

# The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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

VOLUME 59

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NUMBER 8

## Cotton Electric membership honored at gala

By Karen Kaley

Cotton Electric members, please read this next sentence out loud: “I am a member-owner of Cotton Electric, an award-winning cooperative.”

That sounded great! We are so proud of you.

Cotton Electric Cooperative’s members were recognized for their generosity during the Excellence in Leadership Gala held Feb. 27 in Oklahoma City. Presented by Leadership Oklahoma (LOK), the event recognizes and honors organizations and individuals that make a meaningful difference in Oklahoma.

LOK presents four awards annually. Cotton Electric Cooperative joins an impressive list of businesses as the 18th recipient of the Business Leadership Award.

The Business Leadership Award commends an entity for its impact in promoting leadership principles and practices, implementing programs worthy of example, and fostering the growth of quality leadership.

Cotton Electric’s membership is well-deserving of the award.

“Improving the quality of life for our members is the focus of this electric cooperative,” CEO Jennifer Meason said during the awards portion of the gala.

While accepting the award on behalf of the membership, she spoke of the co-op’s beginnings. She told the gathering about a group of individuals who felt there was a need for power in rural communities. They banded together, embraced a set of guiding principles and formed Cotton Electric Cooperative in 1938.

The strength of those early co-op members was in their determination, and their success was in their numbers.

The principle of concern for communities remains a driving force for Cotton Electric. Co-op members have banded together to make a financial commitment to improving the quality of life in southwest Oklahoma. The significant numbers supporting that idea has had a powerful and far-reaching effect.

In 2004, the majority of Cotton Electric members agreed to have their monthly power bill rounded up to the nearest dollar. Each month, some contribute as little as a penny and some as much as 99 cents, all pooled into the Operation Round Up (ORU) fund.

The small individual contributions made by more than 12,000 members add up. As a group, the membership sets aside more than \$6,000 each month.

The five Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) directors meet quarterly to consider grant applications from a variety of community organizations and individuals across the service area. Since its inception, the foundation has issued nearly 400 grants for a total of more than \$907,000.

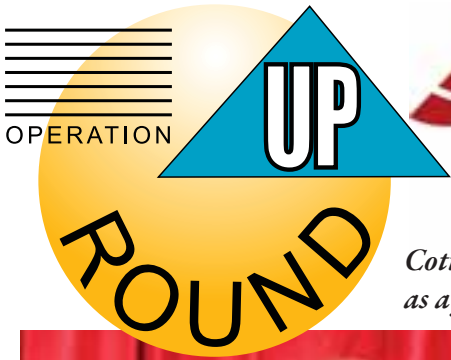
“That’s a huge impact,” Meason said. “We can’t do that individually, but when we come together through an organization like Cotton Electric and Operation Round Up, we make a difference.

“I am honored to accept this award on behalf of the members of Cotton Electric. The ORU program is successful because of their kindness and generosity and is a true testament to the power of cooperation.

“These programs make it possible for the co-op to go beyond the meter, to take one more step toward improving the quality of life for the members we serve every day.”

Cotton Electric’s members have now been recognized twice on a state level for generously funding ORU to support organizations and individuals in the service area with grants from CECF. In 2013, the Beacon Award, sponsored by the Journal-Record in Oklahoma City, acknowledged the cooperative’s role in supporting nonprofit programs that help Oklahomans in need.

Other presentations at the 2016 Leadership Oklahoma gala were the Statewide Community Award for the George Kaiser Family Foundation; the Distinguished Graduate Award



Cotton Electric’s successful Operation Round Up program was cited as a factor for recognition by Leadership Oklahoma.



Former CEO Warren Langford introduced Cotton Electric Cooperative and current CEO Jennifer Meason during the Excellence in Leadership Gala.



Honorees at the Excellence in Leadership Gala included, from left, Burns Hargis, Lifetime Achievement; Cotton Electric Cooperative, represented by CEO Jennifer Meason, Business Leadership; Don Betz, Distinguished Graduate; and George Kaiser Family Foundation, represented by Executive Director Ken Levit, Statewide Community. Leadership Oklahoma sponsors the annual awards.

for Don Betz, president of the University of Central Oklahoma; and the Lifetime Achievement Award for Burns Hargis, president of Oklahoma State University.

Cotton Electric is in fine company. Past recipients of the

Business Leadership Award include Wymer Brownlee, Phillips Petroleum Company, Sonic, AT&T, Devon Energy, Quik Trip and Pioneer Telephone Cooperative, to name just a few.

Now, please read one more sentence out loud: “Cotton

Electric is an award-winning cooperative because of me and my fellow member-owners. Our small contributions have improved the quality of life in southwest Oklahoma.”

Congratulations on your award. You deserve it.

### Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after March 1, 2016, is (\$0.01054) per kWh.

On a member’s average bill of 1500 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a credit of \$15.81 on the March bill.

### February 2016 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	68	36	52	16	64	35	50
2	54	37	46	17	72	29	51
3	47	24	36	18	81	41	61
4	51	20	36	19	79	45	62
5	57	25	41	20	84	51	68
6	54	33	44	21	65	50	58
7	63	22	43	22	65	37	51
8	56	30	43	23	47	43	45
9	60	28	44	24	62	36	49
10	79	24	52	25	53	29	41
11	67	37	52	26	62	23	43
12	67	30	49	27	72	30	51
13	64	31	48	28	77	42	60
14	60	42	51	29	77	36	57
15	69	37	53				

Source: sth.noaa.gov/om/

Average Daily High: 65 Average Daily Low: 34

### Did You Know?

Cotton Electric members can use SmartHub to monitor daily energy consumption. SmartHub is accessible at our website, CottonElectric.com, or via a free app for your smart phone.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on April 11, 2016.

### 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](mailto: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 <a href="http://cottonelectric.com">cottonelectric.com</a>	



From the CEO

Co-op impacts schools in many ways

We’ve all seen the recent headlines regarding Oklahoma’s economy and budget shortfalls and know of friends, loved ones and businesses affected by the economic downturn. As I write this column, the morning news announced an additional 7 percent reduction in state spending for the current year, on top of the 3 percent announced in January.

It is a challenging time for Oklahoma and, in light of the current fiscal situation, schools and taxes have been the topics of much discussion. Supporting our area schools has always been a priority of Cotton Electric Cooperative. It is our privilege to provide educational presentations, sponsorships and assistance when needed.

As a member of Cotton Electric, you make a substantial impact on local schools in several ways. Electric cooperatives in Oklahoma are levied a 2



Jennifer Meason, CEO

percent gross receipts tax on the revenue at both the wholesale and retail level in lieu of an ad valorem tax. Although we typically view taxes in a negative light, this tax in particular makes a significant positive impact.

When you pay your electric bill, the Cooperative remits the 2 percent gross receipts tax to the state, and 95 percent of those funds go directly back to local school districts. Last year, \$2,806,574.33 was apportioned back to the 31 school districts in our service area.

On a percentage basis, electric cooperatives contribute more tax dollars to local school districts than other utilities. For example, investor-owned utilities pay

2015 Gross Receipts Tax by School Districts					
District	Cotton & WFEC Taxes	Cotton miles of line	Frederick Geronimo	\$57,362.57	9.07
Apache	\$32,693.81	1.21	Grandfield	\$47,205.89	194.83
Big Pasture	\$57,689.89	238.10	Grandview	\$49,149.52	113.59
Bishop	\$278.64	1.15	Indiahoma	\$64,355.01	146.63
Bray	\$87,289.11	134.93	Lawton	\$42,006.58	122.54
Cache	\$114,427.33	296.65	Marlow	\$56,718.30	234.09
Central	\$92,230.57	237.66	Ringling	\$83,527.74	24.67
Chattanooga	\$193,660.02	333.31	Rush Springs	\$128,154.38	149.98
Comanche	\$209,885.37	309.45	Ryan	\$40,790.81	119.98
Davidson	\$22,477.90	33.45	Sterling	\$64,052.23	166.83
Duncan	\$85,063.57	193.11	Temple	\$58,564.14	230.76
Elgin	\$125,709.83	312.27	Terral	\$16,853.88	69.56
Empire	\$83,735.51	238.46	Velma	\$288,729.30	510.07
Fletcher	\$51,113.53	26.96	Walters	\$189,031.42	299.46
Flower Mound	\$351.32	1.45	Waurika	\$100,066.86	235.37
Fox	4,196.51	\$17.32			
Totals:				2,498,218.86	5,166.63

ad valorem taxes instead of gross receipts tax, and only 58 percent of these tax monies go to school districts within which investor-owned utilities own property. Municipal utilities contribute no tax money to public schools.

As a participant in our Operation Round Up program, you have helped to contribute \$907,382.54 to our communities, of which \$115,818.10 has been granted to our area schools

since 2004. Our area has benefitted greatly from the Operation Round Up program, and we thank you, our members, for supporting the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation.

Your generosity has not gone unnoticed. Cotton Electric Cooperative was recently awarded Leadership Oklahoma’s Business Leadership Award for the Operation Round Up program. See the front page for more information.

There are challenging times ahead. As your member-owned electric cooperative, we remain dedicated to improving the quality of life in southwest Oklahoma. I encourage you to make your voice heard this legislative session. As we’ve seen with our Operation Round Up program, we may be limited in what we can accomplish individually but together we can make a difference.

Your cooperative will always have a local focus

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

In 2012, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the premier trade association representing approximately 900 electric cooperatives in 47 states, released a report entitled, “The Electric Cooperative Purpose - A Compass for the 21st Century.” The findings of the blue ribbon task force comprised of a dozen co-op leaders from across the country were that an electric cooperative’s purpose is to, “Power communities and empower members to improve the quality of their lives.”

Cotton Electric Cooperative is a member of NRECA and firmly believes that you, our members, need to be at the heart of everything we do. We are proud of the fact that we are different from investor-owned utilities such as the ones that serve larger cities in Oklahoma,

where the primary purpose is to generate profit for their stockholders. Many of those stockholders don’t live in the communities served by the utility. While Cotton Electric must of course generate enough revenue to cover our costs, profit is not our primary motive. Serving you and your neighbors is our number one priority.

As the Electric Cooperative Purpose report noted, “Our story is about ordinary people who banded together to improve the quality of life by providing electricity to our community when no one else would do it.” But that was 78

years ago. As we look to the future, we once again need your active participation in determining the future of our co-op.

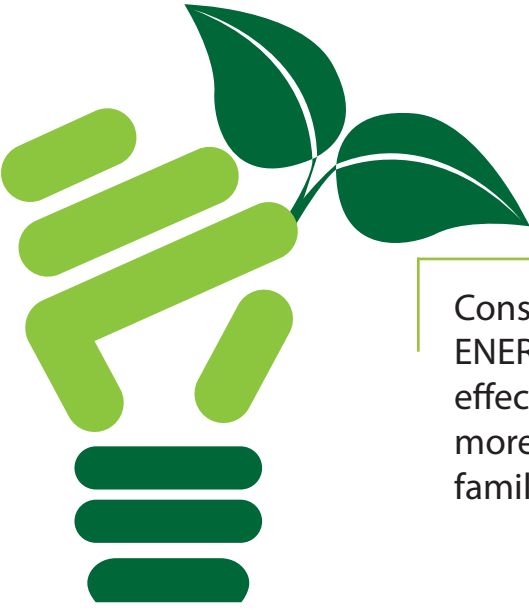
Cooperatives enjoy the support of people from all walks of life. We operate in every type of business from agriculture, housing, finance, health care, technology, small business, food and many more. Co-ops can be found in the most rural to the most urban areas.

Cotton Electric welcomes your input on what we can do to ensure we are meeting your needs. Talk to us at District Meetings in late summer or during the Annual Meeting this September. If

you can’t make a meeting, there are many other ways to contact us. Call us at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520. Send us an email at [info@cottonelectric.com](mailto:info@cottonelectric.com).

One thing you can absolutely count on from your locally owned electric co-op: We will never be moving to Mexico or China like you hear of so many other companies doing. We will always be local – right here and ready to serve our members.

*Adam Schwartz is the founder of The Cooperative Way a consulting firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op. You can follow him on Twitter @adamcooperative or email him at [aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop](mailto:aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop)*



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Consider purchasing rechargeable batteries – and an ENERGY STAR charger for them – which are more cost effective than disposable batteries. In the U.S. alone, more energy-efficient battery chargers could save families more than \$170 million annually.


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



**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.

January 2016 Operating Stats		
	2016	2015
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$5,821,540	\$6,680,614
Cost of Purchased Power	3,749,233	4,692,639
Taxes	101,944	131,808
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,037	1,200
Average Farm and Residential Bill	173	192
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,715	1,846
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,219	18,221
Miles Energized	5,151	5,152
Density Per Mile	3.54	3.54
New Service Connects YTD	12	13
Services Retired	4	9

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# Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the April issue, please submit information by March 30 by calling 580-875-4259 or send an email to [info@cottonelectric.com](mailto:info@cottonelectric.com).

## AARP offers free tax prep assistance

AARP offers free tax assistance and preparation for taxpayers with low to moderate income on a first-come, first-served basis through the tax due date of April 15 at several locations in the Cotton Electric service area.

No appointment is necessary but certain documents are. Taxpayers should take last year’s income tax return, all W-2 and 1099 forms, information about any other income, adjustment and deduction documents, Social Security cards for each person on a return, and property taxes if he or she plans to itemize.

Trained IRS volunteers will be available from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays, and from noon to 4 p.m. Wednesdays at the Center for Creative Living, 3501 Dr. Elsie Hamm Drive, Lawton.

Volunteers will be on hand from 4 to 7 p.m. Mondays, 1 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursdays at Lawton Public Library, 110 SW 4th Street.

The free service is available from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the Duncan Public Library Annex, 2211 N. U.S. Highway 81.

## Passion play set for Saturdays

“The Prince of Peace” Passion play begins at 8:30 p.m. March 19 and 26 at the Holy City of the Wichitas in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. The performance is expected to end around 10:45 p.m., and is broadcast on 88.5 FM.

Admission to the nation’s longest-running Easter Passion play is free. For information, visit [TheHolyCityLawton.com](http://TheHolyCityLawton.com) or send an email to [TheHolyCityLawton@yahoo.com](mailto:TheHolyCityLawton@yahoo.com).

## MP hosts ParkStomp March 18-20

ParkStomp is three days of live bluegrass music in Medicine Park.

First acts perform on March 18. Performance by Tyler Gregory begins at 7 p.m. The Squarshers follow at 9, and Calamity Cubes take the stage at 11.

Music on the main stage begins at noon March 19. Entertainers include Sugar Britches, Tyler Gregory, Dance Monkey Dance, The Squarshers, Chucky Waggs and Dirtfoot.

Final performances begin at noon March 20 on the main stage. Acts include Opal Agafia and the Sweet Nothings, Dance Monkey Dance, Steamaboat Bandits and Von Stomper.

Visit [MedicinePark.com](http://MedicinePark.com) for more information.

## Home, garden show begins Mar. 18

Find practical home improvement ideas and visit professional home and garden service providers during Lawton Home Builders 52nd annual Home and Garden Show.

Doors will be open from 5 to 8 p.m. March 18, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. March 19, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 20 in the Great Plains Coliseum and Annex. Admission is free.

## Heart to Heart spring sale returns

Children outgrow clothes and equipment quickly. Replacements can be expensive. That’s where the Heart to Heart Consignment Bazaar comes in. The spring sale will be March 31 through April 2 at Stephens County fairgrounds.

The semi-annual event is a great place to buy and sell gently used items while supporting a cause. Consignors can find

information about selling items at [HannahsHearts.org](http://HannahsHearts.org).

A portion of sale proceeds goes to Hannahs Hearts, an organization established to help families with children in health crisis.

## JBF set for April 1-3

Just Between Friends is recycling at its best. Buy or sell gently used children’s and maternity items at the spring sale April 1-3 at Comanche County Fairgrounds, 920 S. Sheridan Road, Lawton.

Cotton Electric members presenting a Co-op Connections Card are admitted free and can get \$5 off purchases of \$25 or more.

For details about signing up to participate as a consignor, team helper or shopper, visit <http://lawton.jbfsale.com/homeView.jsp>.

## LCT presents ‘Catfish Moon’

Performances of Lawton Community Theatre’s presentation of “Catfish Moon” are set for April 1-3 and 7-10 at John Denney Playhouse, 1316 NW Bell Avenue in Lawton.

“Catfish Moon” will be LCT’s OCTA Festival submission. It is a comedy featuring old friends meeting for a fishing trip on a favorite old pier. The friends discover that true friendship is too important to let slip away.

For information, visit [LCT-OK.org](http://LCT-OK.org) or call 580-355-1600.

## CTAC Live hosting Cimarrón

CTAC Live presents the rousing world music of Cimarrón at 7:30 p.m. April 15 at the Simmons Center in Duncan.

From the cattle-rearing Llanos Orientales, region of Colombia, Cimarrón performs the festive dance music of ‘joropo’, a fierce virtuoso display of rippling melodies and powerful rhythms combining Andalusian, Indigenous Indian and African roots. The musical fireworks created by harp, bandola, cuatro, bass, cajon, tambora, maracas and high-pitched voices are simply breathtaking.

For information and ticket purchases, visit [ChisholmTrailArts.com](http://ChisholmTrailArts.com).

## Magic Lantern screens classic films

Magic Lantern Film Society of Cameron University screens DVD presentations of classic films in the CETES Conference Center, Room B.

The April 15 offering will be Alfred Hitchcock’s “Notorious,” the story of a notorious woman attempting to gain the confidence of a Nazi in order to aid the U.S. government.

The 1946 film features Cary Grant, Ingrid Bergman and Claude Rains in starring roles.

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](http://Cameron.edu/magiclantern).

## Open house features model railroads


All aboard for the spring open house of the Lawton Model Railroad Association. Young and old will want to see the new layout and learn about running model trains from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 16 at 1711 D Avenue, Lawton. Parking is at the rear of the building.

For information, call Chuck at 580-591-3004.

## CU offers ‘Pajama Game’

Cameron University’s Department of Theatre Arts is offering a spring production of “The Pajama Game,” which deals with labor troubles in a pajama factory, where workers’ demands for a seven-and-a-half-cent raise are going unheeded. In the midst of this ordeal, love blossoms

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Cotton Electric member Kara Hillman submitted this photo in our Oklahoma! contest. She said, “Oklahoma has some of the most beautiful sunsets I have ever seen. I try to photograph them when I can catch the fantastic array of colors.”

Enter your “best shot” in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for April is Gone Fishin.’ Entries can be emailed to [info@cottonelectric.com](mailto: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.

between Babe, the grievance committee head, and Sid, the new factory superintendent.

Performances will be at 7:30 p.m. April 21-23 and 2 p.m. April 24.

All performances will be in Cameron University Theatre, located in the northeast quadrant of the campus between University Drive and 27th Street in Lawton.

## Main Street Duncan hosts cruise

Cruising down Main Street in Duncan is just part of the fun planned for the ninth annual Cruisin’ the Chisholm Trail Car Show set for April 15 and 16. Rain dates are April 22 and 23.

Tailgate parties and a burnout competition are set for Friday night beginning at 6 p.m.

Festivities continue Saturday with live music from 11a.m. to 3 p.m. There will

be a poker run with cash prizes for the high and low hands. Car entry judging begins at 11 a.m., and trophies will be presented at 3 p.m.

For information, call Main Street Duncan at 580-252-8696.


## Arts, Crafts Fest set for April 23

Cotton County Art Council will host its annual Arts and Crafts Festival April 23 at the Comanche National Community Center east of Walters. There will be cash awards for craft and fine-art exhibitors.

Visitors can register for a Visa gift card door prize, purchase Indian tacos and finish up with one of the desserts offered by Walters Senior Citizens Center.


Information and entry forms are available on the Cotton County Art Council’s Facebook page or by emailing [calfinator@yahoo.com](mailto:calfinator@yahoo.com).

TOUCHSTONEENERGY.COM





ALL OF OUR LINES ARE MEMBER SERVICE LINES.

Some deliver electricity. Others deliver information. All must deliver on Cotton Electric Cooperative’s mission: to provide you with service that’s just as dependable as the energy you count on us for every day. Learn more about your locally owned and operated cooperative at [CottonElectric.com](http://CottonElectric.com).




YOUR SOURCE OF POWER. AND INFORMATION.





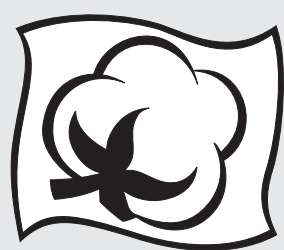
COTTON  
ELECTRIC CO-OP

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# Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

April		May		June	
Ad Sales	Mar. 28	Ad Sales	April 25	Ad Sales	May 31
Classified	Mar. 31	Classified	April 28	Classified	June 2
Publish Date	Apr. 11	Publish Date	May 9	Publish Date	June 13





## Departmental Spotlight

### Engineering

# A place for everything

*Engineers find the spot that serves members and the co-op best*

By Karen Kaley

There is nothing willy-nilly about the placement of more than 100,000 poles supporting around 5,150 miles of line throughout the eight counties Cotton Electric serves. It is more a matter of intelligent design.

There is some consideration about whether a line should follow a road and, if so, which side of the road. If there is no road, questions are asked such as whether a creek should be crossed or if pole holes can be dug in rocky terrain. A lot of thought goes into whether a pole should be this tall or that wide and should be placed here or there.

Whether building a new service or rearranging an existing one, the people who do most of the thinking about how to do it – the designers, so to speak – are the people in Cotton Electric's engineering department.

"We are the first Cotton Electric employees a person will meet if he or she is planning to build a new home or business," said Jeff Hart, supervisor of engineering service.

The process usually starts with Vikie Jeffrey. In addi-



*Cotton Electric's engineering department consists of, front row, from left, Vikie Jeffrey, work order clerk; Jeff Hart, supervisor of engineering services; and Talia Gammill, GIS specialist. Back row, Chace Penn, system engineer; David Break, Scott Crew and Larry Williams, staking engineers; and Mike Ottinger, vice president of operations.*

tion to maintaining records and generating numerous reports related to cost, materials and miles of line, the work order clerk schedules appointments for Hart and the three staking engineers, David Break, Scott Crew and Larry Williams.

The four are all former linemen. Hart said that is a big advantage.

"They have all built and maintained line. That experience comes into play when working with a member to determine the best way to build new line or to rearrange how line serves a location," Hart said.

Engineers visit each site in person. They listen to what a member has in mind. They look over the landscape, think about existing line and how new line can connect and be maintained easily. They explain what can be done, the conditions that must exist before it can be done, and discuss costs to the cooperative and to the member.

Once a plan and other requirements are in place, the staking engineers drive stakes to mark the path for power. They return to headquarters in Walters and use

computer software to map out the plan and prepare a material list for the job.

Hart makes a final inspection before the work order is sent to the warehouse and added to the list of jobs for the construction crew.

After construction, paperwork returns to the engineering department and lands on Talia Gammill's desk. The GIS specialist pulls the engineering design into the larger map of the Cotton Electric system. She and System Engineer Chace Penn work with data to create the most accurate and detailed depiction of the system as possible.

Penn said data about the system is gathered by line workers, too, and all is added to Gammill's map. In turn, Penn makes sure the map software integrates well with other co-op software used to manage outages and to produce accurate power bills.

In the end, the new or moved power line makes sense for the cooperative and for the member. It is a well-placed component of an intelligently designed power delivery system.

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# Call, text or PM: Crime Stoppers goes digital

By Karen Kaley

Crime Stoppers, a tried-and-true method of solving crimes, has adapted to the digital age. There’s an app, website and Facebook page for citizens wishing to remain anonymous while assisting law enforcement. There could even be a reward.

On the national level, Crime Stoppers has embraced TipSoft, a suite of computer products and web applications that help connect citizens and law enforcement. TipSoft collects information over a variety of platforms and directs it to the correct authority. If a tip leads to an arrest or the recovery of property, TipSoft helps determine the amount of a reward.

On a local level, chapters must provide their own portals to receive digital information and pay annual subscription fees to TipSoft. Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) has helped the Stephens County Crime Stoppers (SCCS) with those.

In the second quarter of 2014, CECF issued a \$1,100 grant to help with the initial TipSoft fee and to purchase new Crime Stoppers signage. New signs are going up all over the county, in some cases replacing old Neighborhood Watch signs.

In the fourth quarter of 2015, CECF issued a \$1,500 grant to SCCS to help with the cost of getting a locally dedicated website established.

The group is also launching a public awareness campaign to let people know how important the information is and how easy it is to provide tips about criminal information in modern ways. As always, tipsters can remain anonymous, even when claiming a reward.

CSSC has a stand-alone cellular phone that does not provide caller ID. Conversations are not recorded. It is answered round the clock and accepts text messages.

The number is 580-252-INFO (4636).

Tipsters receive a unique identification number and must provide a good phone number to be contacted later. That is the only way CSSC can let him or her know if a reward awaits at a local bank. All that is needed to claim the reward is the unique identification number.

Crime Stoppers of Stephens County also has a Facebook page featuring mugshots of people wanted by au-



*Stephens County Crime Stoppers (SCCS) is a recent Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation grant recipient. Among those who work with the group are, from left, Lt. David Woods of Duncan Police Department and SCCS board members Blaine Smith, President Clyde Shaw, Daisy Lawler and Anthony Foreman.*

thorities and requests for information in relation to certain crimes. Through the page, one can send a private message or click a link to TipSoft.com.

When the local website is up and running toward the end of April, it will also offer ways to submit a web tip, text a tip or provide information about downloading TipSubmit for Apple or Android products.

All of this is with one thing in mind. “We are here to help with solving crimes,” said Daisy Lawler, SCCS board member.

“We want to make the community a safer place,” said the Crime Stoppers board member and Cotton Electric member.

Does it work? “Without a doubt,” said Lt. David Woods, of the Duncan Police Department.

“Citizen involvement helps police do their job to a

greater extent than probably anybody will ever know,” he said.

In fact, the Stephens County chapter has been so successful during its 32 years that it has been recognized internationally twice for the number of cases solved and property recovered per capita.

CSSC accepts tips of any nature for any location and has paid out rewards in Jefferson and Cotton counties where no Crime Stoppers chapter is established.

Again, the number for the Stephens County chapter is 580-252-INFO (4636). Other chapters in the Cotton Electric service area are: Comanche Nation Crime Stoppers, text or call 580-492-TIPS (8477); Crimestoppers/Drugbusters of Southwest Oklahoma, 580-355-INFO (4636); and Grady County Crime Stoppers, 405-224-TIPS (8477).



## CECF announces first-quarter grants

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 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 Jenni-

fer Meason, the co-op’s CEO; Ronnie Bohot, president of the co-op’s board of trustees; and three representatives from the Cotton Electric service area: Carly Douglass, Danny Marlett and Carter Waid.

The board met in March to review nine grant applications. Grants totaling \$12,000 will be distributed to five of the applicants. First-quarter grants include:

- Boy Scouts of America: \$1,500 CECF grant to fund outreach units for at-risk youth in the Cotton Electric service area;
- Flower Mound School: \$2,000 CECF grant toward purchase of Pre-K

playground equipment;

- Marlow Samaritans: \$1,000 CECF grant to stock food pantry;
- Sugden VFD: \$5,000 CECF grant to complete construction of station addition; and
- Abundant Life Church: \$2,500 CECF grant to assist the family of a victim of a catastrophic accident.

CECF has awarded or pledged grants totaling \$907,382.54 since the foundation was established in 2004.

Applications for 2016 second-quarter grants are due by May 23. Downloadable applications are available at CottonElectric.com.

Download grant applications at [cottonelectric.com](http://cottonelectric.com).  
Deadline for second-quarter 2016 grant applications is May 23.

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.

### New requirement for school grants

Beginning with the second-quarter cycle, all applications for grants benefitting schools will require the signature of the school superintendent. This includes applications submitted by booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations and other school-related groups, teachers and principals. This requirement was established to ensure coordinated communication on projects that fit a school district’s priorities.

# Is Your ‘Financial Umbrella’ in Place?

April showers may bring May flowers, but March is National Umbrella Month. While ranking high on the list of truly obscure celebrations, this “Month” can still teach us a few things – especially if we think about “umbrellas” that can help us protect our financial goals.

Consider these key areas:

**Your vulnerability to emergencies** – It’s a good idea to maintain an emergency fund containing three to six months’ worth of living expenses. Without such a fund, you may need to dip into your long-term investments to pay for unexpected, and unexpectedly large, expenses such as a new furnace or a big bill from the doctor. You’ll want to keep your emergency fund in a liquid, low-risk account.

**Your family’s financial situation** – If something happened to you, how would your loved ones be affected? Would your

family be able to stay in your house? Could your children eventually go to college? Would your surviving spouse have enough retirement income to maintain the lifestyle he or she has envisioned? Having adequate life insurance in place can help ensure that all your hopes and plans don’t fall apart upon your passing. Different types of life insurance offer different features. For example, “term” insurance, as its name suggests, is designed to provide a death benefit for a certain number of years. On the other hand, “permanent” insurance, such as whole life or universal life, can be kept in force indefinitely. This type of coverage may also offer a cash value component.

**Your current income** – If an illness or injury keeps you out of work, even for a little while, the loss of income could disrupt your family’s ability to pay its bills,

leading to potentially big problems down the road. Your employer may offer some type of disability insurance as an employee benefit, but the coverage may be insufficient. So you may want to consider purchasing an individual disability policy.

**Your ability to live independently** – If you’re fortunate, you may never need to spend time in a nursing home or require any other type of long-term care. But no one can predict the future – and it pays to be prepared, because long-term care costs can be catastrophic. In fact, the annual average cost for a private room in a nursing home is more than \$90,000, according to the 2015 Cost of Care Survey produced by Genworth, a financial services company. A financial professional can help you find an appropriate way of paying for these types of costs.

**Your capacity to protect your big-**

**gest assets** – Your home is probably going to be the biggest asset you ever own – so you need to protect it properly, with adequate homeowners insurance. It’s also important to have sufficient insurance for your other major assets, such as your car, boat and so on.

**Your exposure to property loss or liability** – You may someday face costs associated with repairing or replacing your home, auto or boat, or even liability-related expenses. Additional liability insurance – known as an “umbrella” policy – is designed to kick in when your standard coverage on other policies, such as home or auto, has been exhausted.

The sun may be shining in your life today, but it’s always wise to be prepared for the proverbial “rainy day.” So have your umbrellas ready.

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(580)252-2952

Tanner L Cline

(580)252-9048

Lynn Bailey

(580)658-2704



# What to do when the lights go out



Electric service is one of your most dependable purchases.

Power interruptions are usually infrequent and brief, but there are times, due to weather and acts of nature, when your service will be interrupted.

When the power is off:

1. Check the fuses or circuit breakers in your service box panel. If necessary, replace any fuses or reset the circuit breakers. Remember to check the primary cartridge fuses in the fuse box or main circuit breaker.

2. If you have no power at all, check with nearby neighbors to see if they are without power. This will help determine if the trouble is caused by the transformer serving

you or if there is a line outage.

3. If you have not found the trouble, call Cotton Electric Cooperative. Be sure to give your name, location and account/service number.

A description of what you heard or saw that might be associated with the outage will help.

For all service outages, or if you are experiencing any other electrical problems, call 580-875-3351 (Walters local calling area) or 1-800-522-3520.

A local dispatcher is on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you have other questions regarding what to do when the power goes off, please call us.

## Be prepared for severe weather this spring

Spring can bring quite the array of weather-related dangers to the United States. Various parts of the country are at risk for tornadoes, floods, thunderstorms and lightning, hail, wildfires, and tsunamis during March, April, and May. Help your family stay safe this spring by knowing what types of hazardous weather affects your area, learning key safety steps, and making preparations.

The National Weather Service reports that in 2014 there were 333 weather-related deaths. The two deadliest months were March with 58 victims and April with 53 victims.

To prepare, put together supplies for an emergency kit. Your emergency preparedness kit should include items such as enough water and food for three days, flashlight, batteries, blankets, and a first aid kit. A full list of suggested items can be found at SafeElectricity.org.

Check the forecast and hazardous weather outlook regularly. Plan ahead so you do not get caught outside in a storm. Lightning can strike up to 10 miles from the area in which it is raining, even if you do not see clouds. If you can hear thunder, you are within striking distance.

If you are inside when a storm hits, stay inside. Keep away from windows and go to the lowest level of your home. If you do get caught outdoors during a storm and are unable to get into a safe building, take shelter in an enclosed vehicle with a hard-top roof—not an open-frame vehicle like a convertible.

If you are outside during a tornado and you cannot find shelter, do not take cover in a vehicle or under a highway overpass. Find a ditch or ravine, lie flat, and clasp your hands behind your head to protect yourself from flying debris.

Just because a severe storm ended, flood receded, or wildfire extinguished does not mean the danger has passed. A variety of hazards can be left behind.

Touching a downed line or anything it has fallen on, like a fence or a tree limb, could get you injured or even killed. Stay away, and instruct others to do the same. If you come across downed power lines, call 911 or 580-875-3351 immediately. During flooding, if there is any chance that flood waters could be energized from contact with electrical equipment inside or outside the home, do not enter the area.

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SELLING TRACTORS, TRUCKS, AUTOMOBILES, LIVESTOCK EQUIPMENT, FARM MACHINERY, COTTON TILLAGE & HARVESTING EQUIPMENT  
 Brink Auction Service will hold its 30th ANNUAL SPRING 2016 COMMUNITY AUCTION of Farm Equipment and Farm Related items. We invite you to let us turn YOUR equipment into CASH! If you or your neighbors have any items to sell, please contact us NOW!  
Located 1 mile South of Frederick on Hwy. 183  
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Auction Date: To Be Determined  
**TERMS OF THE AUCTION**  
• All Consignors will be charged a pro-rated share of the advertising expenses (based on dollar amount sold).  
• 6% per item over \$500 - 15% per item under \$500.  
• Please, no household related items.  
• Equipment hauling to sale site available.  
• Any items left on auction site for 30 days will be sold for storage and all proceeds retained by Brink Auction Service unless previous arrangements have been made.  
• Brink Auction Service assumes no liability on any item that has a title. If any litigation arises, Buyer and Seller assume all responsibility.  
**Whether you have a complete line-up of farm and ranch equipment, or a small offering, call us today. We will be glad to come to your farm or ranch, with no obligation, to advise you on the best way to market your equipment.**  
  
Terry H Brink, CAI Auctioneer  
580-335-4126  
PO Box 928 • Frederick, OK 73542  
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Website: www.brinkauction.com









Power leaves this dedicated sub in Stephens County on lines built and maintained by an oilfield company.

## 2 subs provide dedicated power to Stephens County oil, gas producers

Nearly every office, every warehouse and every computer used by a Cotton Electric employee has a map of the service area. Some maps are more detailed than others, but nearly all of them feature yellow circles with black trefoils marking the location of substations, or subs as they are called by employees.

The symbols represent 26 active subs, one inactive and one under construction. One can't help but notice that many of the markers are in Stephens County and that there is quite a concentration of them in the eastern portion of the county.

The maps also indicate a sort of natural division of the service territory. Norman Condit is line operations superintendent of the eastern side, which includes service in Grady, Stephens and Jefferson counties, as well as a handful of meters in Carter County.

Of the 16 Stephens County subs, Condit says there are nine in what he calls the Velma area.

"All of those nine serve the oil and gas industry to some degree. Three are dedicated only to that."

Ah, that explains it. All of those bobbing derricks pulling oil out of the ground run on electricity. Natural gas pipelines are everywhere, and one can practically follow the scent to a processing plant, which also requires a great deal of power.

Condit described two of the dedicated substations as rather large loads on Cotton's system. They serve oil- and gas-related infrastructure in the area.

The first of those substations was built more

than 10 years ago on the grounds of a gas plant. As the demand for oil and gas products increased, the requirements for service increased, and eventually justified the construction of an additional substation in the area.

The two subs are nearly side by side, separated only by a tall A-shaped metal structure where high voltage comes in from Western Farmers Electric Cooperative. The huge transformers of each sub step the electricity down to voltage useable at the plant.

The power is fed directly into an adjacent building to serve requirements for the industrial customer.

A power resource at this location is important. So much so that it is backed up by 10 generators the size of semi-truck trailers lined up along the south side of the substation enclosure. The generators offer distributed generation for backup and load control.

The other dedicated substation in Stephens County also serves an oil and gas producer.

The company consists of a great deal of oilfield equipment that works best with an exclusive source of power. Western Farmers transmits high-voltage power to the substation. Cotton Electric monitors the transformers and other equipment and reads the meter at the sub. Power leaves the sub on lines built and maintained by the oilfield company.

Because all of the power coming out of these three subs is dedicated to the companies they serve, there isn't a map of the area they serve. Each sub is like an endpoint.

The yellow and black map dots spread out a bit to the west, but there are still 12 other subs serving industry and residences in Stephens County, some with unique features to be explained in coming months.



Two dedicated substations in eastern Stephens County are situated nearly side by side, separated only by a tall A-shaped metal structure where high voltage comes in from Western Farmers Electric Cooperative. The huge transformers of each sub step the electricity down to voltage useable at a nearby plant.



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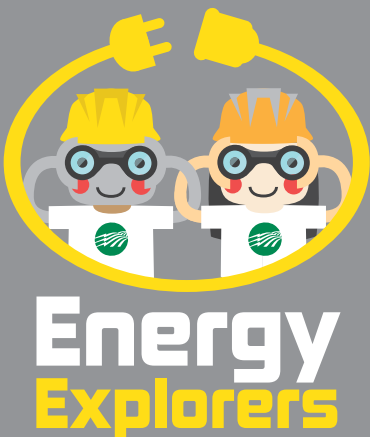
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# EFFICIENCY WORD SEARCH



Reducing energy use is good for the environment, and by being energy efficient, you can help your parents save on their monthly electric bill! Find the words associated with energy efficiency in the word search below.

Circle all words associated with efficiency. The hidden words appear straight across, backwards, up and down, and diagonally. Use the word bank below as a guide.

### WORD BANK

- REDUCE
- LIGHT SWITCH
- APPLIANCES
- LED BULB
- RECYCLE
- ENERGY USE
- CONSERVATION
- THERMOSTAT

R	Y	F	T	T	I	C	U	Z	U	N	I	W	Q	L
Q	E	K	T	A	V	O	U	Z	B	C	Q	V	I	T
S	D	D	O	I	T	N	C	Y	R	K	N	G	X	E
H	F	I	U	V	O	S	P	F	M	S	H	Y	B	S
V	W	J	X	C	M	E	O	S	W	T	S	L	I	U
G	Z	I	U	H	E	R	Y	M	S	K	U	X	K	Y
Q	S	H	L	X	W	V	H	W	R	B	K	L	D	G
C	J	Q	P	O	R	A	I	X	D	E	O	V	Q	R
W	D	O	E	L	G	T	D	E	W	K	H	R	J	E
E	V	K	E	A	C	I	L	P	J	U	P	T	V	N
J	C	D	B	H	B	O	A	O	K	M	P	Q	Z	E
P	X	Y	S	E	C	N	A	I	L	P	P	A	P	H
L	W	T	L	P	U	T	G	T	R	I	C	A	W	C
D	V	X	V	R	J	B	I	M	L	S	B	J	O	C
X	F	R	E	C	Y	C	L	E	H	J	Y	Y	V	U



# COTTON

## ELECTRIC CO-OP

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

- ACROSS**
- 1. Exclamation that denotes disgust
  - 4. Climbed over
  - 10. Has 50 states
  - 11. Able to move
  - 12. Prime Minister (abbr.)
  - 14. Cotangent (abbr.)
  - 15. Particle
  - 16. Fastened
  - 18. Wonders
  - 22. Surpassing all others
  - 23. Provides basement access
  - 24. Daily
  - 26. North Dakota
  - 27. Related to gulls
  - 28. Provoke
  - 30. Lake \_\_, one of the Great
  - 31. Police department
  - 33. Throat illness
  - 35. South Dakota
  - 36. Contains iron (Brit.)
  - 38. Sees what the future holds
  - 39. The extended location of something
  - 40. Cobalt
  - 41. Dwells
  - 47. Reprimand
  - 49. Agree to a demand
  - 50. Talented in or devoted to music
  - 51. Gospels
  - 52. European defense organization (abbr.)
  - 53. Edge of a cloth
  - 54. Equally
  - 55. Experience again
  - 57. Female sheep
  - 58. Made vanish

			1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9			
				10			11								
12	13		14					15							
16		17						18				19	20	21	
22								23							
24							25	26			27				
						28		29			30				
	31	32				33				34		35			
36			37			38									
39						40			41		42	43	44	45	46
47					48				49						
50									51						
			52						53				54		
		55						56		57					
		58							59						

- 59. Unit of force (abbr.)
- 12. Post-traumatic stress disorder
- 32. Far down areas in the sea
- 13. Island
- 34. Delivered a sermon
- 17. Central processing unit
- 36. Any physical damage
- 19. Pitchers
- 37. A Seattle ballplayer
- 20. Long-winged member of the gull family
- 40. Raccoonlike animals
- 21. Auld lang \_\_, good old days
- 42. Odd
- 25. Term of affection
- 43. Delivery boys
- 29. They \_\_
- 44. Billy \_\_ Williams
- 31. Polynesian wrapped skirt
- 45. Icelandic poems
- 46. A Scottish tax
- 48. Central Florida city
- 55. Rhenium
- 56. \_\_, denotes past

- DOWN**
- 1. \_\_ up
  - 2. Rear of (nautical)
  - 3. Purses
  - 4. Samarium
  - 5. A way to take forcibly
  - 6. On or into
  - 7. Metric capacity unit (Brit.)
  - 8. Assign to a higher position
  - 9. Delaware

# Paint The Town Green



Participants can earn E-drawing tickets starting at midnight on March 1 through 11:00pm on March 26, 2016.

- Slot players earn entry tickets by accumulating points on their Comanche Card, 1 E-drawing ticket per 5 points earned during the contest period.
- Drawings will be held every Friday & Saturday from 7pm to 11pm. A total of 9 winners will be selected during this time for the chance to win up to \$500 cash!



COMANCHE  
STAR  
CASINO



Thursday, March 17, 2016 12pm-10pm

A total of 21 hot seat drawings will be held throughout the promotional period. Guests must be actively playing at the slot machine with their own card to be eligible. Approximately one winner will be announced every 30 minutes.

Patron Management's random rewards monitor will be used to select a hot seat winner. Once this winner has been confirmed they will receive \$25 Comanche Credit. Every other player actively playing with their card on the hot seat winner's bank of slots will also receive \$10 Comanche Credit.

Valid I.D. Required For All Promotions and Game Play

# T-SHIRT THURSDAY!



Thursdays 12:00-10:00PM,  
Comanche Club Players that  
earn 25 points will receive a  
free t-shirt. 1 shirt per week  
per participant.

Offer valid while supplies last.  
If supplies run out players that earn the 25  
required points will receive \$10  
Comanche Credit.



New members get up to  
\$100 Comanche Credit.  
See Player's Club for Details.  
Valid I.D. Required

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Every Tues. 12pm-6pm Guests who are 50+ years can receive \$5 Comanche Credit & a free meal after they earn 2 points on their C Club

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## National Agriculture Week, March 13-19, 2016

WE SALUTE YOU, America's farmers and ranchers, for commitment to protecting the land and meeting the demands of a burgeoning population. Farm families are up before the sun, day in and day out, to put food on the table for us. Our farmers are sustaining future generations by feeding, fueling and clothing the world. We appreciate your efforts and during National Agriculture Week, March 13-19, 2016 we extend our thanks to you and your families for helping to keep our communities and our country strong.

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580-492-6161  
Hal Smith

### Standridge of Duncan

John Deere Sales & Service  
1920 Bois D'Arc - Duncan, OK  
580-255-6276 800-256-7855

### Crutcher's Western Wear

313 SW C Ave, Lawton, OK  
580-248-2997  
1503 N Hwy 81, Duncan, OK  
580-252-3220

### McIntyre Insurance-GP

Pat McIntyre, Brent McIntyre, Lori Brown  
Fire, Auto, Liability, Farm & Crop  
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### Spencer's Feed & Supply

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580-353-6047

### Cotton County Farm Bureau

Walters, OK  
580-875-3290

### Walters Bank & Trust Co.



580-875-3397  
201 N Broadway  
Walters, OK

### Bain Farms

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Austin Bain Donnie Bain  
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# New billing cycles tied to fixed dates beginning in April

In an effort to streamline and simplify, Cotton Electric will implement changes in the number and timing of billing cycles during April 2016. The four-cycle system will become a two-cycle system. Billing, bank draft and penalty dates will be tied to fixed dates within each month.

The four-cycle system had its origins in days when meter readings were recorded by employees. In order to read meters spread out across eight counties, each employee had four different weekly routes.

Readings were turned in at the end of the week and bills sent out on Mondays. Cycle 1 bills went out on the first Monday, Cycle 2 on the second Monday, Cycle 3 on the third Monday, and Cycle 4 on the fourth Monday.

Payment on power bills is due upon receipt and there are penalties for paying after a certain date. Bank draft and penalty dates were different from one month to the next, driven by the billing date, which was driven by which Monday of the month the bill was issued.

Mondays float around. Sometimes they are on the first day of the month. Sometimes they are on the seventh day of the month. Using the method described above, billing, bank draft and penalty dates float around, too. Things get really complicated if there are five Mondays in a month.

To help members keep track of these floating dates, we color-coded the bills and published color-coded lists of the dates. We looked for the color coding when we sorted the mail each morning, giving priority to payments on bills approaching penalty dates.

Things have changed quite a bit. We no longer have to send an employee to read meters. Instead, the meters send readings through the power lines to the substations daily. The substations gather the readings and send them to the headquarters in Walters.

Computerization has shortened the time needed to prepare bills and eliminated the need to spread billing out over four weeks. So, over the past few years, we have gradually started phasing out two cycles, assigning new memberships only to Cycle 1 or Cycle 3.


In April, we will fully migrate all Cycle 2 bills into Cycle 1, and fully migrate all Cycle 4 bills into Cycle 3. That's the first change.

The second change has to do with dates. Instead of floating, the dates will become fixed. We think this will be helpful to all members and should eliminate confusion.

"Our members have been asking for this for a long time," said Jeff Simpson, vice president of finance and administration.

"We think the members will

0000000001 Invoice: 0-000

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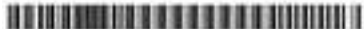
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PCA Factor: 0.000000 Invoice #: 0000

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R -Regular Bill	I -Inactive with Balance
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F -Final Bill	X -Changed Meter
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ACCT	Legal Desc	Description	Bill Cd	Meter #	Service Dates From To	# of days	Meter Readings Prev	Meter Readings Pres	Mult	Usage Billed	Amount
0000000001	SW-00-0N-00W MOBILE	ENERGY CHARGE SECURITY LIGHT ROUNDUP AMT	R	TT000001	3/16/16 4/8/16	24	47877	49569	1	1692	180.76 8.81 0.43
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE											190.00

STATEMENT DATE 04/15/2016	MEMBER # 00000	CYCLE 3
THIS BILL INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNTS		
0000000001	190.00	

Invoice: 0000

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Member #: 0000 Invoice: 0000  
ANY MEMBER  
123 ANY STREET  
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Statement dates and delinquent dates will always be the 15th and the first of the next month on bills issued after April 2016. Cycle 3 bills will feature red lettering. Blue and green bills will no longer be issued as those cycles will be absorbed into Cycles 1 and 3.

be a lot happier with a billing system that will be tied to fixed dates instead of the floating dates.”

So beginning in April, Cycle 1 bills will be issued on the 5th day of the month. Members using the automatic payment feature can expect bank drafts to be on the 15th day of the month. Penalties will be assessed to Cycle 1 bills paid after the 20th day of the month.

Cycle 3 bills will be issued on the 15th day of the month. Members using the automatic payment feature can expect bank drafts to be on the 25th day of the month. Penalties will be assessed to Cycle 3 bills paid after the first day of the following month.

To help illustrate the date change, the color-coded date boxes can be found on Page 20.

The transition month of April was selected with members in mind. The timing coincides with a time of year when outdoor temperatures are mild. Some April bills will be for 32 days and some will be for 26 days, but they will be for days when energy use is usually low.

If you have any questions about these changes, please call one of our Member Services Representatives at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.



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# Savor flavor of eating right with spices, herbs

Let’s face it. In this world of overly processed, salty and sugary foods, it is hard for our taste buds to appreciate the natural flavor of fruits, vegetables and lean meats. Here are some tips to celebrate the theme of 2016 National Nutrition Month: Savor the Flavor of Eating Right.

The dried spice and herb area of the grocery store has exploded with easy-to-season options over the last five years. To make your flavoring job easy, look for seasonings that combine multiple herbs and spices common to a particular cuisine, such as Italian, Mediterranean, Mexican, Cajun, Asian or Caribbean, just to name a few.

These herb and spice blends are perfect for seasoning vegetables and meats to create variety when only certain vegetables are in season. For example, Monday evening you could have Cajun steak and broccoli, Tuesday you could have Asian chicken and zucchini, Wednesday you could have Mexican pork chops and a broccoli/cauliflower mix, and so on.

Look for blends without salt. You can still add salt if you wish and if your health



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

## Food For THOUGHT

status allows you to have extra salt.

Marinades are another great vehicle for adding flavor to meat and vegetables. Marinades typically need a fat, acid or enzyme, and herbs and spices.

Acids include vinegars, wine/beer, buttermilk and citrus juices. Enzymes include yogurt, milk, pineapple juice, papaya and honey. Acids and enzymes

act as the flavor foundation and as a tenderizer.

Fats are normally any type of oil. Fats enhance the flavors and prevent foods from sticking.

The choices of herbs and spices are endless. Fresh or dried herbs will work. Marinating times vary; fish and seafood need the least amount of time because their flesh is delicate. Vegetables need around 30 minutes of time to marinate. Chicken, beef, pork and lamb can marinate from 3 hours to a full 24 hours.

When marinating, it is important to use a non-reactive container. Glass, stainless steel or plastic bags work best.

Save salting for the end of the cooking process to avoid drying out meats or over-seasoning.

Fruits typically do not need additional ingredients for added flavor if you shop smart. When buying fresh fruit, choose local produce that is in season for your area or in season somewhere in the U.S. Here is a quick guide to fruits “in season:”

Winter – Oranges/apples;

Summer/early fall – Berries, melons and stone fruits such as peaches, apricots, nectarines, etc.;

Of course, pay attention to the quality of the fruit. Bruising, molding, off-color or smell is a sign of mishandling and should be avoided unless you can cut around it or are planning to cook the fruit.

If you are craving a fruit that is out of season, look for the frozen or canned option, as long as there is no or very little added sugar.

There are many resources on the Internet to help build your spice blend and marinade repertoire. You can also inquire about flavorings when you eat a dish that you like at a friend’s house or at a work potluck. Restaurants will sometimes give you a hint of what is in a recipe if you ask.

Stock your pantry with your favorite flavoring agents, and then stock your freezer and fridge with lean meats, fruits and vegetables, and you will go a long way toward trading over-processed, over-flavored foods with healthier, tastier options.



### Boneless Leg of American Lamb

- Follow these easy guidelines for preparing the perfect roast:
- For generous portions, figure on one half pound of American lamb per serving.
  - Use a good meat thermometer to determine doneness. Medium Rare: 145 F; Medium: 160 F.
  - Remove the roast from the oven when the internal temperature reaches 10 degrees less than your desired temperature; it will reach desired doneness while it rests, allowing the meat’s juices to settle.
  - Carve the roast across the grain so the meat will be tender.

### Grilled Butterflied American Lamb Leg with Mint-Pistachio Pesto

- Serves: 6-8
- 3 pounds boneless leg of American lamb, butterflied  
salt and pepper (to taste)
- Mint-Pistachio Pesto
- 1 cup shelled pistachios
  - 1 cup fresh mint (leaves only)
  - 1/2 cup fresh Italian parsley
  - 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
  - 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
  - 1 tablespoon lemon juice (to taste)
  - 1 teaspoon lemon zest
  - 1/2 teaspoon sea salt (to taste)
  - freshly ground black pepper (to taste)
  - pinch red chili pepper flakes

Heat oven to 350 F.

Lay lamb leg open on a cutting board. Trim off visible fat. Season lamb generously with salt and pepper; allow to sit at room temperature for 30 minutes prior to grilling.

Toast pistachios by placing in single layer in shallow dish or pan and baking 8 to 10 minutes.

In food processor, add pistachios, mint, parsley, oil, vinegar, lemon juice, lemon zest, salt, pepper and chili flakes; blend until somewhat chunky.

Heat grill to medium-high. Grill lamb leg to medium-rare (remove from heat when thermometer reads between 130 F and 135 F), or to desired doneness. Rest meat, lightly covered, for at least 10 minutes before serving. Slice meat across grain into thin slices.

Serve lamb with pesto, grilled vegetables and salad.

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CELEBRATIONS

FAMILY FEATURES

Spring celebrations wouldn't be the same without one classic centerpiece: leg of lamb. Whether roasted or grilled, a leg of lamb is a tried and true addition to the Easter or Passover table. As elegant as it is, it's also quite simple to prepare.

For a new take on tradition, swap conventional mint jelly with a vibrant salsa verde or mint-pistachio pesto for a fresh, but familiar, flavor that complements the rich taste of American lamb. Find more springtime celebration-worthy American lamb recipe ideas at americanlamb.com.

Roasted Boneless Leg of American Lamb  
with Fingerling Potatoes, Leeks and Mint Salsa Verde

- Serves: 6-8
- Mint Salsa Verde**
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed and peeled
  - 2 cups loosely packed fresh flat-leaf parsley leaves
  - 1 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves
  - 3 anchovy fillets
  - 1 tablespoon capers, drained and rinsed
  - 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
  - 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons plus 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 3-3 1/2 pounds boneless leg of American lamb, butterflied
- 2 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt, divided
  - 3 large leeks
  - 2 pounds fingerling potatoes, halved lengthwise
  - 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

Position rack in lower third of oven (so roast will be in the middle) and heat to 325 F.

With food processor running, add garlic cloves. When finely minced, stop motor, remove top and scrape down bowl. Add parsley, mint, anchovies, capers, salt and pepper. Pulse until ingredients are finely chopped. Pour in 2 tablespoons olive oil and pulse to combine. Transfer about two-thirds of paste to small bowl and cover with remaining olive oil. Cover tightly and refrigerate until serving time, or up to 2 days.

Lay lamb flat on cutting board with fat side up. Trim fat to no more than 1/8 inch. Turn meat over and trim away any large chunks of fat from interior, but leave the rest intact. Be

careful not to trim away connective tissue that holds meat together. Season lamb on both sides with 2 teaspoons salt.

Spread salsa verde paste over interior of meat to edges, rubbing into crevices. Reserve remaining salsa verde. Roll lamb up lengthwise into cylinder. Use kitchen twine to tie cylinder at 1 1/2-inch intervals. Tie another piece of twine lengthwise to secure ends. Allow lamb to sit at room temperature 1-2 hours before roasting. (If you plan to wait more than 2 hours before roasting, loosely cover and refrigerate roast, but bring to room temperature before cooking.) Pat outside of roast dry using paper towels before roasting.

Trim dark green tops from leeks. Halve leeks lengthwise and rinse well. Pat dry and cut into 2-inch pieces. Put leeks and halved potatoes in large roasting pan. Drizzle vegetables with olive oil, season with remaining salt and toss to coat. Spread vegetables around roasting pan in even layer. Place lamb roast on top, seam-side down and transfer to oven. Roast until an instant-read thermometer inserted into center of meat reaches 135 F for medium-rare, about 1-1 1/2 hours.

Transfer lamb to cutting board and allow meat to rest for 20-30 minutes, loosely covered with foil. (The internal temperature will increase to 145 F.) Bring reserved salsa verde to room temperature. Toss vegetables in roasting pan to coat in pan drippings. If they are tender and browned, set aside in a warm spot while meat rests. If not, return to oven to finish cooking.

Trim away kitchen twine and cut roast into 1/2-inch-thick slices. Arrange slices over vegetables. Stir salsa verde to incorporate oil, spoon it over meat and serve.



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# New Billing Cycles for 2016

Cycle 1		Cycle 2	
Bill Date	Past Due Date	Bill Date	Past Due Date
01/04/16	01/26/16	01/11/16	02/02/16
02/01/16	02/23/16	02/08/16	03/01/16
03/07/16	03/29/16	03/14/16	04/05/16

## Combined Cycles

Bill Date	Past Due Date
04/05/16	04/20/16
05/05/16	05/20/16
06/05/16	06/20/16
07/05/16	07/20/16
08/05/16	08/20/16
09/05/16	09/20/16
10/05/16	10/20/16
11/05/16	11/20/16
12/05/16	12/20/16

Cycle 1 bills are mailed on the 5th of each month. Payment is due upon receipt of the bill and is considered Past Due on the 20th of each month.

Cycle 3		Cycle 4	
Bill Date	Past Due Date	Bill Date	Past Due Date
01/18/16	02/09/16	01/25/16	02/16/16
02/15/16	03/08/16	02/22/16	03/15/16
03/21/16	04/12/16	03/28/16	04/19/16

## Combined Cycles

Bill Date	Past Due Date
04/15/16	05/01/16
05/15/16	06/01/16
06/15/16	07/01/16
07/15/16	08/01/16
08/15/16	09/01/16
09/15/16	10/01/16
10/15/16	11/01/16
11/15/16	12/01/16
12/15/16	01/01/17

Cycle 3 bills are mailed on the 15th of each month. Payment is due upon receipt of the bill and is considered Past Due on the 1st day of the following month.

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