

# The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

*“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”*

VOLUME 59

January 19, 2015

NUMBER 6



## Icy winter blast darkens southwest Oklahoma

Photo by Jennifer Meason

By Karen Kaley

We knew it was coming.

Co-op employees had kept an eye on increasingly worrisome weather forecasts during the run up to the Christmas holiday. We had our trucks stocked up and gassed up, we had contract crews on standby, and our dispatch and communications staffs had a plan.

All we could do after that was make the most of our time with our families and brace ourselves for what came after.

It started slow, on the Saturday of what should have been a long, lazy weekend. Instead, the first hours of the winter blast

on Dec. 26 resulted in about 30 outages affecting just over a thousand Cotton Electric members. One outage affecting nearly 700 was caused by a tree blown into the lines.

It turned out that first day was the easy day.

We got power restored for many, but the wind and ice were relentless and very destructive. The early morning hours of Dec. 27 were when southwest Oklahoma really got whacked.

Ice accumulation on power lines is a pretty big problem by itself. A half-inch of ice can add 500 pounds to a span be-

tween two poles. Couple that with 35 mph winds gusting to 50 and you have the makings of a small disaster.

Power lines were so heavy and the wind pulled so hard that numerous broken cross arms and poles could not be avoided. That type of damage was the result not just for Cotton Electric and other distribution cooperatives to the north and west of our service territory, but for Western Farmers Electric Cooperative, the generation and transmission cooperative whose structures deliver power to substations across most of the state of Oklahoma.

When an enormous transmission structure comes down, substations lose power. In turn, all homes and businesses served by those substations lose power. Usually, electricity can be backfed, or routed another way, during the long process of rebuilding a damaged structure.

However, when 60 transmission structures come down, reroute options become scarce or non-existent. Damage to WFEC was so extensive that power was lost to nearly 40 substations, including several in the Cotton Electric service territory.

See Storm, Page 10

Photo by Karen Kaley



### Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment applied to bills mailed after Jan. 1, 2016, is (\$0.01110) per kWh. Power cost adjustment on bills after Feb. 1 is (0.00612).

On an average bill of 1500 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$16.65 on the January bill and a charge of \$9.18 on the February bill.

### December 2015 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	54	28	41	16	53	28	41
2	57	27	42	17	54	23	39
3	62	29	46	18	47	21	34
4	61	28	45	19	61	27	44
5	61	36	49	20	65	46	56
6	64	33	49	21	61	33	47
7	67	28	48	22	72	31	52
8	65	29	47	23	63	38	51
9	72	35	54	24	61	36	49
10	74	37	56	25	59	34	47
11	72	36	54	26	63	38	51
12	72	51	62	27	38	33	36
13	67	42	55	28	36	26	31
14	60	33	47	29	42	21	32
15	63	36	50	30	46	27	37
				31	41	32	37

Source: srb.noaa.gov/oum/

Average Daily High: 59 Average Daily Low: 32

### Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed Monday, Feb. 15, for the Presidents Day holiday.

Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The February issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on Feb. 16, 2016.

### 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](mailto: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](http://cottonelectric.com)

*From the CEO*

# Honored to serve best of SW Oklahoma

Beginning a new year presents the opportunity to reflect on the past as we plan for the future. As I begin 2016 as your new Chief Executive Officer, I have reflected on the journey that led me here and on the future of Cotton Electric Cooperative.

During my senior year at Cameron University, I began looking for an internship. A professor mentioned an opening at Cotton Electric Cooperative, and I eagerly applied. I thought it would be a short-



**Jennifer Meason, CEO**

term position, just something to add to my resume' for when I entered the "real world" after graduation.

What I discovered was so much more. I was introduced to a new career and found my true calling, working for the members of Cotton Electric.

Over the past 15 years, I've had the opportunity to work in various capacities at the cooperative. As my predecessor Warren Langford often said, Cotton Electric members represent the best of southwest Oklahoma. I'm honored to work for you.

Our mission at Cotton Electric is providing you with safe, reliable and affordable power.

But unlike other utilities, we don't stop at the meter. We are committed to being an advocate for you and continuing to improve the quality of life in our area. Since Cotton Electric's inception in 1938, the cooperative business model has offered the perfect tool for tackling tasks too big for one person to handle alone. We're proof that when people unite with a single focus, we have the power to enact change. It is one of the many reasons I love working for a cooperative.

As we embark on a new year, the employees of Cotton Electric and I will continue our focus on improving quality of service and providing valuable member programs, all while remaining true to the cooperative principles. I welcome your input and encourage you to contact me with any questions, concerns and suggestions you have. I can be reached at [jmeason@cottonelectric.com](mailto:jmeason@cottonelectric.com) or by phone at 580-875-3351.

I look forward to hearing from you.

## Co-op sees smooth transition from Langford to Meason

Cotton Electric Cooperative's board of directors recently named Jennifer Meason as the co-op's CEO and general manager, effective Jan. 5, 2016. She stepped into the role following the retirement of Warren Langford on Jan. 4.

Established in 1938, Cotton Electric is a member-owned cooperative providing electricity to rural southwest Oklahoma. The co-op has grown from a first day of sending power to 150 homes along 109 miles of line to more than 18,000 members and 22,000 accounts in eight counties. The current service area includes 5,125 miles of line.

Langford departed after 41 years of service to the co-op, mostly in finance and administration. His time as CEO began in 2004.

Meason joined the co-op's marketing department as an intern in late 1999. This was her senior year at Cameron University, where she was attending as a Regional University Baccalaureate Scholar, pursuing a Bachelor of Business Administration with a concentration in marketing and a minor in communications.

In May 2000, the Lawton native graduated and immediately began working full time for the co-op as a Marketing Representative, launching her career in the utility industry. She continued her education, earning a Master of Arts in Communication from the University of Oklahoma in 2002.

Langford said, "Her academic background in business, marketing and communication have been a tremendous benefit to our members. Because of Jennifer, our member satisfaction rate is higher than industry standard."

Meason's contributions to Cotton Electric over 15 years have been remarkable. During the first five years, she became Manager of Member Relations and then Executive Staff Assistant. While keeping a hand in marketing efforts, she worked with management on high-level administrative projects and represented the cooperative to members of the Oklahoma Legislature.

Meason served as a key developer in what is probably the most widely known function of the cooperative aside from the delivery of electricity, Operation Round Up and the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation. Through ORU, the co-op's members voluntarily have power bills rounded up to the nearest dollar. The CECF board administers the funds, distributing



*At a farewell gathering on his final day at Cotton Electric, Warren Langford listens as Jennifer Meason reads a citation of admiration and congratulations from the Oklahoma Senate. Langford retired as CEO on Jan. 4, and Meason stepped into the role on Jan. 5*

quarterly. Since its inception in 2004, CECF has made nearly \$900,000 in grants to worthwhile organizations and individuals.

"We've made a big difference in our communities," Meason said. "I'm very proud of CECF's impact."

ORU and CECF have been recognized on a state level with a Beacon Award from the Journal-Record in 2013 and have been tapped for another award in the coming year.

Meason was named Director of Marketing in 2005 and became Cotton Electric's vice president of marketing and chief operating officer at CESI, a co-op subsidiary, in 2008.

In her marketing role, Meason oversaw activities ranging from The Current to Youth Tour, coordinated outside advertising and internal communications, and produced the annual meeting and other special events.

As chief operating officer for CESI, Meason managed operations of the high-voltage test lab, overseeing finances, sales and staff. The business has achieved record

sales levels under her guidance.

During the last two years, Meason has also served as director of Cotton's human resources department and wellness initiatives.

A member of the Walters Rotary Club, Meason was the organization's president in 2008. She is a board member for the Walters Educational Foundation and remains active in numerous civic organizations throughout the state. She is a member of Leadership Oklahoma's 2014-15 class and serves on the LOK board of directors. In 2014, she was named an Outstanding Young Alumnus by Cameron University.

Her professional affiliations include participation in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Management Internship Program and membership on the Touchstone Energy Strategic Communications Advisory Committee.

Jennifer Meason and her husband, Clint, live in Walters, where they are raising two daughters, Kendall and Kayla.



### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

If you only want to heat or supplement inadequate heating in one room, small space heaters can be less expensive to use than your central heating system.

*Source: energy.gov*

### November 2015 Operating Stats

	2015	2014
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$4,974,406	\$5,945,803
Cost of Purchased Power	3,291,096	4,401,273
Taxes	90,830	106,782
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	931	1,138
Average Farm and Residential Bill	124	149
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,017	1,240
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,255	18,282
Miles Energized	5,153	5,150
Density Per Mile	3.54	3.55
New Service Connects YTD	311	330
Services Retired	187	142

## The Current

Published Monthly at Walters, Oklahoma  
By Cotton Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Jennifer Meason ..... CEO  
Bryce Hooper..... Vice President of Marketing  
Karen Kaley..... Editor  
Jennifer Kriz..... Display Advertising

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### 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.

# Community Spotlight

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

### CTHC hosts artists' photographs

Chisholm Trail Heritage Center plans a photographic exhibition featuring the work of indigenous artists from around the world to open Jan. 28 and run through March 16. Our People, Our Land, Our Images, includes 51 historical and contemporary images, including the work of Cherokee Jennie Ross Cobb, the earliest known Native American female photographer.

Located just north of the Simmons Center at 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway in Duncan, the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Cotton Electric members can present a Co-op Connections Card to get \$1 off the admission price, per card per visit.

### LCT presents 'Diary of Anne Frank'

"The Diary of Anne Frank," is Lawton Community Theatre's third production of the 2015-16 season. Performances are set for Jan. 22-24 and 28-31.

Discovered in the attic in which she spent the last years of her life, Anne Frank's remarkable diary has since become a world classic – a powerful reminder of the horrors of war and an eloquent testament to the human spirit. LCT's presentation is a stage adaptation by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett of the book "The Diary of a Young Girl" by Anne Frank.

For information, visit [LCT-OK.org](http://LCT-OK.org).

### Polar Bear Plunge set for Jan. 23

Want to take the extreme ice challenge? Try the Polar Bear Plunge and 5K from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jan. 23 at the LETRA Campground, 7463 Deer Creek Canyon Road, 12 miles northwest of Fort Sill.

Not interested in running? That's OK, take the plunge for FREE! Costumes are encouraged for this fun run and the plunge.

Cost is \$15 for pre-registration by Jan. 21 and \$20 on the day of the event. For information or to register, visit <http://sill.armymwr.com>.

### Trail Dance notes 10th anniversary

The 2016 Trail Dance Film Festival will note its 10th anniversary as it takes place at the Simmons Center, 800 Chisholm Trail Parkway, Duncan, with secondary venues at the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway.

Exhibition of films for the general audience begins Jan. 29 and continues throughout the following day, leading up to the Golden Drover Awards Show. The ceremony will recognize the films that stood out to festival judges. There is also an opportunity for members of the audience to vote on their favorites.

Tickets for the Trail Dance Film Festival can be purchased at the Simmons Center or at the event. Admission to the awards show is free.

For information, call Anthony Foreman, 580-467-8519, or visit [TrailDanceFilmFestival.com](http://TrailDanceFilmFestival.com).

### AARP offers tax prep assistance

AARP offers free tax assistance and preparation for taxpayers with low to moderate income on a first-come, first-served basis through the tax due date of April 15 at several locations in the Cotton Electric service area.

No appointment is necessary but certain documents are. Taxpayers should take last year's income tax return, all W-2

and 1099 forms, information about any other income, adjustment and deduction documents, Social Security cards for each person on a return, and property taxes if he or she plans to itemize.

The free service is available from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the Duncan Public Library Annex, 2211 N. U.S. Highway 81.

### CTAC Live presents Artrageous

CTAC Live presents Artrageous, an evening of art, music and bubble wrap, at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 4 at the Simmons Center in Duncan.

Rarely does one get a chance to experience some of the best things in life, all together in one place. Artrageous is one such occasion – an interactive art and music experience. Paint jumps to life with amazing speed unveiling larger than life art in just moments. The evening is filled with music and memorable images from Lennon to Einstein to Bono. And you won't get away without experiencing the delight of doing something fun with bubble wrap, or getting a chance to be part of the painting experience yourself.

For information and ticket purchases, visit [ChisholmTrailArts.com](http://ChisholmTrailArts.com).

### 'Seussical!' scheduled for Feb. 4

"Seussical!" is sure to delight the entire family when presented at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 4 in McMahon Memorial Auditorium, 801 NW Ferris Avenue in Lawton. The City of Lawton and the Lawton Arts & Humanities Council have engaged a New York touring company for the performance.

"Oh the thinks you can think" when Dr. Seuss's best-loved stories collide and cavort in an unforgettable musical caper. Adapted from the Broadway version, this performance for young audiences features 13 actors and enhanced production values.

This production is suitable for the entire family. There is a special general admission rate of \$3, and children 2 and younger are admitted free. Ticket office is at the auditorium's west entrance. Ticket office hours are 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Call 580-581-3472 for more information.

### DLT hosting tea with Beauty

"Be our guest," says Duncan Little Theatre when inviting all would-be princesses and princes to a special Tea with Belle from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Feb. 6 at The Vine and The Fig Tree, 1307 W. Oklahoma Highway 7. Belle, wearing a golden ball gown, will share stories and tea with all attendees. There will be plenty of photo opportunities, including a castle backdrop, so don't forget to bring a camera.

Space is limited. Reservations must be made by Feb. 1 by contacting Gina Flesher at [apmf@cablone.net](mailto:apmf@cablone.net) or 580-467-0299. Cost includes a child's ticket to "Beauty and the Beast," scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Feb. 19, 20, 26 and 27 and 2 p.m. Feb. 21 at the Simmons Center.

### Career Expo set for Feb. 18

More than 70 employers from a variety of fields are planning to participate in the Red River Career Expo from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Feb. 18 in the Aggie Rec Center on the Cameron University campus.

The event is free and open to the public. Job seekers should wear business attire.

For information, call Cameron University Career Services at 580-581-6769 or visit [Cameron.edu/RedRiverCareerExpo](http://Cameron.edu/RedRiverCareerExpo).

### More Community Spotlight on Page 5

## Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

February		March		April	
Ad Sales	Feb. 1	Ad Sales	Feb. 29	Ad Sales	Mar. 28
Classifieds	Feb. 4	Classified	Mar. 3	Classified	Mar. 31
Publish Date	Feb. 16	Publish Date	Mar. 14	Publish Date	Apr. 11

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



This ice-covered windmill is one of the prettier sights from the recent ice storm. It sits in the front yard of Cotton Electric members Dana Chere and Dale Piler of Bray. Dana said the popular photo was also shared by KSWO and The Weather Channel.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for February is Anything Goes. 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.

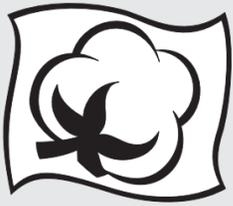
[TOUCHSTONEENERGY.COM](http://TOUCHSTONEENERGY.COM)

**ALL OF OUR LINES ARE MEMBER SERVICE LINES.**

Some deliver electricity. Others deliver information. All must deliver on Cotton Electric Cooperative's mission: to provide you with service that's just as dependable as the energy you count on us for every day. Learn more about your locally owned and operated cooperative at [CottonElectric.com](http://CottonElectric.com).

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**Departmental Spotlight**  
**Administration**

*Cotton Electric's Administration team consists of, seated from left, Executive Secretary Cindy Benefield, CEO Jennifer Meason, Human Resources Specialist Kim Johnson, and, back row, Vice President of Marketing and Subsidiary Services Bryce Hooper, Vice President of Finance and Administration Jeff Simpson, Vice President of Operations and Engineering Mike Ottinger and Safety Coordinator Larry Phillips.*



# New year, new employee series

*EDITOR'S NOTE – Our Employee Spotlight series is going to take a breather in 2016. Oh, don't worry, you'll still see our smiling faces in The Current. We're just swinging the spotlight to shine on departments rather than individuals. The Departmental Spotlight series will run through the first months of 2017.*

By Karen Kaley

Cotton Electric is a bustle of activity during what many consider to be normal business hours and days – 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Employees know, however, the nature of the co-op and the service it provides requires a state of readiness at any given hour on any given day.

Employees report to work on normal days and not-so-normal days in various locations throughout the service territory. Some work outside, some work inside, many do a little of both.

Running a \$100 million plant spread out over eight counties requires quite a bit of organization. Each of about 90 employees has a defined set of tasks that fall into categories, or departments. The various departments are grouped and overseen by Administration.

Cotton Electric's Administration team consists of the CEO; three vice presidents, each with focused tasks and departments; an executive secretary; a human resources specialist; and a safety coordinator.

CEO Jennifer Meason said, "Our role in Administration is to oversee operations and work closely with the board of trustees, making sure their vision is carried out through all departments."

Meason stepped into the CEO role on Jan. 5 after several months of transition from her predecessor, Warren Langford. As Meason moves forward, so does the cooperative. She is supported by a very strong Administrative staff, who are well-supported by their employees.

As Vice President of Finance and Administration, Jeff Simpson oversees the co-op's financial concerns such as metering, billing and accounting. These departments make sure accurate bills go out and money is accounted for properly when it comes back.

Simpson also oversees how the co-op's money is spent. He supervises purchasing, the warehouse and information technology.

Mike Ottinger is Vice President of Operations and Engineering. His focus is on the maintenance, construction and engineering of the Cotton Electric plant.

The plant is the 5,150 miles of line that crisscross the service territory. Ottinger and his staffs plan and build the line from substation to meter. They put up poles, string wire and install transformers and fuses. They track it all with sophisticated software and develop maps for internal use and for members to follow progress in restoring outages.

Bryce Hooper is the newest of the vice presidents, but is no stranger to the Administration department. Hooper has served as Staff Assistant and Human Resources manager and succeeds Meason as Vice President of Marketing and Subsidiary Services.

Hooper supervises staff involved in The Current, energy audits, key accounts and youth programs. That department also organizes and executes the Annual Mem-

bership Meeting held each fall.

Hooper also serves as COO of the co-op's subsidiary, Cotton Electric Services, Inc., a rubber goods test lab and supplier.

As Executive Secretary, Cindy Benefield provides administrative support and coordinates communication between the co-op's board of trustees, the CEO and all other employees. She plays an important role in making sure everyone is where they need to be, when they need to be, with all information and supplies they need to carry out their tasks.

Kim Johnson is Human Resources Specialist for the co-op. She maintains personnel files and coordinates employee benefits. She helps new employees with initial paperwork, established employees with annual enrollment and retired employees with policy changes.

Larry Phillips, the most-tenured member of the Administration team with 44 years of service to the co-op, is the Safety Coordinator. He is responsible for oversight of safety in all areas, coordinates safety training and drills and assures proper safety communication.

Like many other employees, Phillips has responsibilities beyond those indicated by his title. He provides support to the metering department and oversees the co-op garage and the fleet of vehicles.

The co-op is in good hands.

"This is a very strong Administrative team supported by a great, experienced staff dedicated to the continued success of the cooperative," Meason said.

"We plan to exceed member expectations as we move forward."

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**Does your home have any of these symptoms?**

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- High utility bills?
- Thermostat wars with your spouse?
- High humidity in summer?
- House just never seems comfortable?
- There doesn't seem to be enough airflow?
- Dust buildup within 2 days of dusting?
- Problems with your system since it's been installed?
- Anyone with allergies or asthma?
- AC starts and stops frequently or runs all the time, and house is still not cool?

Have been told by other contractors that the problem cannot be fixed?

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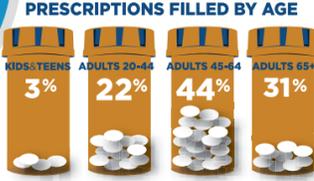
By the numbers...

In one year, Co-op Connections processed **412,570** prescriptions.

The pharmacy discount saved members an average of **47%** on prescriptions. **94%** of these prescriptions were **generic**.

That's **\$9,925,763** in total savings.

**54%** On these prescriptions members saved an average of



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Parents saved **\$232,533**



on medications for children under 19!

For more information about Co-op Connections Card visit: [www.connections.coop/healthy-savings](http://www.connections.coop/healthy-savings)

Pharmacy discounts are NOT Insurance, and are NOT Intended as a Substitute for Insurance. This discount is only available at participating pharmacies.



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

In December 2015, members used their cards at pharmacies in the CEC service area when filling 100 prescriptions not covered by insurance. A total of \$3,727.25 was discounted for an average savings of \$37.27 per use.

The total savings since the program's inception in April 2008 has been \$581,847.

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](http://www.locateproviders.com). Type 22203 into the Group field and click 'log in' to start your search.

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## Community Spotlight

### Globetrotters coming to Lawton

Harlem Globetrotters will bounce into Lawton at 7 p.m. Feb. 8 in Great Plains Coliseum. This exhibition will feature some of the greatest athletes and entertainers on the planet.

The game will showcase ball handling wizardry, rim-rattling dunks, trick shots, comedy and fan interaction. After the game, Globetrotter stars will sign autographs and take photos with fans.

Tickets are available at [harlemglobetrotters.com](http://harlemglobetrotters.com), [ticketweb.com](http://ticketweb.com), the Great Plains Coliseum box office, or by phone at 866-468-7621.

apartment. The 1977 film adaptation of the Neil Simon play features Richard Dreyfuss, Marcia Mason and Quinn Cummings in starring roles.

There is no admission charge, but donations are accepted. For information about the society, visit [Cameron.edu/magiclantern](http://Cameron.edu/magiclantern).

### LPO presents Basso Profundo

Lawton Philharmonic Orchestra presents Basso Profundo at 8 p.m. Feb. 27 at McMahon Auditorium, 501 SW C Avenue, Lawton.

The performance features Lawton native Jonathan Moots singing powerful pieces from Mozart and Ravel. The Vivaldi will feature husband and wife duo Lisa and Larry Reed, LPO's principal oboe and bassoon, while Beethoven's Coriolan Overture and Symphony No. 7 bookend the program.

Buy tickets online at [LawtonPhil.com](http://LawtonPhil.com) or call 580-531-5043.

### Magic Lantern screens classic films

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

The Feb. 12 offering will be "The Goodbye Girl," the story of a dancer and her daughter who have to share their

*Thanks to you, we all weathered the Goliath storm a little better.*

We know that life without electricity, even for a few hours, can be difficult. To have to go without for several days during the coldest part of winter is beyond tough. During the recent long-term outage, our members showed us what they're made of. Showing patience with our restoration efforts and expressing untold amounts of caring and support for our line workers and other employees are just some of the incredible responses you had to this challenging situation.

From every employee here at your local electric cooperative, we appreciate your patience and understanding. To you, our members and owners, we offer our sincere thanks and admiration.



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# 2016 Cotton Electric rebate standards announced

Cotton Electric has announced standards for the 2016 Rebate Program for the purchase and installation of energy-efficient ground source heat pumps.

Rebate funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Once rebate funds have been exhausted, the program will end for the year.

Members should note that the rebates are offered only for ground source heat pumps (GSHP). A desuperheater is not required but additional rebates are avail-

able if one is part of a new installation.

Minimum standards are the same for closed or open loop installations and apply to the full load operation of a GSHP, not the partial load. The amount of rebate is determined by the size of each unit, its Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) and Coefficient of Performance (COP).

Qualifying units can receive a rebate of up to \$1,050 per ton installed if the unit meets the minimum specifications, which are 15.9 EER and 3.3 COP.

Cotton Electric offers a rebate for members replacing an existing GSHP system with a more efficient GSHP system.

To qualify for a rebate when replacing an existing GSHP system with another GSHP system, the new installation must increase the EER by at least 3.0. The minimum specification for COP is 3.3 for closed loop systems and 3.6 for open loop. Rebates are \$375 per ton.

In order to qualify for the program,

members will need to provide a copy of their itemized invoice and, from the HVAC contractor or supplier, AHRI certification and Manual J calculation. Verification by Cotton Electric personnel is also required to receive the rebate. The maximum rebate in 2016 will be \$5,000 per residence.

For more information about the rebate program, please contact Mike Stephens, Cotton Electric's energy use adviser, at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

## SEAL AIR LEAKS WITH CAULK

Did you know heating and cooling accounts for roughly **HALF OF YOUR HOME'S ENERGY USE**? Caulking cracks and gaps around windows, doors and spaces around wires (telephone, electrical, cable and gas lines), water spigots and dryer vents can pay off with **BIG ENERGY SAVINGS**.

*\*Approximate cost: \$5-\$30 \*Energy savings: Approx. 5-10 percent – Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy*



### MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

- Caulk • Caulk gun • Knife or tool to cut • Rags • Water

**1. PREP** Clean the area where you will be applying the caulk. Remove any dirt, loose paint or old, cracked caulk.

Be sure the area is dry before applying new caulk appropriate for your application.

**2. LOAD** You will need to pull the plunger all the way back to load the tube of caulk into the barrel of the caulking gun.

Next, squeeze the trigger a few times until the plunger makes contact with the tube. Squeeze once or twice more to fill the tip with caulk.

**3. APPLY** To figure out the right amount of caulk needed, experiment with an out-of-the-way section. You may find that you need less caulk than you thought.

Hold the gun at a slight angle. Apply steady pressure on the trigger to create a solid stream from the tip, which should be placed 1/2 inch or less from the intended destination of the material.

Use just enough caulk to do the job. Use your finger to gently press the caulk into the corner, crack or space.

**4. RELEASE** Once the trigger is fully depressed, allow it to spring back and depress it again. Keep the gun moving while caulk is still coming out of the tip.

**5. CLEAN** Use a damp cloth or rag to clean off most of the excess caulk. Use a dry cloth to clean off the rest.



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## Put Your Financial 'Puzzle' Together

January 29 is National Puzzle Day, with puzzle celebrations and events taking place at museums, libraries and other venues across the country. Why this date was chosen – or why National Puzzle Day even exists – is something of a mystery. But as an investor, you can find value in the concept of a puzzle – specifically, in putting together the pieces of your financial puzzle.

What are these pieces? Here are the essential ones:

**Growth** – At different times in your life, you will have various goals – purchasing a first or second home, sending your children to college, enjoying a comfortable retirement, and so on. While these goals are diverse, they all have one thing in common: To achieve them, you'll need some growth potential in your investment portfolio. The nature and the extent of the growth-oriented vehicles,

such as stocks and stock-based instruments, in your holdings will depend on your specific goals, risk tolerance and time horizon – but growth opportunities you must have.

**Income** – Income-producing investments, such as bonds and dividend-paying stocks, can help supplement your earned income during your working years and provide you with a valuable income stream when you're retired. Plus, bonds and other income-producers can help balance a portfolio that might otherwise be too heavy in growth vehicles – which, as you know, are typically higher in risk.

**Taxes** – Taxes will always be part of the investment equation. Whenever possible, you'll want to take advantage of those accounts that let you make tax-deductible contributions and that provide the opportunity for tax-deferred growth, such as a traditional IRA and your 401(k)

or other employer-sponsored retirement plan. You may also find that you can benefit from tax-free investments, such as some types of municipal bonds and a Roth IRA. (Your Roth IRA contributions are not tax-deductible, but your earnings grow tax free, provided you've had your account at least five years and you don't start taking withdrawals until you reach 59½.)

**Protection** – You can't just invest for your future – you also have to protect it. If something were to happen to you, would your family be able to remain in your home? Would your children still be able to go to college? To help ensure continuity and security in your family's lives, you'll need to maintain adequate life and disability insurance. Also, you will need to protect your independence in your retirement years, as you no doubt would want to avoid burdening your grown children

with any financial burden. To attain this type of freedom, you may have to guard against the potentially catastrophic costs of long-term care, such as an extended nursing home stay. A financial professional can suggest ways of meeting these expenses.

**Legacy** – After working hard your whole life, you'd probably like to leave something behind to your children, grandchildren, other family members and possibly even charitable institutions. To create the legacy you desire, you will need to create a comprehensive estate plan. Because such a plan may involve a will, living trust and other complex legal documents, you will need to work with your legal and tax advisors.

Try to put these pieces together to help complete your financial "puzzle" – when you do, you may well like the picture that emerges.

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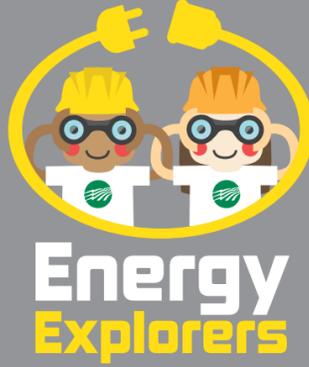
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Tanner L Cline  
(580)252-9048

Lynn Bailey  
(580)658-2704

# HOME ELECTRICAL SAFETY INSPECTION



Always remember to use caution when you're near electricity! Ask an adult to help you complete the inspection below for your home. If you find any hazards, check "Needs Work," and ask an adult to fix them.

	True	Needs Work
1. Electric outlets are not overloaded.		
2. Electric cords do not run under rugs or furniture legs.		
3. No electric cords are worn or frayed.		
4. Electric appliances are kept away from water.		
5. There is a fire extinguisher in the house.		
6. Electric heaters are far away from flammable objects.		
7. Power tools are stored in clean dry areas.		
8. All smoke detectors are properly working.		
9. There are safety plug covers on outlets that are not in use.		
10. There are no trees near the house that interfere with power lines.		



# Rolling Into



# The New Year

Players earn one entry for every 5 points earned on their Comanche Club Card.

Drawings are held every Friday and Saturday night from 7pm-11pm.

All prizes on the wheel are Comanche credit. Prizes are doubled for elite cardholders and tripled for chairman cardholders, excluding the \$500 prize.

The hopper will be emptied every Saturday night.



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## ACROSS

- 1. Women (French)
- 5. Hyrax
- 8. Distress signal
- 11. Trade
- 13. Large northern deer
- 14. The 3 Wise Men
- 15. Marten of N Asian forests
- 16. Hoover's agency
- 17. Received an A
- 18. 2nd Islamic month
- 20. Light brown
- 21. Clarified butter used in Indian cookery
- 22. Frankness
- 25. Argentina's capital
- 30. Citizen of Kenya or Zimbabwe
- 31. Noah's boat
- 32. Family of languages in So. Africa
- 33. Inappropriate
- 38. Scientific workplace
- 41. Hungriness
- 43. Say to talk about an annoying topic
- 45. Sing and play for somebody
- 47. Strike buster
- 49. A citizen of Thailand
- 50. Civil Rights group
- 55. Honest Company's Jessica
- 56. '\_\_\_ death do us part
- 57. Malarial
- 59. Claim against another's property
- 60. Mined metal-bearing mineral
- 61. Dashery
- 62. Capacity unit
- 63. Primary color
- 64. Indian dress

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10		
11				12		13			14				
15						16			17				
	18				19	20			21				
					22	23			24				
25	26	27	28	29									
30							31						
32								33	34	35	36	37	
					38	39	40		41	42			
					43			44					
47	48												
49					49				50	51	52	53	54
55						56				57			58
59						60				61			
62						63					64		

## DOWN

- 1. Manuscripts (abbr.)
- 2. Netherlands river
- 3. Italian island
- 4. One's own being
- 5. More adroit
- 6. Balkan country
- 7. Psychologist B.F.
- 8. Investment group Goldman \_\_\_
- 9. Double curve
- 10. The plane of a figure
- 12. Ocean
- 14. Public presses
- 19. Civil Rights activist Parks
- 23. Cooking container
- 24. Arctic native
- 25. Founder of Babism
- 26. Bashkortostan capital
- 27. Bulky grayish-brown eagle
- 28. Louse egg
- 29. About sight
- 34. \_\_\_/Tuck: TV drama
- 35. Black tropical American cuckoo
- 36. Chest muscle (slang)
- 37. Expression of disappointment
- 39. One who assists
- 40. Antilles island
- 41. Served food
- 42. Egyptian Sun god
- 44. Performed successfully
- 45. Cavalry-sword
- 46. Abba \_\_\_, Israeli politician
- 47. Jonas \_\_\_, cured polio
- 48. The Muse of history
- 51. Express pleasure
- 52. Turkish leader titles
- 53. Castro country
- 54. Nobleman
- 58. \_\_\_ Lanka

# Members contribute \$83,844 through ORU in 2015

Since 2004, CECF contributions have been made to a variety of efforts:

- Volunteer Fire Departments**  
\$237,9148.00
- Communities**  
\$197,779.54
- Youth**  
\$117,218.11
- Services**  
\$93,166.15
- Schools**  
\$113,818.10
- Individuals**  
\$52,750.00
- Public Safety**  
\$48,904.00
- Seniors**  
\$34,598.64
- Total**  
\$895,382.54



Turn out the change in your pocket or coin purse and count it up. Often, the pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters add up to less than a dollar.

Now, imagine if most of the people you know did the same, making one big pile of change. It would add up to quite a bit.

Some 12,870 Cotton Electric members do something similar every month by participating in Operation Round Up. Power bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar and all of those partial dollars are pooled. It adds up to some significant funds that can make a significant difference in the quality of lives throughout the Cotton Electric service area.

During 2015, CECF issued 35 grants for a total of \$83,844. Grant recipients included schools and youth programs, senior citizen programs, volunteer fire departments, non-profit organizations and communities.

Since its beginning in 2004, Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation has distributed more than \$895,000 to assist the needs of more than 200 organizations and individuals.

### 2015 grant recipients include:

- |                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Beautiful Day Foundation            | One True Light Inc.              |
| Bray-Doyle Academic                 | Randlett VFD                     |
| Booster Club                        | Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma   |
| Central High School                 | Rockin' T Cure for Kids Inc.     |
| Chisholm Trail Arts Council         | Simmons Center                   |
| Chisholm Trail Heritage Center      | Stephens County Crime Stoppers   |
| Devol Volunteer Fire Department     | Town of Sterling                 |
| Duncan Area Literacy Council        | Team CE                          |
| Duncan Little Theatre               | Teen Court                       |
| Elgin Schools                       | Temple Nutrition Center          |
| Early Childhood Center              | United Way of Southwest Oklahoma |
| City of Elgin                       | Velma Community Outreach Center  |
| Empire Elementary Schools           | Velma-Alma Elementary PTO        |
| Fiesta in Fuqua                     | Walters Community Food Pantry    |
| Friends of the Wichitas             | Walters Fire Department          |
| Great Plains Improvement Foundation | Walters Public Schools           |
| Horace Mann Elementary School       | Walters Senior Citizens Center   |
| Indianoma Public Schools            | Waurika Chamber of Commerce      |
| Oakridge VFD                        |                                  |

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program. 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.

Download CECF grant applications at CottonElectric.com. Deadline for first-quarter 2016 grant applications is Feb. 17.

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# CECF announces 4th-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 the co-op's CEO, which was Warren Langford at the December meeting; Ronnie Bohot, 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 in December to review 12 grant applications. Grants totaling \$22,137.49 will be distributed to eight of the applicants. Fourth-quarter grants include:

- Bray-Doyle Academic Booster



Club will purchase educational equipment with a \$2,238.92 CECF grant.

- Empire Elementary Schools will purchase a 3-D printer using a \$1,466 CECF grant.

- Friends of the Wichitas will double a \$5,000 CECF grant with a matching grant from the McMahon Foundation for the Nature Store Takeover Project.

- Stephens County Crime Stoppers will enhance awareness through a digital presence developed using a \$1,500 CECF grant.

- Teen Court will be more visible at public events using a logo canopy and booth accessories purchased with a \$1,300 CECF grant.

- The Town of Temple will equip the Temple Nutrition Center with new kitchen and dining equipment

Download CECF grant applications at [CottonElectric.com](http://CottonElectric.com).  
Deadline for first-quarter 2016 grant applications is Feb. 17.

purchased with a \$5,132.57 CECF grant.

- United Way of Southwest Oklahoma will use a \$2,000 CECF grant to purchase books and supplies to be given to children under the age of 6.

- Walters Fire Department will use a \$3,500 CECF grant toward the purchase of wildland and extrication gear.

CECF has awarded or pledged grants totaling \$895,381.54 since the foundation was established in 2004.

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.

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# Operation Round Up: The power of member cooperation

By Adam Schwartz

It started as a simple idea 27 years ago at one co-op in South Carolina. Just round up the co-op member's electric bill to the next dollar, and then use it to do good work in your community. Today, hundreds of electric co-ops throughout the country, including Cotton Electric, use this idea to help members and organizations close to home.

All co-ops adhere to the seven cooperative principles, including "Concern for Community." The Operation Round Up program is the perfect embodiment of this core principle. The average co-op member donates \$6 with a maximum possible contribution of \$11.88 per year. This may not seem like a large amount, but when combined with more than 12,000 other Cotton Electric member-participants, it adds up to make a significant impact.

Each co-op decides how it wants to operate the program, and the vast majority is governed by a board of volunteers that is different from the board of directors for the electric co-op. This ensures that the decisions are made in the best interest of the community.

The program is always voluntary, and at any time, members can change their minds about participating. Once folks see the good work the program does in their community, they almost always keep contributing.

Over the years, millions of dollars have been collected and distributed for a wide

range of activities. This can include helping a family in need: assisting the local food pantry; providing funds so that the local fire department can get a needed piece of equipment; or dozens of other humanitarian efforts that bring electric co-ops even closer to the communities we serve.

While each co-op must respond to the needs of its members, one of the great attributes of co-ops across the country – and the world – is their willingness to share information about the programs that have been successful. Operation Round Up is a perfect example of that cooperative spirit.

The article above and information on Page 8 are examples of co-op member generosity in the last year. Since its inception, Cotton Electric's Charitable Foundation has issued 388 grants totaling more than \$895,000.

Cotton Electric Cooperative is pleased to offer Operation Round Up. We will continue to "borrow" ideas from other co-ops and welcome your participation. Please share with us additional activities we should explore to serve you and your neighbors. Call us at 580-875-3351 or send an email to [info@cottonelectric.com](mailto:info@cottonelectric.com).

*Adam Schwartz is the founder of The Cooperative Way a consulting firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op.*

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During ice storm restoration efforts, secondary problems occur when ice melts. Heavy trucks bog down, sometimes requiring the help of bulldozers to get out of the mud.

# Storm aftermath poses many challenges; all conquered

Continued from Page One

In addition to mud from the thaw, WFEC restoration efforts were complicated by the terrain in and around the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge where a large portion of damage occurred.

The situation was pretty challenging at Cotton Electric, too. At 10 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 27, four substations were without power. Crews in the field were reporting scattered broken poles.

Conditions fluctuated. Power was restored to some substations, lost at others. Power to the co-op headquarters became unstable and the phones went out of service for a brief time.

Employees rallied. Office personnel reported to work to answer member calls. Others came in to support and coordinate information about where damage was, where to concentrate restoration efforts and how to keep our line crews safe.

And, oh, the line crews.

Cotton Electric and contract line workers spread out and began the long

job of restoring power in cold, wet conditions. While WFEC crews worked to repair transmission lines and structures, our crews dealt with more than 100 broken poles and numerous downed power lines scattered across the northeastern, northwestern and southwestern quadrants of the service territory.

This was a tough one. At the peak, some 10,000 Cotton Electric members were without power as a result of damage from the storm. Some members lost power that first day and were not restored until four days later.

Forecasts of winter ice storms are also warnings to prepare for power outages. In December, The Current mentioned some things to consider when facing these events. Here they are again:

- Be weather aware. If ice is in the forecast and accumulation is more than 1/8-inch, there will be outages. The more ice, the more outages; the more outages, the longer it will take to restore power. Outages from the Thanksgiving storm took anywhere from two to nine hours to re-

store. Outages from the post-Christmas ice storm took as long as five days to restore.

- Outages must be reported either by calling or using the SmartHub app. If you call 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520 during periods of high call volume such as the recent widespread outage, please keep in mind that you may get a busy signal or your call may be switched to an answering service or an automated system and you will need your account number to report your outage.

- The SmartHub app is a free download. A link is on CottonElectric.com under the Residential tab. You will need your Cotton Electric account number to set the app up on a phone or tablet the first time. Please remember to include a good callback number when using SmartHub to report an outage. This is the best way to report an outage during a large incident.

- Ice storm outages can be long outages. Have phones charged up and fresh batteries loaded into flashlights. Make

sure there are plenty of warm clothes, blankets and non-perishable foods in the house.

- During an extended outage, keep your refrigerator and freezer closed. With good seals, those appliances can keep food cold for 24 to 48 hours as long as warm air is not introduced by opened doors.

- Generators are a great temporary power supply as long as they are used properly. Never operate a generator indoors. Use it only to power certain appliances and not an entire house. This can create a deadly backfeed situation.

- Ice storm damage can be quite extensive and takes a long time to repair. Have an alternate location in mind if you or members of your family cannot tolerate more than a few hours without power.

- Keep in mind that we want your power back on as much as you do. We will restore it as quickly as safety allows.

- We deeply appreciate the patience and support of co-op members during storm recovery.



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# Communication key during storm recovery

By Karen Kaley

Communications played a key role during Cotton Electric's restoration efforts following the post-Christmas ice storm. Communication along the power lines and between Cotton Electric and our power supplier, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative, kept line workers safe and progress steady.

There is another aspect of communication that looms large during such events: Keeping members informed.

The first line of communication is the telephone. It is essential that our members call us when they experience power blinks or complete interruptions of service. The reason for this is simple: Members are the first to know that it happened.

Another option for reporting a complete power outage is the SmartHub app, which works on all mobile devices. Please use this method only to report complete outages. Remember to include a good callback number.

We keep dispatchers on duty all day and all night to respond to outage reports. As each outage is entered into our system, software can make predictions about incidents in close proximity and make predictions about how many are affected and places to look for a cause.

During large outages, the phones can get overwhelmed quickly, particularly if it is at night. Night dispatchers are usually alone and reach a point where they have to focus more on getting a crew to address the outage. Member calls may be switched to an answering service or an automated system.

There are a limited number of phone lines coming into the Cotton Electric headquarters. It is an adequate number usually but not near enough during a long-term outage such as the one at the end of 2015.

At the end of the day on Dec. 27, the co-op had received more than 2,400 outage calls. Another 1,800 calls came the next day. That number dropped to 840 the next day and 500 the day after that. By New Year's Eve, calls dropped to 17.

Digital communication was not hampered by the ice storm. We posted up-

dates on our website, CottonElectric.com, and received quite a few emails generated by the site and to our general address, info@CottonElectric.com.

The website provides a link to our outage map, a place to see the scope of damage indicated by the number of members affected and to track the progress of restoration crews.

We posted updates on the co-op's Facebook page, too. That communication avenue experienced as much traffic as the phone lines.

Our Facebook follower count jumped from 3,290 to 4,778 during the course of restoration efforts. Facebook statistics show we had more than 2,500 page views during the peak of restoration efforts. A Dec. 28 post describing damage and time estimates recorded 261 likes and 278 comments, was shared by 202 followers and is estimated to have reached 36,700 Facebook users.

In addition to thousands of comments, we received hundreds of private messages through Facebook. At first, it was generally to offer prayer for line workers and to ask when power would be restored. We tried to answer as many as possible with our best guess.

As power was restored to the system, the messages and comments became celebratory and grateful. We have received many kind handwritten messages, too.

We have a message for our members:

We know that life without electricity, even for a few hours, can be difficult. To have to go without for several days during the coldest part of winter is beyond tough. During the recent long-term outage, our members showed us what they're made of.

Showing patience with our restoration efforts and expressing untold amounts of caring and support for our line workers and other employees are just some of the incredible responses you had to this challenging situation.

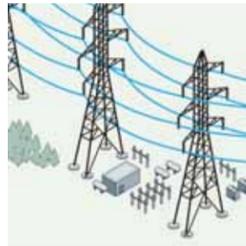
From every employee here at Cotton Electric Cooperative, we appreciate your patience and understanding.

To you, our members and owners, we offer our sincere gratitude and heartfelt admiration.

# Powering Up:

When an outage occurs, line crews work to pinpoint problems

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage as it did on Dec. 26-27, 2015, in southwest Oklahoma, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.

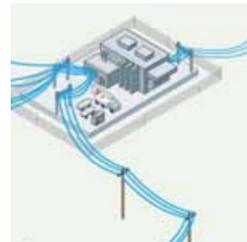


## 1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of consumers) rarely fail. But when damage occurs, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

## 2. Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.



## 3. Main Distribution Lines

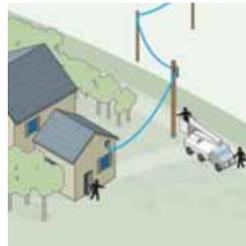
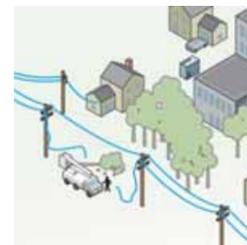
If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

**SAFETY TIP:** If a power line falls across or near your vehicle while you are in it, stay inside until help arrives!



## 4. Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.



## 5. Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate these local issues.

Sources: Illustrations, Funnel Inc.; Text, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

## Early Detection Saves Lives!

### FREE Lung Screening For High Risk Individuals

#### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women worldwide.
- Nearly 160,000 Americans die of lung cancer each year.

Based on findings of the National Lung Screening Trial (NLST), we know that CT lung screening can save lives of people at high risk for developing lung cancer.

Low-dose CT (LDCT) lung screening is quick and easy and results in a minimal amount of radiation exposure. The Cancer Centers of Southwest Oklahoma is determined to raise awareness and improve access to this testing for all people at high risk. Therefore, Cancer Centers of Southwest Oklahoma and Jackson County Memorial Hospital are now offering in conjunction **FREE LDCT lung screening** to individuals who meet the established high-risk criteria.



#### QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

You may qualify for a free LDCT lung screening if you fall into one of these categories:

##### Category 1

- You are between 55 and 74 years of age
- You are currently a smoker or have quit in the last 15 years
- You have a 30+ pack-year\* history of smoking

##### Category 2

- You are between 50 and 74 years old
- You have a 20+ pack-year\* history of smoking
- You have one additional lung cancer risk factor (not to include secondhand smoke exposure)

\*pack-years are calculated by multiplying the number of packs a day you smoke by the number of years you have smoked.

Example: 2 packs a day for 15 years = 30 pack-years

**Call to schedule a screening  
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# New guidelines advise limiting intake of added sugar

At last, 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans have finally been released. One of the new focus areas is added sugar. The recommendation is to limit intake of added sugars to no more than 10 percent of calorie intake. As with many nutrition recommendations, further explanation is needed to fully understand and implement this new guideline.

What does “added” mean? Notice that the guideline did not read “limit your intake of sugar.” Importance is placed on “added” sugar, as many foods that are generally good for you have some sugar in them. Think fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables and milk products – all contain naturally occurring sugar that is not part of the new guidelines.

The emphasis on added sugar points to the infiltration of different types of sugar into processed foods. Because the current nutrition facts label does not differentiate between naturally occurring sugar and added sugar, consumers have to review the ingredients to see if a product contains added sugar. The Food and Drug Administration has proposed changes to the current Nutrition Facts label to separate out added sugar, but the change has yet to be implemented.

Consumers must watch for the following terms in the ingredient list to detect added sugars: any word that ends in -ose, agave nectar, cane juice/syrup/sugar/crystals, any syrup, honey, fruit juice



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

## Food For THOUGHT

concentrate, corn sweetener, and molasses. All are added sweeteners that have calories like sugar, therefore, they are added sugars. The earlier they appear on the ingredient list, the larger the amount added to the food.

What is “10 percent of calorie intake?” To figure this out, you need to do some homework. The dietary guidelines give suggestions on how many calories you should consume based on sex, activity (sedentary or active) and age. To find yours, go to <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/> and click on Appendix 2 - Estimated Calorie Needs per Day by Age, Sex, and Physical Activity Level.

These levels do not take into account need for weight loss, weight gain, or management of a chronic disease like diabetes or heart disease, but will work for translating the added sugar guideline into something you can measure against.

Let's look at 2,000 calories. The added sugar guideline says that if you need 2,000 calories per day, only 10 percent of those calories should come from added sugars.

On food labels, sugar is listed in grams. In order to translate this guideline into grams, take 2,000 calories and multiply by 10 percent to get 200 calories. Divide by 4 calories, the number of calories in 1 gram of sugar. Then you have your daily sugar limit: 50 grams of added sugar per day.

This is a maximum, so if you eat less than your 10 percent per day, you do not need to eat more added sugar.

What does 50 grams of sugar look like? The easiest way to get a perspective on this is to look at sugar-sweetened beverages like soda. There is no naturally-occurring sugar in soda, it's all added! The amount of added sugar in soda ranges from 30 to 40 grams per 8-ounce serving. A typical sugar packet contains 2 to 4 grams of sugar. One package of fruit-flavored candies contains between 30 and 50 grams of sugar. You can see how just one serving of some foods can blow your added-sugar budget.

How can you make this less complicated but shift your intake away from added sugars? The answer is simple but action is challenging.

Daily, limit your intake of sugar-sweetened beverages and avoid adding sugar to no-calorie beverages. Replace candy, cookies, cakes, doughnuts, pastries and other desserts with fruits without added sugar. Reserve those foods for celebrations and special occasions or occasional treats. For foods that seem high in sugar per the current Nutrition Facts Label, check the ingredient list and find brands that use as little “added sugar” as possible.

Why should you even care? If you are overweight, have Type 2 diabetes or heart disease, this is an easy way to help control and manage your health challenges. You can get naturally occurring sugar wrapped in fiber, vitamins, and minerals from fruits and vegetables and reserve your added sugar intake for special foods, special occasions, and foods that you, yourself, do not prepare.

If you are underweight, are suffering from a disease where you need extra calories to manage the side effects of the disease, or you are an elite athlete, please visit with your healthcare provider and registered dietitian, as concern over added sugar is not necessarily what you should focus on and the dietary guidelines may not support your treatment or training goals.

## 4-H recipes rock!



The 2015 Stephens County Cook Off featured 15 categories. Winning recipes were published in November and December. The remaining recipes are here.

**Pie:** 1 stick butter  
Faith Dresser, Grandview 1 T. sugar

### Lillie's Lemon Pie

**Pie filling:**  
1 can Eagle brand milk  
2 egg yolks  
Juice of 2 lemons

**Pie Crust:**  
1 pkg. sleeve graham crackers

Mix well the first 3 ingredients, pour into prepared pie crust, top with leftover graham cracker crumbs. For crust: crush 1 package graham crackers into crumbs, set aside 1 handful. Melt stick of butter and pour into crumbs. Mold mixture into pie plate.  
Serves: 6

### Appetizer

Ryley Dumas, Empire

#### Mini Nacho Cheesecakes

3 cups crushed Nacho Doritos  
3 cups butter, melted  
3-8 oz. pkgs. cream cheese  
1/2 cup mayonnaise  
1 envelope taco seasoning  
2 T. flour  
4 eggs, slightly beaten  
1 1/2 cups finely chopped, cooked chicken  
1 1/2 cups Pepper Jack cheese, shredded  
1/3 cup green onion, chopped  
1 cup sour cream  
Tomatoes, olives, avocado to garnish

Extra chips or crackers, optional  
Combine crushed Doritos and butter in bowl, spoon mixture into muffin pan and press down for crust. In large bowl, using mixer, beat cream cheese, mayonnaise, taco seasoning and flour until smooth. Add eggs, beat on low until combined. Stir in chicken, shredded cheese and onions. Spoon over crust into muffin tins. Bake at 325° for 45 minutes or until almost set. Pull out of oven, spread sour cream over the top and place back in oven for 5-10 minutes until set. Cool 10 minutes, run knife around tin carefully to loosen edges then cool 1 hour. Remove and garnish as desired. Serves: 24

## Blend indulgence with nutrition

Balanced treats can help you enjoy the wellness season

(Family Features) With family gatherings and New Year's resolutions, this is the time of year where the holiday and wellness seasons find themselves on a collision course. The key to fully enjoying both seasons is finding treats that balance great taste with nutritional value.

Hazelnuts, which are widely known as the culprit behind the irresistible flavor of chocolate hazelnut spreads, are one way to consciously enjoy the season. Rich in vitamins and dietary fiber, and naturally cholesterol and gluten free, hazelnuts can amplify a variety of foods and flavors for an indulgence-meets-nutritious experience.

The finest hazelnuts are grown in the lush fields along the Black Sea coast of Turkey, where the optimal climate of the region produces hazelnuts that have a creamy, buttery flavor and crunchy texture.

Turkish hazelnuts add extra vitamins and fiber to recipes, creating a nutritious but indulgent snack, such as this recipe for hazelnut chocolate energy bars. Dates, oats and chocolate chips are bound with hazelnut butter for an on-the-go boost perfect for breakfast time, or any time.

Find more hazelnut inspiration at [hazelnutsfromturkey.com](http://hazelnutsfromturkey.com).



### Hazelnut Chocolate Energy Bars

1 cup dates  
1/4 cup cocoa powder  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/3 cup hazelnut butter  
1/4 cup honey  
1 cup hazelnuts, toasted  
1 1/2 cups rolled oats  
1/2 cup semisweet chocolate chips

Place dates in food processor and mix until small bits remain and form ball. Add cocoa powder and salt and process.

Heat hazelnut butter and honey until warm. Pour into food processor along with remaining ingredients. Pulse until well mixed.

Transfer to lightly greased and foil-lined 9-by-9-inch pan. Using spatula, pack mixture into tight square. Freeze to set for 15 minutes. Remove and cut into 15 bars. Store in airtight container or bag in fridge to keep fresh, or in freezer for longer term storage.

## Is Your Water Safe?

### Give Your Back a Break...Stop Adding Salt to Your Softener

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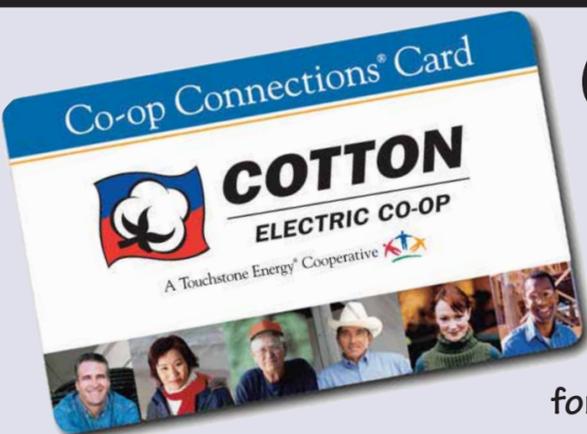
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Visit [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop) for a complete list of national discounts

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

### On The Hill Gypsy Horses

Horse Breeding & Sales  
\$100 off of breeding fee, or purchase of horse.  
By Appointment: 580-641-2022 or 580-656-2475: lee@on-the-hill.net

### Osage Animal Hospital

\$5 off professional examination  
1500 W. Osage, Duncan • 580-255-4200  
Mon.-Fri. 7:45 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

### Rose's Custom LLC

10% discount on purchases over \$200  
580-252-9633 Fax: 580-255-6897  
Mon - Fri 8 - 5 rosescustom@yahoo.com

### Red Dirt Bar & Grill

\$1.00 off appetizers  
6425 NW 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

### Solid Plumbing

10% off all service calls, \$125 sewer camera, \$175 slab leak detection  
2809 NW Sheridan Rd, Lawton  
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

### The Branded Bear

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

### The Vine & The Fig Tree

Event center with catering & tea room.  
5% off Food/ Up to \$25 off in-house catering and 5% off Rentals. Regular prices only & must present card.  
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

### Wichita Furniture

10% off new purchases  
1127 NW Cache Rd, Lawton  
580-355-7425  
9am-6pm: Mon-Sat



Keep up with all the local and national discounts by downloading the Co-op Connections Card phone app at [connections.coop](http://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 2014, members used their cards for discounts on 1,131 prescriptions not covered by insurance. A total of \$28,829.76 was discounted

for an average savings of \$25.49 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](http://www.locateproviders.com). Type 22203 into the Group field and click 'log in' to start your search.



# Parting Shots



Photo courtesy of Western Farmers Electric Cooperative

How bad was the post-Christmas ice storm? Bad enough to take down more than 60 enormous transmission structures like the one shown above. These giant poles and H-structures bring power from the plant at Western Farmers Electric Cooperative to substations throughout most of Oklahoma. While WFEC crews worked to rebuild transmission lines, Cotton Electric worked to repair and rebuild distribution lines. Damage was so widespread that Cotton Electric supplemented the work force with contract crews such as the one shown below.



Photo by Karen Kaley



## Paying your power bill online is easy ...

Just visit [cottonelectric.com](http://cottonelectric.com) and click the **ONLINE BILL PAY** button. Use your Cotton Electric account number and a password of your choosing to set up an online bill pay account.

## Automatic bank draft is easier ...

At [cottonelectric.com](http://cottonelectric.com), click **PAYMENT OPTIONS** under the Residential menu. **Download an application form**, fill it out and send it in with a voided check. We'll arrange to draft your checking account 15 days after your billing date. All you have to do is open your bill and make a note in your check register.

## Want to go paperless?

Call us at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520 or send an email to [info@cottonelectric.com](mailto:info@cottonelectric.com) to request billing via email only. We will need your Cotton Electric account number, so have it handy.



# COTTON

**ELECTRIC CO-OP**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

226 N. Broadway, Walters • 1101 W. Oak, Duncan



# STOCKMAN'S

## The Cowboy Store LLC

2115 N. Hwy 81 • 580-255-7762



# JANUARY SALE!

**BUY TWO REGULAR OR SALE PRICE ITEMS GET THE THIRD FREE!**

(EXCLUDES BOOTS, ROPES, & ANIMAL HEALTH)

**LIMITED TIME!**

