



Strengthening Our Roots



MESSAGE FROM
GENERAL MANAGER
ALAN LESLEY

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR when most of us sit back to reflect on the past 12 months and make resolutions as to how we can improve ourselves or our lives in the months to come. Maybe you make resolutions, and maybe you

don't. As for me, I've found that making a New Year's resolution is not about perfection; it's more about the effort that you put in for a positive change—a change to make things better in your life. Now, you might get to the end of another year and realize you didn't quite live up to your goal for that year; however, as long as you moved the needle forward, you can be proud that you made a positive change!

As for Comanche Electric Cooperative, we're giving ourselves more of a challenge than a resolution for 2017: to continue to strengthen and improve our core objectives. Our goal has always been, and will continue to be, to support, strengthen and provide a better world for the members and communities we serve. Yet there's always room for improvement, so we're going to be evaluating how we conduct business with our members and strive to move that needle forward.

Whether it be improving our prompt member-friendly service, proactively finding and fixing those nagging blinking lights, enhancing communications in times of power outages, or refining any of the many other ways in which Comanche Electric Cooperative interacts with you, our goal for 2017 is the same. If it can be improved, then we are going to make an effort to see that it gets done.

By being engaged in the communities that we serve, we fulfill our mission to be more than just an electric utility: We

are a partner. We strive to provide programs that support a higher quality of life for those living in our service territory.

Through our sponsorship of the annual Government-in-Action Youth Tour, we continue to help a new generation of students to see the importance of being politically involved. We continue to look for ways to reach out to our area youths to enhance longstanding programs, such as our student scholarships, youth leadership programs and other involvement with local schools.

Through donations from our Operation Round Up program, we will continue to send support to our volunteer fire departments and our school systems, as well as to support various charities and organizations. We, of course, will continue to support our membership through Co-op Connections, Air Evac membership and a variety of bill-payment options designed to make that monthly bill just a little bit easier to manage.

CECA came into being 79 years ago when a group of local individuals came together to create a better life for their families. Over those 79 years, CECA has worked diligently to create a better life for you, your families and the communities in which you live. Your cooperative has evolved into what we are today: a group of dedicated employees focused on making life in our little part of the world a bit more enjoyable.

We will continue in the coming months to keep you updated on what is going on within the framework of your cooperative. As our industry evolves, we'll always represent the interests of our members and look for ways to provide dependable power to you at a cost that's reasonable.

It's our hope that during the next 12 months, you will see the difference we've made somewhere in your community and that, through this difference, you will see we're strengthening not only the roots of the cooperative but also our members' lives.

CECA Vehicle To Be Auctioned

COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HAS A RETIRED VEHICLE that will be auctioned through a closed-bid process. This vehicle has a few battle scars and is well broken-in, as you would expect from a work vehicle.

You may come by the office at 201 W. Wrights Ave. in Comanche to inspect it in person.

Sealed bids can be mailed to CECA, Attn: Sealed Vehicle Bid, P.O. Box 729, Comanche, TX 76442, or dropped off in person at the office in Comanche.

In all correspondence, please include a phone number where you can be reached. Questions can be directed to Monty Cunningham at 1-800-915-2533. The deadline to submit bids is noon, January 17. The bid winner will be notified January 18.

CECA reserves the right to reject any or all bids at the discretion of the board.

2007 Chevrolet Tahoe; 2WD; leather seats; power adjustable pedals; remote start; rear parking assist; luggage rack; tri-zone AC; AM/FM stereo with 6-disc CD changer; mileage: 192,238*; minimum bid: \$5,000

*Mileage current as of November 8, 2016, but is subject to change, as the vehicle could still be used.



Statement of Nondiscrimination

COMANCHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the Rural Utilities Service, an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended; and the rules and regulations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which provide that no person in the United States on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability shall be excluded from participation in, admission or access to, denied the benefits of or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any of this organization's programs or activities.

The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is the human resources manager. Any individual or specific class of individuals who feels that this organization has subjected them to discrimination, may obtain further information about the statutes and regulations listed above from and/or file a written complaint. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, or call 1-800-795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a civil rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call 1-866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410, by fax at (202) 690-7442 or by email at program.intake@usda.gov.



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.–4:30 p.m.

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

Eastland Office: Tuesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.–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



facebook.com/CECA.coop



Strengthening Their Roots Through Community Action and Leadership

WHEN LOCAL SCHOOLS ARE INVITED to present their brightest leaders, you know the room will be filled with outstanding young people. Such was the case when CECA sent out applications for the 2016–17 CECA Student Leadership Conference. Ten area schools answered the call, sending 86 students to the one-day conference.

During the conference, students worked through four intense leadership activities. The first activity encouraged group participation and coordination as each group assembled 10 bicycles. The bikes were later presented to three organizations for distribution to local children through their Christmas programs.

The next two activities required deep thinking and compromise as the students had to decide, as groups, how to solve two distinctively different problems. The purpose of the activities was to teach the students to work as a team, and that sometimes compromise and tough decisions must be made.

At the close of the day, students were regrouped into their respective schools and given the task of choosing an action program within their school or community, and creating a detailed plan as to how that program could be carried out. The plans adopted by each school were:

Goldthwaite: A tutoring and mentoring program for younger students. A volunteer group would meet with the younger chil-

dren to assist them with homework, show animals and sports, and hang out with the younger students.

Breckenridge: A voluntary student sign-up to support existing community and charity organizations and increase Christmas spirit.

Cross Plains: A visual representation of the school in the community through a Christmas celebration. The celebration would include a Christmas parade, lighting and decorating the school, as well as other activities to bring the community together.

Zephyr: A mentoring program for kids of all ages. Issues addressed would include peer pressure, constant cellphone use, and how to make better choices and change undesirable habits with alternative activities. Through the program, the students and the community would work together to build each other up.

Comanche: A field day for elementary students as an outlet for the younger students, while at the same time raising funds for a chosen cause. The ultimate plan is for this to evolve into an annual field day where the littles get to have a morning of fun with their “big Indians.”

Bangs: Education and mentorship of younger students through “Story Sleigh,” a reading-in-costume program.

Early: A recycling program.



- 1: Representatives from Brown, Comanche and Eastland counties are presented bicycles to be distributed within their communities through various charitable organizations.
- 2: Students work together through a series of challenges to construct a bicycle.
- 3: After construction, each team's bike was inspected by a safety director, then ridden from the back of the room to the front.
- 4: Students work together to solve issues presented to them in two activities.
- 5 and 6: One or more students from each group present their group's decision after each activity.



Rising Star: A Christmas spirit program. Students would decorate the school for the holidays and encourage Main Street businesses to participate by decorating their establishments. They would also solicit donations to purchase "holiday poles" for Main Street.

Gorman: A cleanup and repair effort to revitalize their

decaying park area.

Being a part of these young people's lives as they develop into adulthood is an honor and a privilege. CECA is proud of the effort these students put into each of these projects, and we look forward to visiting with each group as they bring their school's project to fruition.

Betty Sue Bradley Hayes: From Peanuts to New York City

BY SHIRLEY DUKES



Betty Sue Bradley was only 16 in 1950, and she had no idea that her entire world was about to take a dramatic turn. The daughter of a peanut farmer from Dublin, Texas, Betty led a sheltered life and had witnessed little of the world beyond the peanut patch.

How it all began

Betty Sue Bradley was raised on a peanut farm in Dublin and was the youngest daughter of Scott and Lou Bradley. As many in this part of the country can attest, life on a farm in the '50s could be challenging. Sometimes, if you were lucky, you just happened to be in the right place at the right time.

As fate would have it, Betty was in the same graduating class as Carolyn Colborn, daughter of Everett Colborn, owner of Lightning C Ranch and World Championship Rodeo Company. Colborn shared ownership of the rodeo company with the famed Gene Autry, with whom Betty would eventually work. As Betty and Carolyn, along with the rest of their graduating class, sat in their Sunday evening baccalaureate service, Colborn leaned across to his wife Ava and asked, "Who is that blond-headed girl, and can she ride a horse?" Colborn found out Betty could indeed ride, and that is where her story begins.

Colborn approached Betty and offered her a coveted spot as one of his sponsor girls. "I got into that simply because I was at the right place at the right time," Betty said. "I was a sponsor girl. That doesn't give much of a description of what it was, but it was strictly for publicity."

There were five sponsor girls chosen in 1950: Betty and friend Mary Ann Mayfield from Dublin; Merna McMillan from Shandon, California; Torrie Ahern from Salt Lake City, Utah; and Beverly Jeanne Owen from Portland, Oregon.

The gig

Preparation for a trip of this magnitude was not a simple process in 1950.

"My dad was a peanut farmer, and we didn't have much money," Betty said. "So to get clothes to wear to the ordeal WAS an ordeal. I had to borrow money for mother and daddy to be able to buy stuff. So I borrowed \$300 from Clarence Leatherwood there in Dublin ... and then I came home with enough money to pay him back."

Betty purchased and carried two hats, two pairs of boots and 10 pairs of pants. Her mother sewed 20 shirts and two suede leather-fringed jackets on a Singer treadle sewing machine. With a new set of clothes on her back and the remainder packed in a steamer trunk, Betty was set to go.

On an early September morning, Betty and Mary Ann boarded the Rodeo Train in Dublin to begin the first leg of their journey. Betty would celebrate her 17th birthday while in New York "with a blistered roof of my mouth, like a country kid would be," Betty said.

Betty's stint as a sponsor girl lasted six weeks, four of which were spent in New York, with the other two spent in Boston. She was paid a salary of \$100 per week, with approximately \$26 per week going to pay her hotel bill. Meals, when they had time for them, were usually paid for by one of the sponsors they represented.

In addition to representing the company in a series of ads and appearances, the girls stayed busy with a multitude of supplementary activities. They rode in Grand Entries; traveled along the trail ridden by Paul Revere on his famous midnight ride; attended a 5-mile parade from Madison Square Garden to Bellevue Hospital; and met Eddie Arcaro, the famous American Thoroughbred Horse Racing Hall of Fame jockey.

Each night during the rodeo, a barrel race would be held for the sponsor girls, complete with prize money. Betty placed in 28 of those races, with nine being first-place finishes. "They provided the horses and saddles. We would change and ride different horses every night. When we were in Boston, they had one big black horse that they were using, and I was lucky enough to get him, and I won the barrel race in Boston and got a silver belt buckle for my efforts." The buckle now belongs to Betty's youngest granddaughter, the avid horse lover of the family.



Two pin-up girls from the West pin down a range from the East. The corraling move of Betty Sue Bradley of Texas and Merna McMillan of California officially launches the opening of the rodeo at Madison Square Garden and the start of the Old Stove Round-Up by the Brooklyn Union Gas Company.

Betty fondly recalled her most enjoyable evening during the rodeo. Autry had just come out with his new song *Ghost Riders in the Sky*. Included in the rodeo company's stock was a herd of longhorn cattle and two white horses that Colborn kept on hand for parades. Of the five sponsor girls, Betty and Merna were chosen to represent the company in an exciting display of Autry's new song. Sitting atop the majestic white horses, Betty and Merna, wearing iridescent shirts and aided by a group of cowboys, herded the longhorns, with hooves and horns also painted in iridescent paint, around the arena while Autry sang a booming rendition of his new song. "That was pretty exciting!" Betty said.

Life after sponsor girls

Two other honors were bestowed upon Betty as a direct result of being a sponsor girl: She was selected as Dublin Rodeo Queen for two years and invited to be a guest rider at the Houston Fat Stock Show, as well as the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo. "Had it not been for the trip to New York, that wouldn't have materialized," Betty said.

After returning home, Betty and sister Peggy got jobs at the Dublin sewing plant making belt loops. Peggy inherited



Betty, center, next to Gene Autry

her mother's amazing talent for sewing. Betty, not so much. When a job in the business office opened up, Betty was quickly moved off the floor. It was here that she came to know a group of women from Gustine.

One of the women had a nephew, Russell Hayes, who was 25 and unmarried. Deciding that he had been single long enough, this sweet aunt set up a blind date for Russell and

Winners, sponsors and officials at Madison Square Garden, 1950, from left: Jim Shoulders, Tulsa, Oklahoma, bareback bronc riding; Torrie Ahern Connelly, Salt Lake City, Utah; Jim Little, Canon City, Colorado, saddle bronc riding; Virginia Bagial, Cimarron Ranch, Putnam Valley, New York; Jim Hailey, Chandler, Arizona, steer wrestling; Merna McMillan, Shandon, California; Everett Colborn, managing director, Dublin, Texas; General John R. Kilpatrick, president, Madison Square Garden; Gene Autry; Betty Sue Bradley, Dublin, Texas; Walton Pogue, Rankin, Texas, calf roping; Bob Maynard, North Hollywood, California, bull riding; Beverly Jeanne Owen, Portland, Oregon; Freckles Brown, Lawton, Oklahoma, wild horse race





Sponsor girls, cowboy wives and others in front of Bellevue Hospital after a 5-mile parade from Madison Square Gardens

Betty. That was in August 1953, and the two were married by January 1954.

They had two children: Russell Scott Hayes, known by his friends as Scotty, and Sandra Lou Hayes, known as Sandy. Russell passed away in 1994, and Betty still resides at the home place in Gustine. Scotty married Pam Shockley, and they continue to live in Gustine, where he owns and operates a dairy. Sandy married Roy Hitt and works at Arlington Independent School District. The couple have two children: Rachel, a senior at Tarleton State University, and Jessi, who lives in Fort Worth and is employed by Tarrant County College.

Glenn McCarthy, well-known oil figure from Houston, treated the girls to a trip to the Latin Quarter, a well-known nightclub in New York City. "That was a risqué place, to say the least," Betty Sue Bradley said. "I was just 16, and I had never imagined such as the like. Of course, we didn't have TV then, so you didn't know that existed." McCarthy called the camera girl over and said, "Take her picture. I've never seen such an innocent look before." Pictured from left are: Betty, sponsor Ms. Edwards and Merna McMillan.



Above: Betty Sue Bradley, second from the right, with Eddie Arcaro, famous jockey, at Bellevue Race Track

Below: The Bradley family: top, from left: Dortha, Billy and Peggy; and bottom, from left: Jerry, Scott, Dean, Lou and Betty

