

Along these LINES

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2026



BEYOND THE MONUMENTS

Youth Tour delegates experience a summer to remember **Page 9**

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Essay Contest winners attend NRECA Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. From left are Lee McMillan, Peyton Lewis, Kendyl Carpenter, Anna Bordelon, Anya Riley and Brock Rispone. PHOTO COURTESY OF DEMCO



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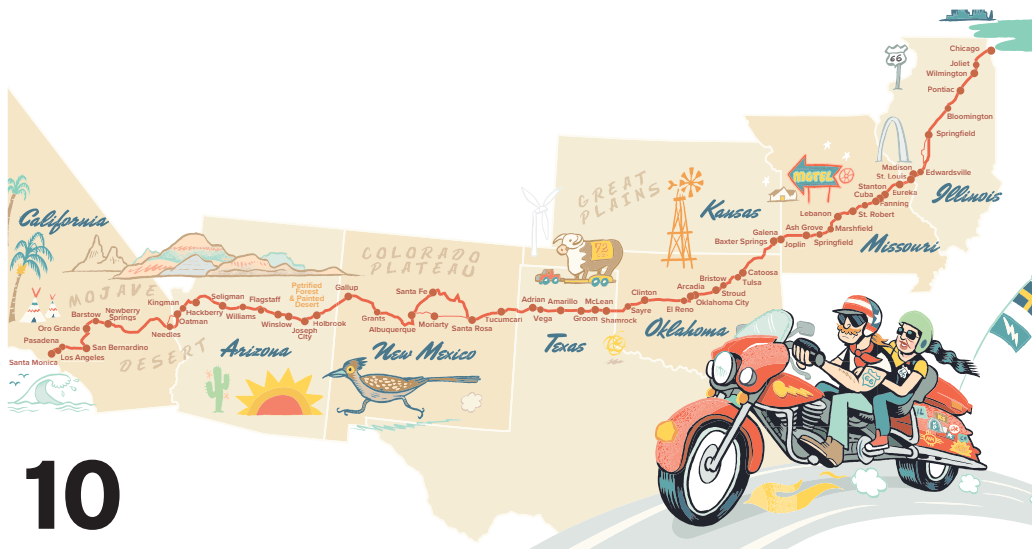
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2026 Annual Meeting Awards

KEVIN REEVES COOPERATIVE SPIRIT AWARDS

The Louisiana Member Services Association and the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives recently recognized cooperative employees and their families for volunteer service in their communities.

LMSA members permanently renamed the Cooperative Spirit Awards in 2024 to honor Kevin Reeves, a longtime Beauregard Electric Cooperative Inc. employee who died unexpectedly in June 2023.

Kevin spent 33 years at BECi and was known throughout Louisiana's electric cooperative community for his service to others. His commitment to his family, church, community and cooperative reflected the values the awards were created to recognize.

Cooperative Spirit Award Individual Nominees

This year's nominees for the Kevin Reeves Cooperative Spirit Award were Jeff Lea, of DEMCO, and Tray West, of BECi.

Jeff, DEMCO's maintenance and facilities crew leader, celebrated 18 years with the cooperative in August. Outside of work, he volunteers with Rescue, Rehome, Repeat, a Livingston Parish organization that gives animals in need a second chance.

Jeff helps walk dogs, clean kennels and comfort nervous animals. Through the organization, he also met Smokey, an energetic rescue dog he and his wife adopted. His volunteer work has inspired fellow employees to support animal shelters and adopt rescue animals.

Tray has served as president of the Louisiana Riding Club since 2023. Under his leadership, the traditional rodeo club became a faith-based, community-focused organization centered on youth development, family involvement and Christian fellowship through Western sports.

The club offers riding and speed events for participants of all ages and skill levels, including people with physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities. Through rodeo and Western tradition, the organization mentors young people, encourages positive



Kevin Reeves Cooperative Spirit Awards recipients are honored. **ABOVE LEFT:** DEMCO's David Latona, left, and Louisiana Member Services Association President EmmaLee Tingle, right, present the individual award to Beauregard Electric Cooperative Inc.'s Tray West. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Washington-St. Tammany Electric Cooperative CEO receives the cooperative award from David and EmmaLee for the co-op's birthday boxes project.

lifestyles, and builds community around faith and family.

Tray was named the 2026 recipient of the Kevin Reeves Cooperative Spirit Award.

WSTE Employees Build Birthday Boxes

Washington-St. Tammany Electric Cooperative employees joined cooperative members, Del Sol Consulting volunteers, Court Appointed Special Advocates representatives and staff from U.S. Sen. John Kennedy's office to assemble Brooke It Forward Birthday Boxes for children in need.

Each box included supplies for an instant birthday celebration, including plates, napkins, cake mix, icing, an ice cream scoop and candles. The Brooke It Forward Foundation distributes the boxes to underserved children ages 13 and older through CASA, the Louisiana Department of Children and

Family Services, and Hope House.

WSTE employees donated \$1,500 out of their own pockets to support the project. Del Sol Consulting matched their contributions, providing a total \$3,000 to buy supplies for 50 birthday boxes.

The project reflected the cooperative principle of neighbors working together to serve their communities. Beyond party supplies, the boxes provide children with an opportunity to feel recognized and celebrated while demonstrating WSTE employees' commitment to service and community involvement.

SAFETY AWARDS

Louisiana electric cooperatives and their employees were recognized for safety achievements during the 2026 ALEC Awards and Safety Banquet in July.



ABOVE LEFT: Claiborne Electric Cooperative CEO Michael Marcotte, center, accepts a certificate recognizing the completion of Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program inspections from Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives CEO Aarron Graham, left, and ALEC Safety Coordinator Danny Delatte. **ABOVE RIGHT:** ALEC's Aarron Graham, Conley Bourgeois Wilson, Beth Fraser and Danny Delatte also completed the RESAP inspections.



Safety and training are among ALEC's key services to member cooperatives. Because electric cooperative employees often work in hazardous environments, ALEC provides programs designed to help employees perform their jobs safely.

RESAP Recognition

ALEC member cooperatives may participate in the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program, which includes rigorous safety inspections every three years. Certified loss-control professionals review facilities, equipment and employee procedures as part of the inspection process.

This year, Claiborne Electric Cooperative and ALEC completed their RESAP inspections and received flags to display at their headquarters in recognition of the achievement.

warning lights and stopped approaching traffic. He and another bystander then ran toward the child.

Matt reached the girl, helped calm her and contacted law enforcement. A short time later, a parent arrived and took the child home.

Matt has worked as a WSTE serviceman for 15 years. His quick response helped protect the child from a potentially life-threatening situation and earned him the Good Samaritan Award.

Loss-Time Safety Milestones

ALEC also recognized member cooperatives that reached significant milestones without a loss-time accident.

South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association surpassed 4.88 million work hours without a loss-time accident, a record dating to December 1996.

BECi recorded more than 981,000 work hours without a loss-time accident since November 2022, while Claiborne Electric surpassed 974,000 hours since June 2024.

WSTE recorded more than 527,000 work hours without a loss-time accident since April 2024. Jeff Davis Electric Cooperative surpassed 122,000 hours since April 2025, and DEMCO recorded more than 729,000 hours without a loss-time accident.

Statewide Safety Award

The Traveling Statewide Safety Award traditionally concludes the banquet. The award is determined using a formula that considers employee incidents, the severity of those incidents, hours worked and vehicle accidents.

JDEC received the 2026 Traveling Statewide Safety Award.

ALEC commends its member cooperatives and employees for their achievements and continued commitment to workplace safety. ■

FROM TOP: JDEC employees and trustees are joined by ALEC representatives as they accept the Traveling Statewide Safety Award. BECi receives a trophy for their many years of safety achievements. Safety awards for no loss-time milestones are presented to WSTE and SLECA.



WSTE CEO Dane Hocott, left, is pictured with Good Samaritan Award recipient Matt Smith.

Good Samaritan Award

The Good Samaritan Award recognizes a Louisiana electric cooperative employee who helps someone in need, saves a life or demonstrates exceptional kindness during an emergency.

On July 29, 2025, WSTE serviceman Matt Smith responded to a trouble call on Highway 41, a heavily traveled road with a 55-mph speed limit and frequent truck traffic.

As Matt rounded a curve, he saw a young girl, estimated to be between 2 and 4 years old, standing barefoot and alone in the middle of the highway. An 18-wheeler was approaching from the opposite direction.

Matt immediately positioned his bucket truck across the roadway, activated its



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Mission

To enhance the quality of life for our members, employees and communities by safely providing reliable and competitively priced energy services.

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DEMCO is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Manager's Report

Mark Phillips
CEO & General Manager



Since 1938, generations of dedicated employees have built DEMCO through hard work, service and commitment to their neighbors. That legacy is one of the things I think about every Labor Day, and this year it carries special meaning for me.

As I celebrate 25 years at DEMCO and begin serving as your CEO and general manager, I find myself reflecting on the opportunities I've been given throughout my career and the people I have shared that journey with.

Over the years, I've had the opportunity to serve in several roles and to work alongside dedicated employees who share a common purpose. No matter the department or job title, we're all working toward the same goal: serving you, our members.

I've experienced firsthand the professionalism, dedication and care our employees bring to their work. Whether building and maintaining power lines, answering member calls or supporting the cooperative behind the scenes, every role contributes to the reliable electric service our members depend on every day.

Those experiences have taught me that what makes DEMCO special isn't just the electric system we've built—it's the people who make it work.

It's a privilege to be part of this cooperative and an even greater privilege to serve you. As we honor the value of hard work this Labor Day, I'm reminded that there's no greater purpose than serving the people and communities we call home.

Mark Phillips became DEMCO's chief executive officer and general manager in July. During his 25-year career with the cooperative, Mark has served in a variety of operational and leadership roles. Most recently, he led DEMCO's engineering and operations division, overseeing the planning, construction, maintenance and operation of the cooperative's electric system.



Get to Know Your Board Members

In St. Helena and West Feliciana parishes, heritage and progress go hand in hand. DEMCO's board members reflect that harmony through service rooted in experience, commitment and vision.

Representing St. Helena Parish, Richard "Dickie" Sitman built a career supporting cooperative institutions across Louisiana. As chair of the operations committee and president of Dixie Business Development Center, he brings expertise in energy, finance and community development. Through his leadership of the Operations Committee, he helps oversee the policies and operational decisions that support DEMCO's safe and reliable electric service.

In West Feliciana Parish, Kevin Beauchamp offers a unique perspective shaped by decades of experience with

DEMCO—as an employee and a community leader. As a member of the Finance Committee, he helps oversee the cooperative's financial stewardship while drawing on firsthand knowledge of DEMCO's operations. His service on the West Feliciana School Board and Gas Utility District Board reflects a lifelong commitment to his parish and the people he serves. Kevin's work is rooted in the belief that strong communities are built by people who show up, serve well and care deeply.

Together, Dickie and Kevin represent the strength that comes from steady foundations and forward-thinking leadership. Their combined experience helps ensure DEMCO continues to serve its members with excellence and purpose. ■



Richard "Dickie" Sitman

- ▶ Favorite local spot: The Amite River, camping and enjoying the sandbars and opportunities for canoeing.
- ▶ Hidden talent or fun fact: Before joining the DEMCO board, he served as a justice of the peace and once officiated a wedding for five couples at the same time—all on horseback, with more than 60 guests dressed in Western wear and Native American attire.
- ▶ Currently enjoying: Reading John Grisham novels and watching classic Westerns.



Kevin Beauchamp

- ▶ Favorite local spot: The many locally owned restaurants throughout West Feliciana Parish.
- ▶ Hidden talent or fun fact: Enjoys camping with his wife and spending time with their grandchildren.
- ▶ Currently enjoying: "How to Test Negative for Stupid," by Sen. John Kennedy.

Louisiana PLANNER

All ages can find something new and exciting around every corner of the state. Filled with rich history, abundant natural beauty and diverse events all year, Louisiana has fun options for everyone.

MORGAN CITY

Sept. 3-7

91st Louisiana Shrimp & Petroleum Festival

This event holds the distinction of being the oldest state-chartered harvest festival in Louisiana, honoring the two industries that built Morgan City. With more than five days of free, family-friendly celebration along the Atchafalaya River in downtown Morgan City, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Highlights include live music nightly in Lawrence Park, a five-day arts and crafts market with more than 100 vendors, a children's parade Saturday morning, carnival rides, Sunday morning Mass in Lawrence Park, the traditional Blessing of the Fleet on Berwick Bay and a spectacular Sunday night fireworks display synchronized to local radio.

shrimpandpetroleum.org

NATCHITOCHES

Sept. 18-19

Natchitoches Meat Pie Festival

Held along the historic downtown riverbank on the scenic Cane River, this two-day event celebrates the flaky, richly seasoned beef-and-pork meat pie that has made this city—the oldest settlement in the Louisiana Purchase Territory—famous. Friday runs from 5-11 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m., with live music, a meat pie-eating contest, children's activities, art vendors, a brew fest and, of course, as many meat pies as you care to eat. Admission is free, and the setting along the Cane River is one of the most beautiful in the state.

meatpiefestival.com

NEW IBERIA

Sept. 24-27

Louisiana Sugar Cane Festival

Iberia Parish has been celebrating its most important crop since 1937, and this festival remains one of the most beloved agricultural traditions in the state. The four-day festival runs Friday, 5-10 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at Bouligny Plaza in historic downtown New Iberia. Highlights include the coronation of Queen Sugar and King Sucrose, a fais do-do, multiple parades, a blessing of the crop, a carnival street fair, a flower show, a photography contest, sugar cookery, art exhibits and live entertainment. Admission varies.

hisugar.org

AMITE CITY

Sept. 30-Oct. 4

Tangipahoa Parish Fair

Since 1888, the fair has brought the community together at the fairgrounds in Amite City for a weeklong celebration of local culture, agriculture and history. The fair features school exhibits built around an annual theme, a Pioneer Town with live demonstrations of sawmill, gristmill and syrup-making operations, carnival rides, live entertainment, a spelling bee, a midway, food vendors, and arts and crafts displays. It is one of the oldest parish fairs in Louisiana and a proud showcase of Tangipahoa's heritage from north to south.

tangifair.org

DERIDDER

Oct. 6-10

97th Annual Beauregard Parish Fair

This event is a time-honored fall tradition celebrating farm living, family and fellowship at Beauregard Parish Fairgrounds. The multiday fair features agricultural exhibits, livestock shows, carnival rides, arts and crafts, live entertainment, local food and youth competitions—embodying the rural community spirit that has kept it going for nearly a century. Admission details and the full schedule of events are available online.

beauregardparishfair.com

SHREVEPORT

Oct. 8-11 and 15-18

50th Annual Red River Revel Arts Festival

An expanded two-weekend format at Festival Plaza on the Red River helps commemorate this event's milestone anniversary. The largest outdoor arts festival in North Louisiana features more than 75 juried artists, four stages of live music and performing arts, nonprofit food booths and a children's arts education area. Thursday and Friday admission is free until 5 p.m.; admission is \$10 on Saturdays and Sundays, with children 12 and younger always free.

redriverrevel.com

CROWLEY

Oct. 15-18

89th International Rice Festival

Louisiana's oldest and largest agricultural festival, downtown Crowley will once again be transformed for a four-day celebration of the crop that put Acadia Parish on the map. The free event features two stages of live music, a children's parade, a grand parade, a classic car show, a fiddle and accordion contest, a rice-eating contest, a frog derby, a 5K run, food booths and an arts and crafts area. The festival's music lineup is the largest of any agricultural festival in the state.

ricefestival.com

MANDEVILLE

Oct. 24-25

47th Annual Louisiana Wildfowl Carvers & Collectors Guild Festival

Decoys become works of art each October at Castine Center. This festival draws master carvers, painters and collectors from across the country to compete in more than 75 categories spanning ducks, songbirds, fish, caricatures, wildlife sculpture, interpretive art and more. Visitors can watch live decoy carving and painting demonstrations, bid in the auction, browse arts and crafts exhibits, and shop from vendors selling carving and painting supplies. Admission is \$5; children younger than 12 are free. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days.

lwccg.com

HOW TO INCLUDE UPCOMING EVENTS

Want to share a family-friendly event with Louisiana readers?

Enter details at tinyurl.com/LouisianaPlanner or scan the QR code with your smartphone camera for easy access. Make sure to submit November/December events by Oct. 1 (due to press deadline). Events are published as space allows.



BEYOND THE MONUMENTS



DEMCO Essay Contest winners, front from left, Kendyl Carpenter, Anya Riley, Anna Bordelon and Peyton Lewis; and back from left, Lee McMillan and Brock Rispone visit the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. PHOTO COURTESY OF DEMCO

A summer to remember

For six local high school students, this summer's Electric Cooperative Youth Tour was more than a trip to Washington, D.C. It was a week of new friendships, unforgettable experiences and a firsthand look at how government serves communities across the country.

After earning their place through DEMCO's annual essay contest, the students joined more than 1,500 delegates from electric cooperatives nationwide to explore the nation's capital. They toured the U.S. Capitol, the White House, Arlington National Cemetery and the Smithsonian museums. They also met with congressional staffers and learned how electric cooperatives advocate for the communities they serve.

Representing DEMCO were Anna Bordelon and Brock Rispone, of Central High; Kendyl Carpenter, of Live Oak High; Anya Riley and Lee McMillan, of West Feliciana High; and Peyton Lewis, of Zachary High.

The experience left a lasting impression on the students, especially the opportunity to meet the people who work behind the scenes in our nation's capital.

"My favorite part of the D.C. trip has been meeting with Speaker Johnson's staffers and seeing the monuments," Kendyl says.

Since pioneering Louisiana's participation in the Youth Tour in 1978, DEMCO has helped hundreds of local students experience the nation's capital while encouraging leadership, civic engagement and a deeper understanding of the cooperative difference.

For these six students, Washington, D.C., became a classroom of its own—bringing history, government and public service to life in ways no textbook ever could.

In 2027, DEMCO celebrates the 50th anniversary of its essay contest. High school juniors can be part of this milestone year by entering for a chance to earn their own unforgettable Youth Tour experience in Washington, D.C. To learn more, visit DEMCO.org/Essay-Contest. ■

“Seeing the Capitol and meeting the Louisiana people who work for the House of Representatives really opened my eyes to the opportunities Washington, D.C., offers.”

— BROCK RISPONE, DEMCO DELEGATE

The MOTHER ROAD TURNS 100

Celebrations rev up America's iconic Route 66

By Jim McCarty

It's midday at Missouri Hick Bar-B-Que along Route 66 near Cuba, Missouri. The lunch rush is almost over when the staff springs into action, moving tables together, preparing for a big gathering.

Soon, the restaurant walls vibrate with the two-cylinder thump of a dozen or so Harley-Davidson motorcycles. The door opens, and the happy sounds of a group that's experiencing the time of their lives reverberate—in Swedish.

Scenes like this play out every day along what remains of the most famous highway in the world. It's called the Mother Road, Main Street of America and the Highway That's the Best. It once traversed eight states

along 2,448 miles, stretching from the shores of Lake Michigan in Chicago to a pier at the Pacific Ocean in Santa Monica, California.

Its official name is Route 66, and it's about to get busier than it's been since it was decommissioned in 1985.

This year, Route 66 fans from around the world will look for new kicks as the celebrated road turns 100. Springfield, Missouri, was in the spotlight in April as the site of the national kickoff of America's Route 66 Centennial Celebration.

The Queen City of the Ozarks earned that honor through a competitive process, but also due to its status as the birthplace of Route 66. On April 30, 1926, John Woodruff, a Springfield businessman, sent a telegram to Washington, D.C., requesting the new road be named U.S. Route 66. The

idea for the road didn't originate here, but its iconic name did.

"This recognition is a testament to Missouri's deep roots in the history of America's most iconic highway and the vibrant spirits of the communities that keep that legacy alive today," Missouri Gov. Mike Kehoe says.

The governor's farm sits along Route 66 in Jerome.

"We have some of the original roadway in Pulaski County that you can still drive on," he says. "People come from all over the world to drive on that. This roadway is so historic, and it has made millions of memories for not just Americans but for people all over the world."

Kickoff festivities included five satellite cities: Joliet, Illinois;



I think Route 66 is on a lot of visitors' bucket lists. And I think whenever there's a big milestone to be celebrated, people want to be a part of that and come experience Route 66 as it's turning 100.

— NIKKI TERLESKY, HISTORIC ROUTE 66 ASSOCIATION OF ARIZONA DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

St. Louis, Missouri; Amarillo, Texas; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Santa Monica, California.

In preparation for the yearlong celebration, communities all along the historic route are sprucing up their landmarks, planning events, relighting neon signs and prepping for a major influx of visitors who plan to motor west.

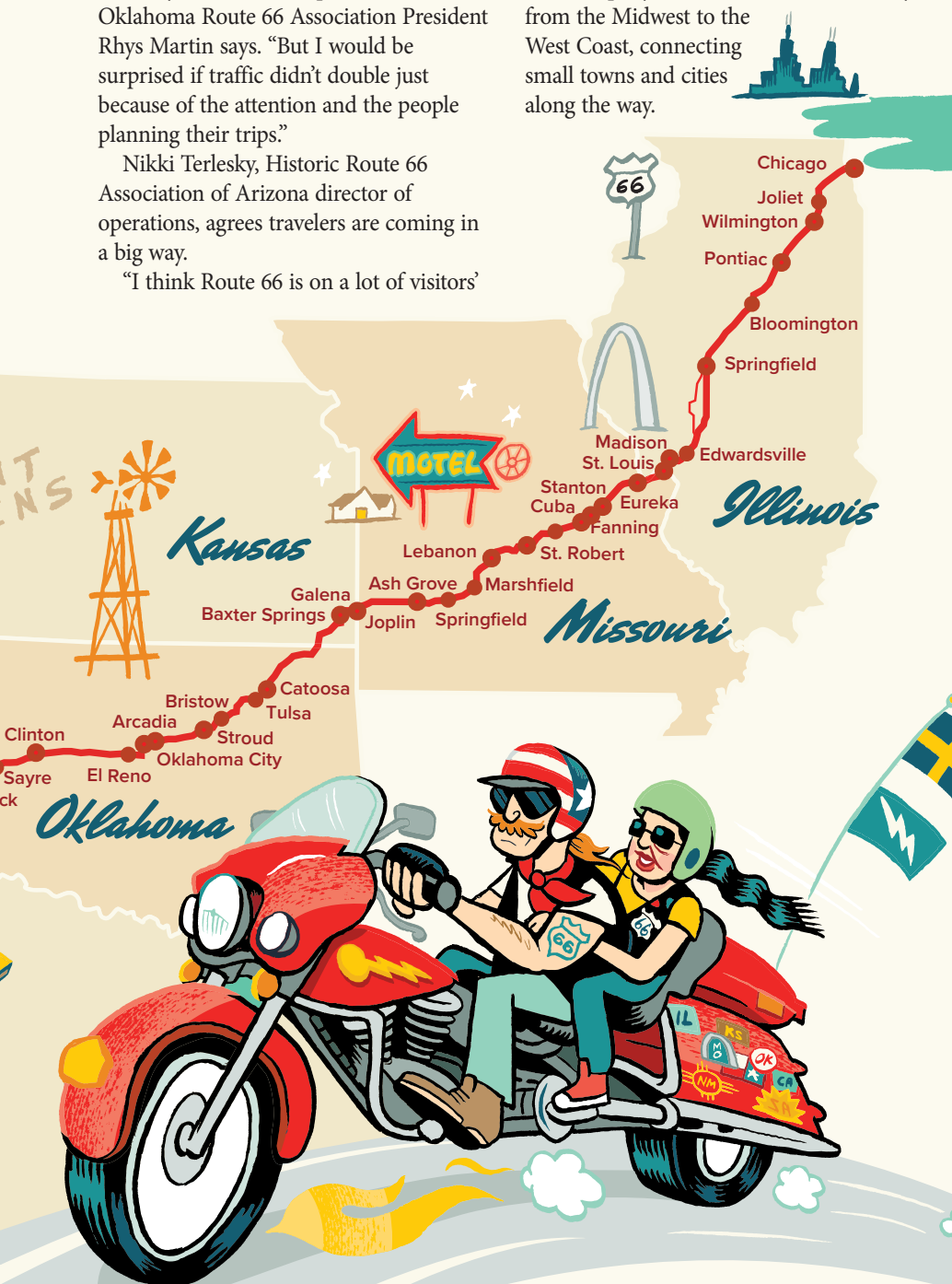
"I struggle to make a specific prediction, and part of that is because it's really hard to track specific routes," Oklahoma Route 66 Association President Rhys Martin says. "But I would be surprised if traffic didn't double just because of the attention and the people planning their trips."

Nikki Terlesky, Historic Route 66 Association of Arizona director of operations, agrees travelers are coming in a big way.

"I think Route 66 is on a lot of visitors'

bucket lists," she says. "And I think whenever there's a big milestone to be celebrated, people want to be a part of that and come experience Route 66 as it's turning 100. I know a lot of Facebook groups I follow are just buzzing with people voicing their travel plans."

While Missouri can claim the creation of the name, an Oklahoma man is known as the Father of Route 66. Cyrus Avery, a Tulsa real estate developer and owner of a coal company, saw the need for a roadway from the Midwest to the West Coast, connecting small towns and cities along the way.



ROUTE 66

DON'T MISS THIS!

Here's the top attraction for each of the eight states.

ILLINOIS—GEMINI GIANT (WILMINGTON)

If you only stop once before leaving Illinois, make it here. The 30-foot-tall Muffler Man is one of Route 66's most iconic photo ops and a perfect start to the journey.

MISSOURI—MERAMEC CAVERNS (STANTON)

A road-trip classic since the 1930s, billboards and barn roof signs for this cavern once lined the entire Mother Road, and the attraction still feels like pure Americana.

KANSAS—CARS ON THE ROUTE (GALENA)

Kansas has only 13 miles of Route 66, but this restored Kan-O-Tex gas station—home to the truck that inspired Mater in "Cars"—is its standout.

OKLAHOMA—BLUE WHALE (CATOOSA)

An absolutely essential stop is the giant, smiling blue whale beside a pond. It is one of Route 66's most beloved and quirky landmarks.

TEXAS—CADILLAC RANCH (AMARILLO)

Ten Cadillacs sit nose-down in the desert. They're covered in spray paint, and you're encouraged to add your own. It's irreplaceable Route 66 kitsch.

NEW MEXICO—BLUE SWALLOW MOTEL (TUCUMCARI)

See the best neon on the entire route. It is a family-run motel with beautifully preserved rooms, and a true 1940s motor court experience. Even if you don't stay, stop for photos.

ARIZONA—PETRIFIED FOREST AND PAINTED DESERT (HOLBROOK)

This is the only national park the Mother Road drives straight through where classic roadside nostalgia meets staggering natural beauty.

CALIFORNIA—ROY'S MOTEL & CAFÉ (AMBOY)

A surreal desert time capsule features a legendary retro-futurist neon sign. Nothing captures the lonely, romantic end stretch of Route 66 like Roy's.

Appointed in 1925 to the Joint Board of Interstate Highways, Cyrus managed to steer the route south from Illinois through Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California instead of a more northern route through Nevada.

Along with Missouri's John Woodruff, Cyrus helped launch the U.S. Highway 66 Association in 1927 to encourage its use.

"One hundred and thirty-seven delegates from 32 cities of the Southwest, meeting here today, organized the National Highway No. 66 Association and elected

John T. Woodruff of Springfield, Mo., its first president," read a Springfield Daily News story. "From Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico, the delegates gathered in Tulsa today determined that Highway 66, which runs from Chicago via St. Louis to Los Angeles, shall in fact become the 'Main Street of America.'"

At the beginning, the route joined various existing state roads, many of which were still gravel. Besides paving the highway, the association's

leaders also marketed Route 66 over other transcontinental routes.

One of the first efforts to popularize the road was an epic foot race that followed Route 66 from its start in California to St. Louis, then on to New York City. The distance was 3,400 miles over just three months. It started with 275 runners, but 77 dropped out on the first day. Only 55 finished. The winner was 20-year-old Andy Payne of Claremore, Oklahoma.

Through publicity like this, the nation learned of the new route, and traffic grew exponentially. Truckers favored its flat terrain, with elevations measured in hundreds of feet compared to thousands crossing the Rocky Mountains.



In the 1930s, Route 66 became a pathway for migrants fleeing the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, heading west in search of opportunity.

When World War II gripped the nation, the route became strategic for moving troops and materials to support the war effort. This led to a major effort to rebuild the roadway for Fort Leonard Wood, an Army base in St. Robert, Missouri.

The highway was no match for the heavy trucks supplying the base. So, in 1941, construction began on a four-lane divided highway between it and Rolla. A deep cut bypassed a steep grade near Devil's Elbow. Hooker Cut became the deepest highway excavation in the nation to date, and the four-lane, divided highway was the first of its kind. The improved roadway was fully open to traffic by September 1945—ironically, the same month the war ended.

Other improvements included rerouting to avoid a series of dangerous hairpin curves in Arizona, dubbed the Sidewinder. This 8-mile roadway has 191 curves with no guardrails and 12% grades. Today, it is often visited by adventurous travelers.



THE ULTIMATE ROUTE 66 (Ordered for the Drive) **PLAYLIST**



DEPARTURE: CHICAGO (WINDOWS DOWN)

- Route 66 - Chuck Berry
- Sweet Home Chicago - The Blues Brothers
- Start Me Up - The Rolling Stones
- Good Times Roll - The Cars
- Real Gone - Sheryl Crow
- Life Is a Highway - Rascal Flatts
- Born to Be Wild - Steppenwolf
- Runnin' Down a Dream - Tom Petty
- Drivin' My Life Away - Eddie Rabbitt
- On the Road Again - Willie Nelson

HEARTLAND MILES:

MISSOURI → OKLAHOMA → KANSAS

- Missouri River Run - Chloe Hoecker
- If You Wanna Get to Heaven - Ozark Mountain Daredevils
- King of the Road - Roger Miller
- Boys From Oklahoma - Cross
- Canadian Ragweed
- Oklahoma Smokeshow - Zach Bryan
- Carry On Wayward Son - Kansas
- Dust in the Wind - Kansas
- Ain't Going Down ('Til the Sun Comes Up) - Garth Brooks
- Ain't No Love in Oklahoma - Luke Combs
- Cadillac Ranch - Chris LeDoux

OPEN COUNTRY AND FREEDOM

- Wide Open Spaces - Dixie Chicks
- Follow Your Arrow - Kacey Musgraves
- Wagon Wheel - Old Crow Medicine Show
- Copperhead Road - Steve Earle
- Midnight Rider - The Allman Brothers Band
- Ramblin' Man - The Allman Brothers Band
- Blue Sky - The Allman Brothers Band
- Born to Run - Bruce Springsteen

DESERT STRETCH:

TEXAS → NEW MEXICO → ARIZONA

- Amarillo by Morning - George Strait
- I've Been Everywhere - Johnny Cash
- A Horse With No Name - America
- Ventura Highway - America

- Take Me to the River - Talking Heads
- Running on Empty - Jackson Browne
- Take the Long Way Home - Supertramp
- Drive - The Cars

DUSK, MOTELS AND LONG THOUGHTS

- Fast Car - Tracy Chapman
- Angel From Montgomery - John Prine
- Into the Mystic - Van Morrison
- Gypsy - Fleetwood Mac
- Landslide - Fleetwood Mac
- The Mother Road - Alan Rhody
- Here I Go Again - Whitesnake
- Peaceful Easy Feeling - Eagles
- Take It to the Limit - Eagles

CALIFORNIA ARRIVAL

- Bad Moon Rising - Creedence Clearwater Revival
- California Dreamin' - The Mamas & the Papas
- Hotel California - Eagles
- Go Your Own Way - Fleetwood Mac
- California Girls - The Beach Boys
- Everyday Is a Winding Road - Sheryl Crow
- Beverly Hills - Weezer

SUNSHINE, CELEBRATION AND LETTING LOOSE

- Party in the USA - Miley Cyrus
- Hot to Go - Chappell Roan
- Paradise City - Guns N' Roses
- Getaway Car - Taylor Swift
- Good Time - Owl City and Carly Rae Jepsen
- Born in the USA - Bruce Springsteen

THE MEANING OF THE JOURNEY (CLOSING STRETCH)

- This Land Is Your Land - Woody Guthrie
- Take Me Home, Country Roads - John Denver
- Kyrie - Mr. Mister
- The Long and Winding Road - The Beatles
- Travelin' Thru - Dolly Parton
- Running on Empty - Jackson Browne
- What a Wonderful World - Louis Armstrong
- End of the Line - Traveling Wilburys

By the 1950s, Route 66 was the byway of a nation in love with the automobile. Cabins, motels, roadhouses and all manner of highway kitsch sprang up to lure motorists off the pavement. Among them was the first fast-food restaurant, believed to be Red's Giant Hamburg in Springfield, Missouri.

Route 66 came to represent everything Americans hold near and dear: freedom,

adventure, nostalgia and small-town values. Those themes were shared in the 1960s TV series "Route 66," which helped fuel today's nostalgia for the road.

Championed in songs such as Bobby Troup's "(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66" and the Eagles' "Take It Easy," immortalized by John Steinbeck's "Grapes of Wrath" and introduced to a new

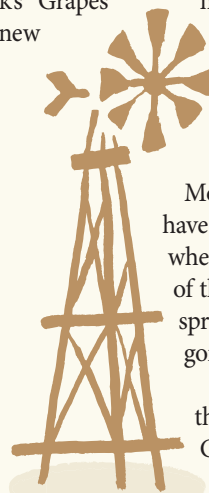
generation through Pixar's "Cars" movie, the Mother Road continues to fascinate those who prefer life in the slow lane.

The demise of Route 66 came with the rise of the new Interstate Highway System—including interstates 55, 44, 40, 15 and 10. Small towns where Route 66 was the main road were bypassed, and many businesses couldn't survive as traffic moved away.

Route 66 was decommissioned in 1985. But the road never truly disappeared.

Mother Nature and the wrecking ball have taken their toll, but if you know where to look, you can still find remnants of the old route. New businesses have sprung from the ashes of those long-gone oases on the road.

So, as the song says, "get hip to this timely tip, when you make that California trip," and make this the year to get your kicks—on Route 66. ■



THE ULTIMATE ROUTE 66 QUIZ



Q: WHO ORIGINALLY SANG "ROUTE 66"?

A: Nat King Cole, with the King Cole Trio, first recorded the song in 1946 at Radio Recorders in Los Angeles. Capitol Records released it as a single, which reached No. 11 on Billboard's pop chart.

Q: WHO IS CONSIDERED THE FATHER OF ROUTE 66?

A: In the early 1900s, Cyrus Avery of Tulsa, Oklahoma, a real estate developer and owner of a coal company, began acquiring oil leases. With the need to reach the barren lands around him and the need for a roadway from the Midwest to the western lands connecting cities along the way, the road became a reality. With John Woodruff of Springfield, Missouri, Cyrus promoted the idea of a highway connecting the Midwest to the West Coast.

Q: WHAT TOWN IS CONSIDERED THE BIRTHPLACE OF ROUTE 66?

A: Springfield, Missouri, is widely recognized as the birthplace of Route 66. A passionate advocate for the "Good Roads" movement, Springfield businessman John Woodruff promoted highway development across Missouri. While the road itself did not begin in Springfield, the idea of the route was born here, making Springfield the home for the Main Street of America. John was elected the first president of the Route 66 Association.

Q: WHAT WRITER MADE ROUTE 66 FAMOUS?

A: John Steinbeck proclaimed Route 66 the Mother Road in his 1939 book, "The Grapes of Wrath."

Q: WHERE DID THE ORIGINAL ROUTE BEGIN AND END?

A: Route 66 began in downtown Chicago, Illinois, and ended in Santa Monica, California, near the Pacific Ocean. The official start is at Adams Street and Michigan Avenue, with classic spots like Lou Mitchell's diner nearby.

Q: HOW LONG WAS HISTORIC ROUTE 66?

A: It is generally accepted that, from beginning to end in 1926, Route 66 traversed 2,448 miles. However, as the route evolved over its 60 years of existence with new, improved alignments, the mileage varied over time.

Q: WHAT WAS THE ORIGINAL NAME FOR ROUTE 66?

A: John and Cyrus also played a key role in the naming the road. It had first been named Route 60, as all main east-to-west highways at the time ended in zero. However, the pair felt Route 66 would be easier to promote, especially with the flow of having two of the same number. Thus, on April 30, 1926, a telegram was sent to the Bureau of Public Roads asking for the name to be changed to Route 66.

Q: WHAT DISTINCTION DOES RED'S GIANT HAMBURG, A SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI, ROUTE 66 RESTAURANT, HOLD?

A: It is considered the first drive-in fast-food restaurant. Red's opened in 1947 and operated until 1984. In early 2019, Red's Giant Hamburg made a comeback, 35 years after the original restaurant's closure. The new restaurant, on Route 413, was a re-creation of the original Route 66 location. It opened in August 2019 and operated for almost six years, closing its doors in May 2025. In 2013, a fundraising campaign was established to re-create the Red's Giant Hamburg sign. The sign, shaped like a cross, was installed in 2015.

Q: WAS U.S. ROUTE 66 PAVED?

A: When Route 66 officially opened in 1926, only 800 miles were paved, the rest being graded dirt, gravel, bricks or wood planks. It took 11 more years before the road would become the first national highway to be completely paved.

Q: WHAT STATES DOES ROUTE 66 TRAVEL THROUGH?

A: Route 66 traverses eight states: Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California.

Q: WHEN WAS ROUTE 66 DECOMMISSIONED?

A: With the advent of the Federal Interstate Highway System, U.S. Route 66 was gradually decommissioned, with the last segment, in Arizona, removed from the federal system June 27, 1985.

Q: WHAT STATE HAS THE MOST MILES OF ROUTE 66?

A: New Mexico has the most miles, and Kansas has the fewest—Illinois, 301; Missouri, 317; Kansas, 13; Oklahoma, 432; Texas, 186; New Mexico, 487; Arizona, 401; and California, 314, for a total of 2,448 miles.

Q: WHAT ANIMATED MOVIE IS BASED ON ROUTE 66?

A: The 2006 animated movie "Cars" tells the story of Route 66 through characters Lightning McQueen and Sally and their escapades at Radiator Springs, a fictionalized representation of all Route 66 towns. Sally liked to say, "Those were the days we traveled to have a great time, not to make great time." In the movie, Ramone's House of Body Art looks similar to the U-Drop Inn in Shamrock, Texas. Other real-life locations that inspired parts of the movie include Cadillac Ranch, Wigwam Motels and Wagon Wheel Motel.



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ACENTO CREATIVO

Modern Substations

Distribution substations have been a key part of the U.S. power grid since its beginning, with the primary function of reducing sub-transmission voltage for safe use by nearby homes and businesses. Today, advances in things like digitalization, automation, renewables integration, cybersecurity and energy storage have transformed the modern substation with a host of new devices and technologies aimed at improving safety, efficiency and reliability.

Transformer Monitoring

Tracks loading, oil condition, temperature and gas levels.

Substation Automation System

Communicates with digital relays and controllers to monitor the grid and isolate faults.

Control Building

Houses servers and communications infrastructure that run multiple software systems.

DERMS

Monitors and coordinates distributed energy resources.

Microgrid management

Enables islanding during major outages.

Advanced voltage regulation

Maintains steady power quality as DERs fluctuate.

Power quality monitoring

Tracks harmonics, flicker, voltage sags/swells and other issues.

Cybersecurity

Protects substation control networks, relays and communications equipment.

Digitalization

Interoperability protocols and fiber optics enable secure, high-speed comms between devices and control center.

Maintenance Sensor

Monitors equipment health.

Advanced Feeder Automation

Detects and isolates faults and automatically reroutes power.

Remote Monitoring

Allows operators to see and address substation status remotely.

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36	8.77	7.93	10.35	9.44	13.94	12.25	21.05	17.72
37	8.77	8.15	10.52	9.81	14.78	12.96	21.89	19.41
38	8.77	8.16	11.19	10.18	15.63	13.78	23.63	20.20
39	9.13	8.31	11.62	10.55	16.47	14.31	24.48	21.69
40	9.55	8.48	12.04	10.98	17.31	15.14	26.14	23.59
41	10.05	8.72	13.10	11.58	19.36	16.75	29.55	25.97
42	10.48	9.01	14.21	12.30	21.07	18.16	32.93	28.31
43	10.98	9.36	14.72	13.18	22.96	19.75	37.90	30.94
44	11.58	9.73	15.67	14.10	24.92	21.38	40.72	33.67
45	12.17	10.15	16.86	15.16	27.03	23.23	44.52	37.06
46	12.84	10.64	17.85	15.83	29.43	24.89	48.77	39.98
47	13.43	11.16	19.03	16.68	31.68	26.58	53.20	43.40
48	13.48	11.88	20.27	17.37	34.21	28.38	57.52	47.00
49	13.69	12.33	21.73	18.32	36.87	30.28	62.61	51.34
50	14.36	12.98	23.00	19.82	39.63	32.49	68.64	56.25
51	15.37	13.75	25.30	20.65	44.27	34.96	77.37	61.14
52	16.36	14.87	27.63	22.13	48.94	37.92	86.78	66.78
53	17.46	15.88	30.95	24.81	53.81	41.34	97.56	72.99
54	18.68	16.72	33.99	26.20	59.70	45.14	109.19	80.58
55	20.70	17.50	37.13	27.85	66.66	49.40	120.50	89.53
56	22.69	19.48	42.01	31.07	73.22	52.91	137.43	95.90
57	24.69	20.63	45.81	33.43	80.38	57.13	149.95	106.31

MONTHLY RATES

Issue Age	\$100,000		\$250,000		\$500,000		\$1,000,000	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
58	27.70	21.98	50.43	36.04	88.63	61.58	168.05	115.60
59	30.37	23.51	55.50	38.76	97.92	66.66	185.80	125.20
60	33.49	24.28	60.76	41.71	108.50	72.14	205.58	135.21
61	36.49	25.09	66.43	47.10	121.89	82.68	235.39	153.85
62	39.88	27.91	73.90	51.32	135.58	91.51	261.93	165.16
63	43.69	34.01	81.54	57.25	152.14	101.63	286.93	186.31
64	47.91	38.28	90.20	62.32	169.25	111.96	322.16	199.83
65	52.81	40.88	100.33	68.23	190.05	124.63	360.57	222.65
66	58.71	44.61	114.29	75.40	210.49	134.77	391.94	241.24
67	64.59	49.08	125.27	83.64	233.74	145.34	435.97	260.67
68	72.24	59.65	143.07	105.55	253.50	172.80	484.22	321.07
69	79.34	64.22	158.23	129.28	287.72	187.50	546.75	351.10
70	86.85	68.11	177.24	147.66	317.88	202.37	594.72	374.91
71	102.45	82.60	203.10	159.34	373.07	234.59	701.44	442.89
72	113.68	93.16	232.46	172.23	426.44	271.99	806.74	511.27
73	127.55	106.68	267.15	188.15	492.36	318.18	936.81	595.73
74	142.08	119.36	303.50	204.84	561.42	366.57	1073.07	684.22
75	159.25	140.48	346.45	224.56	643.04	423.76	1234.11	788.80
76	200.03	168.51	418.29	276.67	784.08	529.52	1488.28	981.25
77	249.54	216.74	505.52	339.94	955.35	657.94	1796.92	1214.92
78	310.70	268.40	613.27	418.11	1166.92	816.58	2178.16	1503.59
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DEMCO Board Director Leslie Falks visits with first grade students in their vegetable garden at Walker Elementary. PHOTO COURTESY OF DEMCO

Hands-On Learning

Takes Root

A school garden grows lessons that extend far beyond the harvest

Sunflowers, squash, zucchini, cucumbers and peas aren't typical first grade classroom supplies. But thanks to the DEMCO Bright Ideas Grant, they're helping students in Emily Guitreau's first grade class at Walker Elementary learn about plant life cycles, nutrition and the environment.

This past spring, DEMCO representatives visited Guitreau's classroom to see firsthand how the Bright Ideas Grant was expanding learning beyond the walls of a traditional classroom.

What began as an indoor science lesson has blossomed into a vibrant outdoor learning space where students can explore, discover and learn by doing.

"The hands-on experience of planting and caring for their own plants not only taught valuable life skills but also reinforced concepts from our first grade science curriculum," Guitreau says. "The excitement my students showed for gardening is a memory I will cherish forever."

Students eagerly showed off their raised garden beds and proudly explained everything they had planted. The visit carried a special sense of nostalgia for

DEMCO Board Director Leslie Falks.

After touring the garden, Falks walked the campus, sharing stories from his time as a Walker Elementary student in the 1960s. He was also reunited with a scrapbook from his school days. As he flipped through its pages, memories of former teachers, classmates and school experiences came rushing back.

Falks' visit served as a powerful reminder that schools are more than buildings. They are where futures are shaped, communities grow stronger and experiences can leave a lasting impact for generations.

The lessons growing in Walker Elementary's garden create experiences today's students will carry with them long after the harvest. Through programs like this, DEMCO helps create opportunities that may inspire and influence students for years to come.

Public school educators who teach kindergarten through high school within DEMCO's service area are encouraged to apply for the 2026-27 Bright Ideas Grant Program between Sept. 1 and Oct. 15 at [DEMCO.org/Bright-Ideas-Grant-Program](https://demco.org/Bright-Ideas-Grant-Program). ■

Grants Awarded in the 2025-26 Academic Year

- ▶ Angela Torrence-St. Helena College & Career Academy, "Living History Museum: The Great Depression"
- ▶ Brandon Creighton-Zachary High School, "Filmmaking Equipment"
- ▶ Crystal Gurley-Denham Springs High School, "Flexible Learning Space for Algebra: Growing Mathematical Thinking and Career Readiness"
- ▶ Emily Guitreau-Walker Elementary School, "A Garden for Science and Wellness"
- ▶ Tananjaly Overton-St. Helena College & Career Academy, "Growing Green: Building a Solar-Powered School Greenhouse"

"The hands-on experience of planting and caring for their own plants not only taught valuable life skills but also reinforced concepts from our first grade science curriculum. The excitement my students showed for gardening is a memory I will cherish forever." — EMILY GUITREAU, FIRST GRADE TEACHER

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Dove hunting offers great opportunities for entire families to get outdoors. Here, a father fires his shotgun at incoming doves while his son fires an air rifle and another son watches birds through the binoculars.



Dove Hunting Primer

Louisiana offers great action for these exciting birds

Story and photos by John N. Felsher

For many people, the September dove season opener kicks off another fall full of hunting adventures. Once the month is over, they might forget about doves and move on to other sporting activities.

However, in the Bayou State, hunters can harvest birds into January. At least seven dove species inhabit Louisiana. Hunters can bag four species of doves: mourning, white-winged, Eurasian collared and ringed turtle.

To hunt doves successfully, they first must be found. In the right spot, limits can come easy for those with skill. Extremely swift and agile fliers, mourning doves can exceed 55 mph. With such twisting, erratic flight patterns, doves can provide extremely challenging sport.

For the best action, look for good feeding areas. The birds ordinarily feed at first light. A dove's diet consists of about

99% seeds. The diminutive birds can eat their weight in seeds each day. They eat any cultivated grain such as corn, millet, sorghum—also called milo—and even peanuts and cotton seeds. They also eat native grass seeds, herbs and weed seeds.

Look for doves in open fields or semi-open grasslands punctuated by occasional trees, brush or fencerows. Doves tend to avoid swamps and dense forests, but may stay near forest edges.

Most people hunt doves by waiting in cover along a timberline or field edge to intercept birds flying from their roosting to feeding or watering areas. In a highly social atmosphere, a group of hunters can spread out along the edges of a field to wait for birds to fly over.

Like in waterfowling, hunters can use decoys to bring birds into range. Popular with waterfowlers, spinning-wing decoys create a strobe effect that looks like wings flapping. Birds can see that flash for

miles. When doves spot that wing flash, they instinctively head to the place where they think their cousins found security or food.

"All gregarious birds with white under their wings are attracted to that flash," says Terry D. Denmon, president of Mojo Outdoors, in Monroe. "That's how they find other birds."

Many people place spinning-wing decoys directly in front of them. Birds swoop down low over spinners and sometimes even land next to them. However, birds heading directly toward a spinner might also spot someone sitting behind it. Alerted birds could flare before entering shotgun range.

Instead, force doves to focus their attention elsewhere. Always place spinning-wing decoys facing into the wind like landing birds, but off to one side where they present the best shots at the optimum range.

"In most places, doves come in from multiple directions," Terry says. "If we want to shoot doves at 25 yards, we put a spinning-wing decoy out 25 yards."

Doves typically feed on bare ground where they can easily find seeds. Ever mindful of predators, doves commonly arrange themselves in a circle to feed so they can watch for danger in all directions. Place a few static dove decoys on the ground around a spinner to simulate feeding doves.

Many static decoys come with devices to clip them onto branches or fence wires. When hunting along a fence or tree line, attach a few decoys to the fence or place them on branches on either side of hunters.

"I usually add about a dozen static decoys around the spinning-wing decoy in about a 10- to 15-yard circle as if they are feeding," Terry says. "If I'm sitting on a fencerow or tree line, I'll scatter a few static decoys up and down the line."

After filling their bellies, the birds look for "nooning" places where they can rest and digest at midday. While nooning, they perch in tall trees, on electrical wires or other places that give them good vantage

points to watch for predators. Unless disturbed, mourning doves frequently perch there until late afternoon. Some landowners erect fake power lines to attract and hold birds in their area. Please remember to never shoot at birds on or near real power lines.

By late afternoon, the birds want to feed again. The birds need to ingest small pieces of gravel or sand to help break up the hard seeds they swallowed whole. Mourning doves frequently go to grit piles or sandy patches to swallow grit or gravel, making them great places to hunt in late afternoon.

After swallowing grit, doves need water to wash it down. Right before sundown, doves look for a place to drink. In late afternoon, doves commonly congregate around streams or ponds with sandy or gravel shorelines. A watering hole doesn't mean something like Toledo Bend. A small pond or even just a tire rut filled with water on a gravel or dirt road could suffice.

Ever mindful of predators, doves typically don't go directly down to the ground to feed or drink. They normally first find a high vantage place to perch

and watch for predators before dropping to the ground. Attach a few static decoys to branches of trees or bushes overlooking the watering hole to mimic birds staging in that area. Next, add a couple decoys in an open, gritty area near water to simulate dusting or drinking birds. Perhaps place a spinner near the shoreline.

Hunters can also try jumping doves. Walk through a field of low brush or along forest edges and fencerows flushing birds from cover. When flushed, a dove's long, elegant elliptical wings make a distinctive whistling clatter. Occasionally, startled doves only fly short distances to alight in a nearby tree or bush.

While most people only hunt doves for a few days in September, late season can often provide excellent action. As weather cools, more doves from states farther north migrate into Louisiana, bolstering the depleted resident population. Sometimes, the best late-season hunting occurs right before or after a strong cold front. ■

Visit wlf.louisiana.gov/page/seasons-and-regulations for season dates, bag limits, zone boundaries and other information.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A father points out incoming birds on a family dove hunt. A hunter uses a hay bale for cover as she fires at incoming doves. Spinning-wing decoys create flash that simulates flapping wings. A hunter waits for more action while hunting doves with his retriever.



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