

# MEET THE CANDIDATES: DISTRICTS 2, 5, AND 8

## DISTRICT 2



**PATRICK KUBALA**  
INCUMBENT

“For the past six years, it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as your District 2 representative. We, the membership, the management, and all the employees, have one common goal—

when we plug an appliance in, turn on a tool, or flip a switch, we want the power to flow. You can rest assured that the board and all of the WCEC employees strive to obtain that goal day in and day out.

I have to say something about the staff at WCEC—they are a well-oiled machine, working together to solve the problems they encounter and deliver reliable, economical service. I congratulate them on a job well done.

Thank you for allowing me to serve on your behalf, and I would appreciate your vote for another three-year term.”

Kubala has lived in the WCEC service territory for 41 years. He has two grown children with his late wife, Becky. He is a graduate of El Campo High School and Texas A&M University.

He is a member of the Knights of Columbus 4th Degree, and a deacon at St. John’s Catholic Church in New Taiton.

His most important function is being a grandfather to his two grandchildren, Jett and Kate.

Kubala has served on the WCEC Board for six years. He is a Credentialed Co-op Director and is the current Assistant Secretary/Treasurer.



**AUDRA ROD SMITH**

“Rural electrification allows people to live and operate in rural areas, rather than moving to urban areas. It keeps resources available to all types of persons and businesses.”

Smith has been a WCEC member for 10 years. She and her husband, Kyle, have one son. She graduated from Texas A&M University and South Texas College of Law. Smith is an attorney with her own practice in El Campo.

Smith spends significant time speaking to and educating the public and other professionals on legal issues and topics in agricultural law, primarily real estate. She is also the current chairman of El Campo Cub Scouts Pack 196, a director of several small non-profit organizations, and an advisor to several other non-profit organizations in the agricultural sector.

## DISTRICT 5



**SAMUEL CRAIG HARDIN**  
INCUMBENT

“It has been an absolute honor and privilege to serve, for these last six years, as your District 5 representative. This time serving as a board member has been an amazing learning experi-

ence for me. The many facets of how electrical power is provided to us are quite interesting, and the more I learn about the process, the more impressed I am by how efficiently and effectively our WCEC cooperative system makes it happen. Having completed my credential education courses, I have also had the opportunity to learn more about the business aspects of the production and sale of electrical power.

I grew up in rural Ganado and graduated from Ganado High School. I attended the Wharton County Jr. College, transferred to Sam Houston State University where I graduated. I taught Agricultural Science in Kingwood for three years and moved back home and taught Agricultural Science and Metal Fabrication at the El Campo High School for thirty-four years. I am retired and am currently self-employed. My wife and I have lived in district five for forty-five years and we have two grown sons that both attended and graduated from the El Campo High School, Wharton County Jr. College, and Texas State University.

The challenges and opportunities that face our cooperative concerning standard production sources, as well as alternative sources such as wind and solar, changes in regulations, and the availability of natural gas and coal are important topics for discussion to ensure the reliability of the energy we have all come to rely on. As a board member, I look forward to being part of providing proactive solutions to ensure reliable, affordable electrical service for WCEC members.

It has been my good fortune to be part of this exceptional group of people who make up WCEC. Providing reliable, safe, and affordable electrical service is always priority one. I am proud to be a part of WCEC as a board member and would be honored to continue serving you in that capacity, and would really appreciate your vote.”

Hardin has served on the WCEC Board for six years. He is a Credentialed Co-op Director.



**JON “CHIP” SHAW**

“I am excited to learn about the process of rural electrification.”

Shaw has been a WCEC member for 10 years. He and his wife, Christine, live in El Campo.

He is a journeyman electrician and owner of All Phase Electric & Construction.

Shaw is a U. S. Army veteran and volunteer firefighter. He is also an electrical coordinator for British Petroleum and has designed, coordinated, and led projects in five different countries.

**ONE MEMBER, ONE VOTE:** WCEC Members are allowed one vote per membership. Even if you have multiple accounts, they may be listed under a single membership. In this case, you will only receive one ballot. If you have questions about your accounts, please call our office at (979) 543-6271 before the Annual Meeting. All WCEC members vote for the full slate of Board candidates regardless of which district they reside in.

## DISTRICT 8 -----



**JIM W. HARTON**  
**INCUMBENT**

"It has truly been an honor and a privilege to serve as your District 8 representative for the past nine years.

During this time, I have earned my Credentialed Co-op Director certification through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

We have encountered some very challenging events over the past few years, including Hurricane Harvey, Winter Storm Uri, COVID-19, Hurricane Beryl, and others. Through these events, the co-op board, staff, and employees continue to work diligently to provide you, the members, with reliable and affordable electric power. Electric cooperatives must keep up with new technologies, federal government and regulatory constraints, and resiliency and reliability that continually challenge the energy industry.

It would be my honor to serve another term and continue working on your behalf through the challenges that lie ahead for us all.

I was raised on a farm in Danevang and experienced firsthand the importance and impact of rural electrification on our lives. My wife, Jennifer, and I continue to live in Danevang on the farm where I grew up. I am retired from Fort Bend ISD and Rope Works, Inc. I graduated from ECISD and Sam Houston State University, majoring in Agriculture and minoring in Physical Education. I am presently a director of South Texas Elec-

tric Cooperative, a member of St. Andrew's Catholic Church, a member of Knights of Columbus Council #9394, and a director of the Danish Heritage and Preservation Society.

Once again, thank you for allowing me to serve on your behalf, and I would appreciate your support and vote to serve another term."

Harton has served on the WCEC Board for nine years and is currently the Vice President. He is a Credentialed Co-op Director and sits on the Board of Directors for South Texas Electric Cooperative.



**OSCAR HURTADO**

"Rural electrification improves quality of life, supports agriculture and small business, and expands access to education, healthcare, and reliable, safe energy."

Hurtado has been a WCEC member for 7 years. He graduated from Coastline Community College and the University of Houston, earning a mechanical engineering technology degree. He is an OPS Supervisor at OxyChem.

Hurtado is a U.S. Navy veteran and now continues to support his fellow veterans through the V.F.W. He has previously served as Vice President of an HOA in San Antonio. He is currently the President of the Markham Industrial Group, where he leads initiatives, supports community development, and fosters strong teamwork.