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# The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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

VOLUME 68

February 14, 2025

NUMBER 6

## A heartfelt thank you for our members' valued feedback

By Carli Eubank

At Cotton Electric Cooperative, we are committed to serving you – our members – by delivering safe, reliable and affordable power while providing excellent member service and improving the quality of life in the communities we serve.

Every fall, we check in with our membership more formally, conducting a random survey to see where we are excelling and where we can improve.

We appreciate the members who participated in the survey conducted in October 2024 and offered constructive feedback and suggestions to help us continue growing and better serving you.

Cotton Electric received an American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) score of 88 on a 100-point scale.\* Our Cooperative Attitude and Performance Score (CAPS) rating is 93.

Cotton Electric's ACSI score of 88 is also much higher than all publicly measured municipal energy utilities and investor-owned energy utilities. In 2024, investor-owned energy utilities had a score of 74, with municipal energy utilities scoring a 75, per the industry ratings in the 2024 ACSI Utility Sector Report.

Beyond the questions used to calculate the ACSI score, further survey responses showed an overall improvement in areas that focus on what is important to our members, like overall satisfaction, electric service and rates, member service and co-op culture. We are encouraged by this feedback and will continue to focus on what matters most to our members.

From the survey, we learned one of the tools our members are particularly interested in is SmartHub. SmartHub allows you to manage your account easily from your smartphone or computer to pay bills, track energy usage, report outages, and more. To create a SmartHub account, visit [www.cottonelectric.com/smarthub](http://www.cottonelectric.com/smarthub) or download the app from Google



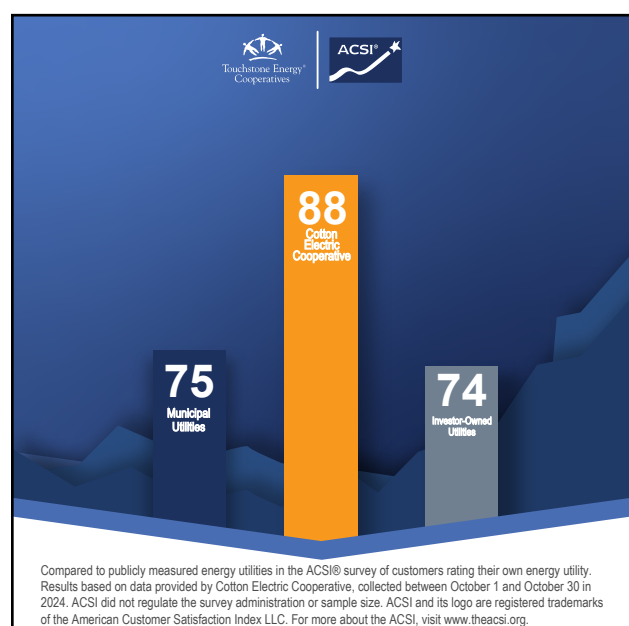
Play or the Apple Store.

Another helpful resource for members is our Outage Center webpage, found at [www.cottonelectric.com/outagecenter](http://www.cottonelectric.com/outagecenter). Members have multiple options for reporting outages, including a dispatcher who is on call 24/7 and the SmartHub app. A new feature we've added is TextPower. This new outage texting system allows members to receive alerts about outages in the area or to report an outage by texting "OUT" at 580-875-3351. To start receiving outage notifications via text, make sure your mobile phone number and contact information is up to date on your electric account.

At our 2024 Annual Meeting, many members expressed satisfaction with the drive-thru setup, and survey results indicated interest in more community events hosted by Cotton Electric. We appreciate your input and look forward to exploring new ways to engage with our members.

At Cotton Electric, your satisfaction as a member-owner is our top priority. Your valuable feedback is vital in helping us improve and ensure we continue to serve you to the best of our ability.

*\*Compared to publicly measured energy utilities in the ACSI® survey of customers rating their own energy utility. Results based on data provided by Cotton Electric Cooperative, collected between Oct. 1 and Oct. 30. ACSI did not regulate the survey administration or sample size. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC. For more about the ACSI, visit [www.theacsi.org](http://www.theacsi.org).*



## About the survey

The 2024 survey took place in October. Postcards and emails were sent to randomly selected members, inviting them to participate in the survey online or by telephone. Conducted by Inside Information of Smithville, Missouri, Cotton Electric has relied on their member research expertise to help with surveys since 2018.

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) is the only national cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction in the United States. Each year, the ACSI uses data from interviews with roughly 200,000 customers as inputs to an econometric model for analyzing customer satisfaction with approximately 400 companies in around 40 industries and 10 economic sectors. ACSI data have proven to be strongly related to several essential indicators of micro and macroeconomic performance.

The ACSI publishes an annual Energy Utilities Study, which is an independent customer satisfaction measure of the U.S. top investor-owned, municipal, and cooperative utilities.

The Cooperative Attitude and Performance Score or CAPS, is a cooperative performance model developed by Inside Information. It is an industry specific benchmarking tool used to gauge performance in service areas deemed most important by cooperative members: Trustworthiness, well-managed, cares about members.

### Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after Feb. 1, 2025, is \$0.00901 per kilowatt hours (kWh).

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kWh, this will amount to a charge of \$11.71 on the February bill.

### January 2025 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	48	25	37	16	60	28	44
2	60	23	42	17	70	33	52
3	56	34	45	18	44	23	34
4	62	51	57	19	31	15	23
5	61	19	40	20	31	17	24
6	38	16	27	21	31	6	19
7	39	16	28	22	53	13	33
8	41	16	29	23	48	19	34
9	32	25	29	24	58	14	36
10	41	23	32	25	57	31	44
11	57	20	39	26	50	29	40
12	55	29	42	27	50	23	37
13	47	20	34	28	56	26	41
14	56	20	38	29	53	45	49
15	56	28	42	30	63	43	53
				31	66	32	49

Source: [srh.noaa.gov/oum/](http://srh.noaa.gov/oum/)  
Average Daily High: 51 Average Daily Low: 25

### Did You Know?

Cotton Electric Cooperative offices will be closed Monday, Feb. 17 for Presidents' Day. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The next issue of *The Current* should arrive in mailboxes March 14, 2025.

### 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](mailto:TheCurrent@cottonelectric.com).

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



**COTTON**  
ELECTRIC CO-OP

**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.

# From the CEO

## Advocating for safe, reliable power

On Feb. 3, Oklahoma's 60th Legislature opened session and began its annual task of introducing, evaluating and debating bills. Oklahoma's electric cooperatives are hard at work keeping an eye on the legislation filed this session and working to protect

the interests of our members. As a member of your electric cooperative, you're an invested owner in the infrastructure and service your electric cooperative provides to you and to the communities we serve. It is our mission to deliver safe, reliable, and affordable electricity to all our

member-owners like you. In the past, co-op members have been instrumental in stopping legislation that adversely affects electric cooperatives and our members.

We need your help as co-op member-owners and ask that you join Voices for Cooperative Power (VCP). VCP is a network of electric co-op members working together to influence elected officials who are making energy policy decisions that impact our co-ops and, by extension, our way of life. You can sign up at <https://voicesforcooperative-power.com/register/>. When issues arise that call for support or opposition, you'll be notified and asked to contact your legislators to speak up for yourself and your cooperative.

You can also help support members of Congress who agree to advocate for sensible rulings that support the mission of rural electric cooperatives. If you are interested, you can join other electric cooperative consumer members, employees and trust-



**Jennifer Meason, CEO**

ees nationwide who are part of our national, nonpartisan political action committee, America's Electric Cooperatives PAC. By contributing to America's Electric Cooperatives PAC, you make a difference in shaping the future of rural America, including your home co-op.

If you would like to contribute, please visit [www.cottonelectric.com/your-co-op-your-voice](http://www.cottonelectric.com/your-co-op-your-voice) or return the completed form on Page 3 with your next bill payment, and we will add your contribution to your monthly bill. It's a small investment that allows our voice to be heard in Washington, D.C.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of your electric cooperative.



Cotton Electric CEO Jennifer Meason visits with Senator Spencer Kern and Representative Brad Boles at the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperative's Out of the Gate legislative reception. Cotton Electric employees also visited with Representative Trey Caldwell, Representative Daniel Pae, Southwest Oklahoma Field Representative for Senator James Lankford Steve Carson and Field Representatives for Congressman Tom Cole Megan Hankins and Scott Chance. Photo by Carli Eubank.

**TO OUR MEMBERS,**

*Happy Valentine's Day!*

**FROM:**  
**COTTON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace. Use ENERGY STAR®-rated equipment, which consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life. Another way to save energy in your home office is to use efficient lamps for task lighting. Replace any older bulbs with energy-saving LEDs.

*Source: www.energy.gov*

### December 2024 Operating Stats

	2024	2023
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$7,014,550	\$6,490,491
Cost of Purchased Power	4,839,704	4,360,155
Taxes	121,042	115,475
Total Operating Expense per Mile	1,260	1,172
Average Farm and Residential Bill	167	163
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,331	1,411
Total Meters Billed (Farm, Residential)	19,776	19,538
Miles Energized	5,281	5,265
Density per Mile	3.74	3.71
New Service Connects YTD	416	434
Services Retired	179	190

### Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

March	
Ad Sales	Feb. 28
Classified	Feb. 28
Publish	March 14
April	
Ad Sales	March 28
Classified	March 28
Publish	April 11

## The Current

Published monthly at Walters, Oklahoma by Cotton Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Jennifer Meason .....CEO  
Shane Bowers..... Vice President  
Zach Young .....Director  
Carli Eubank ..... Communications Specialist

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# Energy Efficiency

## Wrap your home in savings

Ensuring your home is properly insulated can improve energy efficiency and make your home more comfortable. Insulation acts like a cozy coat that reduces heat loss during winter months and a protective layer that reduces heat gain during summer months.

Many older homes have less insulation than newer homes, but even newer homes can benefit from additional insulation. While it's not the least expensive efficiency improvement, adding insulation and air sealing your home can provide the biggest bang for your buck in energy savings and overall comfort.

The most common areas to insulate are attics, ceilings, crawl spaces or unconditioned basements, exterior and interior walls, floors, and ductwork located in unconditioned spaces.

The amount and effectiveness rating of insulation required for each area varies by climate, but many websites like The Department of Energy or your local hardware store provide easy-to-follow recommendations. Visit [energy.gov/insulation](http://energy.gov/insulation) to learn about recommended R-values for specific areas of the home based on climate zones.

It's important to understand how insulation effectiveness is measured. Insulation is rated in R-value, which measures the material's resistance to conductive heat flow. The higher the R-value, the greater the insulating effectiveness. The R-value you'll need depends on factors like climate, type of heating and cooling system and which area of the home you plan to insulate.

Insulation is offered in a wide range of materials from bulky fiberglass rolls to cellulose materials made from recycled paper products.

If you're considering installing additional insulation, talk to an expert who can offer guidance on the right materials for your budget, climate and comfort needs.

Investing in proper insulation for your home not only enhances comfort but also reduces energy consumption.

For more tips and information about energy efficiency, visit [www.cottonelectric.com/energy-efficiency](http://www.cottonelectric.com/energy-efficiency).



**Heath Morgan,**  
Energy Efficiency  
Coordinator



The most common areas to insulate in your home are attics, ceilings, exterior and interior walls, crawl spaces or unconditioned basements, floors and ductwork located in unconditioned spaces. Photo by Carli Eubank.




Installing proper insulation and air sealing around your home is an energy efficiency investment that enhances comfort while reducing energy consumption. Photo source: Erik Mclean.

### Heating Degree Day and Cooling Degree Day Calendar

# JANUARY

HDD	YEAR	CDD
839	2024	0
527	2023	0
694	2022	0

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



## Your Co-op, Your Voice.

Yes! I want to help keep the voice of rural electric cooperatives heard in the state and national political process by participating in America's Electric Cooperatives PAC.

Please add the following amount to my monthly electric bill:

- Co-op Owners Member: \$2.08/month (\$25/year)
- Ambassador Club: \$4.17/month (\$50/year)
- Century Club: \$8.33/month (\$100/year)
- Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I affirm that my contribution has been made with non-corporate funds:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Account #: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_


\*Federal Election Law requires the following information for contribution equal to or exceeding \$200:

Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return the completed form to:  
Cotton Electric Cooperative  
226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572





# Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation

## CECF encourages applicants

Operation Round Up exists because of the generosity of Cotton Electric's members and is designed to provide financial assistance to worthwhile individuals and organizations.

For those interested in seeking funds for local individuals or organizations, below is a portion of the CECF grant application guidelines.

### Grant application guidelines:

- The Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (the "Foundation") provides funds for Charitable purposes within the service area of Cotton Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CEC).
- Grant applications are reviewed quarterly. Applications are to be received in the CEC offices by the close of business 14 days before the quarterly meeting of the Foundation Board of Directors.
- Grants to any group, organization, charity or similar organization will not exceed \$10,000 and grants to individuals will not exceed \$2,500.

### Requirement for school applications

Applications for grants benefitting schools 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.

### Application instructions:

- Please complete all sections of the application. If an item is not applicable to your organization, please make note in the space provided.
- If you are exempt from income tax, please attach verification such as a copy of letter 501(c)(3) from the Internal Revenue Service or an explanation of why your organization is considered to be exempt.
- Please include a recent financial statement. If your organization completes an annual audit, please attach a copy with your application. If your organization does not complete an an-

nual audit, please attach a copy of your treasurer's report and bank statements to verify your source of funding, funds available, etc.

- Please be specific when describing how the funds will be used if approved, and attach price estimates if available.

### Categories of Assistance:

- 1. Communities**
  - Programs, projects and organizations that are important components of a community's overall quality of life, with emphasis on public safety, health care, self-sufficiency, and basic human needs.
- 2. Education and youth**
  - Programs and projects designed to combat critical social problems affecting youth, particularly children and teens at risk.
  - Programs and projects that promote youth wellness.
  - Programs and projects that work to provide supplemental materials and equipment for schools.
  - Programs and projects to enhance school facilities.
- 3. Seniors**
  - Programs and projects to support organizations and the facilities serving senior citizens.
- 4. Volunteer fire departments**
  - Programs and projects to enhance volunteer fire department facilities and vehicles.
  - Equipment and gear purchases and upgrades.
- 5. Individuals**
  - An individual or family in need of assistance may request a grant. Examples of need conditions may include the consequences of a disaster, catastrophic illness, or permanent disability.
  - Individual applications must include a letter of referral from a sponsoring group such as a church, civic organization or other group wanting to raise funds for the individual.

The Foundation will not consider requests for general operating funds, capital campaigns or support for salaries. The Foundation prefers requests for program needs. The Foundation will not consider

**HOW TO APPLY**

**EMAIL**  
ZYOUNG@COTTONELECTRIC.COM

**MAIL**  
226 N. BROADWAY,  
WALTERS, OK 73572

**WEBSITE**  
WWW.COTTONELECTRIC.COM/  
GRANT-APPLICATIONS

**COTTON ELECTRIC CHARITABLE FOUNDATION**

requests for the benefit of an individual or family unit unless the application includes a letter from a sponsoring group. Grants will be issued to the sponsoring group.

### Applicant eligibility

- Contributions will generally be made only to not-for-profit organizations that have been granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service; and to civic-based entities.
- The organization must contribute to the community's health and/or welfare.
  - The organization's services must be non-discriminatory in nature.
  - Activities affiliated with a religious organization with a secular community designation are eligible for the Foundation's consideration of support. A secular designation is defined as an organization separate from the church or religious organization that provides services to people regardless of their religious beliefs and does not propagate a belief in a specific faith. (Example: A food bank that is a separate 501(c)(3) organization from a church and provides food and meals to anyone who qualifies for services, regardless of religious belief.)

### Evaluation factors

The following factors will be considered in the evaluation of all funding requests:

- Potential benefit to residents of the CEC service area and the entire community.
  - Prior contribution level of Foundation or community support for the program or project or the organization requesting the funds.
  - Fiscal and administrative capability of the organization to deliver a quality service or program.
  - Results that are predictable and can be evaluated.
- The Foundation's Board of Directors shall evaluate all funding requests and determine whether to issue a grant for all or a portion of the funds requested.

### Project timing

Requests for funding should state whether the funds are intended for ongoing operations or for a specific project that will terminate at some point in the future. Whenever possible, requests for funding should be for projects that will be completed within 12 months following the Foundation's approval of the grant application. For a complete overview of CECF grant application guidelines, please visit [www.cottonelectric.com/grant-applications](http://www.cottonelectric.com/grant-applications). Applications may be submitted via email to [zyoung@cottonelectric.com](mailto:zyoung@cottonelectric.com), online at [www.cottonelectric.com/grant-applications](http://www.cottonelectric.com/grant-applications) or mailed to 226 N. Broadway Walters, OK 73572.

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# Don't be up in the air about safety: Metallic balloons

Having red and silver heart-shaped metallic balloons delivered to a loved one on Valentine's Day is a sweet gesture. These shiny and colorful balloons brighten any celebration, but they must be handled and disposed of properly to avoid safety hazards and damage to electrical systems.

Many safety experts recommend metallic over latex balloons because they are less of a choking hazard. However, using metallic balloons improperly can pose other safety hazards. Fortunately, with a few simple precautions, metallic balloons can be used without any problems.

Metallic balloons are filled with helium and are made of a type of nylon with a thin external metal coating. The metal coating has the ability to conduct electricity. If released, metallic balloons can come into contact with overhead power lines or electrical substations and can cause power outages.

Cotton Electric and Safe Electricity offer the following tips to help you make sure metallic balloons are used and disposed of safely:

- Always tie your balloons down or use a weight.
- It is safest to keep your metallic balloons inside. In fact, some parks have banned metallic balloons on their property, so be aware of these warnings.
- If you see a metallic balloon in contact with a power line, never attempt to disconnect it yourself. Notify the electrical company immediately.
- Never tie a metallic ribbon on your balloon. Also, never tie a metallic balloon to a child's arm. These both can pose substantial electrical threats.

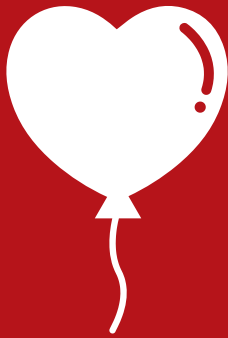
After your celebrations have come to an end, always deflate and poke holes in metallic balloons so that they cannot become airborne after disposal. Balloons are not biodegradable, so they should be recycled rather than released into the environment or sent to a landfill. Before placing the balloon in your recycling bin, puncture it so that it cannot become airborne if released.


For more information on electrical safety, visit [www.safeelectricity.org](http://www.safeelectricity.org) or [www.cottonelectric.com/safety](http://www.cottonelectric.com/safety).

Source: SafeElectricity

## Safety Tip

Did you know that metallic balloons can damage the power grid and cause power outages? Metallic balloons eventually fall back to earth and their remnants can cause harm to animals and marine life. Consider alternatives to balloon releases and enjoy balloons indoors.






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Altus, OK. 73521  
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Lawton, OK. 73505  
580.536.2121



**DUNCAN**  
2465 N. Whisenant Dr.  
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Duncan, OK. 73533  
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# Save on prescriptions with your Co-op Connections card

When you use your Co-op Connections card, discounts are waiting at your fingertips, and one of the great savings offered is on medications. Since its launch in 2008, Cotton Electric members have saved a total of approximately \$672,400 on prescriptions through the program.

The Co-op Connections card is really beneficial for self-employed individuals, college students, and retirees. Although the Co-op Connections card is not another form of insurance and cannot be used to replace or combine with current insurance, it can certainly lessen the financial load in households.

### Want to learn more?

- Download the app or pick up a card.
- Present your Co-op Connections card at the pharmacy check out. If you have insurance, present your insurance card as well.
- Ask the pharmacist to calculate the discounted price and compare it to your insurance price.
- Choose the lowest price between the two.

In addition to members saving on medications, the Co-op Connections card offers other health savings, including dental, vision, hearing, lab testing, flu shots, MRI and CT scans, and more. One of the biggest benefits for members is financial help during

the Medicare coverage gaps, otherwise known as the “donut hole.”

Members can also get their discounted medications delivered to their home address, saving time and money.

To find one of the 60,000-plus participating pharmacies or to compare prices by location, visit [www.rxprice.newbenefits.com](http://www.rxprice.newbenefits.com), call 800-800-7616 or search on the Co-op Connections app. Members can also find more information and savings under the “Health and Wellness” tab at [www.connections.coop.com](http://www.connections.coop.com).

The Co-op Connections card also offers savings beyond the pharmacy counter. Members can use the card to save on dining, shopping, groceries, services, travel, and many more attractions. Co-op Connections cards can be used anywhere across the country where they are accepted.

To learn more and start saving, visit [www.connections.coop.com](http://www.connections.coop.com) or [www.cottonelectric.com/co-op-connections](http://www.cottonelectric.com/co-op-connections). Co-op Connections cards are free and available to all members to be downloaded in the app, printed online, or picked up at Cotton Electric offices in Walters or Duncan.



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# Text messaging attacks: A Smishing saga

Mark was perplexed by the text message, a package delivery notification from Amazon - "Delivery attempt missed! Click the link now to reschedule or your package will be returned." Mark could not remember ordering anything online recently, but to be honest, he ordered so many things online it was easy to forget. Not wanting to miss any packages, he clicked the link, and a page loaded asking for his contact information "to ensure proper rescheduling." The message seemed a bit odd, but Mark figured better safe than sorry. He entered his home address details and was then asked for additional information, including his credit card information. Trusting the company, he entered everything it asked to ensure delivery. The page then said his package should be delivered soon. Then, within fifteen minutes Mark received a phone call from his credit card company notifying him that his card was being used to make numerous online charges from all over the world. Mark froze as he realized that there was no package and that the text message had been a scam to trick him out of all his information, including his credit card.

## What are messaging attacks (Smishing)

Messaging attacks, also called Smishing (a combination of the words SMS and Phishing), occur when cyber attackers use SMS, texting, or similar messaging technologies to trick you into taking an action you should not take, such as giving up your credit card or bank account password or installing a fake mobile app. Just like in email phishing attacks, cyber criminals often play on your emotions, such as creating a sense of urgency or curiosity. However, what makes



If you get a suspicious text or phone call, do not respond. Keep this checklist in mind if you need help spotting and stopping a Smishing attack. Photo courtesy of MetroCreative.

messaging attacks so dangerous is that there is far less information and fewer clues in a text than there is in an email, making it much harder for you to detect that something is wrong.

Sometimes cyber criminals will even combine phone calls with messaging attacks. For example, you may get an urgent text message from your bank asking if you authorized an odd payment.

The message then asks you to reply YES or NO to the message. If you respond, the cyber criminal now knows you will engage with the message and will then call you on your phone pretending to be the bank's fraud department. They can then try and talk you out of your financial and credit card information, or even your bank account's login and password.

## Spotting and stopping Smishing attacks

Here are some of the most common clues of a messaging attack:

- **Urgency:** Any message that creates a tremendous sense of urgency, when someone is attempting to rush or pressure you into taking an action, such as claiming your accounts will be closed or you will go to jail.
- **Greed:** Does the message sound too good to be true? No, you did not really win a new iPhone for free.
- **Curiosity:** If you get a message that looks like the equivalent of a "wrong number," or someone you do not know just saying "hi", do not respond to it or attempt to contact the sender; just delete it. These are attempts by cyber criminals to start a conversation with you, such as romance scams.
- **Personal Info:** Is the message taking you to websites asking for your personal information, credit card, passwords, or other sensitive information they should not have access to?
- **Payments:** Be very suspicious of unusual payment requests, like sending money through Western Union or Bitcoin.

If you get a text message from an official organization that you believe may be legitimate, call the organization back directly. However, don't use the phone number included in the message, instead use a trusted phone number. For example, if you get a text message from your bank saying there is a problem with your account or credit card, get a trusted phone number by visiting your bank's website, find the phone number on a billing statement or from the back of your bank or credit card, then call using that number. Also remember that most government agencies, such as tax or law enforcement agencies, will never contact you via text message, they will only contact you by old fashioned mail.

When it comes to message-based Smishing attacks, you are your own best defense.

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# Co-op Life

## Local humane societies share the love with loyal companions

By Carli Eubank

As Valentine’s Day draws near, the season of love is all around – flower bouquets, decorated pastries, hand-written cards and acts of kindness shared with those we cherish. For some, this time of year might mean welcoming a furry, four-legged friend into their home. Local humane societies are dedicated to providing shelter, care and a second chance for animals waiting for their forever homes. During a time where kindness is celebrated, why not share that warmth with a pet in need?

Located in Duncan, the Stephens County Humane Society (SCHS) kennels and helps county strays and owner surrenders by providing vaccines, food, activities, foster homes, adoption events and other services for dogs and cats.

With a background in the health care field and serving for SCHS as a volunteer and then a Board Member for a few years, Kelly Nelson has been the executive director of the nonprofit organization since 2022. Nelson shared how she and the SCHS work hard to be an advocate for compassionate pet ownerships in the community.

“Ultimately, we would love to be out of business,” Nelson said. “People typically want to do the right thing, but they just don’t always have the resources. If someone needs food, vaccines or any other service we could possibly provide, we want to focus on being that resource that helps keep the pet with its owner.”

With a full-time staff and more than 50 volunteers, animals at SCHS are always tended to and loved on, but there are always opportunities for the public to offer a helping hand. Volunteers help with a range of tasks at the shelter, such as cleaning laundry, dishes and litter boxes, walking dogs, helping with fundraisers, fostering pets, and much more. A well-received program is Takeout Tuesday, where volunteers take an animal out of the shelter for a day.

“During their outing, we ask volunteers to take a few photos and provide feedback on the animal’s behavior, and it allows us to expand their profile,” said SCHS Shelter Manager Courtney

Myrmel. “Whether it’s going for a walk or grabbing a pup cup, we really get to see that animal’s personality outside of the shelter.”

Another successful initiative is the Home to Home program. Myrmel shared that when animals move from a home to the shelter, it places a lot of stress on them, and this program makes it easier for animals to go from being in one home to another home, keeping the shelter as a last resort.

SCHS also holds community events and fundraisers including puppy therapy sessions with local health care professionals, Tractor Supply’s National Pet Appreciation campaign, PetCo events, Bark in the Park and more.

“We really try to give as much information as possible and provide people with as much as we can for them to keep caring for their pet,” Myrmel said.

On the other side of our service territory is the Humane Society of Lawton-Comanche County. Unlike traditional shelters, the organization is foster based, meaning they do not have a fixed location or facility. With a 24-hour answering service and support of volunteers, the organization provides dogs and cats with the best options of support and resources for each situation.

Cotton Electric member Chelsea Newhouse, who began her journey with the Humane Society several years ago by fostering a litter of kittens, has served as the dog coordinator and education director for the past five years. Newhouse fell in love with how well

staff assisted her through that process and wanted to help others have the same experience.

“We try really hard to keep pets at home with their owner, whether that’s giving them a month’s worth of food or information on potential coverage on moving fees,” Newhouse said. “Every call we receive is heartbreaking, but our passion to help pets and their owners the best way we can is what keeps us going.”

In her role as education director, Newhouse visits local schools to teach students about proper pet care. With this new education program, Newhouse hopes to encourage kids to take responsibility, assist with household tasks, care for their pets and so many other things. She also brings along her adopted dog, who has had her own challenges with allergies, to share her story with students.

“I love bringing one of my dogs that I adopted from the Humane Society two years ago because I love to tell her story to students; she’s very well behaved, and she loves all the attention from the kids,” Newhouse said. “We’re always looking for schools that are willing to open up just 30 minutes of their day and help us teach students a very valuable lesson on caring for animals.”

Other ways the public can help support the Humane Society of Lawton-Comanche County is through volunteering, opening their home to fosters, donating funds or items, attending fundraisers and much more.

Whether it’s through volunteering, fostering or donating, there are plenty of opportunities to support local humane societies and the loyal companions they support. To learn more about the Humane Society of Lawton-Comanche County or SCHS, visit their websites or follow them on Facebook.



Valentina, a timid and loving cat, is one of the Stephens County Humane Society’s longest residents. Photo by Carli Eubank.



Chelsea Newhouse travels to local schools to teach kids how to care for their pets. Photo courtesy of Newhouse.



Charlie, one of the Stephens County Humane Society residents, sniffs for treats outside. Photo by Carli Eubank.

# Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the March issue, please submit information by calling 580-875-3351 or sending an email to [TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com](mailto:TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com) by Feb. 28. Only events occurring after March 14 will be published in the next issue.

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

### Local baking competition

The Stephens County Genealogy Society is holding the third annual Sweet Treat sampling and contest on Feb. 22 from 1-3 p.m. Bakers and candymakers will prepare samples of treats for the public to taste. Entries will be judged in the categories of not-for-profit bakers and for-profit bakers. The grand prize will be decided by the people's choice. Door prizes will be given to the public at intervals between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

The event will be held at First United Methodist Church in Duncan, 3820 Country Club Rd. Tickets are \$10 each and available at the door or at the Genealogy Library at 321 N. 8th St., Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. The library is free and open to the public and holds resources from all 50 states. For more information, call 580-255-8718.

### DLT presents *Matilda, The Musical*

Duncan Little Theatre is scheduled for their 200th show with their production of *Matilda, The Musical*.

Show dates are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Feb. 23-25 and March 1-2, and 2 p.m. Feb. 23 at the Simmons Center, 800 Chisholm Trail Pkwy in Duncan. For more information, visit [www.duncanlittletheatre.com](http://www.duncanlittletheatre.com).

### Annual coin show in Duncan

Visit the Stephens County Coin Club 56th Annual Coin Show to browse through rows of coins to buy, sell and trade, featuring gold, silver, coins, currency, tokens and more from all over the United States. There is no fee for parking or admission. The event is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 21, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Feb. 22, at the Stephens County Fairgrounds, 2002 S. 13 St. in Duncan. For questions or more information, call 580-475-4570.

### CU hosts upcoming music events

Fill your world with music by attending one of the many upcoming music events hosted at the Cameron University Department of Art, Music and Theatre Arts.

- Cameron University Concert Band: Feb. 28 at 7:30 p.m.
- Cameron University Community Choir: March 2 at 3 p.m.
- Jazz festival: March 4 at 7:30 p.m.
- Orchestra concert: March 6 at 7:30 p.m.

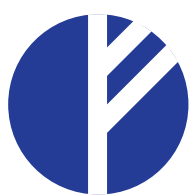
For more information or to purchase tickets, visit [www.cameron.edu/art-music-and-theatre/events/music](http://www.cameron.edu/art-music-and-theatre/events/music) or call 580-581-2346.

# PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Cotton Electric member Archer Pelley helps his poppy, Bub Johnson, move hay in the tractor.

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



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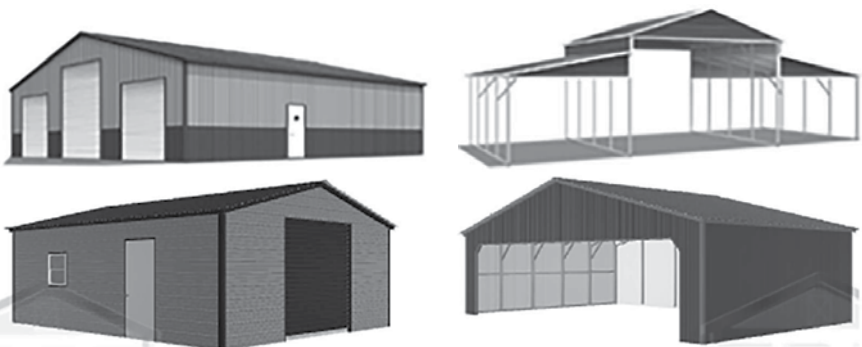
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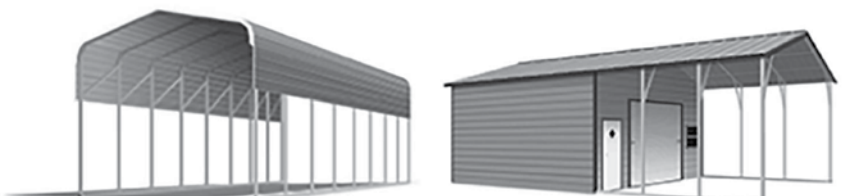
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# Demystifying the seed oil controversy



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

## Food For THOUGHT

The term "seed oil" refers to fats made from the seeds of plants. Vegetable oil is a broader category of fats made from plants and includes olive oil and avocado oil, which are made from the fruit part of the plant, and oils made from nuts (for example, peanut oil). Plant-based fats came about in the early 20th century as a more cost-efficient and healthier alternative to animal fats. The extraction methods are generally more efficient and less costly than other fats, and they are higher in unsaturated fat than animal fats (the exception to this is fat from fish).

Seed and vegetable oils have recently fallen victim to sweeping generalizations in social media and popular press. Criticisms include that seed and vegetable oils contain harmful toxins, contribute to chronic disease, and promote inflammation. These overgeneralizations are causing a tsunami of misinformation that could result in consumers making more harmful choices when using fats in cooking.

Seed and vegetable oil extraction

methods contribute to the harmful toxin concern. Many are extracted from plants using chemicals, and there are concerns that these chemicals leave residue in the oil and, therefore, get ingested. The most common solvent used in extraction is hexane. The U.S. does not have an acceptable/safe intake amount for ingesting hexane but does have occupational limits for hexane inhalation and limits on amount of hexane residue allowed in food additives. The EU does have residue limits for hexane in food products, including vegetable oils.

As hexane is a neurotoxin, it is easy to incite panic over potential hexane residue in seed and vegetable oils. However, there are seed and vegetable oils that are not chemically extracted, and science has yet to confirm that the amount of hexane residue in our food is enough to actually cause harm. If you desire to continue using seed and vegetable oils in cooking for the many positive health benefits, choose oils that are made with the following methods: cold-pressing, expeller pressing, supercritical fluid extraction or microwave-assisted extraction. Cold-pressed is often featured on food labels, but the other methods may require contacting the manufacturer to confirm.

Reusing the same oil over and over again can degrade the oil, resulting in the production of harmful toxins and lowering certain nutrients. This practice is most often used for deep fat frying in the restaurant industry. It is also hypothesized that this occurs with highly processed foods. An easy way to avoid this is by limiting your intake of fried foods consumed away from home, not reusing seed and vegetable oils when

cooking at home, and reducing your intake of highly processed foods.

The claim of seed and vegetable oils contributing to chronic disease is not supported by currently available scientific literature. The majority of scientific literature points to the opposite - because seed and vegetable oils are high in unsaturated fats, they are actually associated with chronic disease prevention in the context of an overall healthy lifestyle. Regarding inflammation, this argument comes from the fact that omega-6 fatty acids are more inflammatory than omega-3 fatty acids, but they are both polyunsaturated fatty acids and are less inflammatory than other fats. The impact of foods on inflammation in the body is highly individualized and is impacted by many factors including the presence of chronic diseases, like diabetes and obesity, and intake of other nutrients. This is one of the many reasons why the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends eating a variety of foods (including a variety of sources of fat) and fitting those foods into healthy calorie ranges.

The bottom line is you can enjoy a balanced diet that includes seed and vegetable oils. If you desire to make adjustments, consider using oils produced by nonsolvent extraction methods, lowering the amount of fried foods you eat that you do not cook yourself, not reusing seed and vegetable oil you have already cooked with, and reducing the amount of highly processed foods you eat.

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## Cheesecake Cookie Cups

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"  
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- sprinkles, for topping (optional)

Heat oven to 350 F.

In muffin tin, press three pieces of cookie dough into each muffin hole. Bake 15 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes then use shot glass and press into each hole. Let cool another 5 minutes and place on rack to cool completely.

With hand mixer, mix heavy cream and sugar until it thickens then add cream cheese and powdered sugar; cream together. Spoon into cool cookie cups.

If desired, use piping bag and pipe pretty edge around cup. Top with crumbled cookies or sprinkles, if desired.

## A delectable dessert for Valentine's Day

(Family Features) If you're going above and beyond a stuffed animal and boxed chocolates this Valentine's Day, try these Cheesecake Cookie Cups for a special homemade dessert. Made with love, it's a perfect combination of sweet and creamy. Visit [Culinary.net](http://Culinary.net) for more sweet treats to share with loved ones.

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## ELECTRIC CO-OP

### CELEBRATE BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month! Let's take a look at a few African American inventors whose contributions helped revolutionize the way we use electricity and essential devices that power life.

Read the descriptions of each inventor and their contributions, then choose the best answer to complete the description.



#### Annie Easley

Annie Easley started her career in 1955 as one of the first African Americans at NASA (when it was called the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics), essentially acting as a human computer, performing manual computations for researchers. Annie was a gifted programmer and developed computer code that was used to analyze \_\_\_\_\_ energy projects, as well as batteries for early hybrid vehicles.



- A. nuclear      B. wind and solar      C. geothermal

*Annie Easley broke down barriers for women and people of color in STEM fields and won the admiration and respect of her coworkers.*

#### Lewis Howard Latimer

Lewis Latimer worked with Thomas Edison on the development and commercialization of the incandescent light bulb. He invented a method to manufacture \_\_\_\_\_ filament to make lightbulbs mass-producible. His method was patented in 1882.



- A. carbon      B. hydrogen      C. silicon

*Without Lewis Latimer's contributions, our lives would never have been so bright!*

#### Marian Croak

Marian Croak began her career at Bell Laboratories (now AT&T) and patented more than 200 inventions. One of her greatest contributions was VoIP, or Voice over Internet Protocol. VoIP technologies are essential for today's fast-paced digital world. VoIP allows voice functionality over an \_\_\_\_\_, including helpful features for video calls and mobile messaging.



- A. airwave      B. audible barrier      C. internet connection

*Marian Croak's passion for advancing technology has improved our digital capabilities and overall quality of life.*

Answer Key | Annie Easley: B, Lewis Latimer: A, Marian Croak: C

Sources: Dept. of Energy, Lewis Latimer House, NASA

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

Level: Advanced

### 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!

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# Parting Shot



Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives

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