

The Current

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Stay chill and help lower bill during intense summer

Oklahomans are no stranger to extreme weather conditions: tornadoes, blizzards, floods, drought and anything in between. With an intense summer approaching, members can not only see high temperatures but could also possibly see higher electric bills.

Below, members will find tips to help save energy and money when trying to keep homes cool. Some tips are free and can be used daily. Others are simple and inexpensive actions to keep energy affordable throughout the summer.

Use windows coverings

- Install window coverings, such as curtains, shutters and awnings, to prevent heat gain through windows.

Operate thermostat efficiently

- Set thermostats at a comfortable temperature that also controls humidity. The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower your overall cooling bill could be.

- Keep your house warmer than normal when away, and lower the thermostat setting when you return home. Installing a programmable thermostat does this automatically without sacrificing comfort.

- Avoid setting thermostats at a colder setting than normal when you first turn on your



Decreasing the difference between indoor and outdoor temperatures can help lower your overall bill.

air conditioner. It will not cool your home any faster and could cause excessive cooling and unnecessary expense.

Use fans to cool off

- Set ceiling fans to turn counterclockwise and turn them off when you leave the room. Remember that fans cool people, not rooms.

- When you shower or take a bath, use the bathroom fan to remove excess heat and humidity. Your laundry room might also benefit from spot ventilation. Make sure bathroom and kitchen fans are vented to the outside (not just to the attic).

Maintain cooling system

- For maximum energy affordability, schedule regu-

lar maintenance for cooling equipment. See page four for CEC rebate information.

- Avoid placing lamps or TV sets near your room air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

- Vacuum air intake vents regularly to remove any dust buildup. Ensure that furniture and other objects do not block airflow through registers.

Consider a range of appliances and lighting

- Consider lighting options that operate at cooler temperatures. Residential LEDs, especially ENERGY STAR rated products, use at least 75% less energy and last up to

25 times longer than incandescent lighting.

- Take advantage of daylight, but avoid direct sunlight. North- and east-facing windows allow natural light into homes without the summer heat.

- Wash full loads of dishes for better efficiency. Use the microwave and other smaller kitchen appliances as much as possible. Cooking outside can help save energy, too. Limit how often you open the refrigerator.

- Wash full loads of clothes in cool water. Periodically, clean the lint screen in the dryer. When purchasing a washer and dryer, look for the ENERGY STAR label. This brand cleans clothes using nearly 35% less water and

25% less energy than standard washers. ENERGY STAR dryers use 20% less energy than conventional models.

- Delay heat-producing chores, like running the dishwasher or doing laundry, until the cooler evening hours. Off-peak hours for the summer are usually after 7 p.m.

Seal hot air from leaking

- Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks, cracks and openings around doors and windows to keep warm air from coming into home.

Lower water heat setting

Water heating is the second largest energy expense in homes, accounting for about 18% of the energy consumed.

- The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends setting water heaters at no more than 120 degrees Fahrenheit to prevent scalding. The lower setting will also conserve energy and save money, so try to take cooler showers in the summer.

Living through Oklahoma summers can be challenging both physically and financially. We encourage members to remember these tips to help reduce high costs as much as possible. If interested in knowing your home's energy efficiency, contact Cotton Electric's energy efficiency coordinator for expert advice at 580-875-3351.

Cooperative charges forward with new EV pilot project

Are you a member who has an electric vehicle (EV)? Are you curious about what future rates, including EV charging, could be? Consider participating in Cotton Electric's pilot project with EVs.

With the increase in demand of EVs, Cotton Electric is activating the first step of this project by gathering and analyzing information from members who have EVs. The co-op will use this data to design a rate for members with EVs.

“The goal of the pilot project is to get a group of members together for those who already have EVs in their home, so we can collect data from their meter profile on when they charge as we look for rates for the future,” said Jennifer Meason, Cotton Electric CEO.

Data requested may include the number of EVs in our service territory, the hours of charging, how we can shift those to off-peak hours, how to

better utilize generating resources and member's experiences with their EV.

“We want to make sure our theory is actually going to work in reality for what our members need in putting together a rate that is beneficial for them as well as the co-op overall,” Meason said. “We want to create a rate that is equitable and fair for those that charge their vehicles.”

The time of day members charge their EVs does impact the co-op, even though rates have not yet been set. If members charge during peak hours, it adds to the overall demand of our system which affects future rates. With the information gathered from this pilot project, a rate will be developed to encourage members to charge during off-peak hours.

“If we structure this project correctly, off-peak charging is most beneficial for the co-op, which is more beneficial for the individual member and rates



Cotton Electric's EV charges at a public charging station in Lawton

overall,” Meason said.

Collecting this data will be beneficial from an operations point of view as well. Depending on if there is a large density of EVs in an area, updates may be required for our construction plan to ensure substations have enough capacity to serve those areas.

There is a future for EVs in our area, and we want to look for not only what the rates could be, but how this demand impacts our membership and

creating the right design moving forward, Meason said.

Once a pilot rate is chosen, members can choose to participate with a time-of-use rate to determine how it would lower the cost of charging if done during off-peak hours. If members are interested in joining this pilot project, information about your EV can be submitted at www.cottonelectric.com/electric-vehicles-ev.

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after June 1, 2022, is \$0.02024 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a credit/charge of \$26.31 on the June bill.

May 2021 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	83	45	64	16	87	65	76
2	89	54	72	17	95	67	81
3	66	46	56	18	96	73	85
4	80	56	68	19	97	66	82
5	72	52	62	20	92	75	84
6	81	49	65	21	75	58	67
7	88	59	74	22	74	51	63
8	101	74	88	23	64	55	60
9	97	74	86	24	66	59	63
10	94	75	85	25	62	53	58
11	91	67	79	26	84	50	67
12	92	68	80	27	89	51	70
13	95	69	82	28	95	66	80
14	92	61	77	29	95	73	84
15	99	71	85	30	93	71	82
				31	92	65	78

Source: srh.noaa.gov/ou/

Average Daily High: 86 Average Daily Low: 61

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed July 4 for the Independence Day holiday. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on July 11, 2022.

Contact Us

Do you have a story idea for The Current or do you need to place an ad? If so, let us know. We can be reached at 580-875-3351 or by email at TheCurrent@cottonelectric.com. You can also drop us a line at Cotton Electric Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572.

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From the CEO

Electricity costs rising across the country

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics recently released the 12-month percentage change in the Consumer Price Index. In April 2022, the Consumer Price Index rose 8.3 percent compared to 2021 and the increase in the electricity category was 11%. The Energy Information Administration's (EIA) Summer 2022 Electricity Industry Outlook forecasts a 4% increase in the national average electricity price compared to the summer 2021.



Jennifer Meason, CEO

Cotton Electric is currently experiencing increases in the cost of wholesale power that affects all of us. The cost of power we purchase on your behalf is typically 70% of our total expenses. For the first four months of 2022, it has increased to 75% of our total expenses.

What is driving the increases in electricity prices?

There are several contributing factors including higher natural gas prices; continued retirements of coal-

fired plants throughout the country and constraints in coal deliveries for those still in operation; and growing demand for electricity as many commercial and industrial sectors return to pre-pandemic levels. Many utilities, like Cotton Electric, are also in the process of repaying the costs associated with 2021 Winter Storm Uri.

As a not-for-profit electric utility, it is critical that we recover all of the Cooperative's power cost from the members who used it. Our goal is to break even and our rates are designed to accomplish that task through the monthly Power Cost Adjustment (PCA).

What is the PCA?

The PCA reflects the increase or decrease in Cotton Electric's cost of power purchased from our power provider, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative. Residential members on Cotton Electric's General Service rate pay a Service Availability Charge of \$30, plus an energy charge of \$0.08950 per kWh. These rates have been the same since April 2015, with the addition of a Winter Storm Uri rider of up to \$0.0045/kWh in March 2022. The energy charge includes 6.25 cents per kWh to cover the cost of wholesale power. Cotton Electric maintains

your electric system and distributes electricity using the remaining 2.7 cents per kWh and monthly Service Availability Charge.

When the cost of purchased power is more than 6.25 cents per kWh, the Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) is increased and shown as a charge in order to recover the price we paid for power. When the cost of purchased power is less than 6.25 cents per kWh, we return the difference and members receive a credit.

The costs for wholesale power are a straight pass-through meaning Cotton Electric makes no margin on the PCA. For June 2021 billing, the PCA was \$0.01022/kWh. For June 2022 billing, it is \$0.02024/kWh and includes a Winter Storm Uri adjustment of \$0.00325/kWh. If a member used 1,000 kWh's in June of both years, they would see an increase of approximately \$10 over the previous year on their next bill.

What can we do?

Cotton Electric is continually making adjustments to our operations to maximize the resources we have while maintaining reliable and safe service for our members. As we enter the summer peak season, we encourage our members to conserve energy when

peak alerts are issued. Small changes like the following can make a difference:

- Adjust your thermostat a few degrees. Cooling below 75 degrees in the summer costs extra.
- Avoid using major appliances such as dishwashers, washing machines and clothes dryers between the summer peak demand hours of 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.
- Turn off unnecessary lights
- Turn off computers and other office equipment when they're not being used, especially overnight and weekends.

Additional energy efficiency and conservation information can be found in this month's issue of The Current as well as on our website, cottonelectric.com.

We're Here to Help

We know that increasing costs can be difficult to manage. To get a clear picture of how you're currently using electricity, we offer billing reviews over the phone and home energy efficiency evaluation at no charge to our members.

If you need assistance or would like to make a payment arrangement, please contact our Billing and Member Services Staff at (580) 875-3351.

2021 capital credit allocations announced

Capital credits for accounts active in 2021 have recently been allocated.

Please note, however, that credit to an individual account is not a refund, and the amount may not be applied to a member's power bill.

Cotton Electric is a not-for-profit cooperative owned by its members who pay electric bills. Revenues in excess of the actual costs of providing electric service for the year are called margins.

Members' portions of these margins are called patronage capital, and are credited to the individual member's equity account in proportion to what each member contributed to the gross margin through his or her electric bills.

These margins are held in reserve for a period of

time, with the capital being used primarily to construct new electric facilities, upgrade existing facilities, maintain the members' ownership and equity in the cooperative, reduce interest costs by lowering the amount of the borrowed capital, and maintain a reserve to protect against storms and emergencies.

Cotton Electric does not generate power but buys most of it from Western Farmers Electric Cooperative. WFEC is a generation and transmission cooperative, organized in 1941 when western Oklahoma rural electric distribution cooperatives found it necessary to secure an adequate power supply at rates farmers and rural industrial developers could afford.

Cotton Electric and other electric cooperatives in Oklahoma and New Mexico own WFEC. Just as

Cotton Electric allocates its margins to members, WFEC allocates its margins to the electric cooperatives that own WFEC.

When Cotton Electric receives margin allocations from WFEC, it allocates those margins to the co-op members. The WFEC allocations are kept separate from the Cotton Electric margin allocations.

Refunds, called retirements, are made when financial conditions of either cooperative permit. Retirements are usually announced separately. They are mailed to the last known address of the account.

Members are encouraged to keep Cotton Electric informed of any changes of address so they will receive a check if a retirement is made. Lists of names on returned checks are published in The Current.

Meter #	Description	Bill Type	Reading Dates From	To	Days	Readings Previous	Present	Meter Multiplier	kWh Billed
AA00001	HOUSE	Regular	01/07/22	02/06/22	30	28119	31013	1	1680

Capital credits for accounts active in 2021 have recently been allocated and are listed on June power bills. Please note, however, that credit to an individual account is NOT A REFUND, and the amount WILL NOT be applied to a member's power bill.

How to calculate your capital credits

Determine the total amount you were billed for electricity during the calendar year 2021.

Multiply that amount by each capital credit factor in the category that applies to you.

If you do not know the total amount billed, contact Cotton Electric at 580-875-3351.

Capital Credit Factors

	Cotton	WFEC
General Service	0.022698074	0.021068513
Small Commercial	0.023077591	0.021420783
Large Commercial	0.020683126	0.019198224
LPC/STC	0.008484290	0.007875178
Irrigation	0.029355253	0.027247753

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

If you're looking to add smart technology to your home, consider smart plugs. Smart plugs are inexpensive and can be used to control lighting and other electronic devices through a smart phone app.

With smart plugs, you can conveniently manage lighting, home office equipment, video game consoles and more. By powering off unused devices when you're away, you can save energy (and money!).

Source: Energy.gov

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

April 2021 Operating Stats

	2022	2021
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$5,815,796	\$5,037,584
Cost of Purchased Power	4,329,948	3,523,869
Taxes	130,578	95,665
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,145	1,010
Average Farm and Residential Bill	121	117
Average Farm and Residential kWh	867	895
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	19,183	18,927
Miles Energized	5,227	5,211
Density Per Mile	3.67	3.63
New Service Connects YTD	145	149
Services Retired	37	64

Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the July issue, please submit information by June 24 by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com. Only events occurring after July 11 will be published in the next issue.

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

Get your passport to outdoor fun

Trails Fest highlights outdoor recreation and healthy living in Southwest Oklahoma for all ages.

Join the 2022 SWOK Trails Fest celebration on the evening of Friday, June 17, to receive a passport and gather information about annual organized events and outdoor recreation opportunities across southwest Oklahoma. On Saturday, June 18, use the passport to visit various event sites. The event is produced by Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma, Lawton/Ft. Sill Open Streets, Friends of the Wichitas, Lawton Public Library, Medicine Park Aquarium and Natural Sciences Center and the Comanche County Health Department. The schedule is as follows:

June 17, Elmer Thomas Park

- 5-9 p.m.: Open Streets healthy living vendor fair
- 5-5:45 p.m.: Interactive StoryBook Walk
- 6-7:30 p.m.: 5K Fun Walk/Run
- 8-8:45 p.m.: Prairie Dog Fun Bike Ride

June 18, Various Sites

- 8 a.m.-1 p.m.: Tour of the Wichitas bicycle ride, Ft. Sill Hangar (registration required)
- 9 a.m.-5 p.m.: mountain bike skills course and rides, Medicine Park Primitive Camping Ground (no fee with passport)
- 9 a.m.-1 p.m.: horseback riding, Lake Ellsworth (no fee with passport)
- 10 a.m.-3 p.m.: flower trail, Medicine Park Aquarium and Science Center (\$5 entry fee for ages 3+, free under 3)
- 12-4 p.m.: paddle sports, Lake Elmer Thomas Recreation Area (no fee with passport)
- 5:30-8 p.m.: Aggie Mile and closing ceremonies, Cameron University Aggie Recreation Center

For more information about the 2022 SWOK Trails Fest, look for the event page on Facebook or www.eventbrite.com.

5k and Fun Run in Duncan

Race to Stampede the Trail 5k and Half Marathon with the whole family to enjoy the outdoors and activity. The half marathon will begin at 7 a.m., the 5K at 8 a.m., and the kid's fun run at 9:30 a.m. on June 25 at the Simmons Center in Duncan. For more information, visit www.simmonscenter.com or call 580-252-2900.

Parkinson's support meetings

The Parkinson's Foundation of Oklahoma, in partnership with Duncan Regional Hospital (DRH) and the Simmons Center, is excited to announce the beginning of the Parkinson's Voice Project® through the SPEAK OUT!® and LOUD Crowd® speech therapy programs for Parkinson's patients.

The LOUD Crowd® group will meet every Tuesday at the Simmons Center, Red Bud Courtyard room F. The program is FREE and no RSVP is required.

If you are interested in the SPEAK OUT! Individual speech therapy program, please call DRH Health Outpatient Rehab Services at 580-251-8460

to schedule an appointment.

If you have questions about these programs or need additional support, visit the Foundation's website at www.parkinsonoklahoma.com.

Geronimo Golf Scramble

Support the Geronimo Athletic Department by competing in their Four-man Scramble golf tournament. The tournament will begin at 8:30 a.m. on June 20 at the Ft. Sill Golf Club. Pre-registrations forms must be submitted by June 18. For more information or questions, call 580-355-3160 or 580-574-0458.

Free Family Art Monday

Chisholm Trail Heritage Center offers fun for all ages at Free Family Art Monday (FFAM). Educators will guide participants through three art projects. FFAM is from 2-4 p.m. every Monday in June and July at Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway, Duncan. For more information, visit www.onthechisholm-trail.com.

Rock'n the Park

The Medicine Park Birthday celebration is combined with a festival celebrating authentic American Rock music featuring regional and local performers. Event will take place July 2-4.

Heroes of America Fireworks Show

Celebrate Independence Day and honor all military and first-responders at the Heroes of America Fireworks Show. There will be live entertainment, children's activities, food and more. Parking and admission are free. The event is from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. on July 4 at the Apache Event Field, 2315 E. Gore Blvd., Lawton, OK 73501. For more information, call 580-248-5905 or visit www.apachecasinothotel.com Event page.

CTAC presents art workshops

Bring your creative energy to Arts Explosion, a week-long series of summer arts workshops for children, teens and adults hosted by the Chisholm Trail Arts Council (CTAC). All students will have the opportunity to learn different art disciplines and mediums throughout the week, including pottery, sculpture, watercolor, story boarding and acrylic painting.

Children's classes are for students who have completed third, fourth or fifth grades. Classes for teens include students who have completed sixth grade or higher. Adult classes take place in the evening. A limited amount of scholarships are available for students who qualify. Online registration is available until July 12.

The 2022 Arts Explosion is an all-day event July 18-22 at the Stephens County Expo Center. For more information and updates, visit www.chisholmtrailarts.com/programs or their Facebook page, or call (580) 252-4160.

Miss Rodeo Lawton

Calling all cowgirls: applications are open for the Miss Rodeo Lawton pageant. You can showcase skills and win prizes. Competition categories include horsemanship, speech, impromptu questions, written test, and modeling. The winner of Miss Rodeo Lawton will be awarded with a saddle, buckle, and other prizes. There is a \$50 entry fee. Must be 15-22 years old to apply. Applications are due July 15. For questions, contact Britney Smith at 580-583-0442 or email missrodeolawtonpageant@gmail.com.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Cotton Electric members Todd and Shelley Clark enjoy their road trip to Fort Worth with their grandkids, Hollis, Tate, Aspen and Henley.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. The theme for July is Splash! Entries can be emailed to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com or mailed to The Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572. Winners will receive a Cotton Electric prize.

Local farmer's markets open

- Duncan: 4-8 p.m. every Friday at 2113 W. Beech. Call 580-641-3309.
 - Lawton: 8 a.m.-12 p.m. every Saturday at SW 38th St. and Elsie Hamm Drive in the Animal Science Building at Cameron University. Visit www.lawtonfarmersmarket.com.
 - Medicine Park: 8 a.m.-2 p.m. every other Saturday at 18360 SH-49 in Rock Shop Vintage. Visit their Facebook page, Medicine Park Farmers Market.
 - Tillman County: 8 a.m.-12 p.m. every Saturday on Main Street in Fredrick. Visit their Facebook page, Tillman County Farmers Market.
- Find farmer's markets across OK at www.oklahomaagritourism.com.

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

COTTON
ELECTRIC CO-OP

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

At Cotton Electric, we're proud to be a part of it, bringing people together by providing energy for all the things you love.

Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

July		August		September	
Ad Sales	June 24	Ad Sales	July 22	Ad Sales	Aug. 19
Classified	June 29	Classified	July 27	Classified	Aug. 24
Publish	July 11	Publish	Aug. 8	Publish	Sept. 6

Stay fresh: five tips for better indoor air quality

We spend a lot of time indoors. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates the average person spends 90% of their life indoors.



Heath Morgan,
Energy Efficiency
Coordinator

Our homes are becoming more energy efficient: they're better insulated and sealed with less ventilation. This is great for our energy bills but not so much for our indoor air quality.

The thought of breathing in pollutants can be scary, but the truth is, indoor air pollution is common and simply unavoidable. The good news is there are ways you can easily improve the air quality of your home.

Here are five tips to help you breathe

a little easier.

Change your air filter often

Clogged, dirty filters reduce the amount of airflow and the HVAC system's efficiency. When a filter becomes too clogged, the excess dirt and dust are sent through your air ducts, adding unnecessary allergens and other unwanted particles into your living space. During the cooling season (summer months), the Department of Energy recommends replacing your air filter every month or two. This is one of the easiest ways to promote better indoor air quality and energy efficiency.

Regularly vacuum carpet and rugs

The cleaner the home, the healthier the home. Vacuuming carpet and area rugs once a week can greatly reduce the accumulation of pet dander and dust inside your home. Frequently

clean other areas that collect dust, like drapes, bedding and cluttered areas.

Use vents to remove cooking fumes

Those exhaust fans aren't just for when you burn the bacon. Fans help remove fumes emitted while cooking and eliminate unwanted moisture and odors. They may be a bit noisy, but these handy tools can help you improve indoor air quality while you're preparing that culinary masterpiece (or even a grilled cheese sandwich).

Get a handle on humidity

Summer months typically bring more humidity than we'd like, especially if you live in a high-humidity climate zone. Moisture in the air can carry bacteria and other unwanted particles that you eventually breathe in. Dehumidifiers work to remove that moisture from the air, reducing the amount of bacte-

ria, mold and other allergens in your home.

Incorporate air-purifying plants into your living space

There are several varieties of indoor plants that can help detoxify your home from dust and germs found in a variety of home products, furniture and other materials. A few low-maintenance, air-purifying plants to consider are snake plants, aloe vera plants and pothos plants (also known as devil's ivy). These vibrant, lush plants are eye-catching and beneficial for any home. Remember to review care conditions and think about placement for any new plants you add to your home.

Taking simple steps to purify indoor air can improve health and overall quality of life. With a little effort, you can improve the indoor air quality of your home and breathe a bit easier.

HVAC tune-up deadline approaching

When was the last time you had your home's HVAC system tuned up? If it has been a few years, the time to have an HVAC contractor inspect, service, and clean your system is now.

Typically, tune-ups on cooling systems that have been neglected for a few years can provide energy savings of 5% to 15%. Just as a tune-up for your car can improve gas mileage, a yearly tune-up of your cooling system can improve efficiency and comfort. Plus, it can increase the life of the system.

Cotton Electric is offering a rebate of up to \$50 per home (50% of the cost of your tune-up, excluding repairs, up to

\$50) for members who get a tune-up for their HVAC system between April 1 and June 20. In order to qualify, members must follow the guidelines below:

Guidelines:

1. Must be a Cotton Electric Cooperative member. Residence must be served by Cotton Electric.
2. Rebate is not available for homes newer than one year.
3. A completed Rebate Application is required. The application is two pages.
4. Application must be signed and dated by both the member and a licensed and bonded HVAC contractor.

5. Member must submit a dated, itemized invoice as proof of service completion from a qualified contractor. Failure to provide required information will result in denial of rebate.

6. Rebates are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until program funds have been depleted.

7. Rebate not valid on gas-fired furnaces.

8. Rebate limited to one tune-up annually per home.

9. HVAC tune-ups must be completed between April 1 and June 20, 2022. Rebate applications must be received by June 30, 2022.

Tune – Up Checklist:

Tune-ups must be performed by qualified service professional and must include the following criteria.

- Check and correct unit's refrigerant pressure and tubing
- Check thermostat settings, wiring, and other electric parts and connections
- Inspect air filters
- Test AC and furnace starting capabilities
- Test safety controls
- Clean and adjust blower components
- Measure temperature difference
- Measure volts/amps on AC and furnace
- Lubricate all applicable parts
- Check temperature calibration and adjust if needed
- Check AC evaporator coil and clean if necessary
- Clean AC condenser coil
- Clean AC condensate drains
- Check thermostat operation

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7:30 p.m.
June 23, 24, 25
Claud Gill Arena

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Protecting convenience at and away from home

Have you ever wondered if you forgot to close the garage door, shut off the lights or adjust your thermostat after you've left the house? These days, you can use your phone to close the garage door, flip the lights on or off and turn the thermostat up to 78 degrees – all while miles away. It's all thanks to an evolving field of technology commonly called Internet of Things (IoT).

What is the IoT? It's best explained as a group of technology objects (like your garage door, smart thermostat or fridge) that connect and exchange data with other devices within your Internet or other communications networks.

Shane Bowers, Cotton Electric vice president of administration, shares how to keep data and updates safe within your home. He recommends putting groups, or segments of devices on different networks.

For example, connect televisions, home security cameras, garage door openers and other appliances on one IoT network. Connect phones, iPads, laptops and other similar devices on a separate network. This allows private information, such as banking or

transaction information to be stored safely.

"At the end of the day, it is a personal preference on what devices are connected to each network," Bowers said.

Adding the IoT is just like adding another WIFI network to your home. Members can look for the IP address on their WIFI router and type that code in a web browser to open their router settings to set up the IoT.

"One of the biggest benefits of the Internet of Things is how accessible it is," Bowers said. "Every device connected on that network can be controlled on your smartphone."

Brands or appliances, such as Whirlpool, has its own app where members can control operations. Many EnergyStar certified appliances come with "smart" technology.

Whenever you can't remember if you started the dishwasher or closed the garage door, the IoT can help put your mind at ease when away from home.

While the IoT is convenient, it is also important to keep your information and devices protected. The Federal Trade Commission shared tips on how

members can keep their IoT secure:

- Build security into IoT product design from the beginning by thinking through data collected and shared by the device, how people will likely use the product and what other devices or systems will connect to the IoT.

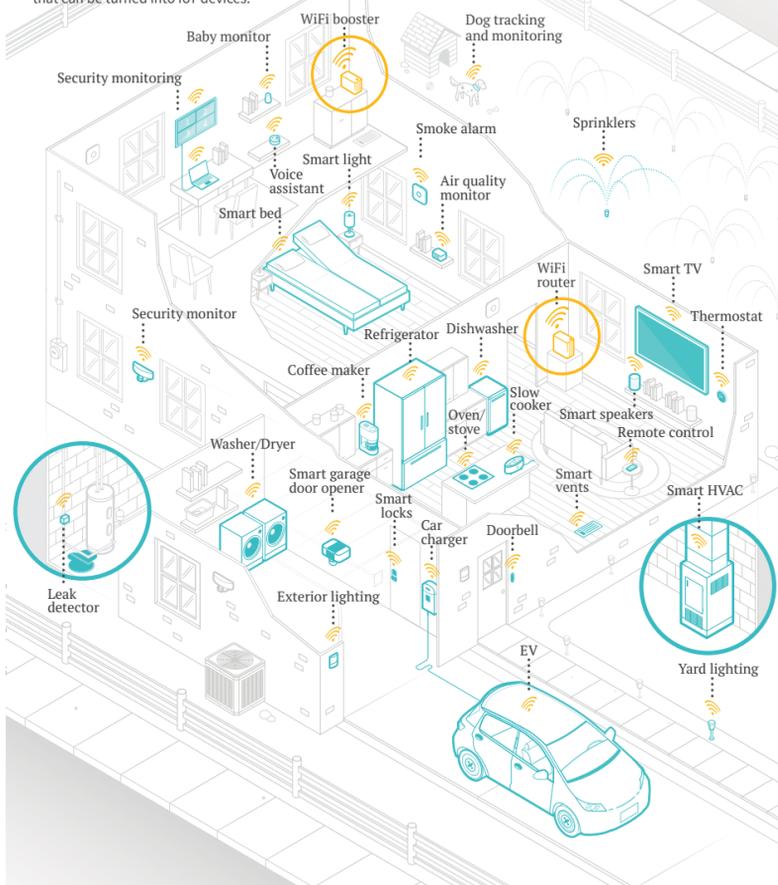
- Implement authentication protocols for your device, data and system to protect and prevent unauthorized access and use of the device from hackers.

- Apply data minimization practices, such as limiting the collection of personal data and do not collect, store or share data that's not needed. Perform timely security reviews as upgrades occur and properly segment your network to monitor who's trying to get access to the system or devices.

The IoT is a simple way to add ease and organization to devices in your home. Within the evolving world of technology, remember these tips and precautions when connecting devices to the IoT and other networks.

Internet of Things

IoT devices are simply gadgets and appliances outfitted with certain hardware that allows them to transmit data over a network. That data can be accessed by a user to monitor a device's performance and even control it with a smart-phone or computer. Such control allows homeowners or their utilities to manipulate appliance use in very specific ways to save energy, identify problems or defer use to off-peak times. Here are some of the many home items that can be turned into IoT devices.



CECF grant deadline tomorrow

Second-quarter Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) applications are due June 14, 2022. The board of directors for the foundation will meet again June 28, 2022 to review applications for the quarter.

Funded by Operation Round Up, CECF grants provide financial assistance to worthwhile individuals and organizations. The CECF board of directors meets quarterly to review applications from individ-

uals and organizations in the area. The maximum annual grant that can be approved is \$10,000 for organizations and \$2,500 for individuals. Apply at cottonelectric.com/grant-applications.

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Co-op yields safety tips for farmers during busy season



A sprayer runs into power line. Photo by Danielle Quickle.

Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by American farmers. For many farmers across the state, harvest has either begun or preparations are ramping up for the busy sea-

son: a sprint of long days and short nights watching a golden cloud of wheat get swept up into the combine header. Along with farming being one of the most dangerous jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics/U.S. Depart-

ment of Labor, the weight of exhaustion and pressure can increase the probability of accidents in the field.

Every year, tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages. These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery.

With harvest season sweeping across the plains of Oklahoma, Safe Electricity and Cotton Electric provide steps and precautions to help keep farmers safe from potential electrical hazards:

- Always use a spotter when

operating large machinery near lines.

- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines — at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, call the utility provider right away.
- If your equipment does hit a power line, do not leave the

cab. Immediately call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

- Make sure irrigation systems do not direct water onto power lines.
 - Be aware of underground wires before digging.
 - Show potential electrical hazards to workers and family.
- Electricity is essential to farming and ranching, and it must be respected when operating near it. We hope you never find yourself in a situation where farming equipment contacts power lines or poles, but if you do, we hope you'll remember these safety tips in the field.

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- Congressman Frank Lucas

With deep roots in Southwest Oklahoma and over 25 years of experience, no one is more qualified to serve as our next District Judge than Steven W. Crow.

Special Olympics is back on track

After a two-year hiatus, Oklahoma Special Olympics athletes and volunteers from Oklahoma's electric cooperatives were reunited last month for the 2022 Special Olympics Oklahoma (SOOK) in Stillwater. Three of the 100-plus co-op volunteers were from Cotton Electric Cooperative: Carli Eubank, Kyle Graham and Heath Morgan. This was the first time the trio had volunteered for SOOK.

"After seeing photos and talking to others who have volunteered in the past, I heard volunteering was a rewarding experience, and I knew I wanted to be part of that," said Graham. "I didn't realize how big of an event it is for athletes and volunteers."

Helping out at SOOK is a rich tradition with Oklahoma co-op em-

ployees that goes back decades. During the games, the volunteers interact with athletes from their region before leading them to opening ceremonies. During the ceremony, athletes representing each region are introduced, awards are presented, and the torch gets lit. Then, with much excitement, the competitions begin.

Athletes train and compete year-round to qualify for the state games. Walking, running, wheelchair races, softball and bean bag toss are just a few of the athletic events. In particular, electric co-op volunteers helped with the track and field events. Helping athletes line up to start the races, cheer them on, record their times, meet them at the finish line or direct them to the awards ceremony were some of the volun-

teer activities. "Watching the athletes compete and express their emotions wholeheartedly hit me in a way I wasn't prepared for," Eubank said. "They showed a lot of examples of being brave and vulnerable that touched me."

Volunteering at the Special Olympics can make just as big of an impact on volunteers as you hope it makes on the athletes.

"I anticipated it being a rewarding experience but not as much as it actually was," Morgan said. "You feel every emotion while you are there with the kids."

Members can get involved with Special Olympics Oklahoma, too. Learn how by visiting www.sook.org under the Get Involved tab.



Carli Eubank, Kyle Graham and Heath Morgan were three out of the 100-plus volunteers at the 2022 Special Olympics Oklahoma.



Kyle Graham congratulates athlete crossing the finish line. Photo by Carli Eubank.



Heath Morgan's favorite moment was cheering on the athlete competing in the 1500-meter run. Photo by Carli Eubank.

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Hello everyone! I'm Mike Woods, your Cotton County District 1 Commissioner. It has been my pleasure serving in this office for the past three and a half years. I have come to know a lot of the residents living in this small rural community. You have made it easy for me to do my job and for that, I would like to say thank you. I'm currently seeking re-election in the Republican primary on June 28, 2022. I am an active member of the First Baptist Church in Walters and the Walters Rotary Club. I serve on the board of directors for AS-COG and as Vice-Chairman for Walters Cotton Enhance 911.

I believe in placing an emphasis on rural road and bridge projects to keep the public safe. This is why I promised in my last election to keep the ditches mowed and intersections visibility maintained. I have kept that promise to you. The expertise of my crew has enabled us to put in 63 new tin horns and clean out a total of 36 miles of ditches. These projects have helped with the flow of water to keep it off the roadway, enhancing your safety. I also worked with the Comanche Nation Tribe on a \$562,000 project to redo the Walters Public School parking lots and the walkways for the safety of our children. Under my leadership, the District finished the 2015 FEMA project, as well as the 2016 and 2017 FEMA projects from start to finish totalling \$2,284,264. The District is currently working on a project of a new bridge over Little Beaver Creek and the total estimated cost is \$968,485. This has been needed for decades. The bridge will provide relief to the area farmers and residents traveling the county road. It has also been possible for the District to acquire three new graders, a new pickup truck, an additional pickup truck, a tractor and mower, a semi-truck, and a loader. With the help of my four full-time employees and one part-time employee, we have over one hundred years of road maintenance experience ranging from laying rock, to pulling ditches, grading roads and just your everyday maintenance.

As Commissioner, I was not only able to deliver the previously mentioned accomplishments, but also able to produce a steady increase in the revenue available to the District. Cotton County District 1 was also able to provide an improved benefit package for the employees. I have served you gladly for the past three and a half years. I have the background experience and necessary qualities needed to continue moving Cotton County District 1 into the future. I will continue to strive at being the best at serving the needs of our area. The Commissioner election is on June 28, 2022. Please vote for me, Mike Woods, as your Cotton County District 1 Commissioner. I want to continue working for you, the citizens of Cotton County District 1. Remember... EXPERIENCE MATTERS!

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Cotton Electric Apprentice Field Meter Technician Bryan Goode encourages his team. Photo by Paula Huckabaa.



Cotton Electric Apprentice Field Meter Technician Josh Belcher helps coworker, Bryan Goode, coach their 10-and-under softball team. Photo by Paula Huckabaa.



Cotton Electric Member Service Representative Jennie Evans (not pictured) helps her husband coach their daughter and her teammates. Photo courtesy of Jennie Evans.

“Some of my main goals are to be there for the kids and possibly make a difference in their life,” Goode said. “We are on the field to compete, but at the end of the day, if everybody leaves with a smile and had a good time, then I’ve won somewhere.”

Bryan Goode

By Carli Eubank

For many people, playing sports is a significant chapter in their life’s story, filling it with pages of memories and lessons learned. Making their first layup. Hitting their first home run. Scoring that first touchdown. Holding up the gold ball.

These key moments are highlights of childhood, but a different kind of memory is made on the other side: as a volunteer coach. At the end of the work day, many of our employees trade their signature Cotton Electric caps and hardhats for coaching hats, connecting with kids in the community.

Cotton Electric vice president of operations, Mike Ottinger has coached a variety of sports for many years. Currently, he coaches basketball for a 10-year-old boys’

team and his daughter’s 14-year-old girls’ team. “The part I love about coaching is the pureness of working with kids and helping them accomplish their goals, while having a good time,” Ottinger said. “I also enjoy teaching athletes lessons that go beyond sports, like walking with a purpose, having goals and being kind to others.”

Cotton Electric member service representative, Jennie Evans coaches her daughter’s 8-and-under softball team with her husband. Evans said she jumped at the opportunity to coach with husband. Even though it can be hectic juggling school, work, practices and games, she loves seeing the kids improve with each game.

Josh Belcher, Cotton Electric apprentice field meter technician, is assistant coach

for his daughter’s 10-and-under softball team. Watching the athletes grow as a team and teaching the fundamentals of the game are some of the many things Belcher enjoys about coaching.

“No matter how many times you try to teach something, when a concept finally clicks for a player, that is a golden moment for them,” Belcher said. “Watching them learn something new is definitely my favorite part about coaching.”

Many Cotton Electric employees team up both on the job and on the field. Coaching next to Belcher on the sidelines of the 10-and-under softball team is Bryan Goode, Cotton Electric apprentice field meter technician. When Goode isn’t coaching his daughter’s softball team, he’s teaching the youngest of athletes –

a 6-and-under T-ball team.

Goode played baseball most of his life and having his dad coach him growing up are huge influences on why he carries on the coaching tradition. Part of Goode is still out on the field playing with his team whenever he coaches, he said.

There are a lot of proud moments that come with coaching a young team. Some athletes have “hearts as big as the field” and Goode loves to see them wear a smile from ear-to-ear after they get a hit, he said.

“Some of my main goals are to be there for the kids and possibly make a difference in their life,” Goode said. “We are on the field to compete, but at the end of the day, if everybody leaves with a smile and had a good time, then I’ve won somewhere.”

Belcher and Goode

are just two of many Cotton Electric employees who volunteer their time and efforts to coaching kids in the community.

Cody Pennington, Cotton Electric meter and transformer supervisor, helps coach his son’s 12-and-under baseball team.

“My favorite part of coaching is getting to know the kids and the humor that comes from them while playing the game,” Pennington said. “It is neat to see another generation that loves baseball and has fun with it.”

Lessons that go beyond the field or gym can get overshadowed by learning the fundamentals of the game for athletes. Playing sports helps kids build character by working hard to become great at something and knowing there may be times when you fail, Pennington said.

“There are a lot of life skills that can be instilled in a kid from playing sports that they may not even realize they are learning, like determination,” Belcher said.

The young athletes might only remember how many outs they have or what the score is, but they also recognize the Cotton Electric logo worn by their coaches, parents and others around the ballfield.

“For some kids, it’s not always easy to understand when parents have to leave for an outage,” Pennington said, “but when they see another kid or teammate experiencing that too, it gives them a connection and understanding of the lifestyle that comes with being a cooperative kid.”

I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream

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Servings: 4-6

- 1 pound fresh strawberries, stems removed
- 1 pint heavy whipping cream
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk

In blender, puree strawberries.

In bowl of stand mixer, beat whipping cream and sweetened condensed milk until stiff peaks form. Fold in strawberry puree. Pour into loaf pan. Freeze 5 hours.

Before serving, let ice cream soften 5-10 minutes.



Creamy Raspberry Mocha Parfait

Servings: 4

- 2 tablespoons hot water
 - 1 tablespoon instant coffee
 - 1 packet chocolate pudding mix
 - 2 cups milk
 - 1 carton whipped topping
 - 1 cup heavy cream
 - 1/4 teaspoon cream of tartar
 - 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - 2 tablespoons sugar
 - 2 cups raspberries
- whipped cream, for topping
chocolate powder, for dusting

In small bowl, mix hot water and instant coffee. Cool completely.

In medium bowl, mix milk and chocolate pudding mix until blended and thickened. Add cooled coffee; mix well. Add whipped topping; mix well. Chill.

In large bowl, add heavy cream, cream of tartar and vanilla extract. Beat mixture to form peaks. Gradually add sugar. Continue beating mixture until stiffer peaks form.

In four parfait glasses, layer chocolate pudding mix, whipped cream mix and raspberries.



Top raspberries with additional chocolate pudding mix, dollop of whipped cream, another raspberry and dust with chocolate powder.

Diet and antibiotic resistance

Antimicrobial resistance occurs when germs do not respond to the treatments used to kill them. It can affect anyone at any stage of life and can result in utilization of more aggressive therapies with severe side effects or death. Antimicrobial resistance is maintained by Antibiotic Resistant Genes in the microbiome, which is the collection of living things like bacteria that live in and on us and contribute to our health. The food we eat has an impact on our microbiome, so could diet play a role in combating antimicrobial resistance?

A new study by Oliver and colleagues published in mBio examined correlations between dietary patterns and Antibiotic Resistant Genes in the gut

microbiome. Individuals who had less Antibiotic Resistant Genes ate more fiber. While this type of study cannot prove a clear cause and effect relationship, the correlations observed could help design future research on dietary interventions aimed at reducing antimicrobial resistance.

The US Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend consuming 25 grams of fiber per day for women and 38 grams per day for men aged 18 to 50 years. For adults over



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT

50, the recommendation is 21 grams of fiber per day for women and 30 grams per day for men. The average intake of fiber is 10-15 grams per day; many Americans are missing out on the health benefits of fiber. In addition

of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, high fiber cereals, nuts, seeds, beans and legumes will increase the amount of fiber in your diet.

The Centers for Disease Control outlines three actions to fight antibiotic resistance: prevent infections, improve antibiotic use, and stop the spread of resistance when it develops. Perhaps in the future they will add consuming dietary fiber as a strategy. Until then, already known benefits of eating fiber such as helping control food intake and weight, decreasing risk of heart disease, improving bowel habits, and feeding the good bacteria in the gut are reasons enough to increase daily fiber intake.

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New limits expand 401(k), IRA opportunities

You could spend two, or even three, decades in retirement. So, to pay for all those years, you'll probably need to take full advantage of your retirement accounts. And in 2022, you may have expanded opportunities to deduct retirement plan contributions on your tax return.



changed this year, let's review the key benefits of these accounts:

- Traditional IRA – You typically contribute pretax (deductible) dollars to a traditional IRA, and your earnings can grow tax-deferred.
- Roth IRA – You invest after-tax dollars in a Roth IRA, so your contributions won't lower your taxable income, but your earnings can grow tax free, provided you've had your account at least five years and you're 59½ or older when you begin taking withdrawals.
- 401(k) – A 401(k) or similar plan (such as a 457(b) for state and local government employees or a 403(b) for

employees of public schools or nonprofit groups) is generally funded with pretax dollars and provides tax-deferred earnings. Some employers offer a Roth 401(k), in which employees contribute after tax-dollars and can take tax-free withdrawals if they meet the same age and length-of-ownership requirements as the Roth IRA.

So, what's different about these plans in 2022? First, consider the traditional IRA. If you – and your spouse, if you're married – don't have a 401(k) or similar plan, you can always deduct the full amount of your contribution on your tax return, no matter what you earn. But if one or both of you are covered by an employer-

sponsored plan, then your deductions could be reduced or eliminated based on your income.

Single taxpayers can claim the full deduction if your modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) is \$68,000 or less (\$109,000 for married filing jointly), with deductibility decreasing at higher income levels and phasing out entirely at \$78,000 (\$129,000 for married filing jointly). But here's the key point: Compared to 2021, these ranges are \$2,000 higher for single filers and \$4,000 higher for those who are married and filing jointly – which means that this year, you might have more opportunities to make

deductible contributions.

And a similar type of increase applies to Roth IRA eligibility. In 2022, if you're a single filer, you can put in up to \$6,000 (\$7,000 if you are 50 or older) in a Roth IRA if your modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) is less than \$129,000 – up from \$125,000 in 2021. Allowable contributions are reduced at higher income levels and phased out if your MAGI is \$144,000 or more, up from \$140,000 in 2021. If you're married and file jointly, the respective ranges are \$204,000–\$214,000, up from \$198,000–\$208,000 in 2021. Again, higher ranges may mean more opportunities for you. (Consult your tax advisor

to determine your eligibility to contribute to a Roth IRA or make deductible contributions to a traditional IRA.)

And finally, the annual contribution limit for 401(k), 457(b) and 403(b) plans is \$20,500 – up \$1,000 from 2021. If you're 50 or older, you can put in an extra \$6,500 this year, for a total of \$27,000.

These changes may not seem monumental, but when you're saving for retirement, any opportunities to invest and potentially reduce taxes, of whatever size, can be valuable. So, review your options to determine how you can help yourself move closer to your retirement goals.

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

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SUMMER STORM SAFETY WORD SEARCH

Summer means fun in the sun! But the season can also bring strong thunderstorms.

Read the storm safety tips below, then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle below.



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



- If you hear thunder, that means **lightning** can strike nearby. Go indoors.
- Wait at least 30 minutes after the last rumble of **thunder** before going back outside.
- During a thunderstorm, stay away from tall, isolated **structures** or trees, which are more susceptible to lightning strikes.
- Avoid standing near **windows** during a thunderstorm.
- Strong summer storms occasionally cause power outages. During an outage, it's best to have an **emergency kit** on hand.

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		5	2	4		1	8	
2		9	1			5		
							2	6
	9							8
8		4	3			7	5	1
1	5			8			3	4
5	4		9					
		7	8	1				
				7				3

Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Parting Shots



Energy Camp winners Ethan Miller and Ava Woods learned about electric cooperatives at the 2022 Energy Camp. Photo courtesy of Nicole Bode.

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RE-ELECT

GREG POWELL

CONSERVATIVE REPUBLICAN
as your
**Cotton County
Commissioner Dist. 3**

- **15 years** Experience as your District #3 Commissioner
- **30 years** Successful Business Owner/Operator & Rancher
- **23 years** as a Volunteer Firefighter
- **34 years** as a Dedicated Husband & Father

If I am re-elected I will continue to work hard for this county. As you know, we are facing difficult times in Cotton County and across our country. I believe now more than ever we need experienced leaders for the choices to be made for our future. I encourage everyone to get out and VOTE. It is important!

For the past 15 years as your District 3 Commissioner I have:

- Built 11 new bridges using federal and state funds
- Received over \$2.1 million in FEMA grants for 8 different disaster events and over \$880,000 in state disaster funds
- Completed over 7 million dollars in asphalt road projects using federal, state and tribal funds
- Have 3 future projects planned with the Kiowa and Comanche tribes
- Plus another state funded 4 mile road project

*I will continue to use my experience to work for ALL the people of Cotton County.
I would appreciate your vote, June 28th.*

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