



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### *TREWA Looks Ahead to the 2025 TEC/TREWA Annual Meeting*

Here we are once again, just two months away for our TEC/TREWA Annual Meeting. CEO's and Director's will gather in Austin this year.

Situated in the center of Austin you will find us at the Fairmont Austin from August 2- August 6th. Our statewide Cooperative leaders and TREWA directors gather each year to learn more about new and innovative things affecting our co-ops, continuing education sessions for the co-op directors, and the TREWA fundraising event.

Texas Rural Women's Electric Association (TREWA) is very proud to share this time with these leaders each year.

Our mission is to continue to educate and create interest and understanding of the rural electric cooperative systems and issues among the members and public, and to present a unified front for the member-owned electric cooperative as they continue to improve the quality of life in rural Texas.

We are looking forward to the annual membership drive and raising funds for our scholarships, Youth Tour and Rural Friends/ACRE.

TREWA's unique scholarship program offers educational opportunities beyond those traditionally offered to graduating seniors. This scholarship program extends to those continuing their education at various levels. TREWA continues to support our statewide organization in its efforts to provide tools for the annual Government-in-Action Youth Tour program.

We also continue our support of Rural Friends of Electric Cooperatives, a nonpartisan political action committee (PAC) for directors, employees, consumer members and others associated with the electric cooperative serving Texas.

Without the support of our cooperative directors, CEO's, co-op staff and our TREWA members, these efforts would not be possible. We look forward to visiting with those that will be attending the meeting and we are just a click away if you are unable to join us this year.

Your contributions to our Silent Auction and arts and crafts sale are very much appreciated. Please see our form for your submission if you are interested in donating on Page 8.

Thank you for your continued support of the efforts of our/your TREWA organization. We look forward to your renewal of membership or becoming a part of this outstanding organization for the first time.



**Rachel Ford**  
TREWA President



# EMPOWERING YOUTH

## THE FUTURE IS ELECTRIC

### *Youth Powering the Co-op Legacy*

**What do future engineers, linemen, communicators, and board members all have in common?** They might just be walking the halls of a local high school in your community right now—and they're already lighting up the future of your electric cooperative.

From leadership programs to scholarships and summer trips that spark lifelong memories, electric cooperatives across Texas are investing in the next generation. Because co-ops don't just deliver power—they empower people.

#### **Youth Tour: The Trip That Changes Everything**

Every June, co-ops from across Texas send outstanding high school students to Washington, D.C. for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour—a whirlwind week of history, leadership, and meeting other students from across the country.

It's not just about monuments and museums (though those are great). It's about inspiring future leaders and helping young people understand the importance of civic engagement, public service, and—yes—electric cooperatives!



*TVEC PR Supervisor, Laura Melton & 2024 Youth Tour students in Washington D.C.*

#### **Scholarships That Spark Opportunity**

Electric cooperatives support local students not only with mentorship and recognition—but also with cold, hard tuition help. Whether they're heading to college, trade school, or a certification program, co-op scholarships are an investment in our communities' brightest minds and most capable hands.

Many co-ops even offer lineworker training scholarships, helping students build hands-on careers that literally keep the lights on.

Youth engagement isn't just nice—it's necessary. Electric co-ops were built on community, and that means looking ahead while honoring the past. Every student who learns about the cooperative model is one more reason to believe our future is in good hands. When students see co-ops not just as service providers, but as stepping stones to careers and community leadership—they see their future take shape.

**They belong here.**

# GOVERNMENT UPDATE

## STRONGER TOGETHER

### *Co-ops and the Power of Participation*

In early June, the dust settles after the 89th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature, marking the end of 140 days of legislative activity. While we await the Public Utility Commission's rule adoption, cooperatives will have opportunities to participate in that process. Instead of detailing specific bills, this is a moment to highlight key accomplishments and give credit where it's due.



**Phillip Smith**  
TVEC Govt. Affairs Coord.

Hundreds of bills were filed in Austin that could have impacted our members and employees. Fortunately, we have a phenomenal and highly capable team at TEC working tirelessly on our behalf. We owe them our gratitude for their dedication and hard work. Having previously worked on the other side of the equation as staff for a member of the legislature, I know what it takes to be successful.

The entire TEC team deserves commendation—it takes long hours, weekend work, and sometimes a twilight zone mentality to grind through the legislative session. If you haven't already, take a moment to send them a quick note of appreciation!

We should also thank the co-op employees who stepped away from their regular duties to travel to Austin for meetings, provide testimony at hearings, make phone calls, send emails, and have good old-fashioned face-to-face conversations with legislators and staff. The legislative process demands participation from all of us. Not everyone can drop everything to get involved, so sincere thanks go to those who made the time and effort to help during session.

“*The work doesn't stop when the session ends... our voices, our unity, and our mission matter every step of the way.*”

This session launched the Voices of Cooperative Power (VCP) initiative in Texas, significantly impacting outreach efforts. Feedback from legislative offices highlighted the difference made by active engagement. Members are encouraged to utilize VCP in their communications. As rulemaking continues, maintaining energy and enthusiasm is crucial. The cooperative network thrives on collective effort, and the commitment to serving members is evident, especially during legislative and regulatory processes.

**Listen to the Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative podcast, [Consider It Hot](#) to hear from Phillip!**

**Got a question?**

Contact Phillip Smith at [smithp@tvec.coop](mailto:smithp@tvec.coop).





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.

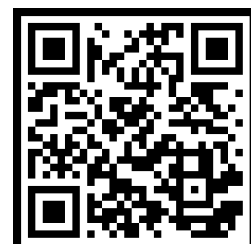
Check out the website [voicesforcooperativepower.com](https://voicesforcooperativepower.com) for more information and how you can get involved.



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.



For more information on Rural Friends of Electric Cooperatives, or eligibility to participate, please contact Jen Johnston, Government Relations Coordinator, at (512) 486-6221 or [jjohnston@texas-ec.org](mailto:jjohnston@texas-ec.org).



# BECOME A MEMBER OF RURAL FRIENDS/ACRE

**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.





# THEN VS. NOW

## *The \$5 Membership That Powered a Movement*

In the late 1930s, a small yet impactful initiative illuminated rural Texas... quite literally. For just \$5, families could join an electric cooperative. This one-time fee provided them with access to a resource that many urban residents already enjoyed: dependable electricity.

Today, \$5 might not seem like much, but back then, it was a real investment. Adjusted for inflation, that's about \$112 in 2025 dollars, a meaningful commitment from families who believed in a better future powered by community.



**Leigh Denney**  
TVEC Media &  
Content Specialist



**Photo Credit:** Texas Electric Cooperatives

Whether you've been a member for decades or just joined this year, you're part of something historic, and something hopeful. As we look to the future with advanced technology and new challenges, we carry the legacy of those first \$5 pioneers with us.

**Because co-ops don't just power homes. They empower communities.**

That small membership fee didn't just bring electric lines to homes. It sparked progress, independence, and opportunity.

It meant:

- Electric lights instead of kerosene lamps
- Refrigerators instead of iceboxes
- Water pumps replacing hand-drawn buckets
- And the start of a member-owned model that still exists today

Nearly 90 years later, that same cooperative spirit lives on. While the tools have changed, smart meters, outage apps, and energy efficiency programs—the mission remains the same: bringing power to the people, not profit to shareholders.

And that original \$5? It's a symbol of what happens when communities come together, invest in themselves, and build something lasting.



# COOPERATIVE HISTORY

## SUMMER SAFETY IS COOL

### Summer Electrical Tips You'll Actually Remember

#### 1. Don't Overload Your Outlets

We get it—you've got fans, chargers, mini-fridges, and fairy lights for your backyard party. But plugging too many gadgets into one outlet can cause overheating and even fires.

#### 2. Water and Electricity Don't Mix

Whether it's pool parties, sprinklers, or washing the dog—keep electrical cords, outlets, and devices far from water.



#### 3. Extension Cords Aren't Roommates

They're temporary guests—not long-term solutions. Running extension cords under rugs or across rooms creates trip hazards and fire risks.

#### 4. Watch Out For Those... Tree Limbs

Summertime storms and tall Texas trees don't always play nice with power lines.

#### 5. Pets and Plugs Don't Mix

Puppies and curious cats love to chew—especially cords. That can be a shocking mistake.



## Texas Street Corn Salad

4 cups frozen corn, charred  
1/3 cup mayonnaise  
1/4 cup sour cream  
1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese  
Juice of 1 lime

1/2 teaspoon chili powder  
1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika  
1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Optional: diced jalapeño

**Char the corn:** Heat a large skillet over high heat. Add corn (no oil!) and stir occasionally until lightly charred—about 5–7 minutes.

**Mix it up:** In a large bowl, whisk together mayo, sour cream, lime juice, chili powder, paprika, salt, and pepper.

**Combine:** Add the corn to the dressing and toss to coat. Stir in cheese and cilantro.

**Chill & serve:** Let it sit for at least 10–15 minutes in the fridge to soak up the flavor. Serve cold or at room temp.

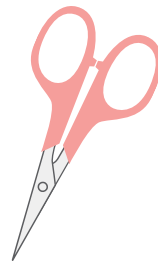
*Co-op Tip: Add grilled chicken or shrimp for an easy main dish, or scoop it up with tortilla chips for a party dip!*



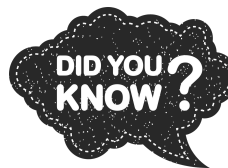


# TEC/TREWA Annual Meeting

## SILENT AUCTION & CRAFT DONATION FORM



☐ **YES! I will donate a craft/art item!**



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

Name

City, State, Zip

Item Donated

Item Value

Designated Person Bringing Item to Meeting:



Stay tuned for more details about the Annual Meeting!



Texas Electric Cooperatives  
Your Touchstone Energy Partner



To send a craft item or make a donation to TREWA, please mail to:

Bobbi Byford, Trinity Valley EC  
P.O. Box 888, Kaufman, TX 75142

*thanks for your support*

You can also give your craft or silent auction item to any TREWA Board Member.

## 2025 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

**Dawn Southwell**

Secretary/Treasurer  
Pedernales EC Inc.  
(830) 868-6142

Dawn.Southwell@peci.com



### Group 7

**Dorina Villarreal**

Board Member  
Nueces EC  
(361) 767-7337

dvillarreal@nueceselectric.org



### 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



“

**A woman is like a tea bag—you can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.**

*Eleanor Roosevelt*

”



# TREWA MEMBERSHIP

**Current memberships expire  
July 31, 2026.**

## 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 Code** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Work Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cooperative Name** \_\_\_\_\_

*Please 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 paper form or online TREWA membership forms are also available at [trewa.org](http://trewa.org).

# LET'S CELEBRATE

## Let's Be Aware

### June

Country Cooking Month  
Camping Month  
Home Safety Month  
Dairy Month  
ROW Professionals Week - 9-15  
Daylight Appreciation Day - 21

### July

Grilling Month  
Picnic Month  
Smart Irrigation Month  
Cow Appreciation Day - 8  
Hire a Veteran Day - 25

### August

Back to School Month  
Family Fun Month  
Wellness Month  
Safe Digging Day - 11  
World Photography Day - 19

## Reminders

First Day of Summer - June 20  
Remind kids about electrical safety  
Check fans - Spin Counterclockwise  
TREWA auction items due in August

## Upcoming Holidays

**Father's Day - June 15**  
**Juneteenth - June 19**  
**Independence Day - July 4**  
**Non-Profit Day - 17**  
**Senior Citizens Day - 21**

## Watt's So Funny?

**How do electric co-op ladies from Texas keep their cool in the summer?**

Smart thermostats, iced tea, and a whole lot of  
shade (both literal and metaphorical).

