

# Watt's Happening



A Publication of the Red River Valley Rural Electric Association June 2022

## focus on CO-OP COWORKERS

### Salute to Recent Retirees

The co-op staff bid a fond farewell on January 31, 2022, to Frank Lornes, Vickie Presley, and Dan Willis. Here's more about their distinguished careers:

**Name:** Frank Lornes  
**Years Served:** 20 (He previously logged 30 years at Uniroyal-Michelin)  
**Job Title:** Consumer Accounts Supervisor  
**What Attracted and Kept You on the Job?**



"REA was always a premium job. You could see from the outside looking in that people who went to work there stayed. It's not an easy place to get hired. Once I joined, I found out it was like Uniroyal. You were part of a family. People depended on you. You were motivated to give the best service you could. I was hired for collections, but it was never about collecting. It was actually finding out why somebody had trouble paying their bills and finding help for them. REA let me handle the area. They were so good to me. I really wanted to do more for them than they could do for me, but that was a real challenge."

**Name:** Vickie Presley  
**Years Served:** 44  
**Job Title:** Billing Representative  
**What Attracted and Kept You on the Job?**



"I took a temporary job as a typist on a project to enter Capital Credit information into a computer. A full time position opened in billing and it was offered to me. I handled billing and payments in a regular, monthly routine. I have only good things to say about REA. I couldn't imagine working anywhere else. In a major outage, the linemen and engineers work so hard to get the power on. When a customer calls, they talk to a person, not an automated device. There were always good managers and good coworkers at REA and it is still that way today."

(Continued in next column)



Mutual aid lineworkers from People's Electric Cooperative in Ada tend to a damaged pole on Muncrief Road southeast of Kingston. A tornado on March 21 did heavy damage to property and electric service in the area.

## Tornados Take Out A Record 198 Poles

Two tornados on March 21 did damage in the co-op area. The larger of the two storms, classified EF2 by the National Weather Service, crossed the Red River and touched down at Kingston-Buncombe Creek around 7 p.m. It left 7,200 members without electricity. Also, 187 power poles were broken, which is believed to be a record, single-incident loss.

Multiple crews of REA linemen and contractors labored around the clock restoring power. The co-op's contractor, Red Dirt Construction,  
(Continued on page 4)

### Retirees (Continued from column 1)



**Name:** Dan Willis  
**Years Served:** 44  
**Job Title:** VP of Finance and Administration  
**What Attracted and Kept You on the Job?**

"REA provided the prospect of long term employment without having to relocate. As it happened, our three children (Jason, Mikhael, and Paul) were able to attend K-12 in the same school system, something that Tricia and I had wished for. As to what kept me around for 44 years,

REA's mission and my own values have always aligned. There were changes in my job titles, but with each the goal remained the same: provide members with the best service possible. It is no surprise now that the service tradition of REA carries on as it did before me."

# How and When To File for the Office of Trustee

You, the members/owners of Red River Valley REA elect a Board of Trustees that hires a professional manager to run the electric cooperative. The trustees are members, too, and live in the areas they represent.

- The filing period for trustees is June 24-July 8.
- Filing papers may be picked up at either co-op office during regular weekday hours beginning on June 10.

To ensure that all parts of the co-op territory are represented, three geographic districts have been established (**See map below**).

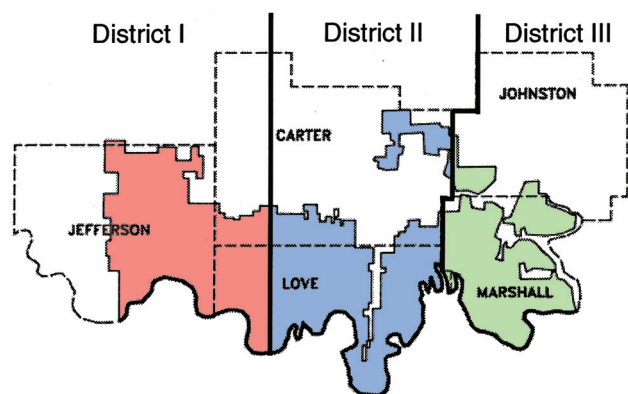
Each district has three offices. Trustees in these offices serve three-year terms. The terms are staggered so that the term of one trustee from each district expires each year. In 2022, Office 2 of the districts is up for election.

**DISTRICT 1, OFFICE 2** is held by Johnny Dewbre of Ringling. Dewbre's seat is up for election.

**DISTRICT II, OFFICE 2** is held by Jerry McGill of Marietta. McGill's seat is up for election.

**DISTRICT III, OFFICE 2** is open. The seat was vacated upon the death of former trustee Randy Hagood on June 7, 2021.

- The election takes place at the 85th Annual Meeting on Monday, August 8, 2022.
- Voting is at large, not by district.
- Regardless of where a member lives, he or she votes in contests for all three offices.



## Our Districts

**District I** covers all cooperative members who live in Jefferson County and those who live in Carter County and Love County **west** of the section line two miles east of Highway 76.

**District II** covers all coop-

erative members who live in Carter County and Love County **east** of the section line two miles east of Highway 76.

**District III** covers all cooperative members who live in Marshall and Johnston Counties.

## Highlights of Trustee Qualifications Rules

The candidate must comply with the general trustee qualifications section of the By-Laws of Red River Valley REA and the decisions of the Credentials and Election Committee. A summary of key provisions is shown below.

### Nomination

Nomination to the Board requires a petition signed by at least 15 fellow members (one signature per membership) of the district from which the nominee is running. Filing packets are available at the Marietta headquarters and the Kingston office beginning June 10.

### Filing

Petitions of nomination must be filed with the co-op at least 30 days

before the Annual Meeting. The filing period this year begins on June 24 and closes at 4 p.m., Friday, July 8. Filing packets must be returned by July 8.

### Qualification

A candidate must reside in the district in which he or she is running for at least one year before becoming a trustee. A candidate may not be an employee of the co-op during the seven years before running, nor have a close relative who is a trustee or employee.

Also, a candidate or close relative may not be employed by or have a significant financial interest in a business selling electrical energy or electrical supplies to the co-op or to any competing enterprise.

A candidate must not have been

convicted of a felony or pled guilty to a felony during the five years before running.

### Voting

Voting for trustees takes place at the Annual Meeting. Each co-op member is eligible to vote for one candidate from each district. The candidate from each district receiving the highest number of votes is elected. Ties are decided by lot.

### Compensation

Trustees receive no salary, but they do receive a per diem allowance for travel to meetings. Regular Board meetings occur monthly. Also, trustees are eligible to join the employee benefit plans of the co-op. These include health and life insurance.



# Student Trips Resume for Contest Winners

This year, the high school division's essay and speech topic focused on "Co-operative principle #1: Open and Voluntary Membership – open to all persons able to use their service and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, political, racial, or religious discrimination." Students expressed why principle #1 was important to them.

The five finalists are pictured below at the Youth Tour dinner attended by co-op

Board members and staff, school officials, and family and friends of the essayists.

The top two finalists, Izzy Coe and Kaden Barron from Ringling H.S., won a one-week, all expenses paid tour with the nation's other top REA essayists to Washington, D.C. The Washington trips resumed after a 2-year COVID-19 pandemic break. Their teacher was Kelly Howard. The remaining finalists, all from Ringling H.S., won cash awards.

In the middle school division, eighth

graders (below) wrote on the topic, "What Would Life Be Like Without Electricity?" The top six writers will represent the co-op at Energy Camp in Hinton, OK, in June. The camp introduces students to career choices with cooperatives. They will witness high voltage demonstrations and ride in a bucket truck, as well as share in team building activities and recreation. KorDale Lornes, Director of Member Services, supervised the essay contests.

## Co-op Members Receive Capital Credit Checks

Red River Valley REA mailed checks totaling \$959,036 to certain members in December 2021. The payments represented fully retired REA Capital Credits for the years 1987 through 1994, partial retirement of REA Capital Credits for the years 1996 through 2020, and fully retired Western Farmers Electric Cooperative Capital Credits for the year 1998. A total of 8,646 active and inactive members were eligible to share in the refund checks. Each Capital Credit check was based on the consumer's total electric bill during the refund periods. The co-op Board of Trustees approved the action last fall.

The co-op is seeking valid addresses for hundreds of inactive members or heirs. See the list under Capital Credits at [www.rvrea.com](http://www.rvrea.com) and help us get their checks out.



**Top Junior Writers:** (from left) Izzy Coe, 1st place; John Tynes, 5th place; Hunter Stephens, 4th place; Kaden Barron, 2nd place; Rikki Gandy, 3rd place.



**Top Eighth Grade Writers:** (from left) Landon Hall, Madill; Ryder Douglas, Madill; Rance Howard, Ringling; Dallas Lowery, Greenville; and Jorge Marroquin, Madill. Not pictured: Madilynn Michael, Marietta.

## Co-Op Picks Top Seniors

**Top Seniors:** (from left) Regan Dewbre and Julius Koons, both from Ringling High School, were selected by Red River Valley REA to represent the co-op area in the Youth Leadership Summit of Oklahoma Electric Cooperatives in Oklahoma City on March 14. Each senior received a \$500 college scholarship and heard from inspirational speakers Rhett Laubach and Kelly Barnes. The content focused on how leaders create change, overcome obstacles, and serve others through their behavior and attitude.



This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



- ✓ Beat the Peak resumes June 20 and continues to September 9.
- ✓ Sign up at [www.rrvrea.com](http://www.rrvrea.com).
- ✓ Endeavor to shift the use of electrical appliances to before 3 p.m. or after 7 p.m. on each peak day.
- ✓ Peak days are when the cost to the co-op to purchase and produce power is at its highest.
- ✓ Last summer, 8 peak-day alerts occurred.
- ✓ You will receive e-mail, Facebook, or text notification of declared peak power usage days.



**RED RIVER VALLEY**

P.O. Box 220  
Marietta, OK 73448

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Tulsa, OK  
Permit No. 2146

## Annual Meeting Will Be Drive-Thru Aug. 8



Mark your calendar for Monday, August 8, 2022, when the co-op will hold a drive-thru Annual Meeting at REA Headquarters, 8574 State Highway 32.

**(Left) Sunrise last August 9 foretold a beautiful day for the first-ever Drive Thru Annual Meeting. Co-op members made an amazing response -- 1,130 registered, shattering the previous record for members attending. They elected Brian Muncrief to the Board of Trustees.**

### Tornados -- (Continued from page 1)

sent crews, and mutual aid lineworkers arrived from Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Stigler; People's Electric Cooperative, Ada; and Southeastern Electric Cooperative, Durant. Southeastern brought its contractors, Metts Powerline and MC Dean. Force Electric sent multiple contract crews. Western Farmers Electric Cooperative dispatched workers to replace downed transmission poles on its system.

General Manager Brent Sykora estimated \$600,000 in repair costs for the co-op. He praised the organized responders. "I'm really proud of our employee and mutual aid help. They did a phenomenal job," he said.

The Member Services Department kept the public informed through news, photos, and videos on the Red River Valley REA Facebook page. At one point, 12,961 viewers were online reading the posts.

Earlier on March 21, a tornado struck in Rubottom in western Love County. Eleven electric poles were downed in that storm.

co-op

CONTACTS

BY PHONE



#### 24 Hour Outage Reports

Toll-Free: 1-800-749-3364  
Local: (580) 276-3364

#### All Other Electric Services

Marietta, OK Office  
8574 State Highway 32  
P.O. Box 220 (Mail)  
(580) 276-3364

#### Weekdays

7:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (lobby)  
7:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. (drive-thru)

Toll-Free 1-800-749-3364

Kingston, OK Branch  
801 State Highway 32  
(580) 564-1800  
Weekdays  
8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.



ONLINE  
[www.rrvrea.com](http://www.rrvrea.com)

