

Watt's Happening



A Publication of the Red River Valley Rural Electric Association June 2023

Co-op's General Manager To Retire On September 1



Desk and Field: Brent Sykora (above) works in his office as CEO/general manager in April. From his boat (far right), he affixes a high voltage safety sign to a 35-foot electric pole on the shore of Hauani Creek near Lebanon during 2015 flooding.



Brent Sykora, the co-op's general manager, has announced he will retire from Red River Valley REA on September 1, 2023.

After general manager Lynn Puckett hired him as a fulltime lineworker in 1992, Sykora rose to become the co-op's fifth CEO/general manager in 2019.

During his 31-year fulltime career, Sykora served in nearly every capacity offered by each department.

"It has been a privilege to serve in so many areas," Sykora said. "I feel my experiences molded me as general manager to appreciate every employee's duties. I could step in and assist when needed."

After receiving a call from Ron Willis (assistant manager at the time), Sykora began his association with Red River Valley REA as an 18-year old in 1989, working on line construction crews while

attending college.

He graduated from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in 1992 with a bachelor's degree in business management and minors in math and accounting.

Sykora engaged in power line construction, primary and secondary voltage, metering, service work, power quality, and after-hours outage calls until 2000.

He then joined manager Brent Hartin's supervisory/management staff and dealt successively in budgetary management, government loan procurement, and management of distribution services. He was made assistant manager in 2017.

Sykora grew up in a military family, which settled in Marietta upon his father's retirement from the U.S. Air Force. Brent graduated from Marietta High School in 1988. He and his wife Tina have been

married since 1992.

They have three daughters and one son-in-law, Mallory Langley and husband Dalton, Bailey, and Mandy.

Sykora has been an active member of Shady Dale Baptist Church since his teens. His hobbies are fishing, hunting, outdoor activities, and spending time with family and friends.

"I want to thank all of my family for their support through the years," he said. "And, though I can't list all the names, I am very appreciative of the coworkers, supervisors, managers, and Board members I worked with throughout my career."

He promoted Mike Mathis, vice president of office and members services, to assistant manager.

The Red River Valley REA Board of Trustees has endorsed Mathis to succeed Sykora as CEO/general manager.

86th Annual Meeting Set for Aug. 14 As a Drive-Thru at the Co-op

Youth Tour Finalists



Emarie Butler



Nathan Pearson



Gabbie Anthony



Rachel Smee



Keagan Balch

Energy Camp Finalists



Jackson Harper



Chloe Lyle



Jackson French



Cash Weiberg



Laila Salazar

(Top Row) Junior Writers: Emarie Butler, Ringling, 1st place; Nathan Pearson, Thackerville, 2nd place; Gabbie Anthony, Thackerville, 3rd place; Rachel Smee, Marietta, 4th place; Keagan Balch, Marietta, 5th place.

(Bottom Row) Eighth Grade Writers: Jackson Harper, Madill; Chloe Lyle, Wilson; Jackson French, Zaneis; Cash Weiberg, Madill; Laila Salazar, Madill. Haylee McGuire, Ringling, is not pictured.

Student Essayists Win Awards from REA

The top two finalists in the co-op's annual Youth Tour essay contest were awarded all-expense paid travel to Washington D.C. Emarie Butler, Ringling, and Nathan Pearson, Thackerville, will join winning essayists from co-ops around the nation in June for tours of the U.S. Capitol and meetings with members of Congress and government agencies.

Gabbie Anthony, Thackerville, finished third, and was awarded \$500. Rachel Smee of Marietta, won \$400

for fourth place. Keagan Balch, also of Marietta, finished fifth and received \$300.

Junior students in the co-op's service area chose their own topics. They each fashioned a professional letter to a local, state, or federal elected official about an issue that was important to them.

Five finalists then delivered a speech on their essays for judges at the co-op's Youth Tour Banquet in March.

In the middle school division, eighth graders wrote on the topic, "What

Would Life Be Like Without Electricity?" The top six writers (above) 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 Names Top Senior

Hunter Stephens (right) a Ringling High School senior, was selected by Red River Valley REA to represent the co-op in the Oklahoma Electric Cooperative Leadership Summit in Oklahoma City on March 13.

Hunter 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.

The annual event is designed to motivate high school students to become leaders of their communities.





Proud To Serve!

MEET YOUR BOARD AND EMPLOYEES

June 2023

The name of each person is accompanied by his or her starting date of service.

Board of Directors		Accounting		Zach Thompson	2021
Harold Lester, Courtney	1965	Roger Rhoades	1990	Justin Blankenship	2022
Jerry McGill, Marietta	1985	Anita Johnson	1992	Matt Monkres	2022
Phillip Landgraf, Madill	1998	Shelby Harris	2016	Operations	
Larry Hicks, Jimtown	1999	Sarah Erwin	2021	Jerry Welch	1994
King Martin, Marietta	2009	Member Services		Troy Wilson	1994
Allen Wade, Ringling	2014	Yesenia Fernandez	2003	Bobby Spanglo	2000
Johnny Dewbre, Ringling	2016	Debbie Case	2008	Chase McKinney	2007
Brian Muncrief, Lebanon	2021	KorDale Lornes	2012	Tony Apala	2007
Pepper Melton, Lebanon	2022	Fabiola Aldaba	2015	Keith Anderson	2009
Cooperative Attorney		Rodney Blankenship	2018	Mark McCage	2009
Ken Delashaw	1982	Manuela Barrientos	2020	John Meeks	2010
CEO/General Manager		Linsey Ackerman	2021	Lance Butler	2012
Brent Sykora	1992	Spencer Lawrence	2021	Allen Russell	2018
Assistant Manager		Courtney Hickman	2022	Bryce Bumpass	2019
Mike Mathis	1997	VP of Engineering & Operations		Ricky Decker	2021
Human Resources		Greg Winchester	1991	Chance Lunsford	2021
Ashley Hambrick	2017	Engineering		Randy Stowers	2021
		Chuck Bone	2003	Felipe Reyes	2022
		Justin Voyles	2016	Leyton Riley	2022
				Ethan Neble	2022
				Safety	
				Wesley Elmore	2013

STEPS *to restoring* POWER OUTAGES



1. Transmission

Transmission lines can supply many substations that power tens of thousands of people. If damage occurs here, it gets first attention.

2. Substation

Substations serve thousands and are checked to determine if the problem is on the transmission or distribution side.



3. Distribution Feeders

Once feeder lines are repaired, members on that line should see power restored, as long as there are no problems downline.

4. Distribution Taps

The final supply lines that carry power to the transformers outside your homes and businesses are then repaired.



5. Service/Secondary

If isolated outages persist, damage on the secondary line may be the reason your neighbors have power but you do not.

Save This Page To Know When Our Offices Close for Holidays

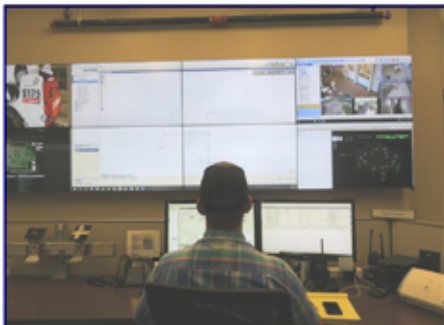
Red River Valley Rural Electric Association

Speak to a Live Representative 24 Hours a Day

A live representative is always available to take your call, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at (580) 276-3364.

During normal business hours, the telephone is answered by a customer service representative.

After hours, calling the co-op brings up a recording. Listen to the prompts, then to report an outage, press 1 and a live representative will answer.



The REA Control Room at headquarters monitors the electric grid and dispatches lineworkers for repairs and maintenance.

Marietta Main Office
(580) 276-3364
8574 State Highway 32
P.O. Box 220
Marietta, OK 73448
Weekdays
7 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Lobby)
7 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Drive-Thru)

Kingston Branch Office
Phone: (580) 564-1800
801 State Highway 32
Kingston, OK 73439
Weekdays
8 a.m - 4 p.m.

Find us Online at:
www.rrvrea.com



HOLIDAYS OBSERVED

JANUARY

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King,
Jr. Day

FEBRUARY

Presidents Day

MAY

Memorial Day

JULY

Independence Day

SEPTEMBER

Labor Day

NOVEMBER

Veterans Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day After
Thanksgiving

DECEMBER

Christmas Eve*
Christmas Day

*If on a weekday

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 30-July 14.
- Filing papers may be picked up at either co-op office during regular weekday hours beginning on June 16.

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 2023, Office 3 of the districts is up for election.

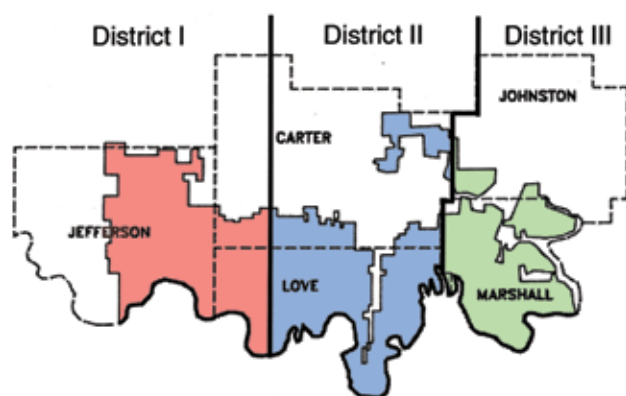
DISTRICT 1, OFFICE 3 is held by Allen Wade of Ringling. Wade's seat is up for election.

DISTRICT II, OFFICE 3 is held by Larry Hicks of Jimtown. Hicks' seat is up for election.

DISTRICT III, OFFICE 3 is held by Phillip Landgraf of Madill. Landgraf's seat is up for election.

The election takes place at the 86th Annual Meeting on Monday, August 14, 2023.

- 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 16.

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 30 and closes at 4 p.m., Friday, July 14. Filing packets must be returned by July 14.

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.



Co-op Tour Shows Facilities, Careers

It is the Madill AP science class (above) inspecting a solar energy field during a complete tour of Red River Valley REA in April. But did you know various school classes, 4-H clubs, and other groups are welcome to inquire about a tour of electrical facilities and to learn about the many career possibilities at the co-op?

The guests visit a substation to learn how electrical distribution works. At headquarters, they can ask questions of maintenance, safety, customer service, metering, and home energy savings specialists, as well as engineers, accountants, managers, mechanics, lineworkers, and dispatchers.

To learn more, contact the Member Services Department.



RED RIVER VALLEY

P.O. Box 220
Marietta, OK 73448

PRSRT STD
POSTAGE & FEES PAID
Tulsa, OK
Permit No. 2146



✓ Beat the Peak resumes June 20 and continues to September 9.

✓ Sign up at 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.

✓ You will receive e-mail, Facebook, or text notification of declared peak power usage days.

Co-op Sends Capital Credit Checks

Red River Valley REA mailed checks totaling \$1,541,834 to certain members in December 2022. The payments represented fully retired REA Capital Credits for the years 1996 through 1998, partial retirement of REA Capital Credits for the years 1999 through 2021, and fully retired Western Farmers Electric Cooperative Capital Credits for the years 2000 and 2001.

A total of 11,109 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.rrvrea.com and help us get their checks out.



Demo Sparks Interest

Wesley Elmore (r), safety director, and KorDale Lornes, member services director, give electrical safety demonstrations to local fourth grade classrooms.

The highlight is the live electric home model, where students see first-hand what happens when people, vehicles, or equipment come into contact with electricity.