

WCEC Breaks Ground for New Headquarters Building



Above: A rendering of the new building by Fitzpatrick Architects. Below, from left: Groundbreaking participants are Cathy Roberts, Brent Glenn, Lewis Young, Coy Johnson, retired General Manager Juan Nichols, Board President Pat Lindley, General Manager and CEO Debbie Robinson, Dennis Wright, Project Architect Brandy Ziegler of Fitzpatrick Architects, Jane Roberson, Burke Bullock and Construction Project Manager Jonathan Jackson.

Wood County Electric Cooperative members, special guests, employees, and board members gathered May 21 to mark a special occasion at the cooperative with a ceremonial groundbreaking for the new administration building in Quitman.

At the event, General Manager and CEO Debbie Robinson acted as master of ceremonies and delivered remarks about the evolution of the new building. Juan Nichols, retired general manager, discussed the historical significance of the cooperative. Brandy Ziegler, the building's architect, spoke about the design innovations.

"Our No. 1 goal is always to serve our members better, and the new technology we will be able to employ in the new state-of-the-art building will bring many advantages," said WCEC Board President Pat Lindley, who officiated the groundbreaking. "And, it will enable the employees to continue to give members the quality of service they have come to expect today."

Groundbreaking participants joining Lindley included: Dennis Wright, vice president; Lewis Young, secretary/treasurer; and directors Burke Bullock, Brent Glenn, Jane



Roberson and Cathy Roberts. Others using shovels to mark the occasion included Robinson, Nichols, Ziegler, attorney Coy Johnson and Construction Project Manager Jonathan Jackson.

As has been written about in previous months, the new building will be built on the cooperative's existing property at 501 S. Main St. in Quitman, replacing buildings from the 1940s, '50s, and '70s. Of primary design concern was how the new building should function for employees and members as well as its operating costs.

The building will incorporate a much more apparent entrance and add additional drive-through capabilities that will reduce associated traffic congestion on Highway 37. The building will also have a more accessible meeting room.

Also of importance, the electrical capabilities will be compatible with newer technologies, and the building will feature improved employee and energy efficiencies.

At the ceremony, Ziegler, an accredited Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, professional, talked about how her firm employed architectural, mechanical and electrical design techniques to work together to maximize energy efficiencies in the new building to ensure low operating costs for the lifetime of the building.

Part of those low operating costs will be driven through gains in energy efficiency. The building will maximize natural filtered light, and the windows will incorporate insulated and high-efficiency glass. The outer "skin" of the building will be insulated with high R-value insulation, and building overhangs and reflective roof material will work to reduce heat gain.

The mechanical and electrical features of the building will work together to minimize energy requirements. And all of these systems will be programmable to reduce use at non-occupied times. Efficient CFL and LED lighting will use photocells to time or sense light applications for both inside and outside.

Other energy-efficiency features will extend to the landscaping design.



WCEC is Getting **SOCIAL**

In May, WCEC launched a brand-new Facebook page that we hope our members will enjoy. Our participation in social media is one more way for members to learn about cooperative and community news. We'll include information about new projects and cooperative events, news about contests for scholarships, and information about many other activities. We'll also use our Facebook page as a forum to post seasonal and weather-related energy tips to help members save on their bills. And, we'll strive to offer timely safety tips.



With the advent of social media, and smartphones, tablets and laptops that can be Wi-Fi connected, we believe that this outlet will be another way to inform members about restoration efforts during outage events that affect large numbers of members. And, we'll use it for

other breaking news events that we think members would like to hear about.

We encourage you to search for "Wood County Electric Cooperative" and "Like" us on Facebook. Already, we've posted a growing collection of photographs, including those of the 2011 annual meeting, our groundbreaking ceremony and other happenings. There's also an album of artists' concepts of our new building, and we plan to post progress photos so members can see how construction is moving along.

As we go forward, we'd love to hear from our members on the types of news you'd like to receive on Facebook. Once you "Like" us, send us a note to let us know how we are doing.

With our broad nine-county service territory, Facebook should allow our membership to be more connected. We are looking forward to the beneficial conversations with members and fans in this social way.



A SPARK OF THE HEART

For more than 30 years now, Quitman resident Judith Sanders has worked to amass an unusual collection of lighters. In that time, she's become somewhat of a well-known expert, avid hobbyist and historian of lighters. Her hobby, turned burning passion, wasn't something she consciously decided to pursue but was ignited by a few simple gifts. In the early 1980s, she had a friend who traveled with the military, and he'd bring her pocket lighters from all over the world. She said they were too beautiful to use (or lose), so she put them on a display

Judith Sanders enjoys all of her lighters, but 'The Reveler' is among her favorite 'people lighters' because the character is charming and recognizable, and the lighter is made by Evans, an old American manufacturer.

shelf. Unwittingly, they were becoming a collection.

Then one day she went to an estate sale in Dallas, where she lived at the time. She was intrigued by a pistol-shaped lighter that was made in occupied Japan, so she decided to buy it for the hefty price of a quarter.

That lighter purchase was a defining moment, and subsequently, Sanders began seeking out and collecting lighters. It was also the beginning of what she now estimates to be a serious collection of upward of 3,000 lighters.

Sanders says that in the '80s, her lighter-collecting hobby was something that was fun and affordable and something she could share with her son. Many weekends they'd visit garage, rummage and estate sales, as well as flea markets. She'd usually dis-

cover several affordable lighters and her then-little boy, Michael, would look for toys and also find her lighters.

"Lighter collecting is as affordable as you want it to be," Sanders says. "There are inexpensive finds, and then there are high-dollar lighters." She extolls the hobby, saying, "Looking for lighters is a safe and good pastime. It gives you something to do on a Saturday afternoon. You can find them at garage sales and flea markets, and collecting is something a family can do together."

As she collected, Sanders says she'd start conversations with friends about "a neat new lighter" she'd just found. In one of those chats, a friend told her about an advertisement in *Antique Trader*. There was a person looking for Dunhill lighters. She says that it was just so exciting, because she'd never



.What do Popeye, Buddha and a pineapple have in common? They all are depicted in lighters and enjoy space among the 3,000-plus lighters in Judith Sanders' extensive collection. Lighters by Zippo Manufacturing are among Sanders' favorites, and she says Zippo has been extremely generous in its support of the collecting club she helped found

met or known of anyone else who collected lighters. So, she got the name of the advertiser and wrote him a letter in New York, where he lived. A few days later, she said the advertiser, John Cuevas, called her. Through their shared and continued conversations and shared passion for lighters, Cuevas told Sanders she should start a lighter-collecting club.

A meticulous organizer by nature, Sanders took on the challenge. The new club she formed, On The Lighter Side, or OTLS, was founded in 1983. At inception, there were three members: Sanders, Cuevas and Helen Hoerman, a Dallas antiques dealer who collected musical lighters. Shortly after the club was founded, someone else suggested that Sanders put together a press release about the club. All it took was the suggestion, and she

wrote and sent one in to a few antiques and collectibles newspapers and magazines. From that first press release, in a year's time, the club grew from just three members to 60.

By 1987, the club was robust, and they had established a strong relationship with American lighter company, Zippo Manufacturing. With club membership steadily growing, it was only natural for a convention to follow. That first convention was held in Dallas, and Zippo supplied the first commemorative convention lighter for attendees. Since that time, the club has held annual conventions, with commemorative lighters being developed for each one. Sanders has every one of those convention lighters, and they hail from cities like Nashville, Chicago, Cleveland, New Orleans, Washington, D.C., Atlantic City and

even Cromwell, Connecticut. This summer, the club will hold its 26th annual convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, and, of course, as the chairman of the board of the OTLS Club, Sanders will be there.

"We have members in the U.S., Canada, Japan, England, New Zealand, Australia, Taiwan, Mexico and France," Sanders says. "Not only are we all collectors of fire-making appliances, we have also become a group of friends."

"I have stayed in member's homes all over the United States, as well as England and France," she says.

Most of the lighter collectors, Sanders says, do not collect butane lighters, as those are viewed as too new. They generally collect liquid fuel (lighter fluid) lighters and the older "striker" lighters from the 1920s. Also,



Sailors, damsels, sports figures and statesmen are just some of the many characters depicted in Judith Sanders' collection of people lighters.

styles ranging from beautiful and fine realistic craftsmanship to boldly colored, playful, and amusing whimsical caricatures and characters.

As a founding member of OTLS, Sanders has stayed extremely active over the years, serving in many board positions such as secretary and treasurer. She's also been the editor and contributing writer for the club's newsletter and webmaster of its website.

"Basically, it is not just a matter of collecting lighters. It is a matter of friendships," she said of the club. "Some the members have formed lifelong bonds, and we call each other all of the time to not only talk about lighters, but about our problems and joys. We all help each other."

she says, for safety, the lighters are thoroughly emptied of any fuel, and generally, the collectors remove any flint because it can disintegrate and damage the lighters. That the lighters are not actually used is not troublesome to Sanders, who says she does not smoke. And, she says, while a few of the clubs members do, most do not.

There are many types of collectable lighters, from the pocket type to those that sit on a tabletop. They are also made from an array of materials including wood, plastic, metal and even jeweled enamels. Typically, collectors like to specialize in a select type of lighter. For example, Sanders' own specialty is "people lighters" that depict different personalities or famous people. And if you know Sanders or ever have the pleasure to meet her, you'll see that her specialty comes naturally, because she is what most would call "a people person" herself. She has never met a stranger.

All of Sanders' lighters are special to her, and part of the convention fun is taking lighters to display and trade. So her collection is ever-changing. If

she sees one she just has to have, she uses some of her collection to barter. There are a few, though, that she will likely never trade, and one of those is one of her "people lighters" made by an American company, Evans, which is no longer in business. This lighter is called "The Reveler." She says she found him at a flea market in Dallas, and she says his image just shows up everywhere. Even Zippo has made lighters with the image. Of her favorite lighter, Sanders says, in addition to the whimsical image, she is just partial to Evans lighters because even the mechanisms have beautiful form and craftsmanship.

One of Sanders' oldest lighters is another "people lighter." It's a table lighter, or striker, sculpture of King Edward. This lighter was made in the early 1920s in Austria. Sanders is also a pretty big fan of another one of her earlier lighters that portrays Abraham Lincoln, and she also has lighters depicting just about every U.S. president since.

Sanders' vast collection also includes lighters illustrated with cars, hats, buildings, fruit and animals in

That helping-one-another theme runs strong in Sanders' life outside of OTLS, too. She is a tireless volunteer in Quitman and works with zeal for many of the charitable and nonprofit organizations, such as the Greater Quitman Area Chamber of Commerce, the Friends of the Quitman Library, Christmas Sharing Plus, Friends of the Arboretum and other fundraisers that may come up. If there is an event happening around Quitman, Sanders is sure to be there and will likely be actively volunteering. Because of these efforts, the Chamber of Commerce recognized her with the Community Involvement Award.

Sanders has a passion, a burning passion you might say, for helping and reaching out to others in the community. She is also a very proud mother of son Michael and daughter Kimberly and the delighted grandmother of four. Sanders has been a member of Wood County Electric Cooperative since 1984. To learn more about collecting lighters, the history of lighters and more about the OTLS club, visit www.OTLS.com.

Beat the Heat

Keep your home cool and energy bills lower with savings tips

BY MAGEN HOWARD

A cold glass of lemonade. A shade tree near a rushing brook. A paper fan swished back and forth.

The advent of air conditioning replaced these time-tested methods of staying cool. But with quick relief from stifling heat also came higher electric bills. Now, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates that 9 percent of Americans' household energy costs are dedicated to cooling.

But you don't have to sacrifice comfort and convenience to save on your bill. All it takes is smart planning, a little elbow grease and dedication to beating the heat—and high bills.

Air Conditioning Units

Logic would seem to dictate that a larger air conditioning unit would work better. However, a unit that's too large for its space will operate inefficiently and fail to control humidity. Whether you have a window unit or central air, correct sizing is key.

If you're in the market for a new air conditioner, be sure to purchase one with an Energy Star label, which means the product has met specific energy-efficiency standards set by the federal government. Room units are about 10 percent more efficient than their non-Energy Star counterparts, while central units are about 14 percent more efficient.

Once you've determined whether your air conditioner is the correct size or have picked out a new one, adjust the settings to maximize efficiency. Use the "auto" function instead of running the fan all the time. Regular maintenance is a good idea, as is changing the air filter at least monthly.

Also, set your thermostat as high as you can while maintaining your comfort level—the smaller the difference between indoor and outdoor air, the lower your cooling costs will be.

Programmable Thermostats

Speaking of thermostats, a programmable model could help you save big bucks. It can automatically raise the temperature during times of the day you specify. But if you purchase one, it's important to take the next step and program it—a step many people fail to take.

Seal Air Leaks

A home that feels cold and drafty in winter becomes hot and stuffy in summer. Taking time to seal air leaks in your house will offer lower electric bills year-round.

Add caulk and weatherstripping around doors and windows, and check where walls meet ceilings and floors. Pay particular attention to recessed canister lights and electric outlets.

exposed, you can do this yourself with a paintbrush and mastic, which you can purchase at any home improvement store. If not, hire a professional contractor.

Leaky ductwork will make your air conditioning system work harder than it should, driving up your electric bills and wearing out HVAC equipment.

Landscaping

Planting a tree or climbing vine not only adds a little flavor to your home's landscape, but it also can cool your house when the sun beats down. Trees in the right spot can decrease your home's energy use by up to 25 percent, according to the DOE.

Plant deciduous trees—those that lose their leaves every year—on the



Regular maintenance for your air conditioner, including checking for a clean filter, will help it run more efficiently.

Check air barriers that are working in conjunction with your insulation. Sealing the cracks and joists in your attic will help your insulation do its job.

Seal Ductwork

Ductwork could be the most important piece of equipment to seal. If it's

south and west sides of your home, and you'll gain shade in the summer and sunshine in the winter.

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