

Along these **LINES**

MAY/JUNE 2021

Explore Louisiana State Parks

Page 12

ALSO INSIDE >>

Manager's Report Page 4

DEMCO Essay Winners Receive
\$2,000 Scholarships Page 17

Lake Claiborne offers a variety of ways to get back to nature.
PHOTO BY CHERE COEN



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Committed to a Co-op Culture for All



CEO Jeff Arnold

Through the years, you may have noticed we talk a lot about how Louisiana electric cooperatives are different.

Our business model sets us apart from other utilities because we adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater good of the community.

Electric cooperatives have a unique and storied place in our country's history. We democratized the American dream by bringing electricity to rural areas when for-profit electric companies determined the effort too costly. Back then, cities were electrified but rural areas were not—creating the original rural-urban divide.

Newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in rural areas. Today, that spirit of equity and inclusion is a vital part of our co-op DNA.

Equal Access for All

When Louisiana electric co-ops were founded, each member contributed an equal share to gain access to electricity that benefited individual families and the larger local community. We still operate with that sense of equity and inclusion.

Louisiana electric co-ops were built by and belong to the diverse communities and consumer-members we serve. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

By paying your electric bill each month, you're a member of the co-op. Every member has an equal voice and vote when it comes to co-op governance. This ties back to our guiding principles of equitable economic participation and democratic control of the cooperative.

We encourage all members to vote when your cooperative holds director elections. We invite all members to participate in co-op meetings to weigh in on discussions that set co-op policies and priorities, such as high-speed internet, renewable power and energy-efficiency programs.

We know members of our community

have different needs and perspectives. We welcome diverse views on all issues under consideration by the cooperative. The more viewpoints we hear, the better we can reflect the needs of all corners of our community.

Inclusion

While the priority is providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we also want to be a catalyst for good in our communities.

Because your electric cooperatives are local, revenues stay in your community. In turn, cooperatives invest in your diverse community base through scholarship programs, charitable giving, educational programs and more. Louisiana electric cooperatives strive to make long-term decisions that improve and enrich the communities we serve.

While today's world is radically different from when Louisiana electric cooperatives were founded, our values have stood the test of time and remain just as relevant today. We recognize today's co-op members expect more, and my pledge to you—the consumer-members we proudly serve—is to promote a cooperative culture of inclusion, diversity and equity for all. ■

Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives Inc.

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Jeff Arnold



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Explore Louisiana's Diverse State Parks

Page 12

Local Pages 4, 5, 8, 17, 20, 21
In the Kitchen 10



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Mission

DEMCO is focused on enhancing the quality of life for members by providing safe, reliable and competitively priced energy services.

Volume 36, Issue 3

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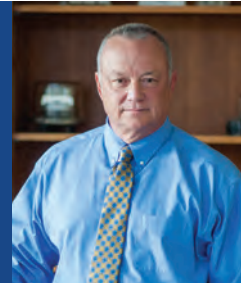
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DEMCO is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Manager's Report

Randy Pierce
CEO & General Manager



And just like that, it's summer. Along with the usual May and June celebrations—Mother's Day, Memorial Day and Father's Day—families are busy planning for a summer of fun. We are all looking forward to getting out and about, even while we continue to practice health and safety protocols. Read the story on Louisiana State Parks on pages 12-14 to find some great options for summer adventures.

The downside to Louisiana summers is they also bring the beginning of hurricane season June 1. Last year, although Cristobal, Marco, Laura and Sally dodged DEMCO's service areas, Hurricane Delta was one of the worst weather events to impact the DEMCO system since Hurricane Gustav and the Flood of 2016. With weather, the only thing we know for certain is that weather is uncertain. Last year we considered ourselves fortunate—even with the direct hit of Hurricane Delta. Whether it's wind, rain, lightning or ice, severe weather presents significant challenges to the power grid.

We never know when weather may cause an electrical outage or who will be affected, and it is tough to predict how long outages may last. Remember to plan for what you'll do if the power is out for anyone in your home or family with special needs, such as infants or elderly family members who require life support, oxygen or refrigerated medication.

We mention these things because we care. Serving you, our members, is the most important thing we do. It is in our mission statement, our vision statement and found throughout our values. We care about you. Our board of directors is made up of members just like you. We value the democratic process that represents you and guides the business of the cooperative. We care about your safety, your pocketbook and the reliability of the service we provide.

Although the pandemic may limit member involvement, we will be holding our Annual Meeting. We feel this is an important cog in the wheel of a healthy cooperative and its member engagement. Information can be found in this issue regarding the virtual event.

And just like the summer, this time is packed with co-op projects and improvements that will help us serve you better. The smart meter rollout is moving forward, and we will launch website and mobile app updates June 28 to help you spend less time managing your account so you have more time to enjoy your busy life.

No matter how busy and hectic our lives are, any changes we make at DEMCO are with you in mind. We wish you a safe and happy spring as we welcome summer.

Annual Meeting DEMCO Headquarters

16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA 70739

Saturday, May 15, 10 a.m.

For more information, visit DEMCO.org.

Lucky Account Contest

Four lucky co-op members have a chance to win \$25! Your account number is listed on your mailing label, but to win you must also find it in the pages of the magazine. To claim your prize, call 225-262-2160.

DEMCO Board Representatives Reelected To Serve Members

Four directors previously appointed to DEMCO's board were reelected to three-year terms. Each expressed their gratitude to the cooperative's members for their support.

Elinda Taillon, a lifelong resident of Ascension Parish, was appointed to the board in November 2020 to fulfill the unexpired term of Clarence Brock. Taillon serves DEMCO members in District 1, Ascension Parish. She retired from BASF Corp. after 37 years of service.

Jill McGraw, a lifelong resident of the Zachary area, was appointed to the board in February 2018 to fill the unexpired term of Ann Samuel. McGraw serves DEMCO members in District 2, East Baton Rouge Parish.

Leslie Falks, a lifelong resident of Livingston Parish and local business owner, was appointed to the board in 1987. Falks serves DEMCO members in District 7, Livingston Parish. He is a local business owner.

Tresa Byrd, a lifelong resident of St. Helena Parish, was appointed to the board in March 2020 to fill the unexpired term of Frank Johnson. Byrd serves DEMCO members in District 11, St. Helena Parish. She has worked for the St. Helena Parish Police Jury since 1994. ■



Elinda Taillon



Jill McGraw



Leslie Falks



Tresa Byrd

Honoring All Who Gave Their Lives To Protect Our Freedom

On behalf of the employees, management, staff and DEMCO Board of Directors, we wish all our members a happy and safe Memorial Day, Monday, May 31, as we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. (Account No. 80066351001)



Official Notice: Annual Meeting

In accordance with provisions of Article III, Section 3.03 of the bylaws of DEMCO, notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the Members of the Corporation will be held at DEMCO's headquarters facility, 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA, Saturday, May 15, 2021.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. In accordance with Article IV, Section 4.05 of the corporation bylaws, notice is hereby given that the following persons have been nominated by the official nominating committee to fill the four positions on the Board of Directors in which vacancies occur this year.

By Nomination:

- Elinda Taillon, District 1
- Jill McGraw, District 2
- Leslie Falks, District 7
- Tresa Byrd, District 11

More information about participating is posted at DEMCO.org and on DEMCO social media platforms.

ALEC Hires Youth Tour Alumnus



Daniel Bischoff proudly wears his three LSU football title rings in his LSU graduation photo.

‘My heart will always be with electric co-ops’

Youth Tour and Youth Leadership Council alumnus Daniel Bischoff has joined the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives as a communicator intern. He recently graduated from Louisiana State University with a bachelor’s degree in mass communication with a concentration in digital advertising.

While enrolled at LSU, Daniel was awarded a football scholarship for serving as an equipment manager for the Tiger football team that earned National Championship, SEC Championship and College Football Playoff titles.

Daniel represented Washington-St. Tammany Electric Cooperative on the Louisiana Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., in 2016. He was selected by his peers to represent Louisiana on the Youth Leadership Council. This trip of a lifetime opened doors for Daniel, who interned for the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Daniel attended NRECA annual meetings in San Diego, Orlando and New Orleans.

“Daniel is one of our shining stars,” says Addie Armato, director of member engagement for ALEC. “Youth Tour is designed to provide students from our rural areas a springboard into early adulthood and leadership. Daniel has used this platform to its fullest potential.”

Daniel will spend the next few months working on communication projects at the statewide association and visiting co-ops around the state to learn about available job opportunities. He plans to continue his education by attending graduate school in the fall.

“My goal is to one day work in the highly competitive sports equipment market,” Daniel says. “I like the drive of competing for market share, but my heart will always be with the electric cooperatives. They have opened so many doors for me and given me so many opportunities.”

“Daniel is a true champion,” Addie says. “He has the personality and the drive to succeed in his future endeavors. I hope he spreads his wings and flies high, but then I want him to come back home to nest at one of our great Louisiana electric cooperatives.” ■

Scholarships Available From ALEC Partners

Altec, Altec Capital and Osmose will award four \$500 scholarships at the ALEC Annual Meeting for fall semester 2021.

- ▶ Recipient must be a Class of 2021 high school graduate.
- ▶ Applicant must be the child of an ALEC member co-op.
- ▶ The one-time award can be used for any college or university.
- ▶ Recipient must provide verification of a minimum 2.5 GPA before scholarship monies are awarded.
- ▶ Mail to Ed Amedee, 1443 City Place, Gonzales, LA 70737.
- ▶ Entry must be postmarked by June 21, 2021. Altec is not responsible for mail delivery.

Applicant’s Name: _____

Parents or Guardian: _____

Member Co-op: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____ ZIP: _____

Telephone Number: _____

High School Attended: _____

Please supply a copy of your high school transcript to verify the 2.5 GPA requirement.



Training for Field Work

The Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives provides many programs and services to its member cooperatives, including hands-on training. **ABOVE AND BELOW:** The Louisiana Superintendent and Foreman's Association joined ALEC to host Undergound School. **RIGHT:** ALEC conducted pole-top rescue training sessions at Washington-St. Tammany Electric and other member cooperatives. PHOTOS BY DEREK SEAL



When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors

Some years, lightning kills more Americans than tornadoes or hurricanes. Don't take chances with this deadly force of nature. During a storm:

- Go inside a building and stay away from windows.
- Do not seek shelter under a tree.
- Move to low ground, but avoid open fields.
- Do not touch metal objects such as golf clubs or bicycles.
- Inside a car is relatively safe, but do not touch interior metal.
- If your hair stands on end, you may be a target. Crouch low on the balls of your feet and keep your knees and hands off the ground.



PHOTO BY SCS PHOTOGRAPHY



Coming in July ENHANCED WEBSITE, BILLING & MOBILE APP FEATURES

DEMCO is committed to providing the best service to our members. With enhanced MyDEMCO account features, we are putting the power in your hands.

With these innovative management tools, you'll be able to take control of your account like never before.

Starting in July, your bill will look different and you will be issued a new account number. In the coming months, be on the lookout for additional information from DEMCO.

SAME DEMCO, BETTER FEATURES



SMART SOLUTIONS.



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SMART LIFE.

Visit [DEMCO.org](https://www.demco.org) for more details

Top Digestive Aid Pill Quietly Slows Premature Aging, Users Report Big Health Boost

Clinical research shows how a gastrointestinal “tonic” can restore GI health and slow an accelerated aging process; studies find the pill helps protect users from metabolic decline, cardiovascular issues, and serious conditions that accompany premature aging

Seattle, WA – A published study on a leading natural digestive aid shows that its key ingredient improves digestive health while supporting healthy inflammation response that slows down signs of premature aging in men and women.

And, if consumer sales are any indication of a product’s effectiveness, this ‘GI-tonic turned anti-aging phenomenon’ is nothing short of a miracle.

Sold under the brand name AloeCure®, its ingredient was already backed by research showing its ability to neutralize acid levels and improve gastric discomfort.

But soon doctors started reporting some incredible results...

“With AloeCure, my patients started reporting, better sleep, more energy, stronger immune systems... even less stress and better skin, hair, and nails” explains Dr. Liza Leal; a leading integrative health specialist and company spokesperson.

AloeCure contains an active ingredient that helps improve digestion by acting as a natural digestive aid that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Scientists now believe that having optimal acid levels could be a major contributing factor to a healthy immune system.

The daily allowance of AloeCure has shown to optimize the acid levels needed to manage healthy immune function which is why AloeCure is so effective.

It relieves other stressful issues related to GI health like discomfort, excess gas and bloating, and bathroom stress.

Now, backed with new scientific studies, AloeCure is being doctor recommended to help improve digestive function, help build better bones, support healthy joint function, and even help reduce the appearance of wrinkles - helping patients look and feel decades younger.

FIX YOUR GUT & SUPPORT HEALTHY INFLAMMATION

Since hitting the market, sales for AloeCure have taken off and there are some very good reasons why. To start, the clinical studies have been impressive.

Virtually all participants taking it reported stunning improvement in digestive symptoms including gastric discomfort.

Users can also experience higher energy levels and endurance, less discomfort and better sleep, healthier looking skin, hair, and nails.

An unhealthy gut can wreak havoc on the human body. Doctors say this is why AloeCure

works on so many aspects of your health.

AloeCure’s active ingredient is made from the famous polysaccharide compound found in Aloe Vera. It is both safe and healthy. There are also no known side effects.

Scientists believe that it helps improve digestive health by acting as a natural digestive aid that improves the pH balance of your stomach and helps the immune system maintain healthy functions.

Research has shown that acid imbalance contributes to premature aging and is why AloeCure seems to be so effective.

EXCITING RESULTS FROM PATIENTS

To date millions of bottles of AloeCure have been sold, and the community seeking non-pharma therapy for their GI health continues to grow.

According to Dr. Leal, her patients are absolutely thrilled with their results and are often shocked by how fast it works.

“For the first time in years, they are free from concerns about their digestion and almost every other aspect of their health,” says Dr. Leal, “and I recommend it to everyone who wants to improve GI health before considering drugs, surgery, or OTC medications.”

“All the problems with my stomach are gone. Completely gone. I can say AloeCure is a miracle. It’s a miracle.” Another user turned spokesperson said, “I started to notice a difference because I was sleeping through the night and that was great. AloeCure does work for me. It’s made a huge difference.”

With so much positive feedback, it’s easy to see why the community of believers is growing and sales for the new pill are soaring.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND ALOECURE

AloeCure is a gastric and digestive tonic. The pill is small. Easy to swallow. There are no harmful side effects and it does not require a prescription.

The active ingredient is a rare Aloe Vera component known as acemannan.

Millions spent in developing a proprietary process for extracting acemannan resulted in the highest quality, most bio-available levels of acemannan known to exist, and it’s made from organic aloe.

According to Dr. Leal and leading experts, improving the pH balance of your stomach and restoring gut health is the key to revitalizing your entire body.

When your digestive system isn’t healthy, it



causes unwanted stress on your immune system and that might lead to unhealthy inflammation.

The recommended daily allowance of AloeCure has been proven to support digestive health, manage healthy immune function, and promote healthy inflammation response without side effects or drugs.

This would explain why so many users are experiencing impressive results so quickly.

REVITALIZE YOUR ENTIRE BODY

With daily use, AloeCure helps users look and feel decades younger and defend against premature aging that can make life hard.

By helping acid levels stay optimal and promoting gut health, AloeCure’s ingredient supports joint health...helps skin appear smooth... maintains healthy cholesterol and oxidative stress...improves sleep and associated weight loss....and supports brain function by way of gut biome...without side effects or expense.

Readers can now support their energy, vitality, and youth regardless of age.

AloeCure Taken Daily

- Helps End Digestion Nightmares
- Reduces appearance of Wrinkles & Increases Elasticity
- Supports Healthy Immune System
- Supports Joint Health
- Promotes Healthy Inflammation Response
- Supports Bowel Health & Regularity

HOW TO CLAIM A FREE SUPPLY TODAY

This is an exclusive offer for our readers. And so, AloeCure is offering up to 3 FREE bottles and FREE S&H with their order. While supplies last you may also receive a FREE book on Aloe Vera health benefits.

A special hotline number has been created for all residents. This is the best way to try AloeCure with their 100% satisfaction guarantee, and any free gifts are yours to keep no matter what.

Starting at 5:00 AM today the phone lines will be open for 48 hours. All you have to do is call TOLL-FREE 1-800-330-0061, the special promotion will automatically be applied.

Important: Due to a surge in sales supplies are not guaranteed beyond the next 48 hours. Call now to not lose out on this offer.

Spring Greens



Sugar Snap Peas With Ricotta Salata and Mint

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 tablespoon olive oil | 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper |
| 2 8-ounce packages trimmed sugar snap peas | 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt |
| 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint | 1 1/2 ounces ricotta salata, crumbled
(about 1/3 cup) |
| 1 1/2 teaspoons grated lemon rind | |

Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add oil to pan and swirl. Add peas. Sauté 3 minutes or until crisp-tender. Stir in mint, lemon rind, pepper and salt. Sprinkle with cheese.

Recipes by Gertrude Treadaway

PHOTO BY KATIE WILCOX

Spring Pea and Radish Salad

½ pound fresh wax or green beans
½ pound fresh sugar snap peas
2 cups water
6 large radishes, thinly sliced

2 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon dried tarragon
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon coarsely ground pepper

Snip ends off beans and peas. Remove strings from peas. In a large saucepan, bring water to a boil over high heat. Add beans and reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 4 to 5 minutes.

Add peas. Cover and simmer until beans and peas are crisp-tender, another 2 to 3 minutes. Drain.

Toss beans and peas with radishes. Stir together honey, tarragon, salt and pepper. Drizzle over vegetables.

Sautéed Spring Greens With Bacon and Mustard Seeds

2 ounces thick-cut bacon, finely diced
2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 large shallot, thinly sliced
1 hot red chile, seeded and finely chopped
1 tablespoon yellow mustard seeds

1¼ pounds mixed young spring greens—such as dandelion, mustard, collards, Tuscan kale and spinach—stems and inner ribs trimmed, leaves cut into ribbons

Salt
Freshly ground pepper
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar

In a large skillet, cook the bacon in the olive oil over moderate heat, stirring until golden, about 3 minutes.

Add the shallot, chile and mustard seeds. Cook until softened, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the greens, and season with salt and pepper. Cook, tossing frequently, until wilted and tender, about 5 to 6 minutes. Stir in the vinegar and serve.

Strawberry Spinach Salad

4 ounces goat or feta cheese, crumbled
1 cup pecans, lightly toasted
¼ cup red onion, thinly sliced

11 ounces baby spinach, prewashed
1 pound strawberries, hulled and quartered
Salad dressing

Combine all ingredients. Dress with balsamic or poppy seed dressing.

“Despite the forecast, live like it's Spring.”

—Lilly Pulitzer

Spring Greens Pasta

16 ounces spaghetti
3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
4 garlic cloves, minced
¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper
12 ounces marinated artichokes
1½ cups asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper

½ cup white wine
2 cups vegetable broth
1 cup frozen peas
1 tablespoon lemon zest (approximately 1 lemon)
4 tablespoons fresh lemon juice (approximately 1 lemon)
1 cup Parmesan cheese, divided
4 cups fresh baby spinach
Fresh parsley

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. You will use the same pot of water to blanch asparagus and cook pasta. Add asparagus to the boiling water. Cook for 1 to 2 minutes until color brightens.

Reduce heat. Using a slotted spoon, remove asparagus from boiling water and place in a strainer. Do not drain water. Run cold water over strainer with asparagus to stop cooking. Set asparagus aside.

After asparagus is blanched and just before you add the pasta, start sauce. In a large, deep sauté pan, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium-high heat. Add garlic. Sauté for 1 to 2 minutes or until just fragrant. Add white wine and let simmer for 1 minute. Add vegetable broth. Stir to combine and let mixture simmer for 7 to 10 minutes.

While sauce simmers, add pasta to boiling water. Cook until al dente, generally on the low end of the recommended cooking time on the pasta package. Reserve ½ cup of the pasta water before draining into colander.

Once wine and veggie broth is done simmering, add artichokes, asparagus and peas. Cook over medium heat for 1 to 2 minutes to warm.

Add cooked pasta, ½ cup to ¾ cup Parmesan, lemon juice, lemon zest (reserve some for garnish) and toss together. Add some of the reserved water as needed. Stir to combine. Simmer a minute or two so spaghetti absorbs some of the broth. Add spinach. Stir to combine. The dish is ready as soon as the spinach wilts.

Top with Parmesan and lemon zest to taste.



Explore Louisiana State Parks

By Cheré Coen

A paddler passes through Castle, a great cypress at Chemin-A-Haut State Park. PHOTO COURTESY OF LOUISIANA OFFICE OF TOURISM

Louisiana Lt. Gov. Billy Nungesser loves to relate a time when a young girl put him on the spot. He was traveling throughout the South, encouraging audiences to visit at least one place in Louisiana outside of New Orleans.

“I would say, ‘I guarantee you won’t be disappointed,’” Nungesser explains, adding that Louisiana was home to numerous unique historic sites and 21 state parks.

A young girl stood and asked him for his favorite Louisiana destination. A native of “The Crescent City,” Nungesser

replied with the first thing that came to mind: the historic town of Natchitoches, which predates New Orleans by four years, and Toledo Bend, the South’s largest human-made, artificial lake.

“I went home and told my wife we need to go there,” he says with a laugh.

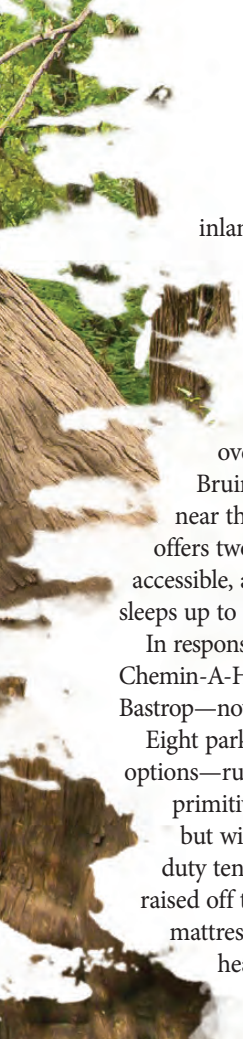
They visited Natchitoches for two days, then booked a cabin at Toledo Bend, where they hired a charter fisherman, caught plenty of fish and cooked them up on site.

“We absolutely had a great time,” he says, adding it is vital to take your own advice.

Early in his term, Nungesser made it a point to visit the state’s 21 parks, all governed under his office—a division of the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. In his tour, however, Nungesser concluded from various feedback initiated from the public that the state parks needed a facelift.

“I learned very quickly that we were 20 years behind,” he says.

In 2019, the Office of State Parks upgraded the park system, refurbishing the beaches in the coastal state parks and



inland parks with lake beaches, upgrading campsites and sewer hookups and renovating the wave pool and bathrooms at Bayou Segnette near New Orleans. Some state parks added overnight options, such as Lake Bruin State Park east of Winnsboro near the Mississippi River. It now offers two standard cabins, both ADA accessible, and one deluxe cabin that sleeps up to eight people.

In response to customer feedback, Chemin-A-Haute—13 miles northeast of Bastrop—now offers full campsite hookups.

Eight parks now offer glamping options—rustic tents that give visitors a primitive experience with nature, but with a bit of glamour. Heavy-duty tents cover a wooden platform raised off the ground. Inside are queen mattresses, benches, shelving and heaters. In warm weather, zippered flaps may be opened for cross ventilation.

Poverty Point

In the northeast corner of Louisiana, a plantation had seen better days—one reason the owner named it “Poverty Point.” Underneath the fields, however, lay something invaluable: earthen mounds created before the Mayan pyramids. The massive Native American community became one of North America’s most impressive archaeological sites.

“The area is renowned for world-class archaeological features consisting of a complex array of earthen mounds and ridges dated between 1700 and 1100 B.C.,” says naturalist Kelby Ouchley of Monroe, author of “Bayou Diversity.” “There is an excellent museum, hiking trails and regular interpretive programs.”

The Poverty Point World Heritage Site itself is not a state park, but is listed by the U.S. Department of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark. Near the town of Delhi, about 15 miles south, Poverty Point Reservoir State Park offers cabins—many of which are right on the reservoir—hiking, a marina and, if you’re lucky, migratory birds and an occasional bear.

Chemin-A-Haut

Chemin-A-Haut State Park overlooks Bayou Bartholomew near the Arkansas line, 13 miles northeast of Bastrop. The park derives its name from the French word meaning “high road” because the bayou was used as a transportation route for many years by Native Americans.

The park offers 26 campsites, 14 cabins, a group camp, and several hiking and equestrian trails. In the summer, both the bayou and swimming pool are available for visitors to enjoy.

The park’s main calling card, however, remains the highly photographed Castle. The giant cypress tree dates back centuries. Rent a canoe or kayak—or bring your own—to paddle out to this 1,000-year-old cypress that contains a hollow cavern 20 feet in diameter. It is large enough for visitors to peek inside.

Lake Claiborne

Since a good part of Louisiana revolves around water, most Louisiana state parks include water sources, which appeal to those who fish. The 6,400-acre Lake Claiborne at Lake Claiborne State Park comes stocked with largemouth bass, bream and white perch, to name a few.

Visitors may also use the lake for swimming and water sports when the weather warms, and the protected beach is perfect for small children.

The park contains 12 miles of hiking and mountain biking trails through woodlands. Many of the cabins that sleep six to eight are nestled within the woods and along the shore, creating a perfect hideaway with views.

Toledo Bend

The top dog for fishing in Louisiana remains Toledo Bend—the South’s largest human-made reservoir that straddles Texas on the western side. The lake has been named the No. 1 bass lake in the nation by Bassmaster magazine several times, and has been the site of the Bassmaster Elite Series Tournament the past five years.

There are two state parks at Toledo Bend: South Toledo Bend State Park and North Toledo Bend State Park. Both offer overnight accommodations, waterfront

views and accessibility, hiking, birding and a chance to spot bald eagles that nest along the lake. Highlights include the 3,000-foot surfaced nature trail and instructional welcome center at South Toledo and a swimming pool at North Toledo.

Chicot and the Louisiana State Arboretum

Hikers who enjoy studying nature as much as a good walk love Chicot State Park and the Louisiana State Arboretum, both located in the center of the state. It is an easy drive between both sites.

Park trails circumvent Lake Chicot and the park’s diverse woods, while the neighboring arboretum offers easy hikes through 300 acres of natural growth.

Chicot stretches across 6,400 acres of rolling hills and around Lake Chicot, with cabins and primitive campsites scattered throughout. In addition to educational hiking trails, the park offers mountain bike trails, a boat launch, boat rentals and a fishing pier.

The arboretum preserves a unique landscape that ranges from the Walker Branch flatlands of Lake Chicot to rolling ridges. Just about every type of Louisiana vegetation grows within its acreage.

For more information about Louisiana flora, fauna and native history, the LaFleur Nature Center features educational exhibits.

Bogue Chitto State Park

Visitors come to Bogue Chitto north of Lake Pontchartrain to enjoy the slow-moving river that gives the park its name.

Paddlers love to ply Bogue Chitto’s waters, but when the heat of summertime arrives, rent a tube from Louisiana River Adventures for a slow float downstream.

This year, 10 miles of mountain bike trails were added to the park’s existing 4 miles, along with a new trailhead and education center. Trails offer a variety of terrain, so beginning mountain bikers will enjoy the trail as much as experts.

Additional glamping opportunities also were added to the park this spring, bringing the total number of glamping units to 10.

Story continues on page 14

Louisiana State Parks

Continued from page 13

Beaches

Ten Louisiana state parks contain beaches—whether on the Gulf at Grand Isle State Park, Vermilion Bay at Cypremort Point State Park, Toledo Bend reservoir or along the shores of Lake Pontchartrain at Fontainebleau State Park in Mandeville, just north of New Orleans.

Grand Isle, South Toledo Bend and Fontainebleau offer new glamping options for visitors to camp near water.

Park Events

Although spring and summer offer many special events, because of the state's balmy climate, any time is a great time to visit Louisiana state parks.

Bird walks and guided nature hikes allow visitors to spot wildlife and migratory birds visiting along the Mississippi Flyway and Louisiana's unique wildlife that comes alive when the weather warms.

Historic sites are featured year-round, with reenactments. Historians and park rangers also discuss historic properties and unique landscapes, offering living history tours of the Acadian Farmstead at Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site near St. Martinville.

The Louisiana Dutch Oven Society offers monthly cooking demonstrations.

Discounts

Louisiana State Parks offer 50% off day-use facilities for active-duty military, veterans, retirees, members of the National Guard and reservists with current photo identification from these organizations.

Emergency responders receive 15% off all park facility rentals Mondays through Thursdays.

Seniors 62 and older, with ID, get 50% off campsite stays through December 31.

For those who book a state park cabin or campsite, use the code WELCOMEBACK to receive the fourth night free. ■

Discover what's happening at Louisiana's state parks. For updated information, check www.crt.state.la.us/louisiana-state-parks/news-activities/calendar-of-events/index.



Lake Bistineau State Park in Doyline has camp sites, a picnic area, hiking trails and a few boat launches to make the most of the almost 30-square-mile human-made lake. PHOTO COURTESY OF LOUISIANA TRAVEL

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The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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— H., Arvada, CO





Networking About Economic Development

Cooperative employees met representatives of the Louisiana Economic Development Department during a recent round-robin event. Participants included Kay Fox and Mike Luttrell, Beauregard Electric; David Latona, Toma Holland, Heather Verrett and Toni Johnson, DEMCO; Eric Gautreaux, Jeff Davis Electric; Brett Ledet, SLECA; Johnny Bruhl, Washington-St. Tammany Electric; and Jeff Arnold, Addie Armato and Daniel Bishcoff, Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives. PHOTOS BY ADDIE ARMATO



2021 DEMCO Essay Contest: Four Students Win \$2,000 Scholarships

Final judging of the 44th annual DEMCO essay contest was held via Zoom Tuesday, March 2, from 6 to 8 p.m. Essays were submitted by 174 eleventh graders representing 25 schools in DEMCO's seven-parish service area: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Livingston, St. Helena, West Feliciana and Tangipahoa.

The four winners of \$2,000 scholarships are Allie Slater, Central High School; Nia Jerro, Central High School; Destiny Kelly, Denham Springs High School; and Madison Brignac, French

Settlement High School. (Account No. 80221787002)

"The DEMCO essay contest provides so many learning opportunities for participating students to gain a better understanding of electric cooperatives," said DEMCO CEO and General Manager Randy Pierce. "It's a wonderful annual event that demonstrates our commitment to co-op members, to education and to the communities we serve."

Other finalists were Aubre Broussard, Dominic Graphia and Brady Vidrine, Denham Springs High School; Skylar Hale and Emma Millican, Central High School; Cody Flurry, Live Oak High School; Whitney Leblanc, Zachary High School; and Sarah Lindrew, St. Joseph's Academy.

Due to COVID-19 health and safety precautions, the contest took place via Zoom. Students presented their essays to judges and members of DEMCO staff and board. Contestants were judged on their oral essay presentation and knowledge about rural electrification and DEMCO.



Allie Slater



Nia Jerro



Destiny Kelly



Madison Brignac



DEMCO CEO Randy Pierce watches the 12 student finalists compete in the DEMCO 2021 essay contest via Zoom.

DEMCO Scholarship Opportunity

One-year scholarships will be awarded to DEMCO member-students in a random drawing at the DEMCO annual membership meeting May 15.

DEMCO member-students attending a Louisiana public college or university are eligible for \$1,250 for each of two consecutive semesters to help with tuition.

"This year, DEMCO is very pleased to provide scholarships to 28 students," says David Latona, vice president of

marketing and member services.

The number of scholarships awarded fluctuates each year as funds permit. (Account No. 80044652001)

DEMCO is allowed to use unclaimed deposits, refunds and other money owed to former members to provide funding for the scholarship program.

For eligibility requirements and to apply by May 7, visit DEMCO.org/community/DEMCO-scholarships. ■

Sign Up for Bank Draft

DEMCO members who pay their bill by bank draft are eligible to win a \$50 gift card. Winning account numbers are published in each issue of Along these LINES. It's easy to be eligible to win. Sign up for bank draft at DEMCO.org or call 1-844-MyDEMCO.

Congratulations to these winners:
Account numbers 80260198001, 80204783001, 80133518002 and 487701002.

STATEWIDE NEWS

In-Person Meetings Resume

For the first time in more than a year, the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives Board of Directors, right, gathered in March for an in-person meeting. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, previous meetings were conducted via teleconference. The Meter School Planning Committee, below, also recently met at ALEC's office. Participants were, from left, Kenny Boycher and Richard Schmidt, Beauregard Electric Cooperative; Marc Aucoin, DEMCO; Aaron Graham, ALEC; Joe Langlois, DEMCO; Brennon LaBouve, Jeff Davis Electric Cooperative; and Derek Seal, ALEC.



PHOTO BY DEREK SEAL



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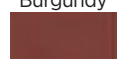

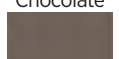

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How to Sleep Better

By Robin Howard

When I was in college, I took a part-time job transcribing patient visit notes for physicians in a sleep lab at a large research hospital.

I spent 12 hours a week—576 hours a year—transcribing the stories of why people couldn't sleep, the toll it was taking on their bodies, minds, relationships and careers, and the doctors' recommendations for improvement.

In six years, I heard some truly heartbreaking stories and absorbed a substantial amount of information about sleeping better. I learned to take sleep

hygiene so seriously that I never pulled an all-nighter in college and went to bed with such precision that I earned the nickname Nerd Girl.

For more than 30 years, I kept up those habits. During the stress of the pandemic, however, I found myself slipping into some bad habits, including doom scrolling at 2 a.m. along with everyone else I know.

If you've been having trouble sleeping lately, you're in good company. However, the effects of chronic sleep deprivation are real and can be quite severe.

After listening to nearly 4,000 hours of sleep clinic

notes, I can tell you there are basic things you can do that will change your world.

Everybody has sleepless nights from time to time, but if you have trouble going to sleep or staying asleep more than three nights a week for more than three months, you have chronic insomnia.

Chronic insomnia causes symptoms such as:

- Irritability.
- Depression.
- Poor school or job performance.
- Higher risk of accidents.
- Anxiety.
- Substance abuse.
- Increased severity of

conditions, such as heart disease and high blood pressure.

Some medications or medical conditions, such as sleep apnea, can cause inadequate rest. However, doctors recommended the same five things to every patient that came through the doors, even if they had a more serious underlying condition.

1. Make Your Bedroom Comfortable

Everyone who visited the sleep clinic was sent home with instructions for a bedroom makeover. Your bedroom should be quiet, dark, cool and

relaxing. Your bed should be the right size to accommodate all the people and pets sleeping in it. You may be tempted to skip this step, but your sleep environment is serious business.

First, give it a ruthless declutter and cleaning. Then, follow these steps:

- Remove all electronics, including television, cellphones and laptops.
- If you sleep with a partner, you may need a larger bed. If you sleep with a partner and a pet or an occasional child, you need a king-size bed.
- Replace your mattress if it's five to seven years old.
- Replace your pillows every two years.
- Install room-darkening drapes or shades to block out ambient and moonlight.
- Replace the lightbulb in your bedside lamps with 45-watt bulbs.
- If sounds keep you awake at night, use earplugs or a white noise maker such as a fan, air purifier or white noise machine.
- If your partner snores, ask them to see a sleep specialist.
- Keep the temperature in your bedroom around 65 degrees.
- Remove every blanket and pillow you don't need, no matter how pretty they are.

2. Go for a Morning Walk

People who went for a walk early in the day fell asleep sooner and stayed asleep longer than people who did no physical activity, did vigorous aerobic exercise or exercised in the evening.

3. Limit Caffeine and Alcohol

Some people can drink caffeine

TIPS FOR BETTER SLEEP

- AVOID CONSUMING ALCOHOL AND NICOTINE BEFORE BEDTIME
- DO NOT WATCH TV OR WORK ON YOUR COMPUTER AND DO NOT USE GADGETS BEFORE BEDTIME
- DRINKING A WARM CUP OF TEA WITH CHAMOMILE OR GLASS OF MILK
- AVOID LIGHTS WHEN TRYING TO SLEEP
- AVOID OVEREATING AT DINNER AND AVOID CONSUMING CAFFEINE IN THE LATE AFTERNOON
- READ A BOOK OR LISTEN TO A RELAXING MUSIC
- 61-75F COMFORTABLE TEMPERATURE IN THE BEDROOM
- WAKE UP AND GO TO BED AT THE SAME TIME. SLEEP 7-8 HOURS
- STOP EXERCISING FOUR HOURS BEFORE BEDTIME
- TAKE A WARM BATH OR SHOWER BEFORE BEDTIME

ADOBE STOCK ILLUSTRATION BY SIBERIAN ART

on their way to bed with no effect on sleep. However, caffeine is a stimulant that can cause insomnia even in small doses. For example, an 8-ounce cup of coffee has 95 milligrams of caffeine, a 16-ounce soda has 39 milligrams, green and black tea have around 25 milligrams, and dark chocolate has 24 milligrams.

It's OK to have caffeine but limit your intake during the day and avoid it six hours before bedtime.

Alcohol, on the other hand, is a sedative. A glass of wine may help you fall asleep, but it won't help you stay asleep. People who drink alcohol experience reduced REM sleep—or deep sleep—and imbalances in the sleep cycle that can last all night.

To be sure you get a good

night's sleep, stop drinking alcohol at least four hours before bedtime.

4. Create a Ritual

Going to bed and waking up at the same time every day, even on weekends, is one of the most important things you can do for better sleep.

If you go to bed at your regular time and find you haven't fallen asleep after 20 minutes, go to another room and do something relaxing until you're tired.

Taking a warm bath before bed can be helpful because it causes a rise and fall in body temperature that can make you naturally sleepy.

Don't do anything stressful, such as work or have emotional discussions, that can cause your body to release stress hormones.

5. Eliminate Screen Time

An hour before you go to bed, stop looking at screens, including TV, cellphone, computer and e-readers. These devices emit blue light, which reduces melatonin, a hormone that helps you sleep.

If you like to read before bed, go old school with a real paper book.

Improving your sleep hygiene takes time and practice, so don't get discouraged if it takes you a few weeks to change your habits or you have a rough night occasionally.

Over time, you'll find the quality and quantity of your sleep improves, and you'll reap the benefits of your new habits by feeling better during the day. ■

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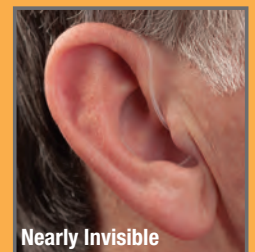
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