



Consolidation News

Please mark your calendars. Beginning July 1, 2007, McLennan County Electric Cooperative and Belfalls Electric Cooperative will officially consolidate to form Heart of Texas Electric Cooperative. We will send out further updates and reminders as July 1 draws near. The website address is www.hotec.coop.

This consolidation will bring about some changes in operating procedures as we adapt to provide more efficient service.

However, like BEC and MCEC, Heart of Texas Electric Co-op will continue to be a member-owned cooperative, governed by a member-elected board of directors. The co-op's only purpose for existence is to provide the

membership with reliable electricity and quality service at the lowest possible cost.

The telephone numbers will stay the same. The offices will continue functioning with the same employees. You will still receive prompt, courteous service for billing questions, outages and any other concerns. The name may be changing, but the face of your co-op and our commitment to providing quality service to our members will not change.

BEC currently has 10 employees, and MCEC currently has 43. The new co-op will have 53 employees, who will continue to have the same dedication to providing quality customer service and electricity to our members.

LIGHTEN THE LAUNDRY LOAD

- Wash only full loads of clothes and be sure to set the water level appropriately.
- Use hot water only for very dirty loads and always use cold water for the rinse cycle.
- Clean the lint screen on the dryer every time you use the machine.

A clogged lint screen can make your dryer use up to 30 percent more energy—and it can be a fire hazard.

- Remove clothes from the dryer while they're still damp and hang them up. This will save energy, prevent static, and reduce wrinkles and shrinkage.
- Dry one load of clothes immediately after another. This will minimize heat loss, reducing warm up and drying times.



YOUTH TOUR 2007

MCCEC is proud to announce that we participate in the Government-in-Action Youth Tour, sponsored in conjunction with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and Texas Electric Cooperatives. The Youth Tour contest is for high school students who have completed their sophomore year and the winner will receive a two-week all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., in June.

The winner will join almost 100 others from Texas on this exciting trip. On Rural Youth Day, the Texas group will meet participants from other states at the Capitol, where they will meet their congressional representa-



tives. Nearly 1,500 students will gather to learn about each other and what life is like in other parts of the U.S.

Overwhelmingly, winning entrants have experienced the trip of a lifetime. For some, this may be their only opportunity to visit our nation's capital and become familiar with historical national monuments and government buildings or to visit elected officials. We hope you will see this as a value and that you will apply or encourage your school or a student to participate. For more information, visit www.mclennanelectric.coop or call (254) 840-2871.

SPRING INTO SAFE OUTDOOR WORK

It's spring, when lawns awaken and homeowners emerge with power tools in hand for yearly repairs and yard work.



Work safely. Take care with electrical equipment outdoors. A few tips for a safe spring:

- Before you dig a hole—even a small one—call 1-800-DIG-TESS to learn whether your landscaping will interfere with underground utilities.

- Any contact with a power line can be fatal, so if you need work done near a power line, like trimming trees or installing a satellite dish, call a professional contractor to do the job.

- Inspect all power tools for damaged cords, plugs or cases.

- Store tools in a dry location. If you suspect that your tools have gotten wet over the winter, do not plug them in until they have dried completely and are inspected for damage by a professional.

- Do not use electric lawnmowers on wet grass.

- Use extension cords rated for outdoor use when working with electrical tools outdoors.

- If your home isn't meeting your electrical demands, have an electrician install new outlets and ground-fault circuit interrupters.



SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS PROGRAM 2007

McLennan County Electric Cooperative is proud to announce its Scholarship Program for 2007. Any student meeting the qualifications can apply for this scholarship. There will be three scholarships awarded within our service area in the amount of \$1,000 each (\$500 each for fall and spring semesters). Winners will be chosen at random at the local MCEC Headquarters on April 16, 2007. Please call the co-op at (254) 840-2871 for details and scholarship applications or visit the website at www.mclennanelectric.coop.

2005 CAPITAL CREDITS ALLOCATED

McLennan County Electric Cooperative has allocated capital credits to members' accounts for the 2005 calendar year. The allocations for 2005 amounted to \$1,401,205.75. Each account's equity can be calculated by multiplying the members' total bill, including security light expense but excluding any taxes, services, memberships, deposits or miscellaneous charges, by a factor of .02501445. Capital credits are not refundable at this time, nor can they be applied toward current or outstanding bills. If you have any questions concerning these calculations, please call the co-op office.

(This article is intended to serve as the official notice of allocations of capital credits for members' equity for 2005.)



NOTICE OF CANCELLATION OF CO-OP PLUS VISA

NOTICE TO MEMBERS WHO HAVE A CO-OP POWER PLUS VISA CARD THROUGH CHASE BANK: Chase will not be renewing Co-op Power Plus Reward credit cards.

The existing agreement is set to expire Dec 31, 2007. Chase has informed us that it does not intend to renew the program. Chase will mail letters to inform cardholders of the cancellation before the cards become invalid.

Chase offered the reward program in conjunction with Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC), which provides financial services to rural utilities cooperatives across the nation. CFC is currently seeking new bank partners to offer a similar program.

We will keep you informed of any new offers as they become available.



McLennan County Electric Cooperative

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Colt is Given a ‘Second Chance’ by Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society

**BY LACY FENN
SPECIAL WRITER TO BEHS**

Iwant to show you the new trick that I taught our boy, I’m so proud of him,” said Cat Ballew, as she carefully guided the cautious yearling backward down several small steps near the barn at the Lorena ranch she shares with her husband, Kyle. “He’s so smart. He tries to trick me into thinking he’s too scared to do it, but within a few minutes he can respond to my command. He’s just such a good boy. I want him to learn this so he can back out of a trailer when he gets adopted. He’s going to make someone a really great horse.”

And while Ballew spends much of her days lovingly training a horse that she knows she will eventually have to say goodbye to, the most rewarding gift she has given him is that of his name ... “Second Chance.”

“Chance,” the name that Ballew uses to address the yearling who, along with his mother and several other horses and yearlings, were all given a new life when they were rescued by the Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society (BEHS). Their owner surrendered Chance and his herd mates, who were severely malnourished and neglected. The horses were then donated to BEHS to preclude their being seized by law enforcement.

Chance and the other horses “had not been fed or watered regularly in months. Physically, they were all severely underweight, and emotionally, they were terrified,” Ballew said. “Chance was wild and starved and shaking in fear. It didn’t appear that he had ever been handled with a gentle hand or even fed by a person. He had no idea what a feed bucket was.”

Although Chance was one of the lucky ones to be rescued by BEHS, his story is a common one for the group of horse lovers. Despite many of the horses having faced some of the most

unimaginable cruelty, many of them are able to blossom and enjoy a normal life thanks to the efforts of BEHS.

“I have learned that horses are forgiving of many cruelties. When I took Chance to the vet, he estimated that he was 10 months old but he had the body size of a 6-month-old,” Ballew said.

“But he is now at his ideal body weight and is a healthy, happy yearling and has the energy now to buck and play and run like a normal 1-year-old. He is a gentle spirit with a special sort of intelligence in his eye and a curious nature.”

BEHS, a nonprofit agency, was formed in March 2005 by a group of horse enthusiasts who felt there was a need for a new rescue to help horses and other equines throughout Texas and Arkansas. Since its inception, BEHS has rescued over 150 horses, rehabilitated 100 others and has adopted over 60 horses to qualified homes.

“We all wanted to do more and had a bigger vision of helping horses, owners and law enforcement. Most of us had years of experience with horse rescues and a strong burning passion to do more,” Ballew said. “It has been a tremendous effort. It’s always really hard for me when we are too late in rescuing a horse, but I try to focus on how many more that we have been able to save and have cared for.”

Ballew, a member of the BEHS board of directors, has devoted much of her life to caring for horses. It was while she was at a horse expo watching a parade that she learned about horse



Cat Ballew has been training Second Chance, a yearling she is fostering until he can be adopted. Ballew is a board member of the horse rescue group Bluebonnet Equine Humane Society.

BEHS STAFF PHOTO

rescue and knew she had to get involved.

“I was at the expo to see the parade they were having of all different breeds. I just wanted to see all of the pretty horses; I had no idea it was a fundraiser for a rescue. When I got there, I went over to the stalls and found some of the most fantastic horses,” Ballew said. “They were all so beautiful, kind and gentle. Each one of them had a before picture with their stories, and I was shocked. I was amazed ... and I was hooked.”

With her experience as an equine trainer, Ballew’s is a foster home specializing in young untouchables who have been starved or otherwise neglected or abused. Because BEHS is a nonprofit organization, the group relies on dedicated volunteers like Ballew to care for the rescued animals.

“We are simple people who love horses and want to help them out of situations that law enforcement has found them in,” Ballew said. “We put every spare hour of our time and every dime of our private resources that we can into building a future for these poor animals. These animals are penned and helpless. It is the least we can do to help them.”



BEHS STAFF PHOTO

Ballew says Chance, who was skittish, underfed and close to wild when he was rescued from a neglect situation, has ‘a gentle spirit with a special sort of intelligence in his eye and a curious nature.’

The group is continuing to grow and is helping rescue a growing number of equines. Ballew said that with such growth comes the rising need for funding and qualified foster homes.

“We really need people to go to our website [www.bluebonnetequine.org] and see if there are things that they might want to volunteer to help with. We need inspectors, investigators, trailering help, donations, sponsors, committee workers and more,” Ballew said. “Our website also has a store, membership applications, adoption forms, etc. We also need people with technical skills [computer, newsletter, etc.], medical skills and trainers. And most of all, we need people who have a burning passion to make things better for these equines.”

Aside from seeking volunteer help for various areas of the organization, BEHS is also hosting a horse expo fundraiser in August in Austin, the place where Ballew had her first encounter with the group.

“I would never have imagined all those years ago when I went to my first horse expo event that I would someday be on the committee to help plan it,” Ballew said, laughing. “Our next expo is in August 2007 in Austin, and yes, it

will have a parade of breeds and showcase many of the rescues.”

And though Ballew and her fellow BEHS horse lovers sometimes feel overwhelmed by the cruelty cases they see, it’s the success stories like Chance’s that make it all worthwhile.

“It is my greatest joy to see them load up to go to their forever adoptive family. Every horse that I have cared for, including Chance, has taught me a few things. People are basically good and want to help with a bad situation. Horses are such amazing creatures and give such unconditional love, despite facing cruelties,” Ballew said. “That is really something I try to carry with me in my own world. I am not as forgiving of



BEHS STAFF PHOTO

Chance was severely malnourished when he was taken in by the BEHS.

malicious or ignorant behavior, but I am trying to follow the good example of Chance and others like him.”

To learn more about adopting Chance or other horses, go to www.bluebonnetequine.org and select the adoption form. If you would like to make a donation to BEHS, please call 1-888-542-5163.