The Nissan Ariya will arrive in early 2022, starting at about $40,000. The electric SUV, more upscale than its predecessor, the Nissan Leaf, will have a range of 223 to 310 miles. A virtual tour is at nissanusa.com/ariya-virtual-car

CHARGE *of the* EV BRIGADE

A Tesla charges at one of a dozen Tesla Supercharger stations at the San Marcos Premium Outlet mall along Interstate 35. The area also has EVgo and ChargePoint stations, which are both DC fast chargers for other types of electric vehicles. *Laura Skelding photo*

Major manufacturers are ready to roll out the next generation of electric vehicles as the ranks of Central Texas buyers grow

By Alyssa Dussetschleger

IF YOU THINK YOU'RE seeing more electric vehicles on the roads of Central Texas, your eyes aren't lying.

By mid-June this year, more than 52,000 electric vehicles — or EVs — were registered in Texas, and 63% of them are model years 2020 or newer, according to data from the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles.

Of the 14 counties where Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative provides power, 10,329 electric vehicles were registered as of August, according to data from the Texas DMV. That's a fraction of the cars and trucks registered in the area's counties, but the electric vehicle numbers are going to grow.

Teslas are the most popular electric vehicles in counties served by Bluebonnet: 5,179 are registered. Of those, slightly fewer than half are the popular Model 3 sedan, the most affordable Tesla at $39,000. There are another 1,848 Tesla Model Y mid-sized sport utility vehicles, which start at $53,990, on area roads. The least common Tesla (750 are registered) in the region is the high performing S model, a luxury sedan starting at $89,990.

Most popular after the Tesla models is Nissan's Leaf, a compact car that starts at $27,400. There are 574 of them registered in the region. Next are Chevrolet Bolts, which start at $31,000, with 474 registered in our area.

Plenty of drivers nationwide — 71 percent — say they would consider buying an electric vehicle in the future, according to a national survey by Consumer Reports in 2020. Of course, the massive new Tesla manufacturing facility in eastern Travis County should have new vehicles rolling off the factory floor in a few months, which is certain to raise Central Texans' Tesla-buying fever.

Two owners talk Tesla

Jeff Nelson was 55 when he bought his first vehicle, an electric Tesla Model 3, in 2018. He got his driver's license just two years earlier.

The delay was tied to Nelson's lifelong vision impairment, but that changed in 2015 when he got bioptic lenses, specialized vision-enhancing telescopic lenses that attach to eyeglass lenses. The bioptics can magnify what is seen up to six times, according to the private practice Bioptic Driving USA.

Even though he had his license, before 2018, Nelson didn't need a car. He lived near his office in Austin and relied on public transportation or his wife to get around.

But three years ago Nelson and his wife, Taffy, moved into a new 2,500-square-foot home in the Whisper Valley subdivision in the Bluebonnet service area.

The development, on FM 973 just east of the Texas 130 toll road, has more than 200 single-family homes and 40 more are under construction. The houses all come with solar panels and other energy-saving options such as geothermal infrastructure, energy-smart appliances and prewiring for garage-mounted electric vehicle chargers.

Nelson did his homework and decided the Model 3 best fit his lifestyle and driving needs. He bought a Tesla wall connector

Story continued on next page

The Ford F-150 Lightning, left, is scheduled to arrive at Ford dealerships in spring 2022 and will start at $39,974. It's the first all-electric, full-size pickup made by a major American manufacturer. Ford is taking pre-orders online or through dealerships now. The truck will have an estimated 230- to 300-mile range and Ford says it will have a generator that can provide back-up power for the home.

CURIOUS ABOUT ELECTRIC VEHICLES?

- Electric vehicle chargers in the Bluebonnet area, **page 20**
- All about charging, at home or on the road, **page 21**
- Battling 'range anxiety' — one EV driver's story, **page 22**
- Apps, websites to track down public chargers, **page 24**
- How to buy a Tesla in Texas, **page 24**

SEE MORE UPCOMING ELECTRIC VEHICLES, PAGES 22-23

WHERE TO CHARGE? AREA EV STATIONS

Looking for a place to plug in? PlugShare, a website and app that locates charging stations, shows more than 30 electric vehicle charging stations in Bluebonnet's service area. They include:

Bastrop: Bring your own Level 2 charging cord and connector to Basin RV Resort, 98 Texas 71, 2 miles east of intersection with Texas 21; $10 per charging session

Brenham: One Level 2 charging station with two charging cords at City Hall, 200 W. Vulcan St.; Level 2 charging stations at Coach Light Inn, 2242 S. Market St., free and open to public; chargers at Holiday Inn Express, 2685 Schulte Blvd. and at Best Western Inn, 1503 U.S. 290 E. for hotel guests' use

Caldwell: One Level 2 charging station at Bud Cross Ford, 150 Texas 36 at U.S. 21 intersection, free and open to public 8 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday; 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday

Cedar Creek: Four Level 2 chargers for resort guests at Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and Spa, 575 Hyatt Lost Pines Road (off Texas 71 W.); chargers installed through partnership with Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative

Elgin: Two Level 2 chargers at Austin Community College campus, 1501 U.S. 290, 2 miles west of intersection with U.S. 95; $4-$12 per charging session, based on time

Giddings: 8 Tesla Superchargers at CEFCO Travel Center, 3025 W. Austin St. (which is also U.S. 290) 2 miles east of intersection with U.S. 77; payment required based on usage, charging time up to 30 minutes

Manor: Two Level 2 Tesla chargers and 1 standard EV Level 2 charger (J-1772 connection) at Whisper Valley subdivision, 9400 Petrichor Blvd, at the Amenity and Discovery Center, free to the public; one Level 2 charger, free for residents of The Flats at Shadowglen apartment complex, 12500 Shadowglen Trace

New Ulm: Two Level 2 chargers for visitors and the public at The Vine wedding and event venue, 25642 Bernard Road, 8 miles south of Industry

San Marcos: 12 Tesla Superchargers at San Marcos Premium Outlets, 3939 S. I-35, payment required based on usage

Deanna Bodine plugs a charger into the back of her Model 3 Tesla in the garage of her Bastrop home using a 240-volt outlet, the type typically used for clothes dryers. Bodine says charging the car has little noticeable effect on her monthly power bill. *Laura Skelding photo*

Continued from page 19

to charge the car in his garage via a 220-volt plug (a standard household outlet is 120 volts) and a 45-inch tall lithium-ion battery to store electricity generated by his solar panels. The slim, rectangular 251-pound Powerwall, also made by Tesla, stores 13.5 kilowatt hours of power for use after the sun goes down or if backup power is needed. Nelson's wall connector cost $500 and the Powerwall cost $7,500 in 2018.

With his car's range of 300 miles on a full charge, and Nelson working mostly from home, he only charges his car once a week. His electric bill averages about $40 a month, he estimated.

Deanna Bodine is another Bluebonnet member who drives a 2018 Tesla Model 3.

She lives in Bastrop with her husband and five children, and has been a Bastrop County resident and Bluebonnet member since 2001. She teaches music at Emile Elementary School in Bastrop. Before buying the Tesla, she drove a 2011 Kia Sorento. She bought her Model 3 online, she said, and had it delivered to the Tesla service center on Research Boulevard in Austin.

When Bodine moved into her current home in 2019, she equipped her garage with a 240-volt outlet — the type commonly used for electric ovens, dryers or RV plugs — to charge her EV. She usually charges her car at home, daily. Her mobile charger, which came with her car, can charge 21 miles of range in an hour.

Charging her Tesla hasn't made much of a noticeable impact on Bodine's electric bill. "Maybe $20 to $30, but I couldn't tell if it increased due to the heat or charging," she said.

Bodine has been satisfied with her Tesla and would gladly purchase another electric vehicle. She's not sure about the make and model, though. "The biggest factor will be nationwide charging ability," she said.

Get ready for a wave of new electric vehicles

Electric vehicles are rolling past niche status and into the mainstream, and almost every major car manufacturer will offer an electric model in the next few years.

Among those on the list are Toyota, Ford, BMW, Audi, Volkswagen, Hyundai, Honda, Porsche, Kia, Stellantis (which includes Fiat, Chrysler, Jeep and Maserati vehicles), Volvo, Mazda, Mitsubishi, Jaguar, Subaru, Land Rover, Mercedes and General Motors.

As more EVs are made and battery technology gets better, their prices will likely

Continued on page 22

Jeff Nelson uses a smartphone app to engage the automatic driving feature of his 2018 Model 3 Tesla to pull it out of his garage. When he moved into his home in the Whisper Valley subdivision south of Manor, he had solar panels, a Tesla wall charger and a Tesla Powerwall installed. The Powerwall stores excess electricity generated by the solar panels. *Sarah Beal photo*

CHARGING 101: POWERING AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE

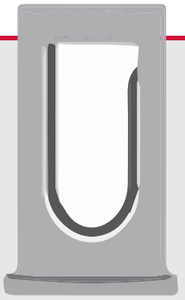
Chargers vary in type, voltage, connector type, speed at which they charge and what vehicles they can charge.

There are three levels of chargers: AC Level 1, AC Level 2 and DC Level 3 fast chargers (or Superchargers for Teslas).

Level 1 is the simplest and slowest. A specialized adapter plugs the car into a standard 120-volt outlet. (Standard household outlets are 120 volts.) That will give the car about 3-5 miles of driving range per hour of charging — very slow.

Most EV owners use Level 2 AC chargers at home or on the road. The Level 2 runs off a 240-volt outlet, the same type used to power most clothes dryers. It can power an electric vehicle three to seven times faster than the Level 1 charger – about 10-30 miles of range every hour. A Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative member would pay $3.44 to give a 2021 Nissan Leaf enough power to drive 149 miles.

A new 240-volt outlet and wall charger should be installed by a certified electrician or installer.



LEVEL 1

- **120-volt regular home wall outlet**
- **40 miles from 8-hour charge**

LEVEL 2

- **240-volt outlet commonly used for electric dryers and stoves**
- **10-30 miles from 1-hour charge**

LEVEL 3

- **Tesla Supercharger or DC fast charger**
- **Tesla = 200 miles in 15 mins. Others = 180-240 miles from 1-hour charge**

If you're looking for more juice, public charging stations are often equipped with powerful Level 3 chargers. A Tesla Supercharger, only for Teslas, can charge a Model 3 with 200 miles of range in 15 minutes. For most other electric vehicles, a Level 3 DC fast charger can provide 180 to 240 miles of range per hour of charging. Not every electric vehicle model can charge at Level 3, so check vehicle specifications.

Unless you drive a Tesla, there are two types of connectors for DC fast chargers, and they are not interchangeable between vehicle models. Make sure you know which type you have or need.

Public charging, especially Level 3, often isn't free. Drivers may pay by the minute or by how much electricity they use. Prices can vary based on electricity cost and charging level.

Sources: epa.gov, energy.gov, Alternative Fuels Data Center (afdc.energy.gov), fueleconomy.gov, consumerreports.org, Kelley Blue Book (kbb.com), tesla.com, myev.com

Continued from page 20

compete with gasoline-fueled vehicles, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

Next year's electric models range from the $29,990 MINI two-door, to the moderately priced $39,990 Kia Niro EV, all the way up to the $150,900 Porsche Taycan Turbo. Volvo has stated that by 2030, it would produce only electric vehicles. General Motors aims to offer 30 different EV models by 2025.

The first full-sized electric pickup from a major manufacturer, the Ford F-150 Lightning, is expected to hit showroom floors in mid-2022. The Lightning, which will start at $39,974 according to Ford's website, looks similar to Ford's other F-150 trucks. There are no Ford Lightnings in area showrooms as of this publication's deadline, but you can reserve one online from your local dealership.

At its Bluebonnet service-area factory, Tesla and its CEO Elon Musk have said the company will make the newest Model 3 sedans, Model Y crossover SUVs and two new vehicles: the futuristic looking Cybertrucks, starting at $39,900, and the big Semi trucks for long-haul commercial drivers, starting at $180,000.

Manufacturers are touting many of the new EVs' increased ranges (the distance an electric vehicle can drive on a single charge) and affordability. Nissan's 2022 Ariya, an electric sport-utility vehicle, will retail for about $40,000, according to an estimate from Consumer Reports. The Ariya will have a range of 300 miles on a single charge if the buyer chooses the "long-range battery" option.

U.S. electric vehicle sales could account for 25% to 30% of the new-car market in 2030, and as much as 50% by 2035, according to projections by IHS Markit,

Continued on page 24

And miles to go before I charge

One electric vehicle driver's cautionary tale about proper planning to avoid 'range anxiety'

By Dana Frank

Dana Frank charges her 2019 Chevy Bolt electric vehicle at a charging station in San Marcos. Now that she can't charge her vehicle at home overnight, she tries to find places where she can go about her daily routine while charging her car. Sometimes that takes planning. *Laura Skelding photo*

NOT SO LONG AGO, I drove regular gasoline- or diesel-powered vehicles. When I needed to fuel up, I could feel it in my bones and, of course, see it on the fuel gauge. I filled the tank when, and not before, the gauge neared E.

Half my life, I've lived 30 miles from a metro area, and the ability to drive wherever, whenever, has always been essential. I'm not alone in my drive for independence. The automobile is celebrated in America, which has nearly 50 million more cars than licensed drivers, according to the federal government. I'm in Texas, after all, where driving near and far most every day represents my autonomy and freedom.

But I've paid the price for that independence. On my round trips to town every day I cruised into gas stations, and I bought a lot of fuel. I had a 1998 VW diesel Bug that cost $11 to fill and pounded out nearly 50 miles to the gallon. But I also drove several thirsty pickups and one muscle car (don't ask) over the years and came to resent the pricey twice-weekly gas station stops.

A few years ago, though, aside from annoyance at paying upward of $300 a month for gas, I had begun to feel guilty about the carbon footprint of my long-distance commute. The quiet electric vehicle beckoned from the shadows of my awareness, and I bought one.

Now the energy source I need in order to travel from here to there doesn't flow freely from easy-to-reach pumps dotting Texas roadways. Some EV owners, including me, have to hunt for vehicle juice, at least for now. I'm a believer that someday the electric vehicle-charging infrastructure will ramp up to meet demand.

Until that time, if you see me or other EV drivers rolling along, nervously alert for our elusive quarry – a charging station – understand that our condition has a name: range anxiety.

At first, my transition to the world of EVs was easy. I "researched" them on the coattails of someone else, then traded my gas-fueled car for a brand-new zippy, compact four-door 2019 Chevy Bolt. I could plug my car's charge adapter into the 120-volt outlet in my garage and get an overnight charge. I gleefully drove past gas stations and gradually got used to my car's power needs. I was coming and going just like my petroleum-powered days, traveling at least 60 miles a day.

The bright dashboard display showed me precisely what time my electric charge would be complete. If I plugged in at home at 6 p.m., say, I'd have a full charge by the wee hours of the next morning. I wasn't worried. A full charge on my Bolt could carry me 250 miles, give or take. That was plenty.

But a year and a half later I moved. At my new dwelling, I no longer have a place to plug in at night. There's no retail charging station nearby, either. I don't always start the day with confidence and a feeling of freedom. My mornings often begin with a question: Can I get where I need to go? Can I make it to Independence in Washington County to meander among the blossoms at the Antique Rose Emporium? This is when my range anxiety kicks in.

So I map my meanderings in relation to retail charging stations, like the one at the city park where I swim, and the one near the coffee shop where I write. If all goes to plan, I easily get my charge, take a deep breath and sometimes even feel a bit prideful.

Sometimes, however, things don't go according to plan. I approach a parking spot that has a charger, and it's occupied and in use. My heart sinks and tightens in my chest. Don't even get me started about charging spaces that are occupied by a vehicle that's not electric. I may have only 57 miles of range on my gauge and miles to go before I sleep. I must conserve enough range to reach a charging station in the morning. One day I was down to my last 5 miles before I found a place to charge. My anxiety rises in inverse proportion to my range gauge, and I'm no longer smug.

The happy news is that range anxiety is a treatable ailment. Planning ahead and using common sense are the easiest cures. But for those considering an electric vehicle, I have some advice.

- Charge your EV at home. Whether you plug your vehicle's adapter into a 120-volt outlet or use a dedicated wall-mounted charger, the ability to consistently and easily charge up while you sleep is the number one cure for range anxiety. When I move again, that will be a priority.
- Get hip to the apps that display EV charging stations' locations and their availability, so you have good back-up options. I'm behind the curve on that, I admit. You can get there with ChargePoint, PlugShare, ChargeHub EV Map or Chargemap. Even Google Maps shows the location of EV charging stations now.
- If you're getting worried about making your destination, ease up on the go pedal and, if you can, turn off amenities such as the AC and radio. Their use drains your range. For example, when I turn off my AC, I watch the range level rise in real time by about 25 percent. Yes, turning off the AC is a lot to ask in sweaty Central Texas, but that range-expanding peace of mind may be worth it.
- If you drive a lot, and can do it, go ahead and splurge for one of the newest electric vehicles. Many 2022 EV models tout ranges of up to 300 miles per charge. The newest technology may be the best way to battle range anxiety.

My particular case of range anxiety probably falls under the category of "user error." Don't let my story of hitting the occasional speed bump deter you from charging into the electric vehicle revolution.

NEW MAKES, MODELS OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES IN 2022 AND BEYOND

Automotive News, a weekly newspaper for the automotive industry, estimates that there will be nearly 100 models of electric vehicles available nationwide by the end of 2022. Buyers will see more crossover sport utility vehicles and pickups, from full to mid-size. Many new models will arrive in 2022, with preorders available now. Several automakers have also released plans for vehicles through 2024.

Chevrolet Bolt EUV

Starts at $33,000; Electric SUV, 2022 models in transit to dealers, available for purchase now; 247-mile estimated range; dual-level charge cord with attachment plugs for 120- or 240-volt outlets; hands-free and semi-autonomous driving assistance features; Level 2 charging outlet installed by Chevrolet at home of eligible buyers

Kia EV6

Starts at $58,500; First edition of new Kia line of crossover EVs, limited number (1,500) being produced, coming January 2022; seats 5, futuristic design with dual curved screens and display, estimated 300-mile range; wait list available

Hyundai IONIQ 5

No pricing available; crossover, coming in 2022; estimated 300-mile range (168 kilowatt motor); equipped for "ultra-fast charging" of 60 miles range in 5 minutes; two years unlimited 30-minute free charging on some DC fast chargers in partnership with Electrify America

Also coming

- 2022 Tesla Cybertruck (manufactured in Travis County)
- 2022 Toyota bZ4X, Toyota's first electric crossover SUV
- 2023 Subaru Solterra, Subaru's first electric SUV
- 2023 Jeep Wrangler Magneto (above)

- 2024 Ram 1500 EV, a full-size pickup
- 2024 GMC Hummer (above)
- 2024 Honda Prologue SUV
- 2022 BMW and Mercedes Benz, releasing multiple EVs including small cars such as EQS from Mercedes Benz and SUVs such as the 2022 iX from BMW

Continued from page 22

a leading global data provider for major industries and markets.

However, EVs' cost, range and battery longevity (which is typically 100,000 miles in standard electric vehicles today, according to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory) still make plenty of Central Texas drivers pause at the idea of going electric — especially those in rural areas who regularly travel long distances.

It will probably cost less to power an electric vehicle than a gasoline-powered car or truck. The U.S. Department of Energy says that fueling your car with gasoline costs nearly three times as much as fueling a vehicle with electricity. Additionally, the Alternative Fuels Data Center reports electric vehicles have fewer parts and usually do not need as much maintenance as gasoline-powered vehicles. The only maintenance required on Bodine's Tesla has been "replacing the tires every three years or 40,000 miles, and windshield washer fluid as needed."

A Chevrolet Bolt's maintenance schedule includes tire rotation, air filter replacement and draining vehicle coolant circuits at 150,000 miles. Additional maintenance and care may include brakes, heat and radiator hose inspection, lights, windshields and wiper blades.

The most costly repair usually associated with owning an EV is the battery, according to Consumer Reports. The lifespan of an EV battery depends on the model. Chevrolet, for example, provides an eight-year or 100,000-mile battery warranty. Tesla high-voltage batteries are under warranty for four years or 50,000 miles. Manufacturers typically do not publish pricing for replacement batteries, but if the battery does need to be replaced outside the warranty, it is expected to be a significant expense according to the Alternative Fuels Data Center.

A major factor in the rush to make electric vehicles in the U.S. is due, in part, to pressure and regulations from the federal and some state governments, according to Daniel Yergin, vice chairman of IHS Markit.

The drive for more electric vehicles faces significant challenges: Electric vehicle manufacturers will have to create entire new supply chains and the vehicles will require new charging infrastructure on a massive scale, he wrote recently.

The biggest challenge, however, will be changing car buyers' habits: Moving from the familiar to the unknown on such a major investment won't be easy. But as Texans see more EVs on the road and in the neighbor's driveway, minds may change. Electric vehicles won't rule the roads of Central Texas any time soon, but be prepared to make room. ■

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT (FINDING A CHARGING STATION, THAT IS)

Most new electric vehicle models, including the Ford F-150 Lightning, Chevrolet Bolt EUV and Hyundai Kona, will have charging maps built into their navigation systems. But many electric vehicle owners opt for smartphone apps to help plan their routes, especially for longer trips.

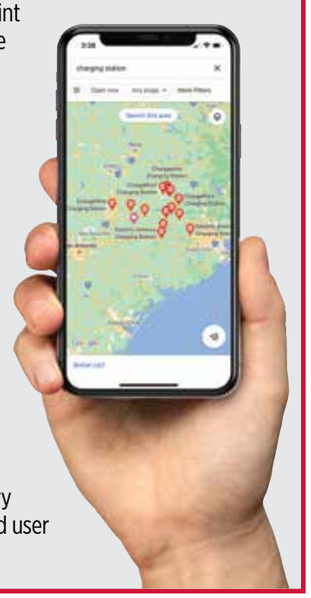
PlugShare — Filter for your plug and charging level type, and exclude chargers currently in use; on its website, find amenities at charging stations such as restrooms

ChargePoint — Find stations, check charger availability, get updates about your vehicle's charge status and range; at ChargePoint charging stations, app unlocks chargers for real-time charging updates; app also synchs with Apple and Google maps to find nearest available charger

ChargeHub EV Map — Trip planner will find charging locations on your route; create a user profile, check in to a station, leave comments and pictures to help other users select a station

Google Maps — (Pictured, right) Added EV charging stations to map features in 2011; search "charging stations" to find one nearby; see how many chargers are available, their type and power capabilities

Chargemap — Search a city or ZIP code using app or website to get charging station details, addresses and hours, amenities, charger types; apply filters to find correct power level and necessary connector; app also includes route-planning tool and user reviews of charging stations.



How do you buy a Tesla in Texas?

You cannot go to a dealer in Texas to buy a Tesla because Tesla doesn't have dealerships in Texas — or anywhere else.

Texas law requires automotive manufacturers to sell their vehicles to independently owned third-party businesses such as dealerships, which then sell to individuals. One exception: used Teslas obtained through trade-ins can be sold by dealers.

Texans who want to buy a Tesla must either buy it online from tesla.com or in another state; then it must be delivered by Tesla to a regional Tesla service center for pick up. The vehicle will have out-of-state registration, and new owners have 30 days to register their Tesla in Texas, according to the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles.

Texas has 12 Tesla service centers. Those nearest the Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative region are in Austin (12845 Research Blvd. in North Austin), two in Houston (9633 Westheimer Road and 14820 North Freeway in North Houston) and in San Antonio (23011 I-10 W).

At tesla.com, you can buy new or used vehicles for an order fee ranging from $100 to $500. Buyers create a Tesla account and go through a step-by-step process of "delivery tasks," which include submitting the final payment, financing and/or trade-in documentation. You'll also receive the vehicle's VIN and schedule delivery to a Tesla service center.

The waiting time for your Tesla varies with financing and model availability. The estimated delivery of new cars, at our time of publication, is January 2022 for a Model Y or Model 3, February 2022 for a Model S and April 2022 for a Model X. In early September 2021, there were many used car options on Tesla's website.

Once your Tesla arrives at the service center, a technician will show you how to operate and navigate it. More information is at tesla.com/support/ordering.

Sources: statesman.com, capitol.texas.gov, businessinsider.com, tesla.com/support/ordering

In support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, linemen like Troy Moore are wearing pink hard hats in the field. *Sarah Beal photo*

We're turning pink in support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month

BLUEBONNET IS passionate about community and supports worthy causes, such as Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Since 2012, during October, our member service centers glow with pink light at night, field crews wear pink hard hats and service trucks display pink ribbon decals.

Members can use a member service center drive-through lane — in Bastrop, Brenham, Giddings, Lockhart or Manor — this month to pick up a pink ribbon pin and support the cause. Business hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Bluebonnet members beware

Phone-payment scam calls on the rise

BLUEBONNET ELECTRIC Cooperative members have reported a recent increase in attempted phone scams by people claiming to represent Bluebonnet. The fraudulent callers appear to be primarily targeting Spanish-speaking members, threatening to disconnect their power unless they make a payment using retail store gift cards.

Bluebonnet members who receive a fraudulent call demanding immediate payment should not pay. Bluebonnet recommends members get as much information as possible about the caller and report it by contacting the co-op's member service representatives at 800-842-7708, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, and local law enforcement.

Bluebonnet members can check their account status 24 hours a day, every day, from a computer, smartphone or tablet through the co-op's website, bluebonnet.coop, via the cooperative's mobile app or by calling 800-842-7708.

Join us online for a live webinar about solar, storage and electric vehicles

10-10:20 a.m. — Welcome and Solar 101 — Learn how solar energy works

10:20-10:30 a.m. — How to connect to Bluebonnet's grid

10:30-10:50 a.m. — Meet three Bluebonnet members and hear from them about solar arrays, battery storage and information about electric vehicles

10:50-11:30 a.m. — Moderated Q&A

The event will take place through a live online format.

Bluebonnet members can pre-register and submit questions in advance. Learn more on Facebook at **bit.ly/3DH9mZM**. We will answer as many questions as possible during the webinar. The presentation and Q&A will be recorded and posted to **bluebonnet.coop** after the event.

NATIONAL COOPERATIVE MONTH

Membership in a co-op offers benefits

DO YOU KNOW how being a member of an electric cooperative is different from being a customer of a utility company? We'll share more cooperative stories on our Facebook and Twitter pages this month and you can read more about the cooperative difference on our website at bluebonnet.coop/About/Co-op-Benefits.

Among the advantages to being a Bluebonnet member are:

- You are a member, which makes you a partial owner of the cooperative.
- You elect the men and women who lead the cooperative — the board of directors — at Bluebonnet's Annual Meeting on the second Tuesday of every May.
- Most Bluebonnet members get capital credits every year, which are much like a return on dividends.
- We support the communities we serve, because we live here, too.
- Every year we provide scholarships to students in Bluebonnet's service area and sponsor numerous nonprofit groups and events.