

The Current

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Area teens experience nation’s capital during week-long Youth Tour

By Karen Kaley

Summertime trips can be quite memorable. Some can be educational. Some well-planned trips can offer educational experience while travelers have a lot of fun.

That’s a great description of Youth Tour.

With Washington, D.C., as their destination, Shayla Barber of Marlow, Kaitlyn Metcalfe of Walters, Kristian Cárdenas and Alexis Matallana, both of Lawton, couldn’t help but learn a thing or two when they represented Cotton Electric Cooperative last month on the 51st annual Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

Because they were travelling with many other young people from across the state, they were bound to have a good time.

The four young women had won the all-expense-paid trip by submitting essays on the topic “The Seven Cooperative Principles” in Cotton Electric’s annual Youth Tour contest. Theirs were among the top 25 essays submitted.

Alexis’s essay is on Page 5.

Following an interview session, 10 of the high school juniors were invited to present their essays orally at a spring-time banquet. Judges from across the state said the best presentations were from Shayla, Kaitlyn, Kristian and Alexis.

Another banquet on a June evening in Oklahoma City kicked off the tour. They joined 68 other teens to represent 26 of Oklahoma’s rural electric systems on a trip to the nation’s capital.

Jennifer “Spike Momma” Dempsey, director of Member Services, Education & Youth for Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives, had a full itinerary planned for the seven-day experience. First, they had to get there.

Spike Momma led 72 teens and nine chaperones, alphabetized and clad in matching T-shirts, through an orderly baggage and security check at Will Rogers World Airport. For some of the teens, the flight to Baltimore Washington International Airport was the first of many new experiences.

Upon arrival, charter buses took the group into the nation’s capital and touring started immediately: Lincoln, Vietnam and Korean War memorials, the World War II Memorial, then Pentagon City Mall for shopping and dinner.

That was the first day, Saturday. Day Two was just as busy. As were Days Three, Four, Five, Six and Seven.

Sunday began with the early wake-up call that was typical for every day.

See Oklahoma, Page 4

The Capitol building in Washington, D.C., provides a perfect background for the four teens representing Cotton Electric during the 2014 Youth Tour. They are, from left, Kaitlyn Metcalfe, Shayla Barber, Alexis Matallana and Kristian Cárdenas.

Hard to select just one ‘must see’ in Washington, D.C.

By Karen Kaley

I was completely confused recently when a friend asked what was the “must see” in Washington, D.C.

He posed the question upon learning I had been among the chaperones of the 72 teens representing Oklahoma during the 2014 Rural Electric Youth Tour.

There is no simple answer to his question. You must see as much of everything as you can.

He rephrased the question: What would I do if I only had 24 hours to spend in the nation’s capital?

I was still a bit dumbfounded.

I wanted to reply with, “Work on getting more time.”

Instead, I tried to think of the one thing I had seen that it would have been a shame to have missed.

Again, my answer was, “All of it.”

He pressed and I finally blurted out the site that made me stand slack-jawed the longest. He was surprised by the Library of Congress.

Really, dude, it’s not what you think. More on that later ...

... Because I immediately wanted to change my answer. If you only have 24 hours, you can dawdle over most of the memorials and monuments.

They’re all in close proximity. Wear good walking shoes and be prepared for some hot, humid conditions.

The trouble with that idea is a glance in any direction brings another familiar sight, another spectacular building, another work of art into your line of vision, beckoning.

You cannot be satisfied with only 24 hours in Washington, D.C. And every

American should visit this beautiful and overwhelming city at least once.

Many, many, many people realize this and they will all be there at the same time you are. I was surprised by the flow of people, the constant side-stepping, the music of different languages overheard in snippets.

We had become stereotypical tourists. Every teen on our journey had a cell phone and most were equipped with a camera. Nearly everyone stopped to take pictures, though not everyone stopped to stay out of the pictures.

It was also the year of the selfie.

After a while, I grew weary of always raising my phone or the co-op’s camera to capture an image. I just wanted to stand and gape.

And so, in the Thomas Jefferson

Building, which houses the Library of Congress, I did just that. As people brushed by me, I stood in the middle of the ground floor and just ...

It is hard to describe how one takes in what Washington, D.C., has to offer. It is a bombardment of all senses.

... I stood there and just said, “Oh!” I had moments like that all through the seven-day trip.

After passing rows and rows and rows and rows and more rows of headstones in Arlington Cemetery, I saw the top of Robert E. Lee’s home above a rise just over John F. Kennedy’s eternal flame.

I saw a path worn into the concrete by a slow, hypnotic guardian’s march at the Tomb of the Unknowns. The solemn ceremony made me weepy.

See Nation’s, Page 4

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment (PCA) applied to bills mailed after July 1 is \$0.01388 per kWh. On a traditional bill, average use of 1500 kilowatt hours (kWh) would include a PCA charge of \$20.82 on the June bill. On a MyChoice account, PCA is added to the base rate of \$0.088923 per kWh, making the rate appear to be \$0.1028 from June 18 through July 17.

June 2014 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	93	68	81	16	94	75	85
2	93	73	83	17	97	75	86
3	96	71	84	18	94	76	85
4	104	71	88	19	89	67	78
5	100	71	86	20	93	70	82
6	93	66	80	21	93	71	82
7	90	67	79	22	89	71	80
8	78	66	72	23	87	65	76
9	80	62	71	24	88	65	77
10	82	63	73	25	90	64	77
11	93	59	76	26	89	72	81
12	85	68	77	27	92	72	82
13	87	64	76	28	91	75	83
14	91	73	82	29	98	76	87
15	92	75	84	30	100	75	88

Source: srh.noaa.gov/oum/

Average Daily High: 91 Average Daily Low: 70

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric members in Districts 2, 6 and 8 will have an opportunity to meet and elect representatives this year. Times, dates and places of District Meetings will be in the next issue of The Current. The August issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on Aug. 11, 2014.

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

Rules drafted in Washington have local impact

Cooperatives, like most local businesses, work through the highs and lows of a cyclical economy. So, when a potential economic hazard arises and we have an opportunity to affect the outcome, you better believe we do whatever we can to prevent or mitigate it. That's why we're concerned about new rules coming out of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to limit greenhouse gases blamed for climate change.

Not-for-profit electric cooperatives work every day to provide affordable, reliable electricity to the more than 42 million Americans we serve. At Cotton Electric Cooperative, we steadfastly focus on ways to slow the rising cost of electricity and find ways to help you save on your electricity bill. Environmental regulations share

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

To learn more about Cotton Electric Cooperative's energy efficiency programs, please contact Trent Marlett or Mike Stephens at 580-875-3351.

part of the blame for rising electricity costs. Electric co-ops have invested billions of dollars in equipment to reduce air pollution already, but greenhouse gases pose a far more difficult challenge to capture, and the new technology just isn't ready for prime time.

Equally troubling to comprehend, the EPA readily admits that cutting these emissions would not have much global impact on overall greenhouse gas levels.

The bottom line is these regulations unfairly and disproportionately af-

fect members of electric cooperatives. They target regions of the U.S. most dependent on coal for electricity. And, increasing electricity prices could endanger efforts to attract new businesses, let alone retain current employers.

By harnessing America's ingenuity, we can do better.

This debate should be about working together to develop a sustainable energy future. This debate should be about how the government supports utilities in a collective effort to develop technologies that can reduce greenhouse gases at a justifiable and

reasonable pace.

All of us at Cotton Electric Cooperative have a deep respect for our environment and take great care through our programs to encourage conservation and energy efficiency. Many of you have participated in our Beat the Peak program and are doing your part to use energy wisely.

We ask that you help again by letting your voice be heard. Please visit www.action.coop and take a few minutes to send your message to the EPA. You can also stop by our Walters or Duncan office and fill out an Action Card to participate.

To help our communities thrive, we need Washington to recognize the potential harm of these regulations and find a different path to a better energy future. We appreciate your help.

Keep clear of power lines for a safe harvest

By Abby Berry

As rewarding as it may be, farming is an extremely difficult job – and it ranks among the top 10 most dangerous professions in the United States. At Cotton Electric Cooperative, safety is top priority for all — our employees and our members.

Our farmers work hard to get the job done, and sometimes it's easy to forget all the necessary steps to take when practicing safe operations. Grain bins are siloed spaces built for storing grain and fermented feed known as silage. These bins play an integral role in the efficiency and profitability of farm and ranch operations, and safety regulations should always be considered when working around these structures.

Whether you're purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas that contain existing ones, proximity to overhead power lines must be a considered factor.

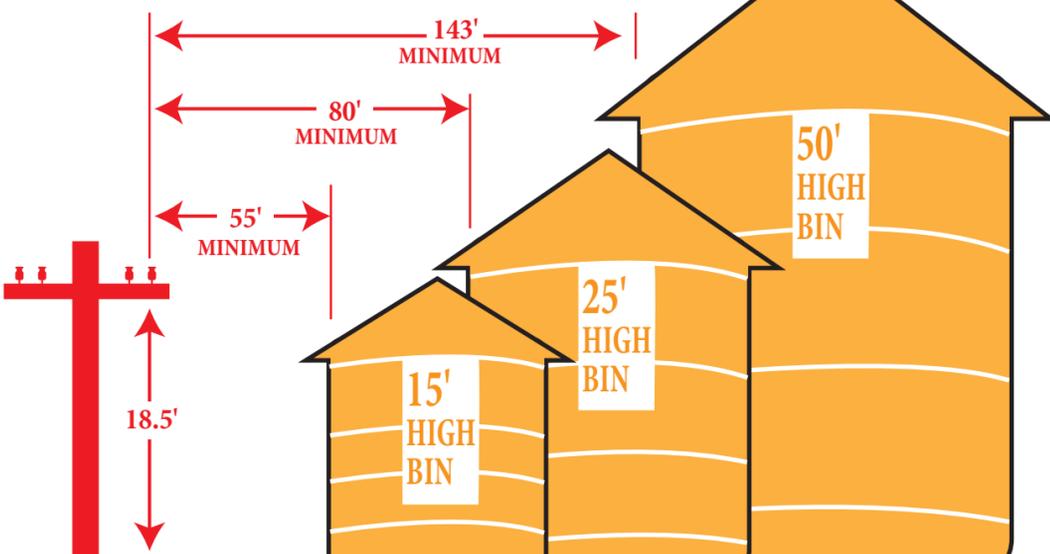
Safe clearance. The National Electrical Safety Code requires an 18-foot minimum vertical clearance from the highest point of the filling port of the grain bin to nearby high-voltage wires and a 55-foot minimum distance from the power line to the grain bin wall. See the chart at right for further guidelines. Changes to landscaping and drainage work can affect clearance heights of power lines, so remember to check these measurements regularly.

Filling grain bins. High-voltage power lines are not insulated, so it's important to remember to maintain an adequate high-wire clearance when using a portable auger, conveyor or elevator to fill your grain bin.

Moving equipment near grain bins. When moving equipment, such as a hopper or a scaffold, be aware of nearby power lines. Remember to maintain a 10-foot clearance to ensure safety.

Accidents can happen in a split-second, which is why Cotton Electric reminds you to always use caution when working near power lines. If you are considering a plan for a new grain bin or reconstruction of an existing bin's site, please contact Cotton Electric at 580-875-3351 and let us assist you in maintaining a safe environment for you and your family.

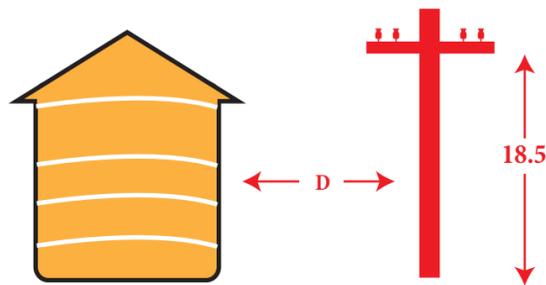
GRAIN BIN SAFETY



DANGER: HIGH VOLTAGE!
FOLLOW FARM SAFETY RULES AROUND POWER LINES

Height of grain storage structure	D=Minimum distance from line to bin wall*
15 ft.	55 ft.
20 ft.	68 ft.
25 ft.	80 ft.
30 ft.	93 ft.
35 ft.	104 ft.
40 ft.	118 ft.
50 ft.	143 ft.
60 ft.	168 ft.
70 ft.	193 ft.
80 ft.	218 ft.

*Based on a typical power line having a vertical clearance of 18.5 feet above the ground and a supply line phase to ground voltage of more than 0V to 22KV; National Electrical Safety Code Rule 232.



Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Replacing your conventional power strips with advanced power strips (APS) can help reduce the electricity wasted when electronic devices are idle. These power strips are a convenient and low-cost way to save.

Source: Department of Energy

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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.

May 2014 Operating Stats

	2014	2013
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$5,871,178	\$5,164,744
Cost of Purchased Power	4,357,729	3,608,463
Taxes	103,553	95,971
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,146	974
Average Farm and Residential Bill	133	124
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,043	1,028
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,181	18,034
Miles Energized	5,139	5,130
Density Per Mile	3.54	6.52
New Service Connects YTD	141	151
Services Retired	82	112

Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the August issue, please submit information by July 29 by calling 580-875-4255 or send an email to info@cottonelectric.com.

Farmers market in Lawton

A farmers market hosted by the Southwest Growers Association is held from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Saturday through October at the Comanche County Fairgrounds, 920 S. Sheridan Road, Lawton.

For information, visit Lawton Farmers Market on Facebook.

Arts Explosion includes all ages

Arts Explosion 2014, Chisholm Trail Arts Council's annual weeklong summer arts program, features workshops for all age groups.

A day camp for students who have completed fourth, fifth and sixth grades will be 8:30 a.m. to 12:20 p.m. July 14-18 at the Stephens County fairgrounds. Students will have the opportunity to enroll in six offered classes. Registration fee is \$65 for students registering before July 14, and \$75 for those registering on the first day of camp.

Teens from 13 to 18 years old can sign up for a trio of sessions that will run from 2 to 8 p.m. July 14-16. Registration is \$45 in advance or \$55 on the first day.

Adult programs will be from 6:30 to 8 p.m. July 14, 15 and 17. Registration fee is \$25 per class or \$60 for all three.

Brochures describing all workshops can be downloaded at ChisholmTrailArts.com.

The week ends with a Friday night exhibition of finished projects. Family and friends can admire the works of art from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the fairgrounds.

For more information concerning Arts Explosion or any other CTAC program, call 580-252-4160 or email director@chisholmtrailarts.com.

Walters Rodeo begins with parade

All individuals, horse riders, clubs and organizations are encouraged to walk, ride a horse or drive a float in the annual rodeo parade kicking off the Walters Round-Up Club Rodeo and Comanche Homecoming Pow Wow.

Parade lineup begins at 4 p.m. Thursday, July 17, at Broadway and Nevada for all entries except riding clubs, which will gather at Nevada and Sixth. Judging for floats, Best Dressed Cowgirl, Cowboy, Indian Girl and Indian Boy, and Best Decorated Bicycle will be during the hour before the parade kicks off at 5 p.m.

The rodeo begins at 8 p.m. nightly, July 17-19, at the Max Phillips Rodeo Arena west of town.

The pow wow, held July 18-20 in Sultan Park, features numerous dances and contests for all age ranges. For information, call 580-492-3240.

For parade information, call 580-875-3335. For rodeo information, call 580-252-6670.

CTHC celebrates Day of Cowboy

Activities celebrating the National Day of the Cowboy will be 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, July 26, at Chisholm Trail Heritage Center in Duncan. This is a free day where young'uns and old'uns can have fun at the museum.

Museum visitors can rope a longhorn, ride a buckin' bronc and create his or her own brand. The 4-D Experience Theater is a place to beat the heat while watching cattle stampede, cooling off during a summer thunderstorm on the Oklahoma prairie, and learning about life as a cowboy.

Visit the Campfire Theater and hear Jesse Chisholm and Tex share campfire tales while some ruckus is made in the wagon by cowboys trying to get comfortable for the night.

Area Rodeos

Walters Rodeo, July 17-19
Velma Picnic, July 30-Aug. 2
Lawton Rangers,
LO Ranch Arena, Aug. 6-9
Great Plains Stampede
Rodeo, Altus, Aug. 21-23
MRCA Rodeo Finals,
Stephens County fairgrounds,
Aug. 29-31
Red River Ranch Roundup,
Stephens County fairgrounds,
Oct. 3-4
Prairie Circuit Finals,
Stephens County fairgrounds,
Oct. 16-18

Art lovers will delight in the Garis Gallery of the American West where they can get an up-close look at prized works of George Catlin, Frederic Remington and Charles Russell. Other local and regional artists also are on display, including the work of Chad Payne.

This year's National Day of the Cowboy festivities tie in with the Allan Houser: Legend Born Free and the Native American Cowboy history.

For information, find On the Chisholm Trail on Facebook or call 580-252-6692.

Dehydrator set for July 26

The 24th annual Dehydrator is a bicycle ride with varied mile routes. Riders leave at 7 a.m. July 26 from the Simmons Center in Duncan.

Entry fees are \$25 per person, \$40 per tandem team, non-refundable. A free T-shirt goes to the first 500 entries. A \$5 late fee will be assessed on entries after July 19.

For information and registration forms, visit thedehydrator.org.

Velma Picnic begins July 30

The Old Settlers 124th Annual Picnic will be at Humphrey Park in Velma. Festivities kick off with a ranch rodeo at 7:30 p.m. July 30. Activities will continue through Aug. 2.

A rodeo will be held at 7:30 each night. Team roping slack begins at 9 a.m. July 31 and steer tripping is at 1 p.m. Aug. 1. The final day begins with a parade at 11 a.m., rodeo at 1 p.m.

Admission is free to all events, including the dance featuring a live band Friday and Saturday nights.

For information, call Chad Cowan at 580-444-3726.

SW Scorchers for walkers, runners

Runners and walkers are welcome at the fourth annual Southwestern Scorchers. Events include a 5K run, one-mile walks for kids and adults, and a wellness competition.

Packet pickup will be from 3 to 7 p.m. Aug. 1 at SWMC Center for Sports and Rehabilitation and 6:45 to 7:30 a.m. race day. The race begins at 8 a.m. Aug. 2 at Southwestern Medical Center, 5602 SW Lee Blvd., Lawton.

Proceeds will benefit the Wounded Warrior Transitional Unit at Fort Sill. Registration and information is at SWMCOnline.com.

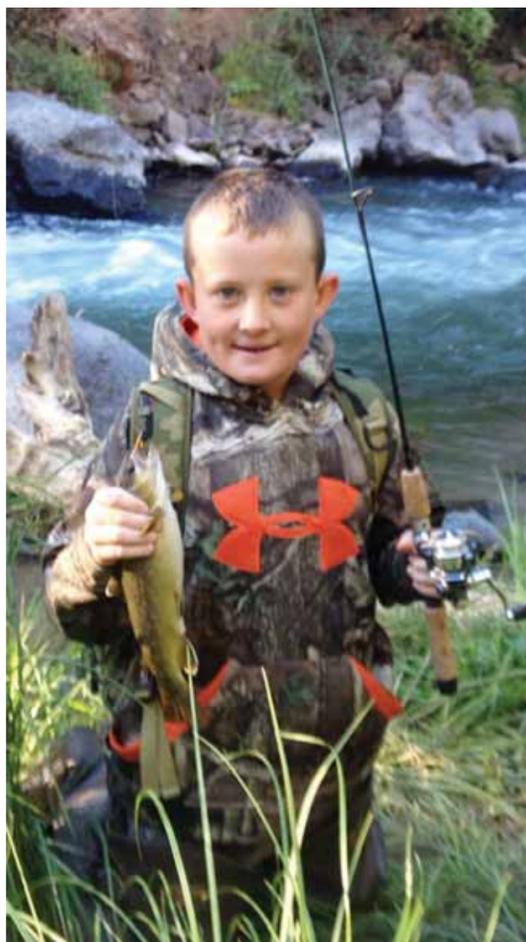
Fiesta in Fuqua set for Aug. 9

Fiesta in Fuqua is a free, fun-filled day in the park for school-aged children featuring opportunities to exercise and immunize. After completing activities, kids receive a package of school supplies.

Fun begins at 8:30 a.m. and runs through 11:30 on Aug. 9 at the park on U.S. Highway 81 in Duncan. All children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Those wishing to receive immunizations must have shot records with them.

Sponsored by New Hope Baptist Church West, a portion of the cost of

Photo of the Month



Hunter Miller, 9, caught his first brown trout while on vacation in Red River, New Mexico. His parents are Cotton Electric members Jeremy and Brandi Miller.

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

the event is defrayed by a grant from Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation. For information, call Daisy Lawler at 580-439-5706 or email daisyl@pldi.net.

Rangers Rodeo begins Aug. 6

More than 400 top cowboys and cowgirls are expected to compete in the Lawton Rangers Rodeo set for Aug. 6-9 at L.O. Ranch Arena in Lawton. Featured events include barrel racing, tie-down roping, team roping, steer wrestling, bareback and saddle bronc riding and bull riding.

Gates open at 6:30 p.m. each night and Grand Entry begins at 7:30. Reduced-price admission is on Fam-

ily Nights, Wednesday and Thursday. Tickets can be purchased at Crutchers, Showman's Choice, Ruben's Shoes, Atwoods and all Lawton E-Z Go Stores.

Historical society sets meeting

Southwestern Oklahoma Historical Society will hold its annual meeting at 7 p.m. Aug. 12 in the Worley Center at Great Plains Tech Center in Lawton. There is no admission fee and the meeting is open to the public.

The society will provide refreshments, and back issues of "Prairie Lore" will be available. For information about the group, visit SWOKHS.org.

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

Here's something worth shouting about. As an electric co-op member, you have a say in how the co-op is run and the decisions that are made. Isn't that nice to hear? Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at TogetherWeSave.com.

COTTON
ELECTRIC CO-OP
TOGETHERWESAVE.COM



There is no shortage of photo opportunities in Washington, D.C. From left, Kaitlyn Metcalfe with U.S. Rep. Frank Lucas; Shayla Barber outside the White House; Kristian Cárdenas near the Reagan Building; and Alexis Matallana on the veranda of the Lee House.

Oklahoma Youth Tour features full agenda every day

Continued from Page One

The Oklahoma contingent toured Arlington Cemetery where they saw the Kennedy grave sites, a changing-of-the-guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and the Lee Mansion. After snapping photos in front of the White House, afternoon stops included the National Portrait Gallery, Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum and a ranger's interpretation of the events associated with Ford's Theatre. They finished the day at Toby's Dinner Theatre, enjoying a musical performance of "Shrek."

Monday was Youth Day, and teens from co-ops in 44 states gathered for morning presentations from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Following a photo shoot with the Capitol in the background, the Oklahoma group spent the afternoon admiring the stunning Library of Congress and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The day ended with a three-hour cruise of the Potomac River.

Outdoor activities were first on the jam-packed agenda for Tuesday in an effort to beat the muggy heat. Youth Tourists were dwarfed by the memorials to Thomas Jefferson and Martin Luther King Jr. They frolicked among the many life-sized and oversized statues and waterfalls that make up the memorial to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who is considered a key figure in the early success of rural electric cooperatives. Indoor activities included time at the Newseum and exploring the many build-

ings of the Smithsonian Institution. Then it was back outdoors for a pizza picnic while waiting for the U.S. Marine Sunset Parade on greens surrounding the Iwo Jima Memorial.

Oklahoma Youth Tourists spent Wednesday morning prowling the grounds of Mount Vernon. They got a special treat during an afternoon visit to the U.S. Marine Corps Museum, where Frank Matthews gave a first-person account of landing and fighting at Iwo Jima. The group spent the evening in Old Town Alexandria, capping off activities with a walking ghost tour.

Friday morning was set aside for a Congressional Summit. The students heard from and posed questions to U.S. Sen. James Inhofe, U.S. Rep. Frank Lucas of Oklahoma's 3rd Congressional District and U.S. Rep. Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma's 2nd Congressional District. The afternoon began in the Holocaust Museum then a few more hours to revisit Smithsonian museums. That evening, the group climbed the hill for a private tour of the Capitol building led by Rep. Mullin.

The final day started a bit later for the weary tourists. The Sooner State group had breakfast together one more time before loading buses with bulging suitcases. A few hours at Baltimore's Inner Harbor and a tour of Oriole Park at Camden Yard were the last activities before the group headed to the airport.

By nightfall, they were back in Oklahoma. They brought back so much more than they took: A new understanding and appreciation of the U.S. capital

and government, souvenir trinkets and clothing, pins and stickers exchanged with students from other states, thousands of digital photos, contact information for many new friends ... and memories. Lots of memories.

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Some restrictions may apply. Services where available.
2 year service contract required.



Remarkably generous with his time, U.S. Rep. Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma's 2nd Congressional District posed on the steps of the U.S. Capitol before leading the 2014 Oklahoma Youth Tour group on an evening tour. His 8-year-old son, Andrew, was shadowing his father for the week.

Nation's capital a feast for all the senses

Continued from Page One

I saw an astonishing chandelier above one of the five auditoriums housed in the performing arts center bearing Kennedy's name.

I saw a stunning view of the Potomac River from the veranda of Mount Vernon and understood immediately why George Washington had chosen that spot.

I listened to 88-year-old Frank Matthews give a first-person account while footage of the landing and fighting at Iwo Jima played on a screen behind him in the U.S. Marine Corps Museum.

I was struck by the visual irony of Oklahoma teens seeking relief from the oppressive heat by huddling in the shadow of the massive Martin Luther King Jr. monument.

I was impressed by U.S. Rep. Markwayne Mullin of Oklahoma's 2nd Congressional District. I know nothing of his politics but can tell you he is a man most generous with his time. He led our contingent on a private evening tour our of breath-taking Capitol building.

I am left with admiration

for Jennifer "Spike Momma" Dempsey of Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives for her remarkable skill in packing as many experiences as possible between our 6 a.m. wake-up calls and 11 p.m. bed checks.

I looked forward to those final moments of each day as much as anything else. I looked in on a dozen exhausted, exhilarated young women, who made their way into my heart and my Facebook friend list.

What an experience. Youth Tour truly is a trip of a lifetime.

PUBLIC AUCTION

Saturday, July 19, 2014 10:00AM
1709 West Birch Avenue
Duncan, Oklahoma

Gary Criswell Auction Service & Real Estate, Inc. has been commissioned by the Ruth Etta Johnson - Guardianship to offer at Public Auction her Home and Personal Property situated at 1709 West Birch Avenue in Duncan, Oklahoma.

Real Property consists of a nice 3 Bedroom Brick Home (Approximately 1,649 Square Feet) with a Living Room/Dining Area Combination. Home has a Large Master Bedroom with Sitting Area, Kitchen, Utility Room (Enclosed Porch) and 2 Full Baths.

Additional Improvements include Central Heat and Central Air, Storm Windows, Covered Patio, Carport with Storage/Workshop (18'x24'-1/2'), Metal Storage Building (8'x10'). All situated on a nice Corner Lot (75'x112') with a fenced Backyard in a good neighborhood.

Personal Property includes Household Furnishings including Stanley Bedroom Suite-5 Pieces (nice), LANE Cedar Chest, BROYHILL Sofa and Loveseat, Dining Table - Drop Leaf- oak, Whirlpool Washer, Whirlpool Dryer, Whirlpool Freezer-Upright, INVACARE Hospital Bed, Curio Cabinet, Variety of Linens, Glassware and Collectibles. Miscellaneous and many more items too numerous to mention.

Consignment: 2010 TOYOTA PRIUS-Hybrid Synergy Drive-4 Door All Power, Automatic, Cloth Seats, New Battery, Color-White, like new (Glen A. Neal Revocable Living Trust).

Consignment: 2007 TOYOTA TUNDRA SR5 - 4x4, Automatic, All Power, Cloth Seats, 5.7 Liter V-8 Engine, A.R.E. Camper Shell, BRUNO Scooter Lift (works), Color-Green, 1 Owner, Mileage: 47,482 Miles, good condition, (Glen A. Neal Revocable Living Trust).

Consignment: 1998 VOLVO S90 Automobile, All Power, Automatic, Leather Seats, Sun Roof, Color-Green, Mileage: 214,918 Miles, good condition (Sarah Morton Schwab).

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Cotton Electric does more for its members



*Alexis Matallana
Lawton High School*

Editor's note: Four area high school juniors won a trip to Washington, D.C., in Cotton Electric's annual Youth Tour essay contest. Each of the essays will appear in The Current.

This past October, I volunteered at my brother's elementary school for a PTA Bingo Night fundraiser. My job would be passing out and collecting bingo cards, delivering prizes, and serving food. But before I could begin helping, I had to be trained by one of the PTA members to complete all the different tasks. I soon learned how entirely this event was run by the PTA, from the organization and implementation to the spending of the money collected. The PTA leadership communicated effectively with its volunteer members, experienced and inexperienced, and sought out their advice on how to achieve positive outcomes.

In a sense, the process I saw working at the fundraiser corresponds to the Cotton Electric Cooperative guiding principle of Education, Training, and Information – one of seven principles that give electric cooperatives their path to success. Although the PTA is strictly volunteer-based and does not have as complex a structure as a business like Cotton Electric, both organizations seem to understand the importance of ensuring positive communication and worker development. I did all right at the fundraiser that night, but Cotton Electric does more than all right for its stakeholders.

In order to gain support of the community,

and therefore more members, a cooperative must practice open communication with its members and leaders. This communication can come from both sides of the company, members and cooperative owners. Cooperative owners can provide this communication in the form of education and information.

Once ideas for improvement are obtained, it is important to ensure that all changes are implemented smoothly. This can occur when a cooperative provides all employees, leaders, and members with the knowledge and information needed to develop a plan. Training is a vital form of this information, and should be given to anyone seeking education and the ability to improve their contributions to the cooperative.

If a cooperative is interested in expanding its business, providing the community with events, or beginning an advertising campaign, many members and elected representatives are needed to plan and enact these ideas. In order for every member to contribute efficiently and positively, education, training, and communication are necessary.

Cotton Electric Cooperative is greatly involved in its community, providing great support for its members, which is reciprocated. In order to provide its members with fun events, such as the Annual Meeting featuring food, games and prizes, and information about the cooperative and its goals, every active member must be educated and trained. All the volunteers and employees need the necessary

training to ensure that the event is successful. This event is also a great example of how Cotton Electric communicates with its members. Leaders are able to actively provide members of all ages with the information needed to get those members involved in future projects and the development of the cooperative.

Cotton Electric Cooperative's newspaper is yet another example of how this cooperative exercises open communication. This paper provides information on community events as well as the business' projects and goals.

Without the application of this principle, Cotton Electric would not have nearly as much public support as it does. With communication outlets such as annual events and a regularly published newspaper, this cooperative can keep in touch with members of all ages, as well as influential opinion leaders. Cotton Electric Cooperative actively educates its members, gaining much public support and spreading information. The cooperative trains and educates all employees and elected representatives to ensure that the organization moves forward and positively develops. Without educating employees and members, a cooperative would not run as smoothly and, without communication, a cooperative would not have a large amount of public support.

Luckily, since Cotton Electric Cooperative exercises and applies the principle of Education, Training and Information, this cooperative runs smoothly and is able to apply other principles, such as Concern for Community.

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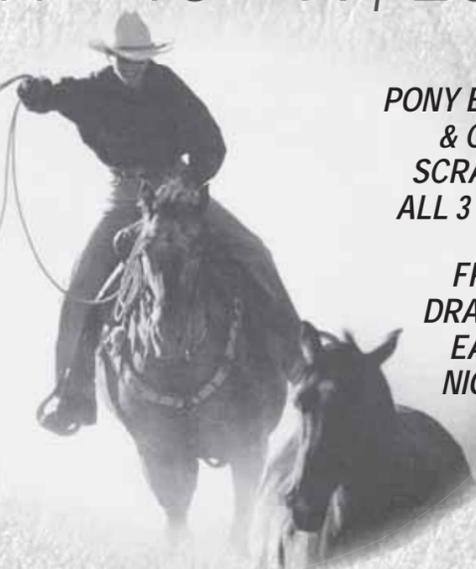
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Cotton's chief dispatcher retires

By Karen Kaley

Cotton Electric's chief dispatcher has retired. He'd been telling us for months it was coming, yet it was still a bit of a surprise when Gary Nichols officially retired in late June.

It's about right, though. Nichols' 40 years with the co-op have included abrupt change and extraordinary accomplishment.

Things started simply enough. Born and raised in the Rush Springs and Marlow area, Nichols was fresh out of high school when he took a job in the transformer shop of Southwest Rural Electric in Tipton.

Nichols got to "move back home" when a position opened at Cotton Electric. He started work as a lineman's helper on Feb. 4, 1974, in a territory that included Marlow, Rush Springs, Bray and Central High.

Within five years, Nichols was a journeyman lineman.

"I really liked line work and being outside," Nichols said. "It was a different type of work every day, and I met up with different people every day.

"I enjoyed the challenges," he said, pointing out that the co-op owned only two basket trucks at the time.

"Everybody was climbing poles."

Work schedules for linemen were different, too. He described a 10-days-on, 4-days-off rotation that had them working through weekends.

"Mainly, it was outages and trouble calls on weekends, but it was all throughout the (east or west) area, so others could have a weekend off."

Linemen work outside their normal areas during extreme situations, too. Ice storms, for example.

Nichols and many others had worked literally day and night after a January 1987 ice storm had taken out 54 poles in western Stephens County. Restoration efforts were nearly complete when things took a terrible turn the afternoon of Jan. 21.

Nichols and his partner, Jimmy Dial, were working on Baseline Road near Claud Cemetery. Nichols had climbed a pole strung with high-voltage primary line while Dial provided support from the ground.

Nichols reached back and his shoulder made contact with the high-voltage line. In a burning flash, his life changed.

Nichols said he doesn't remember the moment of contact but can recall waking up at the site, being loaded into an ambulance and later into a helicopter that took him from the hospital in Duncan to the Burn Center in Oklahoma City.

High-voltage electricity burns a hole as it enters the human body. It passes

through on a searing path as it searches for ground and, in Nichols' case, exploded out through his legs and feet.

The jolt shut down all of Nichols' internal organs except his heart. This caused swelling that made him almost unrecognizable to his family.

Third-degree burns covered 39 percent of his body. Doctors told his family Nichols had a 5 percent chance of surviving.

For three months, Nichols endured painful scrubbing of the burned area, skin grafts and amputations.

The heel of his left foot had been blown out. A severe burn was at his left hip where a pocketful of change and a knife had heated to melting. Eventually, the entire leg was removed.

Recovery was slow. There were more hospital stays and a lot of physical therapy.

Some positives began to emerge. Gary and Pam Nichols were married about 8 months after the accident. He moved to her farm in Ratliff City where they have raised a family that includes five children and seven grandchildren.

Another 10 months passed. The co-op had a job waiting for Nichols. Though still in the process of healing, he agreed to return.

Nichols said he was reluctant at first, thought he needed more time, but looks back now and is glad he came back to work.

He began making the 108-mile round trip to serve as the night dis-

patcher. He was well-suited for the task and was named chief dispatcher in 2000.

The time Nichols spent working in the field made him ideal for the job. He was already very familiar with the eastern portion of the service area, and a wall-sized map made it easy for him to find locations in the west.

He knew exactly what members and line workers were talking about when they called about trouble on the line. He had a knack for keeping track of who was where and which direction the power was flowing along the 5,000-mile system.

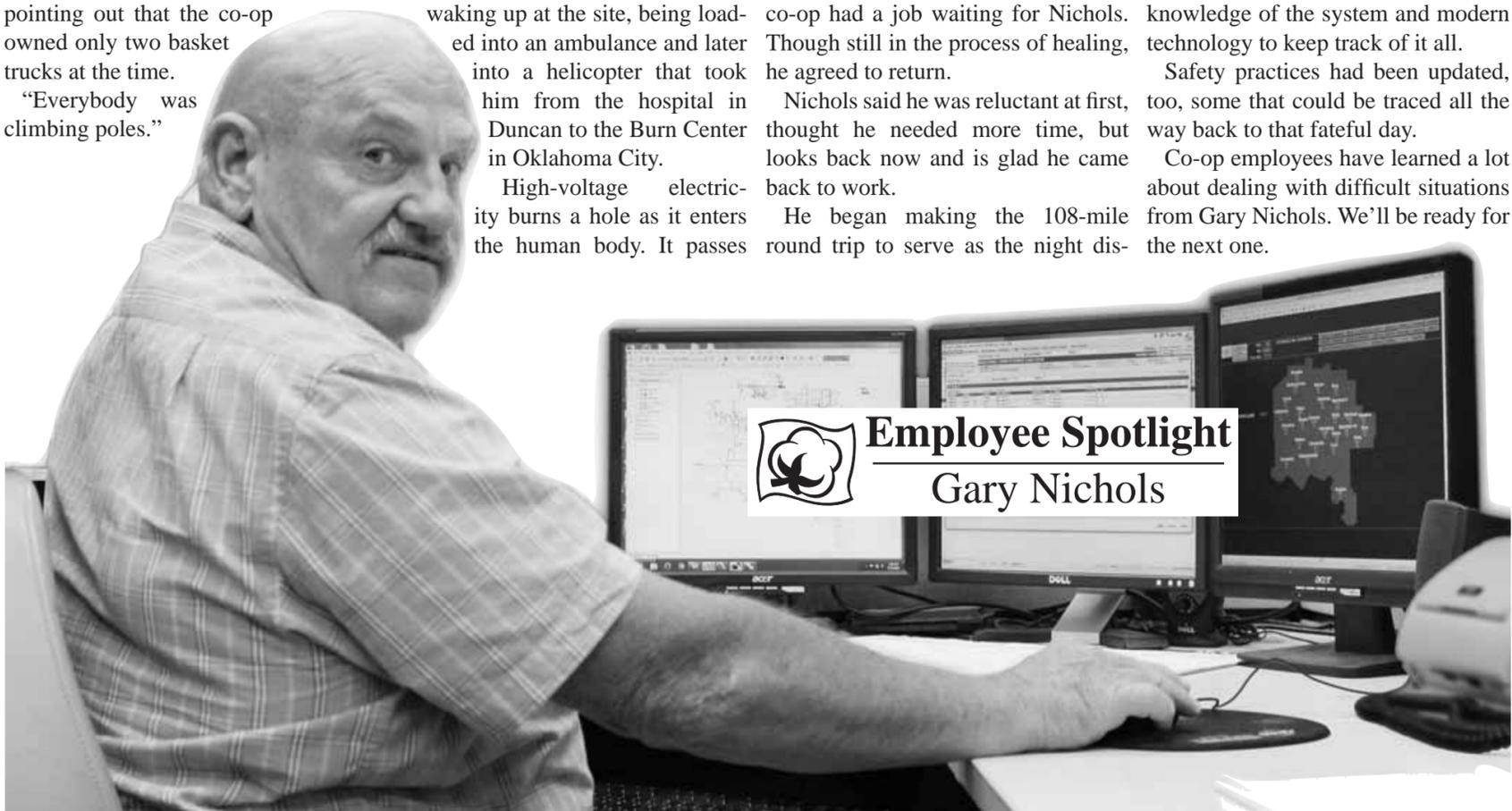
This ability proved invaluable during extreme situations such as the ice storm that hit the system in January 2010.

Thousands of phone calls generated thousands of outage reports. All co-op employees pulled extra duty in the restoration effort. The dispatch area was a hub of activity with Gary Nichols at the center.

There were many differences between how co-op employees dealt with the ice storms in 1987 and 2010. Nichols used a mix of his old-school knowledge of the system and modern technology to keep track of it all.

Safety practices had been updated, too, some that could be traced all the way back to that fateful day.

Co-op employees have learned a lot about dealing with difficult situations from Gary Nichols. We'll be ready for the next one.



Employee Spotlight

Gary Nichols

Forty years and more on the job not uncommon



Dwight Hawkins retired Feb. 14, just a few months shy of 42 years in service to the co-op. He worked 16 years with the underground crew before starting to work in the meter shop. After several years, he started going out in the field. The journeyman field meter repre-

sentative spent most of his time on the west side of the service area. He was instrumental in the creation of the state's first meter apprentice program. The OU Sooner fan is looking forward to spending time with his family and time to sit quietly with a few good books.



When Ronnie Jones turned in his keys to the Chattanooga warehouse at the end of March, he had spent exactly 40 years on the Cotton Electric payroll. He spent his entire career as a lineman in the Chattanooga district, right where he wanted to be, doing the job he wanted to do. He'll spend his retirement doing what he wants to do, which probably involves a fishing pole and a grandson or two.

Baby Boomer? Don't Let Retirement Plans Go Bust

If you're a baby boomer, you're at the point in life where, if you haven't actually entered retirement, you're at least approaching the outskirts. But if you're like many of your fellow boomers, you may be experiencing more than a little trepidation over your financial prospects as a retiree. That's why it's so important for you to determine what steps to take to help improve your chances of enjoying a comfortable retirement.

Just how worried are baby boomers about their future? Consider these numbers: Seventy-two percent of non-retired boomers think they will probably be forced to delay retirement, and 50% have little confidence that they will ever be able to retire, according to a recent AARP survey. Other surveys show a similarly bleak outlook among the baby boom generation.

Fortunately, when it comes to build-

ing resources for retirement, you have options. Of course, if you're in one of the younger age cohorts of the baby boom generation, your possibilities are greater — you may still have time to take measures such as boosting your 401(k) and IRA contributions, reducing your debts and positioning your portfolio to provide you with a reasonable amount of growth potential.

But even if you are pretty close to retirement, or at least close to the point where you initially expected to retire, you can act to better your outcome. For one thing, you could re-evaluate your planned date of retirement. If you really don't mind your job and could extend your working life for even a couple of years, you could help yourself enormously in at least three ways:

- You'll add on to your retirement accounts. The longer you work, the more

you can contribute to your IRA and your 401(k) or other employers-sponsored account.

- You may be able to delay taking Social Security. You can start taking Social Security as early as age 62, but your benefits will be permanently reduced unless you wait until your Full Retirement Age (FRA), which will likely be 66 or 67. Your payments can increase if you delay taking your benefits beyond your Full Retirement Age, up to age 70.

- You may be able to delay tapping into your retirement vehicles. The longer you wait until you begin withdrawals from your IRA and 401(k), the more time you are giving these accounts to potentially grow. (Once you turn 70 ½, you will need to generally start taking withdrawals from a traditional IRA and a 401(k) or similar plan, but you don't face this requirement with a Roth 401(k) account.)

As an alternative to delaying your retirement — or possibly as an additional step you can take along with a delay — you may be able to adjust your investment mix to provide you with the combination of growth and income that can help carry you through your retirement years. You can also be strategic about which investments you start taking withdrawals from, possibly allowing your portfolio to grow more than you had envisioned.

Start thinking now about ways you can help yourself achieve the retirement lifestyle you've pictured. You may want to consult with a professional financial advisor who can suggest the strategies and techniques most appropriate for your situation. In any case, with some careful planning, you can be a boomer whose retirement plans don't go bust.

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Simple Savings

Put appliances in vacation mode before taking off

By Trent Marlett

June 2014 was pretty mild, which allowed us to enjoy being outdoors and keep our air-conditioner units from coming on so frequently. But, I wonder how long it will last.

As temperatures start to rise, some of us are planning to get away for a while. There are some little things we can do around the house to prepare our homes for summer vacation. Our house can save us money when we are gone.

We waste a lot of energy when we take vacations and leave our homes in the same condition as if we were still there. There is no need to keep a home cool if no one is there to benefit from it, and an unoccupied house doesn't need hot water.

By far, heating and cooling accounts for the most energy consumption in the home. The Department of Energy recommends setting our thermostats up to 80-plus degrees in the summer when we are going to be gone for three or more days.

It's never a good idea to completely turn off the HVAC system. We don't want the house to feel like a muggy swamp when we return.

Eighty degrees or higher may seem crazy, but the DOE recommends a setting of 78 when we are actually there. For every degree above 78, you can save up to 5 percent in energy costs.

Many programmable thermostats have a "vacation" mode that takes all the guesswork out of the equation. They can be programmed to cool the house right before you walk in the door, all refreshed from your vacation.

Another big energy consumer is the water heater. It's always a good practice to set your water heater to 120 degrees while you're home, but in the sum-



mer there is no harm in completely turning the thing off for a few days. Just throw the breaker and eliminate using energy to heat water when no one is there to use it.

Don't forget to deal with "vampire loads" before you leave. Take a walk around your house and unplug as many electric appliances as possible. Televisions, DVRs, phone chargers, coffee machines and game consoles all consume energy even when not in use.

Finally, some people like to leave indoor lights on to give the appearance that someone is home. The illusion works better when you place a lamp or two on timers. The timers are relatively cheap, \$10 to \$30.

If you prefer leaving a porch light on during a vacation, consider installing motion-detecting lights. Then lights will come on only when motion is detected, leaving intruders to wonder if someone is home.

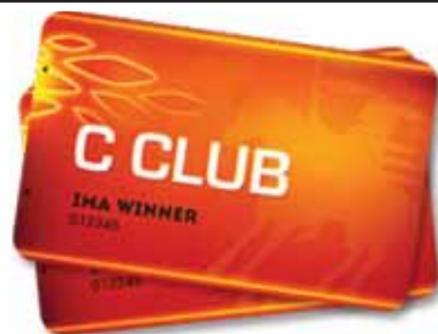
During the summer, it's nice to get away to cooler places, visit family, water parks, and maybe even an exotic beach, but if we leave our homes as if we were still there, we are wasting energy. Putting these tips into practice will allow us to enjoy the summer and not worry about energy use while we are gone.



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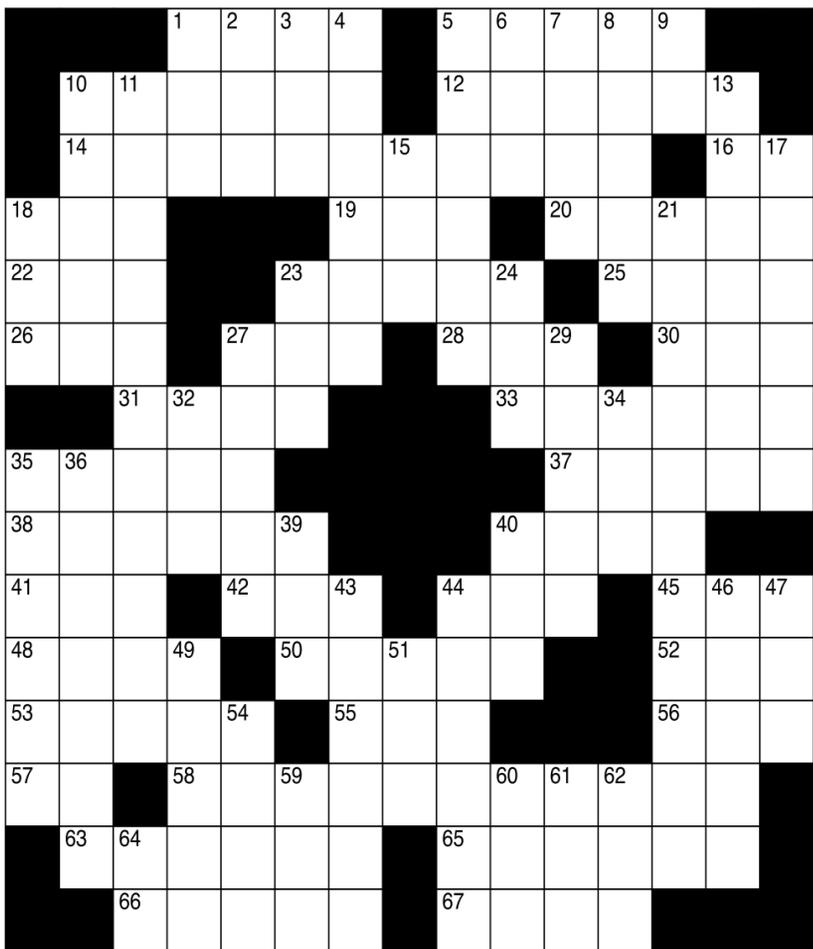
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ACROSS

- 1. Matakam
- 5. "Cat in the Hat" doctor
- 10. Norwegian sea inlets
- 12. Last (Spanish)
- 14. Ron Paul's party
- 16. E. Canadian province
- 18. Leg (slang)
- 19. Fit out
- 20. Czech Pres. Vaclav
- 22. Poorly lit
- 23. Satisfies
- 25. 9th Greek letter
- 26. Callaway on NYSE
- 27. 1/1000 inch
- 28. Chair position
- 30. Women's ___ movement
- 31. Roman = to Greek satyr
- 33. Cause to be senseless
- 35. Saudi peoples
- 37. Jazzman James
- 38. Coat of a mammal
- 40. Mailed
- 41. Complete
- 42. Atomic #105
- 44. Consume
- 45. Macaws
- 48. Seized
- 50. Dog-___: very worn
- 52. Confederate soldier
- 53. Lunar crater
- 55. Even golf score
- 56. 007 author Fleming
- 57. 36 inches (abbr.)
- 58. FOX late night host
- 63. Huck's friend Tom
- 65. Word derived from a name



- 66. Lonestar state
- 67. Popular beef BBQ

DOWN

- 1. Crowd together
- 2. They ___
- 3. 32nd President
- 4. Stellar
- 5. Rises rapidly
- 6. ___ Lilly, drug company
- 7. Where the Jazz play
- 8. Egyptian desert
- 9. Postgraduate engineering degree
- 10. Thrash
- 11. NBC late night host
- 13. A singular occurrence
- 15. Small island (British)
- 17. Lacking firmness
- 18. Haiti monetary unit (abbr.)
- 21. Done willingly
- 23. Moral transgression
- 24. Kin relation
- 27. Mulwi or Munjuk
- 29. 4th Jewish month
- 32. Camel or goat hair fabric
- 34. Negation of a word
- 35. Unemotionality
- 36. Recharges
- 39. East northeast
- 40. Melancholy
- 43. Scholarly compositions
- 44. Ghostlier
- 46. Kingdom
- 47. Airborne (abbr.)
- 49. Eurasian herb weed
- 51. Raced on foot
- 54. African antelope genus
- 59. Main
- 60. Nigerian instrument
- 61. Fireplace warming shelf
- 62. American coin society
- 64. Indicates position

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Conserving energy helps Cotton Electric Beat the Peak

Has Summer 2014 been hot enough for you?

It certainly has for Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), the generation and transmission cooperative owned by Cotton Electric Cooperative and 21 other member cooperatives – all demanding power.

Occasional rain during May and June totaling 4.33 inches has helped keep temperatures and power consumption levels from spiking. That may all change if July and August become the hot, dry days of a typical Oklahoma summer.

WFEC sets prices each year based on a five-year average of the summer peak demand from the co-ops it serves. The peak is determined by the peak period – 3 to 7 p.m. – on the top three days of demand from

June 21 to Sept. 9 each year.

Employees at WFEC keep a close eye on things as the daily load builds. On days that look to be peak days, an alert is issued before noon, so co-ops wishing to manage their load can do so between 3 and 7 p.m., when peak load calculations are made.

At Cotton Electric, a Beat the Peak program is in place as a way for co-op members to help manage the load. By signing up for the voluntary program, members can receive a text message, e-mail or both on days when a peak alert is issued.

Is Cotton Electric's Beat the Peak program working? Well, maybe.

WFEC keeps an hourly peak load history, which shows a steady increase in the high load every year since 2002, with the

exception of 2007. That mild summer saw a peak of 1370 megawatts compared to 1387 in 2006. It was still considerably higher than the peak of 1267 mW in 2005.

The interesting thing about the daily load numbers shown on the WFEC page is the hour immediately before the peak period, 3 to 7 p.m. The load is higher from 2 to 3 p.m. and drops a bit during the peak period.

Cotton Electric members participating in the Beat the Peak program can take some credit for that. Members wishing to join the effort can sign up at CottonElectric.com.

Together, we can Beat the Peak.

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Kids get more than food for thought at Waurika Public Library



Download CECF grant applications at cottonelectric.com.
 Deadline for third-quarter 2014 grant applications is Aug. 27.
 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.

By Karen Kaley

Summer reading programs can be noisy and colorful and full of life, just like the public libraries offering them. They are designed to nourish the mind, but the program at Waurika Public Library also nourishes the body.

"Libraries all over the nation take part in summer reading programming for children," librarian Amy Watkins explained.

"The programs vary from one library to another, adapted to meet the size of the library, budget available and the needs of the public they serve."

Watkins said the summer program at Waurika Public Library began to grow about four years ago.

"Community volunteers were bringing snacks for the once-weekly programming. They noticed many of the kids were asking for more, asking for seconds, and asking to take food home.

"They were really hungry."

Those volunteers decided the community needed more than once a week programming and more than occasional crackers or fruit. They felt Waurika would be better served with a summer reading program that ran Monday through Friday and offered a simple lunch.

It was a good idea with lots of challenges. Waurika Public Library has a staff of one and a half, and limited resources. It needed some friends.

"Putting on a program like this takes manpower and a budget. Incorporating food and expanding the program took some thought and plan-

ning but the Friends of Waurika Public Library made it happen," Watkins said.

The Friends come from across the community. Many are women in the local GFWC Sorosis Club, which recently won a national award for their role in expanding the summer reading program.

Watkins said Waurika businesses, churches and other organizations are Friends of the Library, too.

"This is a big thing for a community our size. It takes the entire community to run it.

"We may be offering simple meals, but feeding this many kids can add up."

The number of meals served is a testament to the success of the expanded program. The daily average was 40 in 2013, the first summer the meals were offered. The next summer saw a daily average of 60, and Watkins said the number for 2014 looks to be 80.

The increase has meant looking for more resources. One of the newest Friends of Waurika Public Library is Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation. Using funds collected through Operation Round Up, CECF issued a \$2,000 grant to help with the cost of food.

The reading program runs from 10 a.m. to noon, with the meals served during the last half hour.

"Some kids get here earlier and stay later. We are a public library and happy to have them here," Watkins said.

"We encourage them to spend a lot of time with books," she said, so the sessions begin with DEAR (Drop Everything And Read) time or



Tallin Mora is one of the many children who enjoy the summer reading program at Waurika Public Library. Her favorite part of a recent lunch was the watermelon. Tallin, 10, is the daughter of Cotton Electric members Shelly and Guy Mora.

library time. A weekly theme is discussed during Word Wall, and the librarian or a volunteer may read related stories aloud. The theme is carried out with a science or art craft activity or perhaps a guest speaker. There is an outdoor activity right before lunch is served.

Meals follow a schedule with grilled cheese sandwiches or chicken noodle soup on

Mondays, and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches on Tuesday. Fruit and vegetables are offered every day along with a simple dessert of cookies or brownies.

On Wednesdays, Waurika Quik Mart donates pizzas. Thursday is hot dogs.

Volunteers do all the cooking, with some bringing their grills to the library to cook up Friday's hamburgers.

Watkins said the volunteers are essential.

"When other librarians call to ask how we've made this work, I tell them part of our success is because we live in an amazing community. That may sound corny, but when it comes to feeding children, people in Waurika are on board.

"We've been really lucky and blessed."

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You may rest assured that I have Cotton County's best interests as heart. I hope my contributions will continue to have a positive outcome.

Thank you for your support and confidence in me as a leader for Cotton County District #1. I am looking forward to another four years!

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Record breaker

114 turn out for CECF benefit tourney

Gusty winds and temperatures in the 90s made for a challenging outing when 114 golfers turned out for the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation Summer Classic on June 30 at The Territory Golf and Country Club in Duncan.

The sixth year for the event drew a record 30 teams that were divided into two flights.

The team of Judd Davidson, Bryce Hooper, Chuck Siess and Jacob Robertson, representing JH Davidson and Associates, placed first with a score of 55 in the Championship Flight.

The team of Darrin Beller, Jason Hendrix, Seth Dehart and Mark Dehart, representing Air Products Supply Company of Oklahoma City, was second in the flight with a score of 56.

Two strokes behind, the team of Vernon Griffin, Ron Nieto, Will Owens and Brian Wahnee had a score of 58, putting the Comanche Nation team at third in the Championship Flight.

Scorecard playoffs were used to determine the top three placings in the "A" Flight. Each team had an overall score of 64. First place in "A" Flight went to a second Comanche Nation team of Gary Tahmahkera, George Red Elk and Fred Codynah.

Second place in "A" Flight was awarded to the Texas Meter and Device team composed of Sam Gonzales, Cody Pennington, Jason Red Elk and Josh Belcher. Third place in "A" Flight went to the team of Jan McKown, Quaid Ogletree, Popcorn Gwoompi and Doyle Cain.

Closest to pin awards went to Jerry Gregston on the fourth hole; Matt Best, eighth hole; Jack Gregston, 13th hole; and Bill Coleman, 17th hole.



Download CECF grant applications at CottonElectric.com.

Since its inception in 2004, CECF has issued grants to a variety of groups:

VFD	\$216,34800
Community	152,981.55
Youth	107,773.11
Services	81,196.55
Schools	83,666.26
Individuals	47,750.00
Public Safety	41,799.00
Seniors	28,849.00
Grand Total	\$760,363.47

Deadline for third-quarter 2014 grant applications is Aug. 27

Seth DeHart won the men's longest drive on Number 10. Corinne Denny of the Kiowa Casino team won the ladies' longest drive on the 10th hole.

"We would like to express our appreciation to the players who took time to support this great cause and to the hole sponsors and contributors who continue to help make the tournament a success," said Bryce Hooper, director of marketing and economic development for Cotton Electric.

"We would also like to thank Tim Johnson and his staff at The Territory for having the course in excellent shape and always going out of their way to take care of our tournament participants," Hooper said.

With a record number of participants in the 2014 tournament, proceeds are expected to exceed \$11,000. Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation will distribute proceeds to organizations and individuals in need.

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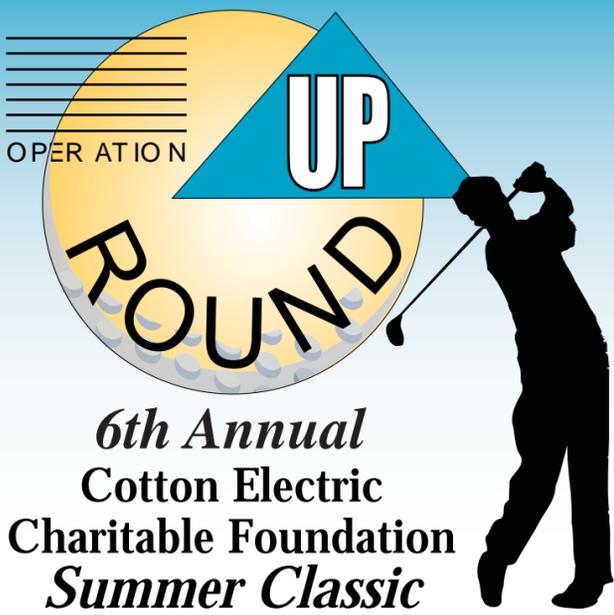
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The team of Chuck Siess, left, Bryce Hooper, Judd Davidson and Jacob Robertson, representing JH Davidson and Associates, placed first with a score of 55 in the Championship Flight of the CECF Summer Classic.



The team of Jason Hendrix, left, Mark Dehart, Seth Dehart and Darrin Beller, representing Air Products Supply Co., was runner up in the Championship Flight of the sixth annual CECF Summer Classic.



The team of George Red Elk, Fred Codynah and Gary Tahmahkera, representing the Comanche Nation, tied for first with a score of 64 and won the scorecard playoff in the "A" Flight of the sixth annual Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation Summer Classic.



Representing Texas Meter and Device, Jason Red Elk, Cody Pennington, Sam Gonzales, and Josh Belcher placed second in the "A" Flight of the CECF Summer Classic



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It is possible to consume too many vitamins and minerals

Food fortification is prolific to the point that the farther removed the food item is from its natural state, the more likely it has been subjected to some type of fortification. Orange juice is commonly fortified with calcium and folic acid. Cereal bars, granola bars, and energy bars are practically edible multi-vitamins.

A report released in June by the Environmental Working Group (www.ewg.org) calls into question the safety of three nutrients commonly added to foods consumed by children: Vitamin A, zinc, and niacin.

Should parents be concerned?

Vitamin A, zinc, and niacin certainly can have negative side effects if consumed in excessive quantities to the point that your natural bodily processes cannot compensate.

The report accurately points out a disconnect between current labeling practices and current intake recommendations for adults and children, and makes salient suggestions on



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT

how to close the gap at the public policy level.

But how should we as individuals react? Before tossing all the fortified foods in your house, consider these questions:

- Do your children take a multivitamin every day?

•How much of the fortified foods do your children eat every day?

•Do the fortified foods contain more than 25 percent of the nutrients of concern?

If your children take a multivitamin every day, you should consider taking a look at the fortified foods in their diet. The most common culprits are breakfast cereals and bars, according to the EWG report, but any packaged food, including bread, may be fortified with additional nutrients.

For those foods your children eat almost daily, review the nutrient label and ingredient list. If any vitamins or minerals are greater than 25 percent of the daily value – and it does not specify if this is adult or child daily value – you may need to make some changes.

You can reduce the frequency of taking the multivitamin or reduce the frequency of consuming the fortified food. For example, on days that your children eat the fortified cereal, skip the multi-vitamin.

You could also look for other brands of similar food items that do not fortify with extra vitamins and minerals.

What about adults? The same thought process can apply, although there is less danger of consuming excessive amounts because the nutrient labels are generally set for adults and not children.

If you take a multivitamin daily and you eat fortified foods daily, you are probably consuming more than the recommended amount of certain vitamins and minerals.

Sometimes, adults have been declared deficient in certain nutrients and are being prescribed increased intake of those nutrients via supplements or fortified foods. How many women have been prescribed calcium and Vitamin D supplements? How many men have been told to consume more folic acid for heart health?

Reading labels and varying your diet are key to avoiding overconsumption of vitamins and minerals.

Top summertime oatmeal with something unexpected

(Family Features) If you think of oatmeal as old fashioned, it's time to think again. Whole grain oats are one of the most versatile breakfast staples and provide a perfect blank slate for this summer's seasonal ingredients.

Most produce is at its best during the summer months; fruits like cherries, raspberries and nectarines or vegetables like corn, tomatoes and zucchini are great additions to turn oatmeal from a typical winter dish into a fresh, summer treat.

"It's amazing how toppings found at the grocery store or farmers market can transform a traditional bowl of oatmeal into a culinary delight," says Sam Stephens, owner of OatMeals, the world's first oatmeal bar, which opened its doors in New York City in 2012.

"Ingredients like fresh figs and blueberries or even tomatoes and basil can help boost the dish's flavor to the next

level and change the way we typically enjoy oatmeal."

As Creative Oatmeal Officer, Stephens has partnered with Quaker to help nourish families in New York City and across the country with creative tips and innovative recipes filled with delicious flavors. She discovered her love for all things oatmeal in college and since then has devoted her life to sharing her passion, creativity and appreciation of oatmeal with everyone. Two of her favorite summer recipes can be found below.

In fact, oatmeal shouldn't be limited to just the breakfast table. It can be a healthy, budget-friendly option for families also looking for delicious snack, lunch or dinner options. There are numerous ways to use simple ingredients to create both savory and sweet dishes for the whole family. Visit www.oatmealchefsam.com for more inspiration.



Red Fruit Trio Oatmeal

Drizzle of honey

Servings: 1

- 1/2 cup Quaker Oats (quick or old fashioned)
- 2 tablespoons diced strawberries
- 4-5 fresh raspberries
- 3 pitted and halved fresh cherries (or 1 tablespoon dried cherries)

Prepare oatmeal as directed. Top with fruit, drizzle with honey and enjoy. Also try adding 2 teaspoons of dried currants or dried cranberries to create a more flavorful red fruit experience.

Steel Cut Oatmeal with Sweet Corn, Tomato & Pancetta

Servings: 4

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 1/2 cup diced pancetta (or bacon, prosciutto or ham)
 - 2 cups corn (approximately 3 ears, fresh or frozen and thawed)
 - 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
 - 1 tablespoon butter
 - 2 diced whole small shallots (optional)
 - 2 diced whole garlic cloves (optional)
 - 1 cup Quaker Steel Cut Oats
 - 4 cup low sodium chicken stock
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
Grated Pecorino or Asiago cheese

In large saute pan, heat olive oil at medium heat. Add pancetta, corn and cherry tomatoes, and cook for five minutes. Remove mixture from pan and place in bowl; set aside.

In same pan, add butter, shallots and garlic, and cook for two minutes at medium heat. Add steel cut oats and stir continuously for two to three minutes, until lightly toasted, golden and fragrant. Add chicken stock and stir to combine.

Cover pan and reduce heat to low. Simmer for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until oats are al dente. Add pancetta, corn and tomato mixture to the cooked oats and stir to combine. Season with black pepper to taste and top with grated Pecorino cheese.

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