



Notice of CECA 2026 District Meeting

Tuesday, July 21, 2026 • 6 p.m.

CECA Headquarters

349 Industrial Blvd., Comanche

To: All Members in District 2

State Highway 36 east from Comanche, thence south and west to State Highway 36

This meeting is for the purpose of nominating candidates for director of District 2.

Please refer to the official bylaws printed herein for requirements and information concerning election of directors.

This meeting also will be open for discussion of any affairs of the cooperative.

A \$15 credit on electric service will be given to each attending member (family) from District 2.

Refreshments will be served, and prizes will be given away during the meeting.

Accessible facilities will be provided upon request.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



To: All Members in District 2
From: Alan Lesley, General Manager
Subject: Nomination of Directors

The CECA Board of Directors and I would like to personally invite you to attend your District 2 meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to nominate candidates for director who will be placed on the ballot for the annual meeting of the membership in October, when they'll be voted on by the whole membership.

Additionally, we will review various issues in the electric industry that most affect our members.

The meeting will be open for discussion of any question or suggestion you have concerning your cooperative.

Who are our owners? Our members. That means that you, as members, have a voice in your cooperative. This meeting is a demonstration of the openness and transparency of your cooperative, and we hope you will take the time to attend.

One of the most important advantages cooperative members have is being able to participate in the nomination and selection of directors of their cooperative. Other utilities' boards of directors are selected by shareholders, whose say is determined by the amount of shares they own; they're most interested in the rate of return on their investment. Your cooperative is nonprofit. Because your directors are members themselves, their goal is quality service at a reasonable price.

Please complete the registration card below and bring it to the district meeting. This card is your entry for the prize drawings.



Registration Card for District 2 Meeting

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NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

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ARTICLE III • DIRECTORS

SECTION 3.2. QUALIFICATIONS AND TENURE

(a) To be eligible to become or remain as Director or to hold any position of trust in the Cooperative, a Member must:

- (1) be a bona fide resident in the area served by the Cooperative,
- (2) be receiving electric service from the Cooperative at their primary residence,
- (3) be a citizen, or legal resident, of the United States,
- (4) not, within the past ten (10) years, have been convicted of a felony nor of any crime involving moral turpitude,
- (5) not be employed nor have a material financial interest in a competing enterprise, or in a business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative,
- (6) not be, or have been, an employee of, nor received compensation from, the Cooperative for the longer term of:
 - (a) 5 years prior to the election, or
 - (b) for so long as the individual's former Cooperative supervisor remains employed by the Cooperative.

SECTION 3.3 DISTRICTS PLAN.

DISTRICTS DESCRIBED. The territory served or to be served by the Cooperative shall be divided into seven (7) Districts, and each District shall be represented by one (1) Director who is a resident of that District. Said seven (7) Districts shall be from time to time reviewed and constituted by the Board of Directors, with notice of the district descriptions provided to the Members in advance of the annual director nomination process.

Not less than seventy (70) nor more than ninety (90) days before the annual meeting of the Members in each year for the election of Directors, the board of Directors shall review the composition of the several Districts and if it should be found that inequalities in representation have developed which can be corrected by a re-delineation of Districts or by the addition of Districts, the board of Directors shall reconstitute the Districts.

DIRECTOR TERMS. A Director's term begins: 1) after the individual consents to being elected or appointed as a Director; and 2) at the beginning of the first Board Meeting held after the Director is elected or appointed. A Director's term ends after: 1) a successor Director consents to being elected or appointed as a Director; and 2) at the beginning of the first Board Meeting held after a successor Director is elected or appointed. Directors' terms shall be three (3) years. Directors shall be elected on a staggered-term basis.

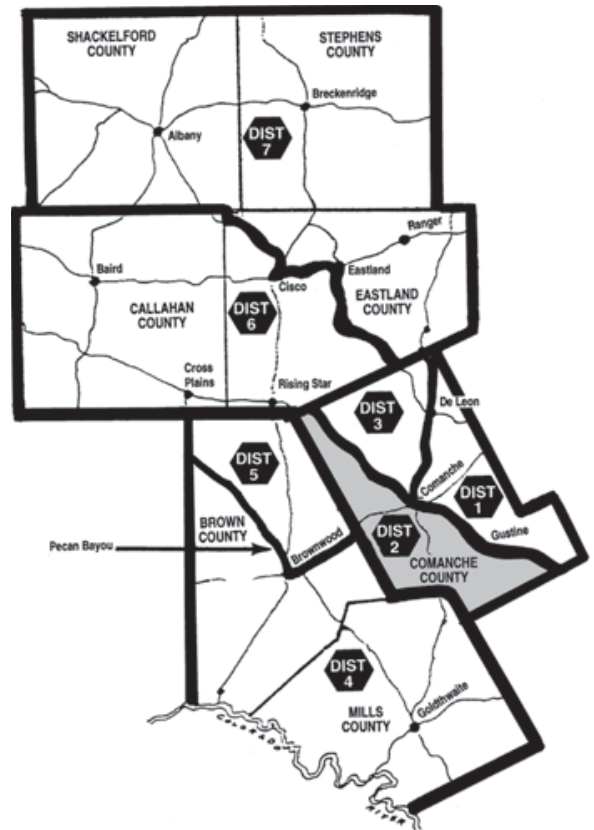
DIRECTOR RESIGNATION. A Director may resign at any time. To resign, a Director must sign and deliver a written notice of resignation to the Board, President, or Secretary. Except as a later date is otherwise provided in a written notice of resignation, a Director's resignation is effective when the Board, President, or Secretary receives the written notice of resignation. If a Director's resignation is effective at a later date and if the successor Director does not take office until the effective date of the Director's resignation, then the pending Director vacancy may be filled before the effective date of the Director's resignation.

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The purpose of the District meetings shall be to nominate, by vote of those Members present in person, no more than two candidates for each vacancy occurring on the Board of Directors. Notice of each District meeting of Members shall be given by the Secretary for such length of time and in such manner as the Board of Directors may direct provided that notice stating the place, day and hour and the purpose of such meeting, shall be given by mail, publication, or electronically not less than ten (10) days prior to such District Meeting. Such District Meetings however, shall be open for discussion of any other matters pertaining to the business of the Cooperative, regardless of whether or not such matters were listed in the notice of the meeting, and recommendations with respect thereto may be submitted to the Board of Directors.

The first order of business at each District Meeting shall be the selection of a Chairman, who shall appoint a Secretary to act for the

CECA Board District Boundaries



duration of the meeting. Fifteen (15) of the Members residing in the District present at such duly called District Meeting shall constitute a quorum, but in the event a quorum is not present at such meeting, the Director then serving such District shall be the official nominee for such District. There shall be no nominations from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

Director Candidates, who have been nominated shall be required to execute an appropriate form to be made available to election judges attesting that the candidate is qualified under these Bylaws to be elected and serve as a Director of the Cooperative.

Voting shall be in person only. Mail-in ballot and proxy voting shall not be permitted at any District Meeting. Each Member present may vote for one nominee as above provided for such District. The two candidates for each place on the Board of Directors receiving the highest number of votes shall be the official nominees of the District. The minutes of such District meeting shall set forth, among other matters the name of each person nominated at the meeting and the number of votes received by each and shall certify the two nominees receiving the highest number of votes as the official nominees of the District for Director. A certified copy of the minutes, signed by the Secretary and the Chairman of the District Meeting, shall be delivered to the Secretary of the Cooperative within five (5) days after such District Meeting.

The Secretary of the Cooperative shall prepare and post at the principal office of the Cooperative at least fifteen (15) days before the meeting of Members for the election of Directors, a list of nominations for Directors as shown by said certified copies of minutes of said District Meetings. The secretary shall mail with the notice of the meeting of the Members for election of Directors, or separately, but at least ten days prior to the meeting, a statement of the number of Directors to be elected and showing separately the nominations made by the respective Districts.

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The Power of Giving Back

As a member-owner of an electric co-op, you have a lot of power. You can vote for your board of directors. You can make your opinions heard at member meetings because you are an owner. That's a huge advantage over the big, corporate power companies. Their customers have no say in the management of the company, no vote for the board of directors and no stake in the power company's future. That's why co-ops work so well throughout America: Because when people want power, we deliver.

We Get Our Power From You—Our Member-Owners



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Notice of CECA 2026 District Meeting

Thursday, July 23, 2026 • 6 p.m.

Mullin First Baptist Church, 303 N. 6th St., Mullin

To: All Members in District 4

Mills County, plus the portion of Brown County south of U.S. Highway 67 and including the portion of Brown County west or south of Pecan Bayou

This meeting is for the purpose of nominating candidates for director of District 4.

Please refer to the official bylaws printed herein for requirements and information concerning election of directors.

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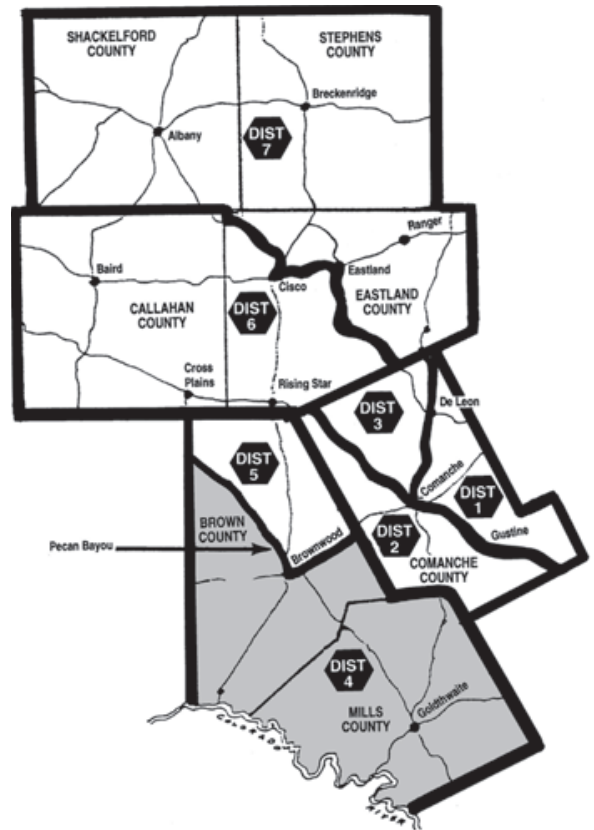
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We Get Our Power From You—Our Member-Owners



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

DISASTER CITY
TO THE RESCUE

DON'T SKIMP
ON SHRIMP

THE THRILL OF
PAINTED ROCKS

Texas Coop Power

FOR CECA MEMBERS

JULY 2026

Down the Rabbit Hole

Jeffie Brewer's
sculptures steal glances
from their many admirers





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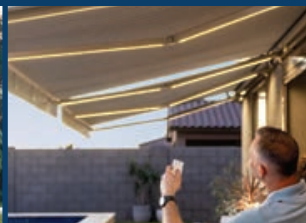
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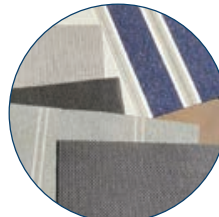
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the USA**



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professional
installation**



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choices by
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*Offer valid on SPF brand motorized awnings and screens only. Offer includes installation, sales tax, shipping, and handling. Excludes prior purchases and cannot be combined with other offers or discounts. This offer supersedes any prior offers or advertisements. Free LED Lights offered on motorized awnings only.

July 2026



10

06 A Big Leap From Doodles

Colorful, whimsical animal sculptures across Texas escape from Jeffie Brewer's workshop.

Story and photos by Anna Mazurek

Crash Course

In this town—population zero—first responders from across the globe hone lifesaving skills.

By Bob McCullough

04

Currents

The latest buzz

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Footnotes in Texas History

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By Vianney Rodriguez

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By Chet Garner

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Focus on Texas

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Observations

Heart of Stone
By Jobeth Pilcher

ON THE COVER

Jeffie Brewer found success after getting "dipped into the art world and wrung out."
Photo by Anna Mazurek

ABOVE

Disaster City offers a variety of large-scale disaster simulations that prepare first responders for the real thing.
Courtesy Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service

Patriots in Texas



BAILEY ANDERSON WAS a young man when he fought in the American Revolution as a private with troops from South Carolina. He was in his 80s when he fought in the Texas Revolution. When he died in 1840, he was buried in Harrison County, in East Texas.

Anderson is one of 69 veterans of the American Revolution confirmed to be buried in Texas. Clovis H. Brakebill wrote about most of them in an ambitiously researched book published in 1998. You can find the full list and the book at the Texas Sons of the American Revolution website.



TCP Contests and More

\$500 RECIPE CONTEST

Holiday Traditions

FOCUS ON TEXAS PHOTOS

Ride the Rails

WIN OPAL LEE BOOKS

Enter online to win two signed illustrated children's books about Opal Lee's life.



ENTER
ONLINE



Simple Dimples

A New York woman applied for a patent in 1921 for a spring-loaded device that pressed rubber tips into users' cheeks to create faux dimples. Something to think about **July 9, National Dimples Day**.

FINISH THIS SENTENCE

Need a hobby? Learn to ...

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

Here are some responses to our May prompt: **Moms are ...**

Doing a million little things no one sees and all the big things everyone feels.

HILARY GRAHAMANN
FAYETTE EC
FLATONIA

The only human being who can open a car door while carrying a child, a bag of groceries and a purse and be talking on her cell at the same time.

BJ MAYO
CONCHO VALLEY EC
MILES

The thread that holds everything together.

CLADY PAUL PAGE
JASPER-NEWTON EC
KIRBYVILLE

The ones you still reach for without thinking.

JAMES VOYLES
CHEROKEE COUNTY EC
TYLER

Visit our website to see more responses.

MAY 2026 Wet Texas

“What excellent photos by Erich Schlegel. It was a delight to enjoy the vistas of the western part of our state and share its beauty.”

MARTHA EVERMAN JONES
VICTORIA EC
VICTORIA



ERICH SCHLEGEL

Hooked These Readers

There was perfect timing with the photo of Blue Hole (above) capturing a large catfish resting on a ledge [*Wet Texas*, May 2026].

Kathy Smith
Trinity Valley EC
Kaufman

There appears to be a large flathead catfish swimming. As an avid fisherman, this caught my attention.

Drew Douglas
Trinity Valley EC
Athens

Finding Fossils

I have all my life had fun searching for arrowheads and fossils in Texas [*He Kept Digging*, May 2026].

Glenn Snyder
Fannin EC
Blue Ridge



COURTESY KENNETH GARRETT

We Wuz Informed

The winner of your *My favorite Texas saying* ... Finish This Sentence feature was a bit too cleaned up from the original [May 2026]. I can still, after 80-some years, hear my father saying, “The sun has riz, the sun has set, and we ain’t left Texas yet.”

Jim Evans
Victoria EC
Schertz

A Red Flag?

There is a picture of a lady refilling her hummingbird feeders with red-colored water [*Fast and Curious*, April 2026]. I have always been told to never use red dye in the water.

Deborah Earnest
Sam Houston EC
Dayton

EDITOR’S NOTE: Author Sheryl Smith-Rodgers explains, “It’s highly recommended that you don’t use red dye. The Browns say they add only a drop or two to each gallon of sugar water mixture, and that’s so they can see the water levels in their feeders.”

TCP WRITE TO US
letters@TexasCoopPower.com

Editor, Texas Co-op Power
1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor
Austin, TX 78701

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

Texas Co-op Power

TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice Chair Cameron Smallwood, Burleson
Secretary-Treasurer Jim Coleman, Edna
Board Members Matt Bentke, Bastrop
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PRESIDENT/CEO Mike Williams, Austin

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Texas Electric Cooperatives
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



A BIG

D



LEAP FROM

OODLES

Colorful, whimsical animal sculptures across Texas escape from Jeffie Brewer's workshop

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ANNA MAZUREK

Sometimes success looks like a 10-foot-tall teal bunny. That was the case for Jeffie Brewer: “You struggle as an artist for a long time to get a footing and get a break, and then you get the break.”

His break was that bunny design.

The whimsical, minimalist metalwork changed the course of his career—and ultimately his life—nearly 20 years ago. And so today, a version of the bunny stands guard outside Brewer's studio on the outskirts of Nacogdoches, where the artist's creations are dreamed up, brought to life and shipped all over the world with the help of a small team.

Decades before any of that, Brewer's path to finding his artistic voice took a long and winding path that began in his father's junkyard in Palestine. “I had always been the kid who drew and made stuff,” he says.

But after a failed attempt at “making it big”—maybe as a comedian—in Los Angeles at 18, he moved back home and studied at a few different colleges before earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Sam Houston State University, where a final-semester class sparked his interest in sculpture.

He completed two master's degrees in art at Stephen F. Austin State University while searching for his artistic voice. After graduation, Brewer stayed in Nacogdoches to teach at his alma mater in the late 1990s. He taught a variety of courses, including art appreciation, painting and 3D design.

His artistic style bounced “all over the place,” he says, including painting, drawing and using a plasma cutter to cut shapes out of steel.

Jeffie Brewer in his Nacogdoches studio with his colorful critters—all descendants of an oversized teal bunny he sculpted 20 years ago.



"The real shift happened when I stopped making art for other people and just made what interested me."

"At my core, I'm a redneck kid who got dipped into the art world and wrung out," he says. "The real shift happened when I stopped making art for other people and just made what interested me."

In 2004, he raised his nephew for a year while the child's parents were stationed overseas in the military.

"His parents were both in Afghanistan and Iraq. Having this kid around changed my philosophy of how I made and worked in art," Brewer says. "I made a little bit more of a jump toward figurative, representational sorts of things."

Birds were a common theme during this period, but he later started doodling bunnies while working at his wife's advertising agency.

When Brewer returned to working in steel after a two-year hiatus, the first thing he made was a bird, inspired by his drawings, to put in the arboretum beside his office in the SFA art department. It was stolen a week later, inspiring Brewer to make a new sculpture that was "too big to steal." His next design—that giant 3D bunny—was inspired by his mindless doodling.

"The bird had been just a cut-plate steel piece, but with the bunny, I saw a chance to try something different, something with more dimension and presence," Brewer says.

The bunny was an instant hit—a "eureka moment" for him. "I got to see how people interacted with it, and it revolutionized the way that I thought about art," says Brewer, who wants people of all ages to walk away from his work feeling something.

On a whim, Brewer entered the bunny in a South Carolina public art show. He won, and that got him mentioned in *The New York Times*. The bunny made an appearance in New Orleans, putting him on the radar of the world-renowned Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas, which included his work in a later show.

"After that, it's been chaos," Brewer says. He kept his foot on the gas, leading to increased exposure, commissions and new animal designs, including armadillos, giraffes, cats and crocodiles.

He made the leap to full-time artist in 2019 and has a team of four full-time assistants, including two SFA grads. At any

OPPOSITE Brewer grinds the edges of a steel sculpture at his rural workshop across from a cow pasture.

BELOW Larger pieces, like the robot along Brewer's driveway, are usually made from steel for durability. He uses aluminum for the smaller ones.

given time, his team is working on four to eight projects—among them an 8-foot-tall purple kitty or an 8-foot hot pink wiener dog. His three real dogs, Olive, Odie and Vinnie, are always on hand to provide emotional support.

Brewer's work is evenly split between commercial and university clients, galleries (his work is in a dozen across the country), and personal commissions from

individuals. His large pieces sell for tens of thousands of dollars, and smaller pieces available on his website go for about \$200.

In 2024, Brewer and his wife, Angie, self-published a colorful soft-cover photo book, *Joy Machine*, that showcases his sculptures.

Every piece is made at his rural workshop across from a cow pasture. A rusted steel gate with the silhouette of five of his famous bunny designs leads to a tree-lined driveway, a sculpture trail really, with an 8-foot purple robot and other artwork scattered in the nearby woods.

One of his most notable permanent public works in Texas is the 12-foot-tall purple bull that stands in front of a water tower on State Highway 46 in Boerne. Others include 58 sculptures at the Bark Yard dog park in Allen—where his 30-foot dog collar is used as a shade structure—and the yellow armadillo outside Covenant Children's Hospital in Lubbock.

"Lubbock loves Jeffie," says Elizabeth Grigsby, the executive director of the Lubbock Arts Alliance.

She first discovered Brewer's work more than a decade ago while serving on a committee to select art to display along highways. Since then, his work has appeared in the Lubbock Arts Festival and twice along intersections. One piece was a 13-foot-tall pink flamingo designed to celebrate an art donor's 100th birthday (Brewer also made a smaller version for her assisted living facility that she decorates for each season).

"What I find most interesting about Jeffie's artwork is that when you look at it, you immediately know what it's meant to represent—there's no confusion about the subject," Grigsby says. "Yet it's presented in such a unique, colorful and stylistic manner that it captures your imagination. He blends clarity with imagination so that the work feels both playful and sophisticated."

Constructing a 500-pound metal bunny is no easy feat. While Brewer, a member of Deep East Texas Electric Cooperative, initially drew his animal designs by hand, he now creates them digitally. The files are sent to a local laser cutter, which trims the figures out of metal. The larger pieces are usually

made from steel for durability, while the smaller ones are aluminum.

"We have to build an inside structure and then wrap it and then we have to meticulously weld it all out," Brewer explains about the multiweek process. "And then go back and grind all the welds off so it looks seamless."

The final step is powder coating the pieces to add his signature bright colors. Brewer initially hand-painted all his sculptures with a waterborne enamel before switching to powder coating for its longevity. He still hand-paints pieces upon request. "I'm a big fan of the teal," says Brewer, noting that blue shades are the most requested, followed by red.

As he continually ships pieces to clients across the country with the help of his staff, he says he still can't wrap his head around his success. He's just glad to be able to do this work.

"I don't have a master plan or some big vision board. I just want to keep working, keep building and see where it takes me," he says. "As long as I'm able to make things that connect with people and keep the lights on, I'm happy." ■





CRASH COURSE

BY BOB MCCULLOUGH

In this town—population zero—first responders from across the globe hone lifesaving skills

WHAT KEVIN PRICE SAW in July 2025 cannot be re-created: trees ripped from the ground and entire structures effortlessly swept away by the Guadalupe River as it rose 34 feet, devastating communities in the Hill Country and killing more than 135.

What came next he had seen before: a carefully coordinated search-and-rescue effort. Those skills and strategies are carefully replicated and reinforced on a continual basis at a training complex unlike any other in the world on the outskirts of College Station.

Welcome to Disaster City, part of the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service, called TEEX. Price is a training manager there. The city's "mayor"—Scott Salter, rescue program director—says it's dedicated to preparing first responders, rescue technicians and emergency management professionals in the most challenging and chaotic environments imaginable.

"Disaster City provides realistic, high-fidelity disaster simulations so responders can develop the skills, confidence and teamwork needed to protect communities when they're in need," Salter says. "It's one-of-a-kind in scale, complexity and realism. While other states operate regional training

centers or individual rescue props, no other facility combines the size, diversity of environments and multidisciplinary training elements found at Disaster City."

The facility is widely recognized as the premier urban search-and-rescue training site in the U.S. and one of the most advanced in the world, Salter says.

TEEX built Disaster City in the late 1990s to meet a growing need. It was an outgrowth of the intense training program for firefighters that dates back to 1929, when the State Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas chose Texas A&M University as the site for a permanent school for firefighters.

Salter says two events proved to be the tipping point for the establishment of Disaster City: the 1993 New York World Trade Center below-ground parking lot bombing and the 1995 federal building bombing in downtown Oklahoma City. Such large-scale emergencies required better planning and better strategies than had been available.

"Texas has also faced many major disasters," Salter says. "The most prominent in recent years include the widespread 2011 wildfires, the 2013 fertilizer plant explosion in West, Hurricane Harvey flooding in 2017, and multiple oil refinery and chemical plant incidents along the Gulf Coast."



OPPOSITE Technical training at Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service's Disaster City prepares crews to safely perform high-angle rescues, rappelling and patient recovery using specialized rope systems and protective equipment.

THIS PAGE Campus exercises simulate real-world emergencies such as vehicle recovery and victim extraction, helping teams build readiness for complex crises.

Disaster City's Building 137, or the Rescue Building, is the hub of the 52-acre complex. This "city hall" houses classrooms, offices and support facilities. It's also the gateway to the disaster response training complex.

Dotting the landscape are multiple collapsed buildings that simulate damage from earthquakes and bombings. There's a passenger train derailment, complete with a locomotive and a heap of train cars. There's a crashed aircraft fuselage. There are underground tunnels, rubble piles, and structures used for breaching-and-breaking training. And that's just a sampling of the chaotic conditions that confront trainees.

"The true strength of Disaster City lies in the diverse training props available to instructors," says Kevin Farmer, a 20-year firefighter, paramedic and instructor with the nearby Bryan Fire Department. "Disaster City allows us to simulate some of the most complex and challenging rescue scenarios imaginable and to test our team to its full capability."

Basic to the rescue of disaster victims in all sorts of circumstances is expertise in the use of ropes. Trainees must master knot-tying and rigging and even understand the physics involved in the successful use of ropes to save lives. Grasping these fundamental principles leads to almost 100 specialized courses in technical rescue and disaster response.

The school offers a Federal Emergency Management Agency canine course that trains dogs and handlers. There's also a spokesperson training course that teaches how to communicate with an anxious public in the aftermath of a disaster.

"Among the rescue courses we offer, the structural collapse, rope/confined space and swift water/floodwater consistently attract the largest number of participants," Salter says. "Each year, more than 22,000 responders—representing Texas, the broader United States and international partners—participate in hands-on and computer-based training with TEEX and Disaster City. This diverse group includes firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency managers, military personnel and international rescue teams preparing for deployment."

Disaster City has helped Texas lead the way in standardizing urban search-and-rescue training; improving communication through joint exercises involving fire, emergency medical services, law enforcement and public works; and enhancing flood and wide-area search protocols.

"After the July 4 Hill Country flooding, Disaster City played a major support role by providing highly trained wide-area search personnel," Salter says. "They assisted local authorities with searching in inaccessible flood zones, documentation of damaged infrastructure and debris field analysis, to name a few of their many contributions."

OPPOSITE First responders remove a mock victim from a train car.

RIGHT Disaster City, built more than 25 years ago, allows students to practice shoring operations, breaching collapsed structures and locating survivors under rubble.

THINK THROUGH THE UNTHINKABLE

The Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service encourages all Texans to take important preparedness steps before disaster strikes. Small actions today can significantly improve survival odds and resilience during a disaster.

- **Have a 72-hour emergency kit with water, medications, flashlights and essential documents.**
- **Create a family communications plan that includes meeting points and emergency contacts.**
- **Be aware of potential hazards—whether flooding, wildfires, severe storms or industrial risks—and sign up for local alerts.**
- **Map basic evacuation routes, whether the threat is a hurricane or a wildfire.**
- **Never assume you'll have time to prepare during an emergency. Start now!**





“Those responders that deployed to the Hill Country had been trained by TEEX at Disaster City, allowing agencies to work together seamlessly under extreme conditions.”

Kevin Price was one of those responders. The TEEX instructor spent a week amid the devastation and came away amazed by the immensity of what he saw: nature’s forces and the power of teamwork that came next.

Salter, an El Paso native who spent the early part of his career fighting fires in North Carolina, was among an international contingent of hundreds of responders who witnessed firsthand the pain and misery caused by the swollen Guadalupe and its tributaries a year ago.

Yet the disaster that remains foremost in his mind and the one that truly motivates him to help others is Hurricane Matthew, which struck North Carolina in 2016. The Category 1 storm caused catastrophic flooding that submerged neighborhoods, cut off highways and overwhelmed infrastructure.

“Working in that environment—swift water, debris-filled currents, compromised structures—was a stark reminder that disaster conditions don’t have to be extreme on paper to be devastating,” he says. “It also reinforced the importance of training responders in wide-area search, flood rescue and interagency coordination.”

Year-round Salter and his team help students respond to known disasters. But they’re also preparing for the disasters we haven’t seen yet. “As threats evolve, our training must evolve with them,” he says. “Thus, we are actively exploring several next-generation rescue and disaster scenarios.”

These include subterranean rescues in transportation tunnels and utility conduits; wind turbine rescues; accidents involving lithium batteries; and advanced industrial rescues focused on petrochemical, rail and energy industry emergencies.

“Our goal is to remain ahead of emerging risks and to ensure Disaster City continues to be the nation’s premier training environment,” Salter says.

He believes Disaster City’s greatest accomplishment is its role in transforming how responders train for large-scale, complex emergencies. They’ve also helped create a common language and operational standards for search-and-rescue teams, enabling agencies that had never trained together to operate seamlessly during real disasters.

But his greatest satisfaction still comes from seeing people arrive at Disaster City as students and leave as confident, highly skilled rescuers.

“Watching them push through difficult, exhausting training and then applying those skills in a real disaster is incredibly rewarding,” Salter says. “But there’s even deeper satisfaction knowing that our work strengthens the entire community. When a responder leaves Disaster City better prepared, that capability extends to every person they may someday help—neighbors, co-workers, total strangers.

“Being part of that chain of impact is what drives me every day.” ■

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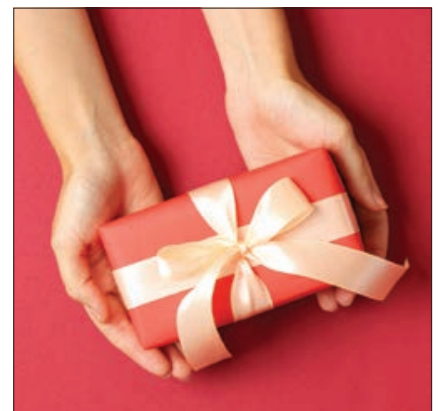
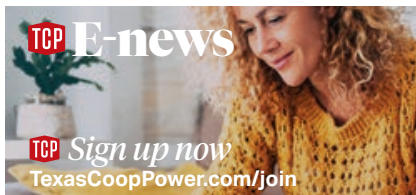
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MESSAGE
FROM
GENERAL
MANAGER
**ALAN
LESLEY**

Your Co-op, Your Voice: Join Us for CECA's District Meetings

EVERY JULY, CECA'S district meetings bring members together for something that feels a little more personal than a typical meeting. They are an opportunity to reconnect with neighbors, visit with cooperative employees and take part in the conversations that help shape CECA's future.

As a member-owned cooperative, CECA has always been guided by the people it serves. That local connection is what makes electric cooperatives unique. The decisions that move this cooperative forward are rooted in the voices, needs and priorities of the members who call north central Texas home.

For 88 years, CECA has proudly delivered safe, reliable and affordable electricity to homes, farms, ranches and businesses across our area. From sunrise mornings in the pasture to front porch lights glowing after dark, electricity quietly powers the rhythms of everyday life. While the industry contin-



ues to evolve, our commitment to the people we serve remains as strong as ever.

Members Set the Path

This month, members in districts 2 and 4 will gather to nominate CECA members to serve on the CECA Board of Directors. Directors serve three-year terms and help guide the important decisions that impact the future of the cooperative.

The nomination process is one of the clearest examples of the cooperative difference. Members nominated during the district meetings will advance to CECA's Annual Appreciation Meeting in October, where the full membership will vote to elect directors who will help lead the cooperative forward.

District Meeting Information

District 2

6 p.m. Tuesday, July 21
CECA Headquarters
349 Industrial Blvd., Comanche

District 4

6 p.m. Thursday, July 23
Mullin First Baptist Church
303 N. Sixth St., Mullin

While nominations will come from members who reside within those districts, all CECA members are welcome and encouraged to attend either meeting. There will be light refreshments available.

Serving Members Every Day

During the meetings, I'll share updates about the cooperative, projects currently underway and the

work our employees are doing each day to serve our members. Whether restoring power after storms, upgrading aging equipment or preparing the system for future growth, our crews and employees work year-round to keep electricity flowing reliably across the countryside we proudly serve.

These meetings also give us the chance to hear directly from you. Questions, ideas and conversations shared during district meetings help shape the direction of the cooperative.

Some of the best moments happen after the official meeting ends, when members visit with neighbors, catch up with employees and spend time discussing the issues that matter most to their families and communities.

Looking Ahead Together

I hope you'll take the opportunity to join us this month. District meetings are not only about cooperative business. They're about strengthening the connection between CECA and the members we proudly serve across north Central Texas.

At the heart of every co-op is the idea that we're stronger when members stay involved, informed and engaged. I always appreciate the opportunity to visit with our members, hear your perspectives and spend time together as a cooperative family. I look forward to seeing you at the district meetings. ■



DOLLYWOOD FOUNDATION

Dolly Parton, founder of the Imagination Library, with young readers, highlighting the program's mission to provide free, high-quality books to children from birth to age 5 and foster a lifelong love of reading.

Inspire a Love for Reading, One Book at a Time

CECA'S OPERATION ROUND-UP is bringing the magic of reading to your doorstep with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. CECA Operation Round-Up sponsors free books for children age 5 and under.

Each month, participating families receive a high-quality, age appropriate book delivered right to their doorstep. Each book is personalized with the child's name and meant to spark a love of reading from the very beginning.

The books are carefully chosen by a panel of childhood literacy experts and include tips on the inside cover for enhancing engagement and interaction between the child and their caregiver. Twice a year, children also receive bilingual Spanish and English titles to support early language development.

CECA Operation Round-Up's support ensures that the program is available at no cost to families within our service area. It's one way we live out the Seventh Cooperative Principle of Concern for Community and help children grow and learn before they ever step into a classroom.

Books have a way of creating quiet moments, big dreams and lifelong habits. With every book that arrives in the mail, children gain something far more valuable than a story. They gain confidence, curiosity and connection.

To sign up, visit ceca.coop/imagination-library or scan the QR code above. ■



Comanche Electric Cooperative Association

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CONTACT US

349 Industrial Blvd.
Comanche, TX 76442
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Web ceca.coop

General Manager

Alan Lesley

Board of Directors

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Pete McDougal, District 2
Bryan Morris, District 3
Monty Carlisle, District 4
Troy Stewart, District 5
Loren Stroebel, District 6
Phil Taylor, District 7

24/7

Outage Hotline Number

CECA crews are available 24/7 in the event of a power quality issue.

TOLL-FREE
1-800-915-2533

ABOUT CECA

CECA operates in Brown, Callahan, Comanche, Eastland, Mills, Shackelford and Stephens counties.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Esta institución es un proveedor de servicios con igualdad de oportunidades.

OFFICE LOCATIONS

Headquarters

349 Industrial Blvd., Comanche, TX 76442
Monday–Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Early

1801 CR 338, Early, TX 76801
Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 7:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Closed from 1–2 p.m.

Eastland

1311 W. Main St., Eastland, TX 76448
Tuesday and Thursday, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.

VISIT US ONLINE

ceca.coop



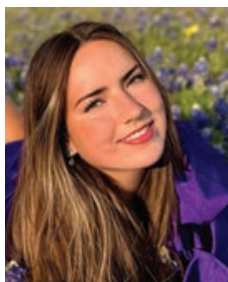
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**Kinsey Bates**

is a graduate of De Leon High School and the daughter of Amber Bates. She plans to attend Texas Christian University to study speech-language pathology.

**Gabrielle Benson**

is a graduate of Early High School and the daughter of Brian and Sandy Benson. She plans to attend Texas A&M University to study mechanical engineering.

**Zoe Hickey**

is a graduate of Early High School and the daughter of Kelly Hickey. She plans to attend Texas College of Cosmetology in San Angelo to study to become a nail technician specialist.

**Bailey Holland**

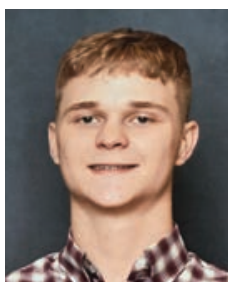
is a graduate of Comanche High School and the daughter of Jerrod and Shea Holland. She plans to attend Cisco College to study nursing.

**Lane Holman**

is a graduate of Abeka Christian Academy and the son of Matt and Kathy Holman. He plans to attend Texas Tech University to study agricultural communications.

**Hayden Milburn**

is a graduate of Dublin High School and the son of Melissa and Tyson Summers and Calvin and Lindsey Milburn. He plans to attend Tarleton State University to study criminal justice.

**Morgan Murphy**

is a graduate of Comanche High School and the son of Robert and Staci Murphy. He plans to attend Ranger College to study mechanical engineering.

**Ryan Murphy**

is a graduate of Comanche High School and the son of Robert and Staci Murphy. He plans to attend Texas State Technical College to study electrical power and controls.

**Jayden Pierce**

is a graduate of Gustine High School and the son of David and Josie Terry. He plans to attend Tarleton State University to study animal science.

**Laney Prater**

is a graduate of Comanche High School and the daughter of Keith and Mika Prater. She plans to attend Tarleton State University to study psychology.

**Aiden Williams**

is a graduate of Comanche High School and the son of Brian and Erin Williams. He plans to attend Texas A&M University to study marketing.



CECA Awards \$22K to Area Students

CECA RECENTLY SELECTED 11 local students to receive \$22,000 in scholarships. Kinsey Bates, Gabrielle Benson, Lane Holman, Jayden Pierce and Aiden Williams each received a \$2,000 Scholarship for Excellence funded by escheated capital credits.

Bailey Holland, Hayden Milburn, Morgan Murphy and Laney Prater each received a \$2,000 Scholarship for Excellence funded by Operation Round-Up. Also through Operation Round-Up, Zoe Hickey and Ryan Murphy each received a \$2,000 technical scholarship. Congratulations to all the recipients. ■



STURTI | ISTOCK.COM

Hot Weather Cooks Up Hot Scams

WE'VE ALL SEEN the salespeople who go door-to-door around the neighborhood offering great deals on roofing, driveway paving, gutter cleaning, tree trimming, etc. What they're offering might sound good, but often you won't like what they deliver. Politely send them away and warn your neighbors against their purported bargains.

Deals that sound too good to be true almost always are. So-called remodelers, often with out-of-state license plates and unmarked pickup trucks, troll neighborhoods with the hope that they can coax somebody to give them a big down payment on a repair job that will never get done.

Sometimes they offer to do a job for cheap with materials left over from "a job they just did down the street." Or they climb up on your roof or pour a little asphalt on your driveway, then take your money and drive off. And good luck finding them again once you discover that the work is shoddy or undone or that the materials are of low quality.

You, the homeowner, should be the one to initiate contact with a contractor if you need some work done around your house—not an unidentified solicitor who appears out of nowhere. Ask your neighbors and friends for referrals to reputable, satisfactory contractors they've used. Verify that those contractors have valid licenses issued by the state. Look online to read reviews that former customers have written about them.

Scam artists surface in the summer in neighborhoods across the country. They'll say your roof is missing shingles—when it's not. They'll say your siding needs to be replaced—when it doesn't. They'll tell you that your air-conditioning unit is broken—when it's not. Don't believe them, and don't hire them.

Also be aware that CECA employees won't show up at your house without letting you know they'll be there. If someone comes to your door claiming to work for the cooperative and you don't expect them or recognize their identification, exercise the same caution and call our office to check it out. ■



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POWER TIP

Use solar screens on windows to reduce solar heat gain, ultraviolet damage and glare, while still allowing plenty of light in.

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Fill-in-the-Blank: Fireworks Safety Tips

Holidays like the Fourth of July and other celebrations can be fun times with great memories. But everyone should practice safety near fireworks. Read the safety tips below, then fill in the blanks with the correct answer in the word bank.



1. The best way to stay safe is to never use fireworks at home. Instead, attend a public _____ and leave fireworks to the pros.

2. Watch fireworks from a _____ of 500 feet away from where they are launched.

3. Never touch or pick up pieces of fireworks or duds as they may still be _____ or could explode at any time.

4. Remember, _____ are not toys and can reach 2,000 degrees F. Use glow sticks instead.

5. Think about _____ when fireworks are nearby. It's best to leave them indoors to reduce the risk of them running away or being injured.

Word Bank:
Sparklers
Ignited
Pets
Display
Minimum

Answer Key: 1) display 2) minimum 3) Ignited 4) Sparklers 5) Pets

Community Calendar

Brownwood

Shrek the Musical; July 4–5, 12 at 2:30 p.m. and July 3–4, 10–11 at 7:30 p.m.; **Lyric Theatre.** Join Shrek, Donkey, Fiona and all your favorite fairytale misfits in this hilarious and heartwarming musical adventure! Based on the Oscar-winning DreamWorks Animation film, *Shrek the Musical* brings the beloved story to life on stage with dazzling songs, side-splitting humor, and a powerful message about friendship and self-acceptance. When the ogre Shrek sets out to rescue Princess Fiona, he discovers that true beauty is more than skin deep—and that even the unlikely heroes can find their happily ever after. Filled with fun for the whole family, you won't want to miss this big, bright, beautiful celebration of love and laughter. For more information, visit brownwoodlyrictheatre.com.

Roald Dahl's Matilda Jr. The Musical; July 24 at 7:30 p.m. and July 25–26 at 2:30 p.m.; **Lyric Theatre.** Inspired by Roald Dahl's beloved story, *Matilda Jr.* celebrates the power of imagination, courage and standing up for what's right. When a brilliant young girl discovers her extraordinary gifts, she dares to take a stand against the cruel adults who underestimate her. Packed with catchy songs, clever humor and inspiring heart, this high-energy show—performed by our local youth—will delight kids and adults alike! For more information, visit brownwoodlyrictheatre.com.

Cisco

Cisco Writers Club Writing Contest, June 1–July 31. Welcoming writers of all ages from anywhere in the world. All entries must be original, unpublished and not AI-generated. Visit ciscowritersclub.org.

annual-writing-contest, call (254) 631-3611 or email ciscowritersclub@cs.com for more information.

For more information, contact the Cisco Chamber of Commerce at (254) 442-2537 or ciscochamberofcommerce@gmail.com.

Comanche

White House Afternoon Tea Time, July 9, 2–3:30 p.m., Comanche County Museum, 402 Moorman Road.

Family Game Day, July 23, 4:30–6:30 p.m., Comanche County Museum, 402 Moorman Road.

Kid's Day at the Museum, August 1, 1–4 p.m., Comanche County Museum, 402 Moorman Road. Celebrate the Cunningham Family Reunion. All are invited to attend this Comanche County event. Hear the Cunningham story and a Robert T. Hall lecture.

For more information, contact Comanche Chamber of Commerce and Agriculture at comanchetxchamber@gmail.com or (325) 356-3233.

Lake Brownwood

Reptiles With a Ranger; July 11, 25 and August 8, 22; 2:30–3:45 p.m.; Lake Brownwood State Park; 200 State Highway Park Road 15. Join a ranger to observe and touch a few harmless reptiles, including a Texas indigo snake and a speckled kingsnake. We will discuss the ecological importance of our native reptiles as well as the biology of these animals. In addition, there will be pictures, snake sheds, turtle shells and other materials guests can touch and interact with. Bring a sense of curiosity to the Group Dining Hall. Free with park

entrance. For more information, contact George Dudich at (325) 784-5223 or george.dudich@tpwd.texas.gov.

Wilderness Survival Hike, Fridays in July and August, 1:30–2:45 p.m., Texas Oak Trailhead at Lake Brownwood State Park. Join a ranger to learn about the plants and other resources Native Americans used in our area.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Independence Day
Saturday, July 4
Our offices will be closed Friday, July 3, for the holiday.

National Pet Fire Safety Day
Wednesday, July 15

National Day of the Cowboy
Saturday, July 25

National Disability Independence Day
Sunday, July 26

Comanche Electric Cooperative Association welcomes your local event submissions.

If you have any events you would like listed in the Community Calendar, please contact Triston McGehee. Event information must be submitted two months in advance for the magazine. The calendar is published monthly and includes events scheduled for the month of publication and the following month. CECA reserves the right to edit or exclude events based on space availability and other considerations. We do not certify the accuracy or reliability of any information posted in the Community Calendar. To confirm event details, please contact the event organizers directly. Email tmcgehee@ceca.coop; write to CECA at P.O. Box 729, Comanche, TX 76531; or call 1-800-915-2533.



ZHANGPENG | ISTOCK.COM

The Benefits of Choosing an Electric Water Heater

THE LONELY WATER heater, tucked away in the basement or a utility closet, is out of sight and out of mind. Most people don't think much about water heaters. When it's working correctly, people take for granted that they make it possible to have hot showers, clean dinner dishes and enjoy load upon load of freshly laundered linens.

There are times, however, when your attention turns to that most essential of appliances: when an existing water heater breaks or when you're building or renovating a home.

At those times, a homeowner will make a decision that has consequences that will persist for a decade or more. Your water-heating choice will have long-lasting implications for energy efficiency, cost of use, the environment, safety and reliability. As a trusted energy adviser, CECA can help you make the right decision.

You might already know about some of the advantages and benefits of electric water heaters, but if not, here's some tips.

Electric water heaters are safe. There is no threat of carbon monoxide poisoning, combustion or explosion. They're environmentally friendly and capable of using electricity generated from solar, wind, hydro and other renewable sources.

Electric water heaters are also easy to install, requiring no expensive gas lines, exhaust flue or on-site fuel tanks. Compared to other fuels, the cost of electricity is stable.

In addition, electric water heaters are emerging as a building block of the future electric grid. These formerly mundane units are evolving into smart appliances and energy storage units that are helping the grid become more stable and efficient. By heating water when demand for electricity is low and storing the thermal energy for later use, electric water heaters can save you money.

At CECA, we're here to be your trusted energy source. If you have questions about water heater options or other energy efficiency needs, give us a call at 1-800-915-2533. ■

Grilled Shrimp With Herb and Wine Butter

½ cup (1 stick) butter
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons fresh chives
1 teaspoon minced fresh parsley
1 teaspoon minced fresh tarragon
1 teaspoon fresh rosemary
¼ cup dry white wine
Juice of ½ lemon
Salt and ground black pepper,
to taste
1½–2 pounds large shrimp,
peeled and deveined
Olive oil
Lemon wedges, for serving

1. In a saucepan, heat butter and garlic over very low heat, just until sizzling. Stir in herbs and cook 1–2 minutes more. Whisk in wine and lemon juice and remove from heat. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

2. Place shrimp in a large bowl and drizzle with enough oil to lightly coat. Season with salt and pepper and toss to combine.

3. Grill shrimp in a preheated paella pan (or in a wire basket or on skewers) about 5–7 minutes total, stirring frequently, until shrimp is pink and just tender. Serve warm with lemon wedges.

SERVES 4–6

TCP Find this and more delicious recipes online at TexasCoopPower.com.

AZURITA | ISTOCK.COM





COOL TIPS FOR HOT WEATHER

Follow these tips to keep your cool during hot Texas summers:

Take frequent cooling-off breaks in the shade or air conditioning.

Drink plenty of water before starting any outdoor activity and during the day, and avoid caffeine and alcohol.

Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothes.

Kids, cars and heat make a deadly combination. Never leave a child—or pet—in a vehicle, even for just a few minutes.

If someone exhibits symptoms of a heatstroke, act rapidly: Remove excess clothing and lower the person's temperature with wet sheets or a cool bath. Get them to the nearest hospital.

CECA encourages you to always practice safety.

PHOTO: BLINDFIRE | ISTOCK.COM

We're Working for You

NO ONE KNOWS what's best for a community more clearly than the men and women who live and work there. Your friends and neighbors at CECA have a strong history of working as your partners to bring jobs and opportunities to our area.

Your local co-op is in business to serve you. Our belief is simple: What's best for the member is best for us.

We're always looking for opportunities to improve the level of service we provide, and you telling us how we're doing and what you need is important.

Our history of working for the best interests of members makes co-ops distinct. No other utility can claim the remarkable record of member advocacy that we can. No other utility company can count as major partners the businesses and individuals to whom we sell energy, the community groups who share our goals to improve the local quality of life, or the associations and lobby groups that work alongside us in your interest.

No other utility can claim the high level of member satisfaction and loyalty that we can. ■



NRECA

Meet the Beauty in the Beast

Discover this spectacular 6½-carat green treasure from Mount St. Helens!

For almost a hundred years it lay dormant. Silently building strength. At 10,000 feet high, it was truly a sleeping giant. Until May 18, 1980, when the beast awoke with violent force and revealed its greatest secret. Mount St. Helens erupted, sending up an 80,000-foot column of ash and smoke. From that chaos, something beautiful emerged... our spectacular *Helenite Necklace*.

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Helenite Necklace**



Helenite is produced from the heated volcanic rock of Mount St. Helens and the brilliant green creation has captured the eye of jewelry designers worldwide. Today you can wear this massive 6½-carat stunner for **only \$99!**

Make your emeralds jealous. Our *Helenite Necklace* puts the green stone center stage, with a faceted pear-cut in a luxurious gold-finished setting. The explosive origins of the stone are echoed in the flashes of light that radiate as the piece swings gracefully from its 18" luxurious gold-finished chain. Today the volcano sits quiet, but this unique piece of American natural history continues to erupt with gorgeous green fire.

Your satisfaction is guaranteed. Bring home the *Helenite Necklace* and see for yourself. If you are not completely blown away by the rare beauty of this exceptional stone, simply return the necklace within 30 days for a full refund of your purchase price.

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- 18" gold-finished chain

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**- J. from Orlando, FL
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TCP Listen as W.F. Strong narrates this story on our website.



Page Earners

Rare books can mean wealth on your shelf

BY W.F. STRONG • ILLUSTRATION BY SHAW NIELSEN

LARRY MCMURTRY ONCE claimed that he was mostly a book hunter who used his side hustle—being a writer—to finance his love of books and reading. He proved that with his 8,500-square-foot bookstore in tiny Archer City, near Wichita Falls.

My knowledge of that market, by comparison, amounts to about 5 square feet. So I stopped to see friends James Gannon and Blake Johnson. They operate a fine antiquarian bookstore called InkQ Rare Books in Addison.

Gannon and Johnson have a great deal of McMurtry's personal library on their shelves and a good deal of Bill Wittliff's, too, among many others of all genres. It's a magical place to browse (by appointment only).

I wanted their insights on the value of Texas collectibles—wealth that might be sitting on your own shelf. They told me that there are many, many caveats to determining the value of a collectible book—things like first or limited editions, signed copies, and condition among them.

They hesitate to say what a book is worth without taking a close look because there are so many variables. But they were able to give me some general guidance on retail values, which is the price you might get if a collector very much wanted your unique volume.

McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove*, in hardback, first edition, signed by the author, is worth a good deal: \$500–\$1,000, depending on provenance.

Signed editions of *Blood Meridian*, Cormac McCarthy's apocalyptic, anti-Western opus written during the 20-some years that he lived in Texas, are worth much more because he didn't sign books much at all: up to \$10,000.

Elmer Kelton's critically acclaimed *The Time It Never Rained* could bring \$600. What about Edna Ferber's *Giant*? A signed first edition with a perfect dust jacket: \$800.

Empire of the Summer Moon by S.C. Gwynne? The 2011 chronicle of the rise and fall of Quanah Parker and the Comanches has been a mega bestseller for years. There are many, many copies out there, but a signed first-edition hardback might fetch \$300–\$500.

As always, these are estimates. The market may be willing to pay a bit more or less, depending on many factors.

And then there are the rare older books, less known by the general public but still wonderful because they captured snapshots of life on the frontier.

For instance, *The Trail Drivers of Texas* by J. Marvin Hunter is worth perhaps \$1,000–\$2,000. And *The Adventures of Big-Foot Wallace*, published in 1870 by John Crittenden Duval, could fetch \$5,000 or more.

If you have Charles Siringo's *A Texas Cow Boy*, published in 1885, you could have a little gold mine on your shelf. In 2022, that book sold at auction for \$94,500.

Gannon and Johnson figure the most valuable Texas artifact is William B. Travis' victory or death letter written at the Alamo. It's housed at the Texas State Library and Archives, but if it were for sale, they estimate it would go for at least \$10 million and probably much, much more. ■

Don't Skimp on Shrimp

This seafood is swimming in flavor—plus there's firecrackers

BY VIANNEY RODRIGUEZ, FOOD EDITOR

My mami worked as a teacher's aide, and during her summer break she worked at the local shrimp factory. She sorted and packed shrimp alongside her friend Yolanda. They would walk home together, laughing, chatting and loaded with shrimp. This month seemed like the perfect opportunity to share her ceviche recipe.

Shrimp Ceviche

1 pound shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 cup fresh lime juice
1 serrano pepper, minced
⅓ cup finely diced red onion
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro, plus more for garnish
½ cucumber, seeds removed, finely diced
2 Roma tomatoes, diced
2 tablespoons Valentina hot sauce
½ teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 avocado, diced
Tostadas or tortilla chips, for serving

1. Dice shrimp, cutting each into 3–4 pieces, and place in a large glass bowl.
2. Add lime juice and serrano and stir to combine. Cover bowl and refrigerate 1 hour.
3. Stir in onion, cilantro, cucumber, tomatoes, hot sauce, oregano, salt and pepper. Taste and adjust seasoning, adding additional hot sauce or salt if desired.
4. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.
5. Before serving, gently stir in avocado. Serve with tostadas or tortilla chips and cilantro to garnish.

SERVES 4

TCP Follow Vianney Rodriguez as she cooks in Cocina Gris at sweetlifebake.com, where she features a recipe for Creamy Chipotle Lime Shrimp.





Shrimp Oliver

CHRISTIE PARTEE
TRINITY VALLEY EC

The simplicity of this recipe caught my eye, but the flavor kept me coming back. Shrimp spiced up with Tabasco, cayenne and wine makes a great date night dish ... swoon.

4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter
2 tablespoons minced onion
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 pound shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 teaspoon paprika
¼ teaspoon Tabasco sauce
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 tablespoon flour
1 tablespoon water
¼ cup white wine
1 ½ teaspoons salt
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
Cooked rice or pasta, for serving

1. In a skillet over medium-high heat, melt butter. Add onion and garlic and cook 2 minutes, stirring frequently.
2. Stir in shrimp, paprika, Tabasco and cayenne. Cover and reduce heat. Cook 7 minutes or until shrimp are fully cooked.
3. Stir in flour, water, wine and salt. Increase heat to high and cook, stirring constantly, 2 minutes, until sauce has thickened.
4. Stir in parsley. Serve warm, over rice or pasta.

SERVES 4

\$500 WINNER

Texas Two-Step Firecracker Shrimp Scampi

BARBARA SAVAGE
COSERV



Plump shrimp swimming in a spicy and buttery garlic lemon sauce is my idea of a good time. The Firecracker Cocktail Sauce brings the heat, which I couldn't get enough of. I served this with plenty of bread to sop up the delicious scampi sauce.



FIRECRACKER COCKTAIL SAUCE

¼ cup ketchup
1–2 tablespoons prepared white horseradish
2 tablespoons chunky salsa
1 teaspoon fresh lime juice
Dash Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon salt
Diced jalapeño peppers (optional)

SHRIMP SCAMPI

1 ½ pounds large shrimp, peeled and deveined
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
4 tablespoons (½ stick) butter
5 cloves garlic, minced
½ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)
Zest of 1 lemon
Juice of ½ lemon
½–1 teaspoon finely minced jalapeño pepper, seeds removed
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

COOK'S TIP: The Firecracker Cocktail Sauce can be easily adjusted for your spice level preference. The amount of horseradish, spice level of your salsa and whether you include jalapeño all will affect the heat of the sauce.

1. FIRECRACKER COCKTAIL SAUCE

In a small bowl, mix ketchup, 1 tablespoon horseradish, salsa, lime juice, Worcestershire sauce, salt and jalapeño, if desired, until well combined. Taste and add additional horseradish if desired. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.

2. SHRIMP SCAMPI Pat shrimp dry and season with salt and pepper. In a large skillet, heat olive oil and butter over medium heat until butter is melted and foamy.

3. Add garlic and red pepper flakes, if desired, cooking just until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add shrimp in a single layer and cook 1 ½–2 minutes per side, just until pink and opaque.

4. Remove skillet from heat and stir in lemon zest, lemon juice and jalapeño. Sprinkle with fresh parsley.

5. To serve, arrange shrimp on a platter and spoon garlic-lemon butter over the top. Serve warm with the cocktail sauce on the side for dipping or drizzling.

SERVES 4

TCP \$500 Recipe Contest

HOLIDAY TRADITIONS DUE JUL 10

Food and family are hallmarks of the holidays. What recipe brings your household together? We'll print our favorites in the December issue, wrapping up \$500 for the winner.

UPCOMING: SMOOTHIES DUE AUG 10



CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >

Cajun Shrimp and Andouille Pasta

MARK MCNIEL
PEDERNALES EC

McNiel has been whipping up this pasta since his college days at Texas Tech University. I can see why it would be a go-to after a day of classes and studying—it's pure comfort.

12 ounces uncooked rigatoni
1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined
2 teaspoons Cajun seasoning
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 teaspoon dried rosemary
1 teaspoon celery salt
8 ounces andouille sausage, sliced diagonally into thin rounds
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon (½ stick) butter
1 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
5 cloves garlic, minced
½ shallot, finely diced
¼ cup white cooking wine or dry white wine



2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 cup heavy cream
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for garnish
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley, divided use

1. Cook rigatoni according to package directions, reserving ½ cup pasta water.
2. In a bowl, combine shrimp, Cajun seasoning, smoked paprika, rosemary and celery salt. Stir to fully coat shrimp in seasoning.

3. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, lightly brown the sausage. Remove from pan and set aside.

4. To the same skillet, add oil and butter. Add seasoned shrimp and cook 1–2 minutes per side or until lightly browned. Remove shrimp and set aside.

5. Add bell pepper to the skillet and cook until softened, about 4–5 minutes. Add garlic and shallot and cook an additional minute, stirring constantly.

6. Add wine and lemon juice to the skillet. Deglaze the skillet by vigorously scraping the browned bits from bottom of pan. Reduce heat and simmer 3 minutes. Whisk in heavy cream, pepper and Parmesan until smooth.

7. Remove skillet from heat. Stir in cooked pasta, sausage, shrimp and 1 tablespoon parsley. Stir in pasta water, as needed, if the sauce is thick. Serve with the remaining 1 tablespoon parsley and Parmesan cheese to garnish.

SERVES 4

Not just another Hunger Game.



Enter online at
[TexasCoopPower.com/contests](https://www.texascooppower.com/contests)
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COURTESY CHET GARNER

Waiting on the Wings

The world's largest bat colony emerges from a cave outside San Antonio

BY CHET GARNER

THERE ARE TEXAS SUNSETS—and then there's the sunset I saw on the outskirts of San Antonio one evening: 15 million bats blotting out the sun. Evenings like this can only be witnessed at the Bracken Cave Preserve, home to the world's largest colony of bats and one of the largest concentrations of mammals on the planet.

After buying a required advance ticket online, I arrived just before dusk on the private property of Bat Conservation International as the summer heat began to fade and the air thickened with anticipation. I joined a group of batty tourists (like me) as we stood by and stared into a relatively small, eye-shaped hole in the ground. I couldn't wrap my head around the fact that there were millions of Mexican free-tailed bats hiding inside.

At first, it was subtle. A flicker. A ripple. Then the cave mouth began to churn like a living cloud. Suddenly, an endless ribbon of wings spiraled into the sky.

It wasn't a swarm but more of an organized cyclone twisting upward and over our heads. I felt bad for the first few bats that met the talons of hungry hawks waiting for their nightly meal. As the bat-nado grew, its fluttering sound turned into thunderous applause. I've seen bat colonies take flight before, but this was bigger and closer. And louder.

These bats fan out across Central Texas, devouring more than 100 tons of insects before returning by dawn. Farmers love them, scientists study them and visitors like me just stand there, grinning like we've stumbled into one of nature's best-kept secrets.

The whole evening reminded me that some of the most extraordinary experiences in Texas don't come with neon signs or funnel cakes but can still leave an impression that lasts a lifetime. ■

ABOVE Millions of bats race past Chet in search of their nightly meal.

TCP Watch the video on our website and see all of 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.

JULY

9

Claude [9-11] Caprock Roundup, (806) 310-9044, claudetexas.com

10

Kemp Aley Picnic, (903) 880-3186, facebook.com/groups/aleypicnic

11

Weatherford Parker County Peach Festival, (817) 596-3801, peachfestivaltx.com

Kerrville [11-12] Summer Market, 1-800-392-9904, texasmarketguide.com

12

Plano '70s Pop Up Market, (469) 422-3885, bit.ly/70spopupmarket

15

Childress [15-17] Junior Rodeo Cowboys Association Rodeo, (806) 290-2848, jrcarodeo.com

Fort Worth [15-19, 21-26] Hamilton, (817) 212-4280, basshall.com

17

Fairfield [17-18] Fuzzy Peach Festival, (903) 389-5792, fairfieldtexaschamber.com

Huntsville [17-18] Texas Thimble Trail, (936) 329-1376, texasthimbletrail.com

18

Bonham Margarita Rodeo, (903) 583-4811, bonhamchamber.com

Fredericksburg Wrede School Open House, (830) 685-3321, historicschools.org

23

Round Rock [23–26] Brick Rodeo, brickrodeo.com

24

Driftwood [24–25] Hill Country Rally for Kids Barbecue Cook-Off, info@hcrally.com, hcrally.com

Victoria [24–26, 30–August 2] *Singin' in the Rain*, (361) 576-6277, theatrevictoria.org

25

Bandera National Day of the American Cowboy, (210) 920-5180, banderabusiness.com

Buffalo Gap Tour de Gap, (325) 829-0617, tourdegap.com

Giddings Sip & Shop Christmas in July, (979) 542-3455, business.giddingsstx.com

28

San Angelo Buffalo Soldier Anniversary Day, (325) 657-4444, bit.ly/fortconcho

31

Schertz Cibolo Creek Ducks Unlimited Banquet, (303) 915-5371, bit.ly/cibolocreekdu

AUGUST

4

Fort Worth [4–9] *Suffs*, (817) 212-4280, basshall.com

6

Corsicana [6–9, 13–16] *Finding Nemo Jr.*, (903) 872-5421, thewlac.com

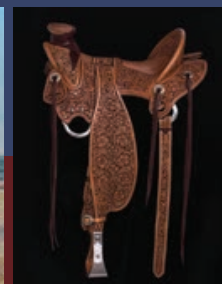
TCP Submit Your Event

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

40th Annual TRAPPINGS OF TEXAS

Opening Weekend: September 17-19

Celebrate the 40th annual exhibit and sale of contemporary Western art and custom cowboy gear at Trappings of Texas. The show continues through October 31, 2026, at the Museum of the Big Bend on the Sul Ross State University campus in Alpine, Texas.



Scan the QR code to win 3 nights in a Hotel Parker casita and tickets for the Trappings of Texas Opening Weekend



Images from 2025 Trappings of Texas (L to R): Eagle and Flower Spurs by Jerry Galloway, *Pease River Rebel* by K.W. Whitley, Saddle by Troy West


MUSEUM OF THE BIG BEND
museumofthebigbend.com



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24K Gold



24K Gold Field/
Silver Liberty



Silver Field/
24K Gold Liberty



Black Ruthenium/
24K Gold



Black Ruthenium/
Rose Gold

Actual size
is 40.6 mm

250 YEARS OF AMERICA. 40 YEARS OF THE SILVER EAGLE. Limited to 1,000 Silver Dollars— Don't Miss Out.

As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary in 2026, Americans are honoring the enduring spirit of freedom first declared on July 4, 1776. This milestone year also marks four decades of the Silver Eagle, struck in one ounce of 99.9% fine American silver. Enhanced here with breathtaking finishes of 24-karat Gold, Black Ruthenium, or Rose Gold, America's most collected silver coin has been elevated into a true masterpiece. Together, these commemorative 2026 Silver Eagles pay tribute to a nation built on determination, self-rule, and pride in its ongoing journey.

One of the Most Popular Silver Coins on the Planet.

First struck in 1986, the Silver Eagle is one of the most popular silver coins on the planet. The official silver bullion coin of the U.S., it's revered for its classic Walking Liberty obverse design created by Adolph A. Weinman back in 1916 and impressive Eagle Landing reverse design created by artist Emily Damstra. These special 40th Anniversary coins are still official U.S. legal tender, struck in one ounce of 99.9% fine silver, but thanks to unique gilding they boast remarkable eye appeal that makes them stand out in a big way.

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The beautiful, unique gilded appearance of these coins makes them a valued addition to your collection that is sure to impress. Each is Brilliant Uncirculated, struck in 99.9% Fine Silver—lavishly layered (gilded) in 24-karat Gold, 24-karat Gold with a Silver Liberty or a Silver Field, or in Black Ruthenium with a 24-karat Gold or Rose Gold Liberty. Quantities are limited! Only 1000 of each variety of the Gilded Silver Eagles are available, so hurry!



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Emily S. Damstra's
beautiful landing eagle

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457212	Black Ruthenium w/Rose Gold	\$139 + FREE S/H
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Seasoned Snaps

Having learned a few things along the way, these readers choose their subjects wisely. All we know is, with this many years of experience behind the camera, you're bound to have a few big shots.

CURATED BY GRACE FULTZ



1 PAUL GARCIA
MEDINA EC

"Taking in the beauty of the smallest things in nature."

2 TOM SLOTT
GRAYSON-COLLIN EC

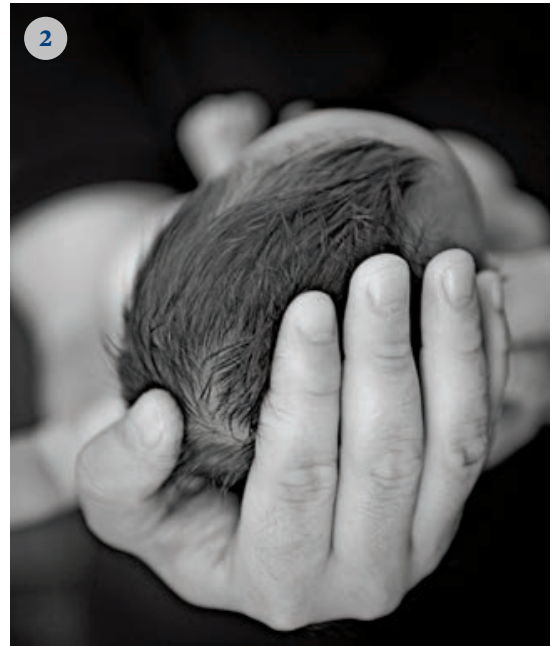
"A different perspective on what really matters."

3 MICHELE BENNETT
GVEC

"Wild turkeys in DeWitt County stay off the dinner table."

4 LAURA BREWER
COSERV

"Vibrant gazania flowers—almost a flush!"



Upcoming Contests

RIDE THE RAILS DUE JUL 10

CHRISTMAS FAILS DUE AUG 10

BARNs DUE SEP 10



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Children look at the rocks at Parr Park Rock Art Trail in Grapevine. The park claims to have the biggest collection of painted rocks in the world.

Heart of Stone

You too can deliver a dose of unexpected joy with a simple rock

BY JOBETH PILCHER

A SMALL ROCK with the shape of Texas painted on it was recently found in the Netherlands. A message on the bottom directed the finder to “Keep or Hide” and included the name of a website. The finder posted a picture and indicated that the rock would be hidden again.

How cool is that?

I first became aware of this trend during the pandemic when I was reading about ways people were sending positive vibes during social isolation.

About the same time, I ran across the Facebook page for Fort Worth Rocks!! and found that many people were painting messages and pictures on rocks and hiding them for others to find. When someone found a rock, they posted a picture of it and often included a comment about how finding it had brightened their day.

I began painting rocks and hiding them in plain sight so that people in my area of rural North Texas would find them. They were colorful yet simple, with words like smile, joy and sing.

And they were a big hit. Many of my neighbors still display their finds on their mailbox posts. One started a mini painted rock garden, and others use them as paper weights or mantel displays.

Megan Murphy of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, is credited with starting the trend of hiding painted rocks. One day in 2015, she went to a beach seeking inspiration and wondered if others might also be there for that reason. So she began painting messages on rocks and leaving them for others to find. From that emerged the Kindness Rocks Project.

The trend spread worldwide. While many painted rocks continue to include words or messages, they increasingly include more artwork. But the overall objective hasn’t changed: to spread kindness. The hope is that finding a rock will brighten the finder’s day.

One of the most well-known locations in Texas is Parr Park Rock Art Trail in Grapevine. During the pandemic, resident Ron Olsen and his family painted 10 rocks and scattered them along the trail. The artwork began multiplying as other hikers added more. Thousands of rocks now line the path.

I visited the trail for my birthday, and it was worth the drive. The sheer number of painted rocks was almost unfathomable. One stone indicated the park had 24,459 painted rocks—a world record. Among rocks with Einstein’s face, the Beatles, realistic dogs and landscape scenes was a collection, each with a letter, arranged to spell out, “Will you marry me?”

International Drop a Rock Day is July 3. So get painting—and watch where you’re walking. ■



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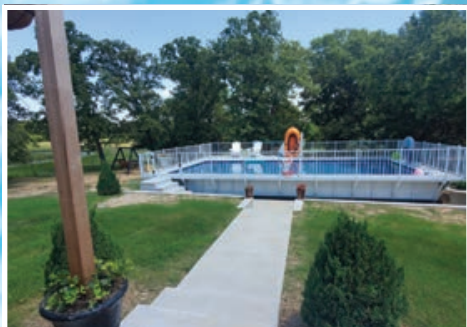
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