

# Directors elected at BECi Annual Meeting

Results of the BECi director elections were announced Saturday, March 23, during the BECi Annual Meeting at co-op headquarters in DeRidder.



Terry Backhaus



Dan O'Dell



Teddy Welch

Incumbent Director Teddy Welch was re-elected without opposition to represent District 5 for a ninth term. Welch, a resident of Sugartown, has served on the BECi Board in District Five since 1989, is presently serving as the Board's vice president, and is a NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director.

Welch is a retired teacher and principal from the Beauregard Parish School system. He attended McNeese State University, Louisiana State University, Northwestern State University and holds a bachelor degree and master degree +30 in education and a certification in vocational agriculture. He is past president and current board member of the Beauregard Parish Police Jury Association, is a board member for the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives, and a member of the Louisiana and Beauregard Parish Cattleman's Association.

Dan O'Dell II, a resident of Ragley, defeated incumbent Director Ray Hauser in District 6. O'Dell received 505 votes and Hauser received 315 votes.

O'Dell works as a Project Manager for CITGO Petroleum Corporation with over 30 years of service and holds a bachelor degree in Mechanical Engineering from McNeese State University. He has been a

member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers for the past 31 years and is Scoutmaster with the Boy Scouts of America Troop 125, South Beauregard, with more than 25 years of service.

He is a past executive board member of the Boy Scouts of America, Calcasieu Area Council, and a member of the First Presbyterian Church in Lake Charles.

District 8 incumbent Director Terry Backhaus, CFP, was re-elected without opposition for a fourth term. Backhaus, a resident of Sulphur, has served on the BECi Board in District 8 for nine years and is a NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director. Backhaus is a financial advisor with his firm, Backhaus Financial Group LLC, and holds a bachelor degree in chemical engineering from the University of Wisconsin and a master degree in chemical engineering from McNeese State University. (Acct. No. 13833-001)

Backhaus is a member of Henning Methodist Church, Chamber Southwest, and the Calcasieu Parish Crime Stoppers Board. He is vice president of the West Calcasieu-Cameron Hospital Foundation Board and was appointed to the Louisiana Ethics Board by Governor Bobby Jindal.

The three directors officially began serving their three-year terms at BECi's annual meeting.

# BECi News



Kevin Turner, Manager  
Dale Peterson, President  
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## 'Maxine Tree' yields annual bumper crop for Eaves

Sometimes in the late afternoons when the weather cools down and a soft breeze blows, 76-year-old James Eaves will take a chair out to his mayhaw orchard and sit in quiet contemplation in the shadow of a special tree.

He'll begin to hear the music in his mind, and most times it doesn't take long before the tears begin to flow.

Though it may look a lot like any old mayhaw tree, Eaves will tell you that tree is distinctive among the other 125 or so in his orchard. It's the one he affectionately calls the "Maxine Tree," or the "Momma Tree," named in the sweet memory of his wife of 45 years who passed away in 2004.

"She loved to play Amazing Grace on the piano. It was our favorite and I loved to hear her. She was a great piano player and singer and had a beautiful voice," Eaves said.

He and the former Maxine Wilson spent a charmed life together. Sweethearts from childhood, they graduated both high school and college together before James was called out by his military commanders to points far and wide. The family relocated to U.S. Army outposts in places such as Korea and Germany and moved to five different states before finally re-settling in southwest Louisiana in 1977.

Back home they made a life together raising three boys and spending time with family and friends as Maxine entered the teaching field while playing piano and leading the choir at Merryville Methodist Church.

They used to walk among their beloved mayhaw trees and talk of the events of the day or nothing in particular. It was during one of those walks back in 1991 when they came upon a wooded area behind the house and he pulled a small tree out of the ground and installed it as part of his orchard near the blacktop road.

It wasn't long before he realized there was something unique about the sapling that would grow to become the Maxine Tree.

When the tree matured enough to begin yielding fruit, he noticed it was late to bloom compared to his other mayhaws. But when it produced fruit around the month



Above, James Eaves shows the "Maxine" mayhaw tree that produces an unusually large amount of mayhaw berries during the latter part of the harvest season. At right, Eaves visits with BECi Vice President of Marketing and Member Services Kay Fox and explains how he turns the berries into juice for making jelly and other goodies.

of May, the results were astounding. The berries were larger than normal and the tree appeared to be resistant to fire blight and other diseases. The tree has produced as much as 35 gallons of berries in a single season.

In 2002, he invited his friends and horticulture enthusiasts Bill Craft and Bobby Talbert to examine the tree. The next year, Craft inspected the tree and took pollen samples and cuttings for the grafting process.

"I told him he could have the cuttings, but any trees that came from it had to be named Maxine," Eaves said.

Though Eaves keeps his wife's memory alive, he doesn't always just sit in solitude. He keeps busy tending to his orchard of 125 trees and has plans to add another 25 trees in a field near the house.



He gets help from two of his three sons who live nearby and uses some hired hands to gather up the berries. Then he employs his own method of making jelly and other products from the mayhaw juice, a method he developed over the past 20 years. He estimates that last year his orchard produced more than 500 gallons of juice that can be made into dessert squares, bread, butter or pastry tarts. (Acct. No. 81206-001)

Meanwhile, Maxine's legacy lives on through cuttings from the original tree; there are "Maxine Trees" in eight states across the Southeast region.

Eaves imagines that his beloved wife looks down from the heavens, especially every year during harvest season, and she smiles.

## Scenes from Beauregard Electric's Annual Membership Meeting

Shown at right are three BECi members who claimed door prizes at the annual membership meeting: Linda James, 42-inch TV; Terry Houston, 32-inch TV; and Edmund Skura, Apple iPad.



At left, BECi General Manager Kevin Turner is shown with Karen Haymon, a spokesperson for Louisiana Public Service Commissioner Clyde Holloway. Haymon congratulated the BECi board, management and employees for the co-op's continued success.

At right, local CPA Randy Brown presents the results of the election for BECi board director.



At right, BECi Board President Dale Peterson delivers a presentation to co-op members.



At right, BECi Board Secretary/Treasurer J.R. Hickman visits with his wife, Mary, and daughter, Jessica.



## From the Manager



By Kevin Turner  
General Manager

## Help us battle copper crime

Metal theft—the crime that endangers lives and can result in thousands of dollars in damages ultimately paid by you—continues to plague electric utilities all over America.

Copper wire is appealing to thieves who sell it for scrap. Burglars often climb power poles, scale fences and break into buildings to steal the precious metal—endangering themselves and others in the process.

Between 2001 and 2008, the price of copper skyrocketed 500 percent. After a brief decline in 2009, it has hovered at a strong \$3.40 per pound.

To a would-be thief, stealing copper may seem like a quick way to make a buck. But it's illegal, it's costly, and it's not worth a life. Working with any metal and electricity is a dangerous combination, even for trained employees using proper equipment.

Stolen wire is commonly brought to recycling centers and traded for cash. Although many state laws require recycling centers to keep records of transactions, enforcement can be difficult. Without identifying marks, stolen wire is hard to track and rarely recovered. Legislation introduced on the federal level aims to improve tracking and impose stiffer penalties; most states have toughened metal theft laws over the past few years as well.

Thieves may not understand that they are risking their lives by taking copper from utility poles or substations, where high transmission voltage is stepped down to a lower current for distribution lines.

Though metal theft is an ongoing problem, we are making some strides here in southwest Louisiana. The BECi board and management commend local authorities and community residents for looking out for copper thieves. Allen Parish deputies, using information provided by citizens, recently made arrests of two thieves stealing copper in Allen Parish. As a result of their efforts, those citizens are sharing a reward of \$5,000 pending the convictions of those individuals involved in the crime.

BECi urges you to follow these guidelines to guard against electrical dangers and prevent copper theft.

- Never enter or touch equipment inside a substation; stay away from power lines and anything touching a power line.
- If you notice anything unusual with electric facilities, such as an open substation gate, open equipment, or hanging wire, contact us immediately.
- If you see anyone around electric substations or electric facilities other than BECi personnel or contractors, call the police.
- Install motion-sensor lights on the outside of your house and business to deter possible thieves.
- Store tools and wire cutters in a secure location, and never leave them out while you are away. (Acct. No. 128563-001)
- If you work in construction, do not leave any wires or plumbing unattended or leave loose wire at the job site, especially overnight.
- Help spread the word about the deadly consequences that can result from trying to steal copper or aluminum wire.

## You could win \$50!!

Beauregard Electric is offering its members an opportunity to win the Co-op's Lucky Account Number Contest by publishing four account numbers somewhere on pages 6-7 of Louisiana Country.

Look for your account number hidden somewhere on these pages.

To win, you must locate your account number (listed on your electric bill) on these pages and then contact the Co-op. To claim your prize, call 800-367-0275 or 463-6221 by June 15.

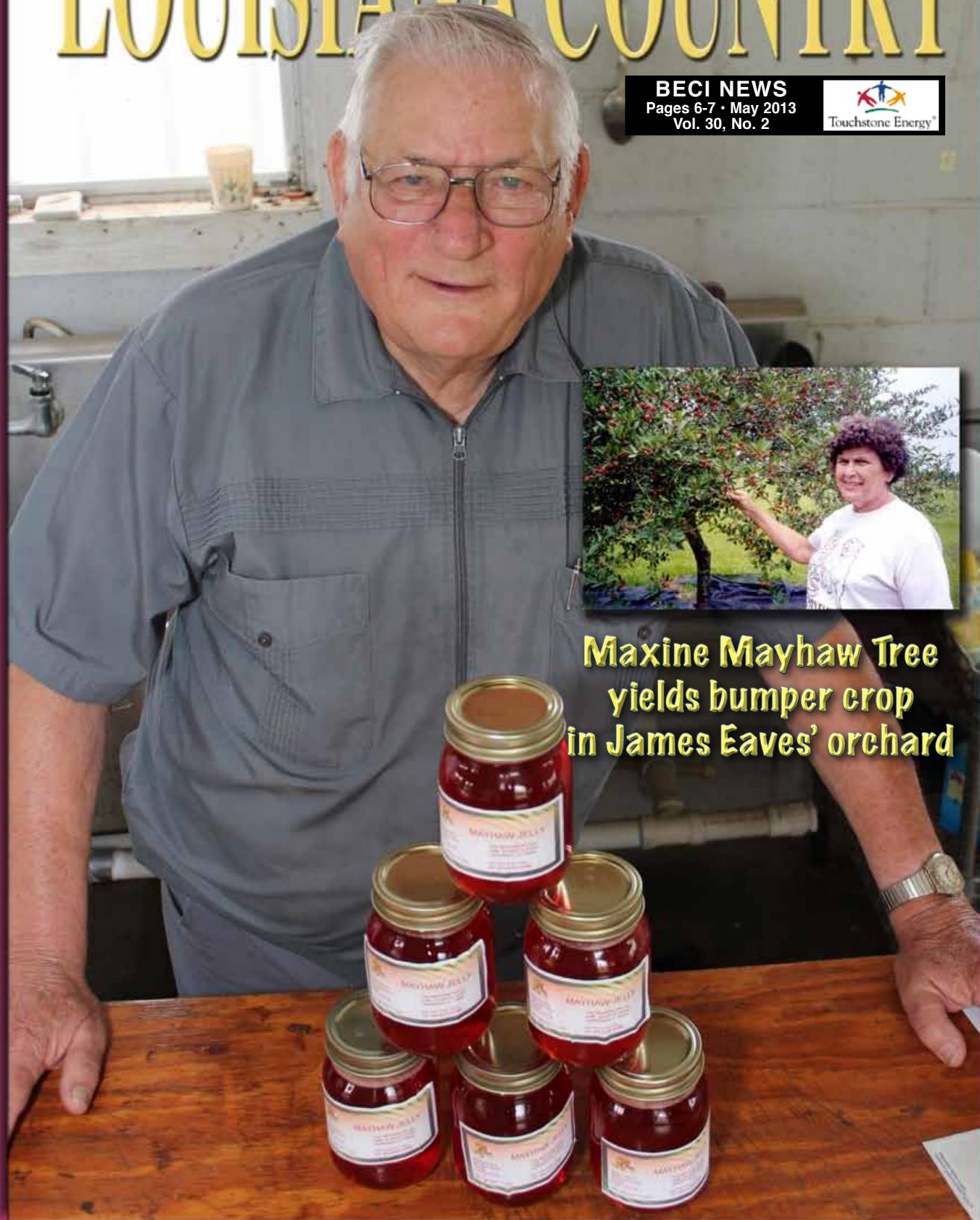
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Your Cooperative Connection

# LOUISIANA COUNTRY

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**Maxine Mayhaw Tree yields bumper crop in James Eaves' orchard**