

Annual Meeting Another Huge Success

Despite the dry weather and sweltering heat, approximately 300 members attended Comanche Electric Cooperative's 68th Annual Meeting on August 19 at the Comanche City Park. Those attending took part in a health fair, were entertained, won prizes, ate a great meal, elected directors, visited with their friends and neighbors, and generally just had a good time while learning more about their electric cooperative.

During registration and the health fair, members were entertained by the Calvin Milburn Band. Boy Scouts began the day's activities by presenting the flag. They were followed by Christine Salmon, who performed the national anthem while Kari Rust accompanied her in sign language. The business meeting was brought to order by Board President Travis Day. Accountant Barbee Word presented the financial report and General Manager Ronnie Robinson gave the business report to the members.

Jennifer Iller and Jaimie Ross told the crowd about their trip to Washington, D.C., and thanked the mem-



bers for allowing them the opportunity to attend. Marcie Strube thanked the members for the honor of being awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

Service awards were given to Comanche Electric Cooperative employees who had served five,

10, 15, 20 and 25 years.

Incumbents Phil Taylor of District 7 and Travis Day of District 1 were re-elected for another term. Door prizes were given away, followed by a meal of fish, chicken and all the trimmings by Cook's Fish Barn.





NOTICE OF CAPITAL CREDIT ALLOCATIONS

Capital credits were recently allocated to accounts of members of Comanche Electric Cooperative for the year 2005.

After the end of the calendar year, cooperatives must determine what, if any, margins from operations were made during the year and allocate these margins to members' accounts.

Your cooperative's operating margin is any money left after all operating costs have been paid. Since members are owners of the cooperative, operating margins are allocated

to their accounts as capital credits.

These capital credits will be returned to members in the future, when doing so will not weaken the financial condition of the cooperative, as determined by the board of directors.

In the meantime, the funds remain invested in the cooperative plant, credited to each member's account, even though the member may move away from Comanche Electric's lines.

It is very important that departing members keep the co-op informed of their current mailing addresses so that those members can receive capital credit refunds when they are paid.

Capital credits for 2005 were calculated by multiplying each member's bill by the multiplier below. For example: If your total residential bill from

the cooperative (consisting of energy billing and power cost adjustment) was \$500, simply multiply that amount by .01340. The capital credit is \$6.70.

In calculating your total bill, include any security light charge, but do not include any tax, service or miscellaneous charges.

If you have any questions concerning these calculations, please feel free to contact the co-op office.

This article is intended to serve as an official notice of allocation of capital credits for 2005.

Residential01340
General Service01969
Large Power00612
Commercial02765
Large Commercial-Substation.....	.00376

Past Meets Present Part II: Pioneer

BY SHIRLEY DUKES

Last month, I introduced you to the Beattie Quilting Club, with a promise of more to come. This month, it is my pleasure to introduce you to the community and some of the residents of Pioneer. Pioneer, like most little communities in Texas, has a very rich history. So kick back and join me as we take one more stroll down Memory Lane.

Pioneer

Pioneer is located on FM 569 in the southwestern corner of Eastland County. I had a 10 a.m. appointment at the Pioneer Community Center with the ladies of the Pioneer Quilting Club. I arrived early, so I drove on past the Community Center to see what remained of this quiet little community. As with many of the boom towns of the past, there was not much left of Pioneer. But it didn't take long for me to discover that Pioneer had not always been a quiet little community!

Pioneer was established in 1883. In 1885, Ed M. Curry selected the name of Pioneer for the town, and a post office was granted, with Bill Smith as postmaster. The railroad came through in 1910.

A school was established as the Eastland County School District #19. The 1880 census showed about 30 children in the little town school. They were dubbed the Pioneer Black Panthers and boasted both good sports teams and a good band. The Community Building was built by the WPA in 1941 as the school's agriculture classroom and workshop. As a result of the boom, Pioneer was among eight Eastland County towns with an independent school district in 1924, a distinction it no longer retains since it consolidated with the Cross Plains School District in Callahan County on September 13, 1948.

Cotton was grown in the area and a gin was built. Churches soon organ-

ized and church buildings were constructed. The little community struggled along with farming as its main support until 1922, when it joined Eastland County's mad oil excitement.

On May 13, 1922, the Bryson wells near Pioneer reached a daily production of 2,200 barrels of crude, and Pioneer skyrocketed from a sleepy little village into a city of 25,000. Later, the Eakin No. 4 surpassed all the other wells in the county by producing 20,000 barrels a day. It may have been the heaviest producer in Eastland County, and it was acclaimed as the largest high-gravity well in the history of the oil industry. Laverne Hutton says she can still remember pictures of it in her history book. With high-gravity crude oil bringing \$2.88 a barrel, Pioneer wells grossed over \$1 million a year for two consecutive years.

The Rising Star-Pioneer area became the new oil field. Aware of the usual ugly shacks and tents of oil boom towns, the Rising Star city government made a rule that settlers had to obtain a permit that specified a minimum cost before building in their city. Some building was done in Rising Star, but Pioneer became the center of the boom town settlement. Its wagon road main street soon stretched out for a mile in well-defined business establishments: stores, hotels, flop houses, oil well supply houses, and there were the usual hijackers, gamblers and bootleggers. Side streets and lanes bristled with tents and tin can shacks. A pic-

ture of the boom town hangs in the front room of the Pioneer Community Center and is a very impressive interpretation of the common sights typical of a boom town of that era.

With available oil storage in Pioneer at 250 barrels, the new wells quickly outpaced the ability to store the crude, so the two wells ran wild, pouring the valuable oil into hastily dug storage tanks and out on the land. These first two wells were only about 250 feet apart, thus combined spouting crude oil and gas formed a fire hazard. Traffic was rerouted miles out of the direct course because the highway ran between two gushers. Trains were delayed or moved cautiously where the railroad line ran to within a half-mile of the wells. Teamsters, roughnecks and pipeliners (wearing hip boots and raincoats to protect against the downpour of oil) dug huge earthen tanks to catch the oil and built pipelines.

Like most oil fields during that era that were allowed to run free, the fields were quickly drained of their riches, and Pioneer settled back down



Janiesa Hutton, granddaughter of member Sandy Hutton, displays a suit worn by Alton McCowen in the second grade rhythm band in 1939. The band won the Eastland County Championship blue ribbon that year.



American and Confederate flags fly next to the gravesites in the Pioneer Cemetery.



Members hard at work (left to right): Glenda Phillips, Jean Fore, Lou Grider, Laverne Hutton, May Jones, Jean Alexander, Frankie Smith, Sandy Hutton and Janiesa Hutton.

to its former peacefulness.

When Pioneer School consolidated with Cross Plains School District, the school building was purchased for \$1 for a community building. Today, the Quilting Club meets here every Tuesday and has been responsible for supporting its upkeep. It is used every other Thursday for Game Night, as well as family reunions, special dinners, community meetings, and an annual quilt and art show held on the first weekend of November. The quilting club was organized after the Home Demonstration Club disbanded in 1946, and has been the mainstay of this now quiet and proud community.

Today, the Pioneer Quilting Club boasts 16 members: Jean Alexander, Lessie Baum, Earlene Burge, Charlene Chesshir, Christy Dallas, Olena Ezzell, Jean Fore, Lou Grider, Laverne Hutton, Sandy Hutton, Trisha Hutton, May Jones, Glenda Phillips, Frankie Smith, Billie Freeman and Melissa Jackson. Jean Fore, at 94 years young, is Pioneer Quilting Club's oldest member. I was excited to learn that she was present and accounted for at this morning's quilting. Lou Grider is from Cross Plains, Olena Ezzell and Melissa Jackson are from Rising Star, and the rest of the ladies reside in Pioneer. Laverne Hutton told about a quilt that they had just finished for her that I so wish I had been able to see. She said she had taken things that she and her children and grandchildren had made, and made them into a quilt. Some of the quilt pieces include: a pair of crocheted baby shoes, her son's sun suit

that she had made out of a feed sack, his navy patch, some fabric pieces that her children and grandchildren had painted on, and various other things. I'm sure it was a beautiful piece when finished. She named it her "Quilt of Memories."

They try to keep three quilts going but when I arrived they only had two set up. They were in the process of trying to wind things down a bit because they usually take off July and August, when everyone is so busy with the hectic summer schedule. School classes still occasionally come out to watch the ladies at work, and they are happy to teach anyone who is willing to learn.

The Texas Heritage Bank in Cross Plains has asked the Pioneer Quilting Club, along with all the other area quilting clubs, to make wall hangings that represent their communities to be displayed in the bank during Cross Plain's homecoming, the third week in September. The quilting club ladies are talking about appliquéing squares for their quilt. The squares will include a pecan tree, peanuts, cotton, the old school house and an oil well. There will be other pieces as well, but all of the plans are not formulated yet, so I guess we will just have to be surprised to see what else goes into the wall hanging.

The Community Center's sole support comes from the quilting they do for the public and from the Quilt Show and Country Store in November. At that sale, you will find quilts, afghans, crafts, baked goods and many other items. The quilting club

invites other vendors to join them in this endeavor, so if you have quilts or crafts that you would like to make available, don't hesitate to contact them. From the proceeds of this sale, they have put a fence around the Pioneer Cemetery, acquired a memorial at the cemetery for the World War I and II veterans, built a bathroom, and rewired the entire building, along with numerous other projects. At the present time, they are concentrating on purchasing new floor covering for the building, a water heater, and plumbing repairs.

After leaving the Community Center, I headed over to the cemetery on Highway 36 to check it out. At one time the town was also on Highway 36. The original school building is across the road from the cemetery in a wooden two-story building. The cemetery itself is very lovely and very old. I found the cornerstone memorial that the ladies had told me about, which serves as a tribute to the veterans of World War I and II. I also found some old gravesites of Confederate soldiers, as well as many dating back to the early 1830s. The gravesites and the Pioneer community both have an extremely rich history.

Oil may have made Pioneer a thriving city for a while, but it is not what has made it what it is today. Caring individuals, with a sense of pride in their community, make Pioneer the quaint but welcoming place it is now. Stop in sometime for a chat. You can find the ladies busy at work on any given Tuesday—they are sure to give you a warm welcome.