

# The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

VOLUME 58

October 14, 2014

NUMBER 3

# 85

**85** CEC 2014  
ACSI score

**83** Touchstone  
Energy  
Co-ops

**75**  
IOUs

Cotton Electric scored an 85 in a recent ACSI member survey. This score is much higher than the investor-owned utility average of 75. Cotton Electric also compares favorably to a group consisting of members of other Touchstone Energy co-ops, which recorded a score of 83.

## Survey says: Doing well, room to do better

By Jennifer Meason and Karen Kaley

At Cotton Electric, our goal is to improve the quality of life for our members. We do that by delivering electricity to homes and businesses, by working to provide electricity at the most affordable rates, and by working with members to help them use less electricity as a way to manage their bills.

From time to time, we check with our members to see if we are meeting our goal. Our members often volunteer feedback when they have good or bad experiences, but we recently surveyed random members to get a more balanced assessment.

We asked TSE Services, a partner of Touchstone Energy, and FGI Research to conduct the phone survey. They made hundreds of calls until they col-

lected enough data to give us a good idea of the membership's view of our service.

TSE Services asked four core questions designed by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) to provide a uniform and independent measure of consumer experience. The ACSI includes an Energy Utilities Index, which is an independent customer satisfaction measure of the top 30 investor-owned gas, electric or combination utilities in the United States.

Cotton Electric scored an 85 in the member survey. This score is much higher than the investor-owned utility average of 75. Cotton Electric also compares favorably to a group consisting of members of other Touchstone Energy co-ops, which recorded a score of 83.

Results for the four core questions

on the Cotton Electric survey show that we meet or exceed benchmarks established by TSE Services. Responses indicating customer retention were significantly higher than the benchmark.

The questions are designed to measure the current overall level of member satisfaction; whether the co-op is meeting member expectations; whether the co-op is close to the ideal; and if members would choose the cooperative again if allowed to choose among utilities.

Cotton Electric's high ACSI Energy Utilities Index rating and overall survey results indicate that we are doing a good job. However, there is still room for improvement. On a scale of 100, we still have 15 points left on the table. Our focus in the coming year will be on the areas you said are most

important and improving the overall ACSI score.

You rated Cotton Electric highest in the areas of commitment to community, knowledgeable employees, and quick response time during outages. You indicated that you want energy at the lowest possible cost and that we need to focus on helping you learn to manage energy use.

As we work on these goals, we will monitor our progress. On our behalf, TSE Services will conduct the survey again toward the end of the year. Your feedback is important to us and we appreciate your help in this project.

The board of trustees and employees of Cotton Electric are grateful for the support your responses indicate and know that our work is not done. We will continue to strive to improve in all areas of service.

## Co-op phasing out MyUsage in favor of SmartHub

By Karen Kaley

Cotton Electric has introduced two new technology tools this year in an ongoing effort to better serve co-op members. Now, one of those tools will allow us to discontinue use of one introduced several years ago in exchange for more seamless member service.

Early in 2014, we launched an integrated voice recognition (IVR) system that allows members to make debit or credit card payments and check payments over the phone. The system provides a convenient and secure environment for this type of payment.

In addition, the IVR system provides updated information about account balances. The information is drawn from the co-op's billing software.

In May, we rolled out SmartHub, an improved way for members to manage Cotton Electric accounts online. SmartHub is accessible on traditional computers through our website, CottonElectric.com, or on any mobile device via the free Smart-

Hub app.

SmartHub has a My Usage tab that provides access to a variety of historical information about an account. For example, members can compare month-to-month power use or see a year's worth of kWh use on a bar graph overlaid with high, low and/or average temperatures.

This is an overlap of features offered in the MyUsage website and app that many Cotton Electric members, particularly those with prepaid electric accounts, have been using in the three years since it was launched. While MyUsage has worked well, the time has come to eliminate the duplication of service and a bit of confusion.

See SmartHub, Page 4



### Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment (PCA) applied to bills mailed after Oct. 1 is \$0.00772 per kWh. On a traditional bill, average use of 1500 kilowatt hours (kWh) would include a PCA charge of \$11.58 on the October bill. On a MyChoice account, PCA is added to the base rate of \$0.088923 per kWh, making the rate appear to be \$0.0967 from Sept. 17 through Oct. 17.

### September 2014 Temperature Extremes

| Day | High | Low | Avg. | Day | High | Low | Avg. |
|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|
| 1   | 85   | 43  | 64   | 16  | 73   | 25  | 49   |
| 2   | 84   | 45  | 65   | 17  | 71   | 32  | 52   |
| 3   | 80   | 49  | 65   | 18  | 60   | 37  | 49   |
| 4   | 80   | 58  | 69   | 19  | 80   | 29  | 55   |
| 5   | 84   | 58  | 71   | 20  | 55   | 37  | 46   |
| 6   | 69   | 41  | 55   | 21  | 46   | 26  | 36   |
| 7   | 70   | 37  | 54   | 22  | 61   | 24  | 43   |
| 8   | 73   | 34  | 54   | 23  | 71   | 32  | 52   |
| 9   | 67   | 36  | 52   | 24  | 64   | 30  | 47   |
| 10  | 65   | 53  | 59   | 25  | 74   | 26  | 50   |
| 11  | 70   | 50  | 60   | 26  | 69   | 35  | 52   |
| 12  | 66   | 39  | 53   | 27  | 67   | 30  | 49   |
| 13  | 76   | 33  | 55   | 28  | 61   | 43  | 52   |
| 14  | 67   | 39  | 53   | 29  | 57   | 40  | 49   |
| 15  | 53   | 28  | 41   | 30  | 57   | 39  | 48   |

Source: srh.noaa.gov/oin/  
Average Daily High: 88 Average Daily Low: 65

### Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed Tuesday, Nov. 11. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520. The November issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on Nov. 17, 2014.

### 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

# There's only 1 Cotton Electric

On the west wall of our boardroom hangs a certificate of incorporation. It is dated Sept. 15, 1938.

There is nothing unusual about the certificate; every corporation doing business in Oklahoma

has one. The state treats us like any other business. We have to follow state statutes, pay taxes and obey rules that apply to all corporations. This is where the similarity ends.

Cotton Electric Cooperative is an autonomous, independent company. We differ from public utilities because we are owned by those we serve. There are no stockholder dividends to satisfy.

Like most electric cooperatives, we use a "not for profit" business model. Even though similar in design, Cotton remains unique. We have approximately 15,321 members. This means there are 15,321 reasons why Cotton Electric is different from all other utilities.

In 1938, the original members wanted electrical power delivered in a safe manner. In those days, reliability was not an issue. This was a time when availability was more important than quality or price.

As time went on, things



Warren Langford, CEO

changed. Utility plant investments increased to match more demanding service requirements. Today, members' needs require power lines be constructed in a manner that exceeds industry stan-

dards. The result is a \$119M utility plant with an ever-improving reliability rating.

Still today, your board weighs service quality and reliability issues against cost before making a decision.

Only the members of Cotton Electric Cooperative determine what electric rates will be. As with most utilities, the cost of generation is the number one expense. In Cotton Electric's case, 72 cents of every dollar spent pays for the generating and transmission of electricity. The remaining 28 cents pays for the cost of substations, pole replacements and everything else involved in operating your distribution system. Because your board represents the membership and no one else, they make sure your electric rates reflect an efficient manner of operation.

Because Cotton is autonomous and independent, increased service quality require-

ments are addressed quickly. At the same time, rates are kept on a break-even basis.

In 2003, you formed the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation and kicked off "Operation Round Up." More than 67 percent of the membership voluntarily participates. Because of your philanthropy, more than \$750,000 has been donated to organizations throughout our service area. This program has improved the quality of life in southwest Oklahoma. Its creation was your decision and yours alone.

No one cares more about the environment than Cotton Electric Cooperative. Every generation of cooperative members has left the service area a better place than before.

Today, we are concerned that scientific evidence indicates CO2 emissions may be affecting climate change. We already encourage conservation and the efficient use of electricity. Skilled staff has performed thousands of free home energy audits in an effort to reduce consumption. If we can reduce generating needs, CO2 emissions will be less.

The membership stands ready to do more and make the financial sacrifice necessary to reduce the world's carbon foot-

print. But first, we want to see a workable plan. Cotton Electric actively engages the Environmental Protection Agency in an effort to hold it accountable. We want a plan that is quantifiable and will have meaningful results. That's not too much to ask.

We have until Dec. 1 to make our voices heard. I urge you to complete the information at [www.Action.coop](http://www.Action.coop) so we can send a unified message. If not, complete and return the form on Page 3, bottom right hand corner, and we'll do it for you.

Cotton Electric is different, stands alone and has a unique set of operating requirements. This autonomy makes it necessary to have local leadership who can solve local problems. It's obvious that no one is more qualified to establish the business policies of this cooperative than you.

There are 905 electric cooperatives serving 42 million people in 47 states. Cooperatives own 42 percent of all the nation's distribution lines. While we may be similar to other cooperatives in name and structure, rest assured – there's only 1 Cotton Electric Cooperative.

## Why climate regulations matter to you

Thank you to the 631 Cotton Electric members who recently attended the 76th annual meeting. Your participation in the governance of your cooperative is important and the embodiment of the cooperative principle of democratic member control.

At the meeting, you might remember CEO Warren Langford asking for your help in making our voices heard in Washington, D.C., regarding the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recently released regulations to limit carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions at new power plants.

Cooperative members have a long history of being good stewards of the environment. We live, work and raise our families here in southwest Oklahoma. We want the best for our state, nation and planet. However, we're concerned the EPA has chosen to write regulations for reducing CO2 emissions that rely on technology that has not been proven at commercial power plants.

This "carbon capture and storage" method might look good on paper or in the lab, but unlike Washington, we're not willing to take the risk with your electric bills.

We believe the proposed regulations will lead to more expensive electricity for members of electric cooperatives in Oklahoma. That's why we're asking everyone to send comments to the EPA through [www.Action.coop](http://www.Action.coop). This easy-to-use online tool sends your thoughts directly to Washington so regulators understand the potential harm of these rules. If you don't have computer access at home, we can assist you at our Walters or Duncan offices where Action.coop comment cards are located at the front counters. You can also fill out the form on page 3

### MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

By Jennifer Meason

and mail or drop it by one of the offices.

In case you're wondering whether the EPA actually will read these comments, consider this: By law, the EPA is required to ask the American public how a proposed rule would affect costs to consumers, the quality of life and the economic future of their communities. That's why electric cooperatives are leading the charge with the 42 million members nationwide to raise our voices collectively so we'll be heard loud and clear.

Already, tens of thousands of folks from across the country have shared their concerns. The country has not yet climbed out of the recession; many Americans are hurting financially. We need to tell the EPA that cost matters. Anyone can send a comment at [www.Action.coop](http://www.Action.coop) – even if they don't live on co-op lines – so please encourage your family and friends, regardless where they live, to join us.

No matter where our energy comes from, we all have a responsibility to keep electricity reliable and affordable. Like energy policy itself, the regulations proposed by the EPA are technical, but an increase in your electric bill is personal. That's why we need you to speak up.

Jobs and tough choices for Oklahomans on a budget and the future prosperity of our communities are threatened by electric bills going up. That's why we must stick together.

We care about the price of electricity because we're a cooperative and we look out for you, our

members. We think about our members with every decision we make. And we're concerned that the EPA is making a decision that will force an increase in what we have to pay for power.

That's why we all need to take a stand and urge our families and friends to join us.

Please visit [www.Action.coop](http://www.Action.coop). Just as important, get out and talk to people about what we're doing and why we care about electricity prices.

Your electric cooperatives in Oklahoma are powering the future, driving economic growth and fostering innovation. And we won't stand for ill-considered regulations written without regard to your economic well-being. Please join us in this important fight today.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Meason at (580) 875-3351.

## The Current

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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.

### August 2014 Operating Stats

|   | 2014        | 2013        |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Total Amount Billed/Accrued             | \$6,550,207 | \$5,972,326 |
| Cost of Purchased Power                 | 4,986,707   | 4,263,837   |
| Taxes                                   | 127,110     | 119,453     |
| Total Operating Expense Per Mile        | 1,264       | 1,148       |
| Average Farm and Residential Bill       | 174         | 165         |
| Average Farm and Residential kWh        | 1,531       | 1,615       |
| Total Meters Billed (farm, residential) | 18,269      | 18,064      |
| Miles Energized                         | 5,148       | 5,128       |
| Density Per Mile                        | 3.55        | 3.52        |
| New Service Connects YTD                | 237         | 247         |
| Services Retired                        | 111         | 136         |

# Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the November issue, please submit information by Nov. 3 by calling 580-875-4259 or send an email to [info@cottonelectric.com](mailto:info@cottonelectric.com).

## Prairie Circuit rides into Duncan

Top cowboys and cowgirls from Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska will ride into Duncan Oct. 16-18 to compete in the Prairie Circuit Finals Rodeo. Performances begin at 7:30 p.m. each night in the Stephens County fairgrounds arena. Steer roping will be at 9 a.m. Oct. 17 only.

Prairie Circuit winners in bareback riding, saddle bronc riding, barrel racing, steer wrestling, team roping, tie-down roping and bull riding will compete for cash prizes and a spot in the Ram National Circuit Finals Rodeo.

Tickets for all performances are available at Crutcher's Western Wear in Lawton and Duncan or at the door.

## Big BBQ Bash at LO Ranch

Get your appetites and lawn chairs ready for the Big BBQ Bash Oct. 17 and 18 at LO Ranch, 2102 SE 60th Street, Lawton. CASA of Southwest Oklahoma is hosting this official Oklahoma State Barbecue Championship.

This professional cooking competition is sanctioned by Kansas City Barbecue Society. Awards include Grand Champion, Reserved Grand Champion, and People's Choice Award. Cash awards, trophies and plaques will be awarded in each category.

Deadline to enter has passed, but the public can participate in selecting the People's Choice on the first day of the event.

For information, visit [Big-BBQ-Bash.com](http://Big-BBQ-Bash.com).

## Cox's Store VFD plans fish fry

Cox's Store VFD will hold its 18th annual Fish Fry from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Oct. 18 at the fire station. The station is three miles north of Oklahoma Highway 7 on Oklahoma Highway 65.

There is no charge for the meal of fish and all the trimmings, but donations will be accepted. Door prizes will also be awarded.

For information, call Jody Dreves at 580-248-0932.

## Bratfest time at Good Shepherd

Lunch or dinner, you can't miss with a home-cooked meal of brats, warm German potato salad, cinnamon applesauce and desserts of all kinds, including the sugar-free type.

Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and dinner from 5 to 7 p.m. Oct. 23 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 2401 Country Club Road in Duncan. Carryouts will be available.

## CU musicians offer performances

Cameron University's music departments have singing, percussion and jazz performances scheduled in late October. All performances will be at 7:30 p.m. in the University Theatre.

The CU Concert Choir and Centennial Singers will appear in concert Oct. 23. The choir will perform a di-

verse repertoire, and the singers will feature the music of The Beatles.

The fall concert for the CU Percussion Ensemble is set for Oct 28. Performances from the CU Pan Express and CU Drumline will round out the evening.

Jazz fans will want to see the CU Jazz Ensemble, CU Country/Jazz Fusion and Cameron/Lawton Community Jazz Ensemble perform on Oct. 30.

## Sportsman's Feast set in Lawton

Lawton's Annual Sportsman's Feast is a time for avid hunters and fishermen to get together and enjoy the fellowship of a great dinner of wild game and fish. A guest speaker is sure to touch home and challenge outdoorsmen.

The feast will be at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 24 and 8 a.m. Oct. 25 at Bible Baptist Church, 7501 SW Lee Blvd., Lawton.

For information and registration, visit [LawtonHuntersFeast.com](http://LawtonHuntersFeast.com).

## Harvest Festival closes season

Lawton Farmers Market will mark the end of the season with the annual Harvest Festival from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Oct. 25 at the Comanche County Fairgrounds, 920 SW Sheridan Road.

Celebrating the connection of food, agriculture, and community, the festival features the farmers market growers, as well as area crafters, craftsmen, artists and food vendors. The family-friendly open air atmosphere will also feature a pumpkin painting area, as well as a professional photographer.

Lawton Farmers Market is a great opportunity to connect with and support local area farms and farmers, and purchase fresh, locally grown seasonal produce.

For information, visit the Lawton Farmers Market Facebook page, or [swokgrowers.com](http://swokgrowers.com).

## Comanche plans Fall Fest

Comanche's annual Fall Fest is the perfect place to celebrate the season with family friendly activities. Activities will be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 25 at Comanche Field of Dreams.

Children can participate in the Great Pumpkin Hunt and collect black and orange eggs with prizes, show off costumes in the costume contest and get their fill of candy at the Candy Harvest while trick or treating at vendor booths.

There will also be live entertainment from HiJacker's Hollow Band in the morning and evening and amateur lawn mower races.

For information, call Nick Haws at 580-560-9726.

## Family fun at Simmons festival

Lots of family fun is in store on Oct. 25 at the Simmons Center in Duncan. Planned activities include live performances, a craft show, carnival, magic show and haunted house.

The haunted house will be open from 7 p.m. to midnight Saturday.

Other activities include a craft show from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and a magic show at 5:30 p.m. in the Simmons Center theater.

The carnival will include giant in-

# Photo of the Month



**Bryce Seaton, 6, has plenty of Football Fun playing on the Cache 6U PeeWee Red football team. He is the son of Cotton Electric members Holly and Brad Seaton of Cache.**

**Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for November is Veterans. Entries can be emailed to [info@cottonelectric.com](mailto: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.**

flatables, games, rides and food. It will run from 1 to 5 p.m. Admission is \$10. Tickets can be purchased in advance from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at the north entrance of the Simmons Center. Tickets will be also available at the door.

## CTAC hosts Glen Miller Orchestra

Chisholm Trail Arts Council begins the 2014-15 season with a blast from the big band past. The Glenn Miller Orchestra takes the Simmons Center stage at 7:30 p.m. Oct. 28.

The Glenn Miller Orchestra is the most sought-after big band in the world today for both concert and dance engagements. Still considered the greatest band of all time, its unique sound is loved by almost anybody that cares for dance music.

Formed in 1956, the Glenn Miller Orchestra has been touring consistently since, playing an average of 300 live dates a year around the globe to

millions of fans.

Tickets are available at the CTAC office, 717 West Willow, or at the box office. Call 580-252-4160 or visit [ChisholmTrailArts.com](http://ChisholmTrailArts.com) for more information.



## Fall back!

Daylight Saving Time ends at 2 a.m. Nov. 2. Remember to "fall back" – turn clocks back one hour – or you'll get to church an hour early!

**More Community Spotlight on Page 4**

# The Current's 2014 Holiday Gift Guide

**Reserve Your Space Today In Our Holiday Gift Guide! Deadline To Advertise**

**Is October 27<sup>th</sup>.**

Call 580-875-4277

Email: [jkreiz@cottonelectric.com](mailto:jkreiz@cottonelectric.com)

**to be included in the November issue! Featuring gift ideas, recipes, decorating tips & holiday crafts.**

**Publish Date: Nov. 17, 2014**

## YOUR VOICE MAKES THE DIFFERENCE



# CO-OP NATION

STRONG & PROUD

**ACTION.COOP**

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For more information, including our privacy policy, please visit [nreca.coop/political-action](http://nreca.coop/political-action)



# SmartHub software replacing MyUsage.com

# Community Spotlight

Continued from Page One

Jeff Simpson, vice president of finance, explained, "Cotton Electric uses NISC (National Information Solutions Cooperative) software for our billing and mainframe software. For the past three years, we have used MyUsage, provided by a third-party vendor, Exceleron, to process information pertaining to prepaid member accounts.

"It worked very well, except when it came time for reconciliation with our in-house billing software. The NISC software updated once each month, while MyUsage updated daily. This was a source of confusion."

With the two programs updating on different schedules, account balance information was often out of sync. The monthly NISC "true up" of the accounts would occasionally show a difference of several dollars between the two softwares.

This would come as a surprise to members monitoring prepaid accounts through MyUsage. It also meant account balance information was incorrect when using the IVR system.

The good news is that SmartHub is an NISC product and offers all of the correct information, updated daily, just like MyUsage but better, because it is tied to our mainframe software.

So, when our contract with MyUsage ends on Oct. 25, our members will still have access to all of the same data with no confusion or surprises.

Well ... one surprise.

Billing staff will migrate all current MyUsage accounts to SmartHub. Everything will pull over except alerts.

Initially, all accounts will receive SmartHub email



Visit [www.SmartHubApp.com](http://www.SmartHubApp.com) to learn more and download an app compatible with your Apple or Android devices.

alerts only. Members will have to get the SmartHub app or go through CottonElectric.com to reset text message or phone call alerts.

Members will need to go to the Notification tab in SmartHub to add text and phone call alerts.

"The member has to do that because it will require a password," Simpson said.

"If a member is using the SmartHub app, a verification number will be sent to his or her smart phone or other mobile device."

As always, we are ready to help with this transition. Those who don't have computers can bring a phone or device to our Walters or Duncan office and we will help get the app and notifications set up.

## Magic Lantern offers classic films

Magic Lantern Film Society of Cameron University screens DVD presentations of classic films each month in the CETES Conference Center, Room B.

The Nov. 14 offering will be "Gone With the Wind," the classic 1939 depiction of the struggles and triumphs of a well-born Southern woman before and after the American Civil War.

The presentations will be on hiatus until the Jan. 9, 2015, screening of "The Age of Innocence."

There is no admission charge, but donations are accepted. For information about the society, or to see a schedule and synopsis of films, visit [Cameron.edu/magiclantern](http://Cameron.edu/magiclantern).

## LCT mid-season auditions on tap

Auditions for Lawton Community Theatre's third production of the 2014-15 season, "Love, Loss and What I Wore," will be at 7 p.m. Nov. 17 and 18 at John Denney Playhouse, 1316 NW Bell Avenue. Auditioners should wear close-toed shoes and be prepared to read.

Based on the book by Ilene Beckerman, the play uses our love of clothing and accessories to create an evening of funny and often poignant stories.

Performances are set for Jan. 16-18 and 22-25, 2015. For information, visit [LCT-OK.org](http://LCT-OK.org).

**Thanks!**

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Advance Tickets Available at [www.prairiecircuitfinalsrodeo.com](http://www.prairiecircuitfinalsrodeo.com) & Crutcher's Western Wear in Lawton and Duncan.

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Door prize winners at the District 2 meeting held in Marlow were Eugene Cobb, left, \$50 energy voucher; Myrna Peters, Weather Alert radio; and Bill McCarley, Old Timer pocket knife.



Door prize winners at the District 6 meeting held in Duncan were Michael Hampton, left, weather radio; Jody Blalock, Old Timer pocket knife; and Sue Morgan, \$50 energy voucher.



Door prize winners at the District 8 meeting held in Walters were Loyd Fletcher, left, weather radio; Jerry Adkison, \$50 energy voucher; and Ron Smith, Old Timer pocket knife.

## Districts 2, 6 and 8 hold triennial meetings

By Karen Kaley

Electric cooperatives operate under a set of principles. Principle No. 2 is about democratic member control, with each member having one vote. As a result, control remains in the hands of all consumers. Trustees are elected from the membership.

Cotton Electric has nine membership districts. Each district is represented by a trustee serving a three-year term. The terms are staggered so three trustees come up for re-election each year. In 2014, those trustees represented Districts 2, 6 and 8.

On Aug. 25 in Marlow, trustee Ken Layn began his meeting by noting the lack of a major ice storm in recent years and said, "The worst thing we've had to deal with lately has been a flood, believe it or not. We lost 22 poles in the Cookietown area."

He mentioned a recent survey of the co-op's members that came back with an 85 percent approval and satisfaction rating.

"We hope all members have good experiences with Cotton Electric," he said, but observed the rating indicates room to improve.

"We try to understand the issues," he said, "but we need your feedback. What are we not doing? What do we need to do to make the co-op better?"

At the Sept. 4 meeting in Walters, trustee DeWayne High echoed the call for input from members.

"If there is a problem with your service, holler at me or dispatch at the co-op. If we can, we'll fix it."

It was pointed out that district meetings are the event to attend when members have questions.

The District 6 meeting was held Sept. 9 in Duncan. Trustee Tommy Jones welcomed the members attending and, as Layn and High had done, turned the proceedings over to the trustees on the current

year's district meeting committee.

Members at each meeting selected a chairman from among those present. The chairmen appointed a meeting secretary then asked for a report on the presence of a quorum. Co-op bylaws require a quorum of 5 percent of a district's members to hold an election.

Neither a quorum nor opponents were present at any of the meetings held this year, so Layn, High and Jones were held over for three-year terms beginning immediately after the 2014 annual membership meeting.

Warren Langford, the co-op's CEO, addressed each gathering. Following the theme of looking for feedback, he first opened the floor for member questions.

One member asked if there was a way to keep bills from fluctuating so much. He suggested the member speak with a billing representative at the meeting about average monthly payment plan.

Another member asked about guidance of issues to discuss with lawmakers. Both questions, posed at different meetings, led Langford to outlining reasons to communicate with the Legislature.

He pointed out that 72 cents of every dollar paid to the co-op is used to purchase power. The remaining 28 cents pays for poles, trucks, wages and other expenses.

"The future may bring a higher number than 72 cents. Sixty percent of our power is generated by coal" and recent EPA action seems to target that fuel source.

"Coal is the most inexpensive fuel but I don't think the coal industry will survive global warming pressures."

Langford explained the co-ops feel that the EPA-

issued Clean Power Plan requiring a 30 percent reduction in CO2 emissions by 2030 will shut out coal at great expense to ratepayers.

He pointed out the U.S. cannot unilaterally reduce global emissions yet we are required to reduce emissions drastically.

"If we have to shut down or retrofit the coal plant in Hugo, it will be expensive. Natural gas prices can spike. We need time to come up with something that will make a difference if we must go to the expense. I encourage you to let politicians know how you feel.

"Let's do something but be fair about it" is the message co-ops need to deliver, Langford said.

"Please participate in the conversation by visiting Action.coop," he said. "To be heard, we have to speak up."

On a more upbeat note, Langford said the co-op was in sound financial condition and the board of trustees had had voted to retire capital credits for the fifth year in a row. He said checks for \$5 and up would be in the mail after the first of October.

The meetings concluded with drawings for door prizes that included a \$50 energy voucher, An Old Timer pocketknife and a weather radio.

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### Open Enrollment: A Great Time to Review Your Retirement Plan

If you work for a medium-to-large company, you may now be entering the "open enrollment" period — that time of year when you get to make changes to your employee benefits. Your benefit package can be a big piece of your overall financial picture, so you'll want to make the right moves — especially in regard to your employer-sponsored retirement plan.

Take a close look at your 401(k) or similar plan, such as a 403(b), if you work for a school or a nonprofit group, or a 457(b), if you work for a state or local government. And keep these possible moves in mind:

**Boost your contributions.** If your salary has gone up over the past year, or if you just think you have a reasonable "cushion" in your disposable income, boost your contributions to your employ-

er-sponsored retirement plan. Even if you can't afford to contribute the maximum amount — which, in 2014, is \$17,500, or \$23,000 if you're 50 or older — to your 401(k) or similar plan, try to put in as much as you can afford. Remember the key benefits of these plans: Your money can grow tax deferred and your contributions can lower your annual taxable income. (Keep in mind, though, that you will eventually be taxed on your withdrawals, and any withdrawals you take before you reach 59½ may be subject to a 10% IRS penalty.)

**Don't miss the match.** Try to take full advantage of your employer's matching contribution, if one is offered. Your employer may match 50% of employee contributions, up to the first 6% of your salary. So if you're only deferring 3% of your income, you are missing half the

match — or leaving money "on the table," so to speak.

**Rebalance, if necessary.** You may be able to change the investment mix of your employer-sponsored retirement plan throughout the year, but you might find that the best time to review your holdings and rebalance your portfolio is during open enrollment, when you're reviewing all your benefit options. Try to determine if your investment allocation is still appropriate for your needs or if you own some investments that are chronically underperforming. And always keep in mind the need to diversify. Try to spread your money around a variety of investments within your plan, with the exact percentages of each investment depending on your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon. As you near retirement, you may need to lower your overall risk level, but

even at this stage of your career, you'll benefit from a diversified portfolio. While diversification can't guarantee a profit or protect against loss, it can help reduce the impact of volatility on your holdings.

**Review your beneficiary designations.** Your retirement plan's beneficiary designations are important and, in fact, can even supersede the wishes you express in your will. So if you experience changes in your life — marriage, remarriage, a birth or an adoption, etc. — you'll need to update the beneficiary designations on your 401(k) or similar plan. It won't take much time today — and it can help prevent a lot of trouble tomorrow.

You work hard for the money that goes into your retirement plan — so make sure your plan is working hard for you.

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## Fall season means energy adjustments around homes

By Trent Marlett

We are finally at that time of year when cooler temperatures are starting to take over. This is also the time of year when our energy bills should be almost as comfortable as we are.

With less heat outside, our air conditioners do not have to run as much in order to keep the house cool. Because HVAC systems account for the vast majority of our energy bills, things are about to look a lot better than they did this summer.

Here are a few ways to take advantage of the cooler temperatures outside and save some energy this fall.

Even though it's still hot enough in the afternoons that we still need our air conditioners, it's starting to get really nice in the early mornings and late evenings. To save a lot of energy during this time, we can take advantage of those nice temperatures to offset our energy use.

In the morning, when the temperature is around 65 to 75 degrees, we can turn our thermostats up so the air conditioner doesn't come on. Open windows on the north and south sides to let the cool breeze come through the house to keep comfortable.

Later in the morning, when the temperature out-

# Simple Savings

side gets up around 80, we can close those windows and reset the thermostat to come on if needed to maintain comfort.

This is also a really good time to check and replace air filters in our HVAC system. They have had to work overtime all summer long, filtering a lot more air while the units are running more often.

Also, our dry dusty southwest Oklahoma means that much more dirt and debris the filter has to keep out of our air handlers.

It also would be a good idea to have a certified technician come out and give the system a checkup before the heating season comes around.

Some of us use window air-conditioning units only during the summer. When the weather cools, it is a good idea to remove those window units and store them away.

By doing this, we can close those windows and seal off the outside cold air much better than if the window unit was still in place.

If you cannot take the window unit out, it is a good idea to make sure it is sealed up as much as possible before the cold weather arrives. One can even place an insulated wrap around the whole window unit and stop the air from coming in.

Finally, since the weather is so nice this time of year, we need to get outside more often. During the heat of the summer, I don't feel like doing much outside unless it's early morning or late evening. Now is the time of year when I actually can get a lot of stuff done around the house that I've been putting off during summer.

Now is a good time to check all the weather stripping around doors and windows and the caulking around them, as well. If anything needs to be replaced or more caulk needs to be added, it's a great time to take care of that job.

This also is the time of year I cook outside on the grill more and save energy by not using the oven or other indoor appliances.

Take advantage of the wonderful weather the fall brings, and save energy and money while doing it.

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# National Cooperative Month celebrates co-op difference

Cotton Electric Cooperative is inviting all to celebrate cooperatives in Oklahoma – and across America – during National Cooperative Month.

Every October, cooperatives are recognized for the qualities that make the business model unique. Seven cooperative principles set us apart from other businesses: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; members' economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community.

This Co-op Month, we're focusing on "The Electric Co-op Connection: Discover the meaning of membership." Co-ops exist to serve their members, but they also play a major role in their local communities.

"Cooperative membership is unique," said CEO Warren Langford.

"Electric cooperatives are committed to providing members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity, but there's more to it than that. We're local, and that means we care about our community. This is why we participate in programs such as Operation Round Up® and Youth Tour."

Cotton Electric is proud to be part

of America's cooperative network, which includes more than 47,000 cooperative businesses.

Electric co-ops provide power for many Oklahomans, with 28 electric co-ops serving 391,720 members. Other co-op businesses thrive in our state, too, with Oklahoma's co-op economy employing nearly 7,000 residents.

Cotton Electric is one of more than 900 electric cooperatives, public utility districts and public power districts serving 42 million people in 47 states.

"In the 1930s, rural America needed electricity just as much as anyone else," Langford said.

"It was a major challenge that big utilities weren't interested in tackling. So, the men and women of rural America banded together and made it happen. And that's why we celebrate in October – we celebrate the power of working together for the common good and bettering the quality of life for our friends and neighbors."

In addition to cooperative utilities, Oklahoma residents are served cooperatively by credit unions, food co-ops, agricultural co-ops, and more. To learn more about Cotton Electric, visit CottonElectric.com.

## Did you know?

U.S. retail energy residential energy prices for the first half of 2014 averaged 12.3 cents per kwh, an increase of 3.2 percent from the same period the year before. The Cotton Electric average for the first half of 2014 was 9.2 cents per kwh, 25.2 percent less than the national average.

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In this day and time, there are many reasons why people run for political office. I'm running for the office of District Judge because I want to serve you and help keep this community safe and prosperous for my children and the generations to come.

My time in the District Attorney's Office and in the private practice of law have given me the experience needed to fulfill the role of District Judge. My work ethic is unquestioned and I will work hard to be a District Judge that you can be proud of.

I'm asking for your vote on November 4th.

Thank you and God bless you.

*Josh Creekmore*  
**Together Let's move forward!**

Paid for by Friends of Josh Creekmore for District Judge 2014

# Cross-training gives line worker Evan Hays inside scoop on tasks



## Employee Spotlight Evan Hays

Catching up with Evan Hays for an interview was made easy recently because of a new aspect of lineman apprenticeship. Normally, the line worker serves in an area near Medicine Park and Elgin, but he spent a few weeks this summer at the co-op headquarters in Walters.

Aspiring linemen go through four years of apprenticeship before receiving certification. The long stretch of time is filled with bookwork and fieldwork in an effort to produce a well-instructed and experienced journeyman lineman.

Cotton Electric has recently added a new phase to the in-depth learning period: cross-training. That explains some different faces that have been seen around the co-op headquarters for the past several months.

Five apprentices and a lineman are getting inside looks at different co-op departments by spending a week working in each of the billing, dispatch, meter shop, engineering, marketing and management departments. They also spend some time working from the Velma warehouse and on the overhead construction crew.

Hays is classified as neither an apprentice nor a journeyman but simply a lineman as he completes the final year of fieldwork before certification

in Spring 2015. He has spent the majority of that time working outside with a fellow Elgin-area native, journeyman lineman Clint Ingram.

About working in the various offices, the notoriously taciturn Hays said, "I've learned a lot."

Such as? "How different departments work ... a lot of stuff I didn't know about."

When asked about specifics in each area, the answers indicate the cross-training is a good idea. When in the billing department, for example, Hays saw how bills are created, observed the flow of payments and listened in on member interactions. He became familiar with the different ways members can pay power bills.

He volunteered, "Now that I know how things work, I can give better answers when members ask about bills."

In the field, line workers are often asked how to get a power line built to a certain location. Thanks to time he spent with the engineering department, seeing how a line is staked out, a material list is compiled and work order developed, Hays said he now has background information that will help him provide a good response.

He has learned how to rebuild transformers in the me-

ter shop and what goes into calling out linemen to an outage from dispatch. Hays even spent a couple of hours with the editor of The Current in marketing.

After an editor's overly-detailed explanation of how each month's newspaper is produced, the man of few words remarked, "There's a lot more to this than I realized."

While he found his time "inside" informative, Hays said he preferred his regular job "outside."

His daily work includes repairing and tightening hardware, working outages and work orders in a district that stretches from Treasure Lake Job Corps to the western edge of Elgin and from Fort Sill to the south side of Apache. He described it as one of smallest districts in terms of square miles but very dense in meters.

Hays said the mountains and rocks in that area are the biggest challenge.

"It takes longer to dig holes for poles and it's pretty tough to put in underground lines."

He said a major project in the area involves changing out a lot of underground line.

"Cotton Electric is doing all the work because the infrastructure has aged. Wear and tear is starting to affect quality of service."

He spoke of a new substa-



Evan Hays performs maintenance on a security light in the Medicine Park area.

tion that will improve the quality of power around Elgin, an area that has experienced significant development over the past several years.

Asked what he thinks about the growth in his hometown, Hays said, "It's changed a bunch."

Is that a good thing? "Just makes it harder to

drive through town. They have stoplights now."

You're kind of a quiet fellow, huh?

"Yeah."

Don't let his short answers fool you. Hays knows quite a bit, thanks to the robust training program for linemen at Cotton Electric, now including cross-training.

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# CECF announces third-quarter grants

Pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters – set enough of them aside on a regular basis, and the coins add up to dollars. That’s how Operation Round Up works.

Most Cotton Electric members participate in ORU, in which power bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar. The amount rounded up can be as little as 1 cent and is never more than 99 cents. On average, each participating member contributes about \$6 each year.

The funds are pooled and administered by the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation, a board of directors that meets quarterly to consider grant applications. The board consists of Warren Langford, the co-op’s CEO; Tim McCary, president of the co-op’s board of trustees; and three representatives from the Cotton Electric service area: Carly Douglass, Danny Marlett and Carter Waid.

The board met Sept. 11 to review 11 grant applications. Grants totaling \$25,600 will be distributed to nine of the applicants, and funds are earmarked for another.



Download grant applications at [cottonelectric.com](http://cottonelectric.com).  
Deadline for fourth-quarter 2014 grant applications is Dec. 3.

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program and members may opt out at any time by calling or sending a letter or email stating the account holder’s name, account number and the request to be removed.

Third-quarter grants include:

- American Red Cross will have a \$5,000 CECF grant to use for disaster relief.
- Big Pasture School Library will purchase a reading rug with a \$600 CECF grant.
- Comanche County Memorial Hospital’s EMS department will purchase a stretcher extender with a \$2,500 CECF grant.

•Empire Public Schools will use a \$1,500 CECF grant in the project to rebuild the athletic building.

•The Town of Indianoma will use a \$5,000 CECF grant to purchase a backup generator for the water blending station.

•Lovesick Ministries Inc. will purchase kitchen equipment with a \$2,000 CECF grant.

•Sugden Volunteer Fire Department will make repairs to a fire truck using a \$5,000 CECF grant.

•Walters Public Schools will use a \$2,500 CECF grant in the project to refurbish the auditorium.

•Christians Concerned is raising funds to purchase and install a walk-in freezer. CECF has pledged \$2,500 to be added to other funds once they are raised.

CECF has awarded or pledged grants totaling \$788,463.47 since the foundation was established in 2004.

Applications for fourth-quarter grants are due by Dec. 4. Downloadable applications are available at [CottonElectric.com](http://CottonElectric.com).

**Star Spooktacular Halloween Costume Contest**  
October 31<sup>st</sup> 8pm-10pm  
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Every Monday 12pm-10pm  
Guests who earn 5 points on their C Club card during the promotion period will receive \$10 Comanche Credit

**Senior Day!**  
Every Tuesday 12pm-6pm  
Guests who are 50 years+ can receive \$5 Comanche Credit and a free meal from the Star Grill after they earn 2 points on their C Club card

**Way Back Wednesday**  
Every Wednesday 12pm-10pm  
Guests who earn 5 points on their C Club card during the promotion period will receive \$10 Comanche Credit. The Star Grill will have food specials for guest showing their C Club card

**Crazy Credits**  
Every Thursday 2pm-10pm  
Each guest earning 10 points on their C Club card will receive \$20 Comanche Credit

**Sunday Fun-Day**  
Every Sunday 3pm-7:30pm  
Guests playing with their C Club card will be eligible to win \$25 Comanche Credit in hot seat drawings

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- Modeled
- Whale ship captain
- On \_\_\_ with
- Dirty fossil fuel
- The same
- Wealthy
- Actress Baranski
- Bangladesh’s capital, old
- Gross receipts
- Runs PCs
- Yukon Territory
- Angry
- Have the ability to
- City of light
- Person from U.K. (abbr.)
- Helper
- Walking steps
- Cablegram (abbr.)
- Slang for famous person
- Skin cancers
- Body fluids
- More dry
- Roman seven
- Actress Farrow
- 1st Lady of Song’s initials
- Disorderly crowd
- Less in spanish
- Br. broad valleys
- Good Wife’s Julianna
- Expression of annoyance
- Blocks
- 4840 square yards
- The culminating point
- Hit an unreturned serve
- Excessively fat
- Scorch the surface of

**DOWN**

- Prevents harm to young
- Children’s tale bear
- Eskers
- Small food stores
- \_\_\_, denotes past
- Mentums
- Gadoid fish
- Rainbow effect
- Live in or on hosts
- Long narrative poem
- Informal term for tobacco (Br.)
- One who has attained nirvana
- One who estranges
- Collection of maps
- Pouchlike structure
- Simple column
- Constitution Hall org.
- Apple notebook computer
- Biblical Syria
- Cuts into small pieces
- Talked profusely
- Hawthorne’s city
- Takes readings from other distant instruments
- 13th Hebrew letter
- Filippo \_\_\_, Saint
- Gulf of, in the Aegean
- Bleat
- A bird’s beak
- Performs a song
- Note of hand
- Icelandic poems
- Ludicrous, empty show
- Peter Pan illustrator Attwell
- Broad, flat stones
- Tibetan Buddhist teacher
- Mire and mud
- Frozen drinks
- Irish Gaelic
- Viewed with the eyes
- Blackguard
- Olde English

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**Kay Hall and the folks at Ligons Garden Center have plenty of items for fall landscaping.**



**Ligons Garden Center**  
10% discount  
(Dog grooming excluded)

## Find fall foliage fixin's at Ligons

By Karen Kaley

Yellow snapdragons and scarlet dianthus, purple pansies and plump pumpkins, hay bales and scarecrows, magnificent mums in gold and bronze. It's time for decorative landscaping to take on the blazing colors and whimsy of fall.

A great place to get everything needed for such a project is an "old-timey greenhouse," as Kay Hall calls Ligons Garden Center in Duncan. She and her husband, Bob, are the owners and go way back with the place.

Originally established by John and Mable Ligon in 1947, the garden center was several blocks to the east and north of its current location when Bob Hall began making deliveries in 1952. In 1954, the first of many buildings sprang up at 301 S. Highway 81, where the business remains today.

Bob and his brother, Frank, worked faithfully for the greenhouse for decades. As a result, the childless Ligons left the business to them.

Bob and Kay were married in 1964, and, she says she has been there ever since.

The garden center continued to grow but suffered a major setback in Duncan's 1976 tornado.

"You never saw so much broken glass," Kay said.

"That's when we started using fiberglass for our greenhouses."

In the springtime, the three

greenhouses and open areas are stuffed full of trees, shrubs and flowers. The enclosed building facing the highway holds fertilizing and pest control chemicals and an alcove where the Halls can measure out bulk seed for vegetable gardeners.

Kay offers advice based on what her many years in the business has taught her about what will and will not thrive in southwest Oklahoma.

"I have learned by trial and error. Sometimes things zoned for this region don't necessarily work well in the Duncan area."

"Products we offer are things I have used, things I know will grow in this area."

Kay said people tend to want certain plants, but she may suggest something better.

"Leave wisteria and trumpet vine alone," she said.

"Go with jasmine. It's not as woody and heavy won't pull your fence down. It doesn't grow wild and has very pretty blooms in the spring."

Bob is 78 years old, Kay will be 70 in the winter, and the center no longer offers things like landscaping service. The whole family pitches in to keep things running at the sprawling complex. As a result, Ligons offers a few things one might not expect to find at a garden center.

The Halls' daughter, Bobbie Gi-

roir, has played a key role not only in the garden area but in starting Purse-Nickety, a flashy selection of purses, wallets, totes, diaper and duffel bags. This area, accessible through the garden center entry, also offers long camisoles, Oklahoma shirts, headbands, lanyards and sunglasses.

Dog grooming is offered in a small building just south of the garden center. Groomer and granddaughter Amy Walls has been building a happy clientele since March.

Another item that can be seen throughout the different buildings is Picnic Time chairs. These lightweight, portable folding chairs feature a sturdy aluminum frame with an adjustable shoulder strap for easy carrying.

This is no ordinary lawn chair. On the side of the chair is a polyester accessories panel that includes a variety of pockets to hold such items as a cell phone, sunglasses, magazines, or a scorekeeper's pad. It also includes an insulated bottled beverage pouch and a zippered security pocket. A side table folds out to hold food or drinks. Maximum weight capacity is 300 pounds.

Ligons is a Co-op Connections Card partner, offering a 10 percent discount on everything except dog grooming.

The gardening advice is free, as is the laughter Kay cultivates.



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# Score a touchdown with Super Good Chili

(Family Features) Football season can only mean one thing – time to grab the best seat in the house, and we’re not talking about at the stadium. In fact, 77 percent of Americans think the best seat in the house is at home in front of an HDTV, according to a recent survey by McIlhenny Company, maker of Tabasco brand products. Instead of heading to the stadium, keep the tailgate at home and throw a “homegating” party.

The ultimate homegate is not only about the football game, it’s about the food. No matter what’s happening on the field, the spread can be the real game-changer. In fact, the survey found the following:

- 78 percent of American adults think good food can make up for a bad game.
- Americans spend, on average, 42 percent of the game eating or drinking.
- Over half of Americans (57 percent) voted the grill as the most important appliance when hosting a homegate.

For a homegate touchdown, banish the boring and serve beer-infused chili, which is sure to please all your family, friends and football fans. For other ways to spice up game day, visit [www.tabasco.com](http://www.tabasco.com).



**Super Good Chili**

Prep time: 15 minutes; Cook time: 30 minutes  
Servings: 6

1 1/2 teaspoons salt  
Shredded Cheddar and Monterey Jack cheese, optional

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 pounds ground beef chuck
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 (12 ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 2 (16 ounce) cans pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (16 ounce) can red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (12 ounce) can or bottle beer
- 1 (4 ounce) can diced green chilies
- 1 tablespoon TABASCO brand Original Red Sauce

Heat oil in 5-quart saucepot over medium heat. Add beef and cook until well browned on all sides, about 5 minutes. With a slotted spoon, remove to bowl.

Add onion and garlic to drippings remaining in skillet; cook over medium heat until tender, about 5 minutes.

Return meat to saucepot; stir in cumin. Cook 1 minute. Stir in diced tomatoes with liquid, pinto beans, red kidney beans, beer, green chilies, Tabasco Sauce and salt. Heat to boiling over high heat. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 20 minutes to blend flavors, stirring occasionally.

Serve with cheese, if desired.



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- October 23rd - 100 Acres + Home North of Velma, OK
- October 25th – 160 Acres – Between Duncan & Lawton

### LAND FOR SALE

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- 740 Acres - Loco, Stephens Co. - Under Contract
- 403 Acres - Garvin County Rush Creek Area, Lindsay - Under Contract
- 120 Acres w/ home - Loco, Stephens Co. - Under Contract
- 45 Acres w/ Solitaire Mobile Home and Barn-Horse Facility -Marlow
- 150 Acres w/ two houses – between Duncan & Velma -Under Contract
- 150 Acres Preconditioning Yard/Livestock Facility - Grady County
- 180 Acres between Duncan & Velma - Under Contract
- 1.9 Acres with Barn Style Home - Grady County
- 2614 Acres - Jefferson Co.
- 120 Acres Hunting Property-Mud Creek
- 160 Acres with New Cabin - Bray
- 56 Acres w/2 Homes east of Velma
- 4.7 Acres & Mobile Home - Comanche
- 19.61 Acres - Duncan
- 9 Acres - Duncan

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LED Lucy made her debut Cotton Electric Annual Meeting appearance. CFL Charlie returned for a fifth time.

## Members gather for festive 76th Annual Meeting

By Karen Kaley

Hundreds of Cotton Electric members gathered on a recent warm, sunny evening at Great Plains Coliseum in Lawton. If the wind had died down just a little bit more, everything would have been perfect for the co-op's 76th annual membership meeting.

Required in the by-laws, the cooperative membership gathers once a year to conduct a business meeting. In the absence of any business, it is more often simply a time for members to meet co-op employees, learn more about co-op issues, and reconnect with other co-op members.

As always, many members arrived well before registration lines were opened and a barbecue dinner was served. Members had plenty of time to visit with each other and with a few vendors offering Co-op Connections Card discounts.

There were a number of special guests in 2014. LED Lucy made her debut appearance, accompanying CFL Charlie, who returned for a fifth time. Star Spangle brought along Miss Kitty to help with a long line of children wanting fabulous face-painting in the children's area.

Weather forecasts looked favorable, and the Touchstone Energy hot air balloon came to town. However, the 5.5 to 14 mph breeze was a little too stiff for the 77-foot-tall balloon to take any flights.

A number of elected officials and hopefuls were in attendance, including U.S. Rep. Tom Cole, who had an opportunity to address the crowd later in the evening.

Cotton Electric Board of Trustees President Tim McCary called the business meeting to order at precisely 7 p.m. Following an invocation by board member Brian DeMarcus, the crowd was treated to a rousing a cappella rendition of the national anthem by Tonya Bardsher of Duncan.

McCary asked for a report on the official notice of meeting and presence of a quorum. J.W. Doolin, the co-op board's attorney, reported there were 631 members present, 135 short of a 5 percent quorum.

See Members, Page 14

# KEEP JUDGE TAYLOE DISTRICT JUDGE

DISTRICT JUDGE EMMIT TAYLOE IS THE BEST CHOICE FOR DISTRICT JUDGE, OFFICE #1, COMANCHE, COTTON, STEPHENS & JEFFERSON COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

## OPEN LETTER FROM FORMER DISTRICT JUDGE ALLEN MCCALL

Judge Emmitt Tayloe is a lifelong resident of Comanche County. His father served in the U.S. Army and retired as a Master Sergeant after twenty years. His mother is a third generation Oklahoman. Emmitt attended Lawton Public schools and graduated from Cameron University. He competed successfully in debate tournaments all across the nation and was part of a team that won a National Championship. He attended the University of Oklahoma school of law obtaining a Juris Doctorate in only 2 ½ years. He then became a prosecutor for Comanche County serving nearly four years. He was lead counsel in major felony cases including murder, rape and robbery and helped obtain convictions for the murders of the victims of the Geronimo bank robbery in the 1980's. Judge Tayloe then served in private practice for over 25 years until he became our District Judge in 2014.

When I retired in 2013, Judge Tayloe and his opponent applied to be appointed to the position I held as District Judge pursuant to the Oklahoma Constitution. After an extensive OSBI background investigation of all the applicants, they were interviewed by the Oklahoma Judicial Nominating Commission which was comprised of many outstanding private citizens and attorneys whom were selected by other lawyers from all over the State including Southwest Oklahoma. Don't be misled into thinking that Southwest Oklahoma was not represented in this investigative process. All of the peer reviews of each candidate came from lawyers and Judges who practice and reside in Southwest Oklahoma, primarily in Comanche County. Judge Tayloe's opponent willingly participated in this selection process and only criticizes it now because his peer review and background check caused him to be rejected by the Commission. The OSBI completed its investigation by talking to the local judges and lawyers who have known the applicants for years and know the experience, integrity and temperament of each of them. After an extensive interview of each applicant, which included Judge Tayloe's opponent, the Commission selected three applicants and forwarded their names to the Governor for interviews. They also were looking for qualified lawyers that had the experience as well as the temperament and character required to be a fair and honest judge. Judge Tayloe's opponent was rejected by this investigative process. Although Judge Tayloe was successfully interviewed by the Judicial Nominating Commission for the position of District Judge (as well as in 2005 resulting in an interview with then Governor Brad Henry), his opponent failed to pass either screening process and has never been selected to interview with a Governor for the position of District Judge. This is now his third time to file for election to this position claiming to be a candidate of merit when in fact he is a liberal trial lawyer who cannot pass a background check.

Governor Mary Fallin appointed Judge Tayloe to the position of District Judge as a result of reviewing his experience, character and temperament. Judge Tayloe has now served on the bench presiding over Jury Trials including Murder in the 1st Degree. He serves with integrity, honesty and fairness. There has never been a complaint of unfairness leveled against him. He is an excellent Trial Judge and has the judicial temperament which voters expect from their District Judge.

District Judge Emmitt Tayloe is clearly the best choice for Comanche, Cotton, Stephens and Jefferson County voters.

Respectfully,  
Allen McCall



# Members urged to vote, make voices heard

Continued from Page 13

Next up, Board Vice President Ronnie Bohot introduced trustees, their wives and special guests. He asked all active and retired military people to stand and be recognized. Bohot expressed gratitude for their service while the crowd applauded.

Bohot recognized another special guest, Lillian Jones, who at 99 was considered the most senior member present. She became a Cotton Electric member in 1952.

McCary addressed the membership again, thanking them for contributing to the co-op by serving on the board, participating in surveys, supporting programs and the Charitable Foundation.

His remarks were followed by

those of Board Secretary/Treasurer Ken Layn, who said the co-op was in good financial shape. He announced the board had elected to retire \$300,000 in capital credits and that members should expect checks of \$5 or more by mid-October.

Cole's turn at the podium included comments intended to put perspective on the nation's issues. He reminded the members that problems have arisen throughout the history of the nation, sometimes more severe than those of the present day and that Americans prevailed.

He said to always have high expectations of elected officials and hold them accountable by exercising the right to vote.

CEO Warren Langford spoke to the gathering about EPA regulations that threaten to shut down coal plants. He said the impact on ratepayers' pocketbooks could be tremendous while the impact on the environment may be questionable, given the lack of similar regulation on a global scope.

He urged the membership to make their voices heard, either by visiting Action.coop or filling out the Action cards available at the meeting.

The evening of festivities ended on a positive note, when drawings were held and about 75 door prizes were awarded, including a \$500 energy voucher that went to Joan Smith of Loveland.

Prize winners are listed below.



At left, Paige Williams shows off the grand prize XBOX 360 she won. Above, Joan Smith of Loveland is the grand prize winner of a \$500 energy voucher, to be applied to her power bill.

## Door prize winners:

- \$500 Energy Voucher: Joan Smith
- \$250 Energy Voucher: Town of Bray, Corum Fire Dept.
- \$100 Energy Voucher: Larry Burk
- \$50 Cash: Don Craig, Richard Rhodes, Wayne White, Danny Jones, L.R. Sparks, Billy Clifton, Jake Chisholm, L.D. Moon, Bob Wiles, Donald Pendergraph, James Fischer, John Byrd, Roy Miller, Don Gilliland, Ronald Rogers, Donna Flook, Donald Kern, G. Scott Kirk
- Kids \$5 cash: Gabriella Romero, Maddie S., Isaac Romero, Hank Renschen, Skylar Guajardo, T.J. Rush, Miranda McQueen, Shelby Cargill, Tyla McCaig, Brooke Bain, Avery Cargill, Kensi Ryans, Payton Bowles, Avigail Karkins, Cayde Ellender, Brady Ellender, Zoey Winburn, Kayla Collins, Presdon Davis, Jonathan Chapman
- Digital camera: Ronald Bellamy
- Hose reel: Larry Mathesen
- Ninja Pro Blender: Ronald Leatherman
- Jumpstarter/Air Compressor: Kenneth Winburn, Francine Frisch
- Nutrabullet Blender: Robert Schultz
- Safe: Austin Bain
- Electronic candles: Darrell Jones
- Portable table: Benny Johnson
- Cube speaker: Arthur Brown
- Chargable Batteries: Union Valley Baptist Church, Jerry Williamson
- Headphones: Norma Hall
- Flashlight: Wanda Oliver
- Water cooler: Darrell Hanza
- \$50 Check: Dan Fischer
- Portable air tire inflator: Donald Frazier
- Camo bag/shirt: Jimmy Lowery
- Wrench tool set: Deanna Brooks, Deborah Darnell, Dale Eberbart
- Wal-Mart gift card: Kenneth Byars, Larry Thompson
- \$100 Visa card: Stephen May
- Tumblers and bags: Gary McConnell
- Blu-ray player: Richard Griffith
- \$50 gift card: Brett Bain
- TV: Pearl Musgrove

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# Through organ donation, life goes on

By Karen Kaley

Organ donation is simple and complicated at the same time.

Check a box when renewing an Oklahoma driver's license, and you're on the list of donors. Should a transplant take place, there is no charge to the donor, whether he or she is deceased or living. Simple.

Complications generally have to do with communication. A person may wish to be an organ donor but has not registered or talked about it. In turn, family members distracted by a loved one's passing can be faced with making the decision to donate.

Reasons for not registering or hesitating to donate may be rooted in a few myths. The following facts, found on OrganDonor.gov, offer better understanding of organ, eye, and tissue donation:

**Fact:** Anyone, regardless of age or medical history, can sign up to be a donor. The transplant team will determine at an individual's time of death whether donation is possible.

**Fact:** Most major religions in the United States support organ donation and consider donation as the final act of love and generosity toward others.

**Fact:** If you are sick or injured and admitted to a hospital, the number one priority is to save your life.

**Fact:** When matching donor organs to recipients, the computerized matching system considers issues such as the severity of illness, blood type, time spent waiting, other important medical information, and geographic location. The recipient's financial or celebrity status or race does not figure in.

**Fact:** An open casket funeral is usually possible for organ, eye, and tissue donors. Through the entire donation process, the body is treated with care, respect, and dignity. Donation will not delay



*Be an organ donor, all it costs is a little love.*

or change funeral arrangements.

**Fact:** There is no cost to donors or their families for organ or tissue donation.

**Fact:** Every state provides access to a donor registry where its residents can indicate their donation decision.

**Fact:** Federal law prohibits buying and selling organs in the U.S. Violators are punishable by prison sentences and fines.

**Fact:** People can recover from comas, but not brain death. Coma and brain death are not the same. Brain death is final.

It is also a fact that donated organs save lives. And, these types of donations go beyond the heart, pancreas, kidneys, liver, lungs and intestines.

Some donations enhance the lives of recipients. Tissue is needed to replace bone, tendons and ligaments lost to trauma or cancer and other diseases. Skin grafts help burn patients heal and often mean the difference between life and death.

Corneas are needed to restore sight. Heart valves repair cardiac defects and damage.

Even hands and faces can be transplanted to improve the lives of those in need.

Organ, tissue and eye donation can save as many as eight lives and enhance as many as 50 lives.

As medical science advances, donation opportunities change, and the need for donated organs and tissue grows. However, there is a shortage of donors.

During 2013, some 900 Oklahomans were listed as transplant candidates. Fewer than one-third received transplants.

A total of 272 organs were recovered from 89 deceased donors and 51 living donors. Sadly, 59 candidates died while waiting for life-saving organ transplants.

On a national scale, another name is added to a transplant waiting list every 10 minutes. The waiting list is long, filled with nearly 125,000 names.

Wait times for transplants vary. Not everyone who needs a transplant will get one. Because of the shortage of organs suitable for donation, only slightly more than 50 percent of people on the waiting list will receive an organ within five years.

And, every day, 18 Americans die waiting for a transplant.

All Americans have the power to change that last statistic with the tick of a box at driver's license renewal time or by visiting LifeShareOklahoma.org. Simple.

Sources: OrganDonor.gov and LifeShareOklahoma.org

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**ROBERT SPENCER NEEDS A LIVER TRANSPLANT! YOU CAN HELP!!**



Robert Spencer, 47, is a graduate of the Animal Science department at Oklahoma State University, as well as a member of the 1989 Livestock Judging Team. Robert needs a liver transplant. His doctor, Dr. Vivek Kohli, in OKC has encouraged him to be proactive and find a liver. He needs Type A or O blood type, and the surgeon will go anywhere to harvest the organ.

For the most part, Robert is physically fine right now. Tests have shown that the Heptic Portal Vein to the liver is blocked and he will not be able to lead a good quality of life in as little as five years if he doesn't get a liver transplant.

Many of you in the cattle business may know the Charles Spencer Family. Robert's parents are Charles and Janis. They have raised Hereford cattle for many years in the Elgin, Oklahoma area. Robert is the owner of Spencer Feed in Lawton. Robert's children are both active in 4-H/FFA livestock projects. Now is the time that the livestock industry becomes family. The thought may make you uncomfortable, but if you have not marked the organ transplant donor box on your driver's license, NOW is the time. Please consider reaching out to Robert by sharing with your immediate friends & family that if something should happen to you, that you want Robert to receive your liver.

Robert asks that you share this information with as many people as possible. Through the channels of social media, this can reach across the entire country. Even if you don't know Robert, know that he is a good Christian man. He has dealt with alcoholism, having been through rehabilitation, and has rededicated his life to Christ. Please pray for Robert and his situation, but also please pray for the individual and family that will ultimately sacrifice and share life with Robert through the liver transplant procedure.

Let's create the biggest web possible. "The larger the web, the faster we catch a fly," says Robert. Robert may be contacted at 580/591-2604. If you or your loved ones find yourself in the unfortunate situation of being able to donate a liver to Robert, give the medical staff on duty Robert Spencer's name and tell them you wish to donate. His name will be found in the organ procurement organization database.

**"The larger the web, the faster we catch a fly!"**



Rachel, Lisa, Meredith, "Mini-Not!", Jeff

**LISA SHAW**

**FOR ASSOCIATE DISTRICT JUDGE**

**JUVENILE COURT JUDGE**