

COLEMAN COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



▲ Director Daniel Redman joins a conversation.

▼ General Manager Clint Gardner welcomes members.



▼ Retiring board member Daniel Redman receives a lamp.



► Coleman County 4-H Club supplies homemade ice cream, cookies and refreshments.



# Coleman County EC Celebrates 77th Annual Membership Meeting

**THE ICE CREAM WAS HOMEMADE** and the company friendly as folks gathered at the Coleman High School auditorium for the 77th Annual Membership Meeting of Coleman County Electric Cooperative.

There were a lot of hugs, smiles and handshakes shared as members arrived and registered for door prizes. Many of the members have been around since the earliest days of the cooperative.

Hershell Ballard grew up in Coleman County and still remembers using a kerosene lantern for light. That was until age 7, when his family moved into a home with electricity. “You could see something in the house then,” Ballard laughed. “It wasn’t but a little bitty bulb. We had one in the main room and one in the kitchen.”

More than a few folks reached out to shake Ballard’s hand. On this night, Ballard was one of four director election officials tasked with counting votes for the co-op.

Across the way at the school cafeteria, the Coleman County 4-H Club served members several flavors of homemade ice cream, along with cookies and drinks. Ted and Mary Beth Ahrens enjoyed homemade ice cream with granddaughter

Emily Ahrens. “We just enjoy getting out and visiting with everybody and seeing what’s going on in the co-op,” said Mary Beth. Ted said they wanted to bring Emily because they knew she liked ice cream. Resting her head on her grandpa’s arm seemed to indicate that it’s not just the ice cream she has affection for, but perhaps her present company, also.

Amanda Straach signed up her children up for the kids’ attendance prizes. She and her family have been fostering children for the past three years from all parts of Texas. Straach said that after she beat cancer twice, fostering children felt like the right thing to do. “I feel that God has given me more chances, and I need to repay that favor in some way,” she said, adding, “If you stay positive, good things happen. Like these guys—we don’t have them very long, but in the time we do, we think that we can make a difference.”

As Coleman County EC members made their way into the auditorium, they were treated to traditional country music by singer-songwriter George Allison. General Manager Clint Gardner opened the meeting with the invocation. He then called on CCEC’s own Kim Stovall and her family to lead the crowd in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and singing the



▲ Mark Schwirtz, president and general manager of Golden Spread EC, addresses the crowd.



▲ Brandon Scroggins is all smiles at the kids' registration table.



◀ Scholarship recipient James A. Stovall stands with his parents, Kim and Daniel Stovall.

▶ Members make their votes count at the ballot box.



national anthem. Afterward, he thanked the Stovall family along with several others who helped with the meeting: Allison for providing the musical entertainment; Coleman County 4-H Club for the homemade ice cream, cookies and punch; Royce Young and Coleman ISD for providing the facilities; Quality Implements for the “mule” utility vehicles used to transport members from their cars; and Bert Long for working the behind the scenes and managing the video presentation.

Gardner made a final call for ballots in the director election, encouraging all members to vote. After introducing the nominating committee and director election officials, Gardner asked the board of directors to come up to the stage. Retiring District 6 Director Daniel Redman was recognized for 15 years of service to the board. President and Chairman of the Board Bob Fuchs presented Redman with a lamp with an electric meter as a base. “Daniel, we definitely appreciate everything you’ve done for Coleman County Electric Cooperative. You’ve given tirelessly of your time,” Gardner said.

After introducing the board of directors, Gardner thanked attorney Don Johnson for 55 years of service to the cooperative. Gardner introduced Coleman County EC’s new attorney, Don Richards from Richards, Elder & Green in Lubbock.

Gardner then introduced the director candidates. In District 3, candidates were Mike Calk and incumbent David Wright. In District 7, candidates were Ronny Alexander and incumbent Bob Fuchs.

Special guests in attendance included Mark Schwirtz and John Eichelmann of Golden Spread Electric Cooperative, Jeff Butler of Cooperative Finance Corporation, Evan Autry of

Texas Electric Cooperatives and several former cooperative employees.

### “We Look Back With Thanks and Appreciation”

Fuchs officially called the business meeting to order. “We have the existence of a quorum tonight, with a total of 183 members present.” Director David Wright read the proof of mailing for notice of the meeting. Soon after, Fuchs heard a motion, a second and a unanimous vote to dispense with the reading of minutes from the 2014 annual meeting.

Fuchs gave the chairman’s report. He reported that Coleman County EC had more than \$13 million in revenues last year. He said the board, co-op employees and Golden Spread EC, CCEC’s power supplier, are working together to keep the cost of electricity as low as possible, even in the midst of current state, national and international economic pressures.

“The board has a duty of care, a duty of concern and a duty of responsibility to maintain the financial integrity of the cooperative to ensure members receive safe and reliable service,” Fuchs said. He said he believes that costs are being managed well because of maintenance and system improvement programs, as well as improvements in technology at Coleman County EC and Golden Spread EC.

“This evening, we look back with thanks and appreciation,” Fuchs said, concluding his report with a video that reflected on the early innovations and benefits of electric cooperatives. After thanking the members for the opportunity to serve on the co-op board, he introduced Board Secretary-Treasurer Helen Bragg for her report.



▲ The \$100 cash prizewinners, were from left: Elmer Nickel, Barbra Schaefer, Angelica Hernandez, Alan Evans and Stephen Loyd.

▼ Shelby, left, and Leah Van Pelt see electricity arcing at the safety exhibit.



▼ Members learn about energy-efficient lighting.



▲ Peggy Smith wins a Rival blender.

Olivia Jefferson, daughter of Liz and Keary Jefferson, wins a \$20 door prize. ►



### Good Financial Condition

“Even though our expenses continue to increase, we remain financially stable,” Bragg reported. She mentioned that while the total kilowatt-hour sales were down since 2013, the operating margin was more than \$1 million at the end of 2014.

The board of directors voted to retire capital credits again this year. Bragg said a total of \$424,334 would be returned as capital credits. Active members will receive a credit on their electric bills, and inactive members will receive a check in the mail.

Gardner returned to the podium to give the manager’s report. He thanked members for attending and immediately asked for a show of hands of members who remembered getting electricity for the first time. Many hands went up.

“Seventy-seven years is a long time for any business to be in existence,” Gardner said. “I believe our success goes back to the original founding members’ vision of delivering safe, reliable and affordable electricity to the countryside of rural America.”

Gardner echoed the secretary-treasurer’s remarks that 2014 was a successful year for CCEC and that the cooperative is financially sound. He said that along with fiscal responsibility, safety also continues to be a high priority at CCEC. There’s no question electricity is one of the safest and easiest-to-use forms

of energy, but because it’s as much a part of our everyday lives, we can become complacent,” Gardner said, explaining that the co-op continues to keep safety awareness campaigns in place to teach the public how to be safe around electricity.

Coleman County EC continues to focus on providing reliable and affordable service through good maintenance. Gardner said smart investments in technology, equipment and training have led to greater efficiency at the co-op.

Gardner also announced that the co-op has joined with Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, a nationwide alliance of electric cooperatives. One of the benefits is a new website, [colemanelectric.org](http://colemanelectric.org). “Research shows that adults 55 and above now spend as much time online as teens do,” Gardner said. Although members have expressed a desire for “always on” communication, he also acknowledges that not all members have adequate access to the Internet.

Gardner revealed that the cooperative is considering an opportunity to distribute Internet service to members through a company called TWN, with their product, “Wi-Power.” The idea rests on the Seventh Cooperative Principle, “Concern for Community.” He invited members to give their feedback to the cooperative about this consideration.

In conclusion, Gardner sent a sincere thanks to the board



## Coleman County Electric Cooperative

3300 N. Highway 84 • P.O. Box 860  
Coleman, TX 76834

Operating in Brown, Callahan, Coleman, Coke, Concho, Runnels, Taylor and Tom Green counties

### GENERAL MANAGER

Clint Gardner

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Roger Bryan, *District 1*  
Roger Kruse, *District 2*  
David Wright, *District 3*  
Sandy Neal, *District 4*  
Anthony Strawn, *District 5*  
Bob Fuchs, *District 7*  
Helen Bragg, *District 8*  
Glen Scarborough, *District 9*



## Contact Us

### CALL US AT

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### AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCY

**1-800-560-2128** toll-free

### FIND US ON THE WEB

**colemanelectric.org**



▲ Ice cream and cookies never go out of style.



▲ Emily Ahrens, granddaughter of Ted and Mary Beth Ahrens, has a bowl of homemade ice cream.



◀ Syble Marraro scoops up creamy vanilla ice cream.

and cooperative employees, and reiterated the co-op's commitment to members for delivering safe and reliable energy for the future.

### Golden Spread Electric Cooperative

Schwartz, president and general manager of generation and transmission co-op Golden Spread EC, thanked the members and the Coleman County EC Board for allowing him to attend the meeting. Schwartz showed a video to members to explain the structure of Golden Spread, its purpose and its mission for the future—to keep energy rates low for participating cooperative members including CCEC.

### Election Results and Winners

Gardner returned to the podium to announce the winner of the director elections. David Wright and Bob Fuchs were re-elected to new three-year terms.

Fuchs then asked if there was any new or unfinished business. Seeing there was none, Fuchs adjourned the business portion of the meeting.

Continuing CCEC's support of students, Fuchs announced the co-op's 2015 scholarship winners: Shelton Bryan, Ashley Guy, William Bredemeyer, Shelbi Greaves, Jolyn Zarate, James Stovall, Jedidiah Herrod, Abigail Ocker and Chase Spaulding.

Gardner then asked Coleman County EC staff to help him with awarding 10 kids' prizes of \$20 each. Once their names were called, the winners enthusiastically claimed their cash. Gardner then drew names for the door prizes. The evening concluded with the awarding of five grand prizes of \$100 each. The winners were Elmer Nickel, Barbra Schaefer, Angelica Hernandez, Alan Evans and Stephen Loyd.



Coleman County EC will be closed Monday, September 7, in observance of Labor Day. We wish you a safe and happy holiday.