SPRING HAS SPRUNG AND (JUST MAYBE) OLD Man Winter has receded to the north once more. It’s good to put some distance between us and the past three months of weather. So now, many of you are eager to get your lawns and gardens back to form. I know some of the flooding and bitter winter temperatures have taken a toll on our homes’ foliage. Quite a few of you might be planting or replanting trees, as Arbor Day falls in April. If you are planning on planting trees this year, please keep two important points in mind.

First, you should always use the Texas one-call network prior to any extensive excavation of soil. While you might think you know where every buried gas or electric line (if any) is on your property, wouldn’t you want to know for sure? The one-call service will cost you absolutely nothing and might save you a whole lot of trouble. Even in our business, we utilize a one-call system to seek out hidden underground dangers. Just dial 8-1-1.

Second, please carefully consider any spots where you plan to plant trees. Make sure you are not planting trees directly underneath overhead power lines. Even though you may think a sapling is so small at the time of planting that it won’t come into contact with our power lines, trees grow. Far too often our vegetation department has to remove trees that were planted beneath a power line or too close to our utility easement. We then become the bad guy when we show up to cut the unsafe tree down. Rest assured, we don’t want to do cutting members’ trees down, but we will do what’s necessary to maintain the reliable service our members expect from us. Always remember when you plant trees anywhere in the vicinity of a power line to keep the tree a minimum of 40 feet from the middle of our power line easement.

At the end of March, we said farewell to Don Roberts, who retired after 35 years with the co-op. Cow Trail Don—it’s time to cut a new trail, so please don’t get lost! We wish Don the best as he starts this new chapter in his life.

Also, I would like to remind our members that the annual meeting is just around the corner. Like last year, we are using the new postcard registration method. You will receive a postcard attached to your May issue of Texas Co-op Power. Please remember to detach it from the magazine and bring it to the annual meeting if you plan to attend. By using this method, we can eliminate long lines at the registration table. It was well-received last year, and we anticipate the process will go even more smoothly this year.

Our annual meeting is where we exchange information concerning our financial solvency, elect and/or re-elect three of the nine board members, and give updates of events that transpired in 2017. Our director election process can be found in our bylaws on our website.

I hope to see many of the familiar faces that I have grown accustomed to seeing over the years. What would really make me happy is seeing a whole bunch of new faces, too—this cooperative belongs to you, our members, and your participation is welcome.

One last thing of note: On April 9, please join me in honoring our linemen as we celebrate National Lineman Appreciation Day. These guys are extremely dedicated to their jobs and serving our membership.

Until next time, take care.
SAN BERNARD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Registration at 8:30 a.m. • Meeting at 10 a.m.

THE AUSTIN COUNTY EXPO CENTER

WHEN YOU RECEIVE YOUR MAY ISSUE OF TEXAS CO-OP POWER, IT WILL HAVE A DIFFERENT cover; this is called a dust cover. Please remove and bring the registration card from the dust cover or bring the entire dust cover to the annual meeting for registration. This will be used as both your ticket to register and door prize ticket! This process will make registration more efficient and alleviate long lines. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call any of our offices. Our customer service representatives are always happy to help! We look forward to seeing you at the annual membership meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING PROGRAM

Registration of Members, 8:30 a.m. (Registration will close at 10 a.m., and you must be registered to vote and receive your complimentary meal ticket.)

Business Meeting, 10 a.m.

Barbecue Meal, 11:30 a.m.

THE AUSTIN COUNTY FAIR ASSOCIATION CONVENTION CENTER
Highway 159 E., Bellville 77418

We look forward to seeing you at the SBEC Annual Membership Meeting.
DON ROBERTS, SAN BERNARD ELECTRIC Cooperative’s electric systems manager, retires April 1 after serving our members for more than 35 years.

Roberts began his career with San Bernard Electric working in the meter shop in 1982 as apparatus technician. His job included, but was not limited to, substation maintenance, metering, testing relays, and painting and testing transformers.

Before his time at SBEC, and before many cooperatives had their own metering shops, he worked in metering for the Lower Colorado River Authority.

“Funny thing is we [LCRA] did all the instrument metering for all the co-ops,” Roberts recalled. “We hung loops for San Bernard EC, Pedernales EC, Bandara EC, etc. out of one office because that is how lightly populated the service territory was at the time. Now, everyone has their own metering shop.”

After going to school at Texas State Technical College and working outside the cooperative world for about three years, Roberts was ready to get back to a cooperative (and out of Houston).

“My plan was always to get back up to the heartland of Texas and back to a co-op,” he said. “I sent out 20 résumés and took a $4/hour cut in pay to work at San Bernard. San Bernard proved to be the best move I ever made.”

Roberts feels his biggest accomplishment in management at San Bernard Electric is changing the weekly duty rotation to a daily duty rotation and implementing the 16-hour rule.

“It took a lot of stress off the linemen,” he said. “Duty rotation is the guy who gets called at night. It used to be the rotation would start on a Friday and last through the week. Sometimes it wasn’t bad, but when there is a week of bad storms, the same guys took the calls each night and by the end of the week, the linemen were like walking zombies.”

This change has helped improve San Bernard Electric’s safety record over the years and ensures the linemen make it home to their families each night.

One of his favorite memories at the cooperative is of his first day on the job. Even though he and future General Manager Billy Marricle both had college degrees, their boss handed them a wire brush to go knock rust off radio towers.

He looked at Marricle and laughed: “I am so glad we got an education.”

Technology has changed a lot during Roberts’ time here at San Bernard Electric.

“We went from an induction disk meter to now where you cannot do anything without a computer and the intense knowledge of the program that goes with it,” he said. “It’s not like you can be a jack-of-all-trades anymore. You need to specialize in one thing nowadays.”

When asked what advice he would give his coworkers looking back, he responded with a phrase from Erwin Skalka of LCRA. “You get paid for what you do and, by definition, that makes you a professional. You should act like one.”

Now that retirement is upon him, he is excited about his new plasma cutter, getting to work on his old Jeeps, beekeeping and not having a set schedule for a while.

We thank Roberts for his years of service and for improving the quality of our employees and members. He will be missed, and we wish him a long, happy retirement.
SBEC Helps Out Neighboring Cooperative

SAN BERNARD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS GUIDED BY THE SEVEN Cooperative Principles, which includes Cooperation Among Cooperatives. SBEC sent several crews to aid United Cooperative Services in Stephenville in February to repair 400 outages caused by an ice storm. United had over 8,000 members without power for several days and enlisted the help of neighboring cooperatives to help restore power across their 10,500 miles of line. SBEC joined Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative, HILCO Electric Cooperative, CoServ and many others in the restoration efforts. This core principle of working together, particularly in times of need, distinguishes cooperatives from other electric companies.

Waller County Realtors Luncheon

From left, guest speaker state Rep. Cecil Bell, Prairie View Mayor David Allen and SBEC General Manager Billy Marricle

From left, Rep. Cecil Bell, San Bernard EC’s John Spiess and Prairie View Mayor David Allen
OUTSIDE OF HEMPSTEAD CITY LIMITS IS A UNIQUE BUSINESS that prides itself on craftsmanship and supporting the local economy.

Frazier’s Ornamental & Architectural Concrete began in 1962 when Billy and Edith Frazier opened a small produce stand on Business Highway 290 to help support their family. After several years, Edith Frazier became tired of the amount of waste that came with owning a fruit stand and challenged her husband to find a different, nonperishable commodity to sell to support their family.

“My dad thought of the idea driving one day near the borders of Mexico,” son Billy Frazier said. “He saw people selling concrete and Mexican curios.”

The family venture then transformed from a fruit stand into a decorative concrete business. Now, Frazier’s is one of the area’s best-known sources for home and garden decor and commercial site finishing. The original fruit stand has since become the workshop where Frazier’s creates many one-of-a-kind concrete pieces for yards, landscapers, commercial builders and even Ukrainian politicians.

The current location sits at the intersection of Highway 290 and Highway 6 on the outskirts of Hempstead. If you’ve ever driven by, you may have noticed the beautiful setting of this unique store and the large dinosaurs that sit alongside the feeder road. For many motorists passing by, this eye-catching building sparks curiosity, inciting many stops along the busy intersection.

The purchase of this land was encouraged by another of Hempstead’s leading businessmen, Lawrence Marshall, who owned the land in the early 2000s. When Billy Frazier and Fernando Gomez purchased a truck from him, Marshall offered them a deal they couldn’t refuse.
Now Frazier laughs at the informal and impromptu meeting with Marshall and the excitement he had when showing them this piece of property that was adjacent to his car dealerships. “I’ve had other offers from people, but based on what I know about you and what your family has done for the community, I want to show you this land and make you an offer to expand your business,” Frazier recalled Marshall saying.

“We wanted to do something attractive as a gateway to Hempstead,” Frazier said. “We had the backing of our local bank and community, and we pressed on with creating the building in 2003 and our grand opening in 2005.”

Frazier’s sits on 20 acres of wooded and cleared land with about 8 acres of ornamental concrete to walk around and enjoy. They also have a garden center inside their football field-sized showroom, which is filled with wind chimes, garden flags, ornamental glass balls, solar lights and anything else your heart can dream up for an outdoor oasis.

“We have the concrete, aluminum, carved granite from China, wooden and metal items,” Frazier said. “We have a wide spectrum of decorative and structural items available.”

Frazier has intentionally broadened the selection to serve a diverse clientele. Frazier’s attracts professionals, architectural contractors and homeowners.

“We tend to attract people who want to produce a living sanctuary in their yard,” Frazier said. “They can enjoy a peaceful experience when they get home. They can sit on one of our benches, listen to the natural sounds from our fountains and watch the birds bathing in our bird baths. It is just a complete stop for customers to stop and get what they need to enjoy their outdoor space.”

The store is distinct because it is also a manufacturer, unlike nearby competitors. It’s also well-known for its various finishes.
and colorful artwork, done by Frazier’s sister, Charlene Todaro. “My sister has been doing this for decades,” Frazier said. “She helps to define the Frazier look and separate our look in the way she finishes our product.”

The many finishes available include bronze, earth tones and stains. In addition to some very detailed items, the shop also offers personalized and custom work of any paint color or finish.

“We also engrave pieces, and that sets us apart from a lot of companies,” Frazier added. “We can do estate names, memorials and statues, as long as the concrete is smooth.”

Frazier’s is so well-known in the concrete world that they’ve even had an ambassador from Ukraine come to purchase pieces of ornamental concrete for a park outside the country’s capitol.

“They wanted concrete statues, benches, fountains and a variety of ornamental pieces,” Frazier said. “This tall guy walks in one day and hands me his business card [in Russian] and just watched my reaction. He then looked at me and said to turn the card over and the other side of the card was in English.”

One of Frazier’s recent adventures involved purchasing the molds and designs of Houston Art, Stone and Staff. The molds were used for designing buildings in and around notable Texas sites such as the Majestic Theatre, Rice Hotel and the three-dimensional star on the San Jacinto Monument.

“The way we present the merchandise separates us from a lot of other similar businesses,” General Manager Fernando Gomez said. “We have grass and that is for a reason. We want our statues to look natural and more inviting for our customers. It would be way easier to pour concrete than to mow and weed eat the grass.”

Next time you are in or passing through Hempstead, make a stop and see what Frazier’s has to offer. You never know what treasure you might find.
TRADING POST

FOR SALE

NEW GOLF CART ENCLOSURE—For 2-passenger golf cart, beige, 72 in. x 41 in. x 54 in., $50. Call (979) 865-8820.

UTILITY TRAILER—20-ft. long with 4-ft.-high sides and 14,000-pound axles, $3,150. Call (281) 658-8896.

TRAVEL TRAILER—2011 Wildcat, 28-ft. 5th wheel, 2 slides, awning, queen bed, rear kitchen, new A/C, housed, only one trip, $19,000. Call (361) 573-2062.

VARIOUS—Houston-Lamar High School 1971 yearbook “Orenda,” $35; bookcase with two shelves and enclosed bottom, 28 in. x 6 ft. x 12 in. deep, $40; Metal desk 3 ft. x 5 ft., $30; Call (979) 877-7257.

VARIOUS—2008 Ford F-250 crew cab, gasoline, automatic, 245,000 miles, great farm or work truck, new tires and new battery, $5,995; Santa Marsala 3-row diatonic accordion in keys of G/C/F, $200; Weltmeister single row diatonic Cajun-style accordion in key of D, $495. Call (281) 723-1859.

VEHICLE—Land Pride 4x4 utility vehicle, 200-hp Honda engine, 530 hours, has electric dump, $3,500, Columbus area. Call (713) 882-6930.

HOMES FOR SALE IN BROOKSHIRE AREA—One home is a 3BR/2BA with garage on ½ acre, 1,400 sq. ft., plus bonus 800 sq. ft. storage/apartment. One home is a 2.5BR/1BA, 1,000 sq. ft. Available to view on weekends. Call (281) 902-8869 for more information.

OLD BOLEN TRACTOR—Has not run in years, may be good for parts or may run again. It comes with 3 implements. $400 OBO. Call (281) 682-1009.

1994 GMC SIERRA—Runs good, will trade for 3-point auger OBO. Call (361) 676-1079.

ESTATE SALE—Old records, all singers, all kinds of music! Books, movies and other materials to read or save. Have to see to appreciate. 21-in. TV (works). Call (979) 732-2041.

SUV—2010 Subaru Forester X Limited, 151,111 miles, all power, one owner, no smoke, no pets. Call (979) 530-7975.

CAMPER—2016 Cougar, 28 ft., garage kept, used twice, all remote-controlled, must sell due to health problems. Paid $45,000 and am selling for $35,000. Call (936) 372-5586.

B-FT. BUSH HOG SHREDDER—Model 3008. Barn kept, excellent condition. Call (979) 732-7629 or (979) 732-3086.

ADVERTISE IN THE TRADING POST

SBEC members are invited to submit ads for the Trading Post to P.O. Box 1208, Bel- ville, TX 77418 or lsamford@sbec.org. However, no commercial business ads will be accepted. Ads are placed on a first-come, first-served basis, and we reserve the right to refuse any ad. Please submit your ad by the 20th of each month. (If you submit an ad by April 20, it will appear in the June issue). Your ad will be published in two consecutive issues, then deleted. If you want the ad to run another two months, you must resubmit the ad. The ad will not exceed four consecutive months.

FREE

ROOSTERS—To a good home. Call Gene/Betty at (210) 846-5676 or (979) 484-1875.

VARIOUS—¾-inch poly irrigation hoses and 19-string aircraft cable. Call (281) 658-8896.

WANTED

LOOKING FOR A SMALL DONKEY OR BURRO—Call Gene/Betty at (210) 846-5676 or (979) 484-1875.

OLD HOUSE/BARN WOOD—Willing to take down. Please call (979) 733-8474.

DOUBLEWIDE MOBILE HOME—In good condition. Weimar/Columbus area. Call (979) 733-8474.

LOOKING TO PURCHASE 100+ ACRES—In Colorado County area. Property can be in any condition.

OLD/ANTIQUE GAS PUMPS—Please call Richard at (979) 865-3098.

OLD/ANTIQUE CARS, TRUCKS, CAMPERS—Any condition. Send photos to (713) 899-0999.

USED CATTLE PANELS OR USED CORRAL PANELS—Call (979) 877-8869.

TRADE—5-month Blue India peahen for another Blue India peahen 3 years or younger. Call or text (281) 389-5407.

SERVICES

FREE WILD HOG REMOVAL—Use dogs, well experienced, willing to travel. Call (832) 715-1130.

Wedding Venues Wanted

SAN BERNARD EC IS LOOKING FOR wedding venues for a summer feature in Texas Co-op Power. If you are a wedding venue in SBEC’s service territory, please contact Lari Samford at lsamford@sbec.org or call her at the Bellville office at (979) 865-3171.