

The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

VOLUME 62

August 12, 2019

NUMBER 12

Bohot serves with members in mind

By Karen Kaley

Cotton Electric members participate in the governing of their electric cooperative by electing a member from each district to serve a three-year term on the board of trustees. If a seat is vacated before the end of the term, the board appoints a trustee. Ronnie Bohot was appointed as trustee in 2009 and District 9 members have retained him ever since.

Bohot is the second-most senior trustee on the current

board of trustees. He said all of the trustees, past and present, have something in common. “We keep the members’ concerns at the front of our thinking. We are focused on getting electricity to members at the lowest possible cost.”

“That mission informs all of our decisions.”

He said that is the legacy of the co-op’s founders. “All of the things put in place by those who established the co-op, those who have carried it forward with

policies and procedures, have always kept members in mind.”

That method of guiding the co-op continues some 80 years later. “We have guidelines that make it easy to follow.”

Well, it’s not entirely easy. “I’ve learned delivering electricity is not as simple as flipping a light switch. It’s a complex machine.”

Bohot said, “Education is an important part of our decision-making. Training helps,” he said, noting the trustees have oppor-

tunities to learn from others’ experiences while learning about the intricacies beyond the poles and wires of an electric cooperative.

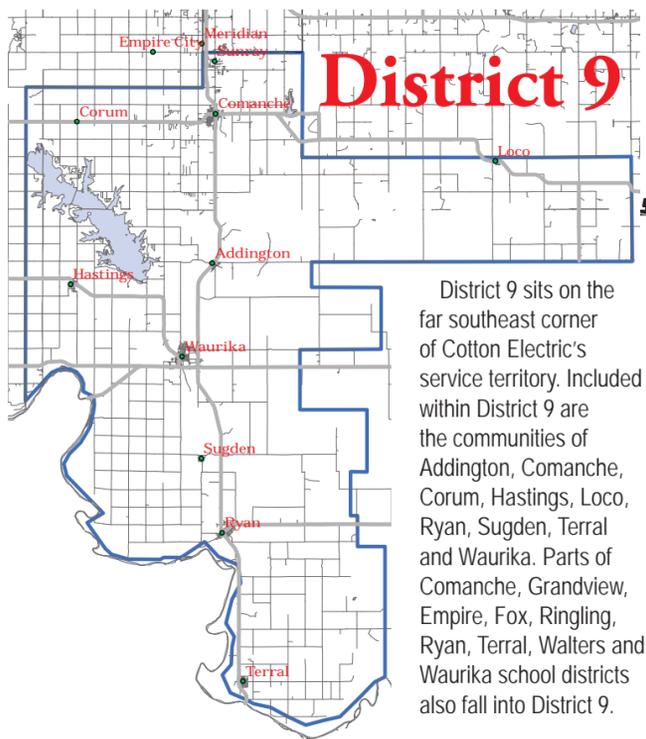
Educational topics include finance, risk management, power supply, technology and policy development.

Serving on the Cotton Electric board has enhanced Bohot’s service to the larger community. “I represent people I know in the community where I live. I serve in other ways and on other

boards and apply the same principles and practices.”

The best part of being Cotton trustee? “It’s like being part of a family. The people I serve, the people I serve with, the staff and employees ... we are all pushing forward, constantly trying to make the system better.”

“We are thinking about the future and how to continue to provide electricity with a high value on service, integrity and low cost.”



Members in this area are served by four substations: Comanche, Sugden, Loco and Walters. These substations distribute power across approximately 691 miles of line to residential and commercial accounts in District 9.

When your power goes out, four line workers are on call to get your lights back on: Journeyman Linemen Terry Foster and Dillon Wiygul and Crewmen Case Hurst and Prestin Green.

These line workers do not exclusively work in District 9 but aid the system in various places along the eastern side of the service territory. They are under the direction of Operations Superintendent Chad Cowan.



Terry Foster



Dillon Wiygul



Case Hurst



Prestin Green

District 9 sits on the far southeast corner of Cotton Electric’s service territory. Included within District 9 are the communities of Addington, Comanche, Corum, Hastings, Loco, Ryan, Sugden, Terral and Waurika. Parts of Comanche, Grandview, Empire, Fox, Ringling, Ryan, Terral, Walters and Waurika school districts also fall into District 9.

Meetings set for CEC Districts 4, 7, 9

District meetings for three of the nine voting districts of Cotton Electric Cooperative have been set for the purpose of electing trustees and for reports involving other business matters.

The business and affairs of Cotton Electric are managed by a board of nine trustees representing geographical districts within the cooperative’s service territory. The board establishes the overall policies of the cooperative. Each trustee is a co-op member who represents one district, the area in which he or she lives.

Members residing in Districts 4, 7 and 9 will receive mailed notices that will include information about the time, date and location of the meetings they should attend. The cooperative’s bylaws stipulate that district meetings are to be held in three of the nine voting districts annually and only members in these three voting districts will receive notices.

The 2019 meeting schedule is:

- District 4: Sept. 10 at Worley Seminar Center, Room 301, Great Plains Technology Center in Lawton
- District 7: Sept. 9 at Wesley Chapel



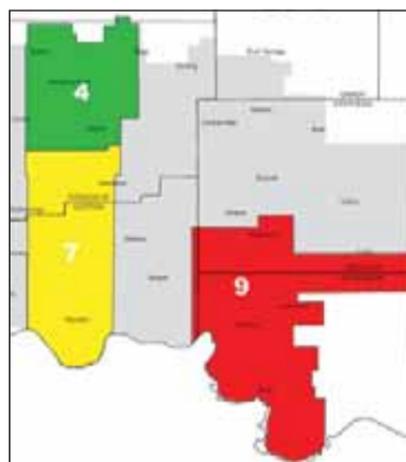
BRIAN DeMARCUS
represents District #4



STEVE ROBINSON
represents District #7



RONNIE BOHOT
represents District #9



Fellowship Center in Lawton

- District 9: Sept. 12 at First Baptist Church in Waurika

Registration at each meeting will begin at 6 p.m., and a mailed official registration card will be required for members. The registration card allows for quicker registration and makes the holder eligible for an attendance prize.

Registration ends at 7 p.m. when the business meeting will be called to order. Each member is entitled to one vote in

trustee elections.

Churches, clubs, schools, organizations and others will receive credentials to be used to designate a person as the voting delegate. Forms must be presented at registration, with all forms completed and notarized. These will enable the representatives of each organization to vote and participate in the business of the cooperative.

Trustees who are elected at the district meetings take office immediately follow-

ing the annual meeting and serve a three-year term. If there is no election, incumbents are held over for another term.

Incumbents are Brian DeMarcus, District 4; Steve Robinson, District 7; and Ronnie Bohot, District 9.

The Cotton Electric Cooperative annual meeting will be Oct. 3 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds in Duncan. Registration for the annual meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m.

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after Aug. 1, 2019, is \$0.01269 per kWh.

On a member’s average bill of 1250 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$15.86 on the August bill.

July 2019 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	93	69	81	16	102	71	87
2	97	73	85	17	101	76	89
3	96	73	85	18	101	76	89
4	96	74	85	19	102	77	91
5	97	75	86	20	102	76	89
6	86	71	79	21	103	72	88
7	95	72	84	22	91	71	81
8	91	73	82	23	90	65	78
9	98	71	85	24	92	58	75
10	100	77	89	25	91	59	75
11	96	71	84	26	91	61	76
12	95	65	80	27	96	63	80
13	94	66	80	28	100	67	84
14	97	73	85	29	102	73	88
15	98	68	83	30	102	68	85
				31	103	72	88

Source: srb.noaa.gov/oun/

Average Daily High: 97 Average Daily Low: 70

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 2, in observance of Labor 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 Sept. 16, 2019.

Contact Us

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

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

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

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More news at cottonelectric.com

From the CEO

WFEC announces advancements in power

I'm excited to share an announcement from Cotton Electric's generation and transmission provider, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), regarding a 700-megawatt combined wind, solar, and energy storage facility.



Jennifer Meason, CEO



The Cotton Electric Cooperative Community Solar project, owned by WFEC, consists of 950 solar modules each rated at 315 Watts. The entire site is rated for 250 kilowatt hours (kWh) at peak performance.

WFEC announced in July that it has entered into a power purchase agreement with a subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources, LLC, for the largest combined wind, solar and energy storage project in the U.S.

When making the announcement, Gary Roulet, the chief executive officer for WFEC, shared that the cooperative is always looking for ways to better serve members with reliable, low-cost and environmentally-friendly energy. The price of wind and solar energy is lower than ever, and WFEC is now able to pair it with battery storage to make more affordable, renewable energy available for more hours of the day - even when the wind isn't blowing and the sun isn't shining.

The combined wind, solar and energy storage project is the first of its kind announced in the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), the electric grid region that includes Oklahoma and 13 other states in the central U.S. covering 546,000 square miles. It is also the largest co-located wind, solar and energy storage project in the U.S.

The project will come online in two phases:

- Skeleton Creek Wind (previously announced) - 250 megawatts (MW) of wind

energy, expected to begin operations by the end of 2019

- Skeleton Creek Solar - 250 MW of solar energy, expected to begin operations by the end of 2023
- Skeleton Creek Storage - 200 MW, 4-hour battery energy storage project, expected to begin operations by the end of 2023

WFEC provides essential electric service to Cotton Electric and 20 other member cooperatives, Altus Air Force Base and other power users. It maintains a well-balanced and diversified portfolio of generation resources that includes owned facilities and capacity and energy provided through power purchase agreements like Skeleton Creek.

The Skeleton Creek wind, solar and energy

storage projects, once commercial, will help further diversify WFEC's generation portfolio to consist of 521 MW of solar generation: 955 MW of wind generation and 270 MW of hydroelectric generation. Also, when completed, some 50 percent of WFEC nameplate capacity will include facilities generating electricity by wind, solar or hydroelectric power.

The Skeleton Creek projects will be located in Garfield, Alfalfa and Major counties near Enid. Data gathered from WFEC's small solar facility in Cotton Electric service territory can be seen on Page 10.

**WFEC purchases or produces energy from various wind and solar resources. However, WFEC has not historically, nor may not in the future, retain or retire all of the renewable energy certificates associated with the energy production from these facilities.*

Clark appointed to CEC board of trustees

By Karen Kaley

Todd Clark has been appointed trustee for District 6 in the Cotton Electric Cooperative service territory. He fills a seat held by Thomas J. Jones Jr. for 35 years until his passing in April 2019. Clark will fill out the remainder of Jones' term, due to expire in 2020.

The business and affairs of Cotton Electric are managed by a board of nine trustees representing geographical districts with similar densities of service. District 6, the smallest in square miles, is situated entirely in Stephens County. The district is densely populated, with about 215 miles of line serving nearly



TODD CLARK represents District #6

1,500 members.

Clark is a Stephens County native who "grew up on Cotton Electric power," he said. Raised southwest of Duncan, he attended Empire schools. As an adult, he has lived northeast of

Duncan, where he and his wife, Shelley, raised two daughters. They have been blessed with three grandchildren.

Todd Clark and his brother, Bill, have been business partners for more than 30 years. They have been successful in several ventures that include heavy equipment rentals and Kubota tractor dealerships. Todd Clark sold his interest as the head of operations in the businesses to Bill Clark and his sons a couple of years ago but remains as the property manager and developer.

Clark said the opportunity to serve on the Cotton Electric Board of Trustees has come

along at a time that he can be of benefit to the co-op.

"I've worked long hours all my life, answered the phone continuously. I didn't have time to serve or become involved in community concerns."

Now he has a wealth of business experience behind him and plenty of time and energy to devote to the business of the cooperative ahead of him.

"I'm excited about this opportunity and anxious to learn more," he noted.

Clark already has been to a training session for new directors at Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives' headquarters in Oklahoma City. It is

the beginning of an educational process that will enhance his knowledge of the electric utility industry and help him and other board members in governing the cooperative.

He expressed an eagerness to contribute, too.

"I don't think I will be doing my job if I don't bring something to the table. I want to be a good board member, to be an asset to the cooperative."

Cotton Electric members will have an opportunity to meet the newest trustee and his fellow board members at the Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation scheduled for Oct. 3 at Stephens County fairgrounds.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Routinely replace or clean your air conditioner's filter. Replacing a dirty, clogged filter can reduce your air conditioner's energy consumption by 5 to 15 percent.

Source: energy.gov

The Current

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

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"Cotton Electric Current" (USPS #134-020) is published monthly by: Cotton Electric Co-op, 226 North Broadway, Walters, OK 73572 Periodicals Postage paid at Wichita Falls, Texas 76307-9998

Postmaster Send #3579 To The Cotton Current 226 North Broadway Walters, OK 73572

This institution is an equal opportunity provider & employer.

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

June 2019 Operating Stats Table with columns for 2019 and 2018, and rows for Total Amount Billed/Accrued, Cost of Purchased Power, Taxes, Total Operating Expense Per Mile, Average Farm and Residential Bill, Average Farm and Residential kWh, Total Meters Billed (farm, residential), Miles Energized, Density Per Mile, New Service Connects YTD, Services Retired.

Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the September issue, please submit information by Sept. 4, by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com.

Rabbit show in Stephens County

The fifth annual Stephens County Free Fair Rabbit Show will be on Friday, Aug. 23. The event will be held in the comfort of an air conditioned building, in the north end of rodeo arena at Stephens County fairgrounds.

Registration is from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 22. Pre-registration is available by emailing scffrs@gmail.com.

All rabbits must pass a health inspection upon arrival and prior to entering rabbit cage area. Showmanship competition will begin promptly at 4 p.m. Aug. 23. Rabbit judging will follow at 6 p.m.

There will be cash prizes, trophies and plaques for top placements.

There are no entry fees. Entries are limited to two does and two bucks per breed, per age group, per person.

Walk to End Alzheimer's is Aug. 24

Join the Walk to End Alzheimer's of Southwest Oklahoma and smash their fundraising goal of \$88,000. The party starts at 7:30 a.m. Aug. 24 in Elmer Thomas Park. The 1.5-mile walk begins at 9 a.m.

Registration is open for those who wish to join a team or walk as an individual. To sign up online, go to www.swokwalk.org.

For information, email Lyndse Sager at lsager@alz.org or visit alz.org/walk.

Homemade ice cream in cool contest

Need a cool treat on a hot day? Come to the annual Ice Cream Freeze-Off sponsored by Walters Chamber of Commerce. The competition to see who can produce the best homemade ice cream begins at 11 a.m. Aug. 24 in the Cotton County Expo Building.

Contestants should plan to bring their fruit, plain vanilla or chocolate, or specialty ice cream to compete for the \$50 first prize in each of three categories. The best of all three will win a \$50 grand champion prize.

For information, call 580-678-8586 or 875-2310.

MP hosts annual Blues Ball

Medicine Park's annual Blues Ball will feature live performances by blues artists throughout the Labor Day weekend, Aug. 30 through Sept. 1.

There is no admission charge, and those attending should take lawn chairs but no ice chests. For information, find the Medicine Park, OK Fun page on Facebook.

Cache VFD sponsors Firehouse 5K

Cache Volunteer Fire Department is sponsoring the Firehouse 5K, a fundraiser scheduled for Sept 7. Proceeds will benefit the Cache VFD.

Check-in is at 602 8th Street, beginning at 9 a.m. The 5K Color Run begins at 10 a.m. and the 1-mile Family Walk begins at 11 a.m.

A white shirt for the color run is included with registrations. Online registration can be done by visiting signmeup.com/reg/form/130157/registration.

For information, call Michael Bolin at 580-919-3740.

CTHC features works by Lemons

"A Texas State of Mind," an exhibit featuring the art of Larry G. Lemons of Nocona, Texas, continues through Sept. 22 at the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center in Duncan.

His paintings are Texas bold and fea-

ture Texas icons: armadillos, the Lone Star, rusty pickup trucks, horned toads and livestock skulls. His art is fun, reflecting his own personality.

The Heritage Center, at 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway, is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Cotton Electric members can get \$1 off the admission price by showing their Co-op Connections Card.

International Festival is Sept. 27-29

Elmer Thomas Park is the site of the annual International Festival to be held Sept. 27-29. There is no admission or parking fee for this family-oriented extravaganza of fun, food, children's games and activities, demonstration artists and multicultural entertainment.

Three days of concerts and entertainment kick off with a Parade of Nations beginning at 5:45 p.m. Friday, followed by a naturalization ceremony. Activities will continue until 10 p.m., then resume from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Find detailed information at the International Festival page on Facebook.

Lawton Farmers Market open weekly

Lawton Farmers Market is open from 8 a.m. to noon every Wednesday and Saturday from April through October at the Comanche County Fairgrounds, 920 SW Sheridan Road.

In addition to local seasonal produce, expect to see specialty foods such as jams, jellies, salsas, baked goods, wine, freshly roasted coffee beans, as well as handmade soap, herbs, plants, eggs, beef and an assortment of handcrafted items and food concessionaires.

For information, visit Lawton Farmers Market on Facebook.

Senior center hosts weekly dances

Duncan Senior Citizens Center presents country and western dances from 7 to 9:30 p.m. every Tuesday and Saturday. Tuesdays feature Bill Dewbre and Old Country. Buzz Carter and the Shadow Riders play every Saturday. Admission is \$6 and includes free coffee and soft drinks. Donations are appreciated.

The center is at 1110 N. Seventh. For information, call the center at 580-255-6902.

Weekly kids' activities in Central High

Central High presents Story Time from 10-10:30 a.m. every Wednesday while school is in session at the high school library.

Participants will read a story, sing songs and do an activity. Children who have not yet started school are welcome if accompanied by parent or caregiver.

For more information, call 580-685-2929, Ext. 6.

Chapter of the Blind meets monthly

Duncan Chapter of the Blind meets at 1:30 p.m. on the third Saturday of each month at the Stephens County Historical Museum, 1402 W. Beech Ave.

This is an opportunity for those who are visually impaired or blind and their caregivers to learn about the availability of services and equipment such as white cane training and large lighted magnifiers. The group also provides information about free access to an extensive library of audio books.

For information about the group or to arrange free transportation to the monthly meeting, call 580-786-8041 or 736-8454.

More Community Spotlight on Page 4

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Cotton Electric member Shana Ramirez snapped this photo of her husband, Adam, taking advantage of their "all you can eat" cruise to Costa Maya.

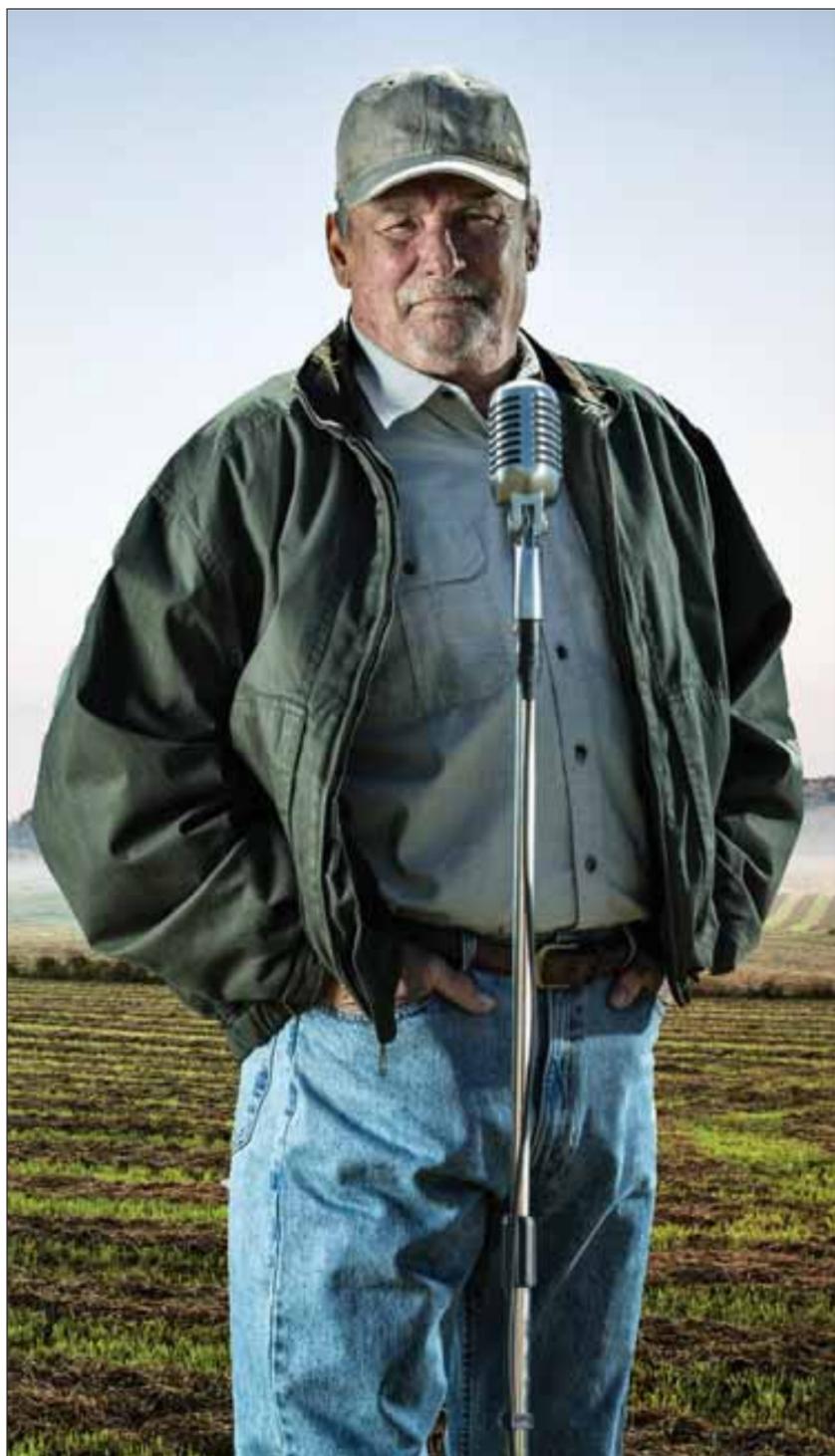
Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for September is Birthday Celebration. Entries can be emailed to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com or mailed to The Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572. Winners will receive a Cotton Electric prize package of CEC goodies.

Coin show in Stephens County

Duncan's Annual Coin Show is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept 13 and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 14 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds.

silver, currency, coins, tokens and supplies. Event includes free parking, admission and refreshments.

For information, contact Ed McGill at 580-475-4570.



EVERY MEMBER HAS A VOICE. MAKE SURE YOURS IS HEARD.

As an electric co-op member you have a say in how the co-op is run. Isn't that nice to hear? Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at TogetherWeSave.com.



Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

September		October		November	
Ad Sales	Aug. 30	Ad Sales	Sept. 21	Ad Sales	Nov. 1
Classified	Sept. 4	Classified	Oct. 2	Classified	Nov. 6
Publish Date	Sept. 16	Publish Date	Oct. 15	Publish Date	Nov. 18

Community Spotlight

Food pantry opens twice monthly

Walters Community Food Pantry is open from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month. The pantry is in the old City Hall, 131 1/2 W. California Street.

Pantry organizers try to provide a two-week supply of basic staples to anyone with identification.

For information, call Roger Noland at 580-591-6826.

Honor guard serves SW Oklahoma

Seeing a need in the area, several military veterans formed an honor guard in 2007 to provide services at funerals for all military veterans. The guard is made up of veterans from all branches of the armed forces and three veterans' organizations.

The uniformed guard furnishes a 21-gun salute, plays taps and folds a flag for presentation to the family. The guard travels anywhere in Stephens, Cotton, Comanche and Jefferson counties, and has made special trips into Grady and Carter counties.

There is no charge for the service, though donations are accepted.

For information about joining the guard or securing its services, call Kenneth Youngblood at 859-684-5128 or Clinton Swanson at 580-251-0629 or visit TheSCHG.com.

Monthly lecture at The Foreman Prairie House

Join the docents and volunteers at The Foreman Prairie House at noon every third Thursday of the month for lunch and lecture. Listen to artists, historians and craftsmen while enjoying a homemade artisan-style lunch.

The subject and speaker for the lecture change every month so you get new knowledge with every freshly prepared meal.

Cost is \$12 per person. Reservations are required and can be made by dialing or texting 580-512-9153.

Senior activities find new home

A variety of activities and weekly sponsored events will continue for the Wichita Mountains Area Senior Citizens Center at the First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Medicine Park until a permanent home can be found or the Legion Building can be rebuilt.

The Legion Building hosted senior center members until the building came down in flames on Feb. 9.

Potluck dinners, games and TV will continue to be offered every Monday from 6 to 10 p.m. Activities continue on Tuesdays and Thursdays with dominoes, other table games, Tai Chi and stretch and balance exercises starting at 10 a.m. Lunch is served at noon, with events continuing into the afternoon.

Senior Center President Puddin McKenzie encourages all of the senior center members to come to the Fellowship Center to play, eat, volunteer and help the senior citizen center recover.

For information about other activities, visit WichitaMountainSeniors.org.

Blessings Boutique open monthly

Marlow First United Methodist Church opens its Blessings Boutique every first and third Tuesday of the month. Clothing donations drop-off days are Tuesdays, or donors can call the church at 580-658-2765 to make other arrangements.

SWOBA meets monthly

Southwest Oklahoma Beekeeper Association meets at 7 p.m. every second Thursday of the month at the Stephens County Fairgrounds.

The association strives to improve beekeepers and beekeeping methods for the local community and provide a beneficial resource to facilitate and augment the cultivation and conservation of wild and managed bee populations across the great state of Oklahoma.

More information can be found by visiting OkBees.org/SWOBA.

#WhoPowersYou contest accepts nominations

By Danielle Quickle

Cotton Electric may power your home, but the co-op is powered by its members. Members are a vital component to the success of the co-op. Every aspect of operation is determined by the members, for the members. Once again, we would like to recognize our members by giving them the opportunity to acknowledge those in our community who have made a positive impact.

We are excited to announce our continuing participation in the annual #WhoPowersYou contest, conducted in partnership with Touchstone Energy Cooperative.

#WhoPowersYou is an online contest created to honor local heroes and celebrate the power of human connections. It's a chance for cooperative members like you to nominate someone who's making a difference in our co-op community.

Through #WhoPowersYou, inspirational stories of people doing good from all across the country are brought to light. Last year's contest winners, Bob and Midge Custer, received national recognition for founding the Downsize Farm in Ohio.

The farm has been providing opportunities for adult-aged special needs individuals to build meaningful relationships and experiences in their communities since 2007.

The Custers have developed a job training center that prepares their clients with the soft skills and the applied skills they need for entry-level positions in food service, janitorial, woodworking, carpentry and manufacturing occupations. Their program focuses on supported employment positions in the community and allows local businesses to hire Downsize Farm clients. Their goal is to change the paradigm and allow those with disabilities to no longer just act as consumers, but also as contributors. Their hope is to help develop a sense of dignity and belonging within their clients.

The farm currently serves more than 60 individuals in Champaign County. Because Bob and Midge's story was

shared by a member, they were crowned the winner of the 2018 #WhoPowersYou contest and awarded \$5,000.

Do you know someone who is making a difference in your community? Nominate them for the 2019 #WhoPowersYou contest and they could win a cash prize up to \$5,000 and be nationally recognized for their actions.

Here is how to participate:

- Go online to WhoPowersYou.com
- Submit a photo and story about someone making a positive impact in our community.
- Provide your name, ZIP code, and select Cotton Electric as your electric cooperative. Only Cotton Electric members and employees are permitted to

make nominations.

- Do NOT nominate a Cotton Electric employee. Current employees are not eligible to be nominated.

- Submit your nomination online by Sept. 6.

A panel of judges appointed by Touchstone Energy Cooperative will announce the contest winners in October. A complete list of rules and information can be found at WhoPowersYou.com.

Cooperative communities are people-powered. Don't let the hero in your neighborhood go unrecognized. #WhoPowersYou is open for nominations from now until Sept. 6.

FOR SALE BY PRIVATE TREATY 640 Acres • Cotton County Land

3 bedroom home, 96'x50' Metal shop w/concrete floor. 103'x80' quanset barn w/2 sheds, w/concrete floors, nice set of cattle working facilities, hyrdaulic squeeze chute, Cotton County Rural Water on 3 sides of section, fenced & cross fenced.

For more information contact:
Terry Brink 580-335-4126
Mr. & Mrs. Phil Kerr, Owners

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UNCOMFORTABLE?

Does your home have any of these symptoms?

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

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

If you answered **YES** to any of these questions, we can help!

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www.PippinBrothers.com

IT department protects member information

By Danielle Quickle

Safety is one of the top priorities of Cotton Electric, from power lines to online. In recent years, cyber security has become an increasing concern. The Information Technology (IT) department carries the responsibility to proactively defend co-op information from both online and offline threats.

The department consists of Manager of HR Shane Bowers, IT Supervisor Greg McComber, and Systems Operator Monty McDaniel. The team monitors every co-op device for suspicious activity, provides cyber security training to employees and ensures the protection of cooperative information.

“Part of monitoring devices is to make sure they are running efficiently,” McComber said. “But our top priority is safety.”

Each day begins with analyzing potential risks and delegating solutions. Combating risks can be as simple as pushing a software update or as complex as patching a server.

“We are entrusted to protect member information,” McComber said. “So, that means we have to do everything we can to make sure the cooperative cannot be targeted easily.”

Security of member information goes beyond digital avenues. Cotton Electric takes physical measures to protect the co-op.

Members who have visited the main office in Walters, the satellite office in Duncan or any of the co-op’s warehouses may have noticed security measures that have



From left, HR Manager Shane Bowers, Systems Operator Monty McDaniel and IT Supervisor Greg McComber work to protect member information from potential threats.

been implemented by the IT department.

“We maintain the security cameras and door locks at all of our facilities,” McComber said. “Digital precautions are important but are meaningless if anyone can easily walk in and access co-op information.”

McComber attends informational conferences and undergoes several hours of continuing education throughout the year. He brings what he has learned back to the co-op.

“Cyber security is everyone’s responsibility,” McComber said. “We let employees know of potential threats on the rise.”

All Cotton Electric employees are required to go through quarterly cyber security training. The responsibility to protect member information is not taken lightly. The co-op encourages members to practice cyber security measures on their own devices by doing the following:

- Use long passwords with complex characters
- Never reuse passwords
- Use a password manager, such as KeePass
- Never click on links or open attachments from people you don’t know or weren’t expecting to hear from.

Taking precautions against the ‘Dark Web’

You may have heard the term “Dark Web” used by others or in the media and wondered “what is the Dark Web?” or “should I be doing anything about it?”. Today we explain what the Dark Web is and what it means to you.



What Is It?

The Dark Web consists of systems on the Internet designed for communicating or sharing information securely and anonymously. There is no single “Dark Web”; it is not something like Facebook where it’s run by a single organization. Instead, the Dark Web is collections of different systems and networks managed by different people used for a variety of purposes. These systems are still connected to and are part of the Internet; however, you will generally not find them using your normal search engines. You often also need special software on your computer to find or access them. One example is the Tor Project. To access this Dark Web, you download and install the Tor Browser. When you connect to web servers using the Tor Browser, your encrypted traffic travels through other computers also using Tor. As it hops through these computers, the source

IP address is changing— meaning that when you get to the web site, your online activity is anonymized. Other examples of Dark Webs include Zeronet, Freenet, and I2P.

Who Uses It?

Cyber criminals are big users of the Dark Web. They maintain websites and forums in the Dark Web to enable their criminal activities such as purchasing drugs or selling gigabytes of hacked data—all anonymously and securely. For example, when a cyber criminal hacks a bank or an online shopping store, they steal as much information as they can, then sell that information to other cyber criminals on sites in the Dark Web.

There are also legitimate uses of the Dark Web. For example, people in countries where censorship is rampant can

use Dark Web networks to share information and see what else is happening in the world while protecting their privacy and remaining anonymous. Journalists, whistleblowers, and privacy-minded people can use the Dark Web to increase their anonymity and bypass censorship. In addition, individuals like these can use technologies like the Tor Browser not only to access the Dark Web, but anonymously browse the regular Internet.

What Should I Do?

Unless you have a specific reason to access the Dark Web, we caution you against it. Some Dark Web sites are used for illegal purposes; many of the sites will use your computer in a peer network to accomplish their goals, and in some cases your computer may even be probed or attacked. Some companies offer monitor-

ing services to let you know if your name or other information has been stolen by cyber criminals and found on the Dark Web. The actual value of these services is questionable. The best way to protect yourself is to assume some of your information is already in the Dark Web being used by cyber criminals. As a result:

- Be suspicious of any phone calls or emails pretending to be an official organization and pressuring you into taking an action, such as paying a fine. Criminals may even use information they found about you to create a personalized attack.
- Monitor your credit card and bank statements; perhaps even set up daily alerts on any transactions that happen. This way you can detect if any financial fraud is happening. If you do detect it, report it to your credit card company or bank right away.
- Put a freeze on your credit score. It does not impact how you can use your credit card and is one of the most effective steps you can take to protect yourself from identity theft.

Source: SANS Security Awareness



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2019 Youth Tour essay topic:

What do you find most interesting about electric cooperatives?

Aurelia Holguin
Marlow High School



Cooperatives care about community

Boom! Boom!

The speakers were pumping out the base to one of my favorite songs.

Boom! Boom!

The pounding continued as people started to recognize the song and join the dance floor. Then the words flowed out of the speakers in a river of music. My friends were smiling wide and dancing with their heels abandoned and hair tied on top of their heads. I imagine I look just as carefree as I am enjoying my junior prom. It's around 9 p.m. on April 16. The gym is lit up with little fairy lights and the DJ is awesome.

Ever since I was little, I watched all of my older cousins and siblings dress up to go prom. I dreamed of being a princess for one night, and here I was. For that reason, I had run for class president to be in charge of this year's prom. So much hard work was put into this night, from calculating how much it would cost to where we could hold it and what food we would eat.

I spun around while dancing to get a glimpse of everything. Wow! All the hard work paid off! I smile as I think this night could not get any better.

But wait, prom just got a whole lot worse. The music just stopped and the dim lights flickered. The electricity shut off right as the song was getting good! We were plunged into darkness ... on prom night.

As class president and the head of the prom committee, I was determined to find whatever went wrong and fix it before the whole prom was ruined. Everyone's phone lights flicker as the realization sinks in. Here we are, dressed up on



prom night with no music, no lights and no electricity. This is a disaster! I find my way through the crowd to the principal. He is already on the phone with our school's power provider.

In less than 30 minutes, the music and lights turn on again. Prom had been saved. As I sit down to give my feet a rest, I realize that fixing the electricity in under 30 minutes was fast. It dawns on me that someone who worked for the school's electric company had to take time out of their night at 9 p.m. to fix the power so our prom could go on.

Wait a second. Who is our school's electric provider?

The next day at school while everyone is chattering about the events of last night's prom, I head to the principal's office to ask who supplies the school with electricity. It turns out that we are not supplied by an investor-owned electric company. We are supplied by Cotton Electric Cooperative.

Wait, what is a cooperative? I decided that it is probably a good idea to research and find out for myself. What I found was very interesting.

Seated at a computer in the library, I searched "what is a cooperative?" and clicked on the first page that popped up. It said something like "Electric Cooperatives were a result of the Great Depression. Electric Cooperatives are not-for-profit organizations that are voluntarily owned and operated by the people who use its services. By every member paying a small fee to use the electricity, they also own a small portion of the business. In correlation of owning the business, members also have a say in how the cooperative will be operated."

Now that I had an idea of what electric cooperatives are, I decided to dig a little deeper and go into the history of establishing cooperatives across the country. During the Great Depression, rural communities were starving and did not have access to electricity. Investor-owned utility companies did not find much profit in stringing the countryside with electrical lines. At the start of the '30s while 90 percent of the urban population had access to electricity, only 1 in 10 country homes did. Rural communities struggled to survive. President Roosevelt found these living conditions unacceptable and in 1935 he established the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). In 1936, Congress endorsed the REA and provided small, long-term loans to groups of farmers. Rural electricity was now a reality. The following decades brought tremendous growth and expansion.

I decided to keep reading some interesting facts about electric cooperatives. Electric cooperatives not only helped boost rural America's economy, but continue to help tremendously today.

More than 900 cooperatives in 47 states provide 56 percent of the nation's land-mass with power. Cooperatives provide 19 million homes, businesses, churches, schools and hospitals with electricity while employing 71,000 people in the U.S. Not only are electric cooperatives known for bringing power to the countryside, but they are also famous for seeking ways to improve the quality of life for their members and their communities. Electric cooperatives benefit the communities around them by sponsoring economic development initiatives like revitalization projects, job creation, improvement of water systems and assist in delivering educational services.

All of this is starting to make sense. The people who fixed our prom's electricity gave up their evening because they care about the well-being of the community. Later I found out that many of my peers have parents who work for Cotton Electric Cooperative. Cooperative workers are average country folk who are concerned with their community's access to affordable, reliable power. Unlike cooperatives, stockholders of investor-owned electricity might not use their own services, or even live in the same areas that they serve. That's why Cotton Electric understood how important getting our prom up and running again was. I put a lot of work in organizing our prom, and Cotton Electric put in a lot of work to save it. The most interesting part of it all is that cooperatives provide jobs, community improvement projects and electricity to host the best prom ever! If next year's prom is crashed again by an outage, then I know the cooperative has my back.

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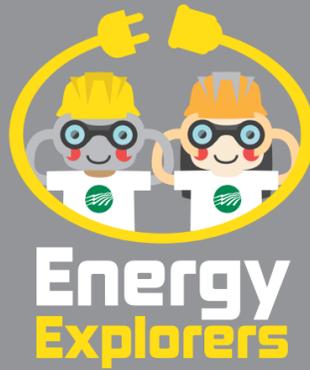
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ENERGY TERMS QUIZ



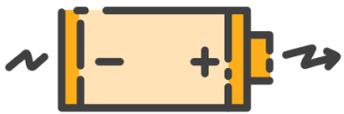
Can you match the definitions below with the correct energy terms? Use the word bank for clues!

1. These energy sources, like coal, oil and natural gas, were formed from the remains of ancient plants and animals buried underground and are used to generate electricity.



2. This is the network of poles and power lines that sends electricity from where it's generated to homes and businesses all over the county.

3. These energy sources include natural energy from the sun, wind and water and are used to generate electricity.



4. This is the flow of electrically charged particles like electrons within a conductor or circuit.

5. This is the act of using less energy.



Word Bank

- CURRENT
- ELECTRIC GRID
- FOSSIL FUELS
- RENEWABLE RESOURCES
- ENERGY CONSERVATION

Answer Key: 1. fossil fuels 2. electric grid 3. renewable resources 4. current 5. energy conservation

ACROSS

1. Social reformer Lucretia
5. Engine additive
8. Where draft beer comes from
11. Skin lesions
13. Denoting one or more things
14. Beloved dish
15. Packaging allowances
16. Surrounds the earth
17. Expresses pleasure
18. "For goodness ___!"
20. Liquefied natural gas
21. Paul __, Swiss painter
22. Benign tumors
25. In an early way
30. Covered with wood
31. Principle underlying the universe
32. Message
33. Become dry through heat
38. Printing speed measurement
41. One who does not succeed
43. Type of agent
45. Type of waste
47. Wings
49. Giants' signal caller
50. Polio vaccine developer
55. Congo native
56. Mortal is one type
57. Fishing vessel (Naut.)
59. Ethnic group of Thailand
60. Where golfers begin
61. Western Florida city
62. Belonging to us
63. Soviet Socialist Republic
64. Influential Israeli diplomat

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55						56				57			58
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62						63					64		

DOWN

1. Mountain Time
2. Int'l political organization (abbr.)
3. Olympic champion Lipinski
4. March
5. Less fresh
6. Reduced in size
7. Garden archway
8. Professional translators group (abbr.)
9. Type of pain
10. What to do for the cameras
12. Midway between south and southeast
14. Bangladeshi monetary unit
19. Satisfy
23. Flop
24. Nearsightedness
25. Parts per thousand (abbr.)
26. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
27. Midway between northeast and east
28. Swedish castle
29. War-ravaged Syrian city
34. American model Carol
35. Bitterly regret
36. Grand __: superior grade wine
37. Of she
39. Clergymen
40. Ringwald and Shannon are two
41. Daze
42. Scores perfectly
44. More narcissistic
45. Fencing sword
46. Highest point
47. In addition
48. Hawaiian feast
51. Appropriate under the circumstances
52. Hillside
53. Metrical foot
54. Winemaking region
58. Someone

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Chattanooga Police Chief Rob Stallcup poses with patrol vehicle equipped with video system.

Chattanooga PD receives CECF grant

By Danielle Quickle

Thanks to the generosity of Cotton Electric members, the Chattanooga Police Department is able to provide video documentation of traffic stops.

Established at Cotton Electric in 2004, Operation Round Up (ORU) is designed to provide financial assistance to worthwhile individuals, families and organizations in communities served by Cotton Electric. Every month, more than 12,300 members participate by having their bill rounded up to the next highest dollar. The spare change is pooled and administered to applicants by the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) and its five directors.

The Chattanooga Police Department (PD) is one such organization that benefited from a CECF grant in the first quarter of 2019. A \$2,000 grant helped the department purchase a camera system for one of their patrol vehicles.

Police Chief Rob Stallcup and officers Larry Cassell and Kody Kinder are based in Chattanooga, have a mutual aid agreement with the communities of Cache and Geronimo, and will occasionally assist the county when called upon.

"We serve wonderful communities," Stallcup said. "We have very few problems and issues that our surrounding areas experience."

The department operates like any other PD, just on a smaller scale. With three officers and two patrol vehicles, they perform traffic control, respond to dispatched situations and serve the community in any way that they can.

"During storm season, we open up the shelter and assist the elderly or disabled to safety. We have also helped people un-



lock their vehicles or change a flat tire," Stallcup said. "Our number one priority is to assist our community."

The purchase of the new in-car video system provides the department with the ability to document traffic stops and DUI incidents that can be provided to the district attorney, if necessary.

"It is just one more thing that improves the checks and balances of the system," Stallcup said. "It protects the officer as well as citizens who are involved and keeps both parties accountable."

This is the second CECF grant the community has received to address public safety. Stallcup is grateful to the foundation and Cotton Electric for providing this service to the community.

"I think ORU is a great way for Cotton Electric to support the community and give back," Stallcup said. "It shows that they are not a faceless company out there that is just providing a service and taking from the community, they care about the people they serve."

Members interested in applying for a grant can find guidelines and a downloadable application by visiting CottonElectric.com/grant-applications. The deadline for 2019 third-quarter grants is Sept. 10.



Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation recently issued 10 grants totaling \$18,760.18. All 10 will benefit children and agencies who advocate for them.

Cotton Electric Staff Assistant Shane Bowers, left, presents a Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation grant of \$2,102.27 to the staff of CASA of Southwest Oklahoma: Erica Mackey, office administrator; Wilma Whittaker,

executive director; and Kim Davis, advocate coordinator. The grant was used to purchase computer equipment, including the laptop Davis holds. The equipment will help the agency expand services into Cotton and Tillman counties in addition to work they do in Stephens, Jefferson and Comanche counties.

More photos of grant recipients can be viewed on the last page of this paper.

Download CECF grant applications at CottonElectric.com
Deadline for third-quarter grant applications is Sept. 10

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Investigating unusually high power bills

We all expect our electric bills to go up during the hottest months of the year. But what can you do when a bill is even higher than you expected? Here are some steps to take to help find the reasons why and hopefully prevent another high bill.



Heath Morgan,
Energy Efficiency
Coordinator

Get Your History

First, verify that the bill is truly higher. To do this, get your usage history or the usage history for the house in question.

Energy consumption can fluctuate a lot based on weather patterns and changes in our lifestyle, so start by comparing your current bill to one of the same month, but from a previous year. Try to compare this bill to one where the weather was very similar.

SmartHub is a great place to start. Using your app or the desktop site, you can compare one bill to another with the Usage Comparison Tool. Here you can compare your usage, and the weather between the two selected bills.

Determine the Significance of the Increase

Smaller increases can be caused by slight variations in

the weather, visitors staying with you, minor changes to lifestyle, or even a few days difference in the billing cycle. While a smaller increase isn't something to take lightly, it also may not be something to worry about. Usually, an increase of 30 percent or more is a good indication that something is not working properly, causing a rise in energy use.

The major consumers of energy in your home are the heating and cooling system, water heater, pool pump, and well pump. A significant increase can also be caused by the addition of appliances to your home, renovations adding square footage, or major changes in your lifestyle.

Perform a Self-Evaluation

If you determine that the increase is significant, the next step is figuring out why. First, think back over the billing period. You know your habits, and the normal functions of the systems in your home better than anyone. Ask yourself a few questions:

Any additional appliances added? Hot tubs, pool pumps, large fans, or additional air conditioners?

Any problems with the mechanical systems in your home? Air conditioner problems, water leaks, or appliance failures?

Your findings may require you to contact a profes-

sional if problems are within your home.

You can take the self-evaluation further. Touchstone Energy's "Together We Save" has provided co-op members with tools to aid them in a home analysis. A link to Touchstone's website is available at www.cottonelectric.com under the Energy Efficiency tab. The Home Energy Adventure and the H.E.A.T. tool will walk you through a basic home analysis. Both tools will help you to determine what additional steps you can take to try and curb future high bills.

There are steps available at www.energy.gov/energysaver/home-energy-audits/do-it-yourself-home-energy-audits to perform your own home evaluation, as well.

As members of Cotton Electric, you have additional resources available. Representatives in the billing department can help with questions regarding bills or billing history. We also provide members with a FREE professional in-home energy efficiency evaluation. This evaluation encompasses a lot of the steps listed above, as well as thermal imaging during a thorough inspection of your home. If this initial evaluation determines the need, additional air leakage and infiltration testing can be provided to members for a small fee.

To schedule an energy efficiency evaluation of your home, call Heath Morgan at 580-875-3351.

What are degree days? Why do they matter?

By Abby Berry

Weather can have a major impact on energy bills, and when the outdoor temperatures become extreme, your heating and cooling equipment works harder to keep your home comfortable.

Did you know the energy experts at Cotton Electric Cooperative use degree days to anticipate heating and cooling needs for you, our members?

Never heard of a degree day? Don't worry, you're not alone. Let's take a look at what degree days are and why they're important for electric utilities.

Degree days measure how cold or warm a location is by comparing the average of the high and low (mean) of the outdoor temperatures recorded in that location to the standard U.S. temperature, which is 65 F. The assumption is that we don't need heating or cooling to be comfortable when this is the outdoor temperature.

So, the more extreme the outdoor temperatures, the higher the number of degree days. And the higher the number of degree days, the higher the amount of energy used for space heating and cooling. Summer is in full swing, so let's look at cooling degree days.

Cooling degree days are a measurement of how hot the temperature was on a given day or during a period of days. With summer temperatures rising, you'll likely require more cooling for your home or business, which results in more

cooling degree days. Variations in electric bills often follow closely with degree days, which is why electric utilities use this data to anticipate energy demand.

Degree days are tracked for a variety of reasons. Farmers can better plan the planting of crops and timing for pest control, and weather experts can better assess climate patterns.

Here are a few tips to help you save on energy bills this summer:

- Set your thermostat as high as comfortably possible. The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your cooling costs will be. The Department of Energy recommends setting your thermostat to 78 F when you're home and a higher setting for when you're away.

- Turn off ceiling fans when you leave a room.

- Close window coverings, like curtains and blinds, during the day to block sunlight.

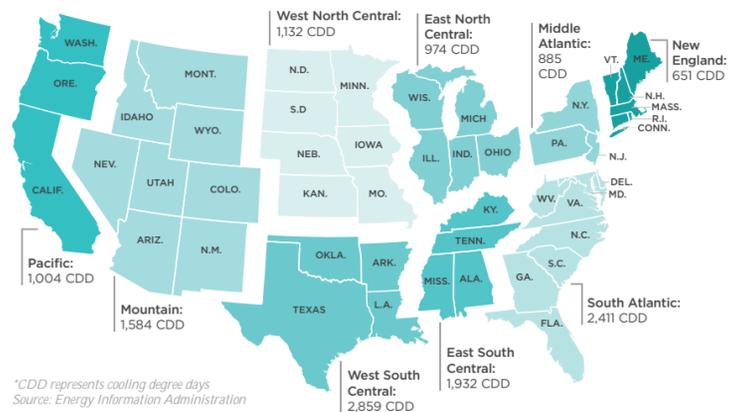
- Use caulk and weather stripping to seal air leaks around doors and windows.

If you have questions about your energy use or to learn more ways to save, give us a call or stop by our office. Cotton Electric is here to help.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

U.S. COOLING DEGREE DAYS

Cooling degree days measure how hot the outdoor temperature was on a given day or during a period of days. The map below shows measurements of U.S. cooling degree days in 2018 by census region. Extreme outdoor temperatures bring a higher number of degree days, which results in higher energy use.



High summer energy bills should not be a surprise in Oklahoma. July is typically the hottest month in a region that experiences more days requiring cooling than the rest of the United States.

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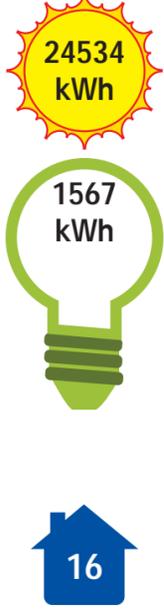
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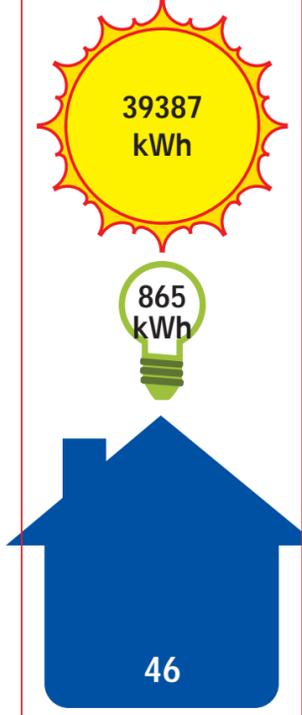
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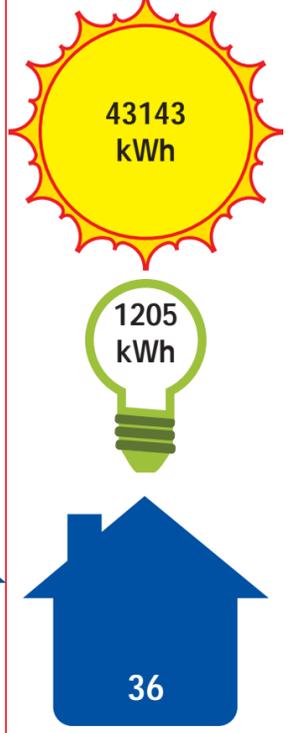
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Sun shines bright in southwest Oklahoma

By Karen Kaley

Cotton Electric's power provider, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative, has a small solar facility in the Cotton Electric service territory. It went online in December 2017 and has been quietly soaking up the sun, converting it to usable energy and putting that energy out on the system ever since.

Cooperative members can look in on the site's progress at this website: <http://kiosk.datareadings.com/ITjhQANC/overview>.

According to the site, "The Cotton Electric Cooperative Community Solar project consists of 950 solar

modules each rated at 315 Watts. The entire site is rated for 250 kW at peak performance."

A click on the Lifetime tab shows the site has generated 1.14 gigawatt-hours of energy. There are graphs showing production during the last 12 months, the last 30 days and the last 7 days.

Generation is only half the story. Energy consumed by Cotton Electric members during the same time helps illustrate the impact of this solar generation site. Cotton Electric tracks and averages kilowatt-hour use and publishes it each month in the Operating Statistics found on Page 2. Dividing the amount of energy pro-

duced by the average amount of energy consumed tells how many average households the site serves.

The graphic above shows the relationship between energy generated (sun), energy consumed (light bulbs) and the number of households that energy would serve at that rate of consumption during the first 6 months of 2019.

It also illustrates the effect of weather on household energy consumption. During the months of April and May, mild outdoor temperatures mean less need for heating and cooling, the two biggest energy uses of any home.

SAFETY NEAR SOLAR

Like any other source of electricity, solar panels can pose potential hazards. Keep these safety tips in mind when you're near solar panels.

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Summertime energy savings

Nighttime energy use can save energy

Instead of running your dishwasher right after dinner, consider waiting until bedtime to turn it on. Same with the clothes dryer. And how about charging your phone and other rechargeables while you sleep?

Most people use their electric appliances at the same times every day: Early in the morning when they're getting ready for work, right after dinner and at mid-day.

That means there's a lot of demand on a limited amount of electrical "capacity" all at the same time.

In the summer when everyone's also running air conditioners, that can tax the electrical system. It can even cause a brownout — although that's rare. But it could put so much pressure on the system that new electrical plants will be needed — and that's expensive.

A better solution: Spread your energy use out. Do the laundry and the dishes at mid-morning while everyone else is at work or late at night when most people are sleeping.

Don't touch that dial

It's so tempting to turn the thermostat down to freezing cold when you walk into a warm house on a hot day. Don't do it.

Setting the thermostat at a very low temperature won't cool your house any faster than setting it on the temperature that you regularly choose to feel comfortable.

In fact, lowering the thermostat beyond the temperature you desire only makes your air conditioner run longer, not faster. You could end up paying more money for an uncomfortably chilly house.

Here are a few other energy-saving tips for summer:

- Install a programmable thermostat, which lets you set the thermostat higher for hours when the house is empty, but lower during your at-home hours. It takes less energy to re-cool your home when you return than it does to keep it cool while you're gone.
- Set the thermostat at 78 degrees. You'll save about 15 percent on your cooling bill over a 72-degree setting, while remaining comfortable.
- Keep lamps and other heat-emitting devices — like TVs and large electronics — away from the thermo-

stat. Most appliances heat up when you use them, so they can trick the thermostat into "thinking" the air is warmer than it really is so it should keep running when the house is already cool.

- Letting the morning sunlight into your bedroom will help you wake up naturally, but it will add to your energy bills during the day. Before you leave the house for the day, close your curtains and window shades to keep the sun's heat out.
- If you use room air conditioners, fit them snugly into window frames, and close all heating ducts.

Fire safety can lead to reliable electricity

Summer fun for Americans often means using fire outdoors — and that can lead to brushfires.

Brushfires can cause power outages.

If you're grilling on a charcoal grill, building a campfire or setting off fireworks, take extra care to extinguish them completely before leaving them unattended.

Along with endless other safety concerns, heat from brushfires can damage electrical lines and equipment, causing major power problems. Even smoke and ash can cause a high-voltage transmission line to trip, leaving sections of the power grid without power.

Summer dryness increases the chance of wildfires, but so do unsafe practices. During Fourth of July celebrations, use only legal fireworks and sparklers, and use them on concrete or pavement rather than dry grass. Never let children handle fireworks; they can burn.

When making a campfire, keep a bucket of water nearby to control a spreading fire. Make a fire pit surrounded by rocks, not wood, and clear away leaves and other flammable materials that quickly spread flame. Never leave a campsite with a burning fire. Quench the fire with water to ensure the damp ashes cannot re-light.

Snuff the burning coals in your charcoal grill by placing the lid on the grill and closing its vents. Most grills have a vent both on the lid and under the kettle. Leave it closed up for 48 hours.

Keep the power going and the community safe by practicing fire safety this summer.

Source: Pointers and Prose

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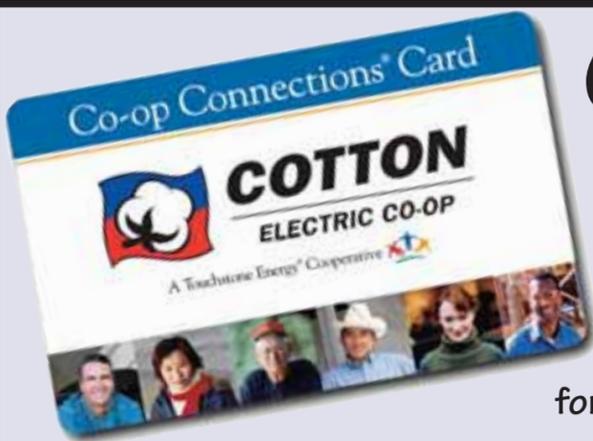
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Planning is key to meeting adolescent dietary needs

Childhood is a time to test boundaries and try different things within a structure of love and guidance. I was reminded of this when a friend told me her teenage daughter had decided to be a vegetarian over the summer.

The family is not vegetarian, so it was a surprise when her daughter announced this. The mother sought to understand the motivation. She explained to her athletic and active daughter that she would need to research and take responsibility to ensure she kept her body nourished, and then reached out to her support system to discover what she should be concerned about, if anything.

It is important to understand why the child wants to be a vegetarian. Are they struggling with the thought of eating an animal, do they dislike the taste of meat, are their friends doing it, do they



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT

want to lose weight, have they adopted a religious stance, do they even know why? It is also important to understand what they think being a vegetarian means - are they abstaining from all animal foods,

such as fish, dairy and eggs, or just certain ones?

Understanding the 'why' and the 'what' will help you guide your child in developing a nutritionally complete vegetarian diet and avoid a potential but rare underlying cause of any dietary change in childhood - the development of disordered eating patterns.

There are specific nutrients that you must pay attention to when adopting a vegetarian lifestyle, especially when it involves a child. Vegetarian diets that restrict all forms of animal protein can be deficient in Vitamin B12, Vitamin D, omega-3 fatty acids, calcium, iron, and zinc.

If the child will eat fish, shellfish, or certain dairy products daily, then deficiency concerns are much lower. If your child wants to pursue strict vegetarianism, for-

tified foods can help fill nutritional gaps.

Be mindful of vegetarian "junk food" - food that may be vegetarian but is also high in refined carbohydrates, unhealthy fats, food additives, or sodium. Review the nutrition facts label and ingredients.

It is possible to meet all your nutritional needs with a vegetarian diet. When planned correctly, it can result in higher intakes of healthy nutrients such as fiber, healthy fats, and phytonutrients.

It is essential to arm yourself with credible information. This is not the time to rely on Dr. Google. Make an appointment with a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist to help ensure that your child's diet is nutritionally complete and to ease the stress a change like this sometimes causes.

Power-packed lunchbox

Family Features

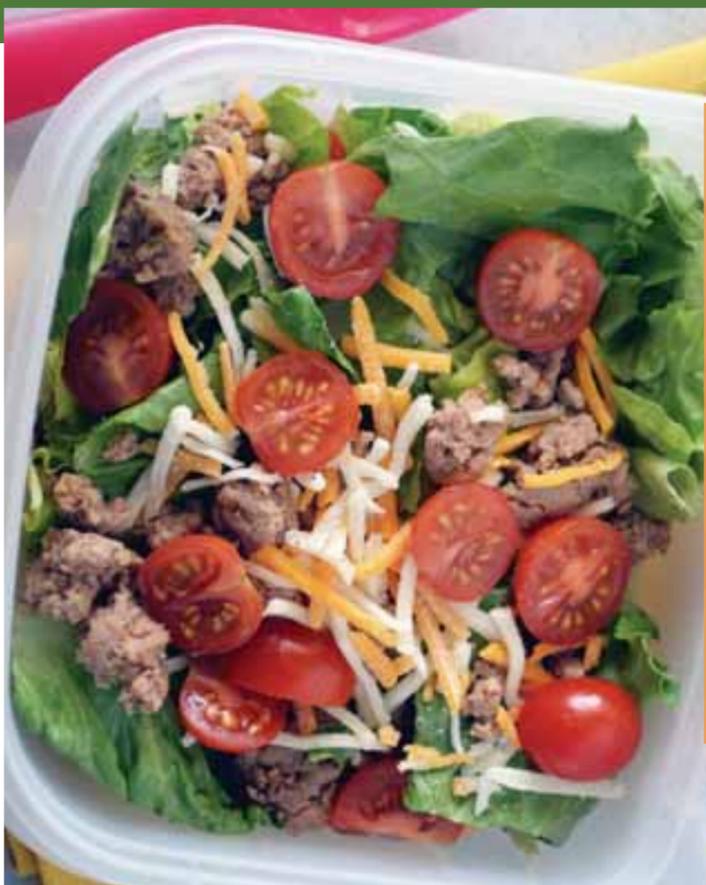
Packing and prepping wholesome lunches doesn't have to be a chore. You can kick health into high gear this school year with new ideas to make creative, nutrient-rich meals.

Fit to satisfy various dietary restrictions, the Power Your Lunchbox program offers kid-friendly options and allergy-sensitive selections. The program, which is dedicated to helping families make healthier lunches during the school year, features more than 80 registered dietitian-approved, family-tested meal ideas with produce as a focal point.

Consider skipping the typical sandwich, chips and apple. Instead, it only takes a few minutes to embark on a creative approach to lunch. Get the kids involved by having them use small cookie cutters to make fresh fruits and vegetables into fun shapes. Try complementing the produce with wraps or soups to add extra excitement to typical lunchbox fare.

Regardless if your child is a picky eater or is on the more adventurous side, bento box lunches such as Chinese Mandarin Pasta Salad Bento Box and Turkey Taco Salad Bento Box can prove to be satisfying, power-packed meals.

For more lunchbox inspiration, visit poweryourlunchbox.com.



Turkey Taco Salad Bento Box

Prep time: 10 minutes
Servings: 1

- 1 cup chopped romaine lettuce
- 1/4 cup cooked turkey meat, seasoned with taco seasoning
- 2 tablespoons shredded cheese
- 4 cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 2 tablespoons guacamole
- 1 ounce tortilla chips

Assemble taco salad with lettuce, taco meat, cheese and tomatoes. Place in lunchbox with guacamole and chips.



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