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# PAY AS YOU GO

## ELECTRICITY

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SAM HOUSTON EC MEMBERS



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With your new *myPowerUsage* meter, you have the option to sign up for *myPrePay*. There's no difference in the service you'll receive—just in HOW and WHEN you pay for it. When you sign up, you pay as often and as much as you'd like.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



# From the Front Lines to Power Lines

## Electric Co-ops Care About Veterans



Electric co-ops have long had a special affinity for veterans. Perhaps because they are both so closely aligned in outlook, focusing on service, mission and country. Maybe it's because a disproportionate number of veterans come from rural

communities and return to their hometowns following active duty. Or, maybe it's due to the shared work ethic of teamwork, cooperation and a "get it done" attitude. Most likely, it is all of the above.

### Network of caring

At Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, we are among the more than 900 electric co-ops across the country to support and honor our nation's veterans of all generations. We are grateful to have veterans within our ranks, and we are proud to serve veterans and their families within our local community. In addition to providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity, we care for the veteran community in a variety of ways.

As part of our national network of electric cooperatives, spanning 47 states and covering 75 percent of the nation's landmass, there are countless programs that our family of co-ops has initiated. At the national level, we support the "Serve our Co-ops; Serve Our Country" program, a nationwide initiative aimed at employing and honoring veterans, military service members and their spouses.

This program came with a great vision of forming a national coalition with the shared goal of hiring veterans into co-op jobs across rural and suburban America and setting them up for success in their local communities. From line technicians to member service representatives, Sam Houston EC proudly employs veterans.

As part of a co-op veteran outreach effort, America's electric cooperatives are working closely with federal partners, including the Department of Energy, Department of Labor, Department of Defense, Veterans Administration, labor unions and other trade associations on an industry-wide veteran hiring initiative, The Utility Workforce Initiative. Together, these groups are establishing a national employee resource group, Veterans in Energy, which will launch later this year to provide transition, retention and professional development support to military veterans working in the energy industry.

### Many programs, one purpose

At the local level, electric co-ops across America have created their own programs tailored to the unique needs of their community. For example, in the Bluegrass State of Kentucky, Pennyrile Electric Cooperative printed more than 10,000 "thank you" cards that members signed and were later delivered to troops on active duty in nearby Ft. Campbell.

Many electric co-ops sponsor "Honor Flights," enabling veterans from the Korean conflict and WWII to visit war memorials in Washington, D.C. at no charge. In the small town of Fort Dodge, Kansas, Victory Electric Cooperative partnered with the local VFW to create the "Vittles for Vets" program aimed at stocking the food pantry at the Fort Dodge Soldiers Home. Many of the veterans living there and in surrounding communities are on limited incomes, and the food pantry helps the veterans meet basic needs.

Other co-ops forge strong partnerships with the military bases in their service territories. In Wyoming and North Dakota, co-op leaders and staff serve on military-civilian boards and committees that support activities initiated by their respective bases. While the activities may differ, a commitment to supporting and caring for veterans is apparent at every electric co-op across this great nation.

We at Sam Houston Electric Cooperative are proud to be a part of the cooperative network that honors and supports veterans of all ages, ranks and branches of the military.



## News Regarding Credit Card Payments



Everyone is busy these days, so making it easy for you to pay your electric bill is important to us. That's why we offer several options, including payment via credit card. Unfortunately, due to privacy rules, we are no longer allowed to take credit card payments through a live

representative over the phone, effective immediately. The good news is that a special automated system has been set up to make it simple, safe and secure for you to pay with your credit card.

Just call us at 800-458-0381 and select option No. 2 to make a payment. We think you'll like the convenience.

And keep in mind that an even more convenient option is to have your electric bill automatically paid by credit card each month.

It's easy to do, and you'll never have to remember to pay your electric bill again. Just give us a call, and we'll set you up.

## Operation Round Up Awards Grants



The Sam Houston Electric Cooperative Charitable Foundation awarded its first grants in September to SpiritHorse Liberty Therapeutic Riding Center and Kids Free Clothing Exchange. Both organizations received a donation of \$200.

SpiritHorse Liberty Therapeutic Riding Center provides therapeutic horseback riding services free of charge to people with disabilities, children who are victims of abuse and battered women. SpiritHorse serves 60 clients each week from across Sam Houston EC's service area.

Kids Free Clothing Exchange provides children's clothing at no charge to

families in Polk, Trinity, Angelina, Tyler, Liberty, Hardin and San Jacinto counties. Clothing is available for children from infant through 18 years old. If this sounds like a group you would like to volunteer for, they need donations for appropriate school clothes and volunteers to help run the Exchange.

Sam Houston Electric Cooperative Charitable Foundation governs the Operation Round Up program. Each month many members "round up" their bill to the next whole dollar and donate the change to the foundation. Employees also contribute by rounding down their paychecks. The Sam Houston EC Charitable Foundation Board of Directors review grant applications each quarter and award funds to 501(c)3 non-profit organizations that work to improve the quality of life for our members.

**[PHOTO, left to right] Sam Houston EC Chief Communications Officer Keith Stapleton, Kids Free Clothing Exchange Volunteers Lupe Barbosa, Althea Elliott, Berdie Cooper, Nita Uptegraph, and Sam Houston EC Communications Specialist Rachel Frey.**

## Co-op Connections Deals



The Co-op Connections Card is a member benefit program that

delivers discounts from participating businesses, both local and nationwide. Visit [www.connections.coop/samhoustonec](http://www.connections.coop/samhoustonec) for more deals.

### Red Wing Shoes

2105-D West Davis Street  
Conroe, TX 77304  
936-539-2668  
Hours: M-F, 9-6; Sat, 9-5  
Offer: 10% Discount

### Rock'n E RV Park

5221 FM 222  
Coldspring, TX 77331  
936-653-8024  
[www.rocknervpark.com](http://www.rocknervpark.com)  
Office Hours: S-Th, 8-5; F-Sat, 9-7  
Offer: 10% discount off regular night charge. Currently \$32 per night with full hook-ups.

### Simpson Hearing Center

1105 West Church Street  
Livingston, TX 77351  
936-327-3818  
[www.simpsonhearingcenters.com](http://www.simpsonhearingcenters.com)  
Hours: M-F, 9-4:30  
Offer: Free hearing test; 25% discount on MSRP on all new hearing aid fittings.

## Conservation Corner



Heating uses more energy than any other system in your home – typically 42 percent of your utility bill. Proper equipment

maintenance and upgrades, and thermostat settings can save you about 30 percent. SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV

## 2016 Holiday Office Closings



All Sam Houston Electric Cooperative offices will be closed the following days for the 2016 holiday season. Crews and staff will be on call to respond to any unexpected power interruptions. If you experience an outage, please report it toll-free at 888-444-1207. Account services are always available online through [samhouston.net](http://samhouston.net) and our automated phone system at 800-458-0381.

### 2016 Holiday Office Closings

November 24-25	In observance of Thanksgiving Day
December 23	In observance of Christmas Eve
December 30	In observance of New Year's Day

## This November, Let Your Voice be Heard



Low voter turnout has been a topic of conversation for the last several election cycles. Since the 1960s, voter turnout during presidential elections has seen a steady decline – with the occasional uptick here and there. In the 2016 primary election cycle, voter turnout in most states was only 21 to 30 percent, and this was a record year for primary voter turnout!

Some speculate the reason for the decline is because the average American is not as engaged in politics as they have been in the past. And who can blame us really? Often times, we may feel like candidates are not speaking to the issues we care about. Or perhaps we don't feel like we understand enough about the candidates' stances on the issues, or even the issues themselves. But we can change this.

Here at Sam Houston Electric Cooperative, we want to see civic engagement in our rural communities increase. We want to give you what you need to make informed decisions about candidates at all levels of government, not just the presidential race. And we want you to know more about the issues that could impact our local communities.

America's electric cooperatives are doing their part by informing co-op staff and members through Coops Vote, a non-partisan campaign with one simple goal: increase voter turnout at the polls this November. By visiting [vote.coop](http://vote.coop), you can learn about your candidates, access voter registration information and more.

We encourage you to visit [vote.coop](http://vote.coop) and take the pledge to learn more about the issues that impact us locally. Let's work together to improve our communities by increasing voter turnout and changing our country, one vote at a time.

# SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU

**Potshots at transformers are dangerous.**

Target practice and electrical equipment are a dangerous combination. Shooting at power transformers or insulators is not only risky; it's also illegal. If you see someone shooting at power line equipment, please call your local law enforcement officials or Sam Houston Electric Cooperative.



 **Sam Houston**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE  
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[www.samhouston.net](http://www.samhouston.net)





# Old Highway 8



## The historic East Texas Highway traces a century of transportation in the Piney Woods of East Texas

By Randy Mallory

**W**hen Don Martindale, now in his 80s, drives his shiny gray pickup on U.S. 96 north of Jasper, he often thinks back to the “old days”—back when travel through the Piney Woods was hardly the smooth, speedy ride of today. Half a century ago, he bounced along the washboard dirt roads of Jasper County delivering mail to rural homes. By the time he advanced to Jasper’s postmaster in the 1970s, Martindale still had to deal with mud-prone roads that sometimes caused carriers to get stuck. He even had to declare one route “impassable” for three months. But the “old days” of auto travel also evoke nostalgic memories for the retired postmaster.

Today’s wide, high-speed U.S. 96 belies the roadway’s humble beginnings. The highway largely follows the route of a historic road, State Highway 8, created in 1917 to thread through East Texas from the Arkansas border to the Gulf of Mexico. During the 1930s a young Don Martindale regularly traveled the narrow, winding SH 8 in his Grandpa Koonz’s Model A Ford on visits to relatives in the community of Gary. The 90-mile dirt-road drive began before daylight and took four hours to complete. “I was so little I stood in the front floorboard trying hard to see over the hood at what was ahead,” he recalls.

Highway 8 followed Main Street through Jasper across the rock bridge over Sandy Creek, past the 1880s Beaty-Orton House, past the 1936 post office where Martindale would work one day, then past grand homes on the town’s

north side. By the time the family outing reached the Forest Service lookout tower at Horton Hill, between Jasper and Brookeland, the sky brightened enough for grandpa to turn off the headlights. Heavy-laden log trucks sometimes emerged from dense woods onto the roadway. Martindale remembers the self-propelled “doodlebug” rail cars that rolled by on tracks paralleling SH 8. Many wooden barns along the way bore painted advertisements for cars, coffee and tobacco. Fence posts also featured advertising signs for Burma Shave brushless shaving cream. Six signs posted in sequence offered catchy slogans, such as “Special Treatment—Every Hair—Holds it Up—And Cuts—It Square—Burma Shave.” Along the entire jaunt, the wind whipped through the car’s open windows, swirling the smell of fresh-fried chicken brought for lunch by Don’s mother. “Every once in a while, she’d slip me a chicken leg to tide me over,” he fondly recalls.

### ROADS OF COMMERCE

In 1917 the State Legislature created the Texas Highway Department—now the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT)—to modernize roads statewide by qualifying for federal highway funds. Before that, roads were built and maintained using local or county funds. The new agency pieced together existing roadways into new state highway routes and gave them numbers. The easternmost north-south route became State Highway 8, also called the East Texas Highway. Unlike many of the other new state highways—including SH 1 (the Bankhead), SH 2 (the Meridian), and SH 3 (the Old Spanish Trail), the East Texas Highway was not part of a transcontinental route. Highway 8’s main purpose was regional—to improve commercial transportation across the Piney Woods from the Red River to the Gulf. It went through the downtowns of some of the region’s oldest and, at the time, most bustling communities—from Linden, Carthage, Jefferson, and Marshall in the north, through San Augustine, Jasper, and Kirbyville, to Orange, Beaumont, and Port Arthur in the south.



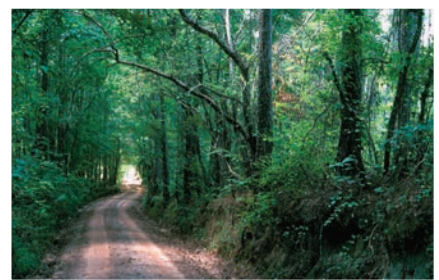
RANDY MALLORY

**[PHOTO]** Former postmaster Don Martindale of Jasper says original stretches of the East Texas Highway (Old Highway 8) crisscross US 96, including this paved portion near a historic fire tower at Brookeland.



RANDY MALLORY

**[PHOTO]** No longer in operation, the Pig Stand coffee shop in Beaumont was one of the nation's first drive-in restaurants built in the early 1920s; a relic of East Texas' early car culture. In 2016, the property was purchased and is set for demolition.



RANDY MALLORY

**[PHOTO]** Big Thicket National Preserve: Trees canopy over a narrow dirt lane, a modern scene typical of early East Texas roadways.



To improve the route, early work crews cleared heavily-forested land and crossed numerous waterways. But the payoff seemed promising—to stitch together, for the first time, a single route that connected the region's towns and industries.

Travel across East Texas had long proved important. Native American trails crisscrossed the region for centuries as part of wide-ranging trade networks. Spanish missionaries of the 17th and 18th centuries trekked from the west to establish missions along the Louisiana border, including Mission Señora Nuestra de los Dolores (Our Lady of Sorrows) at today's San Augustine. Perhaps the earliest north-south road was Trammel's Trace, according to a study of early state highways published by the Texas Historical Commission (THC). During the 1820s the first wave of Anglo settlers traveled from Arkansas to Nacogdoches along the trace, portions of which possibly later were incorporated into SH 8, the report notes. The need for a major north-south route across East

Texas grew during the late 1800s and early 1900s as the region's industries boomed—agriculture (lumber, cotton, and food crops) and petroleum, plus boat-building and shipping on the coast. Burgeoning commercial growth coincided with the arrival of mass-produced vehicles, such as Model T and Model A Fords, that allowed families and businesses to buy their first cars and trucks.

The clamor for better roads—part of the national Good Roads Movement—spread across the region and state. In fact, within a month of the designation of SH 8, the East Texas Highway Association organized in Silsbee to support the route's success. By July 1925 the highway stretched some 270 miles, featuring gravel, sand and iron ore roads in the north and crushed shell roads on the coast. Crews added bridges and concrete culverts where SH 8 crossed creeks and rivers. By the 1930s counties were required to provide 100-foot-wide rights-of-way to allow straightening, where necessary, of the route, as well as

the addition of improved shoulders and drainage. Improved highways spawned a boom in tourism statewide, although SH 8 saw less growth than roads connected to transcontinental routes or near major cities. During the 1930s, SH 8 did carry car campers and tourists to new attractions such as Caddo Lake State Park near Jefferson and the national forests of Southeast Texas. Tourism got another bump in the 1970s when Congress authorized the Big Thicket National Preserve with units spread across several southeastern counties.

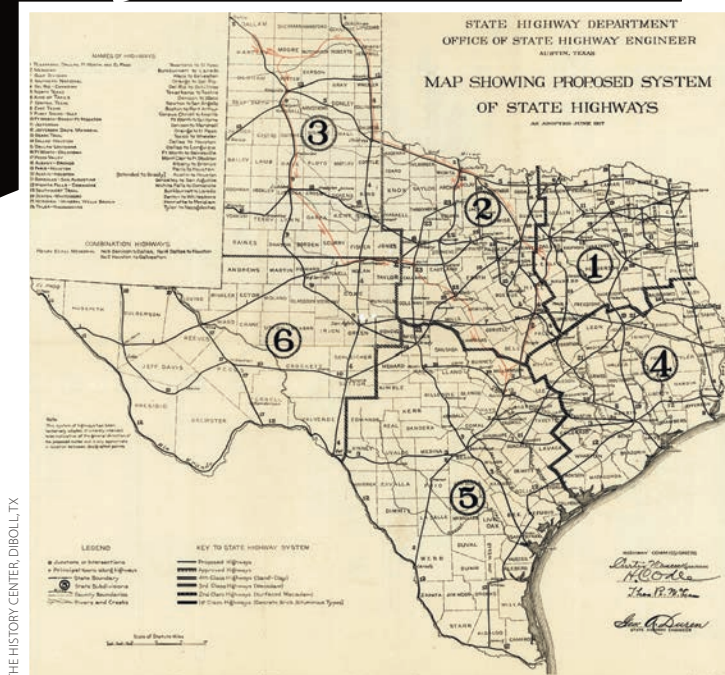
The SH 8 route changed many times over its century of handling traffic.

“Many changes responded to evolving economic conditions,” explains historian David Moore, whose Austin consulting firm (Hardy-Heck-Moore) researched historic highways for the THC report. (Details on the Texas Historic Roads and Highways Program is available online at [www.thc.texas.gov](http://www.thc.texas.gov)). “As the regional timber industry grew, for example, it was



RANDY MALLORY

**[PHOTO]** Crossing Sandy Creek in Jasper, the historic Main Street rock bridge (Old Highway 8) was built during the Great Depression.



THE HISTORY CENTER, DIBOLL, TX

**[MAP]** Highway 8 hugs the East Texas boundary with Louisiana as shown on this 1917 Texas highway map.

faster and cheaper to expand and adjust highways than to build new railroad lines. Roads were also realigned, sometimes bypassing downtowns, in order to improve traffic flow and safety.”

During the 1920s, the route bypassed Orange, veering instead to Silsbee, then to Beaumont and Port Arthur. In the 1930s parts of the road were designated as segments of other U.S. highways. Today, the route remains SH 8 from the Arkansas border to Linden. From there it's U.S. 59 to Tenaha where it becomes U.S. 96 to Beaumont and Port Arthur.

**ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS**

The state highway system turns 100 years old in 2017. The THC surveys of historic highways has set the stage for that centennial by encouraging travelers to visit downtowns once traversed by early highways. Explore the towns connected by the 167-mile stretch of U.S. 96 from Tenaha to Port Arthur, and you'll find fascinating remnants of heritage along the Old 8 route.

In Center you can't miss the two-story Shelby County courthouse. The Romanesque Revival edifice built in 1885 resembles the castles of immigrant architect John Joseph Emmett Gibson's native Ireland. In San Augustine stop at the most famous of the town's 60 state historic structures, the Ezekiel Cullen House, built in 1839 by noted architect Augustus Phelps. The town also boasts the Mission Dolores Visitors Center, which interprets the Spanish mission located here from 1717 to 1763.

Eco-tourists from across the world travel U.S. 96 to the visitor center of the 112,250-acre Big Thicket National Preserve. Its scattered units offer a rare mix of ecosystems, which the United Nations named an International Biosphere Reserve. At Silsbee catch a movie in the historic Pines Theater, in continuous operation since the 1940s, and check out an art or history exhibit at the 1926 Ice House Museum. The largest city on the Old 8 route, Beaumont, honors its oil heritage at the Spindletop-Gladys

City Boomtown Museum and at legacies of oil wealth such as the 1927 Jefferson Theatre and the 1906 McFaddin-Ward House. In Beaumont step back in time with exhibits at the Museum of the Gulf Coast then enjoy a meal or show in a historic building at the Crockett Street Entertainment District.

In Jasper the original route of Old 8 still follows Main Street across the historic rock bridge over Sandy Creek, past the restored 1889 Jasper County Courthouse and the Jasper County Historical Museum on the square. It still passes the old post office (now a VFW hall) and several historic homes on North Main Street.

Once out of town the route winds in and out of modern U.S. 96 in the guise of several county roads. Where the old road passes the old forest service lookout tower at Horton Hill, look around for a shiny gray pickup. You might just find Don Martindale driving along Old 8, thinking about road trips of long ago... and dreaming of fried chicken.