

# A Fresh Start



MESSAGE FROM  
GENERAL MANAGER/CEO STEVE YOUNG

**THERE'S A CERTAIN POETRY TO OPENING A PRISTINE CALENDAR** each January. The clean slate, absent scribbled-in appointments and obligations, encourages reflection and a bit of personal accounting. The calendar's empty grid represents promise—the potential for a fresh start in a new year.

Of course, this month, that sense of possibility is accentuated as we embark on not just a new year but a new decade. It's an especially opportune moment to think about habits and practices that we may want to change, maintain or cultivate.

At Hamilton County Electric Cooperative, we like to take stock in the same way. Each year presents 365 (or 366 this leap year) new opportunities to earn our members' trust and business, and January 1 is a good time for all of us here to think about the best ways to do that.

As you know, the co-op's most fundamental mission is to provide you the best possible electric service at the lowest possible cost. That's what our staff members—from employees at the front desk to warehouse personnel and from the engineering

department to our human resources team and everyone in between—dedicate themselves to, year in and year out. For their dedication, I'd like to express my gratitude. All of them come to work each day with the goal of service to our members foremost in mind.

Our board of directors deserves a big thank-you, too. The members of Hamilton County EC's board have taken on the weighty responsibility of running a multimillion-dollar utility. The commitment they display in

keeping up with the changing regulatory, technological and legislative landscapes that affect our industry is laudable. Decisions made by the board aren't undertaken lightly, as directors know that the outcomes of those choices affect thousands of their fellow members. Their diligence is appreciated, and I strive every day to emulate their conscientiousness.

A final thank-you goes to you, our members, who make all our jobs possible. Your support and understanding when things don't go right, and your input, whether as suggestion, compliment or complaint, helps us do a better job for you.

Without you, there would be no cooperative. For you, for this co-op and for ourselves, you can count on us at Hamilton County EC to do our best to be worthy beneficiaries of 2020's bounty and promise.

## New Meter Policy Takes Effect in 2020

**EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2020, ONLY qualified Hamilton County Electric Cooperative employees may remove or reinstall meters.** Neither electricians who are unaffiliated with Hamilton County EC nor the co-op's members will be allowed to remove or reinstall meters.

Members and electricians must contact the cooperative to request a meter removal and reinstallation by cooperative personnel. Upon receiving the request, we will do everything within our power to complete the work promptly. We recommend that you notify us in advance, preferably with at least 24 hours' notice.

To request meter removal or reinstallation, call the cooperative's main office at **(254) 386-3123** or **1-800-595-3401 Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.** Servicemen will not remove or reinstall meters after office hours or on weekends except in emergency situations.

HCEC employees are required to follow federal laws when working around energized equipment. The following regulations apply when HCEC personnel work with energized meters:

**1. OSHA 1910.269(I)(1)(i):** Only qualified employees may work on or with exposed energized lines or parts of equipment.

**2. OSHA 1926.960:** Outlines general requirements for necessary personal protective equipment when working around energized equipment.

For Hamilton County EC employees, required PPE consists of a nonconductive hard hat, safety glasses, flame-resistant clothing, rubber gloves with leather protectors, fully closed-toe leather footwear and an arc flash face shield.

We regret that we must make the procedural change restricting meter removal and reinstallation to cooperative staff, but it is necessary for the safety of our members and to limit HCEC's liability.



BYCHYKHIN\_OLEXANDR | ISTOCK.COM



FRANCISPORIER | ISTOCK.COM

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS

## Win a Trip to Washington, DC!

June 17–26

**YOU'RE A TEXAS HIGH SCHOOL JUNIOR OR SENIOR. YOU'RE SMART; YOU HAVE BIG** dreams. Maybe you've never been out of the state, and maybe you've never flown on a plane, but you want to travel—to experience a big city, visit historic landmarks and meet people, and not just fellow high schoolers but influential public figures, like your U.S. representative.

If that describes you, then you're a candidate to apply for a slot on the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 17–26, sponsored by Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association and organized by Texas Electric Cooperatives.

Youth Tour is an action-packed trip to the U.S. capital with more than 150 of your peers and chaperones from across Texas. You'll visit the Washington National Cathedral, Arlington National Cemetery, Mount Vernon, the Smithsonian Institution, memorials and more.

You could be a part of this legacy shared by the more than 3,800 past Texas Youth Tour students who have participated since 1965.

**Eligibility:** Students who have completed their sophomore year of high school and whose parent or legal guardian is a member of Hamilton County EC are eligible to apply for this trip of a lifetime.

**Contest Rules:** Students must complete a 2020 Youth Tour application and submit an essay not to exceed 500 words on the following theme: Should electric linemen be considered first responders? Why or why not? The winners will be chosen according to originality and content of their essays. Essays must be attached to the completed application and submitted no later than Friday, February 21.

For more information, visit [texasyouthtour.com](http://texasyouthtour.com). Contact Keela Payne at Hamilton County EC by phone at (254) 386-9428 or by email at [keela.payne@hamiltonelectric.coop](mailto:keela.payne@hamiltonelectric.coop) for an application.

## Hamilton County EC Scholarship Program

**WILL YOUR 2020 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE** need money for college? Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association will be awarding scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each for the 2020–2021 school year (\$500 per fall and spring semester).

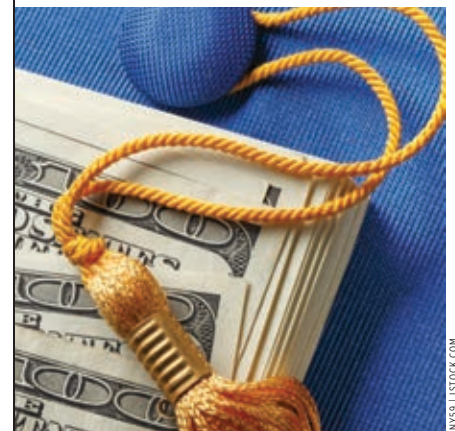
**To be eligible you must:**

- ▶ Be a senior attending a high school within the HCEC service area and graduating in May 2020.
- ▶ Be a dependent of an active HCEC member.
- ▶ Reside full time in the home of a parent or guardian who is a full-time resident in HCEC's service area.
- ▶ Have applied for admission as a full-time student to a technical school, college or university.
- ▶ Winners must use the scholarship awarded within one year of issuance.

Applications are now available and will be accepted until **March 31**. Scholarship winners will be chosen by a committee independent of Hamilton County EC. For more information and an application, contact Keela Payne by phone at (254) 386-9428 or by email at [keela.payne@hamiltonelectric.coop](mailto:keela.payne@hamiltonelectric.coop).



**HAMILTON COUNTY  
ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE**  
"OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE"



DNV59 | ISTOCK.COM

# Safer Generators Are Now Available

**DESPITE THE BEST EFFORTS OF HAMILTON COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, POWER** outages happen. Under extreme circumstances, they can last for several days—causing some members to use portable emergency generators.

If you use a generator, safety precautions are vitally important for our linemen and for you. Carbon monoxide poisoning is a potentially fatal risk of using portable generators, which can emit substantially more carbon monoxide than an idling car.



S-C PHOTO | ISTOCK.COM

To reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, some new generators feature a built-in sensor that triggers an automatic shut-off if CO builds up to dangerous levels, and some also have engines that emit less of the gas in the first place. If you're buying a generator, be sure it includes these important safety features. Regardless of its age, always observe the following safety rules when using a generator.

**Use a portable generator only when necessary** and only to power essential equipment.

**Position generators outdoors and well away from any structure.** Running a generator inside any enclosed or partially enclosed structure can lead to dangerous and fatal levels of carbon monoxide. Keep generators at least 15 feet away from open windows so exhaust does not enter homes or other buildings.

**If you start to feel sick, dizzy or weak while using a generator, it's likely you're suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning.** Get to fresh air right away. If you experience even more serious symptoms, get medical attention immediately. You should have a functioning battery-operated carbon monoxide alarm nearby while the generator is running.

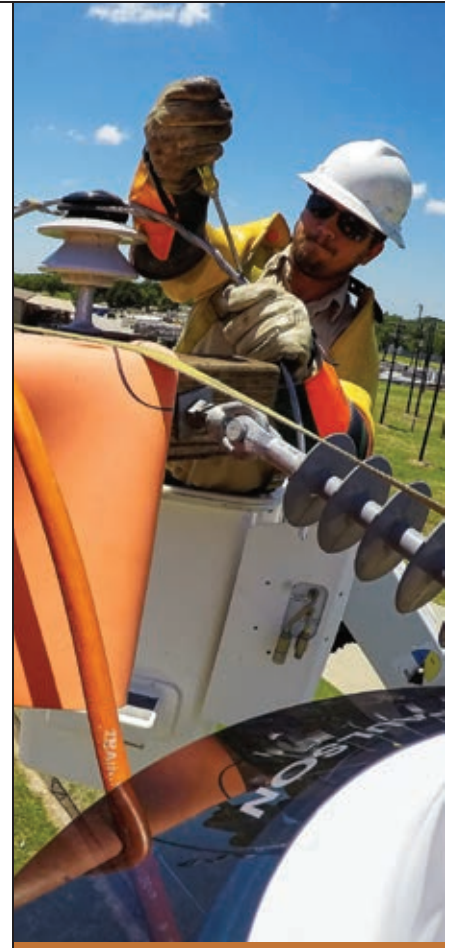
**Operate your generator on a dry surface** and make sure your hands are dry before touching the generator. Do not use the generator in rainy or wet conditions.

**Make sure your generator is properly grounded.** Grounding generators can help prevent shocks and electrocution.

**Plug appliances and equipment directly into the generator.** Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords that are in good working condition and are sized to handle the electric load of any connected appliances.

**NEVER connect the generator to a wall outlet.** Do not try to power your house by plugging the generator into a wall outlet or the main electrical panel. The backfeed can cause serious injury, and possibly death, to lineworkers repairing outages.

**Turn the generator off and let it cool before refueling.** Use only the type of fuel recommended in the manufacturer's instructions.



DAVE SHAFER

## WE RESOLVE TO

Provide you with the most reliable electric service possible.

Keep our rates as low as possible.

Provide friendly and efficient customer service at all times.

Never forget that you are a member-owner of this cooperative.

**Happy new year from the directors and employees of Hamilton County Electric Cooperative.**

Our offices will be closed Wednesday, January 1, for the holiday.

**HAMILTON COUNTY**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# Get Cozy With an Electric Blanket

**BLANKETS ARE WARM, BUT ON SUPER CHILLY NIGHTS, THEY MIGHT NOT BE WARM** enough. That's when an electric blanket can come in handy. Electric blankets on the market today are smart, efficient and safe. **Keep the following suggestions in mind when shopping for one.**

▶ Not all electric blankets work the same way—some can take 45 minutes or longer to heat up. So check for multiple temperature options, since some nights will be colder than others. And find out whether each half of the blanket has its own temperature setting, which is a perk if you share a bed with someone who prefers a different temperature than you. Finally, check whether or not it is designed to heat



evenly. For instance, some electric blankets can detect hot and cold spots and use that information to determine where the heat goes.

▶ Find one that's energy efficient. An electric blanket uses electricity, so you'll want to lower the heat in your house slightly to make up for it. An electric blanket that costs 7 cents a night to use is good, while one that costs 11 cents a night isn't as efficient.

▶ Make sure that it's washable. If the controls can be detached from the blanket, you can just throw it in your washing machine. Since the blanket will need to be laundered, this feature is a must.

▶ Consider safety features. The safest electric

blankets have automatic shut-offs, meaning that you can fall asleep with it on and not worry that you will forget to turn it off in the morning.

**Once you've purchased an electric blanket, there are a few extra safety points to keep in mind.**

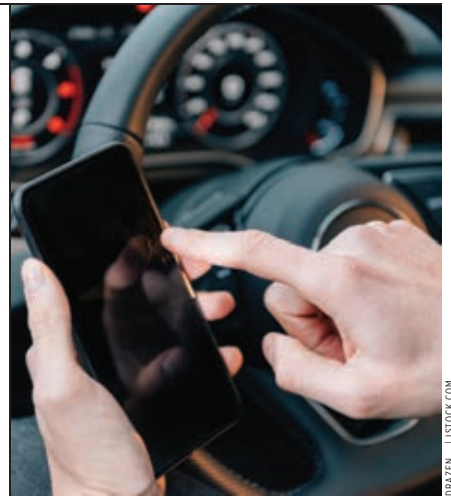
▶ Don't let animals near it. If your pet sleeps with you, don't use an electric blanket. Dogs and cats can chew or claw a blanket and injure themselves (or you).

▶ Be careful with the cord. Never place the electric cord between the mattress pad and the box spring because the friction that it can cause is a fire hazard.

▶ Know when not to use it. Do not use the electric blanket if the wiring or electric cord shows any sign of damage or the blanket is heating unevenly.

▶ Never let a child or elderly or infirm person use an electric blanket. It's simply not safe for everyone.

▶ Store it wisely. Turn off and unplug the electric blanket when it's not in use.



## ELECTRICITY AND YOU

### What To Do for ...

#### Electrical Fires

- ▶ Get out.
- ▶ Call 911. Tell the operator it is an electrical fire.
- ▶ Stay away.

#### Electrical Shock

- ▶ Do not touch anyone or anything you think might have been electrically shocked. The victim may still be in contact with the electricity.
- ▶ Call 911. Tell the operator the incident involves electricity.
- ▶ Keep other people away from the ongoing danger.
- ▶ Understand that electrical shock may cause internal injuries. The person needs to be seen by a doctor, even if you don't see any burn marks.

#### Downed Power Lines

- ▶ Move quickly away even if you don't see sparks.
- ▶ Call 911.
- ▶ Stay away from anything that might touch the wire: a fence, tree, building or car.
- ▶ Wait for help.

#### Power Line on Your Vehicle

- ▶ Stay in the car.
- ▶ If people move toward the vehicle, motion for them to stay away. Have someone call 911.
- ▶ Stay in the car until help arrives.

# Community Calendar



## Comanche

**Second Saturday Shenanigans, historical downtown square.** Shop, snack, sip. For details, visit [facebook.com/comanchechamber](https://facebook.com/comanchechamber).

*For more information about Comanche County events, contact the Comanche Chamber of Commerce at (325) 356-3233 or email [comanchetxchamber@gmail.com](mailto:comanchetxchamber@gmail.com) or [comancheevents@gmail.com](mailto:comancheevents@gmail.com).*

## Copperas Cove

**5K Polar Bear Plunge, January 25, starts and ends at the City Park pool.** After the 5K, we invite the public to attend the Polar Bear Plunge with a costume contest and belly flop contest. If you have any questions, contact Ashley at (254) 542-2719.

**Chamber Banquet, January 31, 6-11 p.m., Civic Center, 1206 W. Avenue B.** Includes steak dinner and casino fun.

**Fishing in the Park, February 15, City Park duck pond, 1206 W. Avenue B.** This is a free event. If you are 18 years or older, it is required by the state that you have a fishing license. If you have any questions, contact Ashley at (254) 542-2719.

*For information about Copperas Cove events, contact the Copperas Cove Chamber of Commerce at (254) 547-7571, email [activities@copperascove.com](mailto:activities@copperascove.com) or visit [copperascove.com](http://copperascove.com).*

## Evant

*For information about Evant events, contact Charlotte Looney at [evantchamber@gmail.com](mailto:evantchamber@gmail.com) or (512) 750-9870.*

## Gatesville

**Gatesville Spursquicentennial (150th birthday) volunteer recognition program; June 1, 2019–December 1, 2020.** We want to recognize

the people who continue to make Gatesville a great place to live through their service to the community as volunteers. Log 150 volunteer hours to be recognized. Volunteer logs are available at City Hall, the chamber of commerce and Gatesville Public Library, or download one at [gatesville150.com/volunteer](http://gatesville150.com/volunteer). For more information, visit [Gatesville150.com](http://Gatesville150.com) or [facebook.com/spursquicentennial](https://facebook.com/spursquicentennial).

**Chamber Market Days, second Saturday of each month in the parking lot of the historic Cotton Belt Depot, 2307 S. Highway 36.** Vendors display unique merchandise and farm-fresh foods. Visit [gatesvilletx.info](http://gatesvilletx.info) for more information.

**Gatesville Country Music Hall of Fame Show/Jamboree, third Friday of each month, 7-8 p.m., City Auditorium, 110 N. Eighth St.** A family-friendly event. There is no admission fee, but donations are accepted for the performers. Visit [gatesvillecountrymusicalloffame.com](http://gatesvillecountrymusicalloffame.com) or call Roger Vierser at (254) 547-6834 for more information.

*For more information about Gatesville events, go to [visitgatesvilletx.com](http://visitgatesvilletx.com) or [gatesvilletx.info](http://gatesvilletx.info), or call the Gatesville Chamber of Commerce at (254) 865-2617 or Gatesville Convention and Visitors Bureau at (254) 865-8951.*

## Goldthwaite

*For more information about Goldthwaite events, visit [millscounty-chamber.com](http://millscounty-chamber.com) or call the Mills County Chamber of Commerce at (325) 648-3619.*

## Hamilton

**Circle T Arena, 4007 W. Highway 36.** For information on upcoming events, visit [tarena.net/calendar](http://tarena.net/calendar) or call (254) 386-3559.

**Home and Garden Spring Fling, March 9, 8:30 a.m.–1 p.m., St. John Lutheran Church Family Life Center, 143 E. Highway 22.** \$10 admission includes lunch and dessert, early snacks and

beverages, speakers, vendors, silent auction, door prizes, and entertainment. Sponsored by the Hamilton Extension Education Association Council. Benefits 4-H. For more information, contact Jeanie Harrison at (254) 372-4572 or [harrisonx2@hughes.net](mailto:harrisonx2@hughes.net).

*For more information about Hamilton events, visit the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center on Facebook or at [hamiltontexaschamberofcommerce.com](http://hamiltontexaschamberofcommerce.com), call (254) 386-3216 or email [hamiltonchambertx@gmail.com](mailto:hamiltonchambertx@gmail.com).*

## Hico

**Hico Spring Open House, March 21.** Celebrate the beginning of spring in historic Hico. Local merchants will be hosting their spring open house with special discounts and terrific treats.

*For more information about Hico events, visit [hico-tx.com](http://hico-tx.com) or [facebook.com/hicochamberofcommerce](https://facebook.com/hicochamberofcommerce), or call Hico City Hall at (254) 796-4620.*

## Lampasas

**Lampasas County Museum, Fridays and Saturdays, 10 a.m.–4 p.m., 303 S. Western Ave., between Second and Third streets.** Learn about the history of Lampasas County through permanent displays and special exhibitions. Free of charge.

**Wild West Casino Night, February 15, 5:30 p.m.–midnight, Lampasas County Show Barn, intersection of Highway 283 N. and Highway 183.** \$50 per person includes a steak dinner with all the trimmings, Vegas-style games and a chance to win a \$900 travel voucher for a trip to a destination of your choice. BYOB. Hosted by LAFTA, Vision and Lampasas County Chamber of Commerce. Purchase tickets at the Lampasas County Chamber of Commerce office.

*For more information about Lampasas County events, contact the Lampasas County Chamber of Commerce at (512) 556-5172 or [lampasaschamber@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lampasaschamber@sbcglobal.net), or visit [lampasaschamber.org](http://lampasaschamber.org).*

## Lometa

**Carnival, March 26–28, 6–11 p.m., Regional Park.**

**Rodeo, March 27–28, 7:30 p.m., Arena at Regional Park, junction of U.S. 183 and U.S. 190.** Admission is \$15 for adults, \$5 for kids; 6 and under free, and active military with ID free. Friday night is open mic night and karaoke, and Saturday night is the Rodeo Dance. Sponsored by the Lometa Lions Club.

**Diamondback Jubilee Rattlesnake Roundup, March 28, 9 a.m.–5 p.m., Regional Park.** Featuring music, team roping, arts and crafts, vendors, Lil Buckaroo Rodeo and snakes! For vendor booth information, contact Susan Hines at (512) 556-2822.

*For information about Lometa events, contact the city of Lometa at (512) 752-3331.*

## Pearl

**Pearl Bluegrass First Saturday Jam and Stage Show; January 4, February 1, March 7; Pearl Community Center.** Free stage shows 12:30–5 p.m. Open jamming all day and evening Thursday–Saturday. RV hookups \$15/\$20 night. Bluegrass café Saturday 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Family-friendly event that bluegrass and old-time music lovers of all ages will enjoy. For more information, visit pearlbluegrass.com.

**Pearl Book Cottage; January 4, February 1, March 7; 10 a.m.–6 p.m.** All kinds of books and resale items. Payment by donation with all proceeds going to charity. For information, call (254) 865-9282 or (254) 865-5864.

**Community Meal, third Thursday of each month, 11:30 a.m., Pearl Baptist Church, Highway 183.** Contact Connie at (254) 223-0621.

**Pearl Community Garage Sale and Flea Market. March 13–14, 8 a.m.–4 p.m.** Giant building and outside awning full of everything you can imagine. Serving breakfast and lunch all day. The Pearl Book Cottage will also be open. For more information or to get a vendor space, please call (254) 865-5864. Dealers welcome.

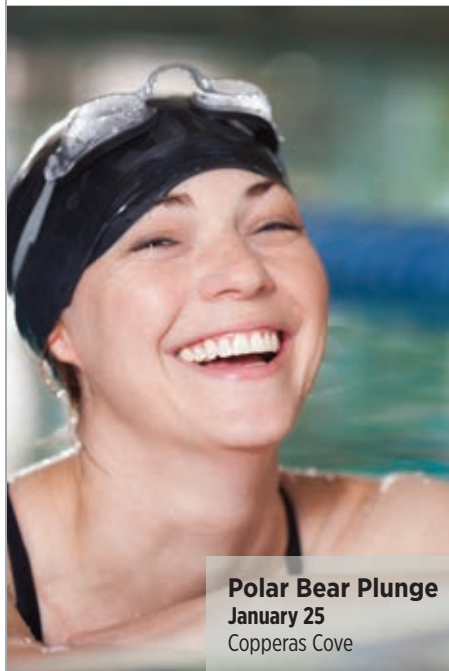
## Pidcoke

*For more information about Pidcoke United Methodist Church events, call (254) 300-6342 or visit pidcoke-umc.org.*

## San Saba

**Mill Pond Lighted Holiday Park Christmas Extravaganza, December 1–January 5, 6–10 p.m., Mill Pond Park, 1007 E. Wallace St.** Drive or walk through. Set your radio to 88.7 FM and enjoy synced music to over 30 acres of seasonal magic. Admission is free.

*For more information about San Saba events, contact the San Saba Visitor Center at (325) 372-5200 or the chamber of commerce at (325) 372-5141, or visit sansabatexas.com/calendar or sansabachamber.org.*



**Polar Bear Plunge  
January 25  
Copperas Cove**

## Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association

420 N. Rice St. • P.O. Box 753  
Hamilton, TX 76531

### GENERAL MANAGER/CEO

Steve Young

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sam Campbell, President, District 6

Dusty Duncan, Vice President, District 5

Bob Gardner, Secretary/Treasurer, District 2

Henry Langford, District 1

Melvin Eilers, Jr., District 7

Ervin Koerth, District 3

Jack Caldwell, District 1

## Contact Us

*For general information  
or to report an outage*

### CALL US

**(254) 386-3123** local or  
**1-800-595-3401** toll-free

### PAYMENT LOCATIONS

#### Hamilton County EC Office

420 N. Rice St., Hamilton

#### Brown & Wesson Insurance

915 Third St., Goldthwaite

#### Fort Gates Water Corporation

103 Gateway Circle, Gatesville

#### Kempner Water Supply

11986 E. Highway 190, Kempner

#### Lometa City Hall

109 W. San Saba St., Lometa

#### Online

hamiltonelectric.coop

#### Telephone

Call 1-877-833-4031 to pay using our automated phone system (credit/debit card or check).

Bill payments can be set up to be bank drafted or charged to a debit or credit card monthly.

### WE WELCOME YOUR EVENT SUBMISSIONS

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative welcomes your local event submissions. If you have any events that you would like listed in the Community Calendar, please contact Donna Harris. Information must be submitted two months in advance for the magazine. The calendar will be published monthly, and it will contain events scheduled in the month of publication and the following two months. HCEC reserves the right to edit and exclude events based on space available and other considerations. We do not certify the accuracy or reliability of any information posted in any listing in this Community Calendar. Please contact the event source directly to confirm event details. Email donna.harris@hamiltonelectric.coop, write to HCEC at P.O. Box 753, Hamilton, TX 76531, or call 1-800-595-3401.