



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Waterfalls. Soaring mountain peaks. Arts and culture.

Adventure seekers looking for that safari-like experience will have that and more at Kalahari Resorts & Convention Center in Round Rock, Texas.



**Kalahari, Round Rock**  
(more photos on next page)

We will find ourselves engulfed in the magic of Africa as we gather for the TEC/TREWA Annual Meeting, July 30 – August 2. From the custom crafted artwork, recorded music from the streets of Cape Town and the original crafts, the Kalahari will share the beauty of Africa.

The TREWA Market will also be showcasing arts and crafts from our cooperative members across this great state. We will have many outstanding items in our silent auction, raffle items, and our VISA raffle for all attendees.

And as with an African safari, we are searching

for the most unique creations. Designed by the many gifted and talented individuals throughout our cooperative areas, the arts and crafts, silent auction, and raffle ticket sales are the fundraising efforts of TREWA to support the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, TREWA Scholarships, and Rural Friends/ACRE.

Pack your Pith Helmet, summer wear, swimwear and some comfortable walking shoes and make the trek to the TREWA Market to renew your TREWA membership, get your raffle tickets, bid on auction items and purchase some wonderful arts and crafts.

We look forward to seeing you as you join us for this awesome global experience.

God's Speed



**Rachel Ford**  
President

To find out more before you arrive, copy the link below.

<https://www.kalahariresorts.com/texas>



The resort only takes credit/debit cards for payments, but TREWA will still take cash along with cards. Thank you.



**TEXAS IS SENDING THE  
MOST WINNERS ONCE AGAIN!**

**152**

**TEXAS CO-OP TEENS  
WILL STEP FOOT IN D.C ON JUNE 13**

**PRAYERS FOR SAFE TRAVELS AND LOTS OF GOOD  
TIMES WELCOMED!**



# GOVERNMENT UPDATE

As you probably know, 2023 marks the 88th Regular Legislative Session for the Texas Legislature meeting right now in Austin. Get ready to buckle up because it is certainly shaping up to be as big as the 2021 session!

The good news is that the Legislature will start off with a budget surplus of nearly \$33 billion due to economic growth and record oil and natural gas revenues. That means that revenues estimated exceeded what they initially thought. That much extra money laying around brings lots of folks to the table. One of the most anticipated uses of the money will likely be seen in the form of property tax relief. There are differences right now between the House and Senate on how to do that, but it is going to be a priority given Governor Abbott made it a campaign promise. Keep in mind the state runs on a 2-year budget.

There are two proposals that could impact co-ops in a BIG way. The natural gas industry saw the surplus as a way to provide “customer rate relief” due to Winter Storm Uri. Co-ops were not going to stand by and allow that proposal to happen without making a push for the same relief for co-op electricity consumers. Uri left co-ops with extraordinary costs. Senator Robert Nichols has authored SB 1983 that would provide the path for this to happen for Co-ops and State Representative Angelia Orr filed the companion, HB 4590. Advocacy for these bills would go a long way to ensure member owned co-ops receive fair and equitable treatment as the gas industry.

HB 4246, also by Rep. Orr, relates to delivery of certain unclaimed money for scholarships for rural students, rural economic development, and energy efficiency assistance. This is the escheat funds, unclaimed capital credits, that we use for these purposes. This proposal strikes the \$2 million cap on the amount of unclaimed property an electric co-op can retain from the state. It raises the cap to 50% of the total amount reported in that year. It also strikes the 20% limit on the use of the funds for economic development. This could potentially mean being able to do more to help our communities and members.

In a perfect world we could just end this legislative update, but unfortunately that’s not the case. As you can imagine, so much more is on the horizon. The Sunset Commission also had the PUC on their agenda during the interim and those bills have been filed respectively. Overall, the sunset bills go a long way in helping the PUC with staffing shortages and cleaning up some items I believe we can all agree on. Co-ops’ interests were well represented by House and Senate members on Sunset who looked after our interest. A TVEC Co-op Member was appointed to the Sunset Commission as the Public At-Large seat. TVEC Governmental Affairs Coordinator, Phillip Smith, proactively met with him before hearings related to the PUC and will remain in contact to ensure our interests are being represented.

One of biggest electricity-related issues facing Texans and the Legislature is the priority of generation and adequate power supply. Winter Storm Uri opened the door, and a large focus has been on building capacity to have adequate supply for our growing state’s demand. There are a lot of opinions and options being presented on how to encourage the building of new generation capacity and maintain reliability. Several bills have been filed and hearings are underway to explore these proposals. ERCOT and the

A decorative header featuring several lightbulbs of varying sizes and colors (blue, yellow, white) hanging from above against a light blue background with soft bokeh effects.

## GOVERNMENT UPDATE CONT'D

PUC have also made recommendations to the Legislature on market redesign, but details will be settled as the session unfolds. Rest assured; everything is being done to ensure Co-ops have a seat at the table.

Other items being addressed by the legislature include broadband & pole attachments (again), distributive energy resources, transmission and interconnection costs, grid security, distributive generation and more. Several bills that have been filed could impact the co-op business model and local control, and those bills are certainly a priority to battle. There are also some very good bills that have been filed that go a long way in correcting some of the issues co-ops have faced recently related to facilities and tax appraisals for property owned by electric co-ops.

Stay tuned for updates and hopefully good news on many fronts! Remember, what happens in Austin doesn't stay in Austin...it can affect everything from the number of dollars in your pocket to the way we are able to work and operate the co-op.





A new grassroots advocacy program by NRECA called Voices for Cooperative Power. VCP brings together a network of electric co-op members sharing the needs of their communities with elected officials. This program helps members engage with policymakers and advocate for their energy future.

VCP is a place for those who want to influence policy decisions impacting electric co-ops and their consumer-members. Members come together to communicate this perspective and protect our co-ops' ability to deliver affordable, reliable services.

Speaking up on issues that impact electric co-ops sends a message to elected officials about the needs of our communities – and their constituencies. VCP gives you a platform to talk about the many ways your electric co-op supports your community. Beyond delivering electricity, co-ops provide jobs, stability, and economic growth – all while ensuring that energy affordability and reliability remain foundational advantages of electric co-op membership.

Check out the website [voicesforcooperativepower.com](http://voicesforcooperativepower.com) for more information and how you can get involved.



Rural friends/ACRE supports legislators who have not only demonstrated an understanding of the unique role electric cooperatives have played in the development of rural communities, but who have also been recognized for their communities to represent the rural interests of electric cooperatives and their members.

**Rural Friends/ACRE** was formed with the mission of making the voice of electric co-op consumers heard in the Texas Legislature and U.S. Congress. Rural Friends of Electric Cooperatives is the nonpartisan political action committee that supports candidates seeking election to the Texas Legislature. It operates under a set of bylaws and the policies of a board of directors composed of electric co-op leaders elected from around the state. ACRE - the Action Committee for Rural Electrification - supports candidates for the U.S. Congress. Rural Friends and ACRE are subject to all state and federal campaign finance laws and reporting requirements.

**Membership** is strictly voluntary and consists of persons who have an interest in preserving and defending our local electric co-ops. Rural Friends/ACRE raises personal, voluntary contributions from supporters who care about our co-ops and the communities we serve.

**Contributions** go to candidates for state and federal office who have demonstrated support for electric co-op goals, who share co-op values and who want electric co-ops to be successful. Support is based on voting records on legislation affecting electric co-ops, statements on co-op issues, and historical stances on those issues.

**Joining is Easy.** Simply fill out and mail the form below along with your check to add your voice to those electric co-op leaders who are "making a difference" for electric co-ops in Austin and Washington, D. C.

---

### Rural Friends/ACRE Membership Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Cooperative: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

I am a cooperative: ☐ Director ☐ Manager ☐ Employee ☐ Attorney ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of an electric cooperative? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Select yearly membership: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 Century Club ☐ \$150 Century Club Plus ☐ \$500 President's Club

☐ Enclosed are my membership dues in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

☐ Please payroll deduct my dues. (If offered by your cooperative.)

☐ Please add my dues to my monthly electric bill. (If offered by your cooperative.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

*Contributions to Rural Friends of Electric Cooperatives (Rural Friends) and the Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) are not tax deductible. Contributions to Rural Friends and ACRE are voluntary and will be used for political purposes. You have the right to refuse to contribute without reprisal. Any contribution guidelines presented are merely suggestions. You are free to contribute more or less than the suggested amounts, or not at all. No one will be favored or disadvantaged by reason of the amount contributed or a decision not to contribute.*

Please remit to: **Rural Friends, 1122 Colorado St., 24<sup>th</sup> Floor, Austin, TX 78701.**



## Tesla and the War of the Currents

Today, most people recognize the name Tesla as a company that makes electric vehicles, but the real genius behind the name is not Elon Musk—it's the Serbian-American engineer and physicist Nikola Tesla. Tesla, for all intents and purposes, was the man who pioneered today's modern alternating-current (AC) electricity supply system.

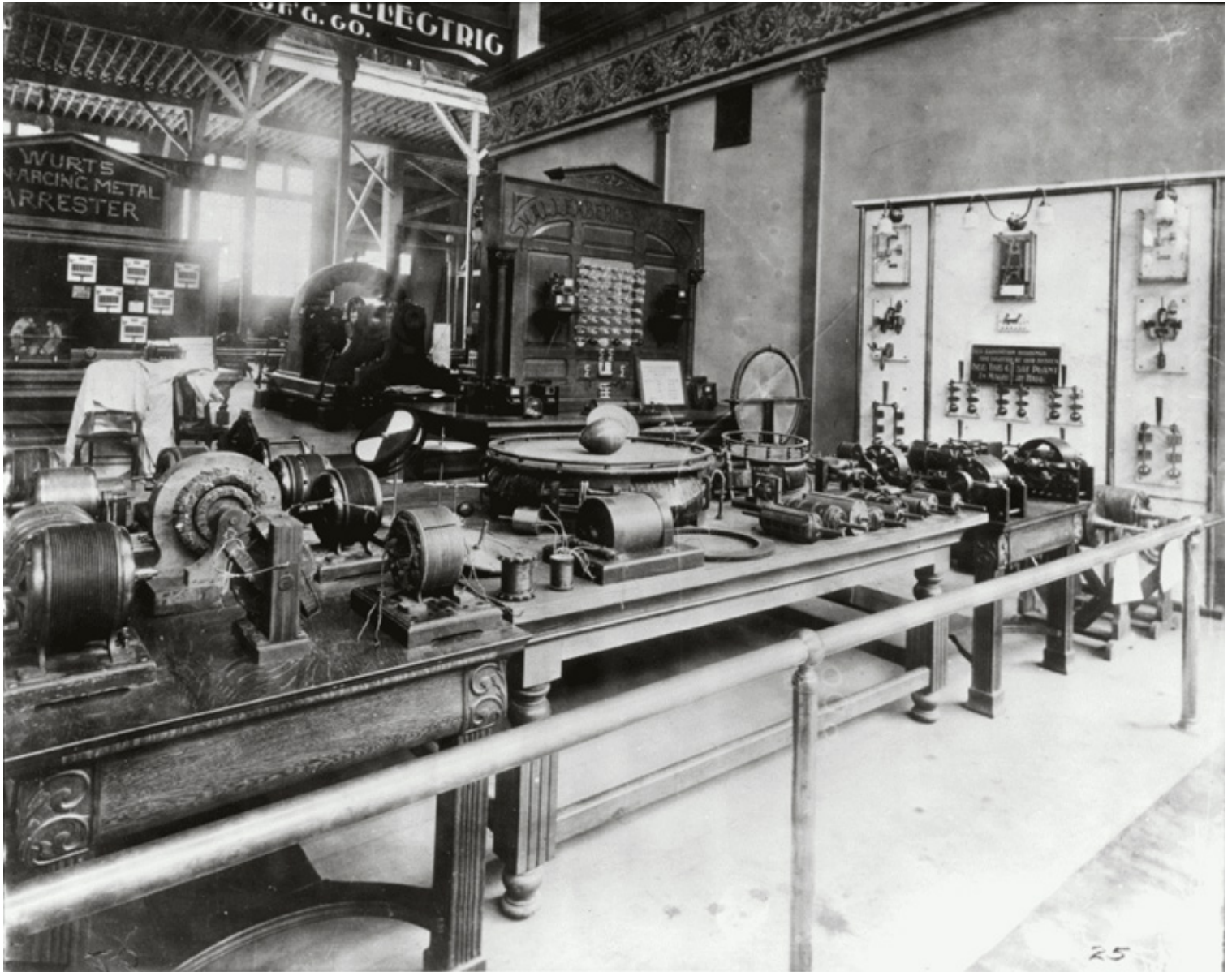
Tesla was born in 1856 in Smiljan, Croatia, which was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the time. He studied math and physics at the Technical University of Graz in Austria, and also studied philosophy for a time at the University of Prague in what is now the Czech Republic. In 1882, he moved to Paris and got a job repairing direct-current (DC) power plants with the Continental Edison Co. Two years later, he immigrated to the U.S., where he became a naturalized citizen in 1889.

Upon arrival in the U.S., Tesla found a job working for Thomas Edison in New York City, which he did for about a year. Edison was reportedly impressed by Tesla's skill and work ethic, but the two men were much different in their methods and temperament. Tesla solved many problems through visionary revelations; whereas, Edison relied more on practical experiments and trial-and-error. Furthermore, Tesla believed strongly that AC electrical systems were more practical for large-scale power delivery; whereas, Edison championed DC systems in what has since come to be known as the "War of the Currents." Tesla left Edison's company following a payment dispute over one of Tesla's dynamo improvements. After his departure, Tesla struggled for a time to find funding to start his own business. When he finally did get his company going, Tesla moved quickly, and over the span of about two years he was granted more than 30 patents for his inventions, which included a whole polyphase system of AC dynamos, transformers, and motors.

Word of Tesla's innovative ideas spread, leading to an invitation for him to speak before the American Institute of Electrical Engineers. It was here that Tesla caught the eye of George Westinghouse, another AC power pioneer. Soon thereafter, Westinghouse bought the rights to Tesla's patents and momentum for AC systems picked up.

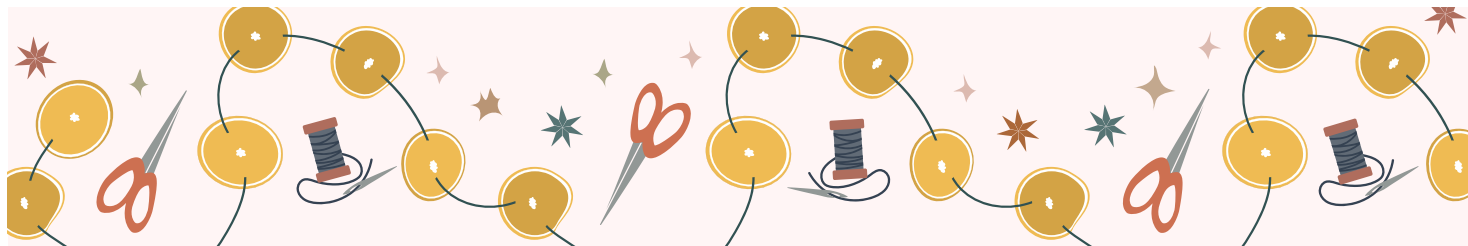
Perhaps the most important battle in the War of the Currents occurred in 1893 during the World's Columbian Exposition, the official name of the World's Fair that year, held in Chicago, Illinois. Westinghouse's company won the bid over Edison's company to power the fair with electricity, and it did so with Tesla's polyphase system.

Among the exhibits (Figure 2) displayed at the fair were a switchboard, polyphase generators, step-up transformers, transmission lines, step-down transformers, industrial-sized induction motors and synchronous motors, rotary DC converters, meters, and other auxiliary devices. The demonstration allowed the public to see what an AC power system could look like and what it would be capable of doing. The fact that power could be transmitted over long distances, and utilized even to supply DC systems, opened many peoples' eyes to the benefits it could provide and spurred movement toward a nationwide AC-powered grid.



A Display Filled with Innovation. Westinghouse Electric Corp. exhibit of electric motors built on Nikola Tesla's patent, and demonstrations of how they function, at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition (World's Fair) in Chicago, Illinois. Also exhibited (front, center) are early Tesla Coils and parts from his high-frequency alternator. Courtesy: Detre Library & Archives, Heinz History Center

In addition to his electrical inventions, Tesla also experimented with X-rays, gave short-range demonstrations of radio communication, and built a radio-controlled boat that he demonstrated for spectators, among other things. Although Tesla was quite famous and respected in his day, he was never able to capture long-term financial success from his inventions. He died in 1943 at the age of 86.



TREWA needs arts and crafts and silent auction items for the TREWA Market for the 2023 TEC/ TREWA Annual Meeting in August 2023. Be on the lookout for those awesome seasonal sales. Gift baskets can be created out of multiple items, whether handcrafted or purchased. Seasonal decorations are prime items for our fundraising efforts. We want to encourage you all to SHOP TILL YOU DROP OR CREATE TO MAKE IT GREAT. We know there are many talented people in our cooperative world, and we need your help.

**To send an item or donation to TREWA, please mail it to:**  
**Bobbi Byford, Trinity Valley EC**  
**PO Box 888, Kaufman, TX 75142**

**You can also give your item(s) to any TREWA board member.**  
**Again, thank you for your continued support.**

**Your donated items will help provide funds for TREWA scholarships and donations to Rural Friends/ACRE.**

## 2022/23 TREWA Board of Directors

### Group 1

#### **Dana Massey**

Arts & Crafts  
 Sam Houston EC  
 (936) 328-1279  
 dmassey@samhouston.net



### Group 2

#### **Kendra Markwardt**

Vice-President/  
 Scholarship Chair  
 HILCO EC  
 (254) 687-2331  
 Ext. 1145 • kmarkwardt@hilco.coop



### Group 3

#### **Malony Bartush**

Board Member  
 Pentex Energy  
 (940) 759-2211  
 malony.bartush@pentex.com



### Group 4

#### **Rachel Ford**

President  
 Comanche EC  
 (325) 356-2533  
 rford@ceca.coop



### Group 5

#### **Suzie Brown**

Board Member  
 Bailey County EC  
 (806) 272-4504  
 sbrown@bcecoop.com



### Group 6

#### **Celeste Mikeska**

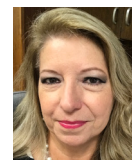
Board Member  
 Pedernales EC  
 (830) 868-6081  
 celeste.mikeska@peci.com



### Group 7

#### **Brenda Rodriguez**

Secretary/Treasurer  
 Wharton County EC  
 (979) 543-6271  
 brodriguez@mywcec.coop



### Group 3

#### **Karen Culpepper**

Past President  
 Wise EC  
 (940) 626-3003  
 kculpepper@wiseec.com



### **Bobbi Byford**

Communications  
 Trinity Valley EC  
 (469) 261-9876  
 bobbi@tvec.coop



### **Laura Melton**

Communications  
 Trinity Valley EC  
 (469) 344-1836  
 meltonl@tvec.coop



*"This is a wonderful day, I have never seen this one before."*  
 - Maya Angelou

# TREWA MEMBERSHIP

## *Current memberships expire July 31, 2023.*

### TREWA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Memberships are valid August 1 through July 31.

Membership: ☐Renewal ☐New Member

#### Membership Fees

Please check the appropriate dues assessments:

☐\$10 (1 year) ☐\$20 (2 years)

First name \_\_\_\_\_

Last name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Home phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Cooperative (spell out) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to cooperative:

☐Employee ☐Director ☐Member

☐Spouse of Employee ☐Spouse of Director ☐Other

#### Return to:

Mail: TREWA Membership  
TEC Lockbox  
P.O. Box 201338  
Dallas, TX 75320

Email: [knejtek@tex-ec.org](mailto:knejtek@tex-ec.org)



The TREWA Board of Directors thanks you for your continued support of this organization.

TREWA membership is open to men and women of rural electric cooperatives. We encourage you to become a part of our growing organization as we continue to light the lamp of knowledge for the future.

Membership has its privileges. The children of TREWA members are eligible to apply for scholarships sponsored by TREWA. Members also receive an edition of The Lamplighter, which is sent twice a year via email.

Regular membership price is \$10 per year and, to date, we have almost 1,000 members. Once again, TREWA is offering membership at \$5 per person to cooperatives that enroll 100 percent of their directors, directors' spouses and employees (or spouse of an employee).

Renew your membership today by completing and returning the form at right. TREWA membership forms are also available at [trewa.org](http://trewa.org).