



JULY/AUGUST 2024

CONNECTION

Rustic influence

Museum dedicated to
Western culture

HCTC GIVES BACK

TRAVEL WITH PETS



Enjoying our summer traditions

A time we celebrate together

We're in the dog days of summer. Did you know that phrase dates back to the Romans? When I hear it, I always think about long, hot days perfect for a dip in a creek or pool, or a family gathering beneath a shade tree. It's a time of year bookended by two of my favorite holidays — the Fourth of July and Labor Day.



CRAIG COOK
Chief Executive Officer

One of the many things I enjoy about my role with HCTC is seeing all the ways our community comes together. We're more than a communications company. Not only do we want to offer you services that top the market, such as internet that is as quick as the summer heat is hot, but we also have a deep, lasting commitment to helping this place we call home thrive.

There's no better time than summer to experience the energy, bustle and cherished traditions that make being outdoors so enjoyable. From the Fourth of July with fireworks that light up the night sky to Labor Day and its laid-back barbecues, these holidays are benchmarks in the rhythm of the year. But they go beyond the festivities and events. They carry a deeper significance, a reminder of the values we hold dear and the ties that unite us.

For us, the Fourth of July isn't just about celebrating independence. It's about coming together as a community to honor our shared heritage and celebrate our freedoms. Whether it's an annual parade or a neighborhood party or church potluck, these traditions are uniquely our own. We see family and friends often enjoying the same events and places as our parents, grandparents and even older generations. Throughout it all, we also remember those men and women who served our nation, because we would not be where we are as a community or nation without their service and sacrifice.

And then there's Labor Day, a time to pause and reflect on the hard work and dedication that built our community and the nation's economy. Workers play vital roles in our past, present and future, and we're proud our services make much of this work possible. Often the economies of rural places like ours are dismissed, but we see the work and commitment that make the businesses in our region possible. These efforts are worth celebrating every day.

But perhaps what's most remarkable about these holidays — really this entire summer season — are the connections we make along the way. In a world that often feels increasingly disconnected, the traditions tie us not only to this place but also to each other, and we're all the better for it.

At HCTC, we're acutely aware of the role we play in fostering this sense of community. It's a responsibility we welcome, whether that means providing access to high-speed internet, supporting our schools, sponsoring a game or any other service we can provide. Together, we make this place all that it is, and I look forward to seeing you out and about during the dog days. 🐕

HCTC CONNECTION

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VOL. 8, NO. 4

The HCTC Connection is a bimonthly magazine published by Hill Country Telephone Cooperative © 2024. It is distributed without charge to all member/owners of the cooperative.



HCTC is more than a provider of state-of-the-art telecommunications products and services. We are a member-owned cooperative with an elected board of directors who govern our organization using our bylaws, member input and business and industry conditions to guide their decisions. We are proud residents of the communities we serve, and we're dedicated to not only providing the best services possible, but doing so in a way that is ethical, safe and productive for our friends and neighbors. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Mission Statement: To be the premier provider of modern telecommunications and broadband services throughout our region.

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On the Cover:



Jason Scull is the artist in residence at The Museum of Western Art, which is home to hundreds of creations depicting the rural landscape and people of Texas.

See story Page 12.

Photo by Gabe Rene

Congrats!

HCTC's 2024 scholarship winners

HCTC awarded \$1,500 scholarships to the following students from communities within our service area:

Laney Lastly
Jude Austin Hueber
Kamryn Loeffler

Clara Sumner
Leslie Robledo
Abigail Dennis
Meredith Stuart

Riley Titsworth
Hailee Gooden
Layla Castro
Rebecca Mieske

Maria Belen Pinto Diaz
Branson Wickham
Aubrey Finke



Put 811 at the top of your summer to-do list

Always call 811 before digging to stay safe



Happy 4TH OF July

HCTC's offices will be closed on **THURSDAY, JULY 4**, in observance of **INDEPENDENCE DAY**. We wish everyone a fun and safe holiday.

The following incumbents will be running for board of director positions:

- Kari Short – District 1B, Ingram
- Randy Bass – District 2, Hunt
- Steve Stengel – District 4, Doss
- Tracy Castillo – District 8, Medina and Tarpley



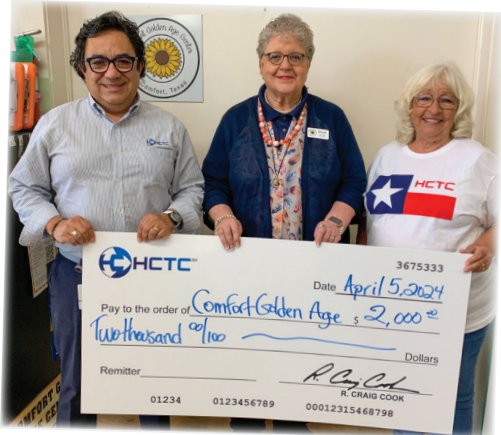
The Center Point Volunteer Fire Department is one of two dozen local fire departments HCTC is proud to support.

DEVOTION TO OUR COMMUNITY

HCTC gives back

As your hometown communications provider, HCTC is proud to support local school programs and area nonprofit organizations. A commitment to uplift our community is one of the lasting principles guiding our mission.

HCTC also supports senior activity centers, including the Comfort Golden Age Center's annual fundraiser.



Photos courtesy of HCTC



HCTC loves to assist the local youth sports programs, including sponsoring the Junction Youth Baseball Association's teams for their 2024 season.



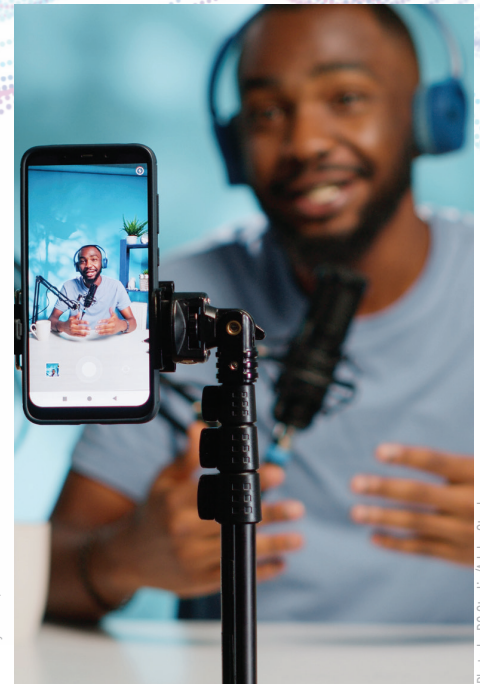
HCTC has a long history of supporting volunteer fire departments throughout its service area.



Members of volunteer fire departments bravely put their lives on the line to serve our communities. HCTC is honored to donate to 24 different departments across our service area.

SMOOTH STREAMING

TIPS FOR SEAMLESS ENTERTAINMENT



Whether it's music, movies, gaming or more, streaming and interactive online content is a part of daily life for many of us. With a little care and planning, you can have the smoothest experience possible. Also, keep in mind the professionals at HCTC are always ready to support you, answering your questions and offering the advice you need to make the right choices for you.

Here are a few items to consider:

1 ANTICIPATE HOW YOU WILL USE YOUR STREAMING SERVICES: When assessing your internet needs for streaming, consider the number of people in your household and their activities. Will there be remote work, gaming or multiple streaming services involved? Once you understand your usage patterns, you can make sure your internet plan matches your needs.

2 DEVICE COUNT: Don't overlook the number of devices connected to your Wi-Fi network. It's common for households to have various smartphones, tablets and smart appliances online all at the same time. Remember, each connected device consumes bandwidth, which can affect the performance of all your devices.

3 WI-FI COVERAGE: Slow streaming can sometimes be attributed to Wi-Fi issues rather than insufficient bandwidth. Evaluate the placement of your router, and consider investing in a mesh Wi-Fi system to ensure comprehensive coverage throughout your home. This can significantly improve streaming performance, especially in larger homes or areas with signal dead zones.

4 UNDERSTANDING STREAMING: Streaming involves the continuous transmission of media

content from an online server to a digital device. It can include a wide range of content, from livestreams to recorded movies and TV shows. At times, it can seem like an endless stream of content possibilities. However, there are potential bottlenecks, so consider cataloging all the streaming services you use — including online gaming — to make sure you have the internet connection and Wi-Fi setup that's right for you.

5 TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION: Streaming technology has rapidly evolved, revolutionizing how we consume media. Stay informed about advancements in streaming services and internet technology to make informed decisions about your streaming setup. For example, image resolution for some movies is now much higher than just a few years ago. And you need a faster connection to enjoy this rich content. 🗨️

RANGE OF BEAUTY

Vivid vistas and sculptures await at The Museum of Western Art

Story by THERESA A. STERLING

After 37 years, sculptor Jason Scull has come full circle. Jason is in his eighth year as the artist-in-residence at The Museum of Western Art in Kerrville. It's where he took his first sculpting workshop in 1987. Art classes at Southwest Texas State University hooked him, but it was at the sculpting class at the museum that he found his home, literally.

After taking more classes, studying in California and across the Southwest and working in studios and en plein air with the master sculptors of Western ranch life — namely Mehl Lawson, Cynthia Rigden and Jack Swanson — Jason looked to his past to establish his future.

The Kerrville museum, known as MoWA, did not have an artist-in-residence program when he approached

officials in 2016 about using an empty building on the grounds. Similar programs usually have finite tenures, but Jason's permanent residency at the museum is unique.

"I told them they may as well let me work in there, and they agreed," he says. "I teach workshops in the museum, in the open pavilion and at the Western Art Academy at Schreiner University, but I work on-site in the studio where people can drop in, see works in progress and learn about the sculpting process."

Jason currently has about 20 pieces in various stages of completion. Horns, hooves, chaps and weathered faces of all sizes sit atop every horizontal space and jut out from the walls. Lassos soar and horse tails fly in an imagined wind, the sculptor steering visitors to exhibits

celebrating the West, its animals and its unique ranch culture and history.

RURAL RESOURCE

MoWA offers an extensive education and outreach program for all ages, including workshops for adults, organized tours, school field trips and summer camps. The Journey West Children's Gallery offers interactive experiences that engage children while giving parents freedom to tour the exhibits. Complimentary admission is available for active and reserve military and veterans, and the last Saturday of every month is Family Free Day.

The museum space itself is an architectural beauty. Designed by renowned Texas architect O'Neil Ford, the structure enchants with thick timber and limestone anchored by polished mesquite and



Displays at The Museum of Western Art depict various eras of frontier life.



The main gallery has handcrafted boveda ceilings and hand-cut mesquite flooring.

Photo by Gabe Rene

Photo courtesy of the Museum of Western Art



Saltillo tiles. The museum houses bronze sculptures, works of various media and artifacts showcasing the landscape, livestock, people and cultures of the American West.

It includes the Griff Carnes Research Center's 6,000 volumes of art and history resources and staff and guest experts on Western history and culture. The museum attracts visitors and accomplished artists from all over the globe, folding them into its mission to connect the past to the present and "to represent authentically the life of the West, in both its historic and contemporary context."

CRAFTING HIS LEGACY

Herman Walker has shown his work at MoWA for decades and won the coveted Patrons Choice Award at this year's 41st Annual Roundup Exhibition and Sale for his oil painting "Ahead of the Storm." He grew up outside of San Angelo and fully intended to follow his grandfather's and father's footsteps into ranching. However, in his senior year studying animal science at Texas Tech University, he took an elective art class that changed his life.

"When I told my dad I was going to be an artist, he said 'Son, I told you ranching is the hardest way to make a living, but lo and behold, you have found one



Photo by Marc Bennett, White Oak Studio



Photo by Gabie Rene

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Herman Walker's oil painting "Ahead of the Storm" won the coveted Patrons Choice Award at this year's Annual Roundup Exhibition and Sale.

Jason Scull's two-piece bronze statue is titled "Wild Cows and Wilder Men."

Jason uses a loop tool to sculpt his latest work.

that's even harder," Herman says with a chuckle. "But once you experience ranch life you're never the same, and there's nothing you'd rather be doing. I want to tell the story of ranch life, to portray that life in my paintings, to see God's creation every day and paint it."

Museum Director Darrell Beauchamp sees an exciting future for the museum and all it has to offer. "We view the future based on the past," he says. "Our visitors tell us how much they have learned from the museum. Our overseas visitors especially love the true taste of Americana as they view our art and extensive

collections of Western artifacts including weaponry, saddles and wagons.

"It has taken us many years — 41 in fact — to get to where we are today," Darrell adds. "We're honored to have been chosen one of the top Western art museums in the country by True West Magazine for the last three years, and we're attracting the most talented artists in the Western art genre who recognize the importance of being part of preserving our rich Western heritage through art. So, our vision is to 'keep on keeping on,' as they say here, and to continue to seek ways to get our message out." 



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