

# Who Profits From Co-op Service? You Do!



MESSAGE FROM  
GENERAL MANAGER  
ALAN LESLEY

**LATELY WE'VE BEEN HEARING A QUESTION** from members that deserves a thoughtful answer: "If you're a nonprofit, why don't you charge just enough to pay your bills?"

The answer is that Comanche Electric Cooperative must charge enough to purchase power, provide service and maintain a positive cash flow. This gives us a cushion to handle unexpected situations and allows us to secure favorable terms from lenders for money we

might need to expand and maintain our delivery system.

When fuel costs for generation go up, your co-op pays more for electricity. If we didn't pass along that charge to you, we'd soon find ourselves in financial straits. Therefore, when generation and fuel costs rise, you can expect to see a bump in your electric bill. When they go down, you'll notice a proportionate decrease in your bill.

In a nutshell, that's part of how a nonprofit operates. All the money we collect pays for keeping your co-op whole. We're not accountable to outside investors. We're accountable only to you, our member-owners. We use our resources to make sound investments that benefit you.

As a distribution cooperative, we have to get the power to you reliably. That means training and compensating our employees, and purchasing high-quality poles, transformers,

wires, bucket trucks and safety equipment. That also means getting your power back on as quickly as possible if severe weather damages the system. We do that by investing in technology that helps us work more accurately and quickly.

We also pay decent wages to the people who repair the lines, send out bills and answer your calls for help when you need it. Don't forget, that's money that goes right back into the community where your co-op employees live and work.

You see, at Comanche EC, there are no outside investors making money on stock dividends or profit sharing. That's because you, the members, are the owners of the cooperative, and every dime the co-op brings in over expenses is invested back in this business—and eventually is returned to you in the form of capital credits.

Our mission is simple: Empower the communities we serve by providing a steady, reliable supply of electricity at the lowest cost possible.

The business structure of electric cooperatives can be traced to our roots decades ago. During that era, the big electric companies that served cities were not convinced that the expense of building lines to serve rural areas would pay off for their investors. So rural residents who wanted electricity banded together, borrowed money from the federal government and formed nonprofit electric companies.

As those rural areas have grown and changed, the cooperatives that powered their growth have also changed. Cooperatives are among the nation's leaders in innovative and efficient approaches to electricity delivery.

There's one thing that hasn't changed: We exist to serve our local communities, not to turn a profit for distant investors.

Main Street, not Wall Street: That's the cooperative way.

*Cultivating a  
Brighter Future  
Through  
Our Actions*



See pages 21–23 to find out how CECA benefits your community.



P.O. Box 729, Comanche, TX 76442

Operating in Brown, Callahan, Comanche, Eastland, Mills, Shackelford and Stephens counties

#### HEADQUARTERS

201 W. Wrights Ave.  
Comanche, TX 76442

#### EARLY OFFICE

1801 CR 338  
Early, TX 76801

#### EASTLAND OFFICE

1311 W. Main St.  
Eastland, TX 76448

#### OFFICE HOURS

**Comanche Office:** Monday–Friday,  
7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Early Office:** Monday, Wednesday and  
Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., closed  
from 1 to 2 p.m.

**Eastland Office:** Tuesday and Thursday,  
8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

#### General Manager

Alan Lesley

#### Board of Directors

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

#### Report an Outage

CECA crews are available 24/7 in the event of a power quality issue by calling 1-800-915-2533.

## Contact Us

#### CALL US

**1-800-915-2533** toll-free

#### FIND US ON THE WEB

[www.cecacoop.com](http://www.cecacoop.com)



[facebook.com/CECA.coop](https://facebook.com/CECA.coop)

# Operation Green Up

Come **GREEN UP**  
your act  
with us!

**CECA** is  
offering you  
an oppor-  
tunity to increase  
your energy efficiency  
and beautify your property.  
Help us make our planet a  
better place.



**Get a free Bald Cypress seedling** *(While supplies last)*

**Join CECA at one of our offices on the dates listed below:**

*Comanche Office: Friday, April 22nd, 7:30 AM-4:30PM*

*Early Office: Friday, April 22nd, 7:30 AM-1:00 PM & 2:00 PM-4:30 PM*

*Eastland Office: Thursday, April 21st, 8:00 AM-4:00 PM*



## “We plan together. We stay safe together.”

National Lineman  
Appreciation Day  
is April 11.

#thankalineman



# OPERATION ROUND-UP 2015 REPORT

## Operation Round-Up Directors

**Regina Johnson**

President

Comanche County

**Kirk Knight**

Vice President

Stephens County

**Marza Adams**

Secretary

Shackelford County

**Bud West**

Treasurer

Mills County

**Lewis Locker**

Brown County

**AS A CECA MEMBER**, you have the power to expand the Operation Round-Up fund to meet our communities' growing needs.

When you join the Operation Round-Up program, your bill is rounded up to the next dollar. The typical CECA member averages a contribution to the program of approximately \$6 per year.

The Operation Round-Up program works because there is power in numbers. A CECA member's average annual contribution isn't much, but it adds up quickly when thousands of members get involved. If every member who contributes to the Operation Round-Up fund got just one more person to join, it would easily double the amount of money available each year to help local organizations.

To opt in to the CECA Operation Round-Up program and aid your community, simply fill out the opt-in form at the bottom of this page and return with your monthly bill, or mail to CECA, P.O. Box 729, Comanche TX 76442.

For more information on the program, contact the Member Services Department at 1-800-915-2533 or [memberservices@ceca.coop](mailto:memberservices@ceca.coop).

**\$6,250 Volunteer Fire Departments**

\$250 each to 25 VFDs in  
CECA's service territory

**\$2,500 Community Rehab Project**

Donation to aid in the repair  
of 25 area homes

**\$5,750 Project Graduation**

\$250 each to 23 schools to assist with  
their graduation-night activities to keep  
students in a safe environment

**\$1,000 Good Samaritan Ministries  
of Brown County**

Sponsorship to the Empty Bowls Project,  
an event to raise funds and awareness  
for the hungry of Brown County

**\$2,000 College Scholarships**

\$1,000 each to two students to attain a  
higher education

**\$1,000 West Texas Rehab**

Sponsorship of events in Breckenridge,  
Brownwood and Eastland



## Comanche Electric Cooperative "Neighbor Helping Neighbor"

***Yes! I want to be a part of Operation Round-Up.***

**We appreciate you taking time to consider participating in Operation Round-Up. Please complete this form and return it to us.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**\$1,000 City of Ranger**

Donation to assist with the repairs of the local pool to prevent the shutdown of the town's main summer activity for the children

**\$500 American Cancer Society**

\$250 sponsorships to two groups within the CECA service territory to benefit Relay For Life projects

**\$500 May Community Center**

Donation to repair the floor of the meeting room

**\$500 Fellowship of Christian Athletes**

Sponsorship for three students to participate in all-star games

**\$500 Run for the Children**

Sponsorship to benefit Dr. Goodall's House in Stephens County

**\$500 Blanket Student Travel Group**

Donation to assist in sending ninth-through 12th-graders on an educational trip to New York City

**\$500 Early High School**

Donation to assist in sending 64 students to the Texas Future Problem Solving Competition

**\$500 Aldersgate Enrichment Center**

Sponsorship for the inaugural Clays and Praise Benefit for the associates of the home

**\$500 Comanche County Christmas**

Donation to upgrade the lighting on the square

**\$350 Caring Family Network**

Donation to assist in meeting the needs of area children and families

**\$300 Breckenridge FFA**

Donation to assist students attending the Youth Range Workshop

**\$250 Toys for Kids Christmas**

Donation to assist in purchasing gifts and food for children and families in Brown County

**\$250 Santa's Helpers of Comanche County**

Donation to assist in purchasing gifts and food for children and families in Comanche County

# Thank a Lineman April 11

**AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES DESIGNATED** the second Monday of April as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

The resolution, adopted unanimously by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Board of Directors, says this about linemen and the proper recognition of their contributions:

"Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on; Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous

conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; Whereas linemen are the first responders of the electric cooperative family, getting power back on and making things safe for all after storms and accidents; and Whereas there would be no electric cooperatives without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of linemen;

Therefore be it resolved that NRECA recognize the second Monday of April of each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day and make available to electric cooperatives, materials and support to recognize the contributions of these valuable men and women to America's Electric Cooperatives."

On April 11 this year, Comanche Electric Cooperative will honor the dedicated people who work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on. We proudly recognize all electric linemen for the services they perform around the clock in danger-

ous circumstances to keep power flowing and protect the public's safety.

Your co-op's linemen maintain 4,867 miles of line in our service territory.

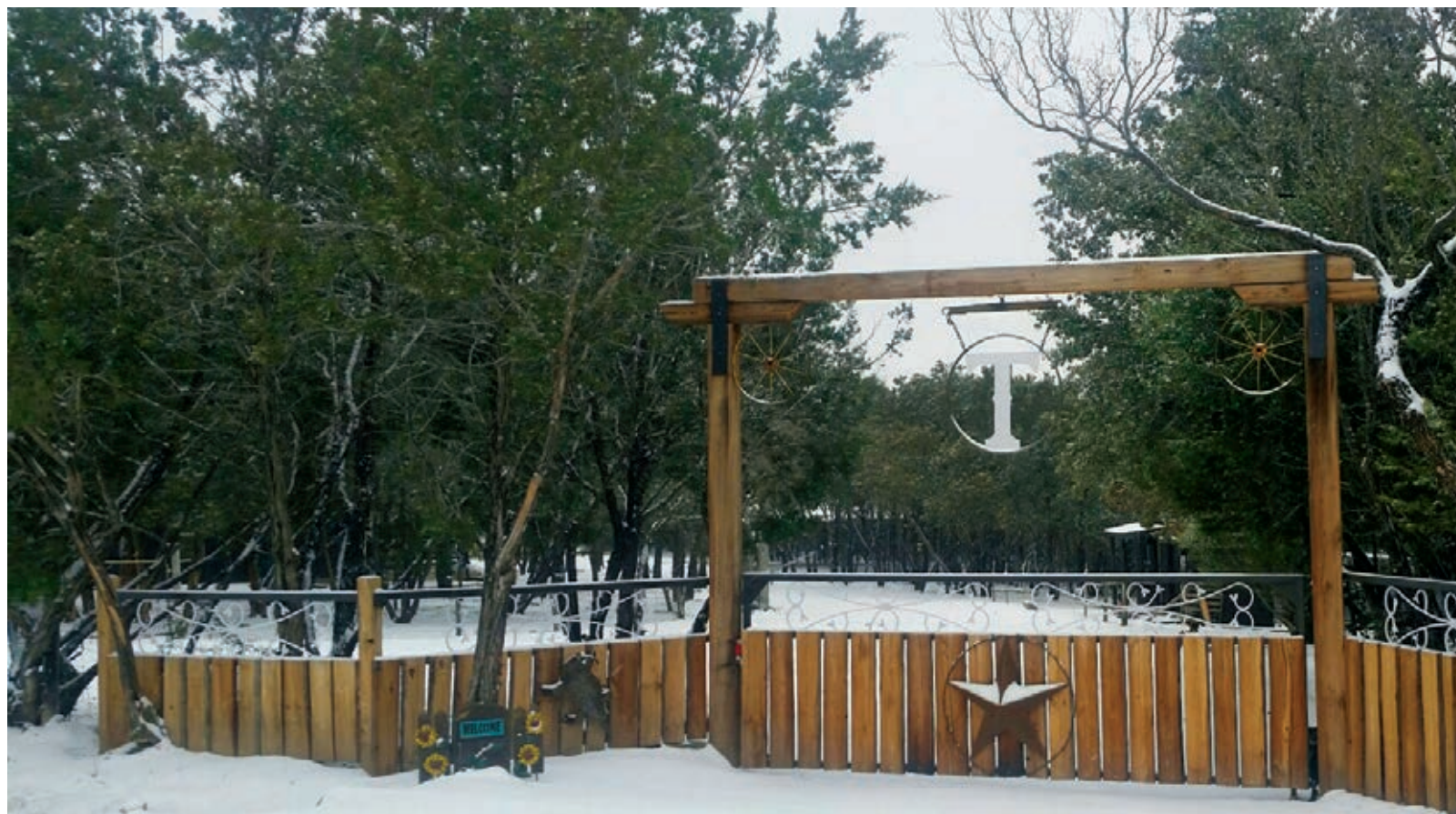
"Our lineworkers are the first responders of our electric distribution system, and they work around the clock on high-voltage lines," says Alan Lesley, CECA general manager. "Conditions can be dangerous, but they power through to ensure reliable service for our members."

We invite all our members to take a moment and thank linemen for the work they do. If you see a lineman at the grocery store or a local ballgame, shake his hand and let him know you appreciate his work. If you post on social media, use #thankalineman to show your support for the heroes who light our lives.

DAVE MAXWELL/VERNON EC







# Trees to Treasures

BY SHIRLEY DUKES

PHOTOS BY KRISTI TAYLOR

*If you have ever owned a piece of handmade furniture, you know what great value it possesses. Having had the privilege of owning some fine original pieces myself, I am well aware of their worth.*

**R**ANDY AND KRISTI TAYLOR OF COMANCHE, CECA members and owners of Bar T Wood Shop, began their business by accident. Kristi is a registered nurse, working full time in the home health industry. Randy is an area manager for Ingram Concrete, overseeing the Granbury, Cleburne, Glen Rose and Stephenville areas. With so many hours spent away from home, they certainly were not actively seeking new careers.

Like so many other parents, the Taylors devoted their time and efforts to their sons, twin boys Trent and Ty. As a rodeo family, most of their weekends were dedicated to hauling the boys—and their horses and equipment—around the state to compete. After the boys graduated high school in 2007, both attended college in Levelland on rodeo scholarships, and Randy and Kristi continued to follow their college rodeo careers.

Randy continued to rodeo once the boys were gone—but without his partners, the joy just was not there. He soon moved on from that hobby, leaving some free time for his imagination to take hold.

One of Randy's co-workers at Ingram owned a portable

sawmill and had access to some good lumber. Through that friendship, Randy returned to a previous interest in wood-working. He came home from work one day and said, "I think I'll make us a bed."

Kristi replied, "Oh, you don't know how to make a bed," to which Randy replied, "I bet I can!" And a new career was born.

"The first few years, we mainly made stuff for ourselves and our family. Randy calls us a charitable organization," Kristi laughingly says. But what started out as a hobby has since turned into a business of sorts. Working evenings and weekends, the Taylors have made and sold a plethora of pieces, ranging from small crosses to furniture to full-sized, decorative gates and fences.

About two years ago, the Taylors decided they enjoyed their new hobby enough to make a more permanent commitment by investing in their own portable sawmill, allowing them more freedom to design and create.

"We prefer not to cut down a tree," Kristi says. "So people will just call us and say, 'Hey, I've got a downed tree. Would you like it? Otherwise it's going to the burn pile.' That's what





we do. We really like to take a tree that's going to go to the burn pile and get it and cut it up."

Working the raw lumber through the sawmill is heavy work. It takes both Randy and Kristi to lift and work the wood—even occasionally requiring a little help from their boys. Once cut, the raw lumber must dry for a while, sometimes more than a year.

"We have wood scattered all over the place, trying to dry," Kristi says. "So that's challenging in itself because of storage. And then, a pecan tree is not a pecan tree, is not a pecan tree. There are all different species of all kinds of trees. So if you have two different pecan trees and you run out of wood, you can't necessarily go get the other stocker wood that was pecan because they don't match. So that itself is challenging in trying to keep it stored. That's probably our biggest issue right now."

**From top: Randy prepares to unload a new shipment of wood rescued from a landowner's burn pile.**

**Although they don't always know what to expect when they cut into a piece of wood, this tree produced a beautiful piece of wood that was used for a kitchen table.**

**Randy and Kristi's cat Tigger enjoys the bed that started it all.**

**Randy and Kristi Taylor sit at their red oak kitchen table, which was custom-made in the Bar T woodshop. The wood for this piece came from Arkansas, and the table and chairs were built a little taller than typical to accommodate their long-legged sons.**





Bar T creates many beautiful crosses.

As far as wood types, there is no shortage of choices in the Bar T stock supply. What they prefer to work with is cedar, as it is easy to work with, dries more quickly and does not bow and warp as badly as other woods. The color of cedar wood is always consistent, allowing them the freedom to build pieces out of multiple trees and have them match.

As a rule, most people either love or hate cedar. It is rustic wood, and those who prefer a more elegant piece of furniture most likely will not appreciate its uniqueness. However, in this part of the world, rustic is a popular style, lending Bar T the opportunity to be creative with cedar and creating some amazing pieces.

Pecan and mesquite are also plentiful in this area of Texas, although they are both difficult woods to work. Kristi says mesquite is a gorgeous wood and is stylish, and they have made quite a few nice pieces out of it. In addition to milling raw wood for their furniture pieces, they also mill large trees or utility poles for barns and fences.

Recently, the Bar T duo came across a unique find: big, square logs that look much like something you would use to build a log cabin. Oil companies drill holes in them, bolt them together and use them as platforms across low-water crossings. Once the company is done in that particular area, they no longer have any use for the platforms, allowing Bar T the ability to procure some of them. Milling those pieces has been exciting, as they cannot tell what type of wood they are until they cut into them. Even then, there are times when it is impossible for them to determine what type of wood they have so painstakingly milled.

When contracting custom pieces for customers, the Taylors prefer to see a photo to assist them in understanding the desired style. Once they understand the customer's style preference, they are able to build and customize the piece to fit the customer's needs.

Randy's mother, Rose Taylor, is another artist in the family. In addition to painting, she is a leatherworker and does a beautiful job of refinishing used pieces. This partnership has led the trio in several directions that were not planned but came about as a result of active imaginations and the occasional need.

"We've done some small pieces like jewelry boxes, but we really don't enjoy little pieces. We like big," Kristi says. Although they do not like to do small pieces, they do produce a substantial supply of gorgeous crosses. Randy and Kristi build the crosses, and Rose does most of the painting, leatherwork and additional detail work. Rose also is the mastermind behind the refurbishing of vintage and antique pieces picked up at yard sales and flea markets.

The smaller pieces, such as the crosses and jewelry boxes, can be seen at Dee Dee's Place at 800 W. Central Ave. in Comanche. The larger pieces will not fit in the booth at Dee Dee's Place, but Randy and Kristi do not mind that so much, as they prefer to design larger pieces to their customers' specifications.

There is no shortage of imagination in the Taylor family, which is evident in the unique way they have picked up odd items from flea markets and inserted them into their custom furniture pieces. For instance, an old car hood found in Canton now forms the doors of an entertainment center; a wrought-iron fencepost used with a cedar post now make up a headboard; a fireplace utensil stand serves as the base for an end table.

The craft is not all about the money for the Taylors. They are deeply ingrained in their community, and their love for the local area and the members of the community is evident in their volunteer work. In addition to donating items for community events and fundraisers for those with medical bills, they stay involved with local clubs and organizations. Kristi has recently completed her most recent term on the Comanche Chamber of Commerce board, and she and Randy are involved with the Revitalize Comanche group. They are also deeply involved with the local country club and golf course. Randy is on the board, and Kristi is on the event committee.

Why do they do it? Because they just enjoy it, they concur.

Randy and Kristi also expressed their love for nature and being outside, and staying busy. “It’s after hours and weekends, but we’ve enjoyed it,” Kristi says. “We still enjoy spending time together, which is kind of an unusual thing in this day and age, but that’s where we get to go spend our time, is in the woodshop. It’s really a stress-breaker for me. That’s where I go. Randy, maybe so, maybe not!”

For more photos and to contact Bar T, visit their Facebook page at [facebook.com/kristi.taylor.5](https://facebook.com/kristi.taylor.5) or call (325) 356-5033.

**Clockwise from top: This pine table was custom-built to fit a small dining area for a client in Stephenville.**

**A vintage croquet set provides the backrest for this unique bench that now resides on the front porch of a Comanche home.**

**Refurbished vintage furniture, along with some smaller hand-made pieces, can be found in Bar T’s booth at Dee Dee’s Place in Comanche.**

**Firearm-concealing coffee tables made of Texas cedar are lockable and can be customized for size and number of firearms.**

**An entertainment center made from mesquite features an old car hood found in Canton. This piece now lives in Bluffdale.**

