

The Current

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

75 TH ANNIVERSARY • COTTON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE • 1938-2013

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NUMBER 8



Harrison King prefers looking at family photos using electric lights rather than the coal-oil lamps of his boyhood.

Dim times brightened when co-op brought ‘the electric’

By Karen Kaley

Whippersnappers and city folk might be fooled by a silvery oil lamp Harrison and Mildred King keep in their home. It is clean and shiny and looks like it could be fairly new. But, it's not.

Harrison said, "This lamp is 70, 80, or maybe even 100 years old."

He is certain of its long life. He used that particular lamp in his younger days ... back before electricity.

At least, before Cotton Electric built a line in 1941 to bring power to his father's dairy farm southeast of Lawton. That was a great day in the life of a 14-year-old eighth-grader who was pretty tired of milking cows by hand.

Pointing to the relic from his childhood, King said, "We used two of these in the dairy barn. They didn't make much light but we could see to get around in there and milk cows."

"We had two more lamps in the house."

The family had a wind charger mounted on a short tower on top of the house, too. "It didn't work so well," King recalled.

"It powered two six-volt batteries and it would play the radio. We had one (electric) light for the three main rooms of the house. It didn't furnish much more light than the coal oil lamp."

Thinking about those dimly lit days, King said, "I don't know how we ever got through school studying by those lamps, but we did."

They worked hard, too. King and his brother and four sisters joined their parents in the farm chores, which meant milking cows by hand.

"Dad started out with 20 head then worked up to 50 before we got electricity. Us kids had to milk every morning before we

went to school and every evening when we got home."

King chuckled and said, "Can you see kids doing that nowadays?"

As a youngster, King didn't much like the life of a dairyman, but electricity changed the work and kept him in the business.

As it was in most rural settings throughout the nation, electricity came to the dairy farm quite some time after it was well-established in cities.

Early-day power plants were owned by municipalities or for-profit companies and it was costly to extend lines to sparsely populated rural areas. Many power companies refused to build lines in the country.

King remembers that, too.

"It seemed kind of strange that they could have it in town and we couldn't have it in the country."

See Electric, Page 4



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Do you remember when the lights came on?

Cotton Electric Cooperative passes a milestone in 2013. The movement to bring "the electric" to southwest Oklahoma began in 1938, and the co-op was issued its state charter on Sept. 15, 1938.

We are looking for photos, mementos and stories from those early days of electricity. Perhaps you or a family member has special memories about those times. We would love to hear from you!

Please send suggestions, memories or contact information to The Current, c/o Cotton Electric, 226 Broadway, Walters, OK 73572, or use modern-day technology and send an email to info@cottonelectric.com.

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after April 1, 2013, is (\$0.00453) per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1500 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a **CREDIT** of **\$6.80** on the April bill.

February 2013 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	54	20	37	15	46	27	37
2	64	33	49	16	55	24	40
3	63	27	45	17	74	25	50
4	70	47	59	18	61	33	47
5	63	38	51	19	57	27	42
6	71	47	59	20	48	37	43
7	69	46	58	21	49	27	38
8	59	31	45	22	45	24	35
9	52	39	46	23	48	24	36
10	63	38	51	24	66	33	50
11	57	36	47	25	53	35	44
12	44	34	39	26	52	34	43
13	57	28	43	27	49	31	40
14	66	27	47	28	55	26	41

Source: srh.noaa.gov/ou/
Average Daily High: 58 Average Daily Low: 32

Did You Know?

Power bills can be paid at CottonElectric.com by clicking the Online Bill Pay link. Use your Cotton Electric account number and choose a password to set up an online bill pay account.

The April issue of The Current will be delivered to mailboxes on or about April 15, 2013.

Contact Us

Do you have a story idea for The Current or do you need to place an ad? If so, let us know.

We can be reached at 580-875-3351 or by email at info@cottonelectric.com.

You can also drop us a line at Cotton Electric Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572.

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More news at CottonElectric.com

From the CEO

Co-op takes advantage of new technology

Your board makes it very clear: This cooperative is to provide quality electric service at the lowest possible rate. Their goals are simple, to the point, and they expect them to be met. They leave the “how to do it” part to me. Fortunately, advances in technology, along with old-fashioned line maintenance, have made the task a little easier.

For over a year, we’ve talked about the smart grid and what it means to the cooperative. Installing equipment that allows two-way communication with our meters is almost complete. Having meters that respond to commands will give the cooperative new billing and operational options. These options are all designed to better serve your needs. Quite literally, we will have a “smarter” grid system.

Getting our smart grid functional hasn’t been easy. Our meter communication system uses the existing power line to send and receive commands. When power lines are used as both a conductor of electricity and a means of communication, they become more sensitive to interference.

The smart grid means line maintenance requirements have been taken to another level. Our system will not work unless certain communica-



Warren Langford, CEO

tion standards are maintained. Because of the smart grid, overall service quality should be better than ever.

There is a cost associated with the smart grid. Cotton Electric had to purchase and install new meters. Our substations have new equipment and employees have to be trained. The technology involved with the smart grid is complicated and we are still “honing” our skills.

In order to integrate with regional electric grids, utilities have no choice but to continually modernize their distribution systems. Keep in mind that smart grid technology is not confined to Cotton Electric Cooperative. Advanced technology is also used at the transmission and generation level. Power is now generated, bought, sold and priced based upon real-time needs. Your cooperative pays more for power when the demand is greatest. These power costs make up at least 70 percent of your electric bill. Cotton’s smart grid will allow the cooperative to price power the same way it is purchased.

Cotton Electric will roll out examples of what future power bills may look like sometime this summer. Smart meters will allow the co-

operative to record usage amounts during peak and non-peak periods. Future rates will provide incentives to change power consumption habits and shift power use to a time when it is less expensive. Because of the smart grid, cooperative members can more effectively control power cost. Remember, the new billing format will not be a rate increase. The new bills will simply identify the peak time periods and show when your power is being used.

Over the last 10 years, developments in technology have been amazing. But the capability of utilities to take advantage and deploy new technology takes time. Cotton Electric’s smart grid is basic, reasonably priced and already returning dividends. System wide, overall service quality has already improved. Soon, you will have a tool that helps control power bills.

As Cotton Electric introduces its modernized distribution system, some myths about the smart grid are sure to follow. Here are some of the questions I’ve already received:

Q. Will smart meters provide any member benefit?

A. Yes! Service has already improved. Smart meter signal strength requires it. Because of smart meters, members will soon know when power is used and change consumption habits.

Q. Are smart meters an invasion of privacy?

A. I don’t see how. The cooperative has to know your monthly consumption for billing purposes. Smart meters just let YOU know the time of day when most power was used. This information is used for billing purposes and for your information – nothing else.

Q. Will smart meters let you see my house and know the number of appliances I have?

A. No.

Q. Are smart meters a health threat because they communicate using wireless signals?

A. We have received no credible evidence showing a threat to health. Some smart grids communicate with wireless signals. Our system does not. We use the existing power line as a path to communicate.

Q. Are smart meters as accurate as the old analog meters?

A. Absolutely, meter accuracy standards remain the same.

Over the next few months, you will be kept informed about the progress of our smart grid system. We expect to be fully operational by summer.

This cooperative is to provide quality electric service at the lowest possible rates. The smart grid will be a valuable tool as we strive to meet these goals.

Dividing lines

What makes electric cooperatives different from other types of utilities lies in their core mission

By Magen Howard

Because Cotton Electric is a cooperative, The Current often refers to “the cooperative difference.” The differences between electric co-ops and other electric utilities range from the nomenclature used — co-ops serve “members” or “consumers,” not “customers” — to the business model itself.

For example, electric co-ops operate on a not-for-profit basis. Revenues above operating costs, called “margins,” are returned to members in the form of capital credits. Last year, the Cotton Electric board of trustees issued \$500,000 in capital credits.

In the U.S., there are two other kinds of not-for-profit electric providers: public utility districts (PUDs) and public power districts (PPDs). There are also two other types of electric utilities: city-owned municipal electric systems and profit-driven investor-owned utilities. In every case, utilities receive financial assistance from the federal government in some fashion. Following is a look at each.

Cooperatives, PUDs, PPDs

Electric cooperatives are joined by public power districts — located exclusively in Nebraska — and public utility districts — all in the Pacific Northwest — as being not-for-profit. But while cooperatives choose trustees from the membership (those served by the co-op) and are required by state law to hold annual membership meetings, PUDs and PPDs are local government units — similar to school districts — and are not required to hold annual meetings or allocate capital credits. In addition, their directors (commissioners in the case of PUDs) are elected on the state ballot. Candidates need only to reside within the PPD/PUD’s boundaries to serve on a board; they do not have to receive power from the utility.

Federal assistance to electric co-ops comes in the form of low-interest loans from the Rural Utilities

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Service (RUS), formerly the Rural Electrification Administration. Based on current interest rates, RUS loans actually make money for the federal government — about \$274 million in fiscal year 2012. Aside from aiding in construction of critical infrastructure that keeps electric service reliable and electric rates affordable, RUS financing remains important because household incomes in co-op service territories run about 11 percent lower than the national average.

Co-ops serve an average of 7.4 consumers per mile of line, over which they collect annual revenue of about \$14,900. Nationally, electric co-ops pay \$1.4 billion in state and local taxes each year.

Municipal electric systems

Municipal electric systems are distribution utilities owned by a city, borough, or other incorporated community. As public entities, they can levy taxes, issue government bonds, and adopt and enforce rules and regulations.

Not-for-profit municipals serve the most consumers per mile of line, an average of 48, and collect an average of \$113,301 per mile of line. The federal government subsidizes municipals, too — when cities or boroughs issue tax-exempt bonds, interest paid to bond owners is not taxed. The cost of this benefit in 2003 (the last year data is available) was \$909 million, or \$55 per consumer.

Investor-owned utilities

Investor-owned utilities, or IOUs, are governed by and generate profits for shareholders (stock owners) who do not necessarily live in the utility’s service area. IOUs average 34 customers and \$75,498 in revenue per mile of line.

In virtually every case, IOUs charge electric rates

that include amounts for presumed federal tax liabilities. However, available tax breaks (investment tax credits and accelerated depreciation) allow IOUs to retain most of the taxes collected, a total of roughly \$107 billion to date. At a cost to the government of \$4.6 billion in 2010, this federal subsidy to IOUs works out to about \$44 per customer.

Back to the cooperative difference

Cotton Electric Cooperative is here to provide affordable, reliable, environmentally responsible electric power. But at the core, it’s really about improving the quality of life in the communities we serve. That’s the main difference — the cooperative difference.

For more information on how Cotton Electric makes a difference in southwest Oklahoma, visit cottonelectric.com.

Magen Howard writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

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COTTON
ELECTRIC CO-OP

Mission Statement
Our mission is to be the leader in providing the most reliable and innovative electric system, with affordable rates, through the positive, enthusiastic and professional use of its resources and people.

January 2013 Operating Stats		
	2013	2011
Total Amount Billed	\$5,427,611	\$5,334,477
Cost of Purchased Power	3,707,114	3,365,527
Taxes	115,336	103,674
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,001	928
Average Farm and Residential Bill	160	161
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,544	1,608
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	17,970	17,762
Miles Energized	5,139	5,141
Density Per Mile	3.50	3.45
New Service Connects YTD	31	29
Services Retired	17	28

Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the April issue, please submit information by April 4, by calling 580-875-4255 or send an email to info@cottonelectric.com.

ParkStomp bluegrass acts listed

ParkStomp is three days of live bluegrass music in Medicine Park.

First acts perform at Park Tavern on March 22. Performance by Chucky Waggs begins at 8 p.m. Whistle Pigs follow at 10:30.

Music on the main stage begins at noon March 23. Entertainers include Grasscrack, Joe Mack, Whistle Pigs, Carter Sampson, Carrie Nation and the Speakeasy and Tyrannosaurus Chicken. After dark, things move into the music hall with Chucky Waggs, Carrie Nation and the Speakeasy and Meandering Orange.

Final performances begin at 1 p.m. March 24. Acts include Meandering Orange, Grassland Caravan and Tyrannosaurus Chicken.

Visit MedicinePark.com for more information.

Home, garden show starts Friday

Lawton Home Builders Annual Home and Garden Show is 5 to 8 p.m. March 22, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. March 25, and noon to 5 p.m. March 26 in the Great Plains Coliseum and Annex. Admission is \$3 per person. Those 12 and under will be admitted free with paid adult admission.

Passion play set for Saturdays

"The Prince of Peace" Passion play begins at 8:30 p.m. March 23 and 30 at the Holy City of the Wichitas in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. The performance is expected to end around 10:45 p.m., and is broadcast on 88.5 FM.

Admission to the nation's longest-running Easter Passion play is free.

Empire plans all-school reunion

Alumni from all classes are encouraged to attend activities set for an all-school reunion at Empire school in Stephens County. Deadline for reservations is March 25.

The weekend begins with a basketball game at 6:30 p.m. March 29 in the gymnasium. A golf tournament begins at 8 a.m. March 30, and the reunion begins at 5 p.m. in the cafeteria.

To participate in the golf tournament, call Paul Walker, 580-255-5572.

Those who haven't received a re-

union announcement can update their information by contacting Lois Love at 580-252-0022.

CTHC hosts MIO, agritourism expo

A fun-filled day featuring the best in the state is on tap at the Made in Oklahoma (MIO) and Agritourism Expo set for 12:30 to 5 p.m. March 26 at Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway in Duncan.

Exhibitors will be on hand to offer samples, sell and take orders for their products. Information will be available about agritourism venues in the region.

There is no admission fee.

For information, email Julie.fitzgerald@ag.ok.gov or call 405-522-5560.

CU music department concerts set

Cameron University's music department has several performances scheduled. All events begin at 7:30 p.m.

Guest performer John Simon will join the CU Percussion Ensemble for a free concert on March 26 in University Theatre.

On March 29, the Centennial Singers, student pianists and the CU Pan Express travel to Duncan for a showcase in the CU@SC series.

Cameron's guitar ensemble performs at 7:30 p.m. on April 4 at McCutcheon Recital Hall.

DAEDF plans job, career expo

Duncan Area Economic Development Foundation will host a Job & Career Expo on April 4 at the Simmons Center.

The Job Expo begins at 7:30 a.m. and runs through 12:30 p.m. This event has free admission and door prizes for job seekers. It's a great opportunity for the unemployed and underemployed.

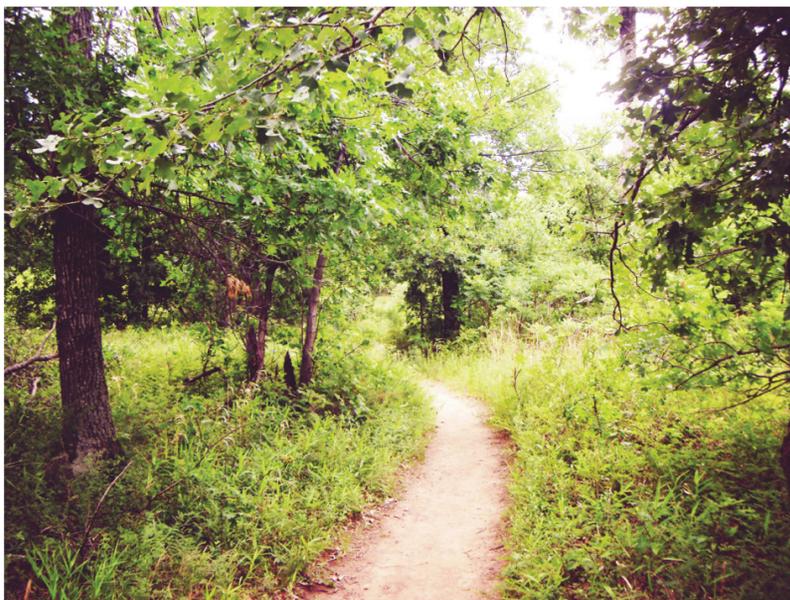
Students can browse through business booths from 10 to 11:30 a.m. to see what career options are available and the education/training required for each occupation.

Students in grades 8-12 within the Stephens, Jefferson and Cotton county school districts can compete in an engineering contest for cash prizes. This activity encourages youth to design a CO 2 dragster and race it on the 65-foot track.

For additional information on the Expo, call 580-255-9675 or email jeannie@ok-duncan.com.

More Community Spotlight on Page 5

Photo of the Month



Carolyn Pettijohn of Duncan submitted the winning photo in our March "Going Green" contest. She snapped this photo of a lush green path in Charon's Gardens, part of the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.

The theme for the April contest is "April Showers." Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest on Facebook. Entries can also be emailed to info@cottonelectric.com or mailed to The Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572. Winners will receive a Cotton Electric prize package of CEC goodies.

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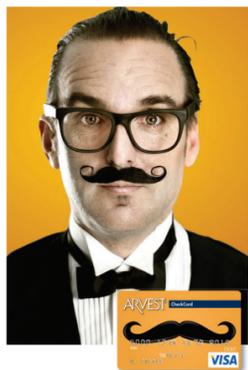
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75TH ANNIVERSARY

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Big Pasture, Cache students enter Go Go Geo scholarship challenge

Students at Big Pasture and Cache schools have entered the Go Go Geo Scholarship Video Challenge.

Darien Kuykendall of Big Pasture submitted "Positive Impact," which starts with a conversation between a bill-paying mother and her son. He tells her a geothermal system will save them big money.

Neil Clement directed and filmed "The Great Heater," a Short Stacks Production, featuring Cannon Mizingo and Rylon Tartsah explaining how a geothermal system works. They also discuss the financial and environmental benefits. All three are students at Cache High School.

Online voting for the Go Go Geo Scholarship Video Challenge has begun. Only the top five vote-getters from each region will move into the regional judging round where they will be scored



for online voting, message delivery, creativity, content accuracy and videography.

During the online voting round, the votes they receive will account for up to 25 percent of their score depending on the number of votes they receive. Supporters can vote daily for each favorite video. Please note that the system allows only one vote per day per IP address to avoid possible ballot stuffing issues.

Regional voting ends March 21 at midnight.

To vote, go to GoGoGeoChallenge.com to watch the video.

Each video has a pre-roll geothermal clip. After the submitted video plays in its entirety, an orange thumbs up symbol will appear just above it. Click it to cast a vote.

The top winner from each region will advance to the final competition where even more scholarship dollars are available. In the final level of competition, the five winners will meet with judges in Oklahoma City for the final scoring and winner announcement.

Students are competing for nearly \$60,000 in scholarship money and grants.

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives are sponsors for this event, with geothermal manufacturers, including ClimateMaster, Bosch and WaterFurnace, as co-sponsors. Cotton Electric Cooperative is a member of this Touchstone Energy Cooperative alliance.

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Rep. Dorman receives Farm Bureau award

OKLAHOMA CITY – State Rep. Joe Dorman is one of the Meritorious Service award winners recognized recently by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau.

The award recognizes legislators who show continuous support and promotion for rural and agricultural issues as well as have a strong voting record in support of the Farm Bureau.

"It is such an honor to be recognized by the Oklahoma Farm Bureau," said Dorman, D-Rush Springs. "Agricultural issues continue to be a priority for all rural legislators at the Capitol, and groups like Oklahoma Farm Bureau continue to educate policymakers on the impact of potential policies."

Mike Spradling, president of Oklahoma Farm Bureau, said the organization wanted to recognize the legislators for their support of agriculture and rural Oklahoma.



State Rep. Joe Dorman

"We want to recognize Rep. Dorman and these legislators for their strong support of Oklahoma agriculture and rural issues," Spradling said.

Dorman has been an advocate of rural development issues during his tenure in the House of Representatives, especially in the area of agritourism. Dorman is serving his second year as the chairman of the Rush Springs Watermelon Festival, sponsored by the Rush Springs Lions Club.

Dorman also was the author of House Bill 1520, the legislation which created the Controlled Burn Indemnity Fund within the Oklahoma Conservation Commission. This program is used to compensate participating landowners who use controlled burning land-management practices for losses incurred outside of insurance policies if a fire spreads "beyond the control of the burner."

"It has been a pleasure to represent my home area in rural Oklahoma and fight for issues affecting the residents of House District 65 and our state," Dorman said. "I cannot think of a greater honor to receive during my final term in the Oklahoma Legislature."

The Meritorious Service award was also presented to three other representatives – state Reps. Lisa Billy, Tom Newell, and Mike Jackson.

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Art Walk seeks submissions for fall festival

Artists are invited to submit a photo of their work for the 4th annual Medicine Park Art Walk in conjunction with the Medicine Park Flute Festival set for Sept. 28 and 29 in Town Center.

Entry fee for the two-day juried show is \$35, with no percentage fee for sales. Booth space is limited, and resale items are not allowed. Judges' prizes totaling \$500, sponsor purchase awards and a children's art area are new this year.

The show is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sept. 28 and from



medicine park, ok

11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 29. Artists' work will be displayed on the covered porches of the scenic Old Plantation restaurant, on the surrounding paved areas and along the scenic Medicine Creek trail. Spaces will be assigned as entries are accepted.

Artists may set up booths after 4 p.m. Sept.

27 or at 7 a.m. the next day. Participants must supply their booth or tent.

Interested artists must submit a high-resolution photo of a sample of work and request an entry form by emailing ambassadors@mpmns.org. Deadline for entry is Aug. 15. Space will be assigned on a first come, first served basis. Check out our Facebook page: Medicine Park Art Walk.

For information on Medicine Park, including lodging, go to www.medicinepark.com. This community offers lodg-

ing, great restaurants, and is just an 18-minute drive to Fort Sill and Lawton. The Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is just down the road. Medicine Park's Aquarium and Natural Sciences Center is under construction with an anticipated opening date this fall.

To get there from I-44, take Exit 45 for Medicine Park/Carnegie, head west on Oklahoma Highway 49, travel approximately six miles to the "Y" and bear right into Medicine Park proper.

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Employee Spotlight
Pat Sage

Cotton Electric dispatchers on duty 24/7 to answer emergency calls

Pat Sage prefers the evening shift

By Karen Kaley

Most evenings at the co-op are long and quiet according to Pat Sage, a dispatcher who works the 4 p.m. to midnight shift Tuesday through Saturday.

On a calm night, the membership cooks supper, watches TV and does household chores before turning out the lights and turning in for the night.

But, on some nights, the lights go out unexpectedly. Squirrels, snakes and other critters in the wrong spot may open a circuit. A vehicle may careen out of control, crashing into a utility pole and snapping a power line.

Occasionally, there are stormy nights. The wind whips tree branches into power lines, causing blinks. Higher winds may break huge limbs that take the lines down with them.

When Cotton Electric members find themselves suddenly in the dark, they should check their breakers first, find their account number near the top of a Cotton Electric power bill, then pick up the phone and call Pat.

The numbers are 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520. Our Facebook page and email addresses are not monitored after normal business hours, but our phones are answered 24/7.

Pat will have a few questions: Have you checked your breakers?

Your answer, of course, will be, "Yes! I read about that in The Current."

If not, Pat will wait on the phone while you check. Checking the breakers is important, she said, because "it costs the co-op a lot to send someone out only to find the problem is breakers. Something like that raises the cost to all members."

Next, she will ask if you heard a loud noise or popping or saw light-

ning just before the lights went out. She may ask if there is a transformer pole nearby with an electrocuted animal at the base.

Details about what happened immediately before the outage are also important.

"It helps determine what action to take. If I have to call a lineman, I try to give them as much information as possible so they can restore power quickly."

An outage may affect one member, 10 members, even hundreds or thousands, depending on the cause and where it happens along the 5,000-plus miles of line. The more affected, the higher the volume of calls.

During outages that involve multiple locations, a conversation with Pat may be short.

"If I'm having a lot of calls, I'll take the member's account number and may hit the call-release button quickly because four or five more calls are lighting up the phone."

The account number helps pinpoint problems on a computer-generated map of the Cotton Electric system. As Pat keys in more data, the programming creates a visual guide of outages and can predict causes and numbers of members affected.

All of this helps get the power back on quickly and safely.

Technology has changed Pat's job in the eight years she has been with the cooperative. When she started in January 2004, she did the dispatch work from the co-op's subsidiary, Cotton Electric Services, Inc. Between outage calls, she tested high-voltage rubber goods to ensure their safety.

"When I was working in the test lab, I had a map of the service territory on the wall."

It was about 4 feet wide and not as easy to



Pat Sage keeps a close eye on the Cotton Electric system using old-fashioned and modern tools. A wall-sized map has long been a fixture at the co-op but digital maps offer more information.

access as the computer model.

She chuckled as she recalled, "I'd have to crawl up on the desk to see where the OCR's and other locations were. The linemen would ask me a question and I'd say, 'You gotta wait. I gotta crawl up on my desk.'"

Pat's knees get a break these days, since she has moved to the Walters headquarters where the map is 20 feet wide and covers an entire wall. It complements the digital map, shown on three different computer screens, each offering a different type of information.

Pat and the other three dispatchers – Gary Nichols, Janeris McKown and newcomer Glendel Cole – use a blend of the new and old technology to keep track of what's going on throughout the system.

Because there are only four dispatchers, they rotate and occasionally pull double shifts to make sure the phones are always answered. Pat said her evening shift suits her just fine.

"I feel very fortunate to have found this job. It fits my lifestyle and needs very well.

"I love the hours," she said with a grin. "I'm really not a morning person."

The schedule allows her to spend time with her retired husband, Harold Sage. Their children and grandchildren all live out of state. Jennifer Stephens and her husband, Tim, live in,

Kansas with Nikki Watkins, 21; John Watkins, 19; Colby Stephens, 8; and Jacob Stephens, 7. Brian Sage lives in San Marcos, Texas.

"We still have two 'kids' at home, though," Pat added. "I guess I should talk about them."

She didn't want to leave out Skeeter, a 4-year-old silky terrier/poodle mix, and Snowball, a female Maltese the couple acquired last December.

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Electricity made life's work possible

King family dairy thrives using labor-saving devices, refrigeration

Continued from Page One

"Of course, that's the reason the co-ops were formed. The government established REA (Rural Electrification Administration) ... and local people started forming co-ops."

Cotton Electric Cooperative was incorporated on Sept. 15, 1938. Construction of the first lines began June 1, 1939, and power ran through them for the first time just 84 days later, on Aug. 26.

By spring 1941, the lines were approaching the King farm.

King remembers the preparations his father made in anticipation of "the electric."

"We knew it was coming, so Dad bought an electric milking machine and had it installed before they turned

the electricity on.

"We wanted lights in the house. We were wired and ready to have one light in each room."

With the flip of a switch, things changed for the King family. King's father, Glen H. King Sr., embraced the technology and helped the cooperative grow.

"Dad talked to neighbors, helped to get them signed up to get the line in there,"

Glen King went on to become a member of Cotton Electric's board of trustees, serving from 1944-49.

"He was devoted to the co-op, really liked it," his son said.

"He would be real proud of the co-op today. It's so big and has done so well. It did a lot of growing while he

was on the board, but it's continued to grow."

By the close of 1941, cooperative membership had reached 1,850. Membership grew to 5,500 by the end of the senior King's tenure on the CEC board in 1949 and today it is well over 15,000.

The impact of electricity on the life of G. Harrison King Jr. cannot be overstated. Electric milking machines, adequate lighting and refrigeration made the life of a dairyman tolerable.

"When I was a kid, I'd have sworn that I wasn't going to do that for my lifelong work, but (as an adult) I was in it for 44 1/2 years. Electricity made that possible. I wouldn't have pursued it as a career if I had to milk by hand."

Leaky duct system loses more than air

Did you know that your home's duct system could be losing as much as 20 percent of its air? Here's a tip from Cotton Electric that can help your heating and cooling system work more efficiently — and save you money.

A leaky duct system wastes energy, increasing your utility bill. So it makes sense to find and eliminate those leaks. According to TogetherWeSave.com, sealing the air ducts in your home can save you up to \$177 a year.

Saving money is one good reason to seal your ducts. But there are other reasons, too. A leaky duct system affects your quality of life. It makes the rooms in your home stuffy and less comfortable — not cool enough in the summer or warm enough in the winter. And because insulation particles, dust and pollen can enter a leaky system, they may affect your

home's indoor air quality. The first step is to find the biggest air leaks in your home.

While some ducts are concealed in walls and between floors, others are exposed — in attics, crawlspace, basements and garages — and can be repaired by sealing.

In the attic, the greatest duct leaks are typically found where the walls meet the attic floor, above drop ceilings and overhangs and behind attic walls. Look for insulation that is dirty or discolored, indicating that air has been moving through it.

In the basement, ducts are often located along the top of the basement wall. Duct runs that go through the basement ceiling to the floors above can be sources of leaks.

Next, you can begin sealing the leaks that you have found.

To start, you'll need mastic sealant or metal tape. Experts advise against using duct tape, which can dry out and disintegrate when used on ductwork.

In addition to sealing any leaks that you have found, check the connections at vents and registers. They should be well-sealed where they meet the floors, walls and ceiling.

It's also important to insulate your duct system. As air travels through your ducts, you want it to stay cool during the summer and warm during the winter. Ductwork located in areas with little or no insulation — crawlspaces, attics or garages — will need to be insulated.

For other tips on how to save energy — and money — visit Touchstone Energy's energy-saving website at www.TogetherWeSave.com.

Find out how little changes add up to big savings at TogetherWeSave.com.

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Youth Tour finalists listed

10 to make oral presentations of essays at banquet

High school juniors from 17 schools submitted a total of 132 essays in Cotton Electric Cooperative's 49th annual Rural Electric Youth Tour contest.

The entries were pared down to the 25 best essays on the topic "Lighting the Way for 75 Years," and their authors were invited to CEC headquarters in Walters for the interview round of the competition.

Following the question-and-answer sessions, the list named 10 finalists. They and their parents and teachers will be the guests of Cotton Electric for a banquet on March 25. During the event, the finalists will be required to recite their essay in an oral, speech-type format. As they speak before judges and banquet guests, the final four winners will be determined.

The Cotton Electric Youth Tour winners will receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. For a week in June, they will join 1,500 students and follow state-planned itineraries, including time with Oklahoma's congressional delegation.

The students will have an opportunity to learn about government, the cooperative form of business and the business of rural electrification. The students will become more familiar with the historical and political environment of the nation's capital through visits to monuments, government offices and cooperative organizations.

Two runners-up in the essay con-



test will represent Cotton Electric at the Touchstone Energy Leadership Summit to be held in January 2014 in Oklahoma City.

Listed by school, the 10 finalists and their parents are:

Lawton High: Samantha Ciaramitaro, daughter of Sarah Spicer; Kaitlyn Sieber, daughter of Jon and Lisa Sieber;

MacArthur: Marissa Adams, daughter of Raanon and Sabrina Adams;

Marlow: Sam Kimbrough, son of Mike and Lisa Kimbrough; Tori Hack, daughter of Jeff and Christie Hack;

Powers Homeschool: Ashley Powers, daughter of Sidney and Wendy Powers;

Ryan: Lucas Ninman, son of Larry Ninman; and

Walters: Megan McCoy, daughter of Cary and Janet McCoy; Cassidy Johnson, daughter of Cody and Tammie Wampler; and Chance Stillwell, son of Richard and Kim Stillwell.

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VCOC a community effort

By Karen Kaley

Sharing and participation are part of what makes a group of people a community. In the small town of Velma, a group of caring citizens shares resources with families in need. Participation in the effort includes volunteers ranging from high school students to local business owners.

Velma Community Outreach Center (VCOC) is an emergency food pantry established in November 2009. It serves people living in eastern Stephens County towns of Velma, Ratliff City, Fox, Tatums, Loco and Countyline.

The non-profit group's president, Kim Byford, and treasurer, Julie Gilby, are quick to point out the specific area they serve. VCOC is one of many such organizations throughout the state that receives food from the Oklahoma Regional Food Bank, which requires them to make distributions to the people in their area only.

Byford and Gilby provided a lot of information about VCOC but stressed the important contribution the entire community makes.

"There are so many other volunteers that work very hard to make this a success. It really takes a group effort to make this happen," Gilby said.

A big semitrailer comes to southwest Oklahoma on the fourth Monday of each month. The traveling cornucopia delivers things like pallets of potatoes and tomatoes, cases of canned goods and flats of frozen foods. The total weight of the assortment of non-perishables, fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables and juices is staggering.

Gilby said VCOC vol-



Velma High School students often help when the Oklahoma Regional Food Bank delivers a few tons of food for Velma Community Outreach Center. Helpers in December included, front row, from left, Sidney Lewis, Jordan Layn, Kylee Saville; second row, Jesse Anderson, Teddi Southerland, Bita Humphreys, Austin Dennis, Trey Guthrie, Quintin Keiner; third row, Kim Byford, Kelton Brown, Dallen Mercer, Julie Gilby and Checotah Lynn.



Download CECF grant applications at cottonelectric.com.

Deadline for second-quarter 2013 grant applications will be in May.

unteers unload 6,000 to 10,000 pounds – that's 3 to 5 tons – each month. That's where the students come in.

At least 20 teens, sometimes more, help unload the truck. Once the giant mound of boxes, cartons and crates is transferred to VCOC, the young people break it down, sorting and shelving groceries that may include cans of chili and boxes of cereal and filling freezers with things like breaded filets and blueberries.

"The kids love it," Gilby said, and she loves that they are willing to lend their strong hands and backs.

"We would not be able to do it without them helping us. That is a lot of lifting."

Two days after food truck day is food distribution day. Adult volun-

teers help clients choose groceries for their families. At the end of the day, VCOC's cupboards are bare.

"Whatever comes in, goes out," Gilby said.

At Christmas time, the group tries to do a little more. They used a \$2,000 grant from Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation this past December to make hams available to the 164 families served. They also purchased toys and arranged to have Santa pass them out to children.

Occasionally, there are bonus items on the truck, but VCOC purchases the bulk of what is delivered. Deep discounts maximize the buying power of dollars donated to VCOC, or any food pantry in any community that uses the Oklahoma Regional

Food Bank.

Monetary donations and plenty of volunteers keep them all going, and VCOC needs plenty of both.

Gilby said donations can be mailed to Velma Community Outreach Center at P.O. Box 121, Velma, OK 73491.

Volunteers can call her at 580-467-3661 or Byford at 580-251-0785.

Eligibility requirements and applications for VCOC's service are available at Velma Town Hall.

The number of clients served in VCOC's area has doubled since the service began three years ago. The group of volunteers gives out a lot, but Byford said they receive so much more.

"We enjoy each other and enjoy helping everyone out. We get more of a blessing than our clients do most of the time. It's pretty awesome."

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Tackle home projects safely

By Kelly Trapnell

Do-it-yourself (DIY) offers a great way to save money and learn new skills. But before you tackle that home improvement project you saw online or on cable TV, practice these safety measures to avoid injury while getting game-winning results.

Score points with safety equipment

Just like a helmet and pads are required on a football field, safety items are essential for DIY tasks. Read and follow directions on every power tool you use. Wearing eye and ear protection and gloves, as well as tying back loose hair and securing loose clothing, are all important to keeping you safe. If renting a tool, ask the store for safety tips.

Look up, down, all around

For outside projects, first check the area where you will be working. Identify potential hazards and take time to avoid or correct any problems. Don't forget to look up for power lines, and avoid using long poles or ladders within 10 feet of overhead wires.

Will your project involve any digging? Call 811 before you dig even if you think you know where underground lines may be. The 811 service will mark all underground lines in your area for free before you start work.

Avoid the blitz

Water and electricity don't mix, so avoid running cords through wet areas. Inspect cords for fraying or damage before use, and be sure outlets can handle any extra load from power tools. Overloading outlets can lead to more than a shock: Fire hazards may result from demanding too much from an electrical system.



Photo by Kelly Trapnell

Read power tool instructions and adopt safety measures such as using equipment guards, wearing eye and ear protection, and securing long hair and loose-fitting clothing.

Be honest with yourself

If a job seems like it might be too much to handle, leave it to a professional. Take into consideration heavy lifting, expensive tools that will only be used once, and whether you really have the time. That way, you won't be tempted to skip safety measures.

For more safety advice around the home, visit www.safetyathome.com.

Kelly Trapnell writes on safety and energy efficiency issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

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Tomato plants can thrive with healthy start

Tomatoes are a vegetable garden favorite. Simple as it may be to establish a garden, sometimes our best efforts in southwest Oklahoma wind up in frustration because nature seems to work against us.

Many experienced gardeners have developed ways of starting early and establishing hardy plants. Here are some tips and reminders on getting plants off to a fast and vigorous start.

A good start to any garden is to purchase well-developed, sturdy plants. There are many good varieties, but specifically look for plants listed as nematode-, Fusarium- and verticillium-resistant.

Tomatoes should be set in the garden when the weather has warmed and the soil temperature is above 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Air temperatures below 50 degrees can impair tomato growth. This is why early planted tomatoes should be protected from frost or cooler weather with plastic milk cartons or a commercially available product.

Before planting, remove pots or bands from the transplant root ball. Peat pots can remain.

Set the plants slightly deeper than they origi-



nally grew so lower leaves are close to the ground.

If leggy plants are all that is available, lay them down in a trench long enough to leave only the top 6 inches of the plant exposed after covering the stem. This will allow roots to develop along the buried portion of the stem.

If the plant is growing in a peat pot, be sure the pot is covered with soil. Exposed portions of the pot act as a wick, allowing the root ball to dry rapidly.

Make transplant holes

2 to 4 feet apart in a row. Space rows at least 3 feet apart for staked or caged plants. Leave 3 to 5 feet between unsupported rows.

Set out plants in the evening or on a cloudy day to keep the plants from wilting and getting too dry.

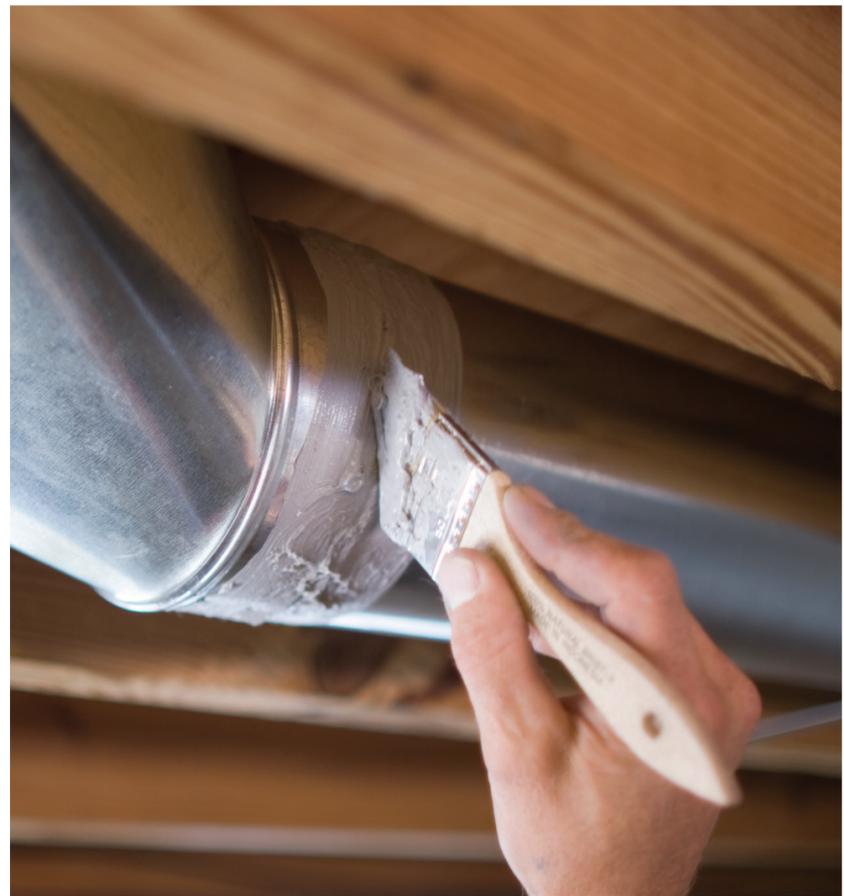
Before planting, fill the transplant holes with water and let it soak in.

Pack the soil loosely around the plant.

Plants can be watered with a starter solution to help in the root establishment.

Gardeners with ques-

tions or seeking more information can contact Max Gallaway, agricultural educator for the OSU Extension in Stephens County, at 580-255-0510 or max.gallaway@okstate.edu.



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Hunt for treasures at Nancy's Antiques

Find furniture, decorative items ...

By Karen Kaley

It all started with a set of Flow Blue and Willow ware. This bit of inheritance started Nancy Way on a path she has followed for nearly 50 years, taking her family with her.

"I started researching these treasures handed down to me. From that, I developed an interest in antiques and wanted to pursue it."

She was hooked early on and recalls browsing antique shops during

lunch breaks when she worked at Halliburton many years ago. From there, her passion for antiques grew, ultimately becoming a business.

She and her husband, Jimmie, established Nancy's Antiques sometime in the mid- to late-60s in a two-story house that was a bit of an antique itself.

"It was an old rooming house for the Rock Island railroad," Nancy explained.

The house still sits near the railroad tracks on the north side of Oklahoma Highway 70 in Waurika. Over the years, the antique business outgrew the house and the Ways built a 12,000-square-foot building just to the east of the old house.

Nancy had no trouble filling up the new building.

She chuckled a little and said, "Family vacations consisted of 'mother going antique hunting' or 'mother on a buying trip.' We took the children along for the ride. They had to endure a lot of 'Don't touch that' and 'Don't you move.'"

They made circuits to buy and to sell things like large wooden furniture, art work and decorative pieces. Nancy said they went north and northeast to gather items until it wasn't worth the time and expense. Then they started importing.

"English antiques were a hit," she said.

They brought in 40-foot containers filled

with treasures from Europe and had no trouble selling them.

Over the decades, Nancy has developed an expertise about antiques. Her practiced eye can easily tell the difference between a true antique and a reproduction, between hand-made and machine-made items.

To demonstrate, she talked about a vanity in her store. She said she could tell the top did not belong with the bottom. "The style of mirror is not correct. It should be beveled."

She said she always looks at the back of a large piece like that to see if it has aged properly. She also looks at the construction and determines if the item is solid



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Nancy Way offers expertise about authentic antiques and disclosure on reconditioned or rebuilt items offered at Nancy's Antiques.

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wood or pressed wood.

She pulled a drawer out and pointed to the craftsman construction at the corners, saying it helps confirm the age of the item.

"Phillips-head screws are a giveaway. They came out in the mid-1930s. Dowel construction is from before that time."

That is what Nancy feels is the best thing she offers: An expert appraisal and frank disclosure about the items she sells. She also helps customers by conducting estate sales and liquidations.

While many of the massive hunt cabinets, sideboards and cupboards in the shop may date to the 1870s, she said some items are reconditioned or reconstructed by her daughter.

One example of Banda Fountain's handiwork is a low, decorative table in the middle of the store.

Nancy's Antiques
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The table surface, built recently, is supported by Queen Anne ball-and-claw legs. A coat of white paint, applied with a technique to make it look distressed, completes the piece.

The furniture holds dish sets, quilts, dolls, paintings, lamps and a multitude of decorative items, all artfully arranged by the third generation, Scarlett Fountain. Nancy smiled as she thought about her only granddaughter.

She looked around and said, "All this could be hers if she wants it."

Nancy is slowing down a bit and opens the store only two days a week.

"On Fridays and Saturdays, I open at 10 a.m. and stay until 4 or 5 in the afternoon. Other times are by ap-

pointment or by chance. Sometimes I come down in the evenings for people who work."

Many visitors are from out of town. Nancy recommends checking the store's website, nancysantiques.com, and calling 580-228-2575 or 228-2011 to make an appointment.

"Look at the website to see if it's a place you want to visit and call to make sure we will be open before driving down."

She said it's worth the drive.

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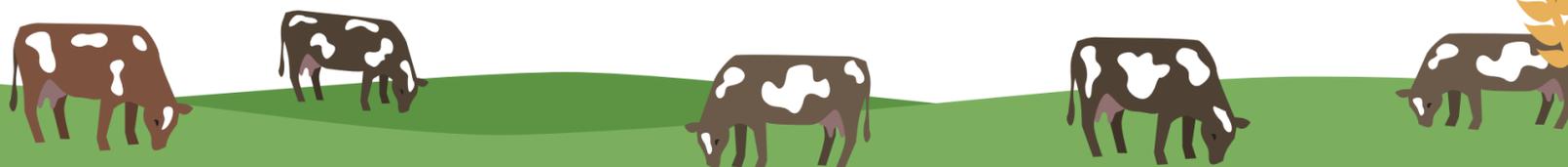
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Simple Savings

Spring time, green time

Keep energy efficiency in mind when preparing warm-weather task list

By Trent Marlett

March is here and the weather is becoming a lot more pleasant. Time to think about ways to enjoy the spring weather, save some energy, and prepare for the hot summer that's right around the corner. As we go about our spring cleaning, let's make also make improvements that go along with the change to better, warmer weather.

First, make it a point to pull out the refrigerator and give the coils a really good cleaning. When dust and debris build up on refrigerator coils, it makes the appliance work harder and use more energy to keep food cold.

Also, make sure there is plenty of room behind the refrigerator for everything to breathe. Two inches behind the refrigerator should be enough.

Another thing to do is to give ceiling fans a good dusting. Remember to switch the direction of the fan blades to make sure air is being pushed down. Counter clockwise is the direction for summer time. This way, we feel the cool air directly being pushed on us. In the winter, blades should move clockwise to push the air upward to help circulate the warm air near the ceiling around the room.

It is best to check air filters for central heating and cooling systems once a month, but if you have forgotten to do so, now would be a great time to change out them, if needed.

Speaking of central heating and cooling systems, before switching from heating to cooling, schedule a spring checkup with an accredited heat and air contractor. He or she can make sure things are in good working order and fix anything that might be wrong.

It's always recommended to set water heaters to 120 degrees year round,

but some people will set it a higher in the winter. If you're one of those people, now would be a great time to nudge the temperature back down to 120 degrees. I don't know anyone that likes a scalding hot shower in the warmer weather.

Great weather means enjoying the outdoors more. Instead of cooking meals indoors, fire up that grill outside. Get a great meal without using any electricity at all.

Also, since the weather outside is getting nicer, we should check window screens and replace or repair the ones that need it. Now, we can open them up and cool our homes with fresh air instead of using the energy-guzzling HVAC system.

Now is a good time to break out those caulking guns and make sure all our windows and plumbing penetrations are sealed up well. Checking and adding weather strips on our doors is another great way to make sure things are sealed up before the heat arrives.

One more thing on the To Do list: Get up into the attic and check the level of insulation while it's not freezing or extremely hot up there.

If the ceiling joists are not covered with insulation, it's a good idea to add more. For our climate, the U.S. Department of Energy recommends having an R-38 to R-49 of attic insulation.

Since we are getting ready to do some serious spring cleaning, why not start thinking about doing some spring saving on our energy bills as well? By following some of these tips and getting things fixed or updated, our spring will be more enjoyable and we will be ready for the heat that's on its way.

There are a lot more tips at the website TogetherWeSave.com.



Spring is a good time to break out the caulking gun and make sure all windows and plumbing penetrations are sealed up well.

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Healthy, gluten-free salads feed the senses

(Family Features) Many people think eating a salad is healthy. However, add-on ingredients such as cheese, bacon, croutons and loads of salad dressing pretty much take that salad out of the healthy category. But it really is possible to make a great-tasting salad that is still good for you.

Carolyn O'Neil, M.S., R.D., and co-author of "The Dish on Eating Healthy and Being Fabulous!" recommends salads that appeal to all of the senses. O'Neil created the two recipes

below, which are beautiful to look at, have refreshing aromas, great taste and the satisfying crunch of Georgia Pecans. With the highest amount of antioxidants of any tree nut, Georgia Pecans are an excellent inclusion in a heart-smart diet and have earned the American Heart Association's Heart Check-mark certification.

◆ The Avocado-Grapefruit Salad adds beauty and interest to your plate with healthy, colorful, crunchy ingredients. Dark greens add a big flavor

punch, and grapefruit brings the tangy taste of citrus. Avocados are a good alternative for cheese. Toasted, heart-healthy Georgia Pecans substitute for the crunch of croutons and for the flavor hit of bacon. (You could even use smoked pecans.) The vinaigrette is made with fresh grapefruit juice from the segmented grapefruit and red wine vinegar.

◆ The Georgia Pecan Confetti Quinoa is a satisfying salad without any greens. Quinoa is a delicious gluten-

free grain that cooks up light and fluffy like rice but contains more protein. This recipe, featuring confetti colored sprinklings of orange, green and yellow veggies, is flavored with garlic and rosemary. Crunchy Georgia Pecans add even more great taste and nutrition because pecans are a super source of heart-healthy fats and antioxidants, and are low on the glycemic index.

Get more delicious ways to eat healthy at www.georgiapekans.org.

Avocado, Grapefruit Salad with Grapefruit Vinaigrette and Toasted Georgia Pecans

Yield: 4 servings

For salad:

- 1-2 heads Bibb lettuce, torn into bite sized pieces
- 1 bunch arugula, torn into bite sized pieces
- 2 Haas avocados, ripe but firm, peeled and cubed
- 2 ruby red or pink grapefruits, peeled and segmented, reserve excess juice
- 1/2 cup toasted Georgia Pecan halves (toasted in a sauté pan)
- 1/4 cup minced fresh parsley

For dressing:

- 2/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 cup red wine vinegar
- Juice from segmented grapefruit (approximately 3 tablespoons)
- Fresh ground salt and black pepper to taste.

Arrange lettuce and arugula on large platter.

Arrange avocado and grapefruit seg-



ments on the bed of greens.

Combine ingredients for dressing, and drizzle over entire salad.

Garnish with toasted pecans.

Add final garnish of minced parsley.

Nutrition Note: Healthy fats come from pecans, avocados and the olive oil-based vinaigrette. Vitamins, antioxidants, fiber and other plant nutrients are in the grapefruit, greens, avocado and Georgia Pecans.

Georgia Pecan Confetti Quinoa

Yield: 6 half-cup servings

- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup diced carrots
- 1/2 cup diced zucchini
- 1/2 cup diced yellow squash
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 cups cooked quinoa (prepared to package directions)
- 1/4 teaspoon finely chopped rosemary leaves
- 1/4 cup toasted Georgia Pecan

halves (reserve 2 tablespoons for garnish)

Heat oil in large skillet and add carrots, zucchini, yellow squash and garlic. Cook until crisp tender.

Fold in cooked quinoa, rosemary and pecans. Season to taste with freshly ground black pepper and sea salt.

Present quinoa on a large platter and garnish with additional toasted pecans.



Pierogies add twist to simple spring quiche

(Family Features) This spring, whether you're hosting guests for brunch, lunch or dinner, a quiche dish is the perfect addition to your menu. Replacing pastry dough with easy-to-prepare pierogies is not only a delicious twist on the classic dish, but it will save you time in the kitchen so you can spend more time enjoying the beautiful spring weather with family and friends.

The recipe below for Crust-less Spring Quiche combines eggs, Mrs. T's Pierogies, fresh vegetables and Asiago cheese to create a tasty and effortless meal that's ready in just 40 minutes. Simply pour the mixture into a casserole dish, bake it in the oven and serve. And you can get creative by substituting or adding any of your favorite spring vegetables – making this meatless dish a wonderful vegetarian option. Get more easy recipes at www.pierogies.com.

Crustless Spring Quiche

Prep time: 20 minutes Cook time: 40 minutes Serves: 6

- 1 16-ounce box Mrs. T's Potato and Cheddar Pierogies
- 1 tablespoon butter or margarine
- 1 small red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 cup mushrooms, sliced
- 3 cups baby spinach
- 2 scallions, sliced
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 3 large eggs
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

1 cup shredded Asiago cheese Preheat oven to 350°F.

Boil pierogies as box directs. Melt butter in 12-inch skillet over medium heat; add red pepper slices and mushrooms. Cook, stirring frequently about 5 minutes or until just tender. Remove to bowl with slotted spoon. Add spinach and scallions to drippings remaining in skillet; cook about 3 minutes or until just wilted. Remove to bowl with vegeta-

bles. Grease 3-quart casserole dish. Beat milk, eggs, salt and pepper in large bowl, until well mixed. Add vegetables, cheese and cooked pierogies. Pour mixture into prepared casserole dish. Bake 40 minutes, or until mixture is puffed and golden.

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While the federal government works hard to provide guidelines for healthy eating that apply to everyone, many people struggle to put those guidelines into action. This year's theme for National Nutrition Month highlights the importance of taking the healthy eating guidelines and adapting them to your situation in life, whether that be what part of the country you live in, your cultural background, your income, or your age.

"Eat Right Your Way Every Day" encourages everyone to find a way to eat healthy within his or her unique life situation.

Geographic location can greatly impact your nutrient intake. The "eating local" movement is designed to get the most nutrients out of crops and livestock grown in your area and support local agricultural. There are many parts of the United States that are more urban than rural, meaning that buying locally-grown produce, meats and dairy can be a challenge.

Also, if you live in a place with distinctive seasons, local produce is simply not available during parts of the year.

A way to adapt to this and still get the nutrients you need is to look to frozen and canned fruits and vegetables. They are definitely healthier options than not eating fruits and vegetables at all.

Meats and dairy are fairly easy to get year-round, even if they are not produced near where you live. Don't let your geographic location stand in the way of eating healthy.

Every culture has a unique mix of foods and eating habits that impact health. Eating healthy does not mean forsaking your culture, but it may mean making a few changes to cultural dishes to make them healthier. Making healthy choices within your culture takes some evaluation.



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT

What types of foods are considered staples in your culture? If they are fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and low-fat dairy, then you just need to make sure your cooking methods don't add unwanted fat, salt and extra calories through too much added sugar.

If they are not, what foods from your culture could you add to your home meals to make them healthier?

You can eat healthy on a budget. Typically, organic produce and meat are the most expensive grocery items.

In the produce aisle, set a limit on what you will spend for fresh fruits and vegetables. Avoid pre-chopped and pre-sliced produce, as they are often more expensive, although if you are not going to take the time to cook whole fruits and vegetables because they take too long to prepare, then save money elsewhere.

If you are going to buy organic, focus on buying organic versions of the foods that make the "Dirty Dozen" list, which features the 12 foods with the highest pesticide residue. The Dirty Dozen list includes apples, celery, strawberries, peaches, spinach, nectarines, imported grapes, sweet bell



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peppers, potatoes, domestic blueberries, lettuce, and kale/collard greens.

For the meat aisle, buy what is on sale and freeze it. Focus on lean cuts of meat without the bone. You can also introduce meatless entrees if you are adventurous.

Shop sales in the dairy aisle. On the interior aisles, look for sales and store brands to save money. Many store brands are offering healthy options that are low in fat or sodium or high in fiber and other healthy nutrients.

As we get older, eating healthy can become a challenge. Between the ages of 50 and 70, the challenge of preventing or managing chronic diseases should have the largest impact on the foods you choose.

After age 70, the barriers to healthy eating become more cumbersome. Decreased physical activity and the resulting reduction in lean body mass lead to a lower metabolism and a decreased need for calories, often leading to an unhealthy increase in weight.

Sometimes your appetite can decrease, making it hard to maintain a healthy weight. Taste and smell changes may result in a loss of interest in eating or can result in using too

much salt and sugar to compensate.

As you age, it is important to keep your eating habits in check. Are you continuing to eat a variety of foods, avoiding less healthy foods, are you eating too much and therefore gaining weight or are you not eating enough and therefore losing weight? Regardless of your age, the basics of healthy eating remain — fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats and dairy.

You may need to alter your cooking methods to make those foods easier to consume and digest. Examples include eating softer fruits and vegetables and opting for lean ground meat.

If your unique life-situation is complicated to the point that you have no idea what to eat to stay healthy, a registered dietitian can help. Find one within your community by visiting www.eatright.org and clicking on "Find a Registered Dietitian" or talk to your doctor and get a referral to a registered dietitian with whom he or she works.

A registered dietitian can help you develop a healthy way of eating that works for your current life situation as well as whatever your future holds.

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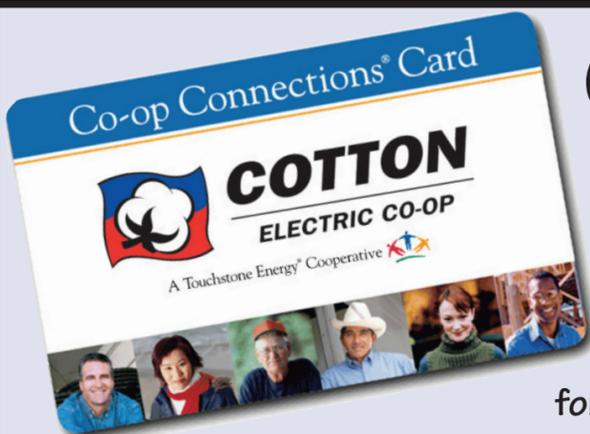
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Antique Adventures, Ltd.

15% off total purchase
811 SW A Ave. - Lawton
Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tue. - Sat.
580-351-0170

Arvest Bank

Open new checking account, receive \$10 or 1st box of checks free.
Valid at Lawton, Duncan, Walters and Chickasha branches.
580-250-4540

Attractive Graphics

Custom screen printing & vinyl cutting
10% discount
PO Box 1188, Cache, OK 73527
580-678-5786
attractivegraphicscsp@gmail.com

Baby Glam & Mama Too!

Denise Graham - owner
10% off store purchase
226 W. Main, Marlow
Tue.- Fri. 10 to 5:30, Sat. 10 to 3
580-658-2000
babyglamandmamatoos.com

Backdoor Bling

10% off
301 S. Highway 81
580-470-8848 • Duncan

Billingsley Ford of Lawton, Inc.

10% off service department repairs up to \$40 per visit.
8209 NW Quanah Parker Trailway
580-510-0925

Billingsley Ford L-M of Duncan, Inc.

10% off service department repairs up to \$40 per visit.
3505 NW Hwy. 81
580-255-5500

Blue Eyed Girls - Dear Friends

10% discount on regular-priced items, excluding tubes, tanks & tights
1513 N. Hwy. 81, Duncan • 580-475-1577

Bluff Creek Lodge

10% discount on all bookings
Eastern Stephens County
580-255-9592 • 580-470-5976
Lyndel Strain, owner

Burton Meat Market

10% off meat purchases over \$20
1206 N. Hwy. 81 (Chisholm Mall)
Duncan

Sue Cabelka, Realtor

Jay Kinder Real Estate Experts
\$500 off seller's closing costs
1146 NW Cache Rd., Lawton
580-248-2600 • 580-591-3362

Chambers Heat & Air

\$20 off service call
2407 SW Lee Blvd., Lawton
580-355-1749

Chisholm Trail Heritage Center

\$1.00 off admission per card per visit
Hours 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway, Duncan
580-252-6692

Cosmetic Specialty Labs, Inc.

10% off & free shipping when you spend \$25 or more.
210 SW Texas Ave., Lawton
580-355-2182

Country Closet Resale Shop

10% off all purchases
1 mi. south of Hwy. 70 on Hwy. 81
Waurika • 580-228-2928

Cowboy Opry Music Store

10% off all purchases
300 Oak Main, Comanche
580-439-8111

Debbie's Little Books

10% off regular purchase price of personalized books.
debbieslittlebooks.com
580-492-4672 • Elgin

Dino's Dry Cleaners

10% discount
1015 W. Oak, Duncan
580-255-2121 • 7-6 M-F • 8-1 Sat

Eastside Sod Farm

Free estimates and 10% discount
580-591-3360 • Lawton

Flowers, Etc.

Florist, antiques & gifts
Sally Wass - owner
10% discount
7831 US Highway 277, Elgin
Mon.-Fri. 9 to 5, Sat. 9 to 12
580-492-4880

Freeman Appliance

5% discount on any purchase over \$500
4325 N. Hwy. 81
580-255-2676 • Duncan

Gene Burk Auto Glass

10% off
2302 SW Lee Blvd., Lawton
580-355-3890

Gilmore Feed & Supply

5% off all items
Highway 70
580-228-3226 • Waurika

Gourmet Gadgets

10% off regular-priced merchandise
1105 NW Ferris Ave., Lawton
10 - 5:30 M-F, 10 - 3 Sat.
580-248-1837

GT Designz Embroidery & Gifts

10% discount
1206 N. Highway Suite 13, Duncan
580-252-1700 • www.gtdesignz.net

Horse Sense Trading Post

Jamon Kelley - owner
15% off orders over \$100
580-512-7047
horsesensetradingpost@yahoo.com

Infinity Computer Systems

10% off all labor.
2322 W. Gore Blvd.
580-351-2911 • Lawton

Johnson & Johnson Locksmith, LLC

10% discount, present card prior to service and ordering of parts
1720 NW Cache Rd., Ste. A, Lawton
New Location Coming Soon!
580-355-KEYS (5397) or 580-355-8749

Just Bling It

10% discount
1302 W. Bois d'Arc, Duncan, OK
580-251-9641

Lakeside Golf Course

\$5 green fees all day on Mon. & Tues.
Hours: 7 a.m. to dark
Walters, OK 580-875-3829

Linda's Carpet

Free vacuum cleaner with purchase of \$2,000 on Stainmaster carpets
4010 N. Hwy. 81 • Duncan

Medicine Creek Gallery

10% discount
206 East Lake Drive, Medicine Park
Fri. & Sun. 1-5, Sat. 11-5 • 940-736-6843
ArttotheWest@BudPawless.com

Nancy's Antiques

20% discount storewide
Hwy. 70, west side of railroad tracks
Waurika, OK
580-228-2575 or 228-2011

Nita's Flowers

Helen Thomas - owner
10% discount
114 N. Broadway, Marlow • 580-658-2714
Mon.-Fri. 8:30-5 • Sat. 8:30-2

Osage Animal Hospital

\$5 off professional examination
1500 W. Osage, Duncan • 580-255-4200
Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Red Dirt Bar & Grill

\$1.00 off appetizers
6425 N.W. Cache Rd., Lawton
918-720-3739

Ringtail USA

Monogramming, screen printing
Buy 12 caps or T-shirts, GET ONE FREE
P.O. Box 1763, Duncan, OK 73534
<http://ringtailusa.com> • 580-439-6560

The Salt Cellar

15% off non-sale items, excluding boxed cards and gift cards
3801 NW Cache Road, #23, Lawton
9 a.m. - 7 p.m. Mon.-Sat. • 580-357-5443

Shane Burk Glass & Mirror

Free mobile service in Stephens, Comanche, Grady, Jefferson, Caddo or Cotton counties or 15% off any residential or business windows or in-shop glass replacement.
580-252-5939
shaneburkautoglass.com

Showman's Choice

10% off Professional's Choice
M-F 8-5:30, Sat. 10-2
1205 SW Sheridan, Lawton
580-355-7469

Sign Dynamic

10% discount on purchases over \$200
301 SW B Avenue, Lawton
580-353-2522

Solid Plumbing

10% off all service calls, \$125 sewer camera, \$175 slab leak detection
2809 NW Sheridan Road, Lawton, OK
580-353-2863

Southern Maid Donuts

10% off donut & pizza purchases
101 Thoma Dr. #A, Elgin, OK
Open 5 a.m. - noon & 4 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Tue. - Sat.
580-492-6123

Southern Trophy

10% off items in Gifts to Treasure shop
9-5 Mon.-Fri.
101 N. 10th St., Duncan
580-252-7866

Stephens County Humane Society

\$10.00 off adoption fee
714 Martin Luther King Blvd.
580-252-7387

Steppin' OUTdoors

15% off all guides & tours.
20% off sponsorship rates.
580-450-1599
SteppinOUTdoorsToday.com

Studio 17 Salon & Gifts

15% off products or retail purchases
8176 State Hwy. 17, Elgin
580-492-4744
Sharla Spencer, owner

Sylvan Learning

Tutoring/Education
Schedule an assessment and \$60 will be deducted from the cost. This is a lifetime assessment fee, no charge for further testing at our center.
2603 NW Cache Rd., Suite 2, Lawton
580-351-9100

Tans Plus

Tanning salon, gifts and accessories
10% off monthly tanning packages
1 mile N. of Comanche on Old Hwy. 81
580-439-5767

TGR Construction LLC

5% off tractor services & 5% off on home construction.
580-512-2567 • Elgin

the 18th block

10% off regular-priced merchandise (cannot combine with other discounts)
331 SW C Ave., Lawton 73501
580-595-9682

The Branded Bear

5% discount on \$100 purchase
Medicine Park
580-529-3656

The Vine & Fig Tree

Event center with tea room restaurant
10% off Food/ Up to \$25 off in-house catering and 5% off Rentals unless discounted.
1304 W. Hwy. 7, Marlow
580-658-3377

Walters Super Stop

2 slices of pizza & 20-oz. fountain drink for \$1.99 + tax
311 W. Missouri, Walters
580-875-2001

Waurika QuikMart

All fountain drinks & all coffee \$0.82
South Main & Hwy. 70
Waurika
580-228-2560

Keep up with all the local and national discounts by downloading the Co-op Connections Card phone app at connections.coop.

Cotton Electric Co-op members get extra relief by presenting their Co-op Connections Card when getting prescriptions filled at participating pharmacies.

In 2012, members used their cards for discounts on 2,381 prescriptions not covered by insurance. A total of \$71,964.29 was discounted

for an average savings of \$30.22 per use.

The card is free to all members and can be obtained by calling 580-875-3351.

To find a participating pharmacy, call Member Services at 800-800-7616 or visit www.locateproviders.com. Type 22203 into the Group field and click 'log in' to start your search.

