying inside.

- ▶ Attic hatches
- ▶ Plumbing vents and pipes
- ▶ Recessed lighting
- ▶ Windows and doors
- ▶ Wiring entries
- ▶ Open soffits
- ▶ Flues and chimneys

Sealing these areas can be fairly easily and inexpensively addressed with flashing, caulking and weatherstripping. A guide for do-it-yourselfers is available at [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov). ■



HALFPOINT | ISTOCK.COM

## Stop the Heat Before It Starts

**ENERGY USE**—and costs—typically rise as the mercury rises, but there are a number of simple, economical ways to boost comfort, save energy and reduce electric bills.

A substantial portion of residential energy costs goes toward cooling homes. You can reduce those costs and ready the air conditioner with a preseason cleaning and tuneup.

During the cooling season, clean or change filters monthly.

If you're purchasing a new unit, check the seasonal energy efficiency rating, or SEER. The higher the SEER number, the more efficient the air conditioner. For greater operating efficiency, install the unit in a shady area and keep it free of plant overgrowth and debris.

Most of the summer's heat buildup inside homes comes through windows. Simply closing curtains, blinds and shades can reduce this heat gain by up to 40% and save big dollars in cooling costs. Installing awnings or shutters over windows exposed to direct sunlight can reduce indoor heat gain by up to 70%. Outdoor landscaping that includes shade trees and insulating foundation plants can also lower energy costs.

Ventilate the attic and check insulation. Adequately sized vents and/or an attic fan can help keep hot air from building up. If your attic has less than 6–8 inches of insulation, consider adding more. Proper attic insulation can save up to 30% on your cooling bill. But be sure the insulation doesn't block vents or cover exhaust fans.

Another inexpensive way to keep cool and reduce AC costs is to use ceiling and oscillating fans to create a wind chill effect. The moving air makes the temperature feel cooler and allows you to maintain comfort at a higher thermostat setting. For each 1-degree increase in the thermostat setting, cooling costs can be trimmed by about 3%.

### **Follow these operating tips for greater energy efficiency and reductions in air conditioning costs.**

- Install a timer or programmable thermostat to raise and lower the temperature automatically. Leave it on a higher temperature while you're away, and set it to cool the house half an hour before you return home.
- Turn off lights, fans and TVs you're not using. Don't leave computers on when not in use.
- Make sure heat-producing appliances like TVs and lamps are located away from the thermostat. They can raise the temperature near the thermostat and cause the air conditioner to run when it's not needed.
- Plan to do hot work—washing and drying clothes, cooking and baking—during cooler morning and evening hours.
- Keep your kitchen cooler by cooking in a microwave oven or grilling outdoors. ■



# Need a New Appliance?

May is a great time to buy

**THIS YEAR, TEXAS' ANNUAL** Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday is May 24–26. During this three-day weekend, ending on Memorial Day, sales taxes are not charged on a variety of energy-efficient appliances and products. There is no limit on the number of qualifying items you can buy, and you do not need to give the seller an exemption certificate to buy items tax free.

**These Energy Star-labeled items qualify for the sales tax exemption:**

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Air conditioners (priced at \$6,000 or less) | Clothes washers |
| Refrigerators (priced at \$2,000 or less)    | Dishwashers     |
| Incandescent and fluorescent light bulbs     | Dehumidifiers   |

**These items do not qualify and are taxable even if they are Energy Star labeled:**

|                   |            |                    |
|-------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Attic fans        | Freezers   | Stoves             |
| Beverage chillers | Heat pumps | Water heaters      |
| Clothes dryers    | Kegerators | Wine refrigerators |

During the holiday you can buy qualifying Energy Star products in store, online or by phone, mail, custom order or any other means. The sale of the item must take place during the specific period. The purchase date is determined by when payment is actually completed (i.e., a credit card charge is processed).

Delivery, shipping and handling charges are taxable. Charges for installing free-standing items are considered part of the item's sales price. If the item you buy is not taxable, then these charges are not taxable. However, for items with a sales price cap, installation fees may be taxable if the total goes above the cap.

For more information, visit [comptroller.texas.gov](http://comptroller.texas.gov) or call 1-800-252-5555. ■



## Take Energy Efficiency to Outbuildings

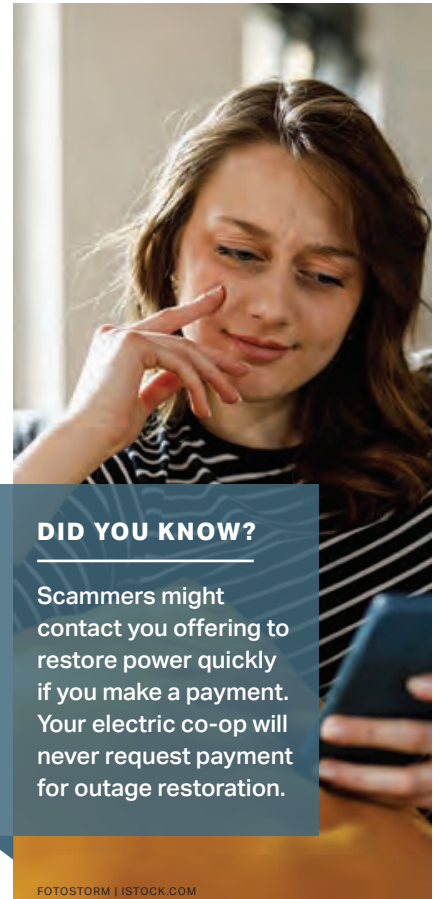
**ASIDE FROM SAVING ENERGY**, an efficient outdoor building can keep the environment around your structure healthy and safe, save money on your bills, keep your animals happier and healthier, and save you from costly structural repairs.

**Follow these tips to achieve energy efficiency for new outbuildings.**

- ▶ Location matters. Carefully assess the area where you plan to build. Consider drainage and sun exposure.
- ▶ If you hire a contractor to help build your structure, consider looking for companies that specialize in energy-efficient practices.
- ▶ Choose efficient building methods. Pole barns, for example, offer reliable shelter without costly excavation, concrete foundations or site disruption.

**If you're upgrading instead of building from the ground up, follow these tips:**

- ▶ Replace indoor lighting with energy-efficient LED bulbs.
- ▶ Ensure your existing structure has adequate insulation.
- ▶ Choose energy-efficient outdoor lighting and install motion detectors to reduce energy consumption.
- ▶ Consider adding a ceiling fan to circulate air. ■



### DID YOU KNOW?

Scammers might contact you offering to restore power quickly if you make a payment. Your electric co-op will never request payment for outage restoration.

FOTOSTORM | ISTOCK.COM

## Do's and Don'ts of Electrical Safety

**KEEPING YOUR HOME** free of electrical hazards should be a yearlong effort, but this May—National Electrical Safety Month—is a good time to look at the do's and don'ts for keeping your household safe and happy.

Electrical safety awareness and education can prevent electrical fires, injuries and fatalities.

Do keep electrical devices away from water to prevent electric shock.

Don't place flammable items like pot holders, napkins or dish towels near the stove while cooking.

Do check you're using the correct wattage in all light fixtures.

Don't overload electrical outlets with more devices than the circuit can handle.

Do use ground-fault and arc-fault circuit interrupters to prevent fires. GFCIs should be used on every outlet near where water is used, inside and outside your home or business.

Don't use ladders or poles near overhead power lines.

Do use extension cords safely, by not using them as a long-term solution and making sure they are rated to handle the devices you'll use them with.

Don't let children go near electrical cords or outlets, and be sure to use child safety plugs to cover exposed outlets and deter foreign objects (or fingers) from being inserted.

Do replace worn-out outlets that heat up, won't hold a plug securely or make zapping noises. ■



### POWER TIP

Lower your energy use by washing clothes with cold water, as heating water accounts for most of the energy used in a laundry cycle.

SOLSTOCK | ISTOCK.COM



# Fayette EC Announces Youth Tour Winners

FAYETTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE proudly announces that Avery Nelius, a junior at Round Top-Carmine High School, and Sophia Nance, a senior at Round Top-Carmine High School, have been selected to represent the cooperative on an unforgettable journey to Washington, D.C., this June.

Chosen from a talented group of seven applicants in Fayette EC's Youth Tour contest, Nelius and Nance have earned a spot on the Government-in-Action Youth Tour. They will join 143 other Texas students on an exciting trip to the nation's capital, where they will visit historic landmarks and museums, meet with elected officials, and create lifelong friendships and lasting memories.

Since 1965, Texas electric cooperatives have proudly sponsored Youth Tour, sending deserving high school students on this enriching experience. More than 4,700 Texans have participated in the program, returning home with a deeper appreciation for our nation's history and a network of peers who share their enthusiasm for leadership and service.

Nelius and Nance's adventure will begin in Austin, where they will meet fellow Texas delegates and build connections before heading to D.C. Once there, their itinerary will be packed with memorable experiences, including a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and meetings with congressional representatives.

After a week of exploration and learning in Washington, Nelius and Nance will return home with new perspectives and a greater understanding of our country's government. Though the trip is brief, the impact will last a lifetime.

At Fayette EC, we believe in investing in the next generation of leaders. Through programs like Youth Tour, we provide young people with opportunities to grow, learn and develop the skills they need to shape the future.

For more information about the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, visit [texasyouthtour.com](http://texasyouthtour.com), check out the Texas Youth Tour Alumni page on Facebook or contact Fayette EC for a copy of *Your Tour* magazine.

Doug Lambert, left, Fayette Electric Cooperative general manager and CEO, and Joseph Kruppa, right, board president, congratulate Sophia Nance and Avery Nelius, students from Round Top-Carmine High School who won FEC's Youth Tour contest and will represent the co-op in Washington, D.C., in June.



# FEC & COBANK TO OFFER GRANTS



Fayette EC, in partnership with CoBank, is seeking applicants for the Sharing Success Grant Program.

Eligible grant applicants must:

- Be a 501(c)(3) organization
- Plan to use grant money to serve a public purpose
- Submit a grant application by 5 p.m. on May 12
- For more rules and information and to complete an application, visit [fayette.coop/grants](http://fayette.coop/grants).

Questions? Contact Tracy Denton at 979-968-3181 or [tracya@fayette.coop](mailto:tracya@fayette.coop).

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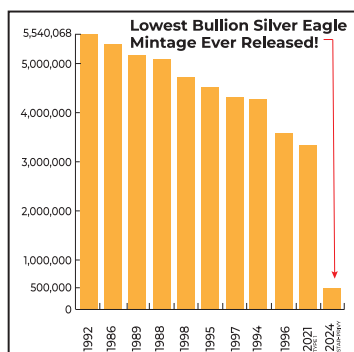
Actual Size  
40.60 millimeters)

2024 Silver Eagle BU  
5 Sided Star Privy Mark

## A World's First Creates The Lowest Mintage Silver Eagle...Ever!

The American Silver Eagle is arguably the most popular coin on the planet. First struck in 1986 for US citizens to own physical silver bullion, the Silver Eagle is made from one ounce of 99.9% fine silver. It's no wonder why these hefty silver dollars have become THE global standard for silver bullion coins, with over 640,000,000 coins minted to date.

And now, the US Mint has released a special Silver Eagle that might just become THE greatest of all time...the *Star Privy Silver Eagle*!



with 3,603,386 coins made. The Star Privy Silver Eagle has a mintage of only 500,000 coins. That's SEVEN TIMES LOWER. Just look at the graph for perspective.

### The First 50,000 Coins Released

Each coin comes certified in Gem Brilliant Uncirculated condition, coming from the first 50,000 coins issued, the "top 10%" if you will, certified by the leading independent 3rd party grading company NGC. Those are bragging rights every collector would dream of having!

### What's So Special?

There are two "key" reasons why the Star Privy Silver Eagle is poised to become the most sought-after coin in the Silver Eagle series;

**One**, collectors LOVE "Firsts" and the Star Privy is the First-Ever bullion Silver Eagle to have a Privy Mark, cementing its permanent place in Silver Eagle history.

**Two**, collectors also GO CRAZY for low mintage coins, the lower the better. And the Star Privy Silver Eagle not only has a low mintage. It's the lowest mintage bullion Silver Eagle EVER!

### First-Ever Privy-Marked Bullion Silver Eagle

Privy marks are small symbols added to coin, oftentimes to commemorate special occasions and/or historic events. In this case, the US Mint has added a "star" to the Silver Eagle to celebrate the release of a new mobile gaming app, 8th Era, a groundbreaking new mobile gaming app that marries gaming with coin collecting to inspire the next generation of collectors. It's an instant "must-have" for Silver Eagle collectors.

### Lowest Mintage Bullion Silver Eagle EVER

Not only is the Star Privy Silver Eagle the first ever privy-marked bullion Silver Eagle, it's also the lowest mintage bullion Silver Eagle ever! How low? It's not even close! Consider this...the 1996 Silver Eagle is the lowest mintage

### Buy More and Save

If you act now, you'll even have the chance to SAVE BIG when you buy more! But don't wait, our inventory won't last long! Every moment you hesitate, someone else could be claiming your piece of this historic release!

### 2024 1oz Star Privy American Silver Eagle - NGC Gem BU

1-2 coins - \$79 each plus s/h  
3-4 coins - \$77 each + **FREE SHIPPING**  
5-9 coins - \$75 each + **FREE SHIPPING**  
10+ coins - CALL FOR PRICING

### FREE SHIPPING on 3 or More!

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**Offer Code SPEP130-1**

Please mention this code when you call.



SCAN TO BUY ONLINE  
rarcoca.com/star-privy-eagle





Staff Sgt. Lucian Adams of Port Arthur receives the Medal of Honor from Lt. Gen. Alexander Patch.

# Beyond the Call

Lucian Adams dedicated his life to his comrades in arms

BY CHUCK LYONS

IN 1994, A 6-mile stretch of Interstate 37, between I-410 and I-10, was named in honor of Lucian Adams. Maybe you've seen signs for the freeway, in southeast San Antonio, and wondered who he is.

Adams was one of 12 children born into a Mexican American family in Port Arthur, near Beaumont, along the coast. Twenty-two years later, like a Gulf wind, Adams tore through a French wood and earned a Medal of Honor.

"I never had any fear," Adams said years afterward. "And you do things so automatically because of the training that you had in the States that you don't take time to think how serious, you know, the predicaments you get into are sometimes. And before you know it, you're in it to your head and you just have to fight

your way out."

During World War II, in October 1944, Staff Sgt. Adams' Army company was fighting to reconnect with the 3rd Battalion, 30th Infantry, which had become isolated in the Vosges Mountains near Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, in northeastern France. German machine-gun fire had killed three of Adams' men and wounded six others before his unit could even move 10 yards.

While the remaining men took cover, Adams grabbed a Browning automatic rifle and charged forward, dodging from tree to tree and firing from his hip as machine-gun fire and grenades hit the trees over his head.

"I didn't want to go down with any ammunition still on me," Adams told

*The Dallas Morning News* in 1993, "so I just kept firing."

In 10 minutes of intense fighting, Adams single-handedly killed nine Germans and silenced three machine gun nests, reconnecting with the isolated battalion and restoring an important supply line for the Allies.

On April 23, 1945, Adams was awarded a Medal of Honor—the highest military distinction awarded by the U.S.—joining 472 other Americans to earn the remarkable distinction during World War II.

Along with four other members of the 3rd Infantry Division, Adams received his award at ceremonies held in Nuremberg's Reichsparteitagsgelände (Reich Party Congress Grounds), which had been the scene of massive Nazi rallies before the war. The Allies had captured the grounds three days earlier.

A large cement swastika, symbol of the Nazi party, that was still on the stadium roof at the time of the presentation was covered with an American flag during the medal ceremony and destroyed with explosives shortly afterward.

Seven of Adams' brothers also fought in the war, but he was the only one to return with a Medal of Honor. He also received a Purple Heart, earned earlier in the war, when he was wounded neutralizing an enemy machine gun nest in Italy.

After the war, Adams dedicated himself to helping other veterans. He worked for the next 40 years as a representative for the Veterans Administration in San Antonio. Afterward, he worked as a VA consultant for U.S. Rep. Frank Tejeda (himself a veteran who also has a highway named in his honor).

Adams retired in 1986 and died in March 2003. He was buried with full military honors at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio. ■



# The Whole Enchilada

So many flavors rolled into one savory dish

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

My morning enchiladas are comfort food to the max. This is my go-to recipe when hosting brunch, as I can whip up the sauce the day before and assemble them before guests arrive. Serve with a mimosa or coffee for a delicious start to your day.

## Black Bean Breakfast Enchiladas

**¼ cup plus 2 teaspoons vegetable oil, divided use**  
**½ cup diced onion**  
**2 cloves garlic, chopped**  
**1 can black beans (15 ounces)**  
**1 cup water**  
**2 teaspoons salt, divided use**  
**2 teaspoons ground black pepper, divided use**  
**8 corn tortillas**  
**6 eggs**  
**2½ cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese, divided use**  
**Salsa, for serving**  
**Cilantro, minced, for serving**

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. In a skillet, heat 2 teaspoons oil over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook until light and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook 1 additional minute.
3. Transfer onions and garlic into a blender or food processor. Add black beans, water, 1 teaspoon salt and 1 teaspoon pepper. Blend until smooth. Return black bean sauce to skillet and keep warm.
4. Heat remaining ¼ cup oil in a second skillet over medium-high heat. Lightly fry each tortilla 5 seconds on each side and place on paper towels to drain. Reduce heat to medium and use the same skillet to prepare eggs.
5. Add eggs, remaining 1 teaspoon salt and remaining 1 teaspoon pepper. As eggs begin to set, use a spatula to gently pull the eggs across the skillet until thoroughly scrambled and cooked. Remove pan from heat.
6. To assemble the enchiladas, dip each tortilla in bean sauce, fill with egg, sprinkle with ¼ cup cheese, roll and place seam side down in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Repeat this process until all tortillas are rolled. Spoon the remaining sauce over rolled enchiladas and top with remaining ½ cup cheese. Bake 10 minutes. Serve warm with salsa and cilantro.

**SERVES 4**

**TCP** Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in Cocina Gris at [sweetlifebake.com](http://sweetlifebake.com), where she features a recipe for Chicken Enchilada Tostadas.







## Butternut Squash and Black Bean Enchiladas

PENNY ATKINS  
UNITED COOPERATIVE SERVICES

- 4 tablespoons olive oil**
- ½ cup diced white onion**
- 2 cloves garlic, minced**
- 1 butternut squash (3–4 pounds), peeled, seeds removed and diced**
- 1 can black beans (15 ounces), drained and rinsed**
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin**
- 2 teaspoons seasoned salt**
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper**
- 12 corn tortillas**
- 1 can red enchilada sauce (15 ounces), divided use**
- 2 cups shredded Mexican-style cheese**
- 1 can sliced black olives (2.25 ounces), drained**
- 2 green onions, sliced diagonally, for garnish**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook onion and garlic until onions are translucent and fragrant.
3. Add butternut squash, cook 5 minutes, then reduce heat to simmer and cook an additional 10 minutes or until squash is tender and lightly browned. Stir in black beans, cumin, salt and pepper.
4. Place half the tortillas on a plate, cover with a damp paper towel, and microwave 30 seconds or until pliable. Repeat with remaining tortillas.
5. Spread ¼ cup enchilada sauce evenly on bottom of baking dish. Spoon ¼ cup squash and bean mixture onto center of each tortilla and roll up. Place seam side down in baking dish.
6. Pour remaining enchilada sauce evenly

\$500 WINNER

## Shrimp Enchiladas

JANICE MERCK  
PEDERNALES EC



Merck has been cooking up these enchiladas for over 30 years to rave reviews, and, baby, I get it! I absolutely loved these creamy shrimp enchiladas. The simplicity of the sauce in this coastal twist on classic enchiladas was so ... wow!



- 1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, divided use**
- 1 cup finely chopped onion**
- 1 cup chopped green chiles, drained**
- ¾ cup finely chopped green bell pepper**
- 3 teaspoons salt, divided use**
- 2 teaspoons ground white pepper, divided use**
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper, divided use**
- 4 teaspoons ground oregano, divided use**
- ½ teaspoon minced garlic**

- 3 cups heavy cream**
- 1 cup sour cream**
- 8 cups shredded Monterey Jack cheese, divided use**
- 2 pounds medium shrimp, peeled and deveined**
- ¾ cup finely chopped green onions**
- ½ cup vegetable oil**
- 20 corn tortillas**

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, melt ½ cup butter. Add onion, chiles, bell pepper, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon white pepper, ½ teaspoon cayenne and 2 teaspoons oregano. Cook 10 minutes, stirring often. Add garlic and cook an additional minute.
3. Stir in heavy cream, bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer uncovered 10 minutes, stirring constantly.
4. Whisk in sour cream until sauce is smooth, then add 3 cups cheese, 1 cup at a time, whisking after each addition until all cheese melts. Remove from heat and set aside.
5. In a 4-quart saucepan over medium-high heat, melt the remaining ½ cup butter. Add shrimp, green onions and remaining seasonings—2 teaspoons salt, 1 teaspoon white pepper, ½ teaspoon cayenne and 2 teaspoons oregano. Cook about 5 minutes, until shrimp is fully cooked.
6. Stir in cream sauce, reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
7. In a small skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Lightly fry each tortilla 2–3 seconds on each side and place on paper towels to drain.
8. Spoon ⅓ cup of shrimp mixture into the center of each tortilla. Roll and place seam side down in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Spoon remaining sauce over rolled tortillas and sprinkle with remaining 5 cups cheese.
9. Bake 10 minutes or until cheese melts.

SERVES 10

## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**CANDIES AND FUDGE** DUE MAY 10

Homemade confections can be sure to make an impression and draw a crowd. Send us your best treats, and you could win \$500. Enter by May 10.

**UPCOMING: TURKEY TIME** DUE JUNE 10



CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >

## RECIPES CONTINUED

over tortillas. Spread cheese evenly over enchiladas and top with black olives.

7. Bake 15–20 minutes, until heated through and cheese is melted. Remove from oven and sprinkle with green onions.

SERVES 6

### Buffalo Ranch Chicken Enchiladas

CARLA MOON  
DEEP EAST TEXAS EC

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 green bell pepper, diced
- 1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning
- 2 tablespoons ranch seasoning, divided use
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1½ cups Buffalo sauce, divided use
- 1 package cream cheese (8 ounces), softened



- 2 cups shredded pepper jack cheese, divided use
- 1 whole cooked chicken, deboned and shredded
- 12 corn tortillas

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
2. In a skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Cook onion and bell pepper until soft and translucent, about 5 minutes. Add Cajun seasoning and 1 tablespoon ranch seasoning and stir.

3. Add stock and 1 cup Buffalo sauce. Reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes or until sauce is slightly thickened. Remove from heat and set aside.

4. In a large bowl, stir together cream cheese, remaining 1 tablespoon ranch seasoning, remaining ½ cup Buffalo sauce and 1 cup pepper jack. Stir well, then stir in shredded chicken.

5. Spread ¼ cup enchilada sauce in the bottom of the prepared baking dish. Place about ¼ cup of the chicken and cream cheese mixture in the center of each tortilla and roll. Place each rolled tortilla in the baking dish seam side down. Spoon remaining sauce over enchiladas. Top with remaining 1 cup pepper jack.

6. Cover dish with foil and bake 15 minutes. Uncover and bake about 15 more minutes or until cheese is bubbly and slightly browned on the edges.

SERVES 6

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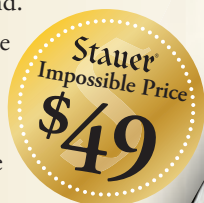
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

## A Walk on the Wild Side

This ranch boasts cows and pigs—but also giraffes and kangaroos

BY CHET GARNER

**HAVE YOU EVER** wanted to dine with a giraffe? Swim with an otter? Hold a baby kangaroo? Of course you have! Blue Hills Ranch, a 150-acre wildlife sanctuary outside Waco, can make all your wildest dreams come true.

I was giddy as I pulled up to the farmhouse that now serves as the office for this exotic ranch. I walked in and felt like I had stepped into the office of Dr. Dolittle. Two St. Bernard dogs lay on the floor like giant rugs while a potbellied pig and kangaroo poked around the kitchen.

Owner Matt Lieberman explained how his ranch started as a wedding venue with a couple giraffes in the pasture to make for interesting photos. But he soon realized animals were much easier than brides—and much more fun. He started adding other species, including axis deer and zebras, and had soon built one of the most interesting interactive animal adventures in Texas.

My first experience was a leisurely drive through the ranch feeding the dozens of species that populate the hills. Let me say, there isn't anything much scarier (or slimier) than the tongue of a hungry Highland cow.

Next I headed for the hot tub, where I spent an hour swimming with resident otters Otto and Sweet Pea. I've never met more curious creatures and could have spent the entire afternoon feeding them bits of shrimp as they treated me like a human jungle gym.

When it was time for the grand finale, we grabbed a picnic basket and headed out for dinner with Blue, the giraffe. There are few better ways to enjoy a Texas sunset than with a 16-foot-tall giraffe sniffing your plate for grapes and crackers.

I've done a lot of amazing things in Texas, but this has to be one of the wildest of them all. ■

ABOVE Chet finds himself on friendly terms with a giraffe at Blue Hills Ranch.

**TCP** Watch the video on our website and see all Chet's Texplorations 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.

# MAY

## 8

**Abilene [8–11] Western Heritage Classic,** (325) 677-4376, [westernheritageclassic.com](http://westernheritageclassic.com)

## 9

**Grand Prairie [9–11] Asian Heritage Fest,** (972) 975-5100, [asiatimesquare.com](http://asiatimesquare.com)

## 10

**Brenham 7 Bridges: The Ultimate Eagles Experience,** (979) 337-7240, [thebarnhillcenter.com](http://thebarnhillcenter.com)

**Corsicana Mimosas at the Market,** (903) 654-4850, [visitcorsicana.com](http://visitcorsicana.com)

**El Campo Crawfish & Gumbo Cook-Off,** (979) 275-1600, [eclostlagoon.com](http://eclostlagoon.com)

**Palestine Wiggy Thump Festival,** 1-800-659-3484, [visitpalestine.com](http://visitpalestine.com)

**Winnsboro Max and Heather Stalling,** (903) 342-0686, [winnsborocenterforthearts.com](http://winnsborocenterforthearts.com)

## 13

**Fort Worth [13–18] MJ,** (817) 212-4280, [basshall.com](http://basshall.com)

## 15

**Luling Field Day,** (830) 875-2438, [lulingfoundation.org](http://lulingfoundation.org)

**Pasadena [15–18] Strawberry Festival,** (281) 991-9500, [strawberryfest.org](http://strawberryfest.org)

## 16

**Columbus [16–17] Magnolia Days Festival,** (979) 732-8385, [magnoliadays.org](http://magnoliadays.org)





## Pick of the Month

### Texas Route 66 Festival

Amarillo, June 5-14

1-800-692-1338, visitamarillo.com

Ten fun-filled days along Texas' stretch of the iconic highway include classic car shows, live music, a cattle drive and parade, bus tours, and a rodeo dance. The grand finale June 14 features Elvis impersonators, a pinup pageant, corn dog eating contests and kids' activities.

17

**El Campo** Coletto Creek BBQ Association Cook-Off, (979) 275-1600, eclostlagoon.com

**La Grange** Bluff Schuetzen-Fest, (979) 968-5658, friendsofkbmh.org

**Round Top** Vanity Fur Fashion Show, (979) 966-0021, janssenanimalshelter.org

21

**Winnsboro** [21-July 19] Gary Bachers Memorial Art Exhibit & CJ Bachers, (903) 342-0686, winnsborocenterforthearts.com

22

**Grapeland** [22-24] Salmon Lake Park Gospel Bluegrass Festival, (936) 687-2594, slpbluegrass.com

MORE EVENTS >

## TCP Submit Your Event

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



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thetexasairmuseum.org

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**TICKETS:**  
[www.fbgcrafterbeerfestival.com](http://www.fbgcrafterbeerfestival.com)

# MAY EVENTS CONTINUED

23

**Fredericksburg [23-25]**  
**Crawfish Festival,**  
[fbgcrawfishfestival.com](http://fbgcrawfishfestival.com)

**Victoria [23-25] Memorial**  
**Weekend Bash,**  
(361) 485-3116,  
[discovervictoriatexas.com](http://discovervictoriatexas.com)

**Granbury [23-26]**  
**Memorial Day Weekend**  
**Festival,** (682) 936-4550,  
[granburysquare.com](http://granburysquare.com)

24

**Freeport [24-Aug. 13]**  
**Shark Exhibit,** (979) 233-  
0066, [facebook.com/](https://facebook.com/freeportmuseum)  
[freeportmuseum](http://freeportmuseum)

30

**El Paso Downtown**  
**Treasures,** (915) 533-0048,  
[tomlea.com](http://tomlea.com)

31

**Godley Christian Music**  
**Fest,** (817) 389-2287,  
[godleymethodist.org](http://godleymethodist.org)

JUNE  
7

**Corsicana The '77**  
**Experience: Hits of 1977**  
**Tribute,** (903) 874-7792,  
[corsicanapalace.com](http://corsicanapalace.com)

**Fredericksburg Lucken-**  
**bach School Open House,**  
(830) 685-3321,  
[historicschools.org](http://historicschools.org)

**Waxahachie [7-8]**  
**Gingerbread Trail Tour of**  
**Homes,** (469) 309-4040,  
[waxahachiecvb.com](http://waxahachiecvb.com)

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# Patterns

We marvel with these readers at the smooth repetition of human-made structures and the chaotic arrangements found in nature. While they may seem random at first, if we just step back, we see the big picture.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1

**1 SHARON BLUNT**  
COSERV

"Turkey tail mushrooms on a fallen log in Caddo Lake State Park."

**2 MARK HOLLY**  
BANDERA EC

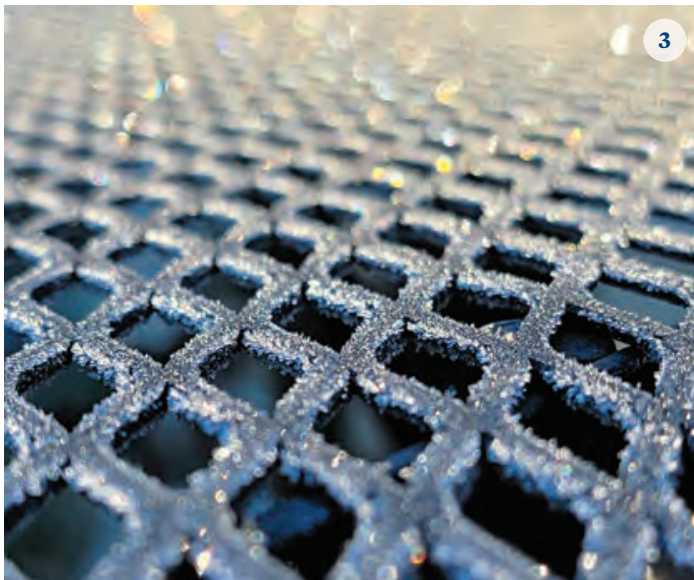
Hotel balconies along the San Antonio River Walk.

**3 KATHY DUMAS**  
PEDERNALES EC

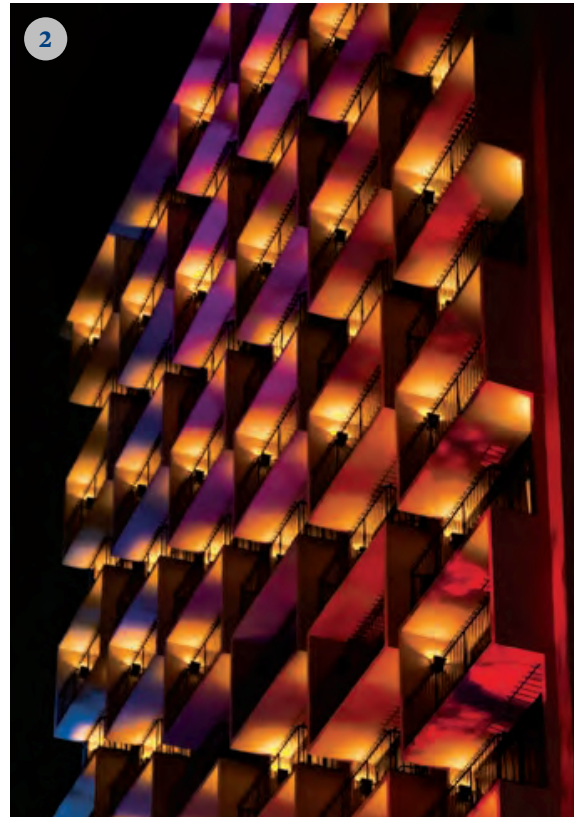
"I captured the morning sun sparkling off the frost on the grates of a patio table."

**4 KEITH CUDDEBACK**  
PEDERNALES EC

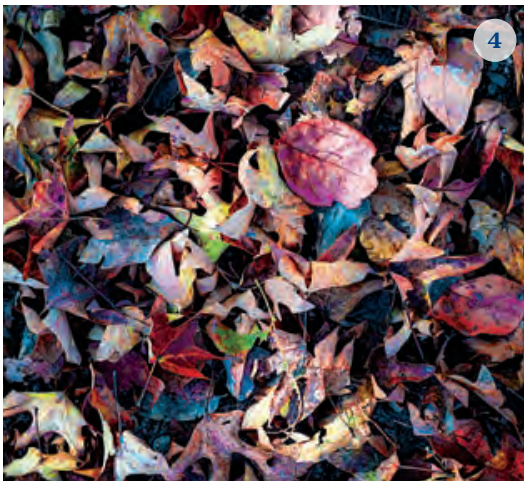
Fallen leaves at Lost Maples State Natural Area.



3



2



4

## Upcoming Contests

**DUE MAY 10** Off-Road Adventures

**DUE JUN 10** Heroes

**DUE JUL 10** Abstract



Enter online at [TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://TexasCoopPower.com/contests).

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





## Stepping Up

Our family tree branched out with Bobbin, at first a stranger

BY MARTHA DEERING  
ILLUSTRATION BY  
ANNA GODEASSI

**WE CALLED OUR** grandmother Bobbin. I'm not sure why. She was my mother's stepmother, acquired with some reluctance on Mother's part when her father remarried a few years after her own mother died of rheumatic heart disease.

By the time Bobbin came into her life, my mother was a tiny tyrant, used to having her father and a string of housekeepers kowtow to her every need.

To be fair, it must be hard to lose your mother at the tender age of 6, especially since Mother was not allowed to attend the funeral. No one explained to her what had happened.

Mother, a petite, lively tomboy with shining dark hair, and Bobbin could hardly have been more different. Bobbin was tall and willowy with long blond hair. As the wedding approached, she pored

over a box of family photos, trying to capture a past she had not shared.

There were problems, of course. They faced the task of consciously building the bridge of communication and love that typically develops naturally between parents and their children. My grandfather, superintendent of schools in a small Wisconsin town, could do little more than stand by and watch with love and understanding.

Bobbin's well-meaning friends offered unsolicited advice. Mother's playmates stood ready with sympathy. "Is she mean to you?" they asked. But most of the problems seemed to stem from worrying too much.

Admiration and love gradually grew. When Mother learned in her early teens that Bobbin was expecting, she rushed out to be the first to buy a present for the new arrival.

Years later, Mother shared this bit of advice with Bobbin, who was writing an article about stepmothers: "Tell them to be demonstrative about showing affection even if the child doesn't appear to want it. I used to pretend I didn't want to be hugged and kissed, but deep down I wanted it badly."

By the time Mother married and had a family of her own, none of us perceived a difference between our beloved Bobbin and other grandmothers. When she rode the train to Texas to visit us, she was entangled in so many loving arms, she couldn't move out of the way to allow other passengers to disembark.

She regularly trounced my brothers and me at Scrabble—no surprise since later in life she worked in Washington, D.C., as an editor at the national cathedral. As much as she loved us, she never let us win.

We lost her in her 80s when a young addict grabbed her purse as she walked home from church, slamming her onto the sidewalk. She only had \$20. If he had asked her, she would have gladly given it to him.

Bobbin's DNA did not match ours; she was a grandmother of the heart. ■





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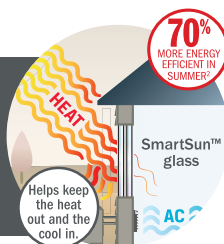
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<sup>4</sup>Using U.S. and imported parts.