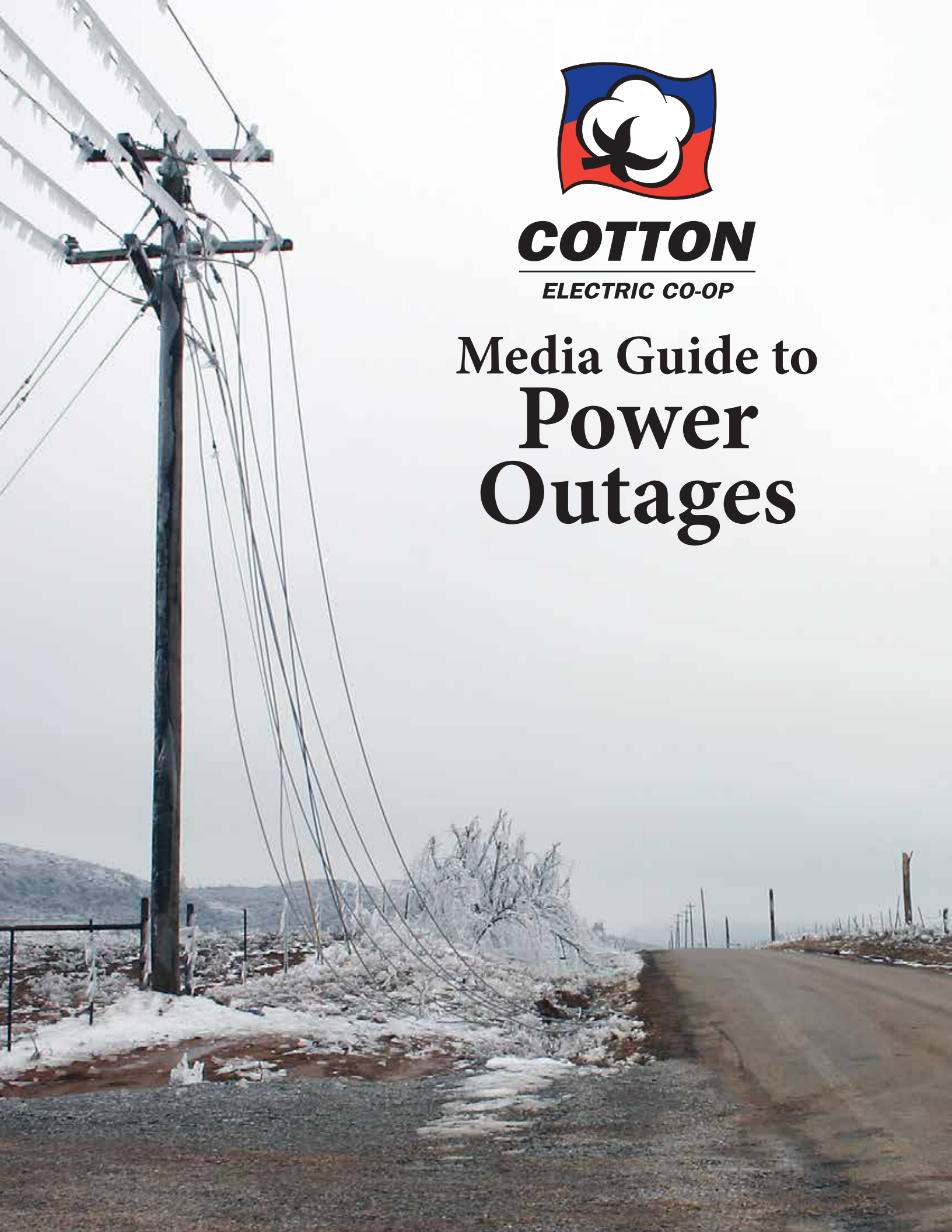




***COTTON***  
*ELECTRIC CO-OP*

# Media Guide to **Power Outages**





# **COTTON**

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## **ELECTRIC CO-OP**

A Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperative 

### **Headquarters**

226 N. Broadway  
Walters, OK 73572  
580-875-3351

### **Duncan Office**

1101 W. Oak Ave  
Duncan, OK 73533  
580-255-5065

**Toll-free 1-800-522-3520**

**[cottonelectric.com](http://cottonelectric.com) • [facebook.com/cottonelectric](https://facebook.com/cottonelectric)**

Revised May 2016

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# General Introduction

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**Jennifer Meason**

*CEO of Cotton Electric Cooperative, Inc.*

Here at Cotton Electric, we are dedicated to providing member satisfaction around the clock.

When an outage occurs, the entire Cotton Electric team reacts swiftly and works around the clock until all power has been restored to the affected areas. We prioritize those members who are dependent upon electricity for their life support devices. During each outage, our work doesn't end until power has been restored to all CEC members.

In this booklet, we provide information about the programs and procedures adhered to by Cotton Electric personnel during an outage. We have included information concerning but not limited to the following topics:

- Cotton Electric's contact personnel;
- How CEC responds to power outages, ice storms and other inevitable power interruptions, and how lost power is restored;
- The many causes of power outages;
- Frequently asked questions;
- How incoming phone calls are received and processed, and why members and the general public may receive a busy signal when calling the co-op;
- How CEC deals with accounts who have life-threatening conditions and rely on uninterrupted electric service;
- Cotton Electric's responsibility to its members.

We hope you'll find the information in this booklet helpful. We thank you for your interest and we invite you to contact us if we can be of help to you in any way.

*Jennifer Meason*  
CEO



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# People to Contact

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**Bryce Hooper** – Our Vice President of Marketing can be contacted directly at 580-875-4215. He is always available to answer questions and provide information about CEC and CEC procedures. During an outage, Bryce can also be reached on his cell phone, 580-690-1000. His e-mail address is [bhooper@cottonelectric.com](mailto:bhooper@cottonelectric.com).

As part of a nationwide alliance with other Touchstone Energy cooperatives, CEC employees are committed to providing members with quality, state-of-the-art technology and personalized service. This commitment intensifies during an outage. We hope you will take some time to review the contents of this booklet, and to contact Bryce directly to discuss any of the associated topics.



**Karen Kaley** – Our Editor/Communication Specialist can be reached at 580-875-4259. Karen will be available to answer any questions about all aspects of CEC's outage procedures. During a power outage, Karen can be reached on her mobile phone at 580-606-8500. Her e-mail address is [kkaley@cottonelectric.com](mailto:kkaley@cottonelectric.com).

It is our goal to keep the media informed about the causes and steps taken to restore lost power to our members. We invite you to contact us at any time to discuss any and all CEC procedures.



**Jennifer Meason** – Our CEO is often available to answer questions about CEC and CEC procedures at 580-875-4217. Jennifer can also be reached at her mobile phone at 580-591-2099. Her e-mail address is [jmeason@cottonelectric.com](mailto:jmeason@cottonelectric.com).

We invite you to visit our website at [cottonelectric.com](http://cottonelectric.com) for updates during each power outage. We thank you for your time and interest in Cotton Electric Cooperative.

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# Media Information

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## *How Cotton Electric Cooperative keeps the media informed*

It is our goal to keep the media informed during interruptions of service. During each power interruption, we write and release **time-sensitive press releases** which are e-mailed to all appropriate news e-mail addresses we have on file.

We post information on our website, CottonElectric.com, which features a link to an outage map showing where outages have been reported and how many members are affected.

Our Facebook page, facebook.com/cottonelectric, has proven to be a valuable tool for communicating with our members. We post outage information, photos and video as it becomes available.

We appreciate your help in making sure that the information which is reported is taken from the most recent press release. **The effective times will be indicated in the top left-hand corner of each press release.** We thank you for your help on this matter.

Again, we invite you to contact us with any questions you may have during these events.



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# Sample Press Release

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**COTTON**  
**ELECTRIC CO-OP**

226 N. Broadway  
Walters, OK 73572  
(580) 875-3351

1101 W. Oak Ave.  
Duncan, OK 73533  
(580) 255-5065

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## **Outage update – 5:30 p.m., Dec. 29, 2015**

WALTERS – Cotton Electric Cooperative crews and contractors are making progress. At 4 p.m. Tuesday, outage count was down to 3,500. The majority of the outages are in the western half of our service area in Comanche, Cotton and Tillman counties.

Cotton Electric crews have been working on smaller outages scattered throughout the service area. We have contract crews working to restore power to the following areas: Meers / Porter Hill, Elgin, Lake Lawtonka. Our goal is to have those areas restored by the end of the day Tuesday.

We returned power to some circuits of the substation serving the Grandfield and Devol communities. We reached maximum capacity allowed by our power supplier and all of the area south of Hwy. 5 is still without power. We estimate restoration on that circuit will be Wednesday afternoon.

We estimate that power will be restored gradually to the substations serving Cache / Indianola area beginning around mid-day Wednesday, Dec. 30. We have asked our members to keep in mind that when large areas come on, secondary outages are revealed. For example, a neighbor may come on while you do not. We ask that members call us if that happens.

The system continues to operate in a fragile state. Some intermittent outages may still occur. If members lose power, we ask them to call us at 5890-875-3351 or 800-522-3520 to report the outage.

Cotton Electric Cooperative, organized in 1938, currently provides electric service to over 20,000 meters in eight counties of Southwest Oklahoma including Caddo, Carter, Comanche, Cotton, Grady, Tillman, Jefferson and Stephens counties.



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# Outage Response

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## *How Cotton Electric responds to power outages and other power interruptions, and how lost power is restored*

When an outage occurs, the entire Cotton Electric team moves quickly to do whatever it takes to restore power to the affected areas. Our work doesn't end until all power has been safely restored to all Cotton Electric members.

Since there are a number of different factors associated with outages, restoring power for members is not always easy. Because each outage is unique, the cause and time required to fix each power outage varies.

Each power outage offers crews a challenge. When power outages are reported to dispatch, a crew is sent out to inspect equipment in the area. Once the cause is determined, necessary measures can be taken to restore power.

When reporting outages, callers often ask why linemen are driving by their houses and not stopping to fix the problem. Unless the power outage is isolated to one home or business, the crews must physically inspect the utility poles and power lines to determine the cause of the outage. For example: If a pole is down, the crew has to find that pole and the appropriate heavy equipment must be brought in to reset the pole, or a new pole must be transported from one of our warehouses to the outage location.

A crew may consist of two to five people. If the outage occurs at night or on a weekend or holiday, assembling a crew will take some time. If the outage occurs during a regular work day, the nearest crew may be working on a task some distance away.

From start to finish, a downed power line can take several hours to repair.





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# Causes of Power Outages

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1. Bad weather conditions: During some of the harshest elements – ice storms, tornados, wind storms, thunderstorms, lightning and hail – minor to major power outages can occur. Poor weather conditions are frequently the cause of most power outages, making it difficult and dangerous for crews to reach the equipment to work toward restoring power.
2. Animals are frequently contributors to power outages. Snakes, squirrels and birds can kick a breaker and cause power outages. Guy wires are used to support poles and keep them straight. Livestock rubbing against guy wires can cause the poles to shake. This, in turn, shakes the overhead lines. Outages occur when the lines “slap” together.
3. Tree limbs: If not trimmed and maintained, tree limbs and brush can also cause power outages. Several years ago, Cotton Electric began a tree-trimming program to help clear lines and rights-of way to eliminate vegetation interference with power lines. It hasn't completely eliminated system damage, but has lessened the risk of storm damage to overhead lines. CEC asks its members to make conscious decisions when planting trees near power lines to avoid potential outages when the trees mature, and to consider taking the trees out completely to avoid constant trimming.
4. Drivers: Automobile accidents occasionally disrupt service when a distribution pole is hit.
5. Hunting season: Glass bells are sometimes accidently shot and shattered which can result in a power outage.

## ***Please remember!***

***Whatever the cause of the power outage, avoid downed power lines and consider them live and dangerous. Downed power lines should always be left for trained Cotton Electric professionals to handle.***

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# Frequently Asked Questions

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**Q. How long will the power be out? What caused the outage?**

A. How long a power outage will be, and its cause, cannot be determined until a district crew physically inspects the affected area. Severe weather, such as lightning, can make it particularly difficult for the crew to reach and repair the distribution poles or wires.

**Q. How many people are out of power?**

A. Cotton Electric personnel use software that predicts the number of people without power as outages are reported, either by members or by crews inspecting the damage and determining the cause of the outage.

**Q. When an outage occurs, are people prioritized by how much electricity they use?**

A. Although the amount of electricity an account uses is not a factor, CEC does prioritize life-threatening emergencies: live, downed power lines that may be a threat to the community, public service businesses (fire departments, for example), and homes with a resident who has a medical condition that requires uninterrupted electric service.

**Q. What happens when our power supplier loses power, and why can we not provide power until their power is restored?**

A. Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC) in Anadarko supplies CEC's power. If WFEC's power is lost to a substation, CEC helps WFEC restore power to the substation. If the situation allows, we will temporarily reroute power from other substations until power is restored to the original substation.

**Q. How does CEC respond to major disasters such as the December 2015 ice storm?**

A. Disastrous circumstances present every utility service with unparalleled challenges. Extra manpower can be required to repair immense damage. In line with the cooperative spirit, whenever necessary and possible, cooperatives have a working agreement to help each other repair the service area that has been severely traumatized by disaster. In Oklahoma, this results in 27 cooperatives and thousands of co-op employees and contractors available to help one another during a major disaster. And, whenever needed, thousands of cooperatives nationwide can be called upon to help restore power to a severely traumatized area. Co-ops are able to restore power to devastated areas faster by helping each other.

**Q. How are incoming phone calls received and why do members sometimes get a busy signal?**

A. Since there are a limited number of incoming telephone lines at the co-op and a large number of incoming calls, CEC members may receive a busy signal when they try to call – especially during a major power outage. Cotton Electric employees try to answer each call quickly and efficiently so that other members' calls can get through. CEC also uses CRC, a cooperative that helps answer overflow calls during major outages, as well as an automated system to take outage calls.



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# Responsibility to CEC Members

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It is Cotton Electric Cooperative's responsibility to provide all co-op members with reliable electric service at the lowest possible rates. Cotton Electric employees are committed to providing all members with quality, state-of-the-art technology and personalized service, with innovation, accountability, community commitment, and integrity the driving forces of Cotton Electric Cooperative.





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# What is a Member?

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**A member**  
is the most important person in our business

**A member**  
is not dependent on us; we are dependent upon him/her.

**A member**  
is not an interruption in our work; he/she is the purpose of it.

**A member**  
is part of our business, not an outsider.

**A member**  
Does us a favor when he/she calls.

**A member**  
is not a cold statistic; he/she is a human being with feelings.

**A member**  
is deserving of the most courteous and attentive treatment.

**A member**  
is the lifeblood of this Cooperative.

**A member**  
is also an owner, and therefore pays our salary.

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# Media Contact Information

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It will be very helpful for us to know who to contact at your specific media location. There are a couple of ways you can provide that information. The media contact form below can be faxed to the attention of Karen Kaley at 580-875-3101 or the same information can be e-mailed to [info@cottonelectric.com](mailto:info@cottonelectric.com). We appreciate your help.

**Radio station, TV station or newspaper name:**

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**Media person to contact in the event of a power outage or other newsworthy event:**

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(name and title)

**Direct phone number and extension:** \_\_\_\_\_

**E-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments or specific instructions:**

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Please fax to Karen Kaley at 580-875-3101 or e-mail [info@cottonelectric.com](mailto:info@cottonelectric.com)  
Thank you for your time!