



MESSAGE
FROM
CEO/GENERAL
MANAGER

TREY TEAFF

Saving Energy Is Just as Green as Solar Panels

MOST ELECTRICITY COMES from large power plants that produce many megawatts for widespread consumption, but concerns over the environment and electricity costs have prompted some consumers to invest in their own power supplies.

Known as distributed generation, or DG, on-site power sources draw electricity from wind turbines and solar panels. But not everyone is interested in or can afford to install DG equipment. Here at Wood County Electric Cooperative, we'd like to remind you that reducing electricity consumption can be just as green as generating your own power.

Options for energy conservation can include simple techniques such as wrapping water heaters with a thermal cover or using a solar clothes dryer (i.e., a clothesline). More involved procedures include upgrading your home's insulation and adding roof vents.

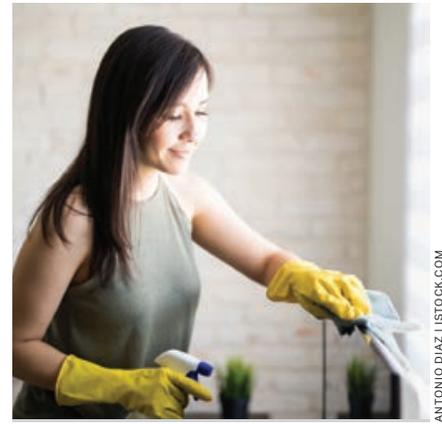
For more ways to conserve electricity, whether it's to save money or protect the environment, visit wcec.org or texascooppower.com.

We encourage members to work with us before investing in DG. We have experts on hand who can help you understand the upfront costs and long-term savings of solar power and discuss the best options for our area.

Power installations connected to the electric grid must be approved by the co-op and follow safety and electric reliability guidelines for the protection of our employees and other co-op members. The guidelines also ensure that the performance of the entire electric distribution system is not jeopardized.

Also please be aware that there are scammers and dishonest installers hoping to take advantage of unsuspecting consumers who are in the market for renewable energy options. Before signing a contract, please call us at (903) 763-2203 to verify the legitimacy of sales companies and contractors.

We recognize our members' diverse approaches to energy conservation and want to remind you that we are a resource no matter which direction you go—using less power or generating your own. ■



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Spring Cleaning Tips for Energy Efficiency

SPRING CLEANING TIME has arrived! It might be hard to get motivated to clean, but cleaning for the sake of saving energy and money might get you moving.

By adding a few extra chores to your cleaning list, you not only will enjoy an orderly household, you'll also save energy and money leading into air conditioning season. Keep these tips in mind.

Dust your lamps and lightbulbs.

Replace burned-out incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient LEDs.

Clean the air filter. If it's over a month old, replace it. Replacing air filters allows your heating, ventilating and air conditioning system to run more efficiently.

Clean the air return vents. And make sure drapes and furniture aren't blocking the flow of air.

Dust your blinds. House too cool for comfort? Leave blinds open to let the sun's rays heat your home. Home too warm? Keep them closed to block the sunlight, keeping your home insulated.

Vacuum your refrigerator's coils. The dust buildup can cause the fridge to run less efficiently.

Thoroughly dust your electronics, and if they're not in use, unplug them.

Scrub your tub, and then install a low-flow showerhead. ■

WCEC Elections Committee To Meet

IN JANUARY, per Article IV, Section 4.02, of Wood County Electric Cooperative's bylaws, the board of directors appointed an elections committee, whose responsibility is to conduct any director's election or vote of the members. The process for nomination and election of directors is defined in Article IV, Section 4.03.

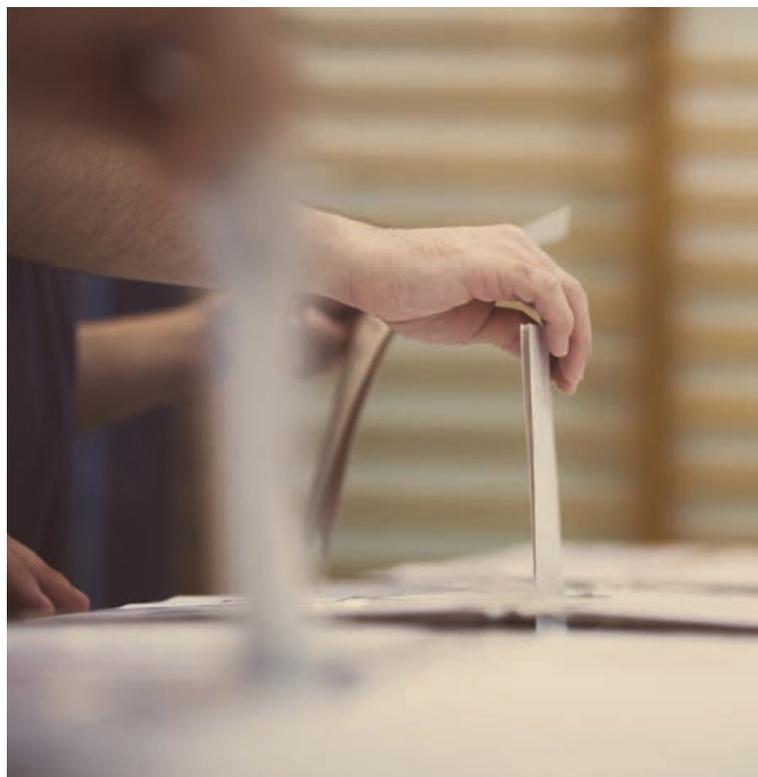
This year, the elections committee will make nominations for directors for districts 1 and 4. Directors whose terms are expiring are Mark Sustaire, District 1, and Brent Glenn, District 4.

Article V, Section 6.05, of the bylaws outlines the two pathways for a member to pursue placement on the ballot: written petition or appointment by the elections committee.

The WCEC elections committee will meet at the cooperative office, at 501 S. Main St. in Quitman, at least 40 days prior to the annual meeting. The committee is composed of the following members:

District 1	Glenn E. Morris	268 FM 900 E.	Mount Vernon	75457
District 2	Bobby Rhea	3777 CR 2403	Winnsboro	75494
District 3	Clarence Meiske	1547 FM 2659	Hawkins	75765
District 4	Carolyn Bryant	201 E. Oak St.	Yantis	75497
District 5	Beverly Waddleton	P.O. Box 996	Quitman	75783
District 6	Judy Peoples	1646 VZCR 1222	Grand Saline	75140
District 7	P.A. Geddie	P.O. Box 608	Ben Wheeler	75754

Copies of the WCEC bylaws are available upon request by calling the cooperative at (903) 763-2203 and at wcec.org under the Resources tab at the bottom of the homepage. ■



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WOOD COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

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Web wcec.org

CEO/General Manager

Trey Teaff

Board of Directors

Cathy S. Roberts, President, District 5
Burke Bullock, Vice President, District 2
Jane Roberson, Secretary-Treasurer, District 6
Mark Sustaire, District 1
Kenneth Langley, District 3
Brent Glenn, District 4
Freddie Ray Jones, District 7

24/7

**Report
an
Outage**

**CALL TOLL-FREE
OR TEXT**
866-415-2951

DOWNLOAD THE APP
Search for MY WCEC
in the App Store or
Google Play

ABOUT WOOD COUNTY EC

Founded in 1938, WCEC owns and maintains more than 5,140 miles of line to provide electric service to over 38,000 meters in parts of nine counties: Camp, Franklin, Hopkins, Rains, Smith, Titus, Upshur, Van Zandt and Wood counties.

MEMBER BENEFITS AND SERVICES

- Online account access and bill payment
- Paperless E-Bill services
- Free bill-paying app
- Visa, Mastercard and Discover accepted
- SmartPower prepay electric system
- Scholarships and youth programs
- Safety and energy conservation programs
- Operation Round-Up community grants

MY WCEC

Your cooperative, in the palm of your hand, our free app gives account access 24/7. See usage graphs, get alerts, estimate upcoming bills, pay your bill and quickly report outages. Free in the App Store and Google Play, search for My WCEC and download.

VISIT US ONLINE

wcec.org



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



A Bulb Hunter's Vision for Southern Gardens

THE BOOM AND BUST of the oil and gas industry in the 1980s prompted Chris Wiesinger's family to migrate across the United States. Wiesinger was born in Lafayette, Louisiana, and spent his earliest years in Houston. He then spent his primary and secondary school years in Bakersfield, California, a central hub of energy production and agriculture.

On a visit to a garden center when he was 11, Wiesinger became enchanted by a colorful tulip display. Reaching into the bin, he came up with an ugly, papery brown flower bulb. He inspected the rootless, dried-up ball and thought it looked and felt like a light rock. He was fascinated with the idea that something that looked like nothing good could hold so much promise. Excitedly, he took the bulb home and planted it. As kids will do, he lost attention—until months later, when a vibrant red tulip popped up, filling him with delight.

Wiesinger was amazed. "From that moment on, I fell in love with flower bulbs," he said. "What else in nature does that? It's a metamorphosis, kind of like the caterpillar into the butterfly."

Sadly though, that tulip bulb was a one-season wonder. While the miracle did not repeat, the lesson of the experience stayed with him. As perennials, most bulbs require a specific number of hours of cold exposure to successfully flower each year. In warm climates this requirement isn't typically met. That's one of the reasons Wiesinger's long-ago tulip failed to thrive and

reappear each spring.

Years later, as a horticulture student at Texas A&M University, Wiesinger drew inspiration from that first gardening success and failure for a mock business plan assignment. The plan outlined a mail-order service that would deliver the magic of bulbs and perennial success to Southern gardeners—helping them avoid a disappointing one-season tulip like his.

Upon graduation, with encouragement from professors Fred Davies and Bill Welch, Wiesinger began to turn that plan into a reality. He called it the Southern Bulb Company.

Wiesinger's initial aim was to be a bulb broker for plants adapted or adaptable to warmer Southern climates. After an exhaustive search, he was troubled. "The types of bulbs I was looking for were in very limited production, not in production or forgotten," he said. So he pivoted. Instead of being a bulb broker, Wiesinger would be a bulb grower. But first he had to find and source the right plants to start his crops.

After many discussions with and direction from Welch, and with a list of gardens to visit, Wiesinger embarked on a bulb hunt throughout the Southeast. He found living relics flourishing amid the ruins of old homesteads and construction sites and in fields and pastures.

"These were bulbs that had existed for decades all on their own, having multiplied and rebloomed," he said. "They had



COURTESY SOUTHERN BULB COMPANY



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COURTESY SOUTHERN BULB COMPANY



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1. Chris Wiesinger, owner of Southern Bulb Company, shows off a freshly dug crinum bulb. Mature crinum bulbs can weigh up to 20 pounds.

2-5. Southern Bulb Company offers bloomers for every season, including the winter-blooming *Italicus* narcissus, the spring-blooming "Grand Primo" narcissus, the summer-blooming "Ellen Bosanquet" crinum and the fall-blooming red spider lily (*Lycoris radiata*).

6. Shoots unfurl from this late summer bloomer known as a pink naked lady.

7. Wiesinger shows off a cache of spider lily bulbs.

Southern Bulb Company

Website: southernbulbs.com

Blog: bulbhunter.com

Instagram: @Bulbhunter

Facebook: Southern Bulbs

Zoom: Book a 1-hour Zoom session

Book: *The Bulb Hunter*

Email: admin@southernbulbs.com

Phone: 1-888-265-2486

gotten better, not worse, over the last 50–75 years. Those are the bulbs we need."

Identifying landowners and knocking on doors to gain permission, Wiesinger began to collect these living heirloom bulbs. At the same time, he scouted for farmland with the ideal conditions to propagate his rescued bulbs.

He learned that the sandy, loamy soil in Wood County, where sweet potatoes thrive, was ideal. Wiesinger visited the local agriculture office, which gave him a list of sweet potato farmers to visit, including farmer Kelly Hamrick. Hamrick, on the spot, generously agreed to allow Wiesinger to use some of his fallow land in Mineola to farm flower bulbs.

Southern Bulb Company was born as an online mail-order company in 2004. It has since become a reliable e-commerce source for low-maintenance, hard-to-find heirloom plant bulbs that recall and reflect the beauty of our grandparents' and great-grandparents' gardens.

These bulbs are not fussy. Generally, spring flowering bulbs are planted in the fall, and fall flowering bulbs are planted in the spring. Despite these optimal planting times, Wiesinger says, "If it's available for sale on our website, we are going to ship it to you, and it is the right time to plant it." The bulbs he sells are hardy and adaptable. For example, he sells red spider lilies year-round.

Other highly sought-after plants include seemingly delicate snowflakes and showy crinums in snowy white, candy stripe and deep dark pink. The company also specializes in a wide

selection of those certain heralds of spring—narcissuses, daffodils and paperwhites—in more than a dozen varieties in shades of yellow and white, with some having orange accents. You'll also find luscious pink naked ladies (*Lycoris squamigera*).

In addition to flower bulbs, Southern Bulb Company offers bulb forcing kits; bulb- and plant-related gifts, like whimsical dinner plates emblazoned with images of red spider lilies; cutting boards; and botanical art prints. Wiesinger's informative and entertaining book, *The Bulb Hunter*, co-written with Welch, chronicles Wiesinger's escapades as he travels winding country roads to collect flower bulbs. It's also sprinkled with gardening lessons, such as Welch's advice on incorporating heirlooms into any garden.

Each spring, Wiesinger gives a presentation and walking tour of his bulb farm. Upcoming tours, which can be booked through his website, are scheduled for 9:30 a.m. March 18 and March 20. Participants are encouraged to bring a shovel and will have an opportunity to help clear between the rows, with the bonus of keeping the cleared bulbs. There also will be bulbs and other merchandise for sale.

Wiesinger also can be booked for gardening talks. He says his purpose is not just to educate about gardening in the moment but for posterity. "When you plant a bulb made for your climate, you are leaving a legacy," he said. "The house will be long gone. The trees will even die. But these flowers will remind us that someone lived through the Great Depression or even the Spanish flu. If it is the right bulb, it will be with you for a lifetime." ■