

The Current

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

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Ken Layn addresses membership for the first time as board president

“We commit to being here for you.”

Co-op appreciates members at Annual Meeting

By Danielle Quickle

“We have been blessed with another great year at Cotton Electric. We did not have any major storms, we did not have any life-threatening injuries and we have continued to improve the quality of your electric service,” Ken Layn said as he addressed the membership for the first time as president of Cotton Electric’s Board of Trustees.

The 2019 Annual Meeting took place on Oct. 3 in Duncan. This annual celebration is a time for Cotton Electric members to gather and hear about everything going on with their cooperative and for Trustees and employees to show their appreciation for the support given to the co-op throughout the year.

Registration opened at 5:30 p.m. Members were given a Cotton Electric gift bag and were automatically entered in the prize drawing that would conclude the night. A classic BBQ dinner was served and members browsed through Cotton Electric departmental booths, Co-op Connections booths and stopped to put on a hard hat and pose with a cross arm power pole at the photo booth.

A kid’s area included Cotton Electric balloons, Star Spangle the Clown, bounce houses and the chance to win a Nintendo Switch.

The meeting was called to order by Board President Ken Layn at 7 p.m. sharp. Shan Files then led the membership in an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. The arena fell silent as the colors were presented by the Stephens County Honor Guard and the National Anthem was performed by Penny Gardner.

Five percent of the co-op’s 15,565



membership must be present in order for there to be a quorum which allows those in attendance to vote on co-op business. Layn determined that there was not a quorum and that the meeting would be adjourned. The night continued with introductions of guests and Trustees from Steve Robinson.

Representatives from the offices of U.S. Sen. James Lankford and U.S. Rep. Tom Cole and a few state legislators made their way to the meeting to engage with the membership. Cotton Electric’s power provider, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative, also made an appearance and set up a booth to explain to members how energy generation and distribution works and hand out a few goodies. Sid Sperry from Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives showed his support for Cotton Electric with his attendance at the meeting.

Layn continued the evening with a report.

“There are an estimated 6,300 technologies that we use in every day life that have been traced back to the space pro-

gram,” Layn said as he reflected on the 50th anniversary of the moon landing this past July.

“These new technologies have brought change to the way we live, the way we communicate, the way we work, the way we play and they will continue to shape our future,” Layn said.

Twenty-three years before the moon landing, big technological changes were happening in rural America. Our parents, grandparents and even great grandparents were in the dark until Cotton Electric was formed in 1938 to bring electricity to those who had never had it.

“Just like the space program, Cotton Electric has brought a lot of change to our way of life,” Layn said. “I want to commit to you, our members, that our staff and Trustees at the co-op will be ready as changes continue to come.”

Layn pointed to the co-op’s new electric vehicle parked nearby as an example to members of how the cooperative is staying at the forefront of emerging technology.

“We commit to being here for you to

help you understand these new technologies.”

Layn handed the meeting over to Board Secretary and Treasurer Brian DeMarcus who reported that the cooperative was in good financial health before asking Jennifer Meason to present the CEO report.

“It is great to see so many of you here tonight,” Meason said. “Thank you for coming out and being a part of your annual meeting.”

The 2019 meeting was Meason’s fourth serving as the co-op’s CEO. She expressed how thankful she was to be able to serve our members.

“Our purpose here is not only to conduct business but to show our appreciation to you, the members.”

There are five pillars that make Cotton Electric unique to other utilities. Together they are referred to at the co-op as Cotton C.A.R.E.S which stands for community, accountability, respect, engagement and safety.

“Every day our mission and purpose is to provide you with power that is safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible,” Meason said. “We also try to go beyond that by doing what we can to improve the quality of life in southwest Oklahoma.”

She notified the membership of \$1.1 million in capital credit retirements that would be issued back to members in the coming weeks. Find out more on Page 3.

The night concluded with a prize drawing. Cotton Electric member Phyllis Banks received the grand prize of a \$500 energy voucher. A complete list of prizes and winners can be found on Page 5.

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after Oct. 1, 2019, is (\$0.0215) per kWh.

On a member’s average bill of 1250 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a credit of \$26.88 on the October bill.

September 2019 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	92	72	82	16	95	69	82
2	95	71	83	17	94	67	81
3	96	68	82	18	93	67	80
4	95	68	82	19	90	69	80
5	97	66	82	20	85	68	77
6	101	66	84	21	91	71	81
7	100	67	84	22	89	74	82
8	98	68	83	23	86	72	79
9	97	73	85	24	90	73	82
10	96	75	86	25	96	69	83
11	94	70	82	26	92	71	82
12	97	71	84	27	96	72	84
13	85	68	77	28	91	74	83
14	93	70	82	29	92	75	84
15	96	67	82	30	91	74	83

Source: srb.noaa.gov/oun/

Average Daily High: 93 Average Daily Low: 70

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed Monday, Nov. 11. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on Nov. 18, 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

October recognized as National Co-op Month

When I think of October, pumpkins, football, cooler weather and beautiful fall foliage naturally come to mind. But October is notable for another reason – it's National Co-op Month! This is the time of year when cooperatives across the country, including Cotton Electric, celebrate who we are and more importantly, the members we serve.



Jennifer Meason, CEO

Cooperatives are different from other types of businesses. When the market declines to offer a product or service, or does so at a very high price, co-ops intervene to fill the need.

Similar to how Cotton Electric was built by members who came together to bring electricity to our community, cooperatives work for the common good. Your electric co-op exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, the members of the co-op.

Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members we serve.

As a co-op, we are well-suited to meet the needs of the community because we are locally governed. Cotton Electric's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board of Trustees, who help set long-term priorities for the co-op, live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected to the position by neighbors like you.

We know our members have a valuable perspective. That's why we are continually seeking your input. Whether through community events, our social media channels or the annual meeting, we want to hear from you.

Our close connection to the community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on local priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as equipment and technology upgrades, renewable resources, and electric vehicle programs.



Another feature that sets our co-op apart from a traditional utility is one of our core principles, "Concern for Community." Through our Operation Round Up program, over 500 grants totaling \$1,200,909.35 have been donated to organizations and individuals in our community. This wouldn't be possible without your generosity.

Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower the co-op through your membership and

through your participation in and support of these programs.

We hope you will think of Cotton Electric as more than your energy provider, but instead as a local business that supports this community and powers economic development and prosperity for the people.

We will continue to learn from our members about their priorities so that we can better serve you – because your electric co-op was built by the community, for the community.

CECF announces third-quarter contributions

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

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

The funds are pooled and administered by the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation, a board of directors that meets quarterly to consider grant applications. The board consists of Jennifer Meason, the co-op's CEO; Ken Layn, president of the co-op's board of trustees; and three representatives from the Cotton Electric service area: Danny Marlett, Carter Waid and Cindy Zelbst.

The board met in September to review several grant applications. Grants totaling \$24,200 will be distributed to eight of the applicants. Third-quarter grants include:

- Central High Public Schools: A \$5,000 CECF grant will help fund the installation of new lighting at their sports facilities.
- Town of Chattanooga: A \$2,500 CECF grant will provide cosmetic upgrades to City Hall.



Download CECF grant applications at CottonElectric.com. Deadline for fourth-quarter 2019 grant applications is Nov. 12.

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

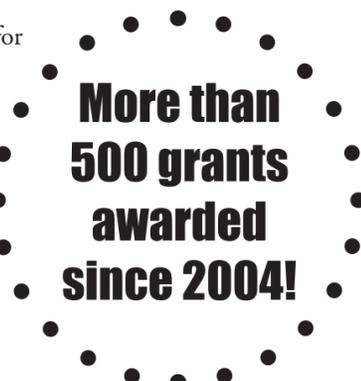
- Duncan Public Schools Foundation: a \$3,000 CECF grant will help purchase a new indoor athletic facility for the school district.
- Gabriel's House: a \$1,500 CECF grant will purchase materials for their STEM program.
- Indianoma Community Food Bank: a \$2,500

CECF grant will provide food to be stocked and distributed to the community.

- Temple Area Food Pantry: A \$1,600 CECF grant will provide food to be stocked and distributed to the community.
- Walters Police Department: A \$3,100 CECF grant will purchase computers and accessories for officers on duty.
- Wichita Mountains Estates Fire Department: A \$5,000 CECF grant will help purchase a new fire engine pumper.

CECF has awarded or pledged more than 500 grants totaling \$1,200,909.35 since the foundation was established in 2004.

Applications for 2019 fourth-quarter grants are due Nov. 12. Downloadable applications are available at CottonElectric.com.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades like additional insulation and air sealing, you can save about 30% on your energy bill.

Source: energy.gov

August 2019 Operating Stats

	2019	2018
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$5,665,798	\$5,222,419
Cost of Purchased Power	3,946,456	3,845,850
Taxes	127,211	117,531
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,093	1,077
Average Farm and Residential Bill	158	142
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,706	1,512
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,472	18,397
Miles Energized	5,198	5,169
Density Per Mile	3.55	3.56
New Service Connects YTD	218	200
Services Retired	79	70



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.

The Current

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

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Karen Kaley.....Marketing & Communications
Danielle Quickle.....Editor
Kaila Williams.....Display Advertising

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CEC, WFEC issue capital credit retirements to membership

You may receive two items from Cotton Electric in the mail over the next few weeks, this newspaper and a capital credit retirement check. Capital credit checks will be mailed out on Oct. 18. This check represents your contribution toward the construction, upgrades and maintenance of Cotton Electric Cooperative (CEC) and Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC).

CEC will retire \$500,000 in capital credits in 2019. Additionally, WFEC has retired \$650,148.64 to Cotton Electric. WFEC is a generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative owned by Cotton Electric and other electric cooperatives in Oklahoma and New Mexico.

In an effort toward efficiency, the co-op has issued single checks combining the CEC and WFEC retirements. The amount of checks is based on the amount of electric power purchased by each member.

Checks are void after 90 days. Members should cash or deposit their checks promptly, otherwise banks may

not honor the check if brought in after Jan. 16, 2020.

If the combined amount of the Cotton and WFEC retirement is less than \$5, a check will NOT be issued. Instead, it will be carried forward and added to any amount authorized for distribution the next time capital credits are retired.

When a resident or business owner signs up to receive electric service from Cotton Electric, he or she becomes a member and owner of the cooperative.

As owners, members have a responsibility to help finance their business. They do this by using our services and by allowing the co-op to retain any money collected in excess of actual operating costs. The money is used to build and maintain the facilities needed to serve the co-op's members and to service our long-term debt.

This money is considered to be capital furnished by the members – capital that will be returned to members at a later date. While the co-op uses the money, members' capital credits are considered "allocated" but

not "retired."

Capital credits are retired at the discretion of the cooperative's Board of Trustees. Before retiring capital credits, they consider the financial condition of the co-op and the impact on electric rates.

Your cooperative is financially strong and, as a result, is able to share this economic benefit with the members. The Board of Trustees has determined conditions are appropriate for returning capital credits to current and former members.

Because the retirements are meant for active and inactive members, Cotton Electric needs changes of address, even if a person has moved and is no longer a member of the not-for-profit cooperative. Members are encouraged to keep the co-op informed of any change of address, as several hundred checks are returned to the co-op for lack of proper address each time capital credit checks are issued.



Be sure to cash or deposit your capital credit check promptly. The checks include this notation: Check is void in 90 days. Your bank may not honor the check after Jan. 16, 2020.

Capital credits spark questions from members

Capital credits can be difficult to understand. Here are some of our most frequently asked questions and answers to help with any confusion.

Why am I getting this check?

Cotton Electric and Western Farmers Electric Cooperative have retired capital credits. This check is your portion of that retirement.

What are capital credits?

Electric cooperatives operate at cost – collecting enough revenue to run and expand the plant. When the co-op has margins left over, they are retired back to its members as capital credits.

Why didn't I get a check?

If the amount of your retirement is under \$5, a check is not issued. Instead, your allocation will be carried forward and added to any amount authorized for retirement in the future.

In some cases, an account may be in arrears and the retirement is put toward the past-due amount.

How is the amount of the check determined?

The amount allocated is based on the amount of electric power you have purchased.

I am moving out of the Cotton Electric service area. Will I still get my capital credit check?

Yes. Let us know your new address, and checks will be mailed as capital credit checks are retired.

I have not been a member for years.

Why did I get a check?

You may still have a portion allocated to you, even though you have not been a Cotton Electric member for a long time. Capital credit retirements over \$5 are issued to all active and inactive members.

How do I know if you have a current address for me?

We will publish a list of members needing to provide updated addresses in later issues of The Current.

How can surviving family members or former co-op members claim capital credits?

To claim a capital credit check intended for deceased members or those who have moved away, we require certain information to verify the member's identity. Former members or their heirs can call the office at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520 to begin the process.

Still confused?

Think of capital credits as water in a large barrel. Annual capital credit allocations are extra water, added to the barrel and retained to keep things afloat.

Occasionally, a percentage is retired to all who contributed to the total amount. How it is distributed is similar to dipping out the water. The size of your drink of water is proportionate to how much you contributed or how much electricity you purchased.

If your portion is only a drop or two, it is left in the barrel. You continue to contribute through power purchases and may get a dipperful with the next retirement.

Cotton Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit cooperative with members who share in the ownership, construction, maintenance and prosperity of the co-op.

CAPITAL CREDITS

When a person establishes service with us, they become a member and are eligible for capital credits.

Capital credits represent a member's share of the cooperative's margins during the time they have membership.

At the end of each year, any funds (margins) remaining after expenses have been paid are allocated, based on percentage of electricity used, to the member's account.

The allocated funds are used as operating capital for system improvements and maintenance.

Annually, the board of trustees evaluates the financial condition of the cooperative to determine if we can retire capital credits. We may not retire capital credits every year.

When the board elects to retire capital credits, we calculate the amount to pay each member.

Checks are mailed to members due retirement of more than \$5. Retirements less than \$5 are not issued a check and the allocation remains in the member's capital credit account.

ALLOCATION

An allocation is made annually for each member, based on the amount of electricity purchased. An allocation is the member's share of the net margins. The co-op sets this money aside to be used as operating capital for improvements and maintenance over a period of years.

RETIREMENT

A retirement is the amount a member receives back as a refund. It is a portion of the total allocation. When capital is no longer needed for operating expenses, it is retired. The amount paid is decided annually by the board of trustees based on the financial needs of the cooperative.

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Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the November issue, please submit information by Nov. 6 by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com.

Annual fish fry begins at 11 a.m.

Cox's Store VFD will hold their 23rd Annual Fish Fry from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 19 east of Lawton on Highway 65 and Rogers Lane.

Fish, calf fries, cole slaw, beans and more will be served. Guests will enjoy live music, a bounce house and an air ambulance demonstration. There will be a raffle for a 1987 Chevy truck.

For information, check out the Cox's Store Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. Facebook page.

Holiday craft show begins Nov. 1

Duncan Crafts, Arts and Hobbies Association is making preparations for a Holiday Craft Show on Nov. 1 and 2 at the Stephens County Fair & Expo Center.

A variety of crafts will be showcased, demonstrating the talents of the people of Duncan and surrounding areas.

Entrance to the show is free. Visitors should pick up tickets at the big wheel booth to be eligible for drawings.

The group has booth space available and encourages those who have never brought their crafts to the public eye to consider this event.

For more information, call Rachel at 209-914-9112.

Set clocks back on Nov. 3

Daylight Saving Time ends at 2 a.m. Nov. 3. Remember to "fall back" – turn clocks back one hour – or you'll get to church an hour early.

CTAC present Orchestra Nov. 8

The Chisholm Trail Arts Council presents the Paragon Ragtime Orchestra beginning at 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 8 at the Simmons Center Theater in Duncan.

Formed in 1986, the ensemble travels the country-side performing their turn-of-the-century American orchestra scores.

Over the years the Paragon Ragtime Orchestra has been heard on the soundtracks of several motion pictures and television programs. The Orchestra's audio and video recordings have been considered instrumental in rekindling interest in America's rich tradition of theater, cinema and dance orchestra music.

For information or tickets call 580-252-4160 or go online to ChisholmTrailArts.com.

CU screens 'Marathon Man'

Magic Lantern Film Society of Cameron University screens DVD presentations of classic films each month in the CETES Conference Center, Room A. Most screenings begin at 7:30 p.m.

The Nov. 15 offering will be "Marathon Man," a 1976 thriller film directed by John Schlesinger. Thomas "Babe" Levy is a Columbia graduate student and long-distance runner who is oblivious to the fact that his older brother, Doc, is a government agent chasing down a Nazi war criminal – that is, until Doc is murdered and Babe finds himself knee-deep in a tangle of stolen gems and sadistic madmen.

Even his girlfriend, Elsa, becomes a suspect as everything Babe believed to be true is suddenly turned upside down. With Dustin Hoffman in the title role, the cast includes Roy Scheider, Laurence Olivier and Marthe Keller.

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

Nutrition Center open weekdays

Marlow Nutrition Center is open to the public from 11 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday at Redbud Park in Marlow.

Nutritious meals are served on site or as carry-out, \$2 for guests 60 years old and older or \$5.85 for guests younger than 60 years. To place carry-out orders or for further details, contact Cheris at 580-658-5773.

More Community Spotlight on Page 6

Medicine Park car show is Oct. 19

Start your engines for Medicine Park's 12th annual Street Rod, Muscle Car and Classic Car Show from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 19. Car enthusiasts will enjoy a variety of vehicles at the family-friendly event. Trophies for first through third in each class are among the honors to be awarded, and a combined \$1,500 will be given to the Best of Show Car and Best of Show Truck.

Same-day registration is \$30 and will be open from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. at The Old Plantation. Motorcycles are also qualified to compete. Awards and prizes will be given at 5 p.m. This event is free to the public. Questions can be answered by emailing info@theoldplantationrestaurant.com.

Car show set for Oct. 19 in Cache

Cache OcTURBOfest Car Show will be Oct. 19 on the Cache School campus. Registration in nine classes ranging from classic to people's choice begins at 8:30 a.m. with the show beginning at 10 a.m. Awards will be given at 3 p.m. All proceeds will go to benefit the Cache Area Chamber of Commerce. For information, call Jaysen at 580-483-5166.

Annual Bark in the Park in Duncan

For the 14th year, four-legged fur-bearing critters will take over Duncan's Fuqua Park during Bark in the Park from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Oct. 26. This tail-waggin' celebration is open to all pets, their owners and spectators. The Stephens County Humane Society and Friends of the Humane Society plan fun, pet and family-friendly activities that include a number of contests, food trucks, vendors and games. Not only does Bark in the Park raise awareness for the Humane Society, all proceeds go toward paying for daily operations at the shelter.

Several dogs will be on site available for adoption. For questions or sponsorship information, call Patti Whitaker at 580-641-0667.

CTHC poetry contest begins Nov. 1

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Center is hosting its second-annual Chisholm Trail Cowboy Youth Poetry Contest for students in Pre-K through 12th grade.

Students must write and submit a cowboy poem of their own original work. Poems must be a minimum of eight lines and a maximum of two pages. Only one entry is allowed per student.

Entries should be emailed, hand-delivered or mailed by Nov. 1 to 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway in Duncan 73533 or to Toni@OnTheChisholmTrail.com. There is no entry fee. A panel of experienced judges will determine the winners, and cash prizes will be awarded to the top five poems in four categories.

For information, contact Toni Hopper or Leah Mulkey at 580-252-6692.

Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

November	December	January
Ad Sales Nov. 1	Ad Sales Nov. 29	Deadlines for 2020
Classified Nov. 6	Classified Dec. 4	to be announced in
Publish Date Nov. 18	Publish Date Dec. 16	coming issues.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Cotton Electric member Cheri Abshere took this action shot of her grandson, Ace, escaping some defenders during a game of flag football in Lawton.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for November is MY HERO. 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.

Boo Review haunts downtown Duncan

Main Street Duncan hosts Boo Review, an annual Halloween celebration, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Oct. 19.

MSD merchants will have trick or treating for the kids in costumes through the duration of the event. There is a pumpkin carving contest.

A pet costume contest will be held at the corner of 9th and Main Street for pups only. Kids' costume contest begins

at noon on 10th and Main. The first 100 registered participants receive a goody bag and all children receive a participation ribbon. Awards will be given for a variety of categories ranging from best group costume to most unique.

Event also features bounce houses, haunted house, music and plenty of treats. For more information, contact Destiny Ahlfenger at 580-252-8696.

I AM THE CO-OP

The information we get from Cotton Electric Cooperative about efficiency, safety and technology gives us the power to make informed decisions.

Visit CottonElectric.com to discover the power of your co-op.

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COTTON

ELECTRIC CO-OP

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Phyllis Banks claimed the grand prize of a \$500 energy voucher at Cotton Electric's 2019 Annual Meeting. Congratulations, Phyllis!

Annual Meeting prize winners listed

Cotton Electric's 2019 Annual Meeting concluded with a prize drawing. Each member in attendance was automatically entered to win a variety of prizes. Kids also had the opportunity to register for prizes when they visited the kids' area complete with cotton candy, bounce houses, balloons and Star Spangle the Clown. Here is a complete list of prizes and winners:

- \$500 energy voucher: Phyllis Banks
- \$250 energy voucher: Karen Newman, John Bowles
- \$100 energy voucher: Suzannahe Smith, Margarita Ramos
- \$50 cash: Gina Cavel, Kelly Sanner, Cindy Floyd, Roger Murphree, Janice Morgan, David Cantwell, Richard Johnson, Patricia Hardin, Richard Rhodes, Kenneth Simmons, Patrick Sessums, Wayne Stiockoff, Sammy Renfro, Katie Swanson, Phillip Archer, Kimberly Shackelford, Cecil Fletcher, James White, Charles Wickwire
- Kids \$5 cash: Kerren Ammons, Lailyn Stallcup, Josslyn Avey, Wyatt Mayo, Heather McKinney, Alexi Linden, Brandi Alvarez, Damien Lawson, Landon Edmond, Nolan Ramey, Brenna Lovett, Bryce Seaton, Phyllis Banks, Lilyann, Micariah Rowley, Jaden White, Bryce Seaton, Wyatt Farris, Lilli Price

- Kids Grand Prize Nintendo Switch: Dani Beeson
- Cordless string trimmer: William George
- Monster indoor/outdoor speaker: Mardy Meadows
- Cordless leaf blower: Dawn Hudson, Robert Alvarez, Keith Copass
- Cordless chainsaw: New Salem Baptist Church
- Ninja pressure cooker: Vern Simmons, David Hetz
- Shop vac: Robert Durr
- Ninja kitchen system: Helen Hyatt, Bruce Fleetwood
- Food saver vacuum sealing system: Bill McCarley, Ricky Sessums
- Hand-turned pen donated by Cotton Electric member Dwight Fair and a \$25 gift card: Paul Barron
- All in one blower, vacuum and mulcher: Kenneth Kirk
- Cordless mower: Eddie Sutton
- 32" Vizio TV: Norman Condit
- \$100 Visa gift card donated by WFEC: Mark Meason
- Gift basket donated by Co-op Connections member Pink Rebel Clothing Co.: Karen McCown
- Gift basket donated by Co-op Connections member Kimberly's Made in America: Mike Hatch



Dani Beeson claimed the kid's grand prize of a Nintendo Switch at Cotton Electric's 2019 Annual Meeting. Congratulations, Dani!

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Accounting keeps cooperative accountable

By Danielle Quickle

More than just calculators and spreadsheets, Cotton Electric's accounting department does a lot to maintain the accountability of the co-op.

Comprised of three employees, General Accountant Supervisor Karen Rivet, Accountant I James Apriesnig and Accounts Receivable Clerk Lisa Bowers work together to monitor the financial stability of the cooperative.

"Accuracy is our number one priority," Rivet said. "Keeping our books accurate and consistent allows our owners, our members, to have financial confidence in the co-op."

Accounting pays all of the co-op's bills and taxes in a timely manner, handles payroll and prepares documents for auditors.

The USDA's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) routinely requires audits to ensure that Cotton Electric's financial statements are an accurate representation in accordance with accepted accounting principles.

RUS administers programs that provide much-needed infrastructure or infrastructure improvements to rural communities. Among other things, the program provides capital and leadership to maintain, expand, upgrade and modernize America's vast rural electric infra-

structure. Cotton Electric is one of many cooperatives that is supported by RUS.

Accounting assists the co-op administration and department heads with establishing the yearly budget. They also monitor accounts receivable and determine the monthly power cost adjustment (PCA) to be applied to members bills.

"Because we are a not-for-profit organization, the power cost adjustment ensures that members do not pay too much or too little for the power that they use," Rivet said.

This month's PCA can be found in the bottom left-hand corner of the front page of this paper.

At the Annual Meeting, it was announced that the co-op was determined to be in good financial standing. Because of this standing, the co-op also announced that it would be retiring capital credits back to the membership.

The accounting department played a key role in determining how much money was available for retirement. Once the amount was approved by Cotton Electric's Board of Trustees, the accounting team worked closely with the Member Services department to distribute the funds to eligible members.

Capital credit retirements will be mailed on Oct. 18. More information



Karen Rivet



James Apriesnig



Lisa Bowers



Departmental Spotlight Accounting

about capital credits can be found on Page 3.

Accounting provides management of financial reporting for the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation and Cotton Electric Services in addition to the internal and external financial administration of the co-op.

There are various departments that

work to keep the co-op operating. Accounting is one part of the sum that is crucial to the success of Cotton Electric.

"As employees of the co-op, we really want to do a great job for our members," Rivet said. "We strive to provide accurate and consistent information that provides accountability and confidence for the co-op."

Community Spotlight

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 a 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.

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 Stephens County Honor 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, Coman-

che 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 The-SCHG.com.

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.

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.

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.

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.



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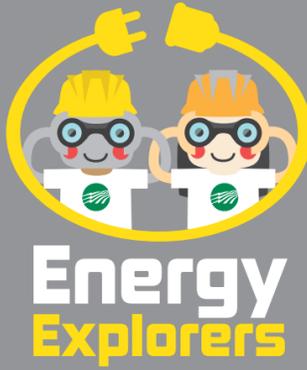
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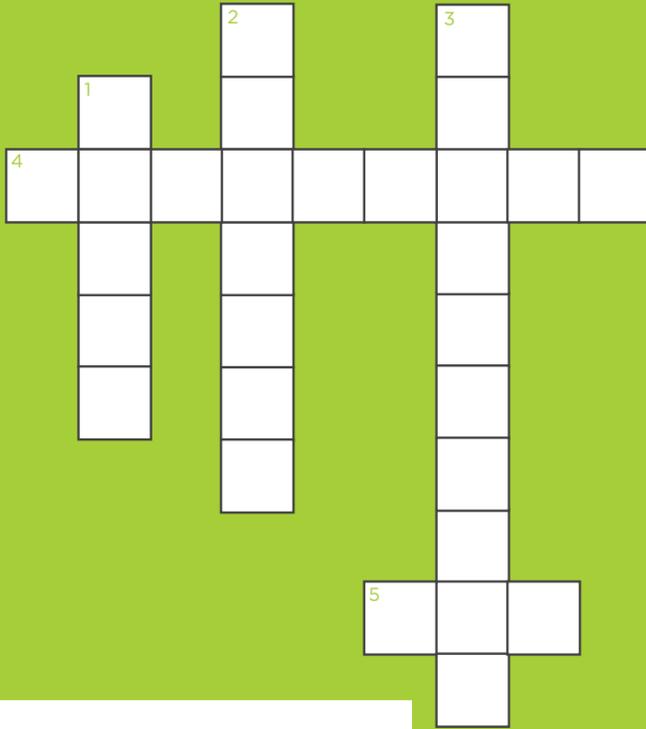
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CO-OP MONTH CROSSWORD



WORD BANK:

- LED
- MEMBERS
- LOCAL
- COMMUNITY
- PRINCIPLES



CLUES:

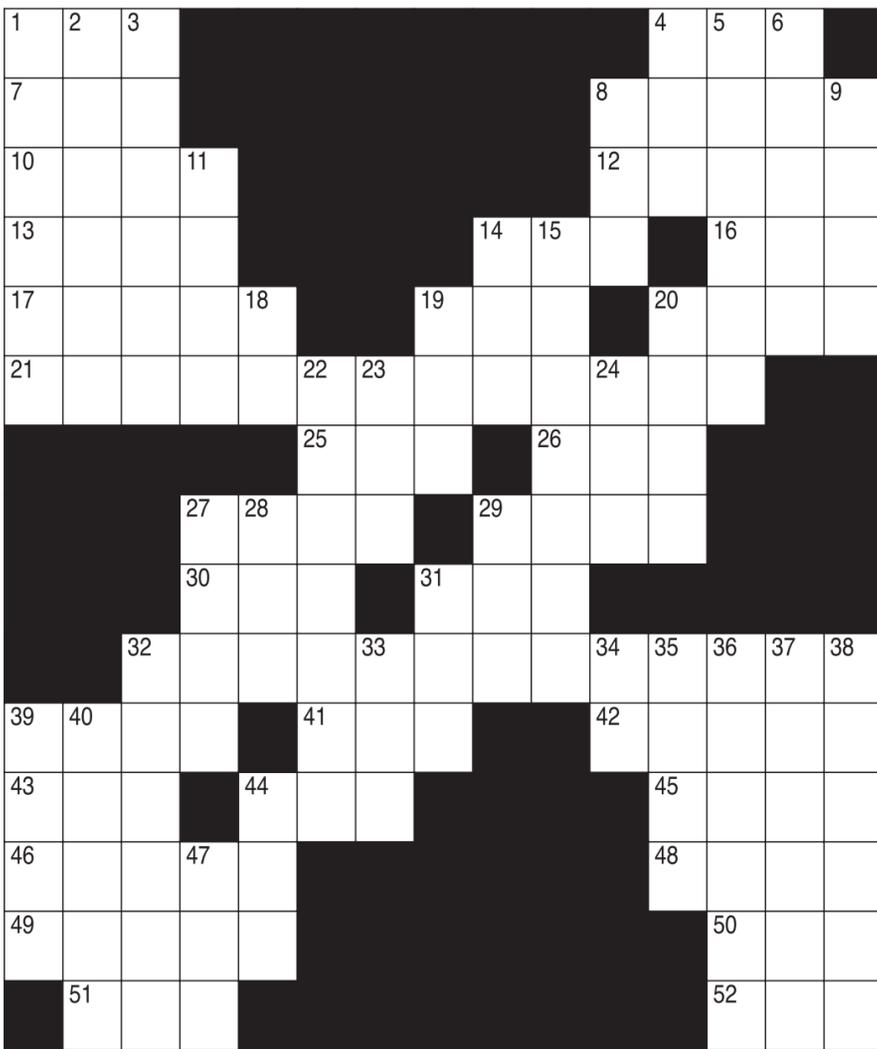
- 1. DOWN:** Co-ops are _____ organizations and businesses, so they understand the communities they serve.
- 2. DOWN:** Co-ops don't have customers; they have _____.
- 3. DOWN:** All co-ops operate according to the same set of seven cooperative _____.
- 4. ACROSS:** "Concern for _____" is the seventh cooperative principle.
- 5. ACROSS:** Co-ops are _____ by the members they serve.

ANSWER KEY

1. DOWN: LOCAL
2. DOWN: MEMBERS
3. DOWN: PRINCIPLES
4. ACROSS: COMMUNITY
5. ACROSS: LED

ACROSS

- 1. Computer key
- 4. Periodical (abbr.)
- 7. Hot beverage
- 8. Capital of Ghana
- 10. Shrek is one
- 12. Behemoth
- 13. Good friend
- 14. Form of "to be"
- 16. Where travelers rest
- 17. European country
- 19. Everyone has one
- 20. Pop
- 21. Feelings of anxiety
- 25. Small amount
- 26. Moved quickly
- 27. Common name for a type of frog
- 29. Free from psychological disorder
- 30. 8th month (abbr.)
- 31. Basics
- 32. Transcending national boundaries



- 39. Natives of Kashmir
- 41. Returned material authorization (abbr.)
- 42. Cigar wrapper
- 43. Brew
- 44. Popular video game series
- 45. Abba __, Israeli politician
- 46. Jewelled headdress
- 48. French cleric
- 49. Bizarre
- 50. Unit of measurement
- 51. Foul-mouthed Hollywood bear

- 52. "Partridge Family" actress

DOWN

- 1. Type of bomb
- 2. Smooth
- 3. Clothing pattern
- 4. Defunct phone company
- 5. Something to take
- 6. Type of piano
- 8. Consumed
- 9. "Pitch Perfect" actress Kendrick
- 11. Ray-finned fish

- 14. Heat storage stove
- 15. Shrink back
- 18. Yukon Territory
- 19. Connects words
- 20. Sound unit
- 22. Furniture with open shelves
- 23. Cool!
- 24. 007's creator
- 27. Source of the Nile River
- 28. Not safe, but ...
- 29. Helps little firms
- 31. Comedienne Gaster
- 32. Conceptualize

- 33. Root mean square (abbr.)
- 34. Integrated circuit
- 35. Evergreen trees and shrubs genus
- 36. Apprehended
- 37. Suitable for growing crops
- 38. Isolated
- 39. Footwear company
- 40. Electronic intelligence gathering
- 44. Political action committee
- 47. Free of

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Busy Season Solutions

Quick and tasty meals and snacks

FAMILY FEATURES

For those who are always on the go, it can be difficult to find time to whip up meals and snacks that are both nutritious and tasty. However, with some simple changes – and timesaving recipes – you can create delicious dishes and meals that will keep you feeling energized to fuel your busy lifestyle.

For example, these quick and easy recipes for a main course, snacks and even desserts are all part of the Atkins low-carb lifestyle, a long-term, healthy eating approach focused on high-fiber carbohydrates, optimal protein and healthy fats.

The eating approach, which is a more flexible version of the popular ketogenic diet, offers a balanced mix of foods containing fiber-rich and nutrient-dense carbohydrates while focusing on reduced levels of refined carbohydrates, added sugars and the “hidden sugar effect” – when carbohydrates convert to sugar when digested. You don’t see the sugar, but your body does.

Learn more about the benefits of a balanced, low-carb approach, and find more recipes to help kickstart a nutritious eating plan, at Atkins.com.

Egg Roll Bowl with Shrimp

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 10 minutes
Servings: 4

- 5 cups frozen cauliflower rice
- 3 tablespoons canola oil
- 3 tablespoons sesame oil
- 4 teaspoons minced or pressed garlic
- 2 teaspoons ginger paste
- 6 cups pre-cut coleslaw (cabbage and carrots)
- 1 cup sliced red bell pepper
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced scallions, root and tips trimmed
- 1 teaspoon Chinese five-spice blend
- 1/4 cup tamari soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons mirin rice cooking wine
- 1 pound cooked and peeled shrimp, thawed
- 4 teaspoons sesame seeds

In microwave, steam cauliflower according to package instructions.

While cauliflower is cooking, warm large, nonstick skillet with lid over medium heat. Add oils, swirl to coat pan and, when shimmering, add garlic and ginger. Sauté until sizzling and fragrant, stirring constantly, about 30 seconds.

Add coleslaw, bell pepper and scallions; continue sautéing, stirring frequently, until cabbage just begins to wilt, about 3 minutes.

Sprinkle on five-spice blend and stir to incorporate. Add soy sauce and mirin rice cooking wine to pan and stir to evenly coat cabbage. Add shrimp to skillet; toss to evenly distribute. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover with lid and allow shrimp to warm, about 3 minutes.

Measure about 1 cup cooked cauliflower rice into bottom of four bowls. Top evenly with shrimp and cabbage mixture, about

1 cup vegetables and 9-11 large shrimp per serving, drizzling with pan sauce evenly. Sprinkle each bowl with 1 teaspoon sesame seeds and serve while hot.

Notes: To help meal come together quickly, use frozen cauliflower rice, pre-grated ginger paste, pre-minced jarred garlic and bagged coleslaw mix. Green onions and bell pepper can also be pre-sliced.

Parmesan Crisps

Prep time: 2 minutes
Cook time: 8 minutes
Servings: 6

- 3/4 cup shredded Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning blend

Heat oven to 325 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.

Use large cup or mug to draw six roughly 4-inch circles on parchment paper. Fill each circle with 2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, smoothing shreds out and creating slightly thicker outer edge. Sprinkle each with pinch of Italian seasoning and bake 7 1/2 minutes, or until outer edges and bottoms are golden but not burned.

Remove from oven and let cool at least 1 minute before eating. Store in airtight container at room temperature up to 1 day.



An On-the-Go Morning Treat

Busy mornings can lead to breakfast being put on the backburner or skipped altogether. However, with an option like the Atkins Chocolate Banana Shake, which is made with real fruit, you can enjoy the most important meal of the day on-the-go or anytime you need a snack break.

A beneficial source of B vitamins, these protein-rich shakes can satisfy hunger with 5 grams of fiber and provide steady energy all day long. Made to easily fit into a busy lifestyle, they're also gluten-free with no artificial colors or preservatives, and low-glycemic with 4 net carbs and 2 grams of sugar.



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Avocado Chocolate Mousse

Servings: 4

- 3 avocados
- 1/2 cup unsweetened coconut milk
- 1/2 cup sugar-free chocolate chips
- 2 1/2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons Erythritol (low-carb sweetener)
- 3 teaspoons stevia-based sugar substitute
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/8 teaspoon salt

Mash avocado and place in blender with coconut milk. Blend until smooth.

In microwave-safe bowl, heat chocolate chips 20 seconds, stir well and heat in 10-second intervals until melted, stirring in-between. Once melted, add to avocado mixture and continue to blend while scraping down sides of bowl.

Add cocoa powder, sweetener, sugar substitute, vanilla and salt. Blend and scrape down sides of bowl until all ingredients are well combined and mousse is smooth and creamy. Add additional sugar substitute 1/4 teaspoon at a time if sweeter mousse is desired.

Note: All ingredients should be at room temperature to make blending smooth and easy.



Yogurt Parfait

Prep time: 5 minutes
Servings: 1

- 13 pieces Atkins Honey Almond Vanilla Crunch Bites
- 1/4 cup fresh blueberries
- 1/4 cup plain, unsweetened whole milk Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon almond butter
- 1 pinch cinnamon
- 1 pinch sugar substitute

Roughly chop crunch bites.

In small glass, layer blueberries, crunch bites and yogurt. Swirl almond butter on top and finish with sprinkle of cinnamon and sugar substitute.

Investigating the plant-based protein phenomenon

Since the first Dietary Guidelines for Americans, published in 1980, the nutrition community has been asking Americans to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Only 1 in 10 Americans eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables despite almost 40 years of education and funding.

With the launch of plant-based meat alternatives at popular fast food restaurants, will the tide turn? Will the health of the American public improve?

Let's examine plant-based meat alternatives. They are, by nature, highly processed and contain many more ingredients than animal protein in order for them to taste like meat.

One of those ingredients is sodium, a nutrient that we don't need more of in our diets. Another ingredient is fat, specifically saturated fat.

Plant-based meat alternatives tend to



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD



have at least as much saturated fat as the actual meat product they are trying to replace.

Swapping a plant-based meat alterna-

tive for actual meat is not necessary to have a healthy diet. You should look to eating more fruits and vegetables, lean sources of protein – both meat and vegetarian – whole grains, and sources of calcium to achieve a generally healthy diet.

If you have a chronic disease, you may need to alter the amounts and proportions of foods to manage your condition. Adding plant-based protein alternatives may or may not help you achieve your health goals; you have to look past the marketing to the actual nutrition facts and ingredients to find the answer.

Regarding the impact of meat on climate change, a study published in Global Environmental Change on Aug. 7, 2019 looked at different dietary shifts and their predicted impact on climate and water crises.

The study authors found that a 2/3 vegan diet reduced climate impact more

than eliminating meat entirely (or an exclusively vegan diet).

A 2/3 vegan diet was defined as a diet that restricts meat for 2 out of 3 meals per day. That's not far off from what the Dietary Guidelines for Americans now recommends.

If you think about dividing your plate between food groups, only 1/4 is dedicated to a source of protein. The rest is made up of fruits and vegetables (50%) and whole grains (25%). The issue is most Americans do not follow the guidelines.

Given that plant-based meat alternatives are highly processed, it is difficult to classify them as "healthy." They can be incorporated into your diet, but they are not equal to whole plant proteins (like soy, beans, legumes, etc.) and in many cases are not as healthy as the actual meat they are trying to replace.

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Districts 4, 7, 9 gather for business in 2019

By Danielle Quickle

Cooperatives are unique in that they are owned by the members they serve. One of the ways members of Cotton Electric practice governance is by electing a member at their district meeting to represent them on the co-op's Board of Trustees. There are nine Trustees who represent members within nine districts of Cotton Electric's service territory. Each year, three of the districts hold a meeting. Districts 4, 7 and 9 gathered for business in 2019.

The first meeting of the year was held by District 7 on Sept. 9 in Cache.

As incumbent Trustee, Steve Robinson welcomed the members of District 7 and then handed the meeting over to the District Meeting Committee, composed of Board Trustees, to call the meeting to order.

To elect a new Trustee or vote on co-op business, a quorum must be present. A quorum is achieved when 5% of the District's membership is in attendance.

District 7 did not present a quorum and Robinson will automatically serve another three-year term.

The same can be said for the meetings of Districts 4 and 9.

District 4, represented by Brian DeMarcus, met on Sept. 10 in Lawton. With no quorum present, DeMarcus will continue to serve as representative of District 4 for an additional 3 years.

District 9 met together on Sept. 12 in Waurika. Incumbent Trustee Ronnie Bohot was held over for another 3-year term.

Cotton Electric CEO Jennifer Meason addressed the membership at each meeting with a report to keep members up-to-date on co-op business.

"We are very blessed to work for the members in southwest Oklahoma," Meason said. "Our job is to supply you with safe, reliable power day-in and day-out."

Information she shared included:

- The cooperative takes a proactive ap-

proach to maintain and improve power service quality. Yearly pole inspections and replacements improve the stability of power lines and the co-op's Vegetation Management (VM) crew tends to the on-going task of keeping power lines clear of trees and brush that pose a threat to service quality.

- A territory-wide meter changeout is another initiative aimed at improving service. The new meters will contribute to the co-op in a variety of ways but perhaps the most notable is by assisting with outages. The upgraded technology will allow the co-op to be notified as soon as an outage occurs resulting in quicker response times and power restoration. Year one of the three-year changeout process is nearly complete.

- Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC) is the co-op's power supplier. The power distributed to Cotton Electric members has been generated by a variety of sources including coal, natural gas and renewables. It is anticipated, by the end of 2023, half of all the nameplate capacity for WFEC will come from renewables.

- Since its inception in 2004, the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation has distributed more than 500 grants totaling more than \$1 million back into our communities through Operation Round Up.

"Beyond just providing electric services, we look to improve the quality of life in southwest Oklahoma," Meason said. "Members participating in Operation Round Up are the reason we are able to make an impact in our communities."

Each meeting concluded with a prize drawing and refreshments. Three members from each gathering went home with a Buck knife, a one-pound bag of Mike's Famous Beef Jerky or a \$50 energy voucher.

Next year, members in Districts 2, 6 and 8 will have meetings.



Door prize winners at the District 7 meeting were, from left, Russ Scherler, Buddy Neasbitt and Darvin Smith.



Door prize winners at the District 4 meeting were, from left, Sharon Reynolds, Wesley Barrow and Louis Gruber.



Door prize winners at the District 9 meeting were, from left, Gary Carter, Flor Griffin and Brad Scott.

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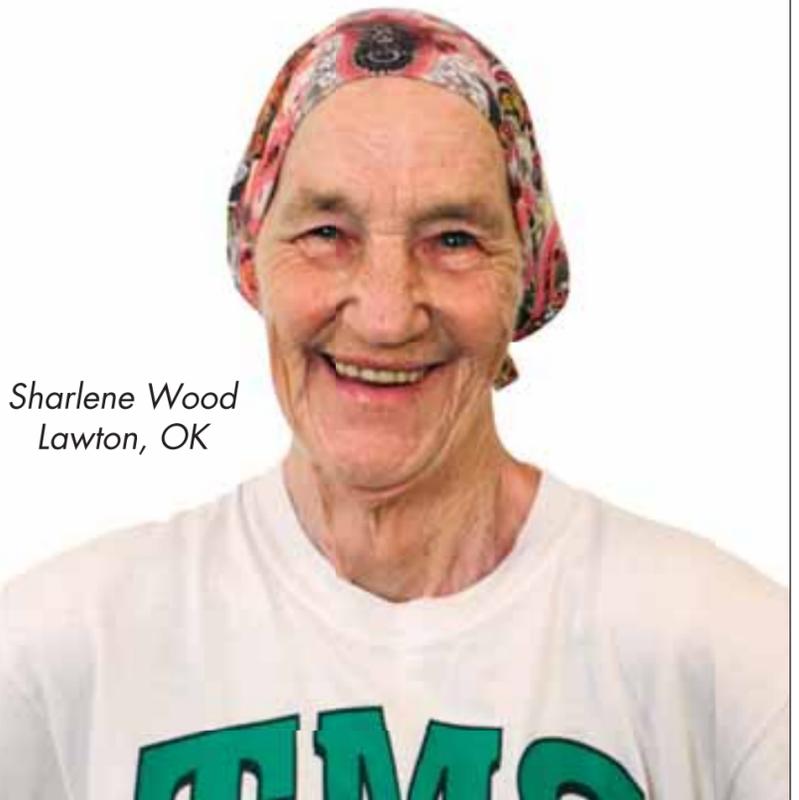
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Sharlene Wood
Lawton, OK



Hawk Hill Farms Petting Zoo is a two-generation family owned business in southwest Oklahoma. From left, Prudence Wick, Megan Hunt and her daughter, Dallas, and Warren Wick hope to educate others about their zoo animals. (Not pictured: Caleb Hunt and Megan's four other children.)

Petting zoo brings animals to Cotton County

By Danielle Quickle

Cotton Electric members no longer need to drive all the way to Oklahoma City to see exotic animals. Hawk Hill Farms Petting Zoo gives members the opportunity to engage with a variety of animals right here in southwest Oklahoma.

Co-op members Warren and Prudence Wick co-own the zoo with their daughter and son-in-law, Megan and Caleb Hunt.

The inspiration for the zoo stemmed from Prudence's childhood.

"When I was growing up, I had an uncle who was the dean of forestry and conservation at the University of Minnesota," Prudence said. "And he would always bring monkeys and parrots home for me to see."

Her love for animals grew as she did.

"When my kids were out of the house, I sort of got empty nest syndrome," Prudence said. "So, I told Warren he could have a new tractor if I could have a monkey. And that is where this all began."

Originally from Minnesota, Warren and Prudence moved to Oklahoma last year to be close to Caleb and Megan and their five grandchildren, bringing all their animals with them.

Officially operating since June, the zoo is located at 174960 Hwy. 65 near Walters, next to 1750 Road. Standard admission of \$8 will allow guests to engage with the many different animals that the family has cared for over the years. Included at the farm are: Two Capuchin monkeys, a lemur, two Sulcata tortoises, miniature pigs, two red kangaroos, a Black Buck antelope, goats, alpacas, llamas, ponies, donkeys, parakeets, a peacock, conuers, an African Crusted porcupine, prairie dogs, bunnies, a longhorn, cows, chickens, ducks and the crowd favorite – a camel named Roy.

All of these animals are available for visitors to engage with in some way.

"Visitors can pet a majority of the animals or even hold them, like the bunnies and piglets," Megan said. "For most of the animals that are not available to pet, they can still get some engagement by feeding them."

It is important to the zookeepers that others can come and visit with the animals up close to truly experience them.

"You go to the zoo and you will see animals, but you will be several feet away and you cannot touch them," Warren said. "The goal of our petting zoo is to allow visitors to see the animals up close and to be able to touch them and feed them. This closeness helps people appreciate and learn about the animals."

The family strives to educate themselves about their animals so they can teach others about them.

"We feel that children, even adults, learn to appreciate and see what the animals provide for us and each other after their visit here," Prudence said.

Part of this education can be seen inside the Hawk Hill Farms Petting Zoo gift shop where guests will find soaps made from the goats' milk and yarn made from alpaca fur.



Guests can take a turn jumping on the air pillow or browsing through the newly added pumpkin patch.

"Our hope is to eventually grow our very own pumpkin patch," Warren said. "But for this year we brought in specialty pumpkins from a 3,000-acre pumpkin farm in Texas."

Through the month of October, the zoo will be open to the public on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 12 to 5 p.m. Field trips, birthdays and large events can be scheduled throughout the week-day by contacting Megan Hunt at 608-807-6329 or HawkHillFarms@yahoo.com.

"Depending on weather, we advise guests to call or check our media outlets to make sure we are open," Warren said. "If it is raining or it is the heat of the day, the animals won't be as engaging."

Hawk Hill Farms Petting Zoo will close for the season on Oct. 27 until next spring. However, there is potential for the zoo to be hosting some holiday events this winter. Check their Facebook page or visit their website at HawkHillFarmsZoo.com for any announcements.

Any upcoming events will also be featured in the Community Spotlight section of The Current.



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Incoming cold weather inspires preparation

Fall is here, which means winter is quickly approaching. The next couple of months typically have more mild temperatures, resulting in lower energy bills.

During these “shoulder months,” the money saved on your energy bill could be used toward efficiency upgrades around the house. These upgrades can continue to save you money and improve your comfort throughout the winter. Now is the perfect time to prepare for winter. Here are some tips to help you prepare your home.



Heath Morgan,
Energy Efficiency
Coordinator

to operate just one of these heaters for only 12 hours a day can be more than \$50 per month.

Check Your Home’s Insulation

Proper insulation throughout your home can substantially lower your heating cost and increase your comfort. You can consult with a professional insulation contractor for estimates on bringing insulation levels up to standard. Professional contractors can offer you options for attic, crawlspace and exterior wall insulation.

In some cases, home insulation measures can be taken care of by the homeowner. The simple addition of blanket insulation or more blown-in insulation can be accomplished over a weekend. Equipment may need to be rented for blown-in insulation. Do your research. Some local hardware stores or home improvement retailers offer free equipment use with the purchase of the insulation materials. Be sure to finish any air sealing measures prior to undertaking the insulation projects.

Don’t forget about your water heater. If your electric water heater is located in an unconditioned space like a garage, you could see some real savings from the addition of an inexpensive insulation blanket. A variety of

different options are available for under \$30, and the installation normally takes a matter of minutes.

Lighting

LED lighting systems operate on 75% less power than is required by older incandescent lights. This is also true for holiday lighting systems. Upgrading to LED lights throughout your home will provide you with year-round savings.

For can lighting updates, look for self-contained LED upgrade kits. These kits replace the traditional bulbs in the can lights and also improve on the air sealing of these notoriously leaky light fixtures.

Cotton Electric also offers a free in-home energy evaluation to our members. This evaluation can help you prioritize where your money can most effectively be spent. Be sure to download the SmartHub app to monitor your electrical usage. As Energy Efficiency Coordinator, I am always available to our members for any questions you might have. Members can contact me at (580) 875-4256.

Windows

Winter months offer a great opportunity to utilize “free” heating from the sun. Prepare south-facing windows by cleaning them to allow more light to shine through and remove any solar screens from these windows. Remember to keep the blinds or drapes on these windows open during the day to allow the sunlight in, and to close them at night to help insulate the windows. Ensure all windows are sealed. Fairly inexpensive window insulation kits are available for older or leaky windows.

Seal Air Leaks Around the House

Spend some time walking around the inside and outside of your home to identify potential air leaks. Along with windows, examine your doors and other openings for signs of air leakage. Visible light, dust trails, or cobwebs are good indications of air leakage. Be sure to check under sinks for openings around plumbing penetrations. Openings cut in your walls or ceilings for electrical outlets, switches, or lighting are potential areas for air leakage. The more that cold air stays out, the less often heaters will need to run.

Most air leaks can be taken care of with a tube of caulk, weather stripping, a can of spray foam or insulated foam seals for outlets and switches.

If you have a fireplace, remember to keep your damper closed when you don’t have a fire going. Leaving your damper open is equivalent to leaving a window open, allowing warm air to escape your home.

Have Your Heating System Serviced

Be sure to have your scheduled maintenance performed before winter arrives. Regularly replace your air filters to ensure your system is moving air as efficiently as possible.

Programmable thermostats should be checked to make sure they are set up properly for winter. Pay attention to your thermostat setpoint in comparison to the outdoor temperature. As the temperature outside gets colder, your heater has to work even harder to maintain the same temperature inside. The Department of Energy’s recommended setting is 68 degrees, or as low as you can comfortably set it. Wearing warmer clothes, or using blankets around the house may allow you to drop the setpoint on your thermostat a little lower.

Reverse your ceiling fans to circulate warm air off of the ceiling and throughout the room.

Dropping the temperature even more when you are not home or sleeping can also help. The Alliance to Save Energy states that you can save approximately three percent on heating cost for every one degree you can lower the thermostat.

Avoid using space heaters if at all possible. Although these heaters may be fairly inexpensive to purchase, they can cost you a considerable amount to operate. The cost

10

Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

- 1
Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
- 2
Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
- 3
Turn off lights when not in use.
- 4
Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.
- 5
Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you’re away.
- 6
Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.
- 7
Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
- 8
Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you’re away from home.
- 9
Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
- 10
Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

The Current's
Holiday Guide

Holiday Guide Rates:

Full Page: 10"x10" = \$360
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The deadline to reserve adspace in the Holiday Guide is October 25, 2019. If you have any questions or would like to reserve ad space please call 580-875-4277 or email kwilliams@cottonelectric.com

Ginger Jar

Of Duncan

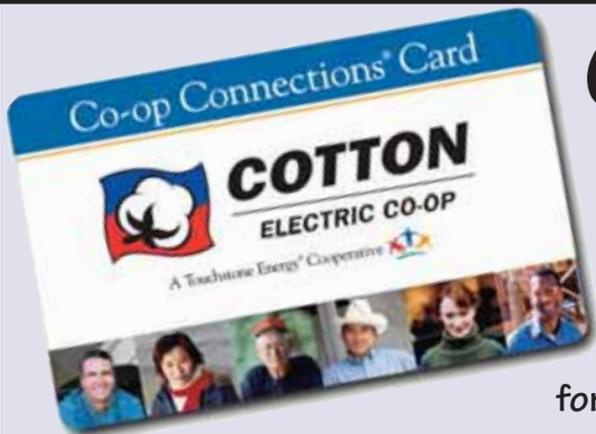
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