



H.E. Striedel's 50-year career in the cooperative industry ends next month when he steps down as General Manager and CEO of Sam Houston EC.



Reflecting on 50 years of accomplishments and bidding a fond farewell to H.E. Striedel.

You may have already heard the word on the street...next month H.E. Striedel will formally announce his retirement. Mr. Striedel has served as General Manager and Chief Executive Officer of Sam Houston Electric since August 1980, and has been with the Cooperative for a total of 34 years. In that time, he has seen a tremendous amount of change at Sam Houston EC. Some of those changes have been signs of the times, and many more have been the fruits of his initiative and leadership.

In recognition of his 50 years of service in the cooperative industry, these pages of Texas Co-op Power are dedicated to Mr. H.E. Striedel, a man who has devoted the majority of his career to serving the best interests of the member-owners of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative.

The Road to Sam Houston Electric Cooperative

Mr. Striedel began his career in the electric co-op business in his hometown of Sinton, Texas. Having skipped two grades in primary school, Striedel was a high school graduate at age 15. In 1949, after two semesters of college, he went to work in the engineering department at San Patricio Electric Co-op for just 70 cents an hour. Until he was drafted to go to Korea in 1952, Mr. Striedel worked on and off at the Co-op alternating between working life and college coursework.

Home from Korea in 1954, Elridge Striedel became a full-time college student at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos. In the spring prior to earning his bachelor of science degree, H.E. Striedel

earned his title as husband to Lina Rae Wise. After graduation in 1958, he returned to Sinton where he moved up through the ranks at San Patricio Electric Co-op to become General Superintendent. In this position, he was in charge of the co-op's construction, maintenance and engineering activities. Additionally, he served on the Texas Job Training and Safety Advisory Committee. It was his involvement on this committee that ultimately led him to Sam Houston Electric Cooperative.

After 16 years at San Patricio Co-op, Mr. Striedel joined Sam Houston Electric Cooperative as General Superintendent in September 1968. Shortly afterwards, he was promoted to Assistant to the Manager, and then in 1980 he was named General Manager/CEO of Sam Houston EC.

A Commitment To Change And Customer Service

President of the Sam Houston EC Board, Truitt Thomson, remembers what things were like when Mr. Striedel first became General Manager. "Twenty-five years ago, people complained constantly about service. That's turned around now. Almost everyone I talk to has high praise for the Co-op, and I think a large part of the credit is due to our General Manager and how he runs things." Thomson continued, "One of Mr. Striedel's greatest assets is what you might term his 'open line of communication.' He has an open door to the employees, board directors and the members. You don't find that with a lot of general managers. He has the highest regard for the membership. Everything he does is in the interests of the members."

A lot has been accomplished and improved in Striedel's time at Sam Houston EC. When he came to Livingston in 1968,

Sam Houston Electric. That's one employee for every 175 members/consumers. Today, there are 143 employees. That's one employee for every 425 members/consumers. It seems unbelievable! Given the growth the Cooperative has seen, it would have been impossible to become so efficient without the help of new technology and ongoing employee training.

Open to change and committed to a quality staff, Mr. Striedel has built a tight ship over the past three decades. Ernie Miles, District No. 5 Board Member commented, "He's assembled what I think is one of the finer co-op staffs anywhere in the country. We have some fine people working for us, and I have to believe a good deal of that is due to his leadership."

When asked what he considers to be among his top accomplishments as General Manager, H.E. Striedel promptly replied, "I am proud to have worked with a Board of

organizations, specifically, has enabled him to lobby for low power costs and build purchasing power for Sam Houston Electric. In turn, the Co-op has been extremely effective in buying power at the best possible price and then distributing it at the lowest possible cost to members.

Undoubtedly, members appreciate these dollar savings, but that's only one of a long list of accomplishments for which Mr. Striedel is extremely proud. Members might also recall the days before the convenience of two branch offices in Coldspring and Woodville. And we can all appreciate the yearly returns of capital credits which have totaled \$21 million to date.

It's All About Customer Service

Be it through the grade school electric safety education program, college scholarship program, deregulation education initiatives, employee training or one of the many service oriented accomplishments listed previously in this tribute, H.E. Striedel hopes to be remembered for his overall commitment to customer service.

Lynn Hendrix, District No. 1 Board Member, summed up the depth of the dedication it takes to maintain high levels of customer satisfaction, "You can't please everyone, but in our last poll I think we hit 94 percent. That's not bad. You have to do a lot of things to make a customer happy, and Striedel has been committed to each little thing."

As he enters his retirement, the core of what it's all about is still close to H.E. Striedel's heart. "Bottom line..." he commented, "we're a cooperative. And so, it's all about the members. What I want people to remember most about my tenure at Sam Houston Electric is that all our efforts have been for the members, one way or another. I hope we have improved our level of service over the years. I know we've done our very best to maintain low rates, return capital credits and of course keep our members informed."

"We're a cooperative...so all our efforts have been for the members, one way or another. We have always done our best to improve customer service, maintain low rates and keep our members informed."

there were 16,800 meters on Sam Houston EC's lines; today there are 61,000. There were no substations. Today there are close to 40 substations. And, if you need yet another difference between yesterday and today, the Cooperative had only one operating bucket truck. Today there is a fleet of 35. Overall, the Cooperative has grown over 250 percent since Mr. Striedel first arrived in 1968.

R.C. Thomas, Sr., District No. 1 Board Member, shared this, "When Elridge came to the Co-op they didn't even have a digger truck for setting poles. They did it all by hand. Today, they have a lot better equipment to work with. He has helped modernize a lot of things over the years."

Mr. Striedel has always been open to advances and technology. He's promoted numerous innovations, changes and upgrades and has surrounded himself with a staff equipped to help initiate and implement such changes. You might think that it would take hundreds of employees to maintain such a high level of quality service for one of the largest electric cooperatives in Texas. But consider this: in 1968, there were 96 employees at

Directors that truly represent the membership and their needs. I'm also proud of having been part of developing a dedicated, courteous, informed and cooperative staff who know their jobs and are willing to be available when needed to make the system operate effectively."

Building Relationships Delivers Buying Power

Operations isn't the only area where Mr. Striedel has helped build efficiencies at Sam Houston Electric Cooperative. H.E. Striedel is or has been a member of numerous Boards of Directors to cooperatives, associations and the local hospital. In fact, his reputation is known throughout the cooperative business community, regionally and nationally. These memberships, friendships and alliances have given Sam Houston Electric a leg up in the community as a whole, but perhaps most directly when it has come to purchasing power.

H.E. Striedel has served as President of Sam Rayburn Generation and Transmission Electric Co-op, East Texas Electric Co-ops and Sam Rayburn Dam Electric Cooperative. His involvement in these



H.E. Striedel visits with Congressman Jim Chapman during a business trip to Washington D.C. in 1995.

ReMember This

There's more than one way to pay your bill.

Take the hassle out of paying your monthly bill with one or more of these financial services offered by Sam Houston Electric Cooperative.



Automatic Bank Drafting

No more check writing! Just sign up, and your bank account will be drafted each month for the amount of your electric bill. All you have to do is record the amount in your bankbook when you receive your bill statement.

Credit Card Payments

Charge it! Make your payment using your MasterCard or Visa. For even more convenience, sign up to have your credit card automatically charged each month for the amount of your electric bill.



Even Monthly Payment Program

No more surprises! This program allows you to pay the same amount each month rather than deal with the rise and fall of the mercury. Find out if your account is eligible – and take advantage of even payments every month.



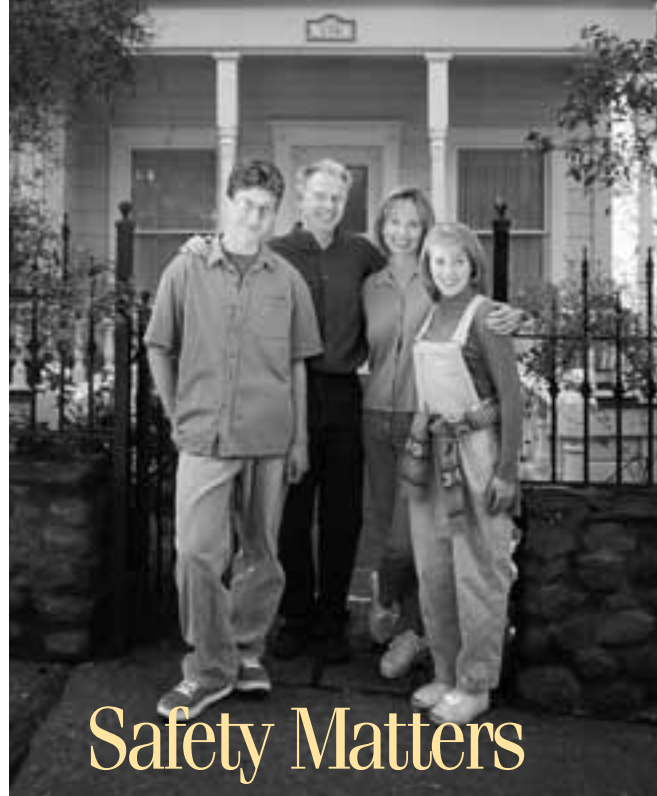
For more information or to sign up for any of these convenient financial services, contact a Member Services Representative at 1-800-458-0381 or visit www.samhouston.net.



EXERCISE YOUR RIGHTS OF MEMBERSHIP — VOTE VIA PROXY

This year's Annual Meeting of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative will be held on November 12, 2002. Since it is impossible for all 48,000 of our members to attend, the bylaws provide for proxy voting so each member may be represented at the annual meeting.

Because each member's vote is important, proxy cards and information about Director elections will be provided with the October issue of Texas Co-op Power magazine. Return your proxy card by November 5, and you will be eligible to win **FREE ELECTRICITY** or one of many other valuable prizes. But remember, your vote is important. Send your proxy card back promptly.



Safety Matters

Going on vacation? Safeguard your home while you're gone.

The last thing you want when you return from being away from your home is to come back to a house with electrical or fire damage. Here are a few common sense ideas for conserving energy and making your home more secure while you're away:

- **Unplug things that don't need to be on** while you're away. This includes your computer, television, stereo, small appliances, etc. By unplugging items, you can prevent costly damage that could result from lightning strikes during summer thunderstorms.
- **Set your thermostat at 78 degrees or higher** to use less energy while you're away. Remember, your air conditioner can only cool up to 20 degrees cooler than the temperature outside.
- **Use timers for indoor and outdoor lights.** Indoors, consider using programmed timers on several different timing cycles. Outside, put lights on timers or photoelectric cells that go on at dusk and off at dawn.

For more information on electric safety, contact Sam Houston Electric at 1-800-458-0381 or visit www.samhouston.net. We're always glad to help.



History is the tie that binds.

There's a tie between folks with deep roots in East Texas. We at Sam Houston Electric Co-op share a long history in the piney woods with many of our member-owners. It's a history that has built trust and loyalty between us.

“ My family moved out here in the 1870s, and we've been squatting on this land ever since. I played in these hills when I was a boy, and I am still running around these same pastures.... I look around and see the house where my mother grew up and trees that my dad grafted in the '30s.... You see, we have a history here. I like that Sam Houston Electric does too. I don't have anything but praise for them. I think it's just a good organization. They've always been our electric company, and they've always been good to me.

...When it comes to all this deregulation talk, I look to them. They know better than I do when it comes to that. I trust them and know that whatever they decide to do, it will be what's right for me. ”

John Clementine Clark, Jr., *Owner, Circle C Ranch*
Former Principal of Woodville Junior High School, Co-op member since 1987



Energizing Communities Since 1939