



## **Sam Houston EC Returns \$1.5 Million to Members**

It's time for capital credits – one of the rewards of membership in Sam Houston Electric Cooperative.

So, what are capital credits? Each month, we collect payments from our member-owners for the service we provide. You're familiar with that part. And we use that money throughout the year to find the best deals possible and cover all the costs associated with delivering reliable, efficient electricity to you. At the end of each year, once we've determined that the financial condition of the Co-op is adequate to meet all normal and emergency needs, the Board of Directors approves the return of a portion of the

extra monies collected to our members as capital credit refunds.

This year the Sam Houston Electric Board of Directors voted to approve returning approximately \$1.5 million in capital credit refunds to our member-owners. Credits are calculated according to each member's electric usage. All eligible accounts were credited with the last three statement cycles in October and the first statement cycle in November.

In the past five years, we've returned nearly \$8.3 million in capital credits. It's part of our commitment to our members; who, after all, are our friends and neighbors.





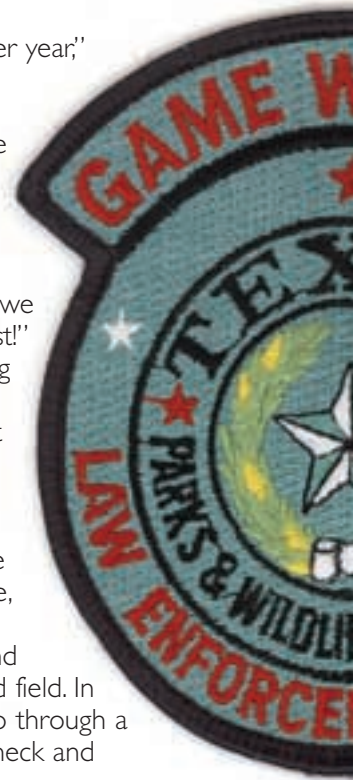
# Texas Game Wardens— Friend, Not Foe

With fall in full swing and winter upon us, hunters across Texas are putting on their camouflage and taking to the fields and forests in hot pursuit of wildlife. And each day, Game Wardens are taking to those same fields and forests as stewards of our valuable wildlife resources.

Contrary to popular belief, Game Wardens do not exist to spoil your hunting, fishing or boating fun. While in the past you may have been tempted to turn and run the other way at the sight of a Game Warden, what you're about to learn just might change your mind.

# The eyes and ears of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

35-40 cadets per year," said Lieutenant Scott Krueger, instructor at the



Simply stated: Texas Game Wardens maintain the checks and balances between the hunters and the hunted. Game Wardens are responsible for enforcement of the Parks and Wildlife Code, all Texas Parks and Wildlife regulations, the Texas Penal Code and selected statutes and regulations applicable to clean air and water; hazardous materials and human health. Game Wardens see to it that hunters, fishermen and even boaters are educated and comply with fish, wildlife and water safety laws.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Game Warden Training Academy. "It's an intensive process, but we get the best of the best!"

Any person wanting to pursue a career as a Game Warden must be 21 years of age and have a four-year, bachelor's degree in criminal justice, wildlife science, fishery science, national resource management, parks and recreation or a related field. In addition, candidates go through a lengthy background check and interview process.

Captain Donnie Puckett, who supervises the field law enforcement for Angelina,

Nacogdoches, Houston, Trinity, Polk, Tyler and San Jacinto Counties stresses the moral character needed for the job. "Beyond the educational requirements, anyone interested

in becoming a Game Warden must have a real desire to serve people," he said. "You must possess an inner quality that makes you want to protect the public, your community and the resource, even if it means risking your own life!"

Classroom study at the Academy is the equivalent of 36 semester hours of college coursework – all crammed into six short months spent living at the Academy. Training includes game and fish laws, criminal law, citation and

Throughout the hunting season, Game Wardens spend an extreme amount of time in the field responding to hunting related complaints from the general public and other hunters. The first place you may encounter a Game Warden would be when you get out of your vehicle to begin hunting for the day, or when you return to your vehicle for a lunch break. With your hunting equipment in hand, a Game Warden may ask to check your licenses and permits, inspect your firearm, take a look at the game you have taken or just engage in friendly conversation.

You may also see a Game Warden deep in the woods on foot patrol or encounter one at a checkpoint designed to gather information on wildlife being taken in a given area, and checking for compliance with fish and wildlife laws.



## Sound easy? Think again!

If you're thinking that this Game Warden job sounds pretty easy, think again. It's true, some days are fairly uneventful, but it's really not that simple. Game Wardens are highly trained and disciplined people.

"We get more than 350 applicants for the program and we narrow it down to



**Operation Game Thief** Otherwise known as "Crime Stoppers for Game and Fish," Operation Game Thief is a program offering rewards of up to \$1,000 for people who give information regarding the apprehension and conviction of game and fish violators. This year the program celebrates its 20th anniversary.

According to Buddy Turner, Assistant Chief of Wildlife Law Enforcement, the program has been a success. "Since Operation Game Thief began, we've fielded more than 250,000 phone calls," he recalls. "We've filed over 8,000 criminal cases, assessed more than \$1 million in fines and paid over \$150,000 in rewards."

The theft hotline is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you have information or would like to report suspicious activity, call 1-800-792-GAME.



court procedures, defensive tactics, arrest procedures, firearms training, hunter safety programs, environmental pollution, saltwater and freshwater fishing operations, boating safety and rescue training.

"There is a definite structure to the program," said Krueger. "Classes begin at 8 a.m., and the cadets endure a full day of instruction – a mix of classroom and field training. They get a short break in the evening, and then most of them are up until one or two in the morning studying. Then they're up early the next morning for chores before classes begin again."

## Times have changed for game wardens.

It's become a more complex job. Bob Hall, retired Texas Game Warden and member of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, remembers how it used to be. "It's a lot



different now; the qualifications are strict," he said. "And, way back when I first became a Game Warden more than 30 years ago, we were law enforcement officers, but we were not peace officers."

"Originally, Game Wardens enforced only game and fishing laws," Hall continued. "That's still the primary concern, but now, being a peace officer means that a Game Warden can and will enforce any violation of any Texas law that he happens to come upon."

Ask any Game Warden and he or she will surely have a story that doesn't fall into what you might think is the "typical" job description. These guys have stories that range from drug busts to flood rescues. Truth is, a large part of a Game Warden's job today is to serve warrants and arrest felons.

## Part environmentalist. Part peace officer.

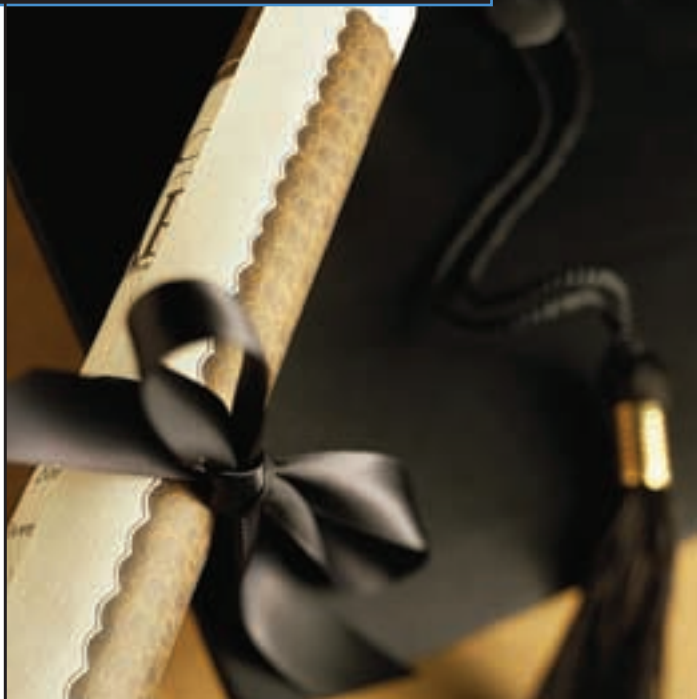
Being a Game Warden isn't easy. But, when asked about the most rewarding part of the job, many would answer the same. "I knew this was a perfect job for me because I am an avid fisherman and hunter, too!" said Puckett. "We not only enjoy working outdoors, we love working with people. We continually teach conservation and respect for our natural resources."

In fact, community outreach is another component of a Game Warden's duties. The Texas Game Warden Association in particular offers a variety of programs designed to educate the public about conservation and wildlife management. Focusing on youth educational programs, the association sponsors many hunts, fishing trips and youth camp experiences, which are designed to teach wildlife management, outdoor skills and water safety, while promoting an appreciation of the outdoor life.

At the end of the day, being a Game Warden is much more than scouring the lake, woods and forests and writing citations. It's a way of life. As you look for that perfect 8- or 10-pointer this fall and winter, remember that an encounter with a Game Warden is a visit from a friend, not a foe. It may even be the start of your lucky day!



# ReMember This



## Brighten Your Future with a Scholarship

### Attention high school seniors:

Did you know that Sam Houston Electric wants to help you pay for college? Sam Houston EC has awarded over \$100,000 in scholarships to more than 120 local students in the past ten years.

As part of our commitment to the youth of the communities we serve, each year Sam Houston EC sponsors a scholarship program for students who dream of going to college. And it's only open to students whose parents or legal guardians are members of the Co-op.

### Scholarships are awarded based on criteria of grades, character, need and goals.

Twenty \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded by Sam Houston Electric Cooperative next May to students who attend public, private, parochial or home school and who plan to attend an institute of higher learning in Texas.

Think you have what it takes? Then apply now. Applications are being accepted through February 1, 2003. Interested students should contact any of Sam Houston EC's branch offices by phone or in person, or visit [www.samhouston.net](http://www.samhouston.net) for more detailed information. Click on "Who We Are," then "Community Partnership" to download an application.

## SAFETY MATTERS



## Set the Holiday Mood Safely

Nothing sets the holiday mood for family get-togethers and parties better than lighting. But what makes our homes bright, cozy and inviting can also result in disaster if proper safety precautions are not followed. Remember these tips when decorating your home for the holidays:

- **Use the appropriate lights for indoor/outdoor use.** Before purchasing lights, read the packaging carefully or the tag on the cord to make sure they're approved for outdoor use. Never use indoor lighting outdoors.
- **Make sure tree limbs aren't growing near or into electric lines** before stringing lights in outdoor trees. Branches and even entire trees can become energized if they contact the line.
- **Plug no more than three sets of lights on a single extension cord,** inside or outside, to prevent overheating and reduce the chance a fire.
- **Avoid routing cords under rugs, appliances or other objects.** Covered cords can overheat or become worn and cause a fire. And keep cords tucked away so they won't trip anyone or look attractive to toddlers or pets.
- **Throw away damaged cords.** The few dollars saved repairing a light string with cracked or broken sockets, frayed insulation or bare wires, or loose connections aren't worth the chance of an electrical accident or a fire.
- **Always turn off tree and decorative lights** before you leave home or go to bed.

For more information on electric safety, contact a Member Services Representative at 1-800-458-0381. We want you and your family to enjoy a healthy, happy and safe holiday season.



## *Our future members and their futures.*

**E**ach year, Sam Houston Electric Co-op sponsors a scholarship program for graduating seniors planning to attend a university in Texas. The monies from the program are intended to help our future members with, well, their futures.

“ I heard about the Sam Houston Electric scholarship from my high school counselor. I think it’s an awesome program. Students need all the help they can get...and they deserve it if they’re willing to put forth the effort to apply and do a good job in school. It’s especially nice that it’s only open to Sam Houston Electric customers. That gives rural students more opportunity and keeps the money in the community. My Sam Houston Electric Co-op scholarship paid for my books and some of my student fees at Sam Houston State.

It’s just really nice that Sam Houston Electric sponsors this kind of program. I know it helps a lot of people out with college. It was definitely a big help to me. ”

**Lindsay Hardy**, *New Waverly High School Class of 2001*  
4.0 GPA student at Sam Houston State University



Energizing Communities Since 1939