

# Some Like It Hot

Resistance-heating devices, such as heat lamps and space heaters, can cause a big jump in your electric bill. These appliances do not use energy efficiently and can cause a fire hazard. If you must use them, do so only when a room is occupied and turn them off as soon as possible.



**SAM HOUSTON**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



# How Can We Better Serve You in 2018?

## We're here to listen



It's amazing what we learn through listening and observing. Feedback from our members has inspired several changes at Sam Houston Electric Cooperative that will improve the service we provide you.

### NEW SERVICE

If you are a new member or have recently added service

from Sam Houston EC, you may have experienced a delay in getting your service established. After reviewing the causes for the delay, Co-op leadership has updated the new service process during November and December to improve efficiency. We appreciate our members' support, patience and most importantly feedback during this time.

### NEW MYSAMHOUSTON PORTAL

More than 11,000 of our members have also logged on to our updated *mySamHouston* on *SamHouston.net*. If you're logging in for the first time since November 6, you will be prompted to use the last four digits of the primary member's social security number as your temporary password. Once you log in, you can update your password to one that is secure and easy to remember. If you have any problems, contact a member service representative at 800-458-0381. When you log in to *mySamHouston*, you will be given a prompt to take a tour of the newest features, including:

- Usage Explorer—offers a detailed look at your past and current usage.
- Usage Comparison—shows the difference between your current bill and past bills, or other combinations to see how your usage varies.
- Budget Gauge—allows you to set and track a monthly target to help avoid unexpected high utility bills.
- Auto Pay your bill from your bank account or credit card.
- Operation Round Up status and past contributions.
- Custom account notifications based on the type of notification and whether you want to be informed by phone or email.
- Online outage notifications and service requests.

### MOBILE APPLICATION

We're also excited about the launch of our *mySamHouston* mobile application, which enables you to check the status of your electric service and receive real-time updates on energy use. More information about our app is available on the next page.

Digital and mobile services are just new ways of connecting with people, like the member service representatives you reach when you call us, or the ones who greet

you from behind the counters at our office. They help us offer the quality services you expect us to provide.

Our goal is to find ways to help you control energy costs. That's why we communicate with you about energy prices and ways we can work together to help ease the burdens on your wallet. With the budgeting features available on *mySamHouston*, and programs such as Budget Billing and *myPrePay*, we are working to help you control your family's electrical use and cost. If you aren't familiar with these programs, just ask us about them—we're here to listen.

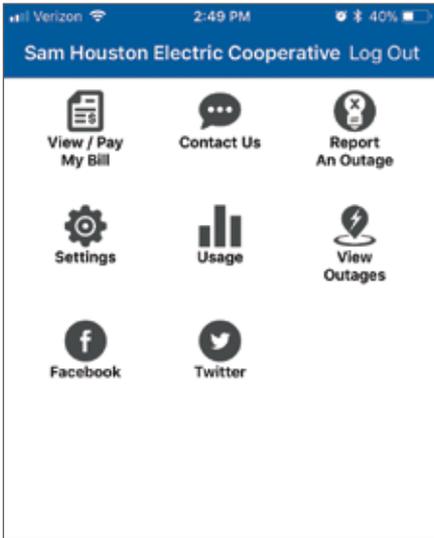
Listening improves understanding, builds trust, strengthens relationships and fosters cooperation. It's also crucial to collaboration and success. That's why Sam Houston EC still loves one-on-one time with our members. Our Annual Meeting is a social event for our whole Co-op family. We hope you'll make plans now to join us in June at the Polk County College & Commerce Center in Livingston for an afternoon of Co-op information, fun and prizes.

So how do we serve you better in 2018? The same way many of us try to serve community, society and family better, each day—by listening. In our offices, on telephones, through social media exchanges and in our face-to-face meetings, we're here to listen.

Whether your question is about energy efficiency, solar panels, electrical service or any of our products or services, just ask us. We'll let you know which product or service we'd recommend based on your needs. Drop in and see us. We're always glad to hear from you.



# New mySamHouston App Available



Sam Houston Electric Cooperative members can download our new mySamHouston app today by searching

for “mySamHouston” in their favorite app store. It’s available for free in the Apple App Store and as an Android App via Google Play.

With this free download, you can enjoy the benefits of your online mySamHouston account access wherever you go. Use the app to conduct routine business with us, like online bill payments, arranging service transfers and requesting service at your location.

The Cooperative has heard the wishes of our members and added the ability to report an outage from the app. Members can even add details to help our line technicians, such as if there are downed lines in the area.

Download it today!

# Co-op Helps Construct Archery Range



A few Sam Houston Electric Cooperative employees were up early on the morning of November 18 to help construct a new archery range that will become part of the Lake Livingston State Park.

“We worked with Lake Livingston State Park staff and volunteers to install roughly 250 feet of split-rail fence to provide a safety barrier for the range,” Communications Specialist Rachel Frey said. “The Park is used by many Sam Houston EC members throughout

the year, so it is only natural that we chose to help with their upgrades.”

Park staff and volunteers have added new and upgraded features recently to Lake Livingston State Park. Aside from the archery range that will open this spring, there is an educational bee colony, renovated walking trails, parking areas and roads. The

Park also now offers kayaks, canoes and stand-up paddle boards for rent.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department opened Lake Livingston State Park in 1977. The Park is located on 635 acres along the southeastern edge of Lake Livingston in Polk County.

**[PHOTO] Sam Houston EC’s Keith Stapleton, Rachel Frey and Jack Davis joined Lake Livingston State Park employees Saturday, Nov. 18, to help construct a new archery range.**

# 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.

## Colvin Auto Parts / NAPA

520 West Church Street  
Livingston, TX 77351  
936-327-NAPA  
Hours: M-F, 7-5:30; Sat, 7-2  
Offer: 10% discount (excludes commercial accounts)

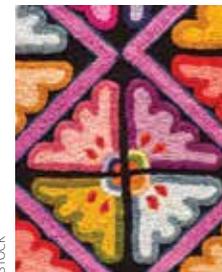
## Davis Doors

911 CR 2276  
Cleveland, TX 77327  
281-659-9072  
DavisOverheadDoors.org  
Hours: M-F 8-5; 24/7 emergency service  
Offer: 5% discount off labor

## Denim and Diamonds Pre-School

9309 State Hwy 75 South  
New Waverly, TX 77358  
936-344-2747  
Hours: 6 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.  
Offer: 10% discount on child-care fee of oldest child (or) 1 free week for one child with paid monthly fee and registration fee.

# Conservation Corner



Looking for an easy way to make your home cozier? Try using an area rug to increase the insulation levels of your floors.

Area rugs are stylish and can keep cool air from entering through your floors. Your toes will thank you!



## Sharing Christmas Blessings



Sam Houston Electric Cooperative employees came together this holiday season to share gifts with local families. Not only were the toys used to decorate Cooperative offices, and bring cheer to employees and Co-op visitors in December, but they were also donated to local children.

Employees also raised money to sponsor a family through the Empty Stocking program. Founded in 1998 the Empty Stocking program is sponsored by the Livingston Interagency Council—a network of social-service agencies that provide various forms of assistance throughout Polk County. Co-op employees then brought joy to children of all ages at Livingston’s Hometown Christmas Lighted Parade after decorating a bucket truck. A big thank you to all the employees who worked hard to put the float together as well as those who took part in the parade.

## Scholarship Deadline Feb. 5



If you know a graduating high school senior, don’t let him or her miss the deadline for the Sam Houston Electric Cooperative 2017-2018 scholarship application. High school seniors, including public, private, parochial and home schooled, whose parents or legal guardians are active members of Sam Houston Electric Cooperative may apply.

Applications are available online at [SamHouston.net](http://SamHouston.net) or at any one of the Co-op’s office locations. Students may also visit their high school counselor for an application.

Completed applications must be received by Sam Houston EC no later than Feb. 5, 2018, to be considered. Both \$3,000 and \$1,500 vocational scholarships will be awarded in May 2018.

“Today’s youth are tomorrow’s leaders,” said Sam Houston Electric Cooperative CEO Kyle J. Kuntz. “We see our scholarship program as an investment not only in our youth, but also in our community. We’re proud to support these outstanding young men and women as they pursue their dreams through higher education.”

Since its inception in 1992, the scholarship program has benefited more than 650 local students to the tune of \$1 million. Scholarships are funded from unclaimed capital credit payments returned to the Cooperative by the State of Texas.

# SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU

**Help us work safely by avoiding distractions.**

When line technicians are working to restore power, distractions can be dangerous. Please help us work safely by staying a safe distance away from bucket trucks, digger trucks and other service vehicles, so line technicians can focus on their work.

If you have any questions, you can call us directly at 1-800-458-0381.



**SAM HOUSTON**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

[SamHouston.net](http://SamHouston.net)

# SAVING THE GLOBE

Lifelong friends bring Bertram's downtown theater back to life

BY LADAWN FLETCHER

The red neon “Globe”—a colorful splash that enlivens Bertram’s downtown—illuminates the street below. The imposing sign appears as if it was plucked from the heyday of single-screen theaters. In fact every aspect of this theater represents a bygone era, and its evolution from dilapidated relic to small-town gem is a testament to perseverance and friendship.

The Globe stood forlorn and empty for decades, but Bertram residents Zach Hamilton, 39, and Lance Regier, 41, its current owners, visualized the theater’s potential. Even though they had never known the structure as anything but an empty shell, the lifelong friends shared dreams of musical glory. Their music initially piqued their interest in the Globe.

“We would pass the theater all the time,” Hamilton says, “and thought it would be cool to fix it up and play there.”

In 1998 they approached owner Tommy Knight about buying the Globe, but family ties kept him from selling. The theater had been a part of his life since he was 8 years old. He’d often accompanied his older brother to work the projector at the then vibrant Globe. Eventually he, too, worked there, and in the 1960s he bought it. Knight kept the

theater open as long as he could, but in the early ’80s, dwindling revenues forced him to close for good.

So it sat. Decaying.

In 2009 as the city took the first step toward demolishing the building, Hamilton and Regier approached Knight again.

They shared with him how they wanted to show movies and bring in popular bands to rock the joint. Knight was pleased they wanted to keep it as a theater.

“Can I work there sometime?” he asked. When they said, “Yes,” so did he.

So the Globe joined the list of Texas single-screen theaters experiencing a renaissance. The LanTex Theater in Llano, the Pines in Lufkin and the Odeon in Mason all have been refurbished and put back into commission for movies and live performances.

Terry “Tex” Toler, Main Street program manager and historic preservation officer for the city of Llano, is happy to see the old theaters return. “When the theaters are restored, they bring a vitality back to a downtown area that really triggers a lot of economic activity around it,” he says.

With the help of Main Street and other programs, buying an old theater and fixing it up is not unusual: Local governments, partnering with cultural and economic-development organizations, frequently take up such projects. What is unusual about the Globe project is that two individuals took on the renovation.

Hamilton and Regier, both members of Pedernales Electric Cooperative, spent more than \$60,000 just refurbishing the building, a modest sum made realistic only because they did much of the work themselves. They each worked a regular job, saved money for the next phase of construction, then worked on the Globe each weekend. The next week, they turned around and did the same thing.

They never dreamed it would take so long.

“We thought it would take maybe a year or two to complete the project,” Regier says. “We bought it in 2009, and we finished in 2015.”

The 1935 art deco theater stands reincarnated. Regier and Hamilton scoured auctions across the country, in person and online, to find authentic architectural elements. As office buildings, schools and other theaters



[PHOTO] The Globe, built in 1935 and refurbished in 2015, features live music and shows classic films.

from the same era met their demise, the two swooped in to secure light fixtures, seats and embellishments that now lend visual intrigue and authenticity to the Globe. When originals couldn't be found, they used convincing reproductions.

From the copper ceiling tiles above to the mosaic tiles on the floor below, the theater speaks of another time.

As beautiful as the Globe is to see, its live performances set the stage for visitors to experience the magic. For music lovers and performers, both famous and not yet famous, the Globe holds a special allure.

The original red granite walls enhance the sound, and the space, which holds

about 300, is gaining a cult following among artists who play there.

"The acoustics there are absolutely exceptional," says Anton Raby of Big Anton & the Alley Cats, a rockabilly band that has played larger venues. "I think my band sounds better playing there than in any other venue."

Regier says artists typically respond to the Globe in this way. "They want to keep returning to the theatre after playing the first time," he says.

Live music brings new guests into the city, but locals love the movies. The Globe features classics, including westerns and other features from back when. "Every show we get people who

remember seeing movies there when they were younger," Regier says.

New memories are being created, too. Trudy Collier moved to Bertram three years ago with her husband, who grew up there.

"They play the old movies, and that is a blast," Collier says. "I took my son to see 'The Wizard of Oz,' and it was great sitting with my neighbors, enjoying a night out that you didn't have to drive far to go to."

People like Collier see the Globe as a gift to the community, but it is also a monument to the friendship and doggedness of two men making a youthful dream come true.

LADAWN FLETCHER IS A HOUSTON-AREA WRITER WHO ENJOYS WRITING ABOUT TEXAS.

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# MESQUITE TREAT

BEANS FROM THE UBIQUITOUS TEXAS TREES SURPRISE WITH FLAVOR AND NUTRITION

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By Eileen Mattei

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**A** tantalizing aroma floats through Victoria Cappadona's kitchen, where mesquite bean pods are simmering. She offers me a taste of the warm Cappadona Ranch mesquite jelly she creates from an infusion of mesquite pods mixed with lemon, sugar and pectin. The silky, amber jelly melts on my tongue and makes me want to eat it by the spoonful. Imagine honey collected from hives in a sun-drenched grove of flowering mesquites.

When city girl Victoria Barrera from McAllen married into a Hidalgo County ranching family (members of Magic Valley Electric Cooperative), she asked her father-in-law about uses for all the mesquite beans. Fred Cappadona told her that cattle and wildlife eat them. Years ago, he explained, he heard stories about Native Americans and early settlers making flour from the pods and medicinal remedies from the tree's leaves, sap and bark.

In 2012 while researching traditional uses of mesquite, Victoria Cappadona

found that mesquite concoctions, lotions and teas had long been used for fevers, burns, wounds, headaches, eye inflammations and digestive problems. The potential use of mesquite beans in recipes captured her attention.

"Who would have thought mesquite would be so amazing a food? The shell is what has the natural sugar and flavor of the mesquite," she explains. "The natural fructose means it doesn't initially require insulin to break it down. And since it takes hours to metabolize, you don't get sugar spikes."

Nutritional studies have revealed that mesquite beans have a low glycemic index and are high in fiber, calcium and iron.

Victoria Cappadona perfected a mesquite bean jelly recipe and made jars for family and friends. As demand soared, she developed another mesquite jelly with chile pequin that balances sweet and hot. She designed the Cappadona Ranch Mesquite Bean Jelly logo and began selling both varieties at livestock shows, festivals and online.

"Many older people say, 'Oh, my gosh, that jelly reminds me of when I was a kid chewing on a mesquite bean,'" said Cappadona's husband, Justin. And her father, a retired physician, recalled eating mesquite pods as candy. That's no surprise, since the pods' sugar content can reach 30 percent.

During June and July, the Cappadonas and their three sons—Cayetano, 15; Federico, 13; and Vicente, 10—harvest mesquite beans on the 2,500-acre ranch.

"A good mesquite looks like a Christmas tree covered in golden pods," she said.

Justin Cappadona drives the front-end loader fitted with a railed platform where the boys stand and harvest the beans. In 2016 they picked enough to fill 16 55-gallon drums. That supplies enough for all the flour, tea, coffee and jelly they produce in a year. About two pounds of beans can be simmered into enough jelly for more than 100 eight-ounce jars.

"The kids are learning responsibility and the value of a dollar," Victoria



**[PHOTO]** Cayetano, Federico and Vicente Cappadona collect mesquite bean pods that their mother will make into mesquite jelly, coffee and flour.

JOHN FAULK

Cappadona said. “We have a limited window for picking, so when there is work to be done, they need to help out. When they are involved, they appreciate the results more.”

Victoria Cappadona sun-dries the pods and stores them to make jelly year-round. “Heaven knows we have enough mesquite trees to do that.” Previously, even after doubling production every year, she ran out of jelly before Christmas. She has moved the operation to a commercial kitchen in McAllen to accommodate growth.

The website, [cappadonaranch.com](http://cappadonaranch.com), offers Victoria’s video recipes, including mesquite flour pancakes.

“The nut-flavored flour, ground from the whole bean, is great for baking and gluten-free,” she said. “You replace one cup of wheat flour with one-quarter to one-half cup of mesquite flour. The pancakes taste so nutty and sweet, they don’t need syrup.”

An accident led to another tasty product.

“The boys were squabbling, a delivery man was at the door and beans were drying in the oven. When I got back to

the beans, they were roasted,” Victoria Cappadona said. Recalling a story that Civil War soldiers made camp coffee from roasted mesquite beans, she decided to try it herself and grind the pods in a coffee grinder and brew them. The result was a savory, high-protein coffee substitute. She also ground roasted mesquite seeds for tea. “With their natural sugar, the tea and coffee provide an energy rush without caffeine.

**“A GOOD MESQUITE LOOKS LIKE A CHRISTMAS TREE COVERED IN GOLDEN PODS.”**

“We suspected mesquite’s nutritional value was remarkable, but we wanted proof—and got it,” she said, thanks to a McAllen Chamber of Commerce Innovation Grant.

It enabled Cappadona Ranch to order nutritional studies that cost \$1,000 per product. A USDA Value-Added Producer Grant helped buy ingredients and packaging. The brand participates in the Texas Department of Agriculture’s Go Texan program, which promotes the state’s products.

While cattlemen might have a love-hate relationship with the mesquite tree itself, Cappadona Ranch has transformed the tree’s beans into delectable native Texan foods.

EILEEN MATTEI, A MEMBER OF NUECES AND MAGIC VALLEY ECS, LIVES IN HARLINGEN.