

Along these LINES

MARCH/APRIL 2023



Botanical Bounty

Page 12

ALSO INSIDE >>

Manager's Message Page 4

Clearing a Safe Path for Power Pages 20-21



ROW maintenance is performed with an emphasis on the removal of trees that threaten the transmission and distribution system.

 /DEMCOLouisiana
DEMCO.org

STRONG, BEAUTIFUL ROOFING

for Your Home

MUELLER STEEL BUILDINGS AND METAL ROOFING



Mueller metal roofs provide long-lasting beauty, weather resistance and energy efficiency. You can select from a wide range of designer colors to complement your home, backed by limited paint warranties up to 40 years. It all adds up to lasting peace of mind. Get a metal roof you can depend on from a company you can trust - a Mueller metal roof.

Learn more at: www.muellerinc.com 877-2-MUELLER (877-268-3553)



Voices for Co-op Power

After its launch in 1981, the MTV channel impacted many adults my age, known as the MTV Generation. The generation refers to adolescents and young adults of the 1980s up to the mid-1990s.

MTV defined popular music, visual style and culture for our generation. Rock the Vote was one of that time's most famous advertising campaigns. Ads featuring celebrity spokespeople encouraged voter turnout among ages 18-24.

Those advertisements sparked my patriotism and empowered me to educate myself on the issues, complete my voter registration and vote. Louisiana electric cooperatives have a similar campaign encouraging consumer-members to do the very thing the MTV campaign accomplished years ago.

You may have seen our Co-ops Vote campaign, or, more recently, you may have seen VCP—Voices for Cooperative Power—on your social media feed. As a member-consumer of an electric cooperative, you can help shape energy policy and tell your story to our elected officials about the many ways your electric co-op supports you and your community.

In the current political landscape, we need your help putting a human face on the

opportunities and challenges facing Louisiana's electric cooperatives now more than ever. We all know that one size doesn't fit all when it comes to energy policies. Diversifying energy sources, collaborating on new technologies, and balancing progress with affordability and access are essential co-op priorities that VCP advocates for on the state and federal levels.

As Louisiana's electric cooperatives, we will continue to champion commonsense policy solutions that reflect the needs of co-op members and communities we call home. As an advocate, speaking up on issues that affect your electric co-op sends a message to elected officials about the needs of our communities and their constituencies.

VCP makes it easy to have a say in energy policy decisions that affect you. You can customize your experience by choosing the most important issues, including broadband, energy efficiency, renewable energy and rural development.

VCP members receive updates on those issues and information on how to contact elected officials and government agencies on proposed legislation or regulations.

The most important voices to elected officials are their constituents. We want to ensure consumer- members who care most



Addie Armato

about their communities and co-ops carry their messages to Congress.

Don't let larger, urban-focused utility companies determine what is best for our communities as the nation transitions to a

new energy future. Use the power of your voice to help us make a difference. To get involved, visit voicesforcooperativepower.com or use the QR code below.

Every generation has a defining moment that sparks its public spirit. Let's make Co-ops Vote and VCP the modern-day voice of patriotism.



Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives Inc.

Staff

CEO Addie Armato
DIRECTOR OF LOSS CONTROL Aaron Graham
SAFETY COORDINATOR Ricky Melancon
COMMUNICATIONS AND DIGITAL MARKETING SPECIALIST Conley Bourgeois
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Rhianna Garon
CREDIT UNION
 Robin Plunket, manager
 Jody Overhultz, representative

Board of Directors

President Dennis Glass
Vice President Michael Heinen
Secretary/Treasurer Roger Dale DeHart



ALEC Members

BEAUREGARD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.
 J.R. Hickman Trent Buxton
CLAIBORNE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.
 Mark Brown Lane Davidson
DEMCO
 Daniel Berthelot Richard "Dickie" Sitman
JEFF DAVIS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.
 Michael Heinen Byron Hardee
SOUTH LOUISIANA ELECTRIC CO-OP ASSOCIATION
 Trevor Benoit Roger Dale DeHart
WASHINGTON-ST. TAMMANY ELECTRIC CO-OP INC.
 Joe Jarrell Dennis Glass

Associate Member

PANOLA-HARRISON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.



Botanical Bounty

Spring brings gardens to life **Page 12**

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



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ASCENSION

Elinda Taillon

EAST BATON ROUGE

Steve Irving
Randy Lorio, Vice President
Jill McGraw

EAST FELICIANA

Mike Anderson
Glenn DeLee

LIVINGSTON

Danny Berthelot, President
Leslie Falks
Dennis Lott, Secretary-Treasurer

ST. HELENA

Tresa Byrd
Richard Sitman

TANGIPAHOA

Melissa Dufreche

WEST FELICIANA

Kevin Beauchamp

CEO & GENERAL MANAGER

Randy Pierce

CHIEF CORPORATE SERVICES OFFICER

Russchelle Overhultz, CEBS

CHIEF ENGINEERING & OPERATIONS OFFICER

Mark Phillips

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Peggy Maranan

CHIEF MEMBER SERVICES OFFICER

Galen Dunbar

Mission

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

Volume 38, Issue 2

Along These Lines (USPS 4089) is published bimonthly by the Association of Louisiana Electric Co-ops Inc., 10725 Airline Hwy., Baton Rouge, LA 70816, in partnership with Pioneer Utility Resources.

Annual Subscriptions: Members \$2.02. Nonmembers \$5.

Postmaster: Send form 3579 to 10725 Airline Hwy., Baton Rouge, LA 70816.

Periodicals postage paid at Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70821 and additional mailing offices.

DEMCO is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Though it isn't what you may first think of when you think about our work at DEMCO, right-of-way (ROW) clearing and vegetation management are one of the most important things we do to get power to you safely and reduce the occurrence of outages.

When DEMCO was founded in 1938, clearing trees and vegetation was necessary, so everyone living along the power lines could get power. Our grid was established for the rural residents who were not being served by big utility companies, so they came together to form a local co-op.

As a result, DEMCO had to build poles to run lines across swamps, forests, ditches, rivers, roads, and miles of land to get power to the people. Over the decades, our communities have grown, and we now serve a mix of members, with many living in more densely populated subdivisions. We have new poles and lines to serve those members, but we still have members who live in rural areas, and our equipment must perform for them.

DEMCO serves rural and city dwellers, so our right-of-way program is extensive. It is our duty to clear and trim trees and other vegetation that threaten the distribution system.

The co-op has hundreds of miles of ROW in our seven-parish service area, much of it through swamps, forests, ditches, rivers, roads, and yards. For our members and their families, initial clearings and subsequent regular maintenance are on a multi-year cycle and necessary to ultimately improve reliability and safety for everyone.

In addition to improving reliability, the ROW program creates safer working conditions for DEMCO crews. All areas in and around the right-of-way must have clear and safe access so line crews can do their work.

A clear right-of-way also makes access easier for our line crews, which results in quicker maintenance and repair for our members and the communities we power.

Crews must always have their head on a swivel looking up, down and all around to make sure there isn't a live wire hidden in the debris, snagged in the brush or in trees as they walk into these situations. These men are highly trained, but as a co-op and a community, we owe it to them to do all we can to reduce their risk by clearing a safe path for them to work.

Rural living is a way of life for an estimated 60 million Americans. For DEMCO, it's the reason we exist. I hope you will read the story on pages 20-21 to learn more about our ROW program.



**DEMCO BOARD ELECTION
DIXIE ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION
CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

2023 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
Saturday, May 13, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION OF MEETING
DEMCO Headquarters Facility
16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA 70739
(Elections in Districts 4, 5, 8 and 10)

February 13, 2023 –

March 10, 2023

Publish the Calendar of Events in the official journal of each parish, including the date, time and place of the meeting of the Nominating Committee.

March 20, 2023 –

March 22, 2023

Pre-qualification period. Members interested in seeking a position on the board of directors are required pursuant to DEMCO bylaws to appear in person between these dates to determine eligibility as prescribed in the corporation's bylaws. Candidates not pre-qualified will not be eligible to seek a position on the board of directors.

March 23, 2023

DEMCO Board Meeting at 6 p.m. at DEMCO Headquarters. The Committee on Nominations will be appointed at this meeting.

March 23, 2023

The Nominating Committee meeting begins at 6:05 p.m. at DEMCO Headquarters, 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA, with results of the meeting to be posted March 24, 2023.

March 28, 2023

DEMCO Governance Committee will meet at 4:30 p.m. on this date, if needed, to determine eligibility of director candidates who have pre-qualified. Only candidates who have pre-qualified will be considered.

March 29, 2023

Beginning on this date, pre-qualified director candidates may obtain a petition to run for a seat on the board of directors. DEMCO bylaws require 50 valid signatures for the petition to be validated.

March 31, 2023

This is the Record Date for the 2023 Annual Membership Meeting. A final list of those

members eligible to vote in DEMCO's 2023 Annual Membership Meeting will be prepared.

April 12, 2023

Petitions must be returned to DEMCO headquarters office by 4:30 p.m. and received by the CEO and General Manager's office.

April 13, 2023

The Governance Committee will meet at 4:30 p.m. on this date, if needed, to validate each petition and post the results as required by the corporation's bylaws on this date.

April 19, 2023 –

April 26, 2023

The Official Notice of the 2023 Annual Meeting will be mailed to all members of the cooperative during this time.

April 24, 2023

Ballots for the 2023 Annual Meeting will be mailed to members of the cooperative on this date. Members should receive their ballots by Saturday, April 29, 2023 — VOTE and mail your ballot immediately.

May 5, 2023

The deadline for receiving ballots for the 2023 Annual Membership Meeting is 4:30 p.m. on this date — DO NOT DELAY — VOTE.

May 8, 2023 –

May 10, 2023

Ballots will be counted during this period by the certified public accountants selected by DEMCO to conduct the annual meeting. Candidates will be advised as to the time and place that the ballots will be counted.

May 13, 2023

Annual meeting and election results announced at 10 a.m., at 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA 70739.



Thank you

**FOR PUTTING IT
ALL ON THE LINE.**

#ThankALineman



DEMCO

A Touchstone Energy
Cooperative 

 /DEMCOLouisiana

Building

**BRIGHTER
COMMUNITIES**

Member-students can apply for one-year scholarships of \$1,250 for each of two consecutive semesters awarded in a random drawing at the DEMCO annual membership meeting. **The DEADLINE is May 8, 2023.**

For eligibility requirements and to enter, visit **DEMCO.org**.

National Lineworker Appreciation Day



On April 10, we celebrate the amazing lineworkers who power our lives. Help us thank Louisiana lineworkers for their hard work and commitment to keep the lights on. #thankalinerworker

Help Fund a Scholarship, Gain a Chance to Win!

Donate \$1 to the Sandy Stockwell Cooperative Youth Leadership Scholarship Fund, and you could win a portable Hisencn flat top propane grill.

To buy a ticket, visit your electric cooperative.

The drawing is in July at the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperative's annual meeting banquet in Baton Rouge.

You do not need to be present to win. The winner will be contacted by phone.



Trainings Key for a Strong, Safe Workforce



Front row, from left, Mayson Victor and Kay Fox, from Beauregard Electric Cooperative Inc., and Kayla Dugas, from South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association, attend Rachel Frey's presentation regarding internal communications. The Louisiana Member Services Association Members First conference was held in Lake Charles. PHOTO BY CHAD SIMON, SAM HOUSTON ELECTRIC Newly elected LMSA officers award outgoing LMSA President Toni Johnson, DEMCO, an Outstanding Service award. From left are, Kayla Dugas, SLECA, secretary/treasurer; Coylean Schloegel, Washington-St. Tammany Electric, president; Anne Hawes, DEMCO, vice president; and Toni. PHOTO BY CONLEY BOURGEOIS



CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT: Altec's Ed Amedee, center, teaches truck safety at DEMCO's recent rights-of-way training. ALEC Safety Coordinator Ricky Melancon, right, presents Claiborne's Ryan Beach with a certificate for completing Lineman Training Module 1. Bucket truck rescue training at SLECA. PHOTOS COURTESY OF RICKY MELANCON

Appliances That Work for You

Q: Are smart home technologies efficient? Will upgrading save me money?

A: You've probably heard the term smart home a lot in recent years. If you're curious what makes your house smart, how it can add efficiency and help you save, you have come to the right place.

SMART was originally an acronym for self-monitoring analysis and reporting technology. This refers to technology that can be programmed for automation or controlled remotely using Bluetooth or Wi-Fi from a cellphone app or online login. A smart home has automated control of appliances and systems, such as lighting and HVAC.

People automate their homes for several reasons, including convenience, energy efficiency and security.

Just because a product is smart, don't assume it's energy efficient. Added connectivity, lights and touchscreens can increase energy use. Always look for the Energy Star logo when shopping, which certifies the products meet standards for energy efficiency.

Energy savings typically come from automating the systems, devices and appliances in your home to use less energy or use energy when it costs less. Here are a few ways you can start implementing smart technology at home.

Whole House Upgrades

Because heating and cooling account for the most energy

use in a home, these systems are the best place to look for energy savings.

Smart thermostats offer features and functionality that can help you save energy and money without thinking about it, including learning temperature preferences and setting temperatures. Geofencing uses your cellphone location to adjust the temperature accordingly.

Smart thermostats also allow you to control the thermostat from anywhere with an internet connection. Features vary by product, so choose the one that's right for you.

Smart window coverings are available and increasing in popularity. They can help save energy in the winter and summer by operating based on the temperature of the room or a preset schedule.

Smart lighting can help you remotely control the lights in your home, based on occupancy or a preset schedule. Lighting can be paired with home security systems.

You can use smart outlets and power strips to control devices from outside the home or manage use based on load. For example, you can plug your computer and devices into a load-sensing power strip that turns off peripherals, such as monitors and printers, when your computer is not in use.

Living Room

Many people use Wi-Fi to stream TV programming. Smart TVs with built-in streaming functionality offer



A cellphone or tablet can control a host of household appliances while at home or on the road. Automation can help reduce your electric bill. ADOBE STOCK ART BY HQUALITY

the most efficient way to stream content. If your TV cannot connect to the internet for streaming, opt for a streaming media player, such as Roku or Apple TV. They use 15 times less energy than a gaming console to stream the same shows and movies.

Laundry

Smart washing machines can be scheduled for off-peak times, which is helpful if your electric rate is based on the time of day energy is used. Smart dryers shut off automatically when your clothes are dry.

Kitchen

There are many options for smart appliances in the heart of the home. Smart refrigerators

offer energy-saving features, such as notifications when the door is left open. Digital screens show the contents to keep you from opening the door.

Smart ovens allow you to preheat when you are on your way home or check if you forgot to turn off the oven when you left home. Toasters, range hoods, microwaves and countertop ice makers are among the list of available smart kitchen gadgets.

More smart home technology is on the horizon, bringing more ways to operate the systems, devices and appliances in your home. Look for products that use the same smart home apps to make these new technologies easier to manage. ■



Miranda Boutelle has more than 20 years of experience helping people save energy. She has worked on energy-efficiency projects from the Midwest to the West Coast. Today, Miranda is vice president of operations and customer engagement at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy-efficiency company.

This content was originally created by Efficiency Services Group LLC under contract with NRECA. NRECA retains ownership of this content. NRECA does not endorse Efficiency Services Group, its views herein expressed, nor any products or services it offers.

The Invention of the Year

The world's most fun-to-drive and portable mobility device

Once in a lifetime, a product comes along that truly moves people. Introducing the future of battery-powered personal transportation . . . **The Zinger.**

Throughout the ages, there have been many important advances in mobility. Canes, walkers, rollators, and scooters were created to help people with mobility issues get around and retain their independence. Lately, however, there haven't been any new improvements to these existing products or developments in this field. Until now. Recently, an innovative design engineer who's developed one of the world's most popular products created a completely new breakthrough . . . a personal electric vehicle. It's called the **Zinger**, and there is nothing out there quite like it.

"What my wife especially loves is it gives her back feelings of safety and independence which has given a real boost to her confidence and happiness! Thank You!"

-Kent C., California

The first thing you'll notice about the **Zinger** is its unique look. It doesn't look like a scooter. Its sleek, lightweight yet durable frame is made with aircraft grade aluminum so it weighs only 47.2 lbs. It features one-touch folding and unfolding - when folded it can be wheeled around like a suitcase and fits easily into a backseat or trunk. Then, there are the steering levers. They enable the **Zinger** to move forward, backward, turn on a dime and even pull right up to a table or desk.



Available in Green, Black and Blue (shown)



The Zinger folds to a mere 10 inches.

With its compact yet powerful motor it can go up to 6 miles an hour and its rechargeable battery can go up to 8 miles on a single charge. With its low center of gravity and inflatable tires it can handle rugged terrain and is virtually tip-proof. Think about it, you can take your **Zinger** almost anywhere, so you don't have to let mobility issues rule your life.

Why take our word for it? Call now, and find out how you can get a **Zinger** of your very own.

journey
zinger

Call now and receive a utility basket absolutely FREE with your order.

1-888-544-0023

Please mention code 117794 when ordering.

Now available in a Joystick model
(Zoomer Chair)

Joystick can be mounted on the right or left side for rider's comfort

mobility | sleep | comfort | safety

enjoying life never gets old™

journey
HEALTH & LIFESTYLE

The Zinger and Zoomer Chairs are personal electric vehicles and are not medical devices nor wheelchairs. They are not intended for medical purposes to provide mobility to persons restricted to a sitting position. They are not covered by Medicare nor Medicaid. © 2023 Journey Health and Lifestyle



85253

FUEL UP

Roadside eats hit the spot

By Chéré Coen

Journalist Al Hebert spends his mornings reporting on quirky and hidden gems for “KADN News 15 Today,” the morning show in Lafayette. But there’s another side to Al, one he’s passionate about—and it comes with a great meal.

He travels the countryside visiting gas stations and convenience stores, sampling the unique foods served by the owners. He writes about these humble places in his blog, “Gas Station Gourmet.” He also produces video segments for YouTube and the “In-Convenience” podcast with Frank Beard.

It all began in 2006 when Al worked as a health care reporter and often traveled with his crew to Texas from Louisiana.

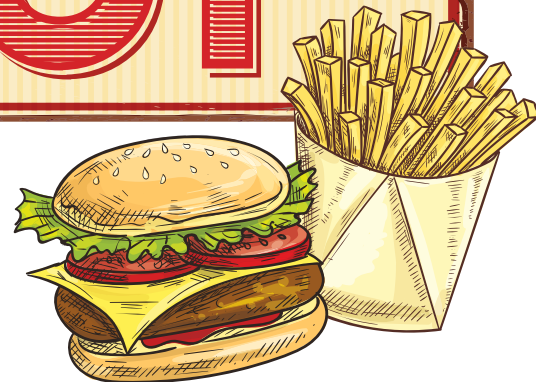
“We stopped at this gas station, and it smelled like your grandma’s kitchen,” Al says. “We asked ourselves, could people be cooking here? I thought, let’s stop, shoot a package and, probably, get a free lunch. Come to find out there are places like that everywhere.”

After beginning the “Gas Station Gourmet” blog the following year, he continued visiting and writing about gas stations. Then, the National Association of Convenience Stores magazine came calling. The publication serves the global convenience and fuel retailing industry. They asked Al to pen a column—also named “Gas Station Gourmet”—and he has written about stations in Louisiana and across the United States. He only spotlights unique and independently owned stores.

“There’s so much cool stuff out there, and that’s what makes it fun,” he says. “That’s where the great stories are. The gas station cooks are the cowboys of today. They’re such interesting people.”

Unique finds include the Cornish game hen in Noonday, Texas, and Hitler’s limousine in an Arizona museum attached to a convenience store. Then, there was the psychic goat in Wisconsin. Another revelation was the men and women behind the food counters.

“People would be surprised at how



many classically trained chefs are cooking in a gas station,” the Abbeville resident says.

Ask Al for some of his favorite stops among the 160,000 convenience stores throughout the country and he’ll excitedly offer a long list. He’s that passionate about his unique food career.

He praises two Church Point stores that rival white-tablecloth restaurants. The Bourbon Street Deli in South Louisiana stations offers a pork roast boudin. And the Corner Grocery’s chili dogs in Loreauville earn praise.

While he credits Maine as having the most unique gas stations, Louisiana and Texas provide the quirkiest food with the best quality.

For instance, Al offers Truck Stop Dressing by chef Sarah Fontenot Broussard, created when she was a chef at a Louisiana truck



It’s not always just about the food. Al finds plenty of adventure during his travels, such as his stop by the Bayou Carlin Cove Boat Landing & Pavilion in Delcambre.



Great food from the Old Country Store in Lorman, Mississippi.



One of Al's discoveries was the big cheddar bacon burger created by Steven Bollich at College Station-Mudbugs in Eunice.

stop. Sarah is now a full-time wife and mom.

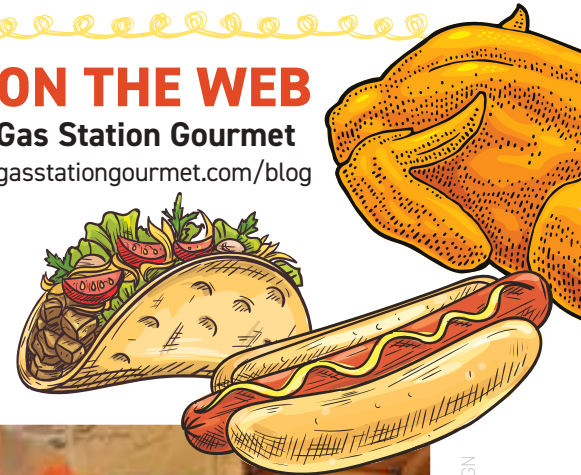
"I had been searching for a great dressing recipe for a long time," Al says. "I found one close to home at Peto's Travel Center on Interstate 10, Exit 59, at the Roanoke exit.

"Some recipes are closely guarded secrets," he says. "Everyone should eat well," is Sarah's philosophy, and she shared hers with me. Her eggplant dressing is good and easy to prepare." ■

ON THE WEB

Gas Station Gourmet

gasstationgourmet.com/blog



Truck Stop Dressing

The Cajun Trinity: equal parts onions, celery and bell peppers
 3 or more tablespoons minced garlic
 1½ sticks butter
 2 eggplants (one for each pound of meat)
 1 pound ground pork
 1 pound ground beef
 32 ounces chicken broth
 1 packet brown gravy mix
 1 or 2 cans of Rotel tomatoes, depending on personal preference
 Cajun or Creole seasoning
 Green onions

DIRECTIONS: Sauté the trinity in butter, add minced garlic. When soft, add eggplants and sweat them down until translucent. Add meat and cook down. Once the meat is cooked, add enough chicken broth and brown gravy mix to cover the mixture. Add Rotel tomatoes and seasoning to taste. Add green onions.

"You know it's ready when the eggplant is soft throughout," Al says, quoting Sarah.

Serve the dish as is or mix with rice for rice dressing. Another option is placing the dressing inside a casserole dish and sprinkling Ritz crackers on top. Then, bake at 375 F until crackers turn a nice brown color. Or, Al says "go completely Cajun" and sprinkle crushed cracklings or pork skins on top.



Al with Big H, the giant sausage icon from Prasek's in Sealy, Texas.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AL HERBERT

SPOTLIGHT



ADOBE STOCK IMAGE BY AGATA

**New Orleans Botanical
Garden, City Park.**
PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW
ORLEANS CITY PARK



Botanical County

Spring brings gardens to life

By Chéré Coen

Botanical gardens across the state offer brilliant displays each spring as the earth comes alive in vibrant colors. While many gardens stand on their own or are part of historical sites, others are within city parks.

We're highlighting a few of the top public gardens in Louisiana, from the show gardens of the American Rose Society in Shreveport to a unique collection of plants and sculptures assembled by a Tabasco heir.

New Orleans Botanical Garden, City Park

neworleanscitypark.org/visit-city-park/botanical-garden

New Orleans' first public classical garden, which dates to the 1930s, is in one of America's largest municipal parks. Funded by the Works Progress Administration, it was described by the 1938 "New Orleans City Guide" as City Park's Rose Garden with a "pool and fountain enclosing a symbolic statue by Enrique Alferez ... and the City Park Conservatories, where a large variety of tropical, semitropical and exotic plants are grown."

It was designated the New Orleans Botanical Garden in 1982, and there were additions of a pavilion for special events and smaller gardens—such as the shade garden, outdoor kitchen and vegetable plot. In 2015, the Helis Foundation Enrique Alferez Sculpture Garden opened in honor of the artist who called New Orleans

home during periods of his life. And, of course, those roses remain.

"We've slowly, over the years, been developing it," Garden Director Paul Soniat says.

Special events, including musical performances and plant shows and sales, occur throughout the year. Most are in spring, summer and fall.

The gardens are open 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday, as well as 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Admission is \$12 for adults, \$6 for children ages 3 to 12 and free for children under 3. On Wednesdays, all Louisiana residents receive free admission.

Burden Museum & Gardens

lsu.edu/botanic-gardens

In the heart of Baton Rouge, just off Interstate 10 at the Essen Exit, are the 440 acres of the Burden Museum & Gardens, which include the LSU Rural Life Museum, Windrush Gardens and the LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens. The latter contains 3 miles of walking paths through several themed gardens. Winter and early spring mean blooming camellias in two major collections, followed by roses in the spring that are spectacular, says Haleigh Judge, Burden's communications coordinator.

Families can enjoy three AgCenter gardens dedicated to children: the Children's Garden of fruits and vegetables, the Pollinator Playground filled with butterflies and bees in summer, and the whimsical Family Forest. There's even

a swamp boardwalk to learn about Louisiana's watershed.

The historic Windrush Gardens, with access through the Rural Life Museum, were designed by Steele Burden, who mimicked European and Louisiana plantation gardens of the 19th century.

The LSU AgCenter Botanic Gardens are open daily, except major holidays, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. There is no admission cost to the AgCenter gardens, but Windrush Gardens and the Rural Life Museum require a \$3 fee.

Jungle Gardens, Avery Island

junglegardens.org

Edward Avery "Ned" McIlhenny was born on Avery Island, the southwest Louisiana salt dome that mimics an island. Ned was the second son of Edmund McIlhenny, the man who began the Tabasco empire on Avery Island, so it was only natural for him to study the unique plants and animals that existed in the exotic bioregion outside New Iberia. Known as an arctic explorer and a naturalist, Ned created a botanical oasis.

It began as a bird sanctuary called Bird City, which was Ned's attempt to save the snowy egret from extinction. In the late 1900s, the egret was hunted to adorn women's hats. By the 1920s, Ned added exotic plants—many were hybrids he created—and called it Jungle Gardens. He opened the decorated acreage in 1935.

"The gardens eventually offered

a landscape architectural service, which designed the grounds of the old and new Louisiana State Capitols, Louisiana State University and various Depression-era public works projects,” writes Shane K. Bernard in “Tabasco, An Illustrated History.”

Today, visitors may enjoy a tour of the Tabasco factory and drive through Jungle Gardens, which now includes a Buddha statue and shrine, bears and alligators, a bamboo forest and Bird City. Spring means blooming azaleas beneath lavish live oak trees and migratory birds.

Rip Van Winkle Gardens

ripvanwinklegardens.com

Jefferson Island is another coastal salt dome on the southwestern Louisiana prairie, and it fronts Lake Peigneur. American actor Joseph Jefferson, known for his Broadway role as Rip Van Winkle in the play he adapted from Washington Irving’s tale, lived here for years. He entertained the famous, including President Grover Cleveland. After Jefferson’s death, the property was sold to John Lyle Bayless, of Kentucky, who began to mine the salt. His son, John Bayless Jr., later developed the Rip Van Winkle Gardens, 15 acres of semitropical gardens, surrounding the mansion.

Visitors may lunch in Cafe Jefferson overlooking the lake, enjoy the bed-and-breakfast cottage with period antiques or tour the mansion listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The 15-acre gardens include centuries-old oak trees draped in Spanish moss, flowers, the Rip’s Rookery of south Louisiana birds and peacocks running wild.

Tours of the mansion are offered at the top of the hour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, including walk-throughs of the gardens at visitors’ leisure. Tickets are \$14 for adults and \$12 for those 65 and older, active military and veterans, \$8 for children.

Gardens of the American Rose Center

rose.org

How fortunate is Louisiana to have the headquarters and garden showplace of the American Rose Society? Located in Shreveport, the 118 acres spotlight an

incredible variety of roses—the largest park to do so in the United States. Visitors may wander through the rose bushes and enjoy companion plants and garden features, such as sculptures. During the holidays, the gardens come alive with thousands of lights and special events in an extravaganza known as Christmas in Roseland.

The gardens, just off Interstate 20 west of Shreveport, are open during the week year-round and are especially beautiful April through October when they are also open weekends. Admission is \$5 per person or \$10 per family.

Briarwood Nature Preserve

briarwoodnp.org

It takes some tough navigating to find the Briarwood Nature Preserve in Saline, about 30 minutes from Natchitoches. The acreage was once home to Caroline Dormon, a 20th century naturalist who helped create the Kisatchie National Forest and the Louisiana State Arboretum, among other statewide natural projects. Her homestead, however, was where she collected and studied the native flowers and shrubs of central Louisiana.

Today, visitors may tour the woods and fields of Briarwood, enjoy exhibits in the visitor center, walk through the log cabin that was Caroline’s home and hike part of the old Sparta Road that took visitors from Sparta to Winnfield. The ruts from horse-drawn wagons are still visible. Visitors will not want to miss “Grandpappy,” the largest longleaf pine tree in Louisiana, believed to be between 200 and 300 years old.

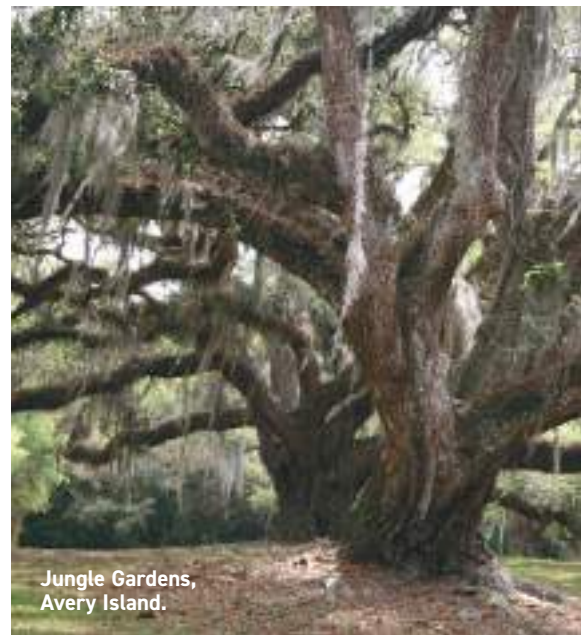
Briarwood is open to the public Fridays through Sundays from March to May and in October and November. Tours are \$5 per person. Tours may be arranged on weekdays by appointment.

“If people call and want a tour, I never tell anyone no,” says Bayli Quick, Briarwood’s curator.

Native azaleas bloom early and continue for weeks, and dogwoods and Louisiana irises cover the property in April. Special events include the annual spring fundraising picnic and Tom Sawyer Days for volunteers. ■



Iris in bloom.



Jungle Gardens, Avery Island.



Rip Van Winkle Gardens, Jefferson Island.



Team Building Fun With Marshmallows

Louisiana Member Services Association members conducted the Marshmallow Challenge at their quarterly meeting. The groups had 18 minutes to build the tallest freestanding structure with a marshmallow at the top. Building materials included 20 sticks of spaghetti, tape, string and one marshmallow.

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: Joe Wilson, Washington-St. Tammany Electric Cooperative; Kayla Dugas, South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association; and Toni Johnson, DEMCO, build a support beam for their spaghetti structure.

Ben Hetzel, Jeff Davis Electric Cooperative; Rhowanda Vessel, DEMCO; and David Latona, DEMCO, put finishing touches on their model.

Mayson Victor, Beauregard Electric Cooperative Inc., and Johnny Bruhl, WSTE, focus on their preplanning stage of construction.

Winners of the Marshmallow Challenge were David, Rhowanda and Ben.

Great work, all!



PHOTOS BY CONLEY BOURGEOIS

STATEWIDE NEWS



Co-op General Managers Attend Planning Retreat

Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives held a general manager planning retreat. The group had a well-versed retreat to brainstorm new ideas and discuss current plans. From left are Trevor Barnett, Cooperative Finance Corporation; Randy Pierce, DEMCO; Dane Hocott, Washington-St. Tammany Electric Cooperative; Addie Armato, ALEC; Austin Haynes, Panola-Harrison Electric Cooperative; Eric Gautreaux, Jeff Davis Electric Cooperative; Mike Heinen, JDEC; and Kevin Turner, Beauregard Electric Cooperative Inc.

DEMCO's Fire in the Wire

Armed with their protective gear, DEMCO employees recently demonstrated for Courtney Christian School students the dangers of coming into contact with energized power lines.

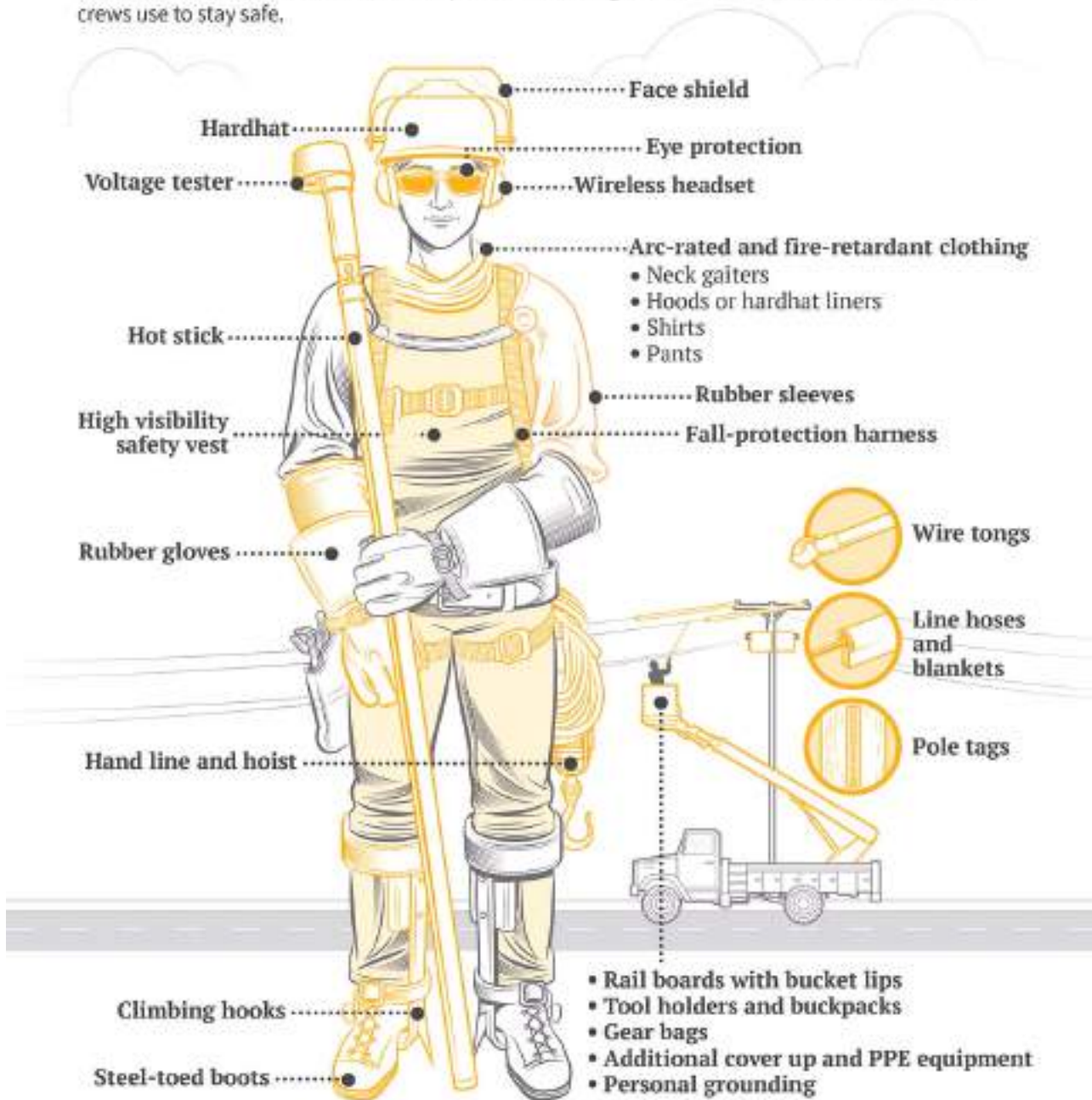
The team also discussed the basics of electricity, from why maintaining the rights-of-way is important to why lights occasionally blink.

It's just one more way DEMCO demonstrates Concern for Community, one of the Seven Cooperative Principles.



Staying Safe

Lineworkers have a dizzying array of gear they carry and wear to safely do their jobs. Some items, like climbing hooks and hot sticks, have been around since the early days of electricity, though they've been updated and improved over the years. Others, like wireless headsets and arc-rated clothing, are more modern innovations. Here's a comprehensive (though not exhaustive) look at the tools line crews use to stay safe.



Auto Pay Winners

Congratulations to these DEMCO members, winners of the random drawing for a \$50 gift card. You will each receive a gift card in the mail! [Spencer H.](#), [Kathleen O.](#), [Helen H.](#), [Curtis R.](#)

PANAMA

8 DAYS \$995

Fully guided tour. Includes all meals, all activities, all hotels. Tax and fees extra.



COSTA RICA

9 DAYS \$995

Fully guided tour. Includes all meals, all activities, all hotels. Tax and fees extra.



MEXICO

9 DAYS \$995

Fully guided tour. Includes all meals, all activities, all hotels. Tax and fees extra.



Caravan

Book online now at caravan.com



We understand the politics of business and the business of politics.

GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

As honest advocates leveraging applied knowledge of the executive, legislative, regulatory and administrative processes, we help you navigate state and local government seamlessly.

POLITICAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Understanding and preparing for political risk is imperative; we stay ahead of politics' ever-changing outlook to provide our clients with the tools and analytics needed for success.

543 Spanish Town Rd - Baton Rouge, La 70802 - (225) 381-0166 - www.ssgla.com - firm@ssgla.com

Culotta Insurance & Investments
Serving Miss-Lou STATEWIDE Since 1992
1-844-AGENT4U
FIXED INDEXED ANNUITIES
MORE GAINS • NO LOSSES • SAFETY
 Up to 10% IMMEDIATE INTEREST BONUS on Deposits
 ROLLOVER CD OR 401K TODAY! 
FINANCIAL FREEDOM
 SAFE RETIREMENT STRATEGIES, MEDICARE SUPPS, LONG-TERM CARE, MEDICAL & LIFE

Richie Culotta • Cameron Culotta • Zach Dustin



Habitat for Humanity

empower
 a family to reach the potential a stable home can bring.

Learn more at habitat.org




There are many ways to help kids who stutter...

Doing nothing is not one of them!

 **THE STUTTERING FOUNDATION**
 A Nonprofit Organization
 Since 1947—Helping Those Who Stutter

800-992-9392
StutteringHelp.org

NEW!

Getting Up Just Got Easy...

Regain Your Independence



It's a
Bed for
Sleep



It's a
Bed that
is also a
Chair



It's a Bed
that helps
you Stand
Up

The only adjustable bed that helps you “Get Up and Go” by yourself!

As we age, a good night's sleep is more important than ever. Unfortunately, for millions of people with mobility issues, getting in and out of bed can be inconvenient, undignified and even dangerous. Now, thanks to the work of countless design engineers and health

professionals behind the **UpBed™ Independence**, getting in and out of bed can be the easiest part of your day.

Why spend another night wondering how you are going to get out of bed. Call now, and a helpful, knowledgeable product expert can answer your questions and tell you how you can get an **UpBed™ Independence** of your very own.

What makes it better:

- Adjusts to a variety of positions,
- Exclusive 90-degree rotation
- Gently raises and lowers you
- Safety rails and a motion-sensor LED
- Comfortable Twin XL Memory Foam mattress
- Designed to fit into any décor and room configuration.
- 2 USB power outlets for nighttime device charging.

journey
upbed
Independence

Call now toll free and order one today!

1-888-964-3457

Please mention code **117793** when ordering.

mobility | sleep | comfort | safety

enjoying life never gets old™

journey
HEALTH & LIFESTYLE

This bedding product cannot be returned, but if it arrives damaged or defective, at our option we will repair it or replace it. ©2023 Journey Health and Lifestyle





ADOBE STOCK IMAGE COURTESY OF THOMAS SÖLLNER

Clearing a Safe Path

DEMCO's right-of-way program helps to keep the lines clear and the power on

By Colette Boehm

For DEMCO and the communities it powers, line clearings and the ongoing vegetation management—known as the right-of-way (ROW) program—are key to improved reliability and safety for all members.

“DEMCO's mission is to focus on enhancing the quality of life for members by providing safe, reliable and competitively priced energy services,” DEMCO CEO and General Manager Randy Pierce says. “Our ROW maintenance and vegetation management program is in large part how we deliver the tenets of that mission.”

Implemented in 1993, DEMCO's ROW program improves service reliability, minimizes damage claims, and improves

access after a hurricane or significant weather event.

“After a storm, there's a lot of debris on the ground,” says Sam Rosso, DEMCO's manager of lands and right-of-way. “Having a clear ROW prior to the storm minimizes the amount of debris that has to be cleared so the linemen can get in there and work and not have to cut their way in to restore power.”

ROW maintenance is scheduled and performed every six years with an emphasis on the removal of trees located within and outside the ROW that threaten the transmission and distribution system.

Every other year, herbicides are applied to select brush and tree species to keep this problematic vegetation from becoming established with the ROW. This selective use of herbicides also promotes the establishment of natural control methods, which lowers overall ROW maintenance cost for the cooperative.

After mechanical trimming has been completed, herbicide is applied to control

unwanted trees and brush. As a result, growth of native grasses and wildflowers start to occur in the ROW and compete with the unwanted species.

DEMCO members are notified in advance of scheduled maintenance activities on their property.

“While providing safe clearances, we are also able to promote native Louisiana plant communities that provide early successional habitat to many of our wildlife species,” Sam explains.

It is also the practice of DEMCO to remove trees located within the utility ROW. This eliminates trees that will never grow and develop naturally, while also making the ROW more accessible.

“We promote proper cuts on trees when they are trimmed, especially live oaks and older growth trees and ornamentals,” Sam adds. “We try to directionally prune those to grow away from the line. This benefits the tree and the longevity of its lifespan.”

Perpetual easements or legal rights granted by landowners allow DEMCO access



for Power

to lands within ROW. For new construction, the landowner will sign an easement before any facilities are installed on the property, and new subdivision contracts are negotiated on the front end. Landowners can request encroachments for things such as agricultural and farm use, drainage ditches, driveways and fences, but each one is evaluated by DEMCO on a case-by-case basis.

“Safety around electric lines for the public and DEMCO employees will always come first,” Sam says. “We try to work with members as much as possible, but we still must maintain our ROW.”

Sam realizes public perception is a big part of the success of DEMCO’s ROW program. That’s why DEMCO recently developed a brochure called “Clearing a Path for Your Power”—posted at DEMCO.org/ROW.

DEMCO’s website also has resources on encroachment guidelines, maintenance and vegetation management, tree debris and cleanup, planting guidelines and a line clearance procedures manual. Members

Online Resources

You can find DEMCO’s Right-Of-Way brochure at www.DEMCO.org/ROW and at each of DEMCO’s seven member service centers. Email ROW@DEMCO.org with questions.

Also available:

- ▶ Encroachment Guidelines
- ▶ Maintenance & Vegetation Management
- ▶ Tree Debris & Cleanup
- ▶ Planting Guidelines
- ▶ Line Clearance Procedures Manual

wanting to plant trees near a power line or utility box, wondering why DEMCO prunes trees the way it does or what happens to debris after scheduled maintenance should consult the website.

Brochures are also available at each DEMCO Member Service Center, and DEMCO ROW coordinators keep them on-hand to give to members who have questions about the program. ■



Perpetual easements or legal rights granted by landowners allow DEMCO access to lands within ROW.
PHOTO COURTESY OF DEMCO

Untangling the Kinks in the Electricity Supply Chain

Electric utilities saw warning signs even before the pandemic

By Paul Wesslund



Electric utilities are experiencing longer-than-normal wait times for essential equipment, such as utility poles. PHOTO BY JENNIFER PATON

Most of us first heard about supply chain issues three years ago when the COVID-19 pandemic left us looking at empty store shelves.

Shortages also affected electric utilities. But their attention to supply chains started years before the pandemic, and it continues. For electric utilities, the pandemic amped up the job of keeping the lights on in an industry already adjusting to the rapid rise in renewable energy sources and power lines battered by severe weather.

Publicly owned utilities are among those taking steps to manage both immediate and long-term supply chain constraints, says Stephanie Crawford, regulatory affairs director with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

“This didn’t happen overnight,” she says. “Many of these dynamics started before the pandemic.”

Creating a Supply Chain Task Force

Those dynamics include the fact there’s only one U.S.-based manufacturer of the steel used to make transformers, vital pieces of equipment that help regulate power levels so electricity is safe to use.

That constraint, coupled with a workforce shortage, means transformer manufacturers have not been able to keep pace with a significant increase in demand coming out of the pandemic. Lead times for ordering transformers jumped from one or two months to as long as two years.

Those delays threaten to slow progress on essential work, such as restoring power after a storm or connecting service for new consumers.

It hasn’t been just transformers in short supply, Stephanie says. Utilities also faced delays “for meters, conductors, utility poles, bucket trucks—essentially all the things needed to keep the system running efficiently, including restoration needs and serving new load,” she says.

To reduce those backlogs, last summer the utility industry created a task force to work with the federal government on resolving supply chain slowdowns.

Incentives for U.S. Manufacturing

The task force recommended several



Transformers are a hot commodity for electric utilities. Steel shortages, coupled with a lack of manufacturing workers, mean transformer manufacturers are unable to keep pace with a significant increase in demand. ADOBE STOCK PHOTO BY CHII CHOBITS

actions the federal government could take to help get utilities what they need. Among its suggestions was to provide incentives to encourage domestic manufacturing of steel for transformers.

The task force also identified national trends and policies that could conflict with the utility supply chain:

Worker shortages. The same lack of people to fill jobs in many parts of the economy, from restaurants to hospitals, also affects the making of materials needed by utilities.

Competition for workers. Any community wants its economic development efforts to attract major new employers. But a large new business could take workers away from companies that supply essential utility equipment. The industry task force recommended the government support incentives for utility-related work.

Renewable energy and infrastructure initiatives. Electric vehicles, solar energy and even efforts to expand broadband service can use some of the same materials needed by utilities. The task force recommended the government avoid disadvantaging utility work by favoring other projects.

All these supply chain issues are causing utilities to rethink traditional business practices. Stephanie says the logistics and procurement functions of electric utilities are getting increased attention.

“New strategies are going to be needed to meet the utilities’ needs,” she says. “They’ve not needed to project the demand for transformers five years in the future because you could get a transformer in 60 days. Now, when it’s taking more than a year for the equipment to be available, they’re going to have to look at it through a different lens.”

Utilities have been adapting to dramatic changes, Stephanie says, from weather patterns to sustainable energy. Supply chain management is one of the latest twists.

“Publicly owned utilities are really good at keeping the lights on,” she says. “But these supply chain issues have made that job more difficult. Real investment needs to be made in domestic manufacturing and supply capabilities to make sure all utilities can get the equipment they need.

“This is critical infrastructure, especially as we rely on the electric grid to power everything from transportation to working at home.” ■



Save A Bundle On TV And Internet!

\$300 Get TV.
Get \$100.
Add Internet.
Get \$300.

1234 5678 9012 3456
4000
Gift Card
EXPIRES END 01/25
VISA

Mention code Card100 when you order TV only.
Mention code Card300 when you order both TV and internet services.
Courtesy of GoDISH.com with activation, certain conditions apply.
Free \$300 VISA Gift Card when you order a qualifying service (premium customer qualification only).



3-Year TV Price Guarantee

Only DISH Offers a 3-Year TV Price Guarantee with just a 2-Year Commitment!



It's All Included for \$79.99!

- ✓ 190 Channels With Locals
- ✓ Live, Recorded And Streaming TV All On Your DVR
- ✓ Free Premium Channels **SHOWTIME.** **SHRIMP MOVIE PACK**
- ✓ Free Professional Installation
- ✓ A Reliable Signal, Now Backed By Our Reliability Guarantee

IT'S FINALLY HERE! Reliable 5G HOME INTERNET

- 📶 No Data Limits
- 📶 No Contract
- 📶 No Upfront Cost
- 📶 No Equipment Fees
- 📶 No Installation
- 📶 Lifetime Price Lock

\$50 Includes All Taxes and Fees! month for Internet

TV service not required for Internet. Speeds and prices vary by provider. Call for details or visit godish.com/internet.

Live TV + Streaming in One Place!

FREE Streaming on 5 Devices with DISH Anywhere App



Smart Remote w/ Voice and Google Assistant



Seamless Integration with DISH



iSe Habla Español!

godish.com/priceguarantee 🔍

1-866-290-7151

Mon-Fri: 7am-10pm • Sat: 7am-9pm • Sun: 10am-7pm Central Time



Offer for new and qualifying former customers only. Important Terms and Conditions: Requires credit qualification and 2-year commitment. Upfront activation and/or receiver upgrade fees may apply based on credit qualification. Offer ends 4/12/23. Offer requires 2-year commitment: Early termination fee of \$20/mo. remaining applies if you cancel early. Included in 3-year price guarantee at \$79.99 advertised price: America's Top 120 programming package, local channels, HD service fees, and Hopper Duo Smart DVR for 1 TV. Included in 3-year price guarantee for additional cost: Programming package upgrades (\$94.99 for AT120+, \$99.99 for AT200, \$109.99 for AT250), monthly fees for upgraded or additional receivers (\$5-\$7 per additional TV, receivers with additional functionality may be \$10-\$15). NOT included in 3-year price guarantee or advertised price (and subject to change): Taxes & surcharges, add-on programming (including premium channels), DISH Protect, and transactional fees. Premium Channels 3 Mos. Free: After 3 mos., you will be billed \$20/mo. for Showtime, and DISH Movie Pack unless you call or go online to cancel. Remote: The DISH Voice Remote with Google Assistant requires internet-connected Hopper, Joey or Wally device. Customer must press Voice Remote button to activate feature. Other: All packages, programming, features, and functionality and all prices and fees not included in price guarantee are subject to change without notice. Not available to DISH Outdoors customers. 99% signal reliability based on data from set-top boxes. Not a guarantee of signal in all weather conditions. Watching live and recorded TV on DISH Anywhere requires internet-connected Hopper and compatible mobile device. Miscellaneous: Taxes or surcharges may apply. All packages and offer subject to change without notice. Additional restrictions may apply. Netflix, Prime Video, HBO Max and Discovery Plus streaming memberships required. Indiana C.P.D Reg. No. - 19-08615. ©2023 GoDISH.com. All rights reserved. Internet speeds, prices, and providers vary by customer address. \$50 price refers to widely available plan from multiple providers. Restrictions apply. Nationwide availability is subject to change without notice. The application of "No Data Limits" varies by provider, but commonly means that your access to the Internet will not be stopped by going over a data limit, but that speeds may be lowered. Call for details. Internet not provided by DISH and will be billed separately.