

School's Out For the Summer... But You Can Still Earn Money for the Fall Semester!



Several students have already submitted electronic applications for United Cooperative Services' 2006 Scholarship Program — but the June 15 deadline still allows plenty of time for even more students to compete at a chance of winning one of the 68 scholarships to be awarded this summer.

United created a scholarship award program to encourage and assist in the educational pursuits of members and their families by investing in the communities it serves. As part of our commitment to community education, your cooperative will award \$85,000 in scholarships to 68 students who are United members.

Following the June 15 deadline, United will have a special committee of cooperative members select scholarship recipients based on anonymous applications. Winners are chosen from numerous applicants across the service territory based on financial need, leadership, community involvement and school activities.

Applicants must live at the residence of their parents or

legal guardians who are active United members at their principle residence. The awards will be distributed during a banquet in Cleburne this August.

United's Contract Crews for June:

Tree Trimming Contractor: American Eagle

Project: Right of Way Line Clearance

Area: Sandflats Area

Tree Trimming Contractor: Horton Tree Service

Project: Right of Way Line Clearance

Area: Lingleville & Stephenville

Inspection Contractor: QPI&M

Project: Pole Inspection

Area: Tenaska, Sand Flat & New Hope Circuits

Inspection Contractor: TechServ Consulting

Project: Pole Inspection

Area: All counties in eastern UCS service territory

Construction Contractor: Blackwell Electric

Project Name: Line Conversion

Area: Godley, Hill City and Crowley Areas

Designated for 68 recipients, the scholarships are representative of the number of years United has served members in this area. A larger sum of money was added to the pot a year ago and this summer, 65 students will win a \$1,000 scholarship, two winners will be presented with \$5,000 college scholarships and one lucky student will be awarded a \$10,000 college scholarship.

The scholarship funds were first expanded in 1997 when Texas House Bill 3203, allowed not-for-profit electric cooperatives like United to put unclaimed member dividend funds to use for student scholarships. This change in the law allowed United to take advantage of money previously lost in the state's general revenue fund and reinvest it locally with a greater and broader impact.

To date, 600 students have received United scholarships totaling more than \$600,000 in award money. The winners come from all over United's service territory, attend a wide variety of schools and include both recent high school graduates and current full-time college students.

In order to receive consideration for the scholarship program, students must fill out an electronic application (available on United's Web site) before the June 15 deadline, and mail in a copy of a tax return (or W-2) stating most recent annual family income for information verification, high school or college transcripts, a one-page typed personal essay, at least one letter of reference and a school photo.

For more information and a complete list of rules, please visit United's Web site at www.united-cs.com.

Power Talk is an inserted supplement to the Texas Co-op Power magazine, written and produced for members of United Cooperative Services by Communications Director Jocelyn Janota.

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United's **Events Calendar** is available exclusively online! Check the listings, provided free of charge by United's members & their community groups, at:

www.united-cs.com/events.htm

United Announces 2006 Youth Tour Winners

United Cooperative Services recently selected four area students to represent the co-op on the Government-in-Action Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

This year's winners of the all-expenses-paid trip are Glen Rose High School sophomore Lauren Payne, daughter of United member Jeff Payne; Alvarado High School junior Jessica Woodard, daughter of United members David and Karol Woodard; Godley High School junior Mariam Ainsworth, daughter of Greg and Mary Jo Ainsworth; and Huckabay ISD sophomore Scott Collum, son of United members Dale and Kathy Collum.

Lauren is an active member of the Future Leaders Organization, the National Honor Society and Future Farmers of America. She takes several AP/Pre-AP classes and has participated in the State 4-H Horse Camp in Glen Rose since the third grade.

Jessica is the top student in her class. She is very involved in Varsity Choir, Jr. ROTC and her school's tennis team. For her original submission in the Youth Tour contest, she put together a Power Point presentation about how members can lower their own electric bills.

Mariam Ainsworth has won numerous awards for UIL debate and extemporaneous speaking events. She participates in her school's marching and concert bands, volunteers at the Hood County Library and last spring earned a black belt in karate.

Scott Collum serves on the student council and has been a cross country regional qualifier for the last two years. He also plays junior varsity basketball and participates in UIL science and mathematics. His original submission focused on the seven cooperative principles.

Every summer, more than 1,400 high school students travel to our nation's capital for a week to experience our country's treasures, see the government in action and discuss the issues of the day with their congressional representatives and senators. This year, the Youth Tour will take place from June 8-16. United congratulates this year's winners and thanks to everyone who promoted the program and participated in this exciting contest.

Look for pictures of the Youth Tour winners, personal snapshots from the sites they visit and details from their trip in United's upcoming editions of Texas Co-op Power.

Lauren Payne



Jessica Woodard



Mariam Ainsworth



Scott Collum



United Changes Lives Through the Youth Tour...

Dear United Cooperative Services,

As a participant of United's 2004 Youth Tour, I am writing to thank you again for the wonderful opportunities your company has provided. Before the Youth Tour, I had never taken a substantial interest in our political system. However, visiting the Capitol, the Congressional Library and of course meeting our congressmen prompted me to take a more active role in government.

Consequently, I joined Joshua High School's debate team, of which I have been a member now for two years. Debate has completely

changed the direction of my life and I've had the privilege to compete successfully at tournaments across Texas and even at the prestigious Harvard University Tournament in Cambridge.

But perhaps even more importantly, the Youth Tour fostered my love for politics and government, which has led to my decision to study political science next year in the selective Plan II Honors Program at the University of Texas at Austin. Without the credentials and recommendations I earned through debate, my admittance into the honors program would not

have been possible. I can say with certainty that the Youth Tour was the keystone to the path I have chosen to follow.

So thank you! Thank you for choosing me two years ago to participate in the Youth Tour; thank you for opening my eyes to a world I never knew existed; thank you for introducing me to my passion for politics and thank you for having such an impact on my future. Above all, thank you for changing my life!

Sincerely,
Jamie Doak
Joshua, TX

In Hot Water: Tankless vs. Conventional

When it comes to conservation, the industry is always looking to create or promote the next best thing. And especially with new tax credit incentives announced earlier this year, tankless water heaters have received a lot of publicity.

Tankless water heaters produce continuous hot water and have the potential to save money in operation when compared to the conventional tank-style water heater most people have in their homes. But before buying a tankless water heater, you might want to know a little bit more about the different types of water heating equipment available.

The most common water heaters, conventional water heaters with storage tank and tankless water heaters, serve your entire house. There are also point-of-use water heaters, either tankless or units with smaller storage tanks.

A tankless water heater is also called a demand, instantaneous or point-of-use water heater because it has no tank or storage capacity. The unit is installed on a wall instead of taking up space on the floor and water is heated immediately when the faucet is turned on to continuously provide hot water. When the water is turned off, the heating elements automatically shut down.

Tankless water heaters have some advantages. They are compact and easy to drain; therefore, they could be ideal for applications where space is a premium (such as a small vacation home). In addition, they could serve quite effectively in point-of-use applications and they offer an unlimited hot water supply. In new home construction, tankless water heaters are easy to install and have up to a 20-year life expectancy.

However, the use of tankless water heaters as the central source of hot water in a residence should be carefully considered and their advantages and disadvantages must be fully researched. While tankless water heaters offer some modest energy savings over storage water heaters, these gains may be offset by potential higher purchase and installation costs. Furthermore, unless the tankless water heater is very large, you can't run several hot water points at the same time and the rate of water flows is very limited.

Prices of a tankless water heater can vary greatly but the initial cost to purchase is high. Most models are priced between \$585 and \$850 for a 28 KW whole house tankless unit; that's 28 thousand watts, more than most large electric heaters in our homes. Compare that price to a range of between \$200 and \$600 for a 4.5 KW tank type.

On standard house wiring, the 28 KW tankless unit will require four 30 amp circuits versus one for the tank type. That could require as much as a 400 amp (or larger) main breaker fuse for the meter loop on your home.

Tankless water heaters have additional requirements over conventional system in order to get the supply water to the desired temperature levels. If incoming water is 50

degrees, it will need a temperature rise of 60 degrees to get 110 degree water at a faucet. To get that almost "instantaneously" heating causes the need for electrical upgrades, for which wiring costs can be substantial.

Rates of flow (gallons per minute) and water pressure are also major considerations. Plumbing costs should be about the same for either type of water heater but as with any system, careful planning is necessary to provide proper gallons per minute flow.

Energy saving claims for tankless water heaters — the main reason for their increasing popularity — mainly deal with their reduction of standby losses when compared to conventional tank water heaters. For example, a conventional tank water heater with an 84 percent efficiency rating consumes 1.2 kilowatt hours per day. Comparatively, a 95 percent efficient tankless unit loses

only 0.2 kilowatt hours per day. Therefore, a tankless water heater could save about 1 kWh/day in standby losses, which would equate to about 365 kWhs annually. This would save

the average home approximately

\$43.80 a year in water heating costs.

However, today's higher efficiency conventional tank water heaters rate as high as 92 to 94 percent energy efficient and standby losses for these tanks are comparable to tankless units, greatly reducing the potential energy savings.

Water heating systems come in many setups. Aside from the conventional tank unit, where a home is setup to include a tank unit with one large central unit serving all hot water faucets, some homes feature a combination of a larger tank with one, two or more point-of-use types throughout the house. These point-of-use water heaters are often under sink 2.5 gallon tanks at the kitchen sink or a similar setup at a remote bathroom.

The same setups can exist with tankless systems. Either tankless water heaters or conventional water heaters can be "whole house systems" or utilize a combination of whole house with point-of-use units, which can also have a tank or tankless setup.

With a combination of units, it becomes extremely important to have them designed properly. Typically, vacation homes or homes with low hot water capacity requirements are prime candidates for tankless water heaters. Our warmer southern climate in Texas may make many people a good candidate for tankless water heaters due to the incoming water temperature (ground water from wells here versus extreme northern regions) but lifestyle choices should be a bigger deciding factor.

So keep in mind that a tankless water heater can provide unlimited hot water but at a lower gallon per minute rate. A tank-style water heater can supply higher gallons per minute rate but will have a limited supply of hot water.



HOLLYWOOD'S INDIAN EDUCATING WRESTLING MUSICIAN COMES BACK TO TEXAS: THE SHORT STORY OF LEONARD "BIG BEAR" BEAL

Among the more than 49,000 members of United Cooperative Services, we have thousands of collectors — people who have a hobby of accumulating particular items of value or interest. Grandview resident Leonard "Big Bear" Beal does not just collect physical items, he has an anthology of stories and life experiences to share with anyone who will take the time to listen.

A lot of men of a certain respectable age have tales to tell and can go on and on about a war they fought in or the significance of a particular era. And if Leonard Beal's stories ever begin to sound like a scene from a movie, he'll just laugh and say that's what Hollywood does to you.

Bear, as many of his friends refer to him as, has lived a full life. A former pilot, police officer, FBI protector, professional wrestler, locomotive engineer, actor and museum owner, Bear recently moved back to Texas after more than 40 years of living in California.

One of his obsessions grew out of a childhood fascination with everything related to Native Americans. So it's no big surprise to know that while living near Los Angeles, he was appointed chief of the United Lumbee Nation and built a museum of artifacts, antiques and Native American memorabilia.



All these amazing life experiences live on in a small warehouse/barn near Grandview in Johnson County. Bear now has a home there with his wife Anna. His oldest son Jay, who lives down the road, made five different trips out to

California over a period of months in 2004 to move all Bear's possessions — and he has a lot of possessions near and dear to his heart — and helped Bear reorganize everything into a collection of antiques, heirlooms, artifacts, old-fashioned finds and family treasures.

LOVE FOR A MUSEUM

For several years, school children from all over Los Angeles County used to arrive in buses at Big Bear's Indian Village in Torrance, California. On the property he purchased back in the early 1950s, he had built a cabin, general store, music hall, a Hogan and parked a large bus filled with various possessions.

Bear is a skilled artisan and musician and he liked collecting many sorts of odds and ends. The buildings of his village were filled with arrowheads, bows, clubs, moccasins, jewelry, bones, weapons, tools, perfume bottles, medical devices, reproduced movie props, musical instruments, clothing and pieces from his childhood. Long glass cases display moccasins, handmade necklaces and paraphernalia for various Indian ceremonies.

You could fill hundreds of pages just cataloging all Bear has — most of which is now stashed away, floor to ceiling, in a large warehouse outside of Grandview.

"I need to build at least two more display cases and I still have a lot to unpack and catalog and organize," Bear said, looking around the jam-packed collection piled high around him. "I would love to be able to bring people here to a new museum, show children around again and teach them all I know."

Bear is one-quarter Cherokee Indian and his wife, Anna, is Navajo. They now live a relatively quiet life and

This page, top photo: The "fully loaded" bus at Big Bear's Indian Village (the former museum) in Torrance, California.

Left photo: Anna and Bear dressed in their traditional Native American outfits outside of a tepee.





Left photo: Bear poses with John Wayne (second from left) and others during a Shriners event in Los Angeles in December 1970.

Bottom photo: During his interview, Bear took time to show off his musical abilities on his homemade, stand-up bass.

although Bear no longer teaches young students about traditional Indian cultures and lifestyles, he still loves to share his knowledge about Indian traditions. He also takes great delight in making the same puns and jokes with each new person he meets and could do the tour of his possessions in his sleep.

Inside his new makeshift museum of sorts, seven large wooden cases sit near the back of the warehouse, filled with neatly organized and identified treasures. He explains the ceremony and tradition behind Navajo wedding baskets, moves past a weaved rug still on a loom and shows off crystals, fossils, arrows and drills.

Bear possesses a number of guns and several Indian weapons — although he's quick to point out that he uses the word "hammer" instead of "tomahawk" or "war club" when speaking to children. He recalls stories of charity work he had done for area Indian tribes back in California and he leaves no doubt that he lied, cheated and would steal just about anything that was needed for the people. But every Christmas for 15 years, he played Santa Clause and would bring clothes and toys (often bicycles) to the people of the children of a Navajo Reservation.

"I've also had to tell some white lies to get artifacts for my own collection," Bear admits. "I used to have a couple of rodent catchers but the ones I have now are replicas because the originals rotted away. And I charmed one lady enough to give me a 'fry bread picker-upper' that was used over a large fire. Only the Navajo would think of something as smart as that and I just had to have one for myself."

In his living museum, he gathered the community together to support Indian traditions by leading workshops and singing, dancing and performing in culturally-related activities.

PASSION FOR ENTERTAINMENT

In between showing off his possessions, Bear talks fondly about his career in Hollywood. Pictures not only cover his walls, they lay in stacks on shelves between glass and brown paper. In many of the photos, he is dressed in full Native American dress, complete with moccasins and an ornate feather headdress.

Bear acted in the movie "Another 48 Hours," was a regular extra in Emmy-nominated television series "Guns of Paradise" and has also been seen in the shows "Matlock" and "Twin Peaks" years ago. He has many fond memories

from his time on the sets and, like all his past professions, took great pride in the work he did. Bear even had some jobs working for the studios away from the camera and used his talent to build several set props. Many replicas of those props now reside in his in-progress museum.

The talented performer also met a lot of famous people from both acting and touring the world both as a musician and a member of the Al Malaikai Temple of Shriners. As a testament, Bear proudly shows off pictures of himself with John Wayne, Iron Eyes Cody, Hank Williams Jr., Chill Wills, Will Sampson and more.

"I worked as an extra in western movies for about 10 years and I made a lot of friends," Bear said. "I also traveled around with the Shriners and ... continued on Page 6.

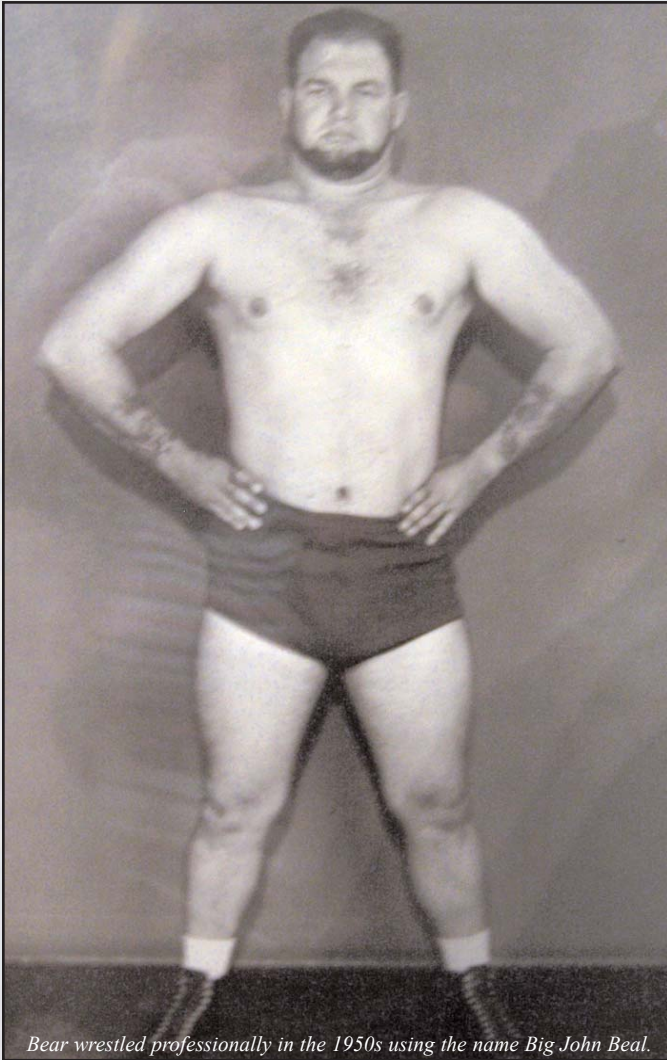


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got to perform all over the world.”

Music is still in his bones. He plays a variety of instruments including the piano, organ, guitar, bass and several Indian-designed instruments. He’s also known for slapping out rhythms and plucking out tunes on a homemade bass hewn from an upside-down washtub and a tall piece of wood.

“I formed a country/western band in 1949 called Big Bear and the Bootleggers and I went solo in the ‘50s and the Shriners sent me all over the world, including Tahiti and Australia,” Bear said. “I even played during the Country Music Awards several years ago because Hank Williams Jr. wanted to play my one-string bass.”



Bear wrestled professionally in the 1950s using the name Big John Bear.

Officer Bear guides children across a busy crosswalk in Torrance, California sometime during his tenure from 1945–1950.



PROFESSIONS OF THE PAST

Alas, it seems as if most of Bear’s stories took place several years ago. He was born near Texarkana, Texas in April 1923 to an American Indian mother and Irish father and was fascinated by his Indian heritage from the start. As a boy, he became skilled at making arrowheads and learned Indian dances and methods for building. He joined the Boy Scouts Texarkana Troop #2 and learned how to make even more things with just his hands.

Bear was a drummer in the junior high school band but he never attended high school. After his honorable discharge from Company A 111th Medical Regiment of the Texas National Guard, he joined the Marines and served with the Navy during World War II. After his tour ended in 1945, he made his home in California.

“I had a driver’s license for the states of Texas, Arkansas and California but I never took a driving test,” Bear said. “When a friend suggested I apply to be on the police force, they just asked to see my Texas license and gave me a California one the same day!”

For five years, he laid down the law as a police officer in the city of Torrance and to this day, he carries his badge in his pocket. Around the same time, using the name Big John Bear, he earned his license to wrestle professional in California in 1950. During these years, he also worked undercover for the FBI and a bodyguard.

Later, he took a job as a locomotive engineer on the Santa Fe Railway running passenger trains from Los Angeles to San Diego and retired from railroad in 1971. It was then that he began his acting career and began organizing his collection. Bear also ran a retail store for some years in downtown Torrance but after a major burglary, he packed everything up and moved it to his village museum.

“I have had a good life,” Bear said, years of smiling carves his wrinkles. “I’ve buried three wives but I had a lot of good life experiences and found true happiness in helping people learn and teaching others what I know.”

Steve McCool Retires from United

United Cooperative Services recently celebrated the career of retired employee Steve McCool. Steve began working at the co-op on Dec. 4, 1972. He was named maintenance foreman in 1979 and worked as a crew chief and lineman in the

1980s. He began working in the Right-of-Way Department in 1988 and retired from United on Feb. 10, 2006 as the right-of-way foreman.

Congratulations to Steve in his retirement after nearly 34 years of service.



Manager's Message

By Ray Beavers, General Manager/CEO

"Straight Talking"

Like many of you, my wife Pat and I have recently been inundated with news reports spotlighting excess earnings by oil companies and ever increasing energy costs. We even saw a story about a local investor-owned utility being hammered for having extraordinarily high rates and record profits.

Pat said this current energy situation isn't right and something should be done to prevent this abuse. In a way, I agreed with her but in truth, I know corporations and investor-owned utilities exist for one self-fulfilling purpose: to create profits for their shareholders. These are worldwide corporations driven not by our perception of energy costs, but by whether they regularly provide dividend returns to investors, raise the value of stock prices and most importantly, whether they feel we will continue to line up and buy more of their corporation's product in the future.

We live in a global free market. Capitalism is now more the "rule" than the "exception." And as a result of an energy market becoming more complex due to global market impact, some market pricing structures have more volatility than ever before. We, as consumers, have to try to understand the dynamics of a very broad energy market and while we can't change the realities of today's energy challenges overnight, we can change how we perceive the so-called energy crisis.

I have no idea what the available oil and gas reserves contain, what has been explored or what we are still waiting to find. But those are not the real issues. Our primary concern should focus on what is presently happening in the market. Because of our oil dependency, America has paid whatever the market charges us for that commodity without curbing our appetite for it.

When the consuming public willingly pays more and, at the same time, consumes more, the free market will answer the call and charge us more. Of course, keep in mind there are many reasons why the world's energy reserves will not keep up with demand, but as long as high profits can be gained without high risk in investments, most corporations should and would call that a

successful business model.

I have written about conservation before but I should tell you up front that I am not one of those conservationists on a mission to change the world (even though those people have more credibility with me today than ever before). I prefer instead to take a pragmatic view that suggests we should all embrace wiser energy choices. I consider conservation a wise investment with a definite return. The great news is we all have places where we can start investing: our homes, vehicles, recreational activities and our travel.

With the hot summer approaching, we could all implement saving solutions like turning up the thermostats, changing air filters in air conditioners and adding some insulation, weather-stripping or caulking around the house to help conserve energy and lower electric bills. Some of you may choose to keep the door shut as much as possible when little ones run around, make sure the pump at the well does not run all the time, change 100-watt light bulbs to something with a lesser wattage or even plant trees and shrubs to shade your west exposures as much as possible. The list goes on and on.

If your home is already energy efficient, then maybe we need to be more conservative about jumping in the car on a moment's notice and making trips to the store only to come home and turn around and go back to the store again later. Carpooling is just one concept people are revisiting.

The problem with consumers like me is that I want to go when I want and as far as I want without inconvenience. If you are like me, then you don't want someone or something dictating when and how you do things. Of course, prices do often dictate our choices. And until you and I are willing to make some wise energy saving choices, we must settle for paying a higher premium for the value we receive.

I recently read an editorial that challenged all Americans to cut our energy consumption by 10 percent, an achievable level that would have a direct impact on the price of gasoline and natural gas. What could happen if



we did meet that challenge? Well, the greatest thing might be that we would prove to ourselves we could do it and before you know it, we might even be able to cut another 10 percent of our energy usage. Then, not only would the supply be more available but the price would also decline — making our future energy picture less bleak.

At United, we do all we can to help you with your electric conservation practices. We offer the Online Energy Calculator and we have trained energy auditors ready to come to your house and give you ideas on how to cut your energy usage.

Why would United want you to use less electricity? Well... "we" are "you" because we are a cooperative. Pat and I are members who pay the same rates you do. The more we can cooperatively save, the less we have to pay for new generating plants or the inefficient use of the high cost plants we now have.

The key to our energy independence is wise use of energy. We will always need electricity, no matter how it is generated, and we will probably always need some form of fossil fuel. We will need energy. But if we learn to use it wisely, then we can expect less volatility and more reliability.

Pat was right when she said something must be done. Time is no longer our ally. We have reached the point where we have to be more serious about our energy decisions. It is time for **straight talking** and workable solutions. Your co-op can help you receive the best value for the best price by discovering ways to conserve electricity. So please go online or give us a call!



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