

WCEC Awards \$18,000 to East Texas Students



Jase Melton
Grand Saline ISD



Jack Heard
Mineola ISD



Sunni Ruffin
Mineola ISD



Lauren Newsome
Mount Vernon ISD



Brooklyn Marcee
Quitman ISD



Madison Batie
Van ISD



Presley Blair
Winnsboro ISD



Rance Brown
Winnsboro ISD



Canaan Swanner
Winnsboro ISD



Dawson Tinney
Winnsboro ISD



Blake Weissert
Alba-Golden ISD



Samuel Currey
Grand Saline ISD



Avery von Reyn
Quitman ISD



2022 Power My World scholarship judges, from left, David Dobbs of Quitman, Susan Ukleja of Yantis and John Arbter of Golden had their work cut out for them in their task of selecting scholarship winners from so many qualified applicants.

A PANEL OF THREE independent judges recently awarded \$18,000 in scholarships as part of Wood County Electric Cooperative's Power My World program. Ten local high school students residing within WCEC's nine-county service area will each receive a \$1,500 scholarship toward a college education, and three students will receive \$1,000 each toward tuition for a trade or vocational certificate path.

The program is funded by unclaimed capital credits payments returned to WCEC by the state and does not come from WCEC's operating budget.

The judges were WCEC members John Arbter of Golden, David Dobbs of Quitman and Susan Ukleja of Yantis. The judges selected the 13 winners from among 42 applicants based on academic records, civic and community participation and achievements, and an essay.

The 2022 Power My World college scholarship recipients are Jase Melton, Grand Saline Independent School District; Jack Heard and Sunni Ruffin, Mineola ISD; Lauren Newsome, Mount Vernon ISD; Brooklyn Marcee, Quitman ISD; Madison Batie, Van ISD; and Presley Blair, Rance Brown, Canaan Swanner and Dawson Tinney, Winnsboro ISD.

The trade and vocational scholarship winners are Blake Weissert, Alba-Golden ISD; Samuel Currey, Grand Saline ISD; and Avery von Reyn, Quitman ISD.

"Congratulations to each of these students on their achievements," said Trey Teaff, WCEC CEO and general manager. "Based on the outstanding field of candidates, I know our judges had a challenging time of selecting the scholarship winners. I can't wait to see how each of them will excel as they move forward." ■



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Save Electricity This Summer

WHEN IT COMES to electricity, the less you use, the more you'll save. Here are some easy ways to cut down your use of electricity this summer.

Move lamps, the TV and all other heat-emitting electric appliances away from your thermostat. The heat can make the thermostat work harder to make the house cooler than it needs to be.

If you're still using incandescent lightbulbs, switch to LEDs. The newer bulbs emit almost no heat and use less electricity.

Set the air conditioning at 78 degrees. If you usually run it at 72 degrees, you can save on your cooling bill by letting the house stay a little warmer.

Plant trees outside windows on the sunny side of your house. The shade can save you money by blocking heat from the sun.

When you turn on your AC, turn on your ceiling fans too. Running them together will make your house feel 4 degrees cooler—so you can raise the thermostat by 4 degrees. Turn fans off when you leave a room.

Lower the temperature of your water heater to 120 degrees. That will save you money, and it's safer than a higher setting.

Give your oven and stovetop a break on hot days. Use the microwave oven, a toaster oven or an outdoor grill instead, and you'll cut your energy use while avoiding extra heat in the house.

Early summertime is no time to coop yourself up indoors with your computer. Turn it off and enjoy the great outdoors. But don't leave the computer on when you walk away; unplug it or turn off the power strip it's plugged into.

Still don't have a programmable thermostat? It's time to get one. Choose a model that can automatically turn the AC up when you're not home and crank it back down before you return. ■

WOOD COUNTY ELECTRIC CO-OP

CONTACT US

501 S. Main St., Quitman, TX 75783

P.O. Box 1827, Quitman, TX 75783

Local (903) 763-2203

Email info@wcec.org

Web wcec.org

CEO/General Manager

Trey Teaff

Board of Directors

Cathy S. Roberts, President, District 5

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**Report
an
Outage**

**CALL TOLL-FREE
OR TEXT**

1-866-415-2951

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



Check us out at

TexasCoopPower.com/wood



Bobby Irwin



The Bellamy Brothers

Big Bass Tourney To Bring Family Fun to Lake Fork

THE SIMMS BASSMASTER Elite Fishing Tournament on Lake Fork, one of nine Elite Series tournaments throughout the year, will be held May 19–22.

The series represents the highest level of professional bass fishing, and competitors must qualify through Bass Pro Shops Bassmaster Opens or the B.A.S.S. Nation. Professional anglers compete yearlong for points toward being named the Toyota Bassmaster Angler of the Year and to qualify for the Bassmaster Classic.

The event starts at 10:30 a.m. each day and features food, merchants, and opportunities for fun and entertainment.

A 5K race and family fun run/walk will be held May 21 across the Lake Fork reservoir and dam. The Great Dam Race, as it's billed, offers racers and walkers the opportunity to view Lake Fork from the top of the dam, which is generally closed to the

public. The untimed 1-mile family fun run/walk will be held after the timed 5K. Racers and walkers can register at [active.com](https://www.active.com).

After the races, the Bobby Irwin Band will play a free concert. Irwin, 19, is a rising star in country music with five singles to his name, winning the TXM Records Texana Troubadour Singer and Songwriter Contest, the Texas FFA Talent Contest and the 2021 National FFA Convention Talent Contest in Indianapolis.

The Bellamy Brothers will perform May 22. Brothers David and Howard Bellamy have scored hits on the pop and country charts and have remained popular for more than 40 years. Best known for *Let Your Love Flow*, the band holds records for country music award nominations and continues to play to sellout crowds worldwide.

Other activities that the weekend will include a Hawg Trough Bass Fishing experience, a catfish fishing experience



and a bicycle safety rodeo with puppets for children. The fishing tournament weigh-ins will be at 3 p.m. daily with the final awards on Sunday afternoon.

The vendor fair, activities and concerts held in conjunction with the tournament are organized through a partnership of the Sabine River Authority, Wood County Economic Development Commission and Pilot Club of Quitman, with help from area sponsors.

Net proceeds from the sponsorships will benefit the pilot clubs of Wood County in Mineola, Quitman and Winnsboro. Each of these clubs are all-volunteer nonprofit service groups dedicated to improving the lives of people in Wood County according to the mission, scope and guiding principles of Pilot International in three areas: brain safety and fitness, supporting youth, and caring for others.

For a full schedule of festival events, visit quitmanpilot.org. ■



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Cinco de Mayo
Thursday, May 5

Mother's Day
Sunday, May 8

Memorial Day
Monday, May 30

Our offices will be closed in observance of the holiday.

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Get Ready for the Energy Star Tax Holiday

MARK YOUR CALENDAR for the Energy Star Sales Tax Holiday, May 28–30.

Texas shoppers wanting a break on energy-efficient items can buy qualifying Energy Star products in stores, online or by phone, mail, custom order or any other means (including in-store purchases) tax-free, when either: The item is both delivered and paid for during the exemption period or you order and pay for the item and the seller accepts the order during the exemption period for immediate shipment, even if delivery is made after the exemption period ends.

If you pay sales tax on qualifying items during the sales tax holiday, you can ask the seller for a refund of the tax paid or a refund form to send directly to the Texas comptroller's office. ■

Qualifying Products

Air conditioners
Refrigerators
Ceiling fans
Incandescent and fluorescent lightbulbs
Clothes washers
Dishwashers
Dehumidifiers

Nonqualifying Products

Water heaters
Clothes dryers
Freezers
Stoves
Attic fans
Heat pumps
Wine refrigerators
Kegeators
Beverage chillers



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Celebrate Electrical Safety Month

IT'S MAY, AND Wood County Electric Cooperative is celebrating National Electrical Safety Month. While safety for our members is a top priority year-round, Electrical Safety Month is a time to acknowledge the importance of safety vigilance.

This year we're focusing on electrical safety in the home. Electricity causes more than 140,000 fires each year, resulting in more than 500 deaths, 4,000 injuries and \$1.6 billion in property damage, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International.

Use these helpful tips to safeguard your home.

In the Kitchen

- ▶ Vacuum your refrigerator coils every three months to eliminate dirt buildup that can reduce efficiency and create fire hazards.
- ▶ Ensure all countertop appliances are away from the sink.
- ▶ Appliance cords should be away from hot surfaces. Pay particular attention to cords around toasters, ovens and ranges.
- ▶ The area above the cooking range should be free of combustibles, such as potholders and plastic utensils. Storing these items on or near the range may result in fires or burns.

Light the Way to Safety

- ▶ The wattage of the lightbulbs you use in your home should match the wattage indicated on the fixture. Overheated fixtures can lead to a fire.
- ▶ Check lamp cords to make sure they are in good condition—not damaged or cracked. Do not attempt to repair damaged cords yourself. Take any item with a damaged power cord to an authorized repair center.
- ▶ Extension cords should not be used to provide power on a long-term or permanent basis. Have additional electrical outlets installed by a professional to provide power where needed.

Be Prepared

- ▶ Nearly two-thirds of fire deaths result from fires in homes without working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms should be located on every level of your home, inside each bedroom and outside each sleeping area.
- ▶ Test smoke alarms every month. Batteries should be replaced at least once a year—or sooner if indicated in the manufacturer's instructions. Smoke alarms should be replaced at least every 10 years.
- ▶ Talk to your family about an emergency plan in the event of a fire in your home. If you have small children, include them in planning an emergency escape route; they are more likely to remember the plan if they're involved in creating it. ■

Rolling Outages Demystified

Wood County EC's load shed plans and details

THE RISK OF rolling outages is a recurring topic during the coldest and hottest months of the year. When news reports warn that rotating power outages may be possible, Wood County Electric Cooperative starts getting calls because members want to know if they will be affected, the exact timing and for how long. Unfortunately, we don't always have that specific information at our fingertips, as rolling outages and load shedding are a complicated process.

Wood County EC's electricity comes from two regional transmission organizations, the Southwest Power Pool and the Electricity Reliability Council of Texas. While ERCOT oversees most of the Texas grid, WCEC has just one large industrial meter within ERCOT; the rest of WCEC's meters fall within the SPP.

The RTOs balance supply and demand along the infrastructure they oversee. An electric grid is dynamic, with power ebbing and flowing constantly. Every time someone turns on a light switch, washer, dryer or any other electric equipment, power is being demanded. Substations feed different segments of the grid, and communities in those segments use various levels and amounts of energy at any one time.

At times the demand for electricity outpaces the available supply of electricity. There can be several causes for this imbalance, including extreme hot or cold weather that leads people to turn up their air conditioning and heating systems or some needed generation has gone offline. Whatever the cause, imbalances threaten the whole grid. To relieve stress and avoid long-term damage and outages, the RTO must shed load.

When this happens, the RTO first will issue an emergency energy alert to WCEC and other electricity distributors. The alert has three levels. The first two warn that load is approaching available generation capacity, and a load shed event may be required if the situation doesn't improve. The final alert requires load action.

The RTO decides the amount of load that needs to be removed from the grid, and they order transmission operators to manage this. The transmission operator decides the amount each member of WCEC's generation and transmission provider must remove from its distribution system. The G&T then informs each distribution cooperative, like WCEC, the amount of load they each must shed to help restabilize the grid.

Load Shedding

If that happens, WCEC enacts its own load shed plan. The plan strives to offer continuous service, when possible, to the most critical infrastructure, such as hospitals, water utilities, natural gas facilities and emergency services. These systems are generally further down on the list for load shed. Even so, as an event and needs unfold, action must take place in the moment.

It is often a very rapid process, but as soon as we believe rolling outages might be possible, WCEC will communicate the news through various available means as time permits. We will



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inform news media, send direct texts and emails to members, and post on social media and wcec.org. Members are asked to curtail their use where possible, and if everyone does their part in reducing load, a load shed event, or rolling outage, can possibly be avoided.

If the grid continues to be unstable, the RTOs, via the G&Ts, may instruct WCEC to execute controlled power outages.

What To Expect During Load Shed

At WCEC we prioritize continuity of service for loads deemed critical to the well-being of the community, such as hospitals and other emergency services. However, all members should assume that power could go out without warning.

Every member has the responsibility to make their own arrangements for alternate power in the event of any outage. It's crucial that those dependent on electric-powered medical equipment, and especially those on the co-op's critical care list, formulate a solid backup plan to ensure their own safety during power loss. No meter is, or can be, excluded from rolling blackouts, load shed events or unplanned outages.

In extreme power emergencies, WCEC could be required to shed large amounts of load over extended periods of time. When possible, WCEC will rotate outages across the system so that any one area is not burdened by lengthy outages. However, depending on the circumstances, some meters could lose power for extended times. That is why it is imperative that every member have a backup plan, including the safe use of generators or backup batteries or having alternate places to go.

Stay Informed

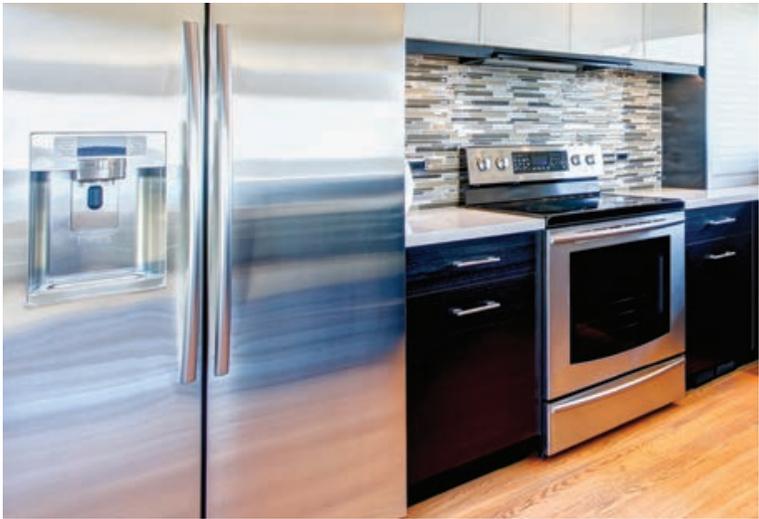
WCEC works hard to keep its members informed during all large outages. To ensure you receive these communications and other critical information that may affect you, we ask all members to make sure their contact information remains up to date so we can reach you when it matters. We will never sell your information or use it to solicit to you. If you've changed your phone number or email address, please update it with us. ■

10 Tips To Put You in Power

MAKING ONE OR TWO small changes in how you use electricity might not have a huge impact on your electric bill, but the cumulative effect of lots of changes can make a big difference.

Here are 10 tips to help put you in charge of your electric bill:

1. When you use your printer, print on both sides of the paper. This saves ink, power and paper.
2. Invest in a single power strip to tuck behind your entertainment center. Plug devices into it then switch off the power strip when you're not using those devices.
3. Wait until your dishwasher is full before running it. Don't wash dishes by hand; that uses up to twice the water and energy as the dishwasher.
4. Wash clothes in cold water instead of hot to save on water-heating costs.
5. Lower your water heater's temperature by just 2 degrees. You probably won't notice the difference in the shower but could see a difference in energy savings.
6. Keep your freezer and refrigerator moderately full. It takes more energy to cool an empty space than a full one.
7. Hang an outdoor clothesline. Pull nearly dry clothes out of the washer and hang them out to dry naturally. That will cut the number of dryer cycles you use.
8. Slide your refrigerator a couple of inches away from the wall. Pressing it up against a wall limits air circulation behind it and makes the appliance work harder, which uses more energy.
9. Skip the hair dryer. You'll save energy by air-drying rather than blow-drying—and your hair will be healthier too.
10. Turn things off when you're not using them: lights, ceiling fans, space heaters, the TV, your computer—anything that's electric. ■



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3 Cutting-Edge Technologies To Save Energy at Home

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES to traditional technologies are helping homeowners realize energy savings. Let's look at three promising products on the market today that keep power bills lower.

Refrigerators are essential for any modern home, and they typically use a good deal of energy to properly cool food. Reducing the amount of energy your fridge uses lowers your home energy consumption. One emerging technology that can save energy is magnetic refrigeration.

Most fridges use a traditional compressor to cool perishables, but magnetic refrigeration uses a magnetic field to cool food. This is possible through the magnetocaloric effect, which causes certain materials to cool down when a magnetic field is removed, creating a more efficient refrigerator that uses about 30% less energy than traditional fridges. Researchers and universities are working to improve this technology and bring more magnetic refrigerators into homes.

Choosing the right roofing material can make a huge impact on how much heat your home absorbs. Certain types of roofing reflect more sunlight than others, which can help to keep your home cooler—reducing your need for air conditioning. These “cool roofs” are designed to absorb less heat and reflect more sunrays than traditional roofs.

Cool roofs are lighter in color and use reflective paint, highly reflective tiles or a reflective sheet covering to achieve their effect. There are several types of cool roofs commercially available, and choosing the right type depends on your roof. Although cool roofs can block heat from entering your home, the overall heat savings you can achieve from roofing depends on your insulation, climate and other factors.

A heat pump clothes dryer can help reduce energy use by at least 28% compared to standard dryers. Instead of releasing warm and humid air through a vent outside the home, heat pump dryers work by sending humid air through an evaporator that removes moisture without losing too much heat.

These appliances don't require outside ventilation like standard dryers, which is a major efficiency benefit. And because these dryers use lower temperatures, they're gentler on clothes. Commercial brands like Whirlpool and Samsung sell Energy Star-certified heat pump dryers, and they typically cost \$900–\$1,500 depending on features. ■



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Beware of Warm-Weather Scammers

YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE will never send anyone to your house to ask you if you need work done. And when someone does come for a legitimate reason, you'll see a uniform, a truck with the cooperative's logo on it and valid identification.

Springtime is scam season. Don't be surprised if you get phone calls, uninvited visitors looking for work and door hangers offering landscaping, roofing, painting and home-repair services.

Your best bet: Say no to all of them. If you need work done around your house, visit tdlr.texas.gov/verify.htm to check the status of contractors or join a contractor referral network that recommends only contractors who are licensed, insured, bonded and experienced.

A few other tips:

Be wary of contractors with out-of-state license plates or detachable, magnetic company signs on their trucks. These could be "travelers," who follow the warm weather from state to state and hire themselves out as home improvement contractors. They're almost always unlicensed, and if you discover a problem with their work later, they'll be long gone.

Do not pay in cash, and do not pay upfront. Instead, work out a payment schedule that allows you to pay in increments as the work is completed.

Get bids from three reputable companies before you start. If you get one offer that's way lower than the other two, some-

When hiring anybody to work at your home:

- ▶ Verify the status of contractors at tdlr.texas.gov/verify.htm.
- ▶ Research and gather information on the project.
- ▶ Ask for references.
- ▶ Get multiple quotes.
- ▶ Get everything in writing.
- ▶ Verify license and insurance.
- ▶ Confirm building permits.
- ▶ Inquire about a lien waiver.
- ▶ Think about future service issues.
- ▶ Arrange a payment schedule—never pay in full upfront.
- ▶ Get receipts for every payment.
- ▶ Hang on to your contract.

thing is probably amiss.

Don't fall for these two lines: "I just finished a job at your neighbor's house, and I'll give you a good price if you hire me today because I'm already in the neighborhood," or "I have leftover materials from a job I just did, and I'll sell/install them here for a deep discount because I don't need them."

Hiring contractors can be expensive. Don't waste your money on one who's not licensed and legitimate. ■