

The Direct Connection



A newsletter dedicated to Cross Connection Control and Backflow Prevention www.abpa-sa.org

June Vol. 51 Issue 6

“Cross Connection Control – Lessons Hard Learned”

Through the years there have been many cross-connection related contamination incidents that have costs millions of dollars to correct and have affected public trust in their water purveyor and plumbing inspection departments. Some of these events resulted in illnesses and death.

Lack of Enforcement of cross connection control measures, in the majority of events, was the root cause of these contamination events. Many times, the backflow prevention program was placed on the “back burner” by management. However, when an event occurs, cross connection control then “Becomes a Priority”. As we have heard for many years, this is like vaccinating for the disease after you get the disease! Understandably, production and distribution are primary considerations, however so should be protecting the distribution system from actual or potential cross connections.

Support of the cross-connection control program and establishing viable, enforceable procedures are a necessity. Generally, water purveyors are the enforcement agencies charged with continuous monitoring of backflow prevention assemblies, including testing and maintenance. The Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) has established regulations mandating continuous monitoring/annual testing of backflow protection on high hazard cross connections. TCEQ oversees and inspects water purveyors through annual surveys. A portion of that review is a water purveyor’s Cross Connection Control Program and enforcement measures. Recent Texas events have highlighted necessity of ensuring cross connection control programs meet established standards.

TCEQ inspection processes also include educating the local water purveyor’s management of the importance and the costly effects of contamination events involving unprotected cross connections. Through the years we have seen many events occur, due to management not totally supporting the cross-connection control program with funding and personnel. Some of these events have been career ending for management.

There are a few water purveyors and plumbing inspection departments that think if they simply turn the “backflow testing” program over to a software company, they are in compliance with state regulations and nothing more needs to be done. They do not realize that backflow preventer testing requirements are just “one fifth” of a backflow prevention program. Without adequate field personnel and boots on the ground – the local enforcement agency actually does not have a viable cross connection control program, resulting in Contamination events! Education of water purveyor’s and plumbing inspection department’s management should be established as a priority, along with production and distribution.

Blind Note: Reviewing water related journals and various magazines, very seldom do we see cross connection control related articles, with the exception of the American Backflow Prevention Association (ABPA), PHCC, ASSE and some plumbing publications. This is a topic that periodically should be included in all water related publications, after all, backflow protection and cross connection control impacts all water related fields.

Fred Baird – BacFlo® Unlimited, Inc. - f.baird@att.net

June Meeting Details

Meetings of the San Antonio Chapter of ABPA are held the second Thursday of every month except December. Dinner and refreshments are served beginning at 5:30 with the meeting starting at 6:00pm.

Date: Thursday June 11, 2026

Time: 6:00 PM (pre-registration required to receive a meal)

Place: SAWS Bldg. 2 Conference Room
2800 US Hwy 281 North

Meeting Training: Katherine McGlaughlin with the TCEQ

Meal Sponsor: BAVCO

No Alcoholic Beverages Allowed

Next meeting date: July 9th, 2026

**Thank You to our
May meeting sponsor:
'BSI Online'.**



June Agenda

- 5:00 pm General discussion / quorum confirmation - Call Meeting to Order
- 5:02 pm Secretary's Report. Read and approve the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 5:05 pm Treasurer's Report. Discussion and approval of the treasurer's report.
- 5:10 pm Vice President's, Directors', and any other reports for the good of the chapter. Comments, new business, any discussion.
- 5:15 pm Training Report. Training & Meal Sponsors
- 5:20 pm Webmaster Report
- 5:25 pm President's Report. New & old business
- 5:30 pm Meal served.
- 6:00 pm General Membership Meeting & Training
 - 1. Report from the Directors Meeting, President.
 - 2. City, Regional, and National Reports. Reports from any City personnel present.
 - 3. Training program for the evening.
 - 4. Raffle prize drawing.

Nightmare of Year Award:

Members: submit your own (true) 2026 backflow testing nightmare story to: info@speackbackflow.com.

The entry judged the best will be awarded a \$200 cash prize at this year's November meeting!

"Direct Talk" by the President

The July meeting will be held in the SAWS conference room, Tower II building at 2800 U.S. Hwy 281. The Director's meeting will start at approximately 5:00 PM with the meal served at 5:30 and meeting at 6:00 PM.

Jeff Stricker

**Check your license status and/or update your license contact information here:
https://www2.tceq.texas.gov/lic_dpa/index.cfm?fuseaction=licall.searchindiv

MINUTES

ABPA - SAN ANTONIO CHAPTER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING Thursday, May 14, 2026

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS – PRESENT	EXECUTIVE OFFICERS CONT. – ABSENT
Jeff Stricker - President	Greg Shean - Secretary
Timothy Sales - Vice President	Trinidad Chairez – Past President/Program Director
OFFICERS SPECIAL TO THE CHAPTER – PRESENT	OFFICERS SPECIAL TO THE CHAPTER - ABSENT
Webmaster - Open; Troy Baird - Newsletter	Supply Officer - Vacant
Jeff Meeks - Sgt. At Arms	
Carl Michaud – Gauge Testing/Certification	
Mark Schnur - Liaison to SAWS	

DIRECTORS AT LARGE – PRESENT	DIRECTORS AT LARGE – ABSENT
Robert Stricker - 2 years	Bob Clark - 1 year
Bruce Rathburn - 2 years	
Fred Baird - 1 year	
Keith Waldrep - 2 years	
GUESTS PRESENT: None	

Agenda Item #1. Agenda Item #1. Jeff started the meeting at 6:00pm asking that all turn off cell phones, then reviewing meeting agenda. He asked if there was anyone not getting the meeting notice or meal request emails. Much progress has been made with the local ABPA-SA website, updates continue. INFO.

Agenda Item #2. Secretary's Report: The April minutes were in the newsletter and approved. Keith Waldrep beat Robert for the approved motion. Second. Passed. INFO.

Agenda Item #3. Treasurer's Report: We have \$12,825.00 in checking account (savings separate). The chapter paid the air fare for Trinidad (Program Director) and Jeff (President) to attend the ABPA National Conference and Trade Show in Las Vegas, NV May 4-6. INFO.

Agenda Item #4. Meeting Sponsor: BSI sponsored the May meeting meal of pizza, cesar salad, and dressing. INFO.

Agenda Item #5. Supply: Art brought extensive supply to the April meeting of remaining chapter attire w/ sizes and prices. Get yours before they're gone. The chapter plans to reorder only caps. A decision still needs to be made of unsold inventory. OPEN.

Agenda Item #6. Raffle: For the raffle prize Mid-West Instrument provided two sets of backflow test quick disconnects. INFO.

Agenda Item #7. Newsletter: Troy brought to the meeting and distributed 25 hard copies (printed) of the newsletter. This has been a popular idea. He said copies will be in front of the room before meeting starts for those arriving early. Newsletter goes out to roughly 290, and across US. INFO.

Agenda Item #8. Membership: Jeff said we have about 93 members that have paid both national and local San Antonio chapter annual dues. INFO.

Agenda Item #9. Bruce Rathburn brought the Jack Poole presentation that was made at the National Conference and Trade show the week prior. Jack is a PE and the owner of Poole Fire Protection in Olathe, KS 66062 - www.poolefire.com. Presentation title: "Does Your Water System Have MIC?" INFO.

Agenda Item #10. SAWS: Mark Schnur posted the SAWS backflow revised guidelines on for review at <https://www.saws.org/backflow-prevention/> - the link is to be included in the minutes for the membership for review. Comments must be forwarded to Mark by June 11th, 2026. Mark presented a Power Point on Residential testing of Irrigation Backflow Assemblies. SAWS is tracking 12,658 residential irrigation assemblies of which 2,601 are high hazard and 10,057 are low hazard. The proposed revised DRAFT guidelines will require residential low hazard irrigation assemblies be tested every three years. High hazard assemblies remains a yearly testing requirement. SAWS Conservation estimates 40-50% of residential customers have an irrigation system. INFO.

Agenda Item #11. Gauge Testing: Carl said that "all seems to be going well". Make sure to keep the white copy for your records when getting your gauge certified as it's much cleaner to make copies and/or email to whoever you need to provide a copy to. INFO.

Agenda Item #12. ABPA National. Troy said the National conference in Las Vegas was great with the highest attendance in 10 years. The next 2027 conference will be in Dallas. The national Board has welcomed Belinda Pattison to the Region 4 position and all other Board positions remain occupied with exceptions of Region 8-10. Stephen Bitely (past Region 4 Director) will move to Vice-President, Kathy Riley to President, and Troy Baird to Past President. Adjustments ongoing to new/updated national website, input is welcomed. INFO.

Agenda Item #13. Test and Maintenance Reports. Jeff provided some good information on entering T&M's into BSI Online. He also mentioned that he spoke to Vanessa from BSI who was at the national conference regarding some issues of concern. She was very helpful in providing feedback right away and provided additional communication the next day. INFO.

Agenda Item #14. Training. Bruce Rathburn presented a PowerPoint presentation from Jack Poole, PE. The presentation discussed microbiological influenced corrosion (MIC) that is often found in fire sprinkler systems. Jack also discussed the requirements of NFPA 13, the standard for the Installation of Sprinkler Systems as it relates to MIC and the treatment requirements.

It was acknowledged there are many different methods to solve the MIC problem, and what it means for water quality and the requirements for cross-connection control? In many instances, chemicals are added to fire sprinkler systems. Does this mean that a reduced pressure principle backflow prevention assembly is required?

Jack included an Introduction to MIC, what we know, treatment process, resources, fire protection standpoint, overview & summary, and time for questions. It was said to put things into perspective we are NOT corrosion experts, We ARE NOT microbiologists, We DO NOT have all the answers, we ARE concerned about maintaining the continued performance of sprinkler systems, We DO think that you can take prudent steps to minimize your exposure to internal corrosion problems, and we DO want our drinking water kept safe!

MIC was explained as an acronym for Microbiologically Influenced Corrosion. Jack defined it as “a mode of corrosion incorporating microbes that react and cause the corrosion or influence other corrosion processes of metallic materials.” MIC is caused by various microorganisms that utilize nutrients present in the water or on pipe surfaces - organisms that interact with byproducts of other microbial processes and with the piping material, contributing to corrosion. MIC is virtually everywhere: Hands, thread cutting oil, gloves, ground, pipe wrenches, pipe dope,... These microorganisms are classified by the reactions and products on which they live, can be aerobic (requiring oxygen), or anaerobic (without oxygen). He said microorganisms are initially introduced into fire sprinkler piping systems through the water supply are aerobic. Anaerobic (no oxygen) organisms begin to grow in the stagnant water that lacks oxygen. And system tests and activations can introduce more oxygen into the water, revitalizing the oxygen-dependent MIC organisms, which can result in quicker corrosion.

It was explained when MIC infiltrates your suppression system, the bacteria grows and feeds on the metal of the pipe with pitting likely being result. Jack discussed the walls of the pipe and how they may be penetrated. Flow characteristics of the pipes can be degraded, or rust can plug sprinklers and valves.

MIC was elaborated on - as it can continue to eat the pipe causing pinhole leaks making a mess and causing water damage. Stainless steel was brought up, with scanning electron micrograph magnification at 5,000X. With no hard data existing, it is estimated that MIC generates between 20% - 40% of all sprinkler piping corrosion problems. He then mentioned MIC as also detected by debris/slime, plugging, coloration/smell, water testing, and microbiological / metallurgical evaluation.

Jack discussed code requirements for MIC Testing like NFPA 13 (2025) - Water supply testing for possible existence of microbes and conditions that may contribute to MIC. Also he discussed inhibitors mitigating bacterial corrosion, and NFPA 25 (2026) which included inspection and testing frequencies for existing piping. Then, NFPA 13, Section 5.1.4.1, water supplies and environmental conditions being evaluated for existence of microbes and conditions contributing to MIC. Where used, listed bacterial inhibitors and/or corrosion inhibitors shall be compatible with system components he said. Then going into NFPA 13, Section 5.1.4.3.2, listed bacterial inhibitors and corrosion inhibitors shall be compatible with each other and NFPA 25, Section 14.2.1.1 and .2 which has an assessment of the internal condition of piping requirement saying 'shall' be conducted at a minimum of every 5 years or at frequency determined by approved risk analysis for inspecting for presence of foreign organic and inorganic material. Jack then discussed NFPA 25 section 14.2.1.3 which was tubercles or slime being found and being tested for indications of MIC.

Dry systems were then mentioned, with MIC being found to progress more rapidly in these type systems rather than in “wet” systems. It was stressed that after a system is flushed or used, stagnant water remains in the fittings edges, drops, and in slight dips in horizontal lengths of pipes. This results in MIC finding favorable growth conditions in oxygenated stagnant water.

Different methods to solving MIC issues were discussed - chemical treatment of water, flushing, mechanical cleaning, nitrogen, vapor corrosion inhibitors, and replacing pipes. He mentioned water quality relating to chemicals, bacteria, and cross connection control - and importance of a backflow program in place. And then alluded to chemical or microbiological contamination, being hard to detect small backflow and cost of responding to water contamination.

Jack discussed importance of controlling cross connections and preventing backflow occurrences that are avoidable - and fire systems having the appropriate backflow prevention assemblies installed. He said when MIC is discovered, it is traditionally treated with chemicals meaning they are then added to a sprinkler system. It was reiterated that a reduced pressure principle backflow prevention assembly is required when chemicals are added.

Companies that treat systems were mentioned as Huguenot Laboratories in Port Jervis, NY, Engineered Corrosion Solutions in St. Louis, MO, Potter Corrosion Solutions in Hazelwood, MO and General Air Products in Exton, PA.

He then went over International Plumbing Code (IPC) 608.17.4.1 relating to additives and non-potable water sources. Systems are under continuous pressure with chemical additives or antifreeze, or where connected to a non-potable secondary water supply, an RP is used for protection of potable water supply.

Where chemical additives or antifreeze are only in a portion of the fire system, an RP is allowed locally located to isolate that portion of the fire system. He mentioned again, an RP must be used if chemical for chemical treatment is used.

The importance of identifying high points in wet-pipe fire protection systems where air can become trapped was then discussed. To eliminate these areas reconfiguring piping when possible or providing venting devices to purge air can be options - manual valve, automatic air relief vent, inspector's test valve, etc.

Lastly, the importance of pressure relief valves installed downstream of each backflow prevention device, minimum 1/2". Sizing and setting to prevent system pressure from exceeding 175 psi - or 10 psi above the system's rated working pressure, whichever is lower. Testing water for MIC - providing proper cross connection control based on the level of hazard present, RP needed if chemical is involved.

Adjournment. Adjourn the meeting at 7:35 PM for the raffle.



Greg Shean - Secretary ABPA San Antonio Chapter

BPAT ETHICS

The statement below was developed by Bill Hamrick and Katrina Hamrick, Atty at Law, and was a result of numerous meetings between Troy Baird, Bruce Rathburn, Bill Hamrick and Fred Baird. There were many suggested enforcement modifications for water purveyors and plumbing inspection departments to control ethics and backflow testing.

"I CERTIFY, UNDER PENALTY OF LAW, INCLUDING POSSIBLE LOSS OF LICENSE, FINES AND PENALTIES, THAT I HAVE TESTED THE BFPA LISTED ABOVE AT THE TIME AND DATE LISTED AND ALL INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS ACCURATE AND I HAVE PERSONALLY COMPLETED THIS FORM IN FULL".

*** ABPA-SA MEMBER HANDS-ON TRAINING: SEPTEMBER 9, 2026 ***

Members who have attended at least 5 meetings per year and have accumulated a minimum of 16 meeting hours are eligible to attend the free hands-on training course sponsored by Bac-Flo Unlimited. Attendee is required to provide print out of their TCEQ license record the morning of the course which can be found at 'TCEQ License Search' on Bac-Flo Unlimited's homepage.

Recipe - Mexi Pineapple Nut Fruit Cake

1 Lg. can crushed pineapple w/juice

2 cups flour

2 cups sugar

2 eggs

2 tsp. vanilla

2 tsp. baking soda

1 cup pecans

Optional – (1 cup red cherries)

Mix & bake 9/13 pan – 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes

Icing: 1 stick butter (melted), 1 tsp. vanilla, 1 1/2 cup powder sugar

(Pour over cake while still warm)

QUIZ - True or False

T F 1. A containment RP on a critical service has a relief valve that has a continual drip. The tester can basically determine the issue by taking a gauge reading across #2 check valve.

T F 2. A BPAT license gives the tester the authority to place backflow preventer requirements if the water purveyor approves.

T F 3. An RP has a toxic chemical that is back-pressured against the assembly with the relief valve dripping. The issue could be a leaking #1 check valve, a leaking #2 check valve, or a fouled relief valve.

T F 4. Falsifying a "Test and Maintenance Report" form is classified as a misdemeanor.

T F 5. For backflow protection at RV parks (potable water site hook ups), a Hose Bib Vacuum Breaker (HBVB) works as long as there is a HBVB installed at each individual site/potable water RV connection.

Answers on next page, discussions at June ABPA-SA meeting.

ABPA-SA Board of Directors 2026

- 1) President – Jeff Stricker
- 2) Vice President – Timothy Sales
- 3) Treasurer – Arthur Trejo
- 4) Secretary – Greg Shean
- 5) Immediate Past President – Trinidad Chairez

Special Officers to the Association

- 6) SGT-AT-ARMS – Jeff Meeks
- 7) Liaison to SAWS – Mark Schnur
- 8) Program Director – Open
- 9) Gauge Testing and Certification – Carl Michaud
- 10) Membership - Art Trejo
- 11) Webmaster – Matthew Wilgen
- 12) Newsletter - Troy Baird

Directors at Large

Two-year term

1. Jeff Hoffman
2. Bruce Rathburn
3. Robert Stricker

One-year term

4. Fred Baird
5. Robert (Bob) Clark

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Quiz answers 1. False 2. False 3.True 4.False 5.False



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1**

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**JUNE
11**

Plumbing Apprenticeship
Program Graduation

8 AM - 11 AM

Location: Magnolia Halle, 10319 Huebner Rd, SATX 78240
(Invite Only)

**JULY
9**

Monthly Membership
Meeting (Limited Seats)

11 AM - 1 PM

Location: SAWS Main Office, 2800 US Hwy 281 N, San Antonio, TX 78212
Guest Speakers: SAWS - Conservation & FOG Teams

**AUG
5-7**

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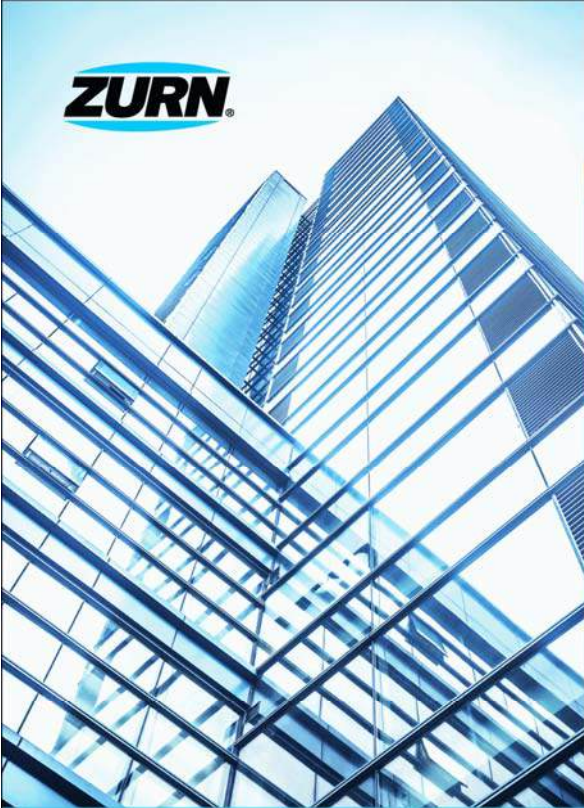
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Bruce Rathburn – past ABPA President
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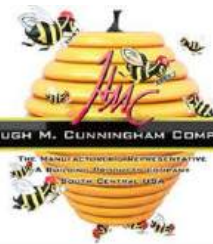
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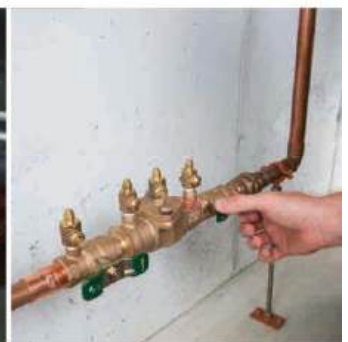
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Zone Assembly



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How to join the ABPA-SA Chapter

There are two ways to join the San Antonio Chapter of the American Backflow Prevention Association.

The easiest way is to click on the QR Code and follow the instructions to set up your account and be presented with an invoice that you can pay with a credit card on-line or check the box to pay with a check. If you don't use QR Codes, click on this address. <https://www.abpa.org/page/Join> **IMPORTANT** Be sure to select the chapter/s (San Antonio Chapter) you want to join before selecting the payment method. If you elect to pay with a check, you will be able to print the invoice so you can send it with your check to the address on the invoice. If you pay with a credit card on-line, you will be able to print a receipt.

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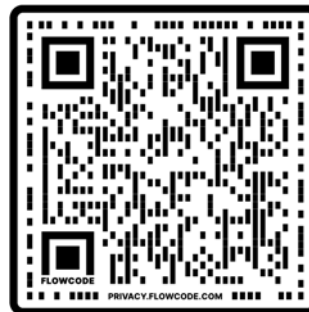
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How to renew your ABPA-SA Chapter Membership

There are two ways to renew your San Antonio Chapter membership of the American Backflow Prevention Association.

The easiest way is to click on the QR Code and follow the instructions to renew your membership and sign into your account and follow the instructions. If you don't use QR Codes, click on this address. <https://www.abpa.org/page/RenewNow> The program will present you with an invoice that you can pay with a credit card on-line or check the box to pay with a check. **IMPORTANT** Be sure the chapter/s (San Antonio Chapter) is/are selected that you want to renew before selecting the payment method. If you elect to pay with a check, you will be able to print the invoice so you can send it with your check to the address on the invoice. If you pay with a credit card on-line, you will be able to print a receipt.

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Thank You for Your Membership



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To join the American Backflow Prevention Association, simply fill out the membership application form and mail it with your check to the address listed below, or if paying by credit card you may fax the completed form to 979.846.7607. Local chapters have additional fees. Below is a listing of chapters by region. To find out if there is a local chapter in your area, please review the chapter information on our website at abpa.org or call the National Office at 979.846.7606. **Membership in the Association constitutes paying National dues.**

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☐ International Membership \$79
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- A Sustaining Member must submit a letter that designates their Voting Representative.

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REGION 1 New England \$12.00 Rhode Island 18.00	REGION 5 Colorado \$15.00 Utah 12.00	REGION 9 (USD)
REGION 2 Virginia \$25.00	REGION 6 Arizona \$20.00 Central Coast 10.00 Central Valley California 10.00 Hawaii 23.00 Silver State 23.00 Southern California 15.00	REGION 10
REGION 3 Carolinas \$10.00 Florida Suncoast 12.00 Peach State "1788" 30.00 Tennessee 20.00	REGION 7 Oregon \$20.00 SRC4 20.00	REGION 11 Indiana BPA \$25.00 Michigan 40.00 Northern Illinois 23.00
REGION 4 Arkansas \$10.00 Central Texas 20.00 Corpus Christi 23.00 Lower Rio Grande Valley 25.00 North Texas 23.00 San Antonio 60.00	REGION 8 (USD)	REGION 12 Eastern Nebraska \$10.00

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