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# Texas Coop Power

FOR TRINITY VALLEY EC MEMBERS

MARCH 2025

## The Greatest Mettle

Museum in Arlington  
celebrates Medal of Honor  
recipients' heroics



**TRINITY  
VALLEY EC  
NEWS**

SEE PAGE 16



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# March 2025



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The long-awaited National Medal of Honor Museum in North Texas tells the stories of our nation's greatest heroes.

*By Cyndy Irvine*

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#### ON THE COVER

The late George "Bud" Day received a Medal of Honor after his F-100, like the one behind him in Houston, was shot down over Vietnam.

*Photo by Robert Seale*

#### ABOVE

Exhibits at Caddo Mounds.

*Photo by Anna Mazurek*

# Women's History Month



THOSE RED AND WHITE signs herald a grocery chain that has grown to more than 435 stores in Texas and Mexico since its founding in 1905 in the Hill Country.

Howard E. Butt is credited with launching the H-E-B empire, but the family's first store was the creation of his mother.

Florence Butt, above, was the mother of three young sons and wife of a pharmacist unable to work because of tuberculosis. She invested \$60 to open C.C. Butt Grocery, named for her husband, on Main Street in Kerrville.

Howard took over the store in 1919 after he returned from World War I.



## TCP Contests and More

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**\$500 RECIPE CONTEST**  
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**FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS**  
Catch of the Day

**RECOMMENDED READING**  
Texas Independence Day is March 2. Read *Texas Independence* from March 2016 to learn more about the birthplace of a nation. Find it at [TexasCoopPower.com](http://TexasCoopPower.com).

“Texas has yet to learn submission to any oppression, come from what source it may.”

—SAM HOUSTON

## FINISH THIS SENTENCE

Making my bed every morning is ...

**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 January prompt: **The best year of my life was ...**

When my brother (now deceased) came home safe from the Vietnam War.

SUSAN MARTIN  
SAN PATRICIO EC  
THREE RIVERS

When I figured out that happiness is just a state of mind.

ADRIAN MAUI SCLAWY  
HOUSTON COUNTY EC  
ELKHART

The year I married the girl of my dreams—52 years ago.

STEVE BAILEY  
PENTEX ENERGY  
GAINESVILLE

2012, when I moved to Texas to join the love of my life after being apart for almost 40 years.

TOM DIFRANCESCA  
NUECES EC  
BISHOP

Visit our website to see more responses.



JANUARY 2025 Our Nosy New Neighbors

“As a child, I remember spotting black bears as far east as Waco. My mom told me their favorite drink was Dr Pepper.”

GLORIA CURRIN  
WOOD COUNTY EC  
VAN



JARED MARKGRAF

**Can We All Get Along?**

I checked out the videos from Rancho Ursa Major and was captivated by them [Our Nosy New Neighbors, January 2025]. I hope the black bears continue to thrive and that humans will be able to coexist with them.

Betsy Drapela  
Pedernales EC  
Boerne

Know what to do when encountering a mother with her cubs. If the cubs are scurrying up a nearby tree, try not to lose sight of the mother.

Back yourself slowly out of the area. Do not run until well clear of the area. The article mentioned carrying bear spray: excellent advice.

Frank Ott  
Concho Valley EC  
Eola

**Easing Into Y2K**

I spent New Year’s Eve 1999 at home logged into my work’s network watching Y2K come into our sites overseas, beginning with Japan—midnight their time, 9 a.m. Dallas time [Black-Eyed Peace, December 2024]. All systems were up and running.

I informed my boss. He told me to continue to monitor. Taiwan and the Philippines were next. Again, all systems up and running.

This continued until our Germany and France sites hit midnight, 5 p.m. Dallas time. All systems up and running.

My boss told me to enjoy the rest of my New Year’s Eve with my family.

Mark Murray  
Farmers EC  
McLendon-Chisholm

**Not Asking Too Much**

Loved this [Dear Santa, December 2024]. What a wonderful and simple time.

Laneta Beach  
Via Facebook



CHRIS WORMELL

**TCP WRITE TO US**  
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

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Austin, TX 78701

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

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# HOME *of the* BRAVE



RECIPIENT: **SPC. JAMES C. MCCLOUGHAN**  
BRANCH: **ARMY**  
COMBAT: **VIETNAM WAR**

Among his heroics as a combat medic in May 1969, the private first class was hit twice by small arms fire and shrapnel from a grenade—bleeding heavily—as he rescued multiple wounded comrades.



RECIPIENT: **LT. COL. WILLIAM D. SWENSON**  
BRANCH: **ARMY**  
COMBAT: **AFGHANISTAN WAR**

The captain's combat team was ambushed in September 2009. His exceptional leadership and stout resistance against the enemy during six hours of continuous fighting rallied his teammates and effectively disrupted the enemy's assault.

## The long-awaited National Medal of Honor Museum in North Texas tells the stories of our nation's greatest heroes



**RECIPIENT: MAJ. GEN. PATRICK HENRY BRADY**  
**BRANCH: ARMY**  
**COMBAT: VIETNAM WAR**

Maj. Brady used three helicopters in one January 1968 day to evacuate 51 seriously wounded comrades. One aircraft was heavily damaged, and his missions encountered close-range enemy fire and descended through heavy fog and smoke.

BY CYNDY IRVINE

A distinctive, boxy building under construction for the past three years in Arlington's entertainment district is not another sports arena or entertainment complex. Instead, in stark contrast to its glitzier surroundings, this structure's solemn purpose is to pay tribute to American heroes who have displayed exceptional courage under fire.

Heroes like Marine Corps 2nd Lt. George Herman O'Brien Jr., who charged through a hail of gunfire during the Korean War, fighting while injured and holding the line for hours. Like Army Sgt. James Marion Logan, who singlehandedly captured a German machine-gunner emplacement during World War II. Like John E. "Jackie" Kilmer, a Navy hospital corpsman who died using his body to shield an injured comrade during the Korean War.

The National Medal of Honor Museum will tell their important stories and those of many others. The much-anticipated national landmark is a tribute to recipients of our nation's highest and most prestigious military award for valor.

After a nationwide search, Arlington, in the Metroplex, was chosen in 2019 as the ideal setting due to its easy accessibility and location near the center of the country. Construction began in March 2022, and the grand opening is set for March 25, National Medal of Honor Day.

"We knew it is important for the museum to be located in an area which already has significant foot traffic and an infrastructure for supporting tourism," says Cory Crowley, executive vice president of the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation. "Finally, we knew Texas has a strong and patriotic philanthropic base of generous individuals, families and corporations with whom this project would resonate."

Through an international competition, renowned architect Rafael Viñoly (who has since died) submitted the winning design for the museum. He reportedly was inspired by the heavy burden carried by members of the U.S. military and envisioned a large slab formation supported by five columns, each representing a branch of the military.

PORTRAITS: ROBERT SEALE; NOVEMBER 2024. LE MERIDIEN DALLAS. THE STONELEIGH





ALL IMAGES THIS SPREAD COURTESY NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM

The museum’s dramatic structure follows Viñoly’s vision. Entry is through a spacious open-air rotunda encircled by the five concrete megacolumns that bear the primary building structure 40 feet overhead. Two glass elevators and a double helix of staircases lead to the upper level.

Inside, visitors will find galleries housing an extensive collection of personal mementos, compelling artifacts (including a fully restored Vietnam-era Huey helicopter), and state-of-the-art exhibits that tell the history of the Medal of Honor and the stories of the heroes who earned it.

Powered by a database of hundreds of hours of recorded video interviews, generative artificial intelligence will enable visitors to hold interactive conversations with medal recipients and hear their stories brought to life.

“Our museum is focused on collecting artifacts that will share the full history of the Medal of Honor, from its beginnings during the Civil War to modern day,” says Greg Waters, director of curatorial affairs. “The collections continue to grow as we bring in additional artifacts that will help us

ABOVE A nighttime rendering of the National Medal of Honor Museum designed by renowned architect Rafael Viñoly. The structure rests 40 feet high on five columns, each representing a branch of the military.

BELOW Entry is through a spacious open-air rotunda. Two glass elevators and a double helix of staircases lead to the upper level.

inspire our future visitors with these incredible Medal of Honor stories.”

The more than 100,000-square-foot complex, set on five acres alongside a small lake, includes a tranquil green space for reflection, an event center for memorials and ceremonies, an outdoor amphitheater, and the National Medal of Honor Griffin Institute.

The institute, with its 220-seat theater and conference center, will offer outreach programs and educational opportunities for all ages. “It’s one way we can live our mission to inspire, equip and connect people around the values inherent in the Medal of Honor—so everyone can live and lead with honor,” says Anthony Brock, executive director of the institute.

To receive the Medal of Honor, a recipient must have shown exceptional courage in combat, often risking their life beyond the call of duty. The medal is conferred by congressional approval only after an extensive review of supportive evidence and at least two eyewitness accounts documenting the heroic actions.

The president typically presents the medal in a formal White House ceremony before family members and invited guests. The medal is recognizable as a five-pointed star attached to a light blue neck ribbon—with slight variations in design between the military branches.

The Medal of Honor originated during the Civil





War when President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation creating the award in 1861 for Navy personnel and in 1862 for Army soldiers to honor “gallantry in action” during combat activities. Congress then established the Medal of Honor as a permanent decoration in 1863.

While more than 41 million Americans have served in the military all-time and more than 2 million have earned Purple Hearts, just 3,547 Medals of Honor have been conferred in more than 160 years. There are 19 double-recipients.

More than 600 of the medals have been awarded posthumously—a testament to the sacrifice required for the honor. Seventy-seven Medals of Honor have been awarded to Texans. Today there are 61 total living recipients across the U.S.

Retired Staff Sgt. Clint Romesha of Minot, North Dakota, who received the Medal of Honor for heroism in Afghanistan, says his medal was “not given for a day that went easy.”

“It’s a very personal thing, this museum,” the Army veteran says. “It’s not just highlighting the legacy of the medal and the recipients themselves, but it really shows the root and the values of the medal for all. ... It will share [the medal’s story] with the American people and constantly remind them that freedom isn’t free.”

The \$210 million museum is primarily funded by generous donations from private individuals, foundations and corporations. Jerry Jones, owner of the Dallas Cowboys, a neighbor of the museum, contributed \$20 million.

“This is not a war museum or a history museum,” Crowley says. “It is a biography museum, which will leave visitors with the understanding we are all born with the potential to be extraordinary and we all have the opportunity to be heroes in our own communities, families or vocations.”

For O’Brien—who was promoted to major as a member of the Marine Corps Reserve and later returned to West Texas



## Did You Know?

Only one woman has ever been awarded the Medal of Honor: Mary Edwards Walker, who served as a Union Army surgeon during the Civil War.

Only one president has a Medal of Honor: Theodore Roosevelt, for his service during the Spanish-American War.

Nineteen Americans have been awarded two Medals of Honor.

The youngest Medal of Honor recipient, Willie Johnston, earned the award as an 11-year-old drummer during the Civil War.

Milton M. Holland, an African American from Panola County or Austin (sources vary), was the first Texas-born recipient of the Medal of Honor, for assuming command of a Union company during the Civil War.

Two Texans, Army Lt. Col. Robert G. Cole of Fort Sam Houston and Marine Pfc. Charles Howard Roan—both Medal of Honor recipients—died on the same day, Sept. 18, 1944, in separate actions during World War II.

It is illegal to wear someone else’s Medal of Honor.

There are three medal variants, as shown. Members of the Marine Corps and Coast Guard are eligible to receive Department of the Navy recognition.

to live and work—the medal represented so much more than his own sacrifice.

“This medal’s not mine. It belongs to those kids who never grew up to be grandfathers,” he said before he died in Midland in 2005. “It’s in trust, and I hope I wear it well.” ■

# A Journey of Resilience

Caddo Mounds State Historic Site builds community  
while rebuilding itself after a devastating 2019 tornado





STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANNA MAZUREK

**On April 13, 2019,** 80 people were celebrating Caddo Culture Day at Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, a pre-Columbian village and ceremonial center near Nacogdoches, in East Texas. Members of the Caddo Nation had traveled from several states to attend the festivities that included traditional dance and music performances, guided hikes, and artist exhibits—when tragedy struck.

A powerful storm system had unleashed multiple tornadoes early that afternoon, including one that swept directly over Caddo Mounds, even as visitors sought shelter in an interior room of the visitor center. A passerby was killed, and collapsing walls paralyzed one survivor and left others seriously injured.

“The shock of the 2019 tornado is unique to each individual who was present that day,” says Rachel Galan, assistant site manager. “Caddo citizen Tracy Burrows described the response of all of those there that day as a tribal response. With three hours before outside first responders were on the scene, all those on-site and the community around us took care of each other.”

But the healing process for the Caddo community took much longer and required a great measure of hard work.

Finally, on May 18, 2024, another gathering celebrated the grand reopening of a new 5,150-square-foot visitor center. Rebuilding became a pathway to recovery for the survivors, strengthening the Caddo connection to the site and to each other, and shaping the site’s future.

OPPOSITE The site’s traditional grass house was rebuilt thanks to efforts from the Caddo Nation and the Texas Historical Commission.

ABOVE The rebuilt visitor center includes tribal replicas and exhibits. It also has tornado shelters.



## Caddo History

By the year 800, the Caddo people were firmly established near the Neches River in present-day East Texas, anthropologists say, due to the abundance of food and fertile soil for agriculture.

While Caddo territory is mainly centered around the Red River Valley, in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas, archaeological finds at the Caddo Mounds site—copper sourced from the Great Lakes and shells from the Gulf Coast—illustrate their vast trade network, which included the El Camino Real de los Tejas.

“This trail network has been appropriated as a Spanish-Euro western trail system, which is actually a network that was created over centuries, if not millennia, that connects Caddo all the way up to the Great Lakes with copper and Cahokia Mounds, Spiro Mounds and all the way down into Mexico City and over to Santa Fe,” says Lauren Toho-Murrow Haupt, an Indigenous anthropologist and citizen of the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma.

“These were really wide networks of trade that really speak to how diverse Caddo were and how influential we were.”

The Caddo even influenced the name of the Lone Star State. “Texas comes from the Caddo word *tejas*, which means friend,” she explains.

Many centuries after the Caddo became established in the area, pressure from Anglo colonization efforts increased, and the Caddo were forced to leave Texas for Oklahoma in the 1850s. Today the Caddo Nation is headquartered in Binger, Oklahoma.

In 1982, a portion of the ancestral home of the Caddo Nation became the 397-acre Caddo Mounds State Historic Site, which is owned and overseen by the Texas Historical Commission.

The grounds include a section of the El Camino Real de los Tejas and three earthen mounds created about 1,000 years ago—one for burials, one for ceremonies and a third, a low platform, that doubled as a plaza space for meetings and gatherings. The mounds were one of the few features to survive the tornado unscathed.

## Rising Again

The Caddo term for a tornado experience is *shahó*, a word shared with the nation by Alaina Tahlate, a Caddo Nation citizen and language preservationist—and a survivor of the tragedy.

“That’s one of the gifts of that kind of tragedy—that shared experience,” explains Galan, whose husband, archaeologist Victor Galan, was paralyzed as a result of the tornado. “For many of us, it just deepened our relationship to the place and our commitment to the place.”

One of the main efforts of the restoration was rebuilding the site’s replica grass house, originally constructed in 2016. Traditionally, a grass house would have been built in a day, but the fundraising and rebuilding process after the tornado took roughly 18 months due to the pandemic, weather and supply shortages.

Five female Caddo apprentices were hired to rebuild the house with funding from the Texas Historical Commission and Friends of Caddo Mounds, an advisory nonprofit that supports the site.

Caddo society is matriarchal, with women being central to social organization, and matrilineal, with family lineage traced from the mother’s side. While choosing female apprentices wasn’t necessarily planned, Toho-Murrow Haupt, one of the apprentices, considers it “reflective of the significance of female participation through all dimensions of Caddo culture.”

Rachel Galan recalls the “really powerful experience” of witnessing the rebuilding process and “having the house rise again” thanks to the five apprentices—Toho-Murrow Haupt, Jackie Bullard, Kay O’Neal, Katelyn De Anne Polly and Debbie Turner.

Traditional Caddo houses are beehive-shaped structures with a tiered, multilayered exterior and a pointed top. “The grass houses were the place that the families came together,” Toho-Murrow Haupt says. “It’s where children got to listen to stories in the winter ... they were a place of connection.”

A hundred volunteers—Caddo and non-Indigenous—donated time and labor to assist through the nine-month rebuilding process. The grass house was completed in 2022.

**“That’s one of the gifts of that kind of tragedy—that shared experience. For many of us, it just deepened our relationship to the place and our commitment to the place.”**

“It was a special process of engaging in the matriarchy rite of looking to an elder to guide us maternally through the process and nurture and facilitate this growth of a house, which eventually became a home,” Toho-Murrow Haupt says.

“To be doing Caddo things with Caddo people was a really special experience that I wish every Indigenous person got to have. It was making new relationships and hearing stories from people I’d never met before.”

## Lasting Commitment

The completion of the \$2.5 million visitor center was also part of the first phase of the reconstruction efforts. The interior roof features a conical dome mirroring the structural shape of the grass house. The center includes tornado shelters and a berm for safety.

The site is currently raising money to build an education activity center, cisterns for rainwater collection and an open area for workshops and programs.

In addition, Galan has implemented a braided land conservation plan that weaves together Western-based science with traditional ecological knowledge acquired by Indigenous groups over generations.

The first programs “center on the revitalization and preservation of Caddo traditions: pottery, split-cane basket making, tending wild spaces and more that have led to nonextractive opportunities for Caddo citizens along with unique learning opportunities for visitors,” Galan says.

The programming includes weekend talks and workshops





ABOVE The exterior of the new visitor center was designed to blend into the natural environment with a self-weathering steel roof intended to mirror the shape of the Caddo mounds.

LEFT Archaeological excavations at the 20-foot burial mound, one of three earthen mounds on the site, revealed 90 bodies in roughly 30 burial pits.

such as ancient pottery techniques and the cultural importance of bead art. Educational activities include a free six-day family experience held over a series of three consecutive weekends and a six-week family garden camp.

These events are just one more way that shahó has brought more Caddo people to the site and increased their involvement while also bridging the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous visitors.

“By creating opportunities for authentic partnerships between Caddo citizens and the site, engaging Caddo citizens with the goal of being less extractive, and supporting cultural revitalization and preservation efforts, we have witnessed how an increase in Caddo participation with Caddo Mounds State Historic Site directly impacts visitation and interest in the site,” Galan says.

Caddo Mounds attracted 6,756 visitors last year—a 33% increase over 2023, with a notable bump after the rebuilding of the grass house and reopening of the visitor center.

Sustainability and land conservation are an integral theme of these new initiatives and a vital part of Caddo culture. Toho-Murrow Haupt says the Caddo coevolved with the land and maintained a healthy and balanced ecosystem.

“To truly live sustainably means to not leave a mark,” she says. “It means to allow for the full process of returning to the earth and completing that cycle.”

Though structures like the grass house are impermanent, the 2019 tragedy showed that the Caddo Nation and community’s commitment to the site is everlasting. ■

# Myth Busting with Geothermal Heat Pumps

by Brian Shaw, Texas Territory Manager  
WaterFurnace

**“Well, you could have a geothermal heat pump, but...”**

## **...You Need a Bunch of Land**

**A**s one old timer put it, “If you have a lawn mower, then I can put in a geo unit.” With numerous options for the underground loop systems, that’s actually true. A vertical loop is often installed under driveways or even 10’ x 10’ patches of ground. There are many other options including using an existing water well, a pond, or if in fact you have more than ½ an acre, a long horizontal ditch is a great solution. If you Google “ground heat exchanger options” you will find a variety of solutions that might work for you.

## **...It Isn’t Safe**

Since geothermal heat pumps are 100% electrical, there is no combustion of gas or oil in the home for heating. So, there’s no chance of smelly fumes, explosions, or carbon monoxide poisoning. Because heat pumps are certified by independent laboratories, they include safety cutoff switches for every circuit in the system.



A geothermal unit easily integrates into your current heating and cooling system.



When using a geothermal unit, about 75% of the heating and cooling energy comes from the earth.

## **...Electric Heat is Expensive to Operate**

Some geo systems are installed with electric strip heat for extreme cold weather. And yes, that can add to your electric bill. However, modern systems are designed to operate without backup heat down to extremely low temperatures. And if your underground system (the “loop”) is sized right, no back up heat is needed at all.

## **...It’s Too Expensive to Install**

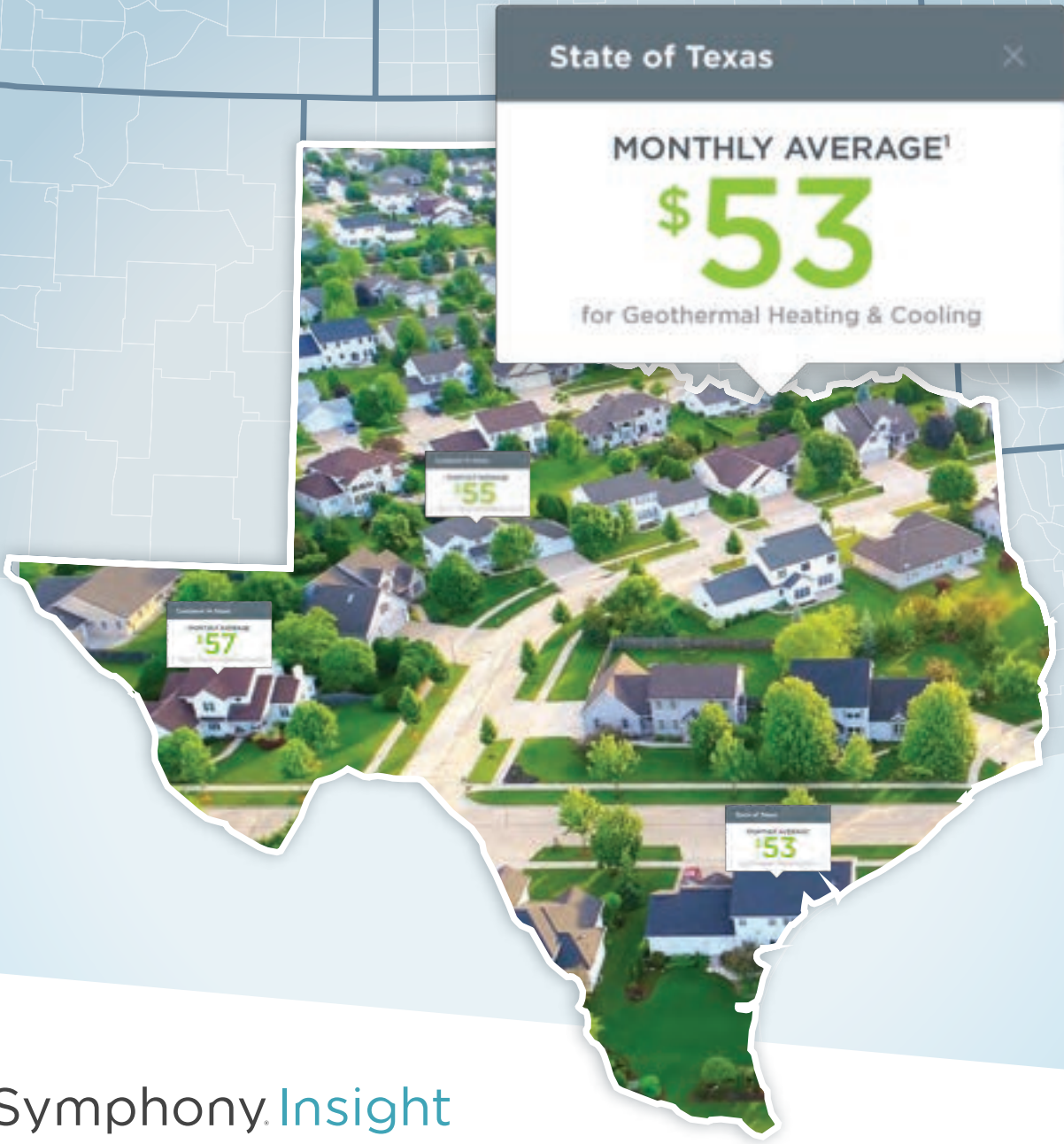
Installing geothermal heating and

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Geo system owners quickly realize their systems are saving so much money they are recouping their investments in 5-7 years. With the 30% tax credit and other incentives geo can even cost less than a new boiler or HVAC system to install. When you consider the loop will outlive anyone alive today and the heat pump will deliver twice the useful life of most alternatives, that makes for a much more attractive investment.



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



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER/CEO JEFF LANE

# Understanding the Factors That Impact Your Energy Bills

**THERE ARE A FEW** key factors that affect electricity prices, and while most of those are out of our hands and yours, there are a few ways you can make a meaningful impact on home energy savings.

The big drivers of electricity costs happen in the energy markets, the infrastructure goods supply chain and even with Mother Nature.

## Generation Fuel Prices

The wholesale cost of electricity accounts for a significant portion of the cost of providing electricity to homes and businesses—and the cost of fuels used to generate that power fluctuate based on supply and demand.

While these fluctuations impact the cost of electricity, we work closely with our generation and



LSOPHOTO | ISTOCK.COM

transmission provider, Rayburn Electric Cooperative, to plan ahead and help stabilize electricity prices for our members. With the purchasing power of the four member cooperatives, and significant generation capacity, REC provides significant value in keeping energy prices as low as possible.

## Extreme Weather

We can't control the weather, but we do review weather patterns and forecasts to prepare for times of extreme cold or heat, when we know the demand for electricity will increase. When temperatures fluctuate and the demand for electricity spikes, the price of wholesale power typically goes up.

## Infrastructure and Equipment

The operational side of electric service, including power lines and equipment, personnel and the costs of doing business are paid for by co-op members through the monthly customer charge and a portion of the per-kWh rate.

Inflation has significantly driven up the cost of materials, contributing in large part to the recently announced rate increase that will go into effect on April bills for usage after February 20th.

## You Have Control

While many of these external factors are out of our control, we all have the power to manage our energy use at home. The most effective way to lower use is thermostat management.

Since heating and cooling account for a major portion of home energy use, adjusting the thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting for heating and highest for cooling can help you save energy and money. Remember to have your heating and cooling system checked annually and replace dirty filters as needed.

Your bill from Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative includes a summary of how much electricity you used during the billing cycle. You can even see when your electricity use may have spiked, such as a particularly cold or hot day. You can also help reduce wholesale energy costs for the co-op

use by taking advantage of off-peak periods, when the demand for electricity is lower. Reserve energy-intensive chores for off-peak times—typically 8 p.m. to 7 a.m.

Be sure to seal air leaks around windows, doors and other areas where gaps are possible. This will help your heating and cooling system work less and improve the overall comfort of your home.

TVEC is your local energy partner, and we're here to help. As always, we will continue working diligently to provide you with reliable power at an affordable cost. ■





Lineworkers must be able to respond to emergency situations quickly, even if that is at the top of a pole. Some Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative crews renewed their qualification in January by putting on gear, climbing to the top and bringing down a training mannequin in less than 4 minutes.

## TVEC March Updates: Scholarship Deadline, Rate Changes and More

• **Scholarships for High School Seniors**—The deadline for applications is March 17. Seniors whose families receive power from TVEC are eligible, including home school and private school students.

Scholarships are funded by escheat money, which is unclaimed capital credits returned to the co-op by the State of Texas. Those funds may only be used for education, economic development, scholarships and efficiency programs.

Find out more and apply online at [tvec.net/scholarship](http://tvec.net/scholarship).

• **Rate Change Reminder**—As announced in the January edition of *Texas Co-op Power*, TVEC's electricity rates are going up slightly on April bills. Those billing cycles will include usage starting after February 20. You can find the full rate schedule and a handy bill calculator to see how this change will affect your bills at [tvec.net/rates](http://tvec.net/rates).

• **Join us on the Consider it Hot Podcast!**—Now you can catch up with the co-op in your car, while you exercise, or anytime really. The Consider it Hot podcast is available on all major podcast platforms and YouTube.

Give it a listen and let us know what you think.

• **Are You on SmartHub?**—Both online and on your mobile device, SmartHub offers the easiest way to manage your TVEC account, pay bills and more. Find out more at [tvec.net/smarthub](http://tvec.net/smarthub).

• **Operation Round Up Grants**—Do you know of a great organization making a difference in your community? Your participation in Operation Round Up has provided more than \$4 million in grants to great organizations throughout the TVEC service territory. Send potential applicants to [tvec.net/charitable-foundation](http://tvec.net/charitable-foundation) for more information on how to apply for a grant. ■



Find out more and listen online at [tvec.net/podcast](http://tvec.net/podcast).

## Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

### CONTACT US

1800 E. Highway 243  
Kaufman, Texas  
Local (972) 932-2214  
Toll-Free 1-800-766-9576  
Web [tvec.net](http://tvec.net)

### Board of Directors

Howard Tillison, Chairman, District 6  
Carolyn Minor, Vice Chairwoman, District 1  
Jo Ann Hanstrom, Secretary, District 4  
Jeff Priest, District 2  
Paul Weatherford, District 3  
Edward Reeve, District 5  
Jack Endres, District 7

### General Manager/CEO

Jeff Lane

**24/7**

## Outage Hotline Numbers

For information and to report outages, please call us.

TOLL-FREE  
1-800-967-9324

AUTOMATED ASSISTANCE  
1-800-720-3584

### ABOUT TRINITY VALLEY EC

TVEC operates in Anderson, Dallas, Henderson, Hunt, Kaufman and Van Zandt counties.

### OFFICE LOCATIONS

#### Kaufman District Headquarters

1800 E. Highway 243, Kaufman

#### Athens District Office

909 W. Larkin St., Athens

#### Cedar Creek District Office

1012 W. Main St., Ste. 102  
Gun Barrel City

#### Wills Point District Office

582 N. Fourth St., Wills Point

#### Lobby Hours

8:15 a.m.–4:45 p.m.

### VISIT US ONLINE

[tvec.net](http://tvec.net)

A Touchstone Energy 



# DON'T GO OUT ON A LIMB

Safety for you and your children is a top priority at your electric co-op. Kids don't always know—or remember—what can be dangerous, so it's up to all of us to watch out for them.

**Follow these safety rules for power lines:**

Don't plant trees or install tall playground equipment under or near power lines.

Don't build tree houses in trees near electric lines.

Don't allow children to climb trees near power lines.

Teach your children to always look up to check for power lines before climbing trees or any tall objects.

Keep children away from ladders and equipment that may be near power lines.

And the No. 1 safety rule for everyone to remember: Never touch a power line or anything that's touching a power line. Look up and live!

**Trinity Valley EC encourages you to always practice safety.**

PHOTO: NICKYLLLOYD | ISTOCK.COM

**TVEC**  
THIRTY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

**2025**  
**SCHOLARSHIPS**  
*Now*  
**Open**

SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE AND APPLY

YOU COULD WIN UP TO A \$1,000 SCHOLARSHIP!

APPLY BY **MARCH 17, 2025**

**WIN WIN WIN!**

SCHOLARSHIP

[www.tvec.net/scholarship](http://www.tvec.net/scholarship)





SEAN HANNON | ISTOCK.COM

## Electricity 101: The Flip of a Switch

**HAVE YOU EVER** wondered why they call it electricity? It's named after tiny parts of atoms called electrons, and that's the place to start in understanding how power plants make the electricity that reliably lights your home with the flip of a switch.

Getting all those electrons to march together inside a wire may be one of civilization's greatest and most complex engineering feats.

Just about all electricity generation starts with spinning a magnet inside a coil of wires. Inside most power plants are large turbines that accomplish this in different ways: falling water at a hydroelectric dam, burning coal or natural gas at a fossil fuel station, atomic energy at a nuclear power plant, or the rotating blades of a wind turbine.

One exception is solar energy, which uses materials that produce electricity when they're activated by sunlight.

Every one of those power plants is unimaginably complicated—think about what you would do if you were handed a lump of coal and were told to make it run your refrigerator.

Most large electric generating plants need large banks of transformers to boost the voltage for the long trip through wires held up by transmission lines and towers. As it nears your neighborhood, the voltage is reduced at one of those fenced-in complexes of wires and transformers called a substation.

As the electricity gets closer to your home or business, the voltage is reduced again with smaller transformers, which you can typically see mounted on a nearby utility pole or in a ground-level green box. This ensures the electricity entering your home is at a safe voltage for powering your lights, appliances and devices.

When you think about it, that's a lot of power in the simple flip of a switch. ■



## In Memoriam Jo Ann Hanstrom 1942-2025

The Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative lost a long-serving board member and member advocate with the passing of Jo Ann Hanstrom on February 2.

Jo Ann was already active in the community—serving as president of the Cedar Creek Lake Area Chamber of Commerce—when she was elected to the TVEC Board of Directors in 2008.

"Jo Ann was just a great person. She had a keen business mind and a passion for serving her community, whether that be through her work at the Chamber or at the Co-op," said TVEC General Manager and CEO Jeff Lane. "Her presence will be greatly missed."

Hanstrom worked tirelessly for TVEC members, and had achieved Director Gold status through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

She was also active in other causes, including serving on the board of the Mabank ISD Education Foundation, the Cain Center in Athens and the Central East Texas Better Business Bureau.

Prior to 2001, she worked in various industries and as Director of Visitor Development for the Irving Convention and Visitor's Bureau. ■





CARLOS GAWRONSKI | ISTOCK.COM



TVEC ENERGY  
MANAGEMENT  
SUPERVISOR  
**CHRIS WALKER**

## 10 Tips for Spring Energy Savings

**AS SPRING UNFOLDS** so do opportunities to save energy. Here are some no-cost ways to get you started on spring energy savings.

**1. Clear the air.** Open windows to allow fresh—free—air to circulate.

**2. Cook outside.** Enjoy a few hours of sunshine by using your grill or smoker to add flavor to meals. Or toss a salad or pull together sandwich fixings and enjoy them outdoors.

**3. Search and seal.** Cracks and gaps let conditioned air outside. Caulk and weatherstrip to seal leaks. Window and door frames need the most attention.

**4. Brighten up naturally.** Open blinds and curtains and turn off lights to save energy.

**5. Be fan friendly.** Use ceiling fans to circulate air. Fans should turn counterclockwise for cooling. And remember: Fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when the room is unoccupied.

**6. Adjust the atmosphere.** Remember to adjust your thermostat settings for the milder months ahead. Consider turning off the system entirely during mild spring weather.

**7. Tune up.** Schedule an appointment with an HVAC technician to identify potential problems with your system and have them addressed before peak cooling season arrives.

**8. Maximize savings.** Think about supply and demand. Plan to do household chores that require electricity during off-peak hours (when energy demand is lower—typically between 8 p.m. and 7 a.m.).

**9. Take charge.** Consider disconnecting electrical devices you don't use regularly until you need them. Plugged-in devices use energy even when not in use. A smart power strip can make it easy to turn off multiple items.

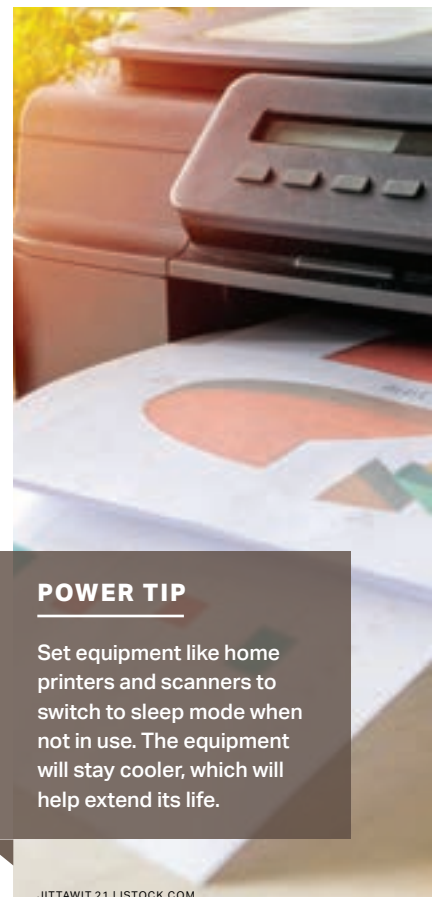
**10. Move outdoors:** Trade lights, TVs, computers and devices for fresh air. You'll be more active, have fun and save money. ■



### GREAT CAUSE

The Leadership Kaufman County class has adopted Operation Round Up grant recipient Casey's Place for a major renovation project.

Find out how to support the effort using the QR code above and buy a brick for the "Free 2B Me Corner."



### POWER TIP

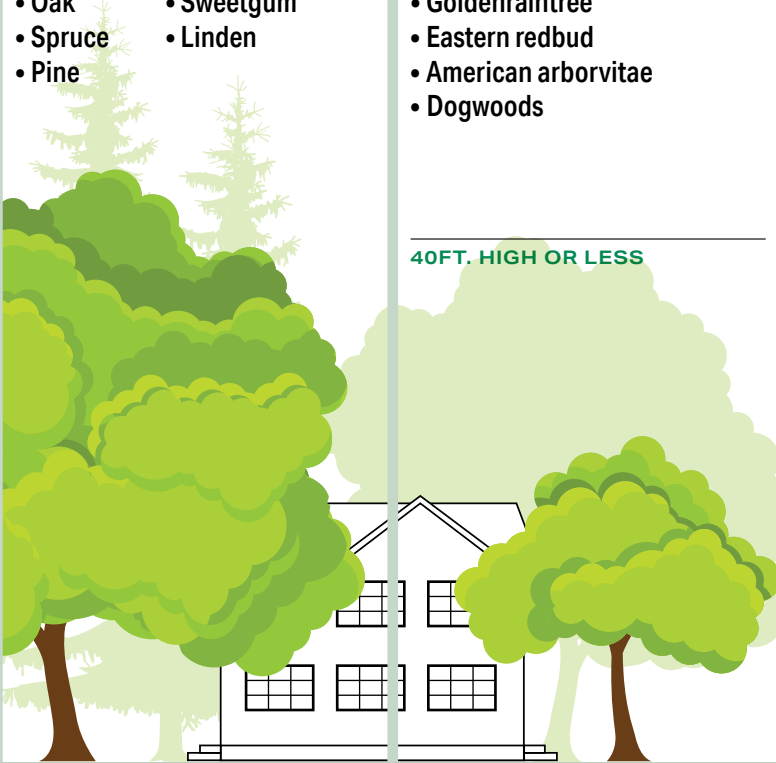
Set equipment like home printers and scanners to switch to sleep mode when not in use. The equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life.

JITTAWIT.21 | ISTOCK.COM

## LARGE TREES

Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:

- Maple
- Birch
- Oak
- Sweetgum
- Spruce
- Linden
- Pine



40FT. HIGH OR LESS

50FT.

## MEDIUM TREES

Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as:

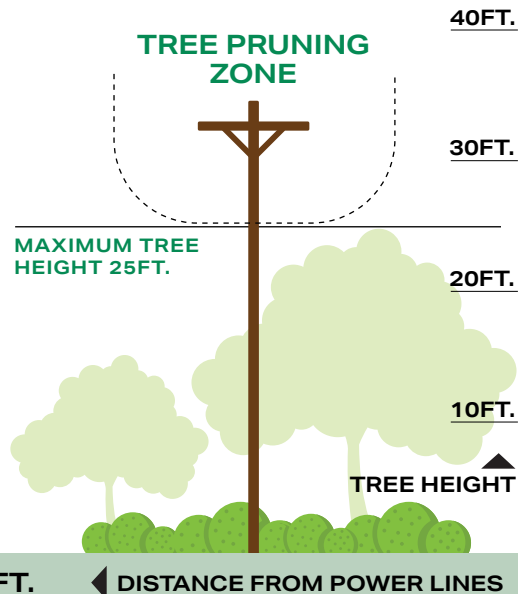
- Washington hawthorn
- Goldenrain tree
- Eastern redbud
- American arborvitae
- Dogwoods

## SMALL TREES

Height/spread of no more than 25 feet such as:

- Star magnolia
- Crabapple
- Lilac

Avoid planting within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.



# LOOK UP (AND DOWN) BEFORE YOU PLANT

Spring is a great time to plant shade trees, which eventually will grow up and out and cast nice shade on your house, keeping it cooler during the summer.

**But beware of where you plant.** Tree branches can conduct electricity, creating a possible shock hazard for utility workers who need to service overhead power lines that are too close to towering trees.

**Do some homework on the trees you've chosen before you plant them.** Know how tall and wide each tree will grow. That way, you can plant it in a spot where, when it's fully grown, it'll still be at least 10 feet from utility poles and overhead wires.

### HERE ARE A FEW OTHER SMART SPRINGTIME CAUTIONS:

- ▶ Don't climb a ladder that's within reach of a power line.
- ▶ Hire a professional to prune any tree branches that are near overhead wires. That's not a job for a do-it-yourselfer.
- ▶ Call your electric cooperative and 811 before you dig a hole to plant a tree to make sure you won't interfere with underground lines on your property. That's not only a safe practice—it's the law.



# Lineman Lunch



DON JOHNSON | TVEC

## Bebo's Butchery and Bistro

Locally grown meat and fresh baked goods in Montalba

WITH A FEW TABLES MADE FROM LARGE WIRE SPOOLS, Bebo's Butchery and Bistro makes a fitting lunch stop for line crews. It isn't the ambiance that keeps Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative crews coming back, though. A selection of hearty meals and baked goods is the main draw.

"They have a little bit of everything with barbecue that is really good," said Chance Franks, journeyman lineman. "But there is a sour cream blueberry pie that you really have to try."

The convenient location in Montalba is also a factor, saving crews in the area a 10-mile drive to Palestine.

"They always have a really good lunch special that will fill you up," Franks said. "And the atmosphere is great with local people and home grown beef, you can't beat that."

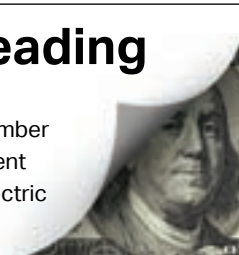
Menu items include smoked brisket, chicken, sausage and more. The daily specials are posted on the Bebo's Facebook page, with recent choices like giant stuffed meatballs, flat iron steak and baby back ribs. The meat market has plenty of specials as well for people who want to cook at home.

Bebo's is located at 9402 N. State Highway 19 in Montalba, and online on Facebook. ■



## Win \$100 Just for Reading

Somewhere hidden on pages 16–23 is a TVEC account number. Read closely. If the account number is yours, contact the member services department by March 31 to receive a \$100 credit on your electric bill. Don't miss out—you could be our winner.



**TVEC**  
TRINITY VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

**Energy Quiz**



**What measurement is used to compare different types of energy to each other?**  
[eia.gov/energyexplained/us-energy-facts/](http://eia.gov/energyexplained/us-energy-facts/)

- A. Calories
- B. British thermal units (Btu)
- C. MegaJoules

Win **\$100!**

Send your answer and contact information to [contest@tvec.coop](mailto:contest@tvec.coop) or contact TVEC Member Services by March 31. One \$100 bill credit winner will be chosen from all correct replies. Look for the correct answer in a future **Texas Co-op Power**.

## February Energy Quiz: Turbine Size

THE SCALE OF MODERN wind turbines is impressive. In order to catch enough wind to generate almost 30% of Texas energy generation, the turbines have to be big. 12445001

Average size for wind turbine rotor diameter is up to about 438 feet, and newer, larger designs are in production.

Congratulations to our January Energy Quiz winner, Desiree Pool of Kaufman.

Look for the winner of this month's contest in the May issue of *Texas Co-op Power*. ■



## Grant Supports DSO Student Outreach in Terrell

Young musicians get lessons in artistry and life

TERRELL HIGH SCHOOL and Middle School Students had a unique opportunity to spend time with Dallas Symphony Orchestra musicians thanks to a November, 2024 Operation Round Up grant.

“Over the last 22 years, the E! Terrell Entertainment Series has provided more than 100 student outreach programs as part of our mission to support fine arts education in our schools,” said Dana Skelton, one of the E! Terrell organizers. “It is a way to widen the cultural horizons of our students in ways that are both educational and entertaining.”

Students enjoyed a selection of classical music by the DSO’s woodwind quintet, followed by small group instructional sessions for the different instruments represented, including oboe, bassoon, clarinet, flute and French horn.

“I’d say very few of these students have had a chance to see anything like this—on this level—before. Getting out and going to see this music live is just not realistic for them right now,” Said Terrell High School Director of Bands Rod Boyce. “For them to have this opportunity and have the musicians come here is amazing.”



Alex Kienle, from the Dallas Symphony Orchestra Woodwind Quintet, works with students from Terrell ISD bands as part of an E! Terrell Entertainment Series student outreach program.

Beyond the basics of musicianship and learning to play well, Boyce said the goal of music education reaches beyond the classroom and into the rest of the students’ lives.

“We are teaching them to be great citizens, hard working and responsible,” he said. “These are lifelong lessons: how to identify and isolate problems then come up with solutions. Once you have made something better, you can always get to another level.” ■



## JANUARY 2025 Operation Round Up Awards

Thank you for turning your coins into change!



### Grants

Eustace Intermediate School	\$4,680.21
Kaufman ISD Education Foundation	\$3,000
NOW Backpack Program	\$1,000
Texas Best Choices Animal Rescue	\$2,000
Van Zandt Veterans Memorial	\$2,000

### Food Pantry Assistance

Water of Life Lutheran Church	\$5,000
-------------------------------	---------



*Classic Chic —  
the toast of  
France*

## *Style and Sophistication for a Fraction of the Price!*

**I Lost a Fortune at the French Races, but Fortunately I Found This Bag**



**R**eady! Set! Go!" The starting gate opened and 19 horses galloped off, each jockeying for the lead. While Apache, the horse I bet on, was the odds-on favorite, his rival Napoleon pulled ahead in the race's final seconds.

In less than a minute I lost a fortune at the Paris horseraces.

After a brief moment of disbelief, something caught my eye. It seemed like every woman in Paris was carrying the same classic handbag! I had to have one for my own, so I had our handbag designers interpret this classic offer. Presenting the **Parisian Chic Claire Handbag**.

Inspired by the equestrian gear I encountered in the stables after the race. The **Claire Bag** is the color of saddle leather with metal adornments that recall horse bits and stirrups. Sturdy and chic, the Claire Bag is ideal for the woman on the go. See for yourself why the **Parisian Chic Claire Handbag** is the toast of France!

Backed by our **satisfaction guarantee**, you can revel in its sophistication risk-free for 30 days. Should it fail to dazzle, return it for a full refund of the item price.

#### **Jewelry Specifications:**

- Brown vegan leather.
- 8 1/2" x 4" D x 6 1/2" H, 9 1/2" H w/ handle.
- Two interior open pockets, two interior zipped pockets, one outside zipped

#### **Parisian Chic Claire Handbag**

~~-\$299~~ **\$39\*** + S&P **Save \$260**

*\*You must use Insider Offer Code PCH163-01 to get this price.*

## **1-800-333-2045**

**Your Insider Offer Code: PCH163-01**



Rating of A+

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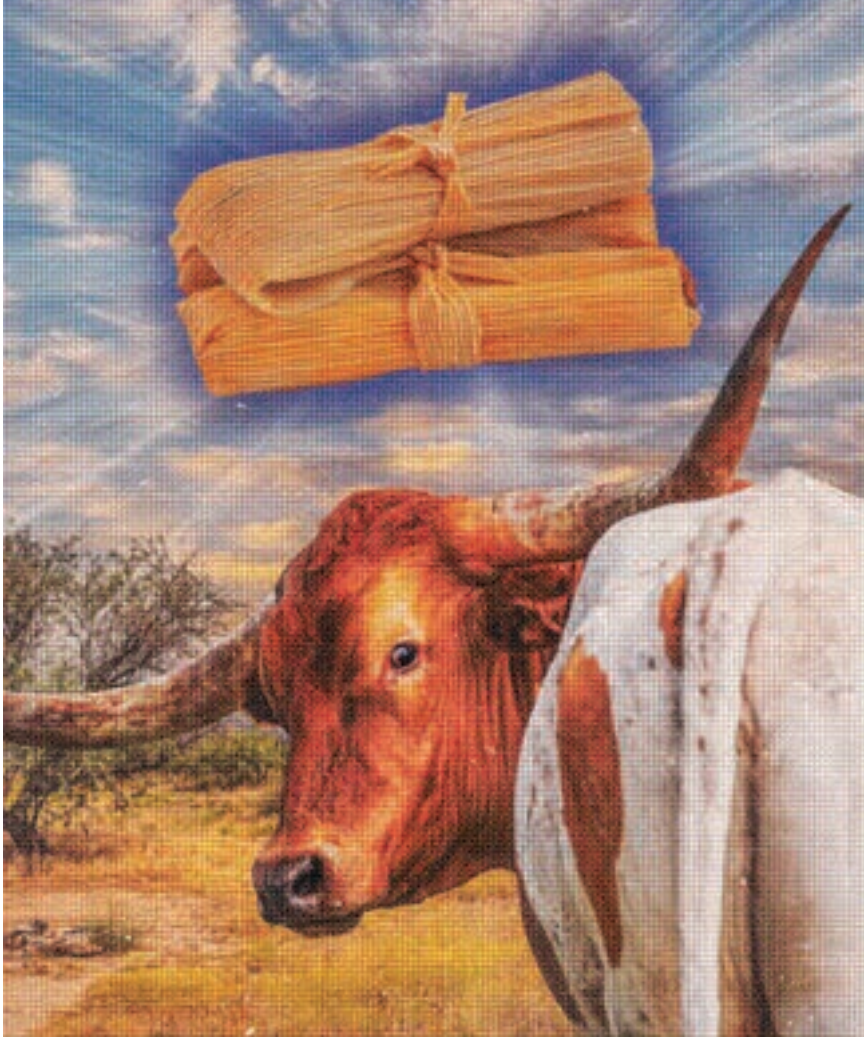
14091 Southcross Drive W.

Dept. PCH163-01, Burnsville, MN 55337

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



He was wily.

He would often stop, face south and sniff the breeze for the smell of the Gulf. At night, a cowboy would rope him and tie him to a big bush or tree.

One day, the cattle balked at a full-flowing river. "Rope old Sancho and lead him in," a boss ordered. They did so, and Sancho led the herd across.

But as soon as he was released, Sancho returned to the rear of the herd where he could watch for chances to head home to his mesquite tree and tamales.

The herd nonetheless moved ever northward. Across the Canadian, across the Cimarron. Across Kansas, around Dodge City, across Nebraska, under the Black Hills and past the Bighorn Mountains—2,000 miles.

They finally reached Wyoming. Sancho was still halting now and then to sniff southward to see if he might get a whiff of Texas somewhere in the wind. He didn't like this new land.

The new ranch branded CR on Sancho, and the Shiner boys headed home, leaving Sancho behind.

The next spring, back in Texas, Rigby was riding near Kerr's home. He said, "I looked across the pear flat and saw something that made me rub my eyes."

He rode over and looked. It was Sancho. He had both the 7Z road brand and the CR range brand on him as plain as day. He went to talk to Kerr.

"Yes, Sancho got back six weeks ago," Kerr said. "Hoofs worn down to hair. But Maria went might near out of her mind with joy at seeing him." She hugged him and cried and fed him hot tamales.

After that, Sancho slept every night under the mesquite by the gate. ■

# Sancho's Long Road

The legend of the tamale-loving longhorn

J. FRANK DOBIE ADAPTATION BY W.F. STRONG

**FOLKLORE IS NOT HISTORY**, but it is historical. It gives us a window into the sentiments and humor of the people who lived in those times and told those stories.

One of folklorist J. Frank Dobie's favorite stories was that of a longhorn named Sancho. He heard it from John Rigby of Beeville, in South Texas. Dobie figured Rigby had dressed up the story a bit and admitted that he himself had done some "constructive work" on it over the years.

It goes like this.

There was a man named Kerr who lived on a small ranch out in the brush country south of San Antonio. One winter day in 1876, he found a cow dead in a bog with her near-lifeless calf beside her. Kerr roped the calf and took it home to his wife, Maria.

She cleaned up the poor calf and bottle fed him until Kerr could find another cow with a calf to adopt the orphan. Maria named the calf Sancho.

She began feeding him tamales, shuck and all, seasoned with peppers. Out in the brush, he began eating the chile pequin peppers that grew wild in shaded places.

Sancho was eventually branded and turned into a steer, but he was as strong as any bull. Nonetheless he remained Maria's pet and came in from the range each night to sleep under a mesquite tree.

When Sancho was 3, Kerr sold the steer to the Shiner brothers, who were to deliver three herds to buyers in Wyoming.

They branded him 7Z for the drive north, but Sancho kept lagging back and was tagged by the boys as one to watch.



# Pies, Pies, Pies

Regardless of the filling, you're guaranteed a slice of heaven

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

Indulge in chocolaty goodness with this easy pie. A luscious mix of whipped cream and rich pudding creates a smooth, decadent filling. Each bite offers a satisfying crunch and melt-in-your-mouth sweetness, making this dessert irresistible for any chocolate lover!

## Chocolate Chip Pie

**1 quart heavy cream**  
**2 cups powdered sugar**  
**2 tablespoons vanilla extract**  
**1 box instant chocolate pudding mix**  
**(5.9 ounces)**  
**2 cups whole milk**  
**2 cups mini chocolate chips, divided use**  
**2 chocolate cookie pie crusts**  
**(9 inches each)**

1. Using a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, whip heavy cream, powdered sugar and vanilla on medium-high speed until medium peaks form, about 3–4 minutes. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together pudding mix and milk until smooth. Gently fold half the whipped cream and 1 cup mini chocolate chips into the chocolate pudding.
3. Divide filling evenly between crusts, and smooth out top with a spoon.
4. Top with remaining whipped cream and sprinkle with remaining 1 cup chocolate chips.
5. Place in fridge to chill at least 2 hours. Serve chilled.

**SERVES 12**

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





## Peanut Butter Buttermilk Pie

ROSE M. DAILEY  
HOUSTON COUNTY EC

This is a creamy, indulgent twist on a Southern classic. It combines the tangy goodness of buttermilk with the smooth, nutty flavor of peanut butter, creating a filling that's sweet and slightly tart.

**1 unbaked deep-dish pie crust  
(9 inches)**

**4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter**

**½ cup creamy peanut butter**

**1¼ cups sugar**

**3 tablespoons flour**

**⅛ teaspoon salt**

**1 cup buttermilk**

**4 eggs, lightly beaten**

**1.** Preheat oven to 425 degrees. If crust is not already in a pie dish, arrange unbaked crust in pie dish.

**2.** In a microwave-safe bowl, melt butter and peanut butter together in the microwave on medium-high (70% power) for 15 seconds, or longer as needed to melt butter. Allow to cool 5 minutes.

**3.** In a large bowl, stir together sugar, flour, salt and buttermilk. Stir in eggs to blend completely. Add the cooled peanut butter mixture and stir until smooth.

**4.** Pour filling into pie crust. Bake 10 minutes at 425 degrees, then reduce heat to 350 degrees and bake 25–30 minutes longer.

**5.** Remove from oven and allow to cool before serving.

**SERVES 6–8**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >

\$500 WINNER

## Strawberry Custard Pie

MILLIE KIRCHOFF  
NUECES EC



Delight your guests with this perfect blend of sweet and tangy flavors. Fresh strawberries nestled over a creamy custard are sweetened with vanilla and a hint of lemon juice for brightness. The velvety filling pairs beautifully with the buttery crust. This is a showstopper.

**1 pie crust (9 inches), prepared and baked according to package directions**

**2 egg yolks**

**1½ cups sugar, divided use**

**7 tablespoons cornstarch, divided use**

**¼ teaspoon salt**

**2 cups whole milk**

**1 tablespoon (½ stick) butter**

**1 teaspoon vanilla extract**

**1 cup water, divided use**

**1 tablespoon lemon juice**

**6 cups fresh strawberries, hulled and quartered**

**1.** Place crust on a baking sheet. In a heatproof medium bowl, lightly whisk egg yolks.

**2.** In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, whisk together ¾ cup sugar, 4 tablespoons cornstarch, salt and milk. Bring to a boil. Boil 1 minute, whisking constantly.

**3.** Slowly pour ½ cup milk mixture into egg yolks, whisking constantly. Add egg mixture to the saucepan, reduce heat and cook for an additional minute, whisking constantly until mixture thickens.

**4.** Remove from heat and stir in butter and vanilla. Pour custard mixture into baked pie shell.

**5.** In a bowl, stir together remaining ¾ cup sugar, remaining 3 tablespoons cornstarch and 2 tablespoons water.

**6.** In a medium saucepan over high heat, bring remaining ¾ cup water to a boil. Stir in sugar mixture and cook, stirring constantly, 2–3 minutes until thick and clear. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice. Fold strawberries into syrup.

**7.** Spoon strawberries over custard mixture and chill in refrigerator at least 4 hours. Serve chilled.

**SERVES 6–8**



## TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

**BEEFY BURGERS** DUE MARCH 10

Backyard grilling is the best part of summer. How do you build your perfect burger? Submit your all-star recipe, and you might flip over \$500. Enter by March 10.

**UPCOMING: ONE-SKILLET DINNERS** DUE APRIL 10





## Edna's Dewberry Pie

TINA WEBB  
BLUEBONNET EC

Fresh berry filling crowned with a sweet, crunchy topping makes for one appetizing pie. Webb's mother-in-law, Edna, passed down this recipe that's been in the family for generations. Webb uses the native dewberries she gathers each season to make the pie, but blackberries will work too.

### PIE

- 1 unbaked pie crust (9 inches)
- 4 cups dewberries
- 1½ cups sugar
- ½ cup flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- ½ cup sour cream

### TOPPING

- ½ cup flour
- ½ cup sugar
- 4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter, chilled and diced



1. **PIE** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. If crust is not already in a pie dish, arrange unbaked crust in pie dish.
2. Place dish on a baking sheet and place berries inside.
3. In a bowl, mix together sugar, flour, salt, eggs and sour cream. Pour mixture over dewberries.
4. **TOPPING** In another bowl, stir together flour and sugar. Use hands to work in butter

## Tips by the Ton

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ

I baked a ton of pies for this issue. Before all that testing, I wish I had known:

**Place your pie on a baking sheet in the oven to prevent a huge mess.** The filling might bubble over. Trust me on this one.

**Don't rush the cooling process.** Allow the pie to cool completely before slicing. It's worth the wait.

pieces until large clumps form. Sprinkle topping over pie.

5. Bake 45 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven and allow pie to cool 2 hours at room temperature before serving.

SERVES 6-8

## WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS BEGINS WITH YOU

Have your "Go Kit" packed and ready.

Create defensible space around your home.

Identify two evacuation routes incase one becomes compromised.

Communicate with local officials and learn how they will send emergency notifications.



tfsweb.tamu.edu/PreventWildfire



## APPLY NOW for TREWA SCHOLARSHIPS

# \$30,000 AVAILABLE

for college-bound students

Application available at  
**TREWA.ORG**  
**DEADLINE: MARCH 15**

The Texas Rural Women's Association (TREWA) will award twenty \$1,500 scholarships to TREWA members or their children. Membership dues are \$10 per year.





COURTESY CHET GARNER

## Heaven in Houston

A Rice University art installation transports viewers at dusk and dawn

BY CHET GARNER

**THERE I SAT**, in total silence, on the campus of Houston’s Rice University, surrounded by dozens of other people just staring at the ceiling. But this wasn’t any normal ceiling.

It was equal parts lights show, meditation and spaceship, slowly changing colors and seemingly transporting all of us into another dimension. After 40 minutes, the light show ended, and I felt like I’d been given a brain massage—a welcome side effect to witnessing the glory of the Twilight Epiphany Skyspace.

This bit of artistic madness was created by James Turrell, an internationally acclaimed master of color, light and messing with your eyes. In the daylight, this artistic installation built in 2012 looks like a giant UFO hovering over a Mayan pyramid. But at sunrise and sunset, the UFO fires up its engines and lifts off. It’s currently closed but will reopen in late spring.

I rolled onto Rice’s campus about 20 minutes before sunset. The experience is totally free and open to the public, and there was a docent on-site to answer questions. “So, we just go sit and stare?” I asked. “Yes,” she answered. “You’ll know when it starts.”

At first, I felt a bit uncomfortable sitting around with total strangers staring at a blank white surface. But as the daylight faded, the lights began to shine and we all drifted into a hypnotic trance. There were neons and purples, greens and reds, each fading slowly into the next.

Was I looking at the orange hues of a Texas sunset, or was it just a vibrant projection? Hard to say, as the edges of the giant square seemed to blend seamlessly into the surrounding sky.

Every now and then, a giggle would break the silence and remind me that this was indeed a very strange collective experience. However, sometimes the weirdest art is the most wonderful of all. ■

ABOVE Chet takes in the exterior of the Twilight Epiphany Skyspace.

**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.

## MARCH

1

**Weatherford [1–31] Grow at Clark Gardens**, (940) 682-4856, [clarkgardens.org](http://clarkgardens.org)

8

**Abilene The Gatlin Brothers**, (325) 676-6211, [abileneconventioncenter.com](http://abileneconventioncenter.com)

**Luling Rajun’ Cajun Throwdown & Gumbo Cookoff**, (830) 875-5058, [lulingmainstreet.com](http://lulingmainstreet.com)

14

**Round Top [14–15] Herbal Forum & Plant Sale**, (979) 249-3129, [festivalhill.org](http://festivalhill.org)

**Tolar [14–15] Ceramic Expo & Handcrafted Items**, (254) 716-5227, [westceramicshow.com](http://westceramicshow.com)

16

**Fredericksburg St. Patrick’s Day Coin Hunt**, (830) 990-2044, [fbgtx.org](http://fbgtx.org)

22

**Huntsville Herb Festival at the Wynne Home**, (281) 787-3895, [texasthymeunit.org](http://texasthymeunit.org)

**Kingsville How To Recognize a Champion Horse**, (915) 533-0048, [tomlea.com](http://tomlea.com)

**La Grange David Wilcox**, (979) 968-9944, [thebugleboy.org](http://thebugleboy.org)

**Palestine Dogwood Festival**, (903) 729-6066, [palestinechamber.org](http://palestinechamber.org)

**Tomball Choo-Choo Chow Down**, (281) 290-1035, [tomballtx.gov](http://tomballtx.gov)

25

**Fort Worth [25–30] Clue**, (817) 212-4280, [basshall.com](http://basshall.com)

27

**Sagerton [27-29] Hee Haw,**  
(940) 200-0035, facebook.com  
/sagertonheeew

28

**Cuero [28-29] Heirloom  
Stitchers Guild of Cuero  
Quilt Show,** (361) 550-9388

**Georgetown [28-29]  
Quilt Show,** (512) 869-1812,  
handcraftsunlimited.com

**Hamilton [28-29] Hamilton  
County Master Gardener  
Vegetable Sale,**  
(254) 386-3919,  
hamilton-tx@tamu.edu

29

**Burnet Hill Country  
Lawn & Garden Show,**  
(512) 756-3059,  
burnetcountyhighlandlakes  
mastergardener.org

**Sabinal [29-30] Wild Hog  
Festival & Craft Fair,**  
(830) 486-8549,  
sabinalwildhogfestival.com

## APRIL

3

**Corsicana John Conlee,**  
(903) 874-7792,  
corsicanapalace.com

4

**Fredericksburg [4-6]  
Texas Fandango,**  
thetexasfandango.com

5

**Port Arthur Cajun Heritage  
Fest,** (409) 985-7822,  
visitportarthurtx.com

**Waxahachie [5-May 26]  
Scarborough Renaissance  
Festival,** (972) 938-3247,  
srfestival.com

### TCP Submit Your Event

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

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# Small Spaces

Tiny and terrific, there's a whole world to explore right at our fingertips. Between the cracks of the sidewalk, tucked in the petals of a flower or deep in an underground cave, nature awaits if we only slow down long enough to take a look.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ

1 KATY FRANCESCHINI  
PEDERNALES EC

"This little frog in our garden frog found the perfect spot to hide."

2 SHELBY BARLET  
HAMILTON COUNTY EC

"I found this little guy looking for respite on my window-sill. Turns out he was trying to get away from my cat!"

3 KATHERYN JAGER  
PEDERNALES EC

"My husband, Garrett Smith, an environmental scientist, squeezes into a Texas cave entrance."

4 GREGORY COTHERN  
TRINITY VALLEY EC

"A tree frog finds shelter for the day in the leaf whorl of a canna lily."



## Upcoming Contests

DUE MAR 10 Catch of the Day

DUE APR 10 College Life

DUE MAY 10 Off-Road Adventures



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

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





## Nanny's Blessing

A grandmother sows memories for generations through her love of bluebonnets

BY SHANE TORNO  
ILLUSTRATION BY  
SARAH FERONE

**MY GRANDMOTHER, NANNY** to us kids, loved bluebonnets. She loved all wildflowers but especially bluebonnets.

She was a native Texan so that fact is probably no surprise. However, her love for these attractive weeds went beyond the standard Texas loyalty.

A typical Texan will happily drive for hours in the spring for the chance to view vast fields of the state flower. Of course she would often do this, but she would also collect seeds throughout the year so that she could plant them along highways in the fall.

As a child, I would sometimes accompany her and operate the shovel while she sowed the seeds in places where she could keep her eye on them during their growth.

Prior to these experiences with her, I had always assumed that the wildflowers

were responsible for their own dispersion. Now, whenever I see bluebonnets along the road, I imagine a little old woman urging a reluctant teen boy with a shovel to “keep up the pace!”

Nanny didn't just plant bluebonnets along the road though, she sowed them anywhere the sun shined. Her front yard, her side yard, her backyard, city parks, vacant lots, alleyways.

She was very successful, too. Her bluebonnet patches often attracted admirers, photographers and plenty of pollinators.

My wife also loves bluebonnets. She grew up in Kerrville and got to enjoy some of the state's best bluebonnet gazing with her family along the Hill Country's famously scenic Willow City Loop.

Once we had our own children, my wife and I would photograph our young sons in Nanny's bluebonnet patches. That's because, despite my shovel work with my grandmother, I never had any success growing my own.

Back in 2015, I bought some property out in the country that would eventually be my homesite. One of the first things I did with that property was plant bluebonnet seeds with my sons.

But no bluebonnets came up. Year after year I would plant more seeds. No bluebonnets.

Nanny died in December 2023 at the age of 97. She had good health and enjoyed her independence until the very end, and she even tended her garden with care up until the last few years.

She was a blessing to many people, even some who never knew her or knew why there were so many bluebonnets between Sinton and Rockport, north of Corpus Christi.

Last spring—inexplicably—I had some big, beautiful bluebonnet patches in my front flower bed, even though I didn't sow any seeds in the fall.

If you ask me if I think this is a coincidence, I would say, yes, of course it is.

But it is my favorite coincidence ever. ■