



Win a Home Energy Makeover Worth Up to \$10,000 !

Be one of four co-op members to win up to \$10,000 worth of energy-efficient improvements to their homes.

Each winner will receive up to \$10,000 in energy-efficient home improvements that will save money for years to come. Home improvements will be based on what demonstrates the best examples of energy-efficiency and may include such things as:

- Upgraded heating and cooling systems
- Energy-efficient water heaters
- Improved insulation and weatherization
- Energy-efficient appliances

Enter Today

Entering is easy and only takes a few minutes online. Go to www.texascooppower.com for complete contest rules and an online application, or mail the completed entry form below to Texas Co-op Power Home Energy Makeover, 1122 Colorado St., 24th Floor, Austin, TX 78701. The deadline to enter is March 10, 2010. All mailed applications must be postmarked by March 10, 2010 to qualify. All online applications must be received by midnight on March 10, 2010.

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Square Footage of Home: _____ Year Home Was Built: _____

Name of Your Electric Co-op: _____

Would you like to receive contest updates and special offers from sponsors via e-mail? Yes No



TEXAS CO-OP POWER
HOME ENERGY
MAKEOVER

The Gleam of Steel and Talking Walls

Twelve-year-old Dan Harrison, like most Texas boys, had been interested in guns from a very early age. One of his favorite places to go was the local gunsmith in North Dallas where he grew up. Dan decided to learn everything he could about firearms with the intent of becoming a gunsmith. So, when the gun shop owner challenged young Dan by giving him a broken German Luger with no other instruction other than, “It’s broke—fix it,” Dan was determined he would.

Dan first tore the whole thing down and methodically began studying the mechanics. Eventually, he found a broken piece that could not be repaired, and since parts were not as readily available as they are today, Dan had to make the part. To do that, he invested in a grinder, ultimately created the part, and then had himself a working gun.

But after he had restored his gun, there sat the unused grinder, and he started thinking of other uses for it. Well, what was a boy to do but to make himself a big ol’ Bowie knife? And since that knife he made back in 1948 turned out pretty well, he decided to make his momma, Nellie Bea Harrison, an even better kitchen knife. As it turns out, Nellie Bea was so pleased with her present that she bragged about his efforts to various friends and neighbors.

until he was about 16, and then, as he perfected his craft, he turned to Swedish steel.

As important to his life’s story, Dan’s childhood was auspicious for another reason. He crossed paths with a woman who would be just as important as his mother had been in supporting him in his career path. As Dan tells it, when he was a normal, aggravating 10-year-old boy, a cute 8-year-old girl decided to chunk her penny loafer at him. Dan promptly tossed the shoe back, but not before breaking an egg into it. Somehow that gift did not deter what would become a budding friendship that blossomed into an eventual elopement to Durant, Oklahoma, in 1955, when he made the former Carol Lee Pool his wife and lifelong partner.

Over the years, this husband and wife team has taken a wandering path that has seen active and reserve service with the Marine Corps and an eventual return to Dallas, where Dan worked as a county juvenile officer and then as a Garland police officer. Along the way, the couple had two children, Adam and Dana, and Dan started working long hours as a sales representative for a door company. While the money was good, Dan did not get to spend as much time as he liked with his family or his true calling of knife-making.

A dream was born one day when Carol and Dan were riding motorcycles through East Texas and felt drawn to its serenity and beauty. Taking a leap of faith, they put their Dallas house on the market and then pulled a camper to Lake Tyler East where they lived with their children, whom they enrolled in the Arp school district. In the meantime, Dan started making knives. Without much room in their RV, Dan set up on a park bench and started knocking out all kinds of knives. With the quality and craftsmanship he was demonstrating, he soon became a media darling: the guy who makes phenomenal knives in the park.

Eventually, with the sale of their Dallas house and Dan’s growing reputation, he and Carol were able to set up shop in Edom after receiving an invitation by Doug Brown and other artists there. As it happened, a Dallas businessman named James McCormick owned an old blacksmith’s shop in the artisan town, and he offered it to Dan rent-free if he’d refurbish it himself. Dan accepted and set up his knife business. That shop also became the place of local legend when Dan was asked to serve as a justice of the peace (JP).

Dan’s two-term JP stint came after the townspeople called on him to use his police background to stifle some gang activity that had arisen. In short, it was a case of a bunch of Corsicana boys coming to fight the local boys. Dan squashed it handily. After this, Dan was asked to officially



Knife maker Dan Harrison shows off another one of his master creations to customers, from left, Donna Elam, singer-songwriter Slaid Cleaves and Tony Elam.

Neighbor women came calling to order up their own sturdy kitchen knives, and a business was born. Those first knives were made from power hacksaw blades and metal files. “I made every neighbor lady within miles a kitchen knife,” Dan said. He continued to make knives out of files

run for JP. With some prompting, he did run and won the seat from the incumbent on a write-in with virtually no campaigning.

Some interesting folk tales spring out of that time, and movies might be made if the old walls of the blacksmith shop could talk. But more central to this story is Dan's continued dedication to his knife making.

Dan consistently began to win national and international acclaim for his freehand-ground knives that are made in almost the same way those coveted kitchen knives were. With his notable reputation won, Dan parlayed his custom work into developing designs that became a patented and manufactured series for large-scale manufacturers such as Browning, Kershaw and KA-BAR. Then, the knife manufacturer Alcas hired him as one of its premier knife designers. He traveled the world promoting his designs. After that, he began his own manufacturing and operated a factory on his farm that grew to employ 26 workers, building knives for many knife companies.

Dan said the stress of travel and overseeing the business eventually took a toll on his health and contributed to two heart attacks, which gave him notice that it was time to slow down. So, he sold his business and scaled back to making custom knives one at a time, just like in the beginning, only this time selling them on the Internet.

The work is painstaking, since he hand-grinds and heat treats each piece himself, using a type of raw steel known for its toughness and corrosion resistance. For collectors and art pieces he also uses a type of stainless steel. His forged blades are made by heating a single piece of steel, then shaping the hot metal with a hammer or press. What are called stock removal blades are formed by grinding and removing steel.

Dan makes real work tools—sturdy knives for hunters and farmers that are made to last for generations. But, he's probably more well-known for his highly prized collector and art knives, which have been displayed in galleries and museums worldwide. The handles are custom-made from burl and exotic woods and other materials including fossilized bone, woolly mammoth tooth and animal ribs, and come with intricate guards and pommels. When asked about his favorite material, Dan is hard-pressed to say and muses, "I like all kinds of hand material. I can't say what my favorite is, but right now I might pick the woolly mammoth tooth."

Owners of Dan's knives include such notable world leaders as President Lyndon B. Johnson, the president of Turkey and the royal family of Malaysia as well as entertainers like Ray Price and Sammy Kershaw. Dan's designs also reside in museums as far away as Yokohama, Japan, and have even appeared in movies and a TV series. But even with the



Dan's creations run the gamut from Bowies to file knives and are prized as much for their beauty and workmanship as their utility and sturdiness.

renown he's attracted for his art pieces, he says some of his favorite types of knives are the 10- to 12-inch Bowies. He says even with the acclaim, his real joy lies in making knives that will work hard.

"The average man comes in here and says, 'I cleaned 10 to 12 deer with this knife, and it's never lost its edge,'" he said.

Customers are loyal to his products. One man, whose family had been Dan's customers for years, had a bois d'arc tree that had been on their land for generations and had fallen. The tree was symbolic to them, and they had saved some wood and asked Dan for a custom knife with a handle fashioned from that wood. Years later, the man came back and ordered a knife for his son from that same wood.

Recently, the son came in and ordered a knife for his own son. Dan said that this is where his main job satisfaction comes from. "These [are] people I know. It's not like building for royalty," he said.

Another part of his job fulfillment and life's contentment is working with his wife and helpmate, Carol. He glows when he speaks of her and says she is an incredible artist in her own right, singing beautifully and writing music, even though she only does so for her own enjoyment. Carol also custom crafts all of the sheaths that cradle Dan's works.

Just last year, as Dan and Carol were happily fulfilling custom knife orders from their home shop via Internet sales, Dan got a call from Brooks Gremmels, one of his longtime customers and fans and a developer in Ben Wheeler.

According to Dan, Gremmels said, "Hey Dan, I've got a shop for you here in Ben Wheeler."

Dan said he didn't know before he went down to see it that it was actually his old shop that had stood in Edom. Gremmels had bought it and had it moved into the town that he is revitalizing.

Coming full circle, Dan presides proudly in the very building that could tell so many stories if it could talk. During the refurbishment, some of the "evidence" was lost, but the mystery of the place still looms. On the winter day this interview was conducted, the traffic was steady with a visit from a popular Austin singer, the kid next door, some buyers from Tyler, the kid next door, a covey of local teens, a wood supplier and the kid next door. Seems there might be another knife maker in the making.

Harrison Custom Knives and owner Dan Harrison can be found in downtown Ben Wheeler, served by Wood County Electric Cooperative. Harrison can be reached online at dwhclh@msn.com or by calling (903) 852-3791. His website is www.harrisoncustomknives.com.

Contest Deadline Reminder!

*You Could Win up to
\$10,000 in the Home
Energy Makeover Contest*

Did you forget to enter the Texas Co-op Power Home Energy Makeover Contest? If so, there's still time to beat the March 10 entry date, so don't put off entering for your chance to win up to \$10,000 in energy-efficiency upgrades to your residence. These energy-efficiency improvements could include new ground-source or air-source heat pumps, insulation, water heaters and other upgrades. Applications appeared in the January and February issues of Texas Co-op Power magazine and can currently be found in the WCEC lobby or online at www.texascooppower.com. The winners will be announced in the August issue of Texas Co-op Power.

The application form can be found on page 21 and online at www.texascooppower.com.



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LEGAL NOTICE

The Elections Committee of Wood County Electric Cooperative, Inc., will meet at the cooperative office at 501 S. Main St., Quitman, Texas, at least 40 days prior to the annual meeting. The committee is composed of the following members:

Mr. Glenn E. Morris
268 FM 900 E. 1547
Mount Vernon, TX 75457

Mr. Clarence Meiske
1547 FM 2659
Hawkins, TX 75765

Mrs. Carolyn Bryant
201 East Oak
Yantis, TX 75497

Dr. Beverly Waddleton
P.O. Box 996
Quitman, TX 75783

Mrs. Judy Peoples
1646 VZ CR 1222
Grand Saline, TX 75140-4628

Mr. Willie Cicero
1010 State Hwy. 64
Ben Wheeler, TX 75754-4331

Mr. Mike Giles
690 PR 8571
Winnsboro, TX 75494

This committee shall arrange for a notice to be prepared and posted at the cooperative office at least thirty (30) days before the annual meeting that will include a list of nominations of directors. But any one hundred (100) or more members may make other nominations by official petition but not before January 1 of this year and not less than sixty (60) days prior to the meeting, and the secretary shall post the same at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted.

The committee shall cause to be mailed ballots listing all qualified candidates and a notice of the meeting, at least twenty-one (21) days and not more than thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. This shall include a statement of the number of directors to be elected and will show separately the nominations made by the committee and the nominations made by petition, if any. The Elections Committee shall make nominations for directors for Districts 5 and 6. Directors whose terms are expiring: Jane Roberson, District 6, and Cathy Roberts, District 5. The Annual Meeting of Wood County Electric Cooperative, Inc., will be held at 2 p.m. October 8, 2010, at Governor Jim Hogg City Park in Quitman.



A dirty track on a sliding glass door can create a gap in the door's seal that will allow air infiltration. Clean dirt out of the track regularly.

Caulk around the edges of the sliding glass doors and seal any cracks where the door frame meets the house.



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Sitting on power lines: Safe for birds, not for people.

Power Line Facts and Myths

If birds can touch electrical wires, are they safe for people, too? If you're not on a metal ladder, are you clear of danger from power line electrocution?

Know for sure before you take a chance with your life.

First, the facts: Electricity is always looking for the shortest and easiest path to the ground—a path that can include people and objects that touch or come too close to power lines. Electricity is fast—it travels at the speed of light in a vacuum—and it can cause severe burns or death if it flows through the human body. Take power line safety seriously. Read on to find the facts on the following myths:

MYTH: Wires must be safe to touch if birds can land on them.

FACT: Birds don't represent a direct path to the ground, giving electricity nowhere to go but back to the wire. It's easier for the current to simply stay in the wire. So touching a power line is not safe for humans.

MYTH: Power lines are safe to touch because they're insulated.

FACT: Service lines are insulated only to protect against slight tree contact, but not enough to prevent human injury. Don't touch them! Overhead distribution lines are not insulated at all. Contact with any power line could be deadly.

MYTH: It's safe to rest nonmetal ladders on a power line.

FACT: Anything that can get wet can conduct electricity, and many nonmetal ladders still contain metal parts. Keep your ladder away from power lines, no matter its construction.

MYTH: Ladders are safe near power lines as long as they don't touch them.

FACT: Electricity can "jump," especially when a good conductor like a metal ladder comes close. Keep a safe distance of at least 10 feet.

MYTH: Trimming trees close to power lines is safe if I don't use a ladder.

FACT: Metal isn't the only thing that conducts electricity—the moisture in the tree also can. If a tree comes into contact with the line while you're trimming, it has a direct path to the ground through the tree, your pruning tool and you. Call your electric cooperative when it's time to trim trees near power lines.

East Texas Rural Electric Youth Seminar:

FREE WEEKLONG LEADERSHIP CAMP!

In June, WCEC will send 10 high school sophomores and juniors to a weeklong leadership camp with all expenses paid. The purpose of this camp, the East Texas Rural Electric Youth Seminar (ETREYS), is to enhance leadership and problem-solving skills in a positive learning environment on a college campus. ETREYS was also developed to promote leadership skills and the cooperative philosophy, ideals and values among young people.

The program consists of a week of workshops, seminars and peer-group activities. Participants meet and learn from outstanding motivational speakers and participate in activities planned to promote team building. The program is sponsored by nine electric cooperatives in East Texas and will include about 125 students from East Texas high schools.

ETREYS 2010 is planned for Monday, June 21, through Friday, June 25, on the campus of Lon Morris College in Jacksonville. In addition to developing skills for a lifetime, all participants in ETREYS will be eligible to compete for various college scholarships. To apply, download the application at: www.wcec.org/community/programs.html.