

COLEMAN COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



▲ Members of the Runnels County 4-H Club serve ice cream and cookies to members.

▼ Coleman County EC staff demonstrate an electricity safety display that travels to schools and other events.



► The Havlak Polka Band entertains attendees before the business meeting.



▲ Coleman County EC staff shuttle members around the parking lot.

► Exhibits encourage discussion among members on energy-efficiency topics.



# Community Comes Together at Coleman County EC Annual Meeting

**ASK HARRIET AND DANIEL FISCHER** how long they’ve been coming to Coleman County Electric Cooperative’s annual membership meetings, and you won’t get an exact number right away.

“Oh, my goodness,” Harriet said. “50 years?”

After some calculations—factoring in their 1959 marriage—the couple from Olfen settled on 57 years of meetings. Daniel recalled when they were held at the Coleman rodeo grounds “a long time ago.” It’s the fellowship that keeps them coming back.

“We come every year,” Harriet says. “I serve on the nominating committee, and so I look forward to the meeting and to seeing who wins the elections and all that. And we see the same people every year—nearly—but we look forward to seeing them! It’s just kind of a fun time.”

The Fischers and 214 other members of Coleman County EC plus a couple hundred guests filled Coleman High School’s

auditorium July 15 for the co-op’s 78th annual meeting of the members. They were there to participate in the business of the cooperative by voting for their representatives on the board of directors and hearing reports, but also to enjoy ice cream and cookies served by the Runnels County 4-H Club, a chance at winning one of dozens of door prizes, and fellowship among friends, family and co-op employees.

Tony Williams, Coleman County EC member service manager, has been attending the meetings for nearly 40 years, but he still looks forward to gathering with members face to face.

“You get to see a lot of people you usually only talk to on the phone,” Williams said. “Same thing with the linemen ... They see the members every day, and the members come here and they remember, ‘Oh, you were the one fixing my line. I remember you.’”

▼ CEO and General Manager Clint Gardner addresses the crowd.



▲ Golden Spread Electric Cooperative President and CEO Mark Schwirtz

◀ A future member gets in on the fun.



▼ Terrilyn Taylor helps open the business meeting by singing *The Star-Spangled Banner*.



Coleman County EC employees process member registrations and hand out gift bags.

### Down to Business

One of the main functions of the annual meeting is the election of directors. Democratic Member Control is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles, ensuring that members' interests are represented on the board.

"Through democratic control, members like you vote to elect me and others from our co-op to serve on the board of directors," Board President Bob Fuchs told attendees during his report. "Control stays in local hands. Your board of directors, along with those who work for the co-op, are your friends and neighbors."

Members voted to re-elect Roger Kruse to District 2, and Darla Wise was elected to represent District 6. The co-op renumbered its districts because they decreased in number from nine in 2014 to seven in 2016. The former District 8 is now District 4, and what was District 9 became District 6.

Departing directors Sandy Neal, District 4, and Glen Scarborough, District 9, were honored for their years of service to the co-op. "We are looking forward to having new blood on our board," Fuchs said, "but we sure are going to miss these two gentlemen. They've been really good for us."

Other important functions of the event are reports on the operations of the cooperative.

"Coleman County Electric Cooperative is in very good financial condition, and even though our expenses continue to increase, we remain financially stable," Board Secretary-Treasurer Helen Bragg reported.

Bragg said that although kilowatt-hour sales dropped between 2014 and 2015, the co-op maintained an operating margin of \$965,000. "Your board of directors have once again voted to return capital credits to you," she said.

Capital credits retirements from 1984—along with capital credit funds paid from Golden Spread Electric Cooperative for 2015, totaling \$428,784.07—are being returned to active members in the form of bill credits and to inactive members via checks.

In his report, CEO and General Manager Clint Gardner spoke about all the ways Coleman County EC is working to keep costs low and service reliable.

"From lights to air conditioning and heating, electricity has kept its value better than a lot of things in this world," he said, "and here at Coleman County Electric Cooperative, we work hard to deliver safe, affordable, reliable electricity to roughly 8,800 meters every day."

The co-op's dedicated team of employees and a new safety program are keeping the lights on efficiently, and the storms

► Members learn about Wi-Power, Coleman County EC’s high-speed internet partner.

▼ Grand prizewinners, back row from left, Thomas Rutherford, Zane Laws, Richard Lange; and front row from left, Cindy Langford and Donna McCarthy



◀ Coleman County EC Board of Directors

and flooding that the region experienced Memorial Day weekend were a testament to the co-op’s abilities, Gardner said. Despite losing 49 poles and thousands of feet of line as part of \$50,000 in damages sustained to the Coleman County EC system, Gardner said power was restored in less than 36 hours for nearly all members.

“You’ve got a dedicated set of employees here at this cooperative, and I am so fortunate to work at the co-op with them,” he said.

The new safety program is saving the co-op money by limiting accidents that would affect workers’ compensation.

“The most important part of a successful safety program is being able to send everyone home at night,” Gardner said. “Our safety program is designed to encourage anyone who sees an unsafe situation to speak up, and encourages everyone to listen to their concerns. That’s what we say to our employees every day.”

Golden Spread EC President and CEO Mark Schwirtz updated members on the happenings at the generation and transmission co-op, which generates the power that Coleman County EC distributes. An unusually high amount of rainfall over the past year cut into revenues brought in by irrigation systems, and an unexpected outage at the Mustang Station near Denver City created challenges for Golden Spread EC in 2015, according to an accompanying video.

“In the past, the combination of these events would have

been disastrous for Golden Spread,” Chief Operating Officer J. Jolly Hayden said in the video, “but because of our flexible strategy, we were able to purchase low-cost energy from the marketplace and deliver that low-cost energy to our members.”

The first of three combustion turbines at the Antelope Elk Energy Center near Abernathy went online in 2015, and transmission lines to connect this plant to the Electric Reliability Council of Texas grid are being built.

### Thanking the Community of Members

Another of the Seven Cooperative Principles is Concern for Community, and Coleman County EC shows that concern in several ways.

One of those is the annual awarding of college scholarships to local students using unclaimed funds from capital credits retirements. Gardner announced at the meeting that this year’s winners are **Cameron Cooper, Holly Huston, Kelly Loyd, Jessi Loyd, Corder Norris, Nicole Pelzel, Kyler Richards, Kasey Rives, Chase Taylor and Madison Watkins.**

In addition to 65 door prizes that all attending members were eligible to win—from kitchen appliances to gift cards and bill credits—each member received a reusable, insulated gift bag containing a travel mug and a cooperative cap. Five lucky members also were selected to receive the grand prizes—crisp \$100 bills. They were **Richard Lange, Cindy Langford, Zane Laws, Donna McCarthy and Thomas Rutherford.**



# Straight Shooting on Safety

Texans love to hunt. Nature beckons. There's suspense and excitement and escape from the daily routine.

Here are the "10 commandments" of shooting safety:

- ▶ Always point the muzzle of your gun in a safe direction.
- ▶ Treat every firearm or bow with the same respect you would show a loaded gun or nocked arrow.
- ▶ Be sure of your target.
- ▶ Unload firearms and unstring conventional bows when not in use.
- ▶ Handle firearms, arrows and ammunition with care.
- ▶ Know your safe zone-of-fire and stick to it.
- ▶ Control your emotions when using weapons.
- ▶ Wear hearing and eye protection.
- ▶ Don't consume alcohol or drugs before or while handling firearms or bows.
- ▶ Be responsible: Never use electrical equipment, such as insulators and transformers, as targets.

If you practice these rules, you'll help to ensure a safe future for yourself, for others and for the shooting sports.

## 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*

### CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

Clint Gardner

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bob Fuchs, President, District 7

Roger Kruse, Vice President, District 2

Helen Bragg, Secretary-Treasurer, District 4

Roger Bryan, District 1

David Wright, District 3

Anthony Strawn, District 5

Darla Wise, District 6



## 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**

## Power Tip

Consider insulating your water heater tank, which could reduce standby heat losses by 25-45 percent and save you about 4-9 percent in water heating costs. You can find pre-cut jackets or blankets available from around \$20.