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# The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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

VOLUME 66

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NUMBER 9

## Managing, monitoring your Cotton Electric account with ease

By Carli Eubank

Life can be fast and hectic, but it doesn't always have to be complicated. Keeping up with your Cotton Electric account shouldn't be a complex task, and with SmartHub, it won't be.

Some members may have heard of SmartHub but are unfamiliar with its many benefits. SmartHub can help members take control of their account so they can spend less time worrying about their electric bill and more time focusing on other responsibilities.

SmartHub has several features, including being able to pay a bill, viewing energy consumption, contacting Member Services and getting the latest co-op news.

Upon login, members have access to their billing history in the Bill and Pay tab. With the Payment History feature, they can view their current or previous bills to compare payments throughout the years.

“Another feature within the Bill and Pay tab is if members choose to go paperless with billing, they can still view and download paper bills from previous months on the app,” said Jennifer Kriz, Cotton Electric member service representative.

Members are also able to view their energy consumption

in the Usage tab. SmartHub shows how member's energy use is trending over time by comparing month-to-month power use or showing a year's worth of kilowatt hour (kWh) usage. This allows members to take steps toward lowering their bill.

Another feature in Usage is a comparison of daily energy consumption to average temperature. This is shown on a bar graph overlaid with high, low and/or average temperatures. This illustrates the increase in electricity use during extremely hot or cold weather. Energy use thresholds can be set to notify members when they are using more energy than they would like and help them keep bills as low as possible.

“One of the great things about the energy consumption graphs is they can provide a summary of usage or it can show very detailed reports,” said Tonya Daniel, Cotton Electric director of member services. “Everybody's usage is different and this helps members understand how much energy they use.”

Making payments through SmartHub is fast and easy. The first time a member submits a payment, they are able to securely store payment information for future transactions, allowing for easy payment on future bills.

SmartHub accepts payments via electronic check or with Visa, MasterCard or Discover credit cards any time of day. Credit cards will not be accepted for payment on commercial accounts.

Another perk when using SmartHub is Cotton Electric members can arrange to have an email sent when their bill is ready, allowing them to know the amount of their bill before receiving it in the mail.

“If members want to update their stored payment information on their account, they will need to change it themselves,” Daniel said. “To ensure their security, employees can't manage a member's account.”

Members using our MyChoice prepay method can keep track of their balance and can schedule alerts for low balances. Downloading SmartHub is not mandatory for members enrolled in MyChoice, but it's recommended.

SmartHub alerts members of important co-op notices in the Notifications tab. Whether it's billing notices, payment confirmations, annual meeting, youth programs or anything in between, members can stay updated in the app. Members can select how they wish to be notified, including emails and text messaging.

“It's important to have a current phone number listed on an account to make sure you can receive notifications and updates, all from your phone,” Daniel said.

Reporting an outage is quick and easy from SmartHub. Using the app to report an outage immediately alerts the co-op that a member is without power. Since the app sends your account number with the report, it should not be used to report a neighbor's power outage. Members can use the Comments section to include a good callback number and related information about what was heard or seen before the power went out.



## Tech tidbits

**USE THE APP**

When using a mobile device such as a phone or tablet, it's best to use the app instead of the browser. Browsing from mobile devices sometimes causes problems.

**CHECK YOUR BROWSER**

If you are accessing through CottonElectric.com, SmartHub works best with Mozilla Firefox, Internet Explorer and Safari. It is not always compatible with Chrome or Edge.

**THINK ABOUT TIMING**

When asking questions or leaving comments through SmartHub, keep in mind that it is not monitored beyond normal business hours. If you have a time-sensitive issue, please call.

**CHECK FOR TYPOS**

Ensure your email address is typed correctly as well as your password. Remember that passwords are case sensitive.





SmartHub gives members access to an overview of their Cotton Electric account from anywhere.

Logging into the app, or if you have a time sensitive issue.

With SmartHub, our members can manage and keep up with their Cotton Electric account no matter where they are, giving them access to all the app can offer right at their fingertips. Members can access SmartHub through CottonElectric.com or by downloading the app on your mobile device through the App Store or Google Play.

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### Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after May 1, 2023, is \$0.00597 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$7.76 on the May bill.

### April 2023 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	70	46	58	16	73	36	55
2	80	40	60	17	83	37	60
3	89	51	70	18	82	53	68
4	85	69	77	19	92	58	75
5	72	40	56	20	76	49	63
6	65	40	53	21	74	48	61
7	71	40	56	22	55	46	51
8	73	43	58	23	60	37	49
9	74	41	58	24	73	38	56
10	77	47	62	25	69	54	62
11	77	48	63	26	63	50	57
12	81	43	62	27	65	49	57
13	82	44	63	28	63	47	55
14	84	55	70	29	74	49	62
15	72	42	57	30	76	48	62

Source: srh.noaa.gov/oun/

Average Daily High: 74 Average Daily Low: 46

### Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed on Monday, May 29 to recognize Memorial Day. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on June 12, 2023.

### 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 TheCurrent@cottonelectric.com.

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



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**Mission Statement**  
Our mission is to safely deliver reliable and affordable power, provide excellent member service, and improve the quality of life in the communities we serve.

# From the CEO

## This May, take the time to plug into safety

This month, I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the importance of safety. May is Electrical Safety Month, and we will be sharing safety tips and reminders throughout the month to help raise awareness about the dangers of electricity. We all depend on electricity to power our lives, but accidents can happen when electricity is improperly used.

### Our responsibility to you

Cotton Electric's concern for safety extends beyond our employees. We care deeply about the safety of our members, and this month, we encourage you to plug into safety. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the United States are critically injured and electrocuted as a result of electrical fires, accidents and electrocution in

their own homes.

To promote safety education in our local communities, we offer safety demonstrations at local schools and community events. We frequently provide electrical safety content in The Current, as well as on our website and social media. We strive to provide our communities with safe, reliable and affordable electricity and to serve as your trusted energy advisor, now and well into the future.

### Our responsibility to employees

It is no accident that safety is a top priority at Cotton Electric. We are committed to a culture of safety that is integral to our daily operations. In fact, Cotton Electric is part of the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) that follows specific guidelines and protocols

for electrical safety that are considered leading practices.

Our lineworkers are required to wear personal protective equipment at all times when on the job. This includes special fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect from electrical shock.

Our safety team regularly discusses important safety issues pertaining to work within the building as well as out in the field.

Your cooperative also has a subsidiary whose primary focus is protecting lineworkers throughout the country, Cotton Electric Services, Inc. (CESI). The testing facility at CESI exceeds the strictest standards established by the National As-



Jennifer Meason, CEO

sociation of Independent Laboratories and maintains its NAIL accreditation for protective equipment testing. CESI's dedicated staff tests equipment like the insulated rubber gloves and sleeves that protect lineworkers in the field. You can learn more about this unique business on pages 10 and 11.

As the CEO of Cotton Electric, I believe it is my duty and responsibility to raise awareness about the importance of electrical safety. I hope you'll take a few minutes to plug into safety by visiting our website at [www.CottonElectric.com/safety](http://www.CottonElectric.com/safety) to learn more.

### A Safe, Happy House

Four Easy Ways to Boost Electrical Safety at Home

- DON'T** place flammable items, like potholders, napkins or dish towels near the stove while cooking.
- DO** keep electrical devices away from water to prevent electric shock.
- DO** ensure you're using the correct wattage in all light fixtures.
- DON'T** overload electrical outlets with more devices than the circuit can handle.

**HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY**  
WE HOPE YOU HAVE A WONDERFUL DAY

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### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The location of your thermostat can impact your HVAC system's ability to maintain an ideal indoor temperature. For maximum accuracy, thermostats should be placed in the center of the home, away from air vents, plumbing pipes and exterior doors.

Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat, which can cause the HVAC to run longer than necessary. Avoid installing thermostats in rooms that tend to feel warmer or colder than the rest of the home. Do not place furniture in front of the thermostat, which can block air flow and result in inaccurate readings.

Source: [Energy.gov](http://Energy.gov)

### March 2023 Operating Stats

	2023	2022
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$6,369,222	\$6,982,746
Cost of Purchased Power	4,182,886	4,736,975
Taxes	133,550	157,174
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,117	1,217
Average Farm and Residential Bill	151	169
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,140	1,299
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	19,202	19,181
Miles Energized	5,256	5,225
Density Per Mile	3.65	3.67
New Service Connects YTD	105	98
Services Retired	34	24

### Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

June		
Ad Sales	May	26
Classified	May	26
Publish	June	12
July		
Ad Sales	June	30
Classified	June	30
Publish	July	17

### The Current

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

Jennifer Meason .....CEO  
Shane Bowers..... Vice President  
Zach Young .....Director  
Carli Eubank..... Communications Specialist

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# Energy Efficiency

## Energy-saving projects for the weekend warrior

Are you a weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a few project ideas for you—all of which can be completed in a day or less.

Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

### Get smart about home cooling and heating

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with ENERGY STAR®-certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are more affordable, this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, giving you

the control to adjust the settings from anywhere (from your phone), and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences.

Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat and connecting it to your home Wi-Fi.

Play it safe: Remember to carefully read the installation instructions before you get started.

### Go green and boost your greenery with a rain barrel

If you've got a green thumb, you already know that rainwater is the best water for outdoor plants. It's free of minerals, salts and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macronutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to catch large amounts of rainwater and

reduce home water use. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually.

Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your watering needs.

The simplest way to install a rain barrel is positioning a plastic or wooden barrel directly under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of your harvested water.

### Create fresh savings with a DIY clothesline

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs—in the summer, you can also save on cooling costs since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer



**Heath Morgan,**  
Energy Efficiency  
Coordinator

won't be added to your home (which makes your air conditioner work harder). Additionally, air drying is much gentler on fabrics and will keep your clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

You can create your own clothesline with two T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of Quikrete to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat. You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like thespruce.com and hgtv.com offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.

These are just a few simple ideas to help you save energy and money. So, get out there, roll up those sleeves and tackle a few projects.

Check out our website for additional energy-saving tips at [www.cottonelectric.com/energy-efficiency](http://www.cottonelectric.com/energy-efficiency) or call us at 580-875-3351.



The size of rain barrel you purchase depends on your household's needs.



Air drying clothes can help save energy costs while keeping fabrics looking fresher longer.

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY MYTHS

Safe Electricity.org

Don't always believe what you hear.

**MYTH:** Electricity always takes the path of least resistance

**FACT:** Although the path of least resistance is the easiest to take, an electrical current can take any conductive path.

**MYTH:** Rubber gloves and shoes will protect me from shock and electrocution

**FACT:** That is only true if they are 100% rubber. Most everyday gloves and shoe soles are not, and the other materials they contain can be conductors.

**MYTH:** Voltage has to be high to kill

**FACT:** Although the voltage plays a role in how strong the current flows, exposure to the current itself is what's deadly. Even lower voltages can kill.

**MYTH:** Heavily insulated tools will always protect against shock and electrocution

**FACT:** Don't let a tool give you a false sense of security; take all precautions even if a tool is marketed as safe or insulated.

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**SHAPED by our community.**  
**LED by our community.**

**WE'RE PROUD TO POWER YOUR LIFE.**

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### Sharing the cooperative in classrooms and communities

Education, Training and Information is one of the seven cooperative principles that Cotton Electric strives to follow each day. One example of how we inform our membership and communities is through educational presentations.

As a free service to the community, Cotton Electric can share information on a variety of topics for your next school, organization or other group event.

#### Cooperative 101

• Learn about the roots of electric co-ops with our Cooperative 101 presentation. Employees explain the cooperative business model, how electricity reaches residences, what it means to be a member of the co-op, and how we serve local communities.

#### Electrical safety

• Co-op employees can advise your group on how to stay safe around electricity in different situations: indoors, outdoors, on the road, after a storm and more. We also give a glimpse of how our crews stay safe on the job. A popular section of this presentation is the tabletop farm safety demonstration that shows how to stay safe and what happens if someone comes into contact with electricity.

#### Cooperative careers

• From member services representatives and accountants to engineering technicians and journey-



Cotton Electric Energy Efficiency Coordinator Heath Morgan uses the tabletop farm safety demonstration during a school presentation.

man linemen, electric cooperatives have various career paths to explore. Employees from different departments can share their experiences and what their responsibilities look like working at a co-op.

#### Energy efficiency

• Hear from the co-op's Energy Efficiency Coordinator and gather different ways to help lower energy cost and usage. Changes can be as simple or complex as someone wishes, such as adjusting the thermostat or insulating an attic space. Information about our rebate programs and home energy efficiency evaluations can be shared, as well.

Cotton Electric strives to keep our communities safe and informed. Co-op employees can present to surrounding schools, colleges, career fairs and other community groups. To schedule a presentation, call 580-875-3351 or visit [www.cottonelectric.com/presentations](http://www.cottonelectric.com/presentations).

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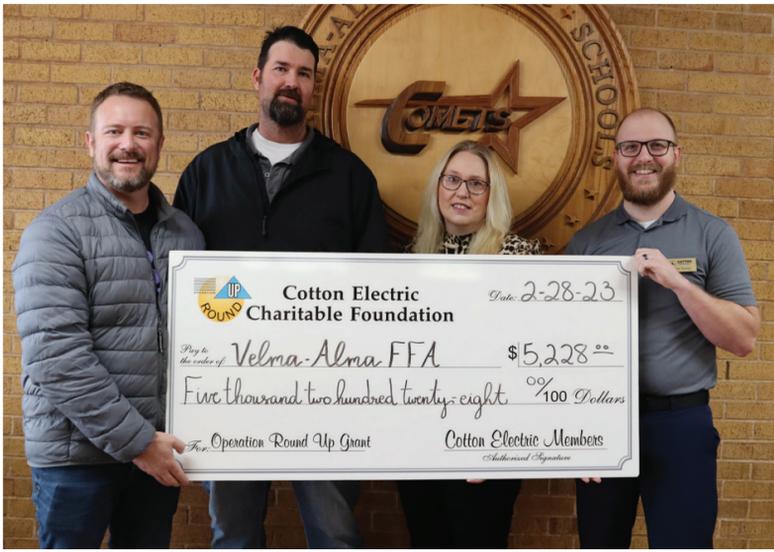
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## Correction

The first-quarter grant for Velma-Alma FFA went towards a 10-ton pipe bender and pipe die. The April edition of The Current incorrectly stated the grant went towards the installation of heaters. We apologize for the misprint.

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# Digital spring cleaning in seven simple steps

We often hear of the term “spring cleaning,” the time of year when we go through our belongings and organize our house and lives in preparation for the upcoming summer. This is also the perfect time to take an annual review of your digital life. The following seven simple steps, taken once a year, will go a long way toward ensuring you can make the most of technology, safely and securely.

### Accounts:

Review each of your accounts. Using a long, unique password for each account ensures that if one account is compromised, your other accounts are still safe. Can't remember all those different passwords? Don't worry, neither can we. We recommend you use a password manager to securely store all your passwords and make your life far simpler and more secure. Enable multi-factor authentication (MFA) when possible, especially for your personal email or financial accounts.

This is the single most important step you can take to secure any online account. If you have any online accounts, you have not accessed in over a year, it could be time to simply delete them.

### Programs:

Keeping your devices and software updated and current ensures you have the latest security features installed and known vulnerabilities are fixed. The simplest way to do this is to make sure you have automatic updating enabled on all your computers, mobile devices, and even smart home devices. Also, delete any unused programs or apps on your mobile devices and computers. Some apps require large amounts of storage, can introduce new vulnerabilities, and may even slow things down. The fewer apps you have, the more secure your system and your information remains. Many devices show you how long it has been since you've used an app. If it has been a year since you last used

the app, chances are you don't need it anymore.

### Finances:

Verify that your bank accounts, credit card accounts, investments, and retirement accounts are configured to alert you whenever a transaction is made, especially for unusual sign-ins, large purchases, or money transfers. This will make it so that you are always notified when a financial transaction occurs and you can spot any fraud or unauthorized activity right away. The sooner you identify fraudulent activity, the sooner you can stop it and the more likely you can recover your money.

### Disposing of devices:

Over time you may find yourself collecting old devices you no longer need - perhaps an old smartphone or smart home device. If you dispose of any of these devices, first wipe any personal information from them. Most devices have a simple wiping function that



securely purges all personal information (or reset to factory default) before disposing of the device.

### Backups:

No matter how safe or secure you are, at some point you will most likely need backups to recover your important information or migrate your information to a new device. Set your devices to automatically back up to the cloud. Creating and scheduling automatic backups allows you to recover important information.

### Parenting:

If you are a parent or guardian, this is a good time to review any parental controls settings you have in place for

children. As children get older, you will most likely need to update these controls settings.

### Social media:

Review privacy settings on your social media accounts – these are a goldmine of personal information. Review your accounts to check that you are not sharing sensitive information such as your birthday, phone number, home address, banking information, or geo-location in personal photos.

Spending just a couple hours a year taking these steps will go a long way toward protecting you, your devices, and information.

Source: Sans.org

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# Co-op Life

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



91-year-old Cotton Electric member Billy Shelby enjoys sharing the amaryllis he grows in his small greenhouse.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. The theme for June is Rural America! Entries can be emailed to [TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com](mailto:TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com).

## Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the June issue, please submit information by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to [TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com](mailto:TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com) by May 26. Only events occurring after June 12 will be published in the next issue.

*Editor's Note: We recommend checking for cancellations with local sources before attending any event.*

### Arts for All Festival

The Arts for All Festival is southwest Oklahoma's largest free juried arts festival, full of art, entertainment and tantalizing foods. The festival will feature 90 artists, and include two stages of live entertainment, a youth art competition and multicultural food vendors. Come to the Arts for All Festival and browse through artist booths filled with fine art, photography, pottery, sculpture, painting and jewelry. The event is May 12-14 at Shepler Park, W. Gore Blvd. and 5th Street, in Lawton. For more information, call 580-248-5384 or visit [www.lawtonartsforall.org/festival/](http://www.lawtonartsforall.org/festival/).

### Tour de Meers

The annual Tour de Meers bike ride is one of the region's oldest and most successful bike rides in the small rural community of Meers, located just north of the Wichita Mountains

Wildlife Refuge. Bicyclists can choose varying distances of 10, 22, 36 or 60 miles. The longer routes go through the wildlife preserve, where riders can see bison, longhorns, elk, birds and several other species up close. This event is an annual fundraiser for the Meers Volunteer Fire Department, 26362 State Highway 115, in Meers. Registration begins at 6 a.m. and the fee is \$40 for a single rider and \$55 for tandem bikes. The ride starts at 7:30 a.m. on May 27 at the Meers Volunteer Fire Department. To register or for more information, call 580-704-9009 or visit [www.tourdemeers.org](http://www.tourdemeers.org) and their Facebook page, Tour de Meers Bicycle Ride.

### Legacy Fest

Kick off the summer with three days of red dirt music at Legacy Fest. This June country music festival will feature popular acts reigning from both Oklahoma and across the nation. Headliners include NBC's "The Voice" alum Corey Kent, Texas-based rock-n-roll group Giovannie & The Hired Guns, and Georgia hitmaker Craig Campbell. Additional supporting artists will be performing, as well. The festival is June 15-17 at Highway 7 and Cherokee Road in Duncan. For more information or to purchase tickets, call 580-470-5302 or visit [legacyfest.co](http://legacyfest.co).

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# Jicama adds unique and nutritional benefits to diet



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

## Food For THOUGHT

Jicama (pronounced “Hee-kuh-muh” or “HICK-uh-muh”) is a warm weather root vegetable popular in Mexican cuisine. It can be eaten cooked or raw and can even be juiced. The texture is similar to an apple but the taste is more subtle; some describe it as slightly sweet and nutty. Because of its subtle flavor, it is easily incorporated into common salads, soups, and other dishes.

If your grocery store carries Jicama, it will be in the produce area in the form of pre-cut white “sticks” or in whole form (looks like a tan turnip). Jicama is mainly offered in areas of the country with a

Mexican cultural influence and in grocery stores which offer predominately healthy food options.

Like all vegetables, Jicama has some very beneficial nutrition properties. It is high in fiber and in water. Fiber helps with weight management by filling you up with less calories (one cup of Jicama provides 49 calories, 12 grams of carbohydrates, and 6.4 grams of fiber). Fiber also helps with many bodily functions like laxation and feeds the good bacteria in the colon.

With its unique combination of texture and taste, Jicama works best fresh as an additional vegetable on a veggie tray, chopped fresh and added to salads with a citrus dressing, juiced (but you are eliminating the beneficial fiber if you throw away the pulp), or cooked by stir frying or baking in cubes or strips. It also works well in stews and soups.

Why give Jicama a try? If you can get past the subtle, starchy taste, Jicama provides a satisfying crunch and a lower calorie, higher fiber delivery mechanism for yummy dips instead of chips. It can be a healthy filler for meat-based recipes as it will take on the flavor of the seasonings, basically a vegetable chameleon adding fiber to your dish. Jicama is not a necessity, not a “super food,” but can be a unique and healthy deviation from your normal vegetable intake.

# THROWBACK

Let's look back 40 years ago and see what was cookin' in The Current!

## Strawberry delight

### Ingredients

#### Crust:

- 1 stick butter
- 1 c. flour
- 1/4 c. brown sugar
- 1/2 c. chopped pecans
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla

#### Filling:

- 20 oz. pkg. strawberries, thawed
- 1 tsp. lemon
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 c. sugar
- 2 egg whites

### Directions

**For the crust:** Mix ingredients until crumbly and spread into cookie sheet in thin layer. Bake in oven for 10-15 minutes at 325 degrees. After crust cools, remove from cookie sheet and crumble up. Set aside.

**For the filling:** Whip ingredients with electric mixer for 5-10 minutes and fold in 1 c. cool whip.

Place half of the crust mix in bottom of 9x13" pan. Pour in filling. Top with remaining crust mix. Freeze.

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# Safety begins at Services

*May is National Electrical Safety Month*

*By Carli Eubank*

Safety is one of the main focuses at Cotton Electric that ripples throughout the cooperative into our communities. Crews maintain quality power while keeping our members safe. Employees attend safety trainings and complete safety courses. Personal protective equipment (PPE) helps keep crews safe while working on power lines. A lot of work goes into keeping members, crews and employees safe, and it begins just down the street from the co-op headquarters in Walters.

Cotton Electric Services Inc. (CESI) is a subsidiary company of the cooperative that has tested high voltage equipment since 1985. Later, they went commercial and began testing for customers all across the U.S. in 1992. Eric Woods, CESI supervisor, has been with the Cotton Electric more than 17 years and came into his current role in 2013.

“What sets CESI apart is being just down the street from the cooperative,” Woods said. “We see the people that wear the products we are testing, and we put a face to everything. We hold ourselves to the highest standards possible to make sure that each crew member goes home safely to their families.”

CESI employees test more than 20 products: including primary protection, such as gloves and sleeves, and secondary protection, like line-hose, blankets, crossarm covers and much more. When shipments arrive, CESI keeps their commitment of a two-week-or-less turnaround from the day rubber good materials are received.

When gloves arrive, employees give an initial visual inspection to identify any cuts or other abnormalities and document the results. Gloves are washed in a commercial washer, using a special soap that is

approved for rubber goods, before going through an electrical test that applies the appropriate voltage to the equipment. Anywhere from 2.5 kilovolt (kV) to 40 kV is applied to see if any gloves have holes in them. If the machine detects a hole, it will burn all the way through the glove and employees will remove the gloves and circle the failed spots before setting them aside. After the electrical test, employees conduct another visual inspection on the inside and outside of gloves using an inflator to check for any cuts or ozone the machine did not detect.

“Ozone is comparable to dry rot on a tire,” Woods explained. “It’s bound to happen, but storage and care of equipment plays a big factor in how quickly they oxidize and fail.”

Some customers request CESI employees throw away their failed equipment, but Woods encourages



**In 2022,**  
CESI shipped nationwide to  
**& 34 states**  
British Columbia, Canada

retested  
**88,230** items  
64,644 were gloves  
13,873 were sleeves  
9,713 were other rubber goods

completed more than  
**2,300** orders




*Cotton Electric Services Inc. (CESI) staff line up in front of one of the delivery vehicles. Pictured left to right: Tassie Berry, lab technician; Shelly Sehart, CESI representative; Caleb Ferguson, lab technician; Eric Woods, CESI supervisor; Jennifer Meason, CEO; Bryce Hooper, COO; Brady Stapp, lab technician; Ryan Noland, lab technician; and Jake Lawler, lead lab technician.*



*CESI Lab Technician Tassie Berry hangs and clips gloves before being tested. Photo by Zach Young.*



*Ryan Noland, CESI lab technician, prepares and loads blankets to be tested. Photo by Carli Eubank.*

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Jake Lawler, CESI lead lab technician, checks water levels of the machine before gloves are tested. Photo by Carli Eubank.



CESI Lab Technician Caleb Ferguson inflates a glove to identify any cuts, tears or other damages to the glove. Photo by Zach Young.

them to get the failed equipment sent back to use as an education tool. Test results help address how crews can change or improve on some things they do on the job to help prevent the equipment from failing.

The frequency of retesting varies for each piece of equipment and the standards are set by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). Woods is active in the organization to keep up with evolving safety standards and updates.

Another program that Cotton Electric, CESI and most electric cooperatives in Oklahoma participate in is the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP). Their safety standards expand more on their testing procedures than ASTM standards.

One example is how, according to ASTM standards, line hoses aren't required to be tested unless something doesn't look right, but RESAP standards require them to be tested annually.

"Usually, cooperatives test gloves every 60 to 90 days, sleeves every 120 days, and line hoses and hot sticks annually," Woods said. "Cotton Electric tests gloves and sleeves every 30 days."

Since 1996, CESI has been certified by the North American Independent Laboratories for Protective Equipment Testing (NAIL) and meets their strict standards. One of their standards includes inspecting the inside and outside of gloves, as previously mentioned, instead of just the outside, which is all ASTM requires. Additionally, an auditor will observe the CESI team every three years on how they work and to make sure they are following procedures properly.

Another way that CESI employees help ensure safety is by staff rotations. Every couple of years, Woods will rotate employees between the two lab areas: one area tests sleeves, line hoses, blankets and 40,000-volt gloves and the other lab area tests all other volt-

ages of gloves. Rotating employees helps have a fresh set of eyes on the equipment when being tested, while also expanding their knowledge on different aspects of the job.

"I've got a fantastic crew, and I always encourage them to take their time and do the best job they can to make sure crews are wearing safe equipment," Woods said.

CESI's mission statement says: "Cotton Electric Services conducts dielectric testing on personal protective equipment against strict standards designed to ensure the safety of the equipment and those who use it." For CESI employees, they aren't just fulfilling PPE orders; they are the starting point of keeping their customers, employees and friends safe on the job.

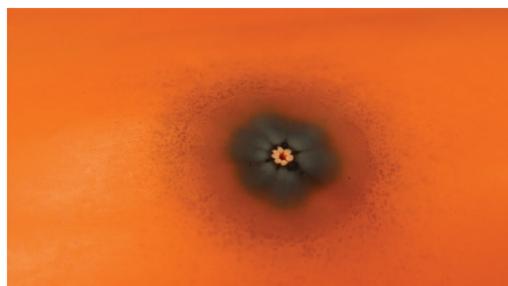
"You can't put a price on safety, so we are going to keep doing the best job possible," Woods said. "Our ultimate goal is to make sure people are working with safe equipment and able to go home at the end of the day."



Brady Stapp, CESI lab technician, removes the previous testing date on gloves that are ready to be tested again. Photo by Zach Young.



Gloves are clipped and ready to be machine tested after being visually inspected by employees for any cuts, tears, ozone or other damages to the material. In 2022, CESI employees retested 64,644 gloves. Photo by Carli Eubank.



A testing machine identified a punctured hole in a blanket, burning a hole all the way through the failed equipment. Photo by Carli Eubank.

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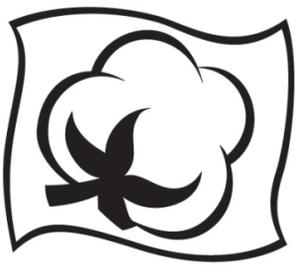
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May is National Electrical Safety Month! Take this quiz to test your safety skills. Check your answers in the key below.

- It's safe to plug in several devices to one electrical outlet as long as you use a power strip.**  
A. True B. False
- Smoke alarms should be tested \_\_\_\_\_.**  
A. Every month B. Every other month C. Every six months
- Extension cords are safe to use year-round if the cord is not frayed or damaged.**  
A. True B. False
- When unplugging a device from an electrical outlet, always hold the \_\_\_\_\_ while unplugging.**  
A. Cord B. Plug C. Device
- It's never safe to play near power lines, but it's OK to play near pad-mounted transformers (those big green boxes you see in neighborhoods).**  
A. True B. False
- Where is the most dangerous place to use electricity?**  
A. Near other electrical equipment B. Outdoors C. Near water

Answer Key: 1. B 2. A 3. B 4. B 5. B 6. C

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**ACROSS**

- Midway between south and southeast
- Fathers
- Wine grape
- Al Bundy's wife
- Organic compound
- Venezuelan state
- Interest term
- Experts
- Central cores of stems
- Smooth and glossy
- One-time S. Korean city
- One from Damascus
- Short message at the end of an email
- It cools your home
- Oh, God!
- Intestinal pouches
- Men
- Popular English soccer team (abbr.)
- Former CIA
- Arrange in steps
- A baglike structure in a plant or animal
- The Great Lake State
- Dog-\_: to mark a page
- Stop moving
- Ancient Dead Sea region
- Of I
- Clerical vestment
- Songs sung to a lover
- Charges
- Popular design program manufacturer
- Where to park a boat
- One who values reason
- Slang for cigarette
- Sailboats
- Actress Zellweger
- Screen material
- Country music legend
- Haggard
- Puts together in time

**DOWN**

- An involuntary and abnormal muscular contraction
- PhillyOs rail service
- Leaves a place
- No longer be a part in
- Guitar players use them
- Cease to exist
- GeneralOs assistant (abbr.)
- Shaking of the earth
- Strong winds
- For each one
- A bog
- The creation of beautiful or significant things
- Affirmative
- Pie \_\_\_ mode
- Nonclerical
- Inspirational football player Hamlin
- Learning environment
- Khoikhoi peoples
- Bring out or develop
- Shows up
- Theatrical device
- Loads
- Popular Hollywood alien
- Distinguishes
- College dorm worker
- Secondary or explanatory title
- Resembling wings
- One who delivers a speech
- In the middle
- Loop with a running knot
- Airborne (abbr.)
- Beloveds
- Ordain
- Breed of small cattle
- Very small period of time (abbr.)
- Revolutions per minute
- They \_\_\_
- Longtime ESPN anchor Bob
- A place to stay

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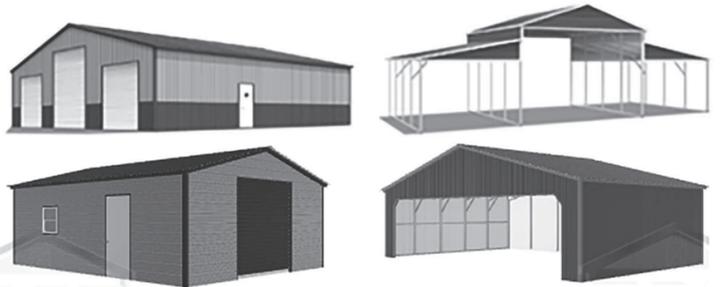
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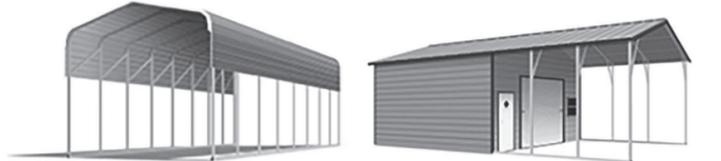


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