

Angela Coy, manager of accounts receivable at Bluebonnet, assists in registering member Linda Makowsky of Burton during the cooperative's drive-through Annual Meeting at the Silos on 77 near Giddings on May 11, 2021. Sarah Beal photos



An Annual Meeting like no other

Drive-through event gives members a chance to safely register, greet, get information

BLUEBONNET'S ANNUAL Meetings are big events steeped in tradition. Every year for decades, hundreds of cooperative members have gathered on the second Tuesday in May to chat with other members, shake the hands of co-op leaders, get information, ask questions, get a snack and perhaps win a door prize.

The 2020 meeting was held without public attendance due to COVID-19. This year, Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative brought back a bit of the in-person feel to the event with its first drive-through Annual Meeting on May 11.

In the parking lot of the Silos on 77, an event facility in Giddings, members were guided through two white tents, each wide enough for several lanes of vehicles. The threat of thunderstorms didn't deter nearly 200 members, many accompanied by spouses, kids or pets, from driving through. They were able to register, greet employee volunteers, get answers to questions, chat from their front seat with cooperative leaders, and get a bag full of useful news and information. Attendees even received the traditional kolaches, safely tucked in individual bags.

"We were all happy to return to having our Annual Meeting with members this year," said Ben Flencher, Bluebonnet's Board chairman. "It sure was nice to see and visit with our friends and neighbors."

During the Annual Meeting, two incumbent members of the Bluebonnet Board of Directors were re-elected: Shana Whiteley, District 2, Travis County, and Bryan



Doyle Janner of Brenham won the 2008 Chevrolet 1500 that was retired from Bluebonnet's fleet. Prize winners' names were drawn at random from all the Bluebonnet members who submitted a proxy form or registered at our Annual Meeting on May 11.



Shana Whiteley



Bryan Bracewell

Bracewell, District 3, Bastrop County.

Whiteley has served on the Board since 2017 and owns the Good Luck Grill in Manor and the Lucky Duck Cafe in Taylor.

"Bluebonnet is an organization of exceptional quality and integrity," she said. "It is my privilege and honor to be re-elected to the Board during this exciting time of growth and prosperity."

Bracewell joined the Board in 2018 and owns Southside Market & Barbeque, with locations in Elgin, Bastrop, Austin and Hutto.

"The commitment and care everyone at Bluebonnet has for the members and

communities we serve are rooted in the co-op's 82-year history," he said. "I am thankful for the opportunity to contribute to Bluebonnet's success."

Before the event, 6,682 Bluebonnet members participated in the Annual Meeting by submitting proxy forms. Those, along with the 193 members who registered at the event, constituted a quorum for the meeting.

"We weren't sure what to expect from a drive-through meeting," said Matt Bentke, Bluebonnet's general manager. "Judging from my conversations with members, it was a great success."

Every member who submitted a proxy or registered at the drive-through was also entered into drawings for numerous door prizes. Doyle Janner of Brenham won the big prize — a 2008 Chevrolet 1500 extended cab being retired from Bluebonnet's fleet. "It'll make a great farm truck," he said. Daniel Muff of Bastrop and Kenneth Sprinkles of Manor each won a Cub Cadet zero-turn riding lawn mower.

— Melissa Segrest

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

Bluebonnet, LCRA grants support community projects in the region

THE LOWER COLORADO River Authority and Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative recently awarded several grants in Bluebonnet's service area. The grants are part of LCRA's Community Development Partnership Program to give back to the communities it serves. Bluebonnet is one of LCRA's wholesale electric customers and a partner in the grant program. Applications for the next round of grants will be accepted in July. More information is available at lcra.org/cdpp.



A \$50,000 grant will help the Caldwell County Fire Chiefs Association construct a new training facility for area fire departments. The grant is paired with matching funds of \$60,000 raised by the association with generous support from the community. The new facility will include movable walls and windows designed to withstand repeated fires. Hands-on, live-fire training provides valuable opportunities for firefighters to improve and maintain their skills in real-life fire conditions. Area departments will be able to train close to home, creating better regional coordination in emergency situations. Pictured, from left to right, are Joyce Buckner, Bluebonnet community representative; Danney Rodgers, the fire association's vice president; Lori A. Berger, LCRA board member; Phil Wilson, LCRA general manager; Jerry Doyle, association member; Edward Hanna, association president; Linda Haden, association fundraising organizer; Milton Shaw, Bluebonnet Board member; Hoppy Haden, Caldwell County judge; Hector Rangel, Caldwell County emergency management coordinator; and Hank Alex, Caldwell County assistant emergency management coordinator.



A \$19,848 grant will help Round Top install energy-efficient outdoor lighting on its historic town hall and the public square that surrounds it. The grant, along with \$7,000 in matching funds will pay for eight vintage-style fixtures that will hold LED bulbs. The fixtures will complement the design of Round Top's mid-1920s town hall and be dark sky-compliant, directing their light downward. Pictured, from left to right, are Byron Balke, Bluebonnet Board assistant secretary/treasurer; Kyle Merten, Bluebonnet community representative; Mark Massey, Round Top mayor; Mark Johnson, Bluebonnet community representative; and Lori A. Berger, LCRA board member.

A BIG Thank You!

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donations toward
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prizes!

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