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# The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

*"The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957"*

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## 2025 Energy Camp essay contest due in March

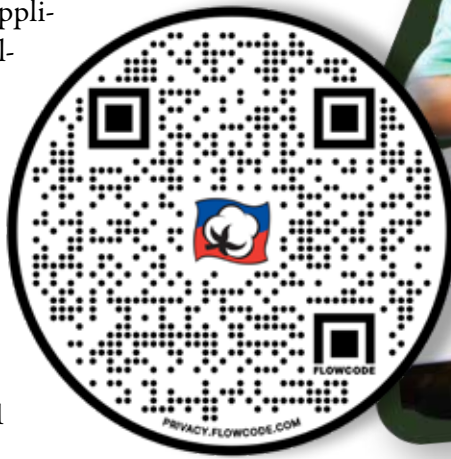
The clock is ticking for all incoming and current eighth graders looking for an exciting experience to develop leadership skills and learn about rural electrification at the 2025 Energy Camp at Red Rock Canyon.

When students attend Energy Camp, they will have opportunities to watch safety demonstrations, climb a pole, learn about the cooperative business model and network with students from other Oklahoma electric cooperatives.

To be eligible to enter the competition, contestants must be an incoming or current eighth grader in the Cotton Electric service area. The students and their families do not have to be Cotton Electric members.

This year's contest is broken into two rounds. First, applicants will submit an essay between 50 and 100 words to the co-op about why they would like to represent Cotton Electric at the 2025 Energy Camp. Writers of the top 10 essays will move on to the second round for a live video interview with independent judges arranged by Cotton Electric. Last, the top four applicants will be selected to attend the all-expense-paid trip to the 2025 Energy Camp.

The deadline to submit an essay is 3 p.m. March 20. Contest deadlines, resources and contest submission can be found on our website at [www.cottonelectric.com/EnergyCamp](http://www.cottonelectric.com/EnergyCamp). For questions or more information, please call 580-875-3351 or email [zyoung@cottonelectric.com](mailto:zyoung@cottonelectric.com).



APPLICATIONS DUE:

**MARCH 20, 2025**

## Enhancing account security and control through SmartHub 2FA

By Carli Eubank

At Cotton Electric Cooperative, members have the ability to take control of their account, and one of the key features available is SmartHub. Recently, SmartHub introduced the option for members to sign up for two-factor authentication (2FA), adding an extra layer of security to help protect member accounts and provide peace of mind.

With 2FA, SmartHub users can rely on more than just a password to secure their accounts. This feature requires a second verification step before logging in, making it more challenging for unauthorized users to gain access. In addition, 2FA allows SmartHub to send an alert if someone tries to log in to your account from an unrecognized device, allowing members to act quickly if anything seems suspicious.

### Activate 2FA on mobile app

- Log in to SmartHub and select More, Settings, Security, and Two-Factor Authorizations to activate to begin the setup.

- Choose from email, text message or a one-time password to select your preferred 2FA communication method.

- Members will receive a verification alert via your previously selected method. Enter the code in the Verification Code field in SmartHub.

- Select Verify.

- A Success screen will pop up, confirming that 2FA is now activated on your account.

- Moving forward, you will need to verify your login with your chosen 2FA method each time you access your Cotton Electric account.

Enabling 2FA is a quick and simple way to strengthen your digital security while staying informed and in control of your Cotton Electric account.

Members can sign up or access their SmartHub account on a computer at [www.cottonelectric.com/smarthub](http://www.cottonelectric.com/smarthub) or mobile device by downloading the app from the Apple store or Google Play.

For more information, call 580-875-3351.

**YOUR PRIVACY MATTERS TO US.**

Enable 2FA on your SmartHub account today

**FOR MOBILE DEVICES**

- 1 GO TO SETTINGS**  
Go to "Settings" in your SmartHub app and select "Security".
- 2 TURN ON 2FA**  
Select "Two-Factor Authentication" to activate.

### Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after Jan. 1, 2025, is \$0.01212 per kilowatt hour (kWh).

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kWh, this will amount to a charge of \$15.76 on the January bill.

### December 2024 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	58	29	44	16	65	41	53
2	61	27	44	17	66	35	51
3	54	30	42	18	56	29	43
4	68	35	52	19	59	23	41
5	49	30	40	20	51	26	39
6	50	24	37	21	55	24	40
7	54	37	46	22	63	30	47
8	58	37	48	23	65	53	59
9	52	34	43	24	58	48	53
10	49	29	39	25	52	48	50
11	59	25	42	26	55	39	47
12	63	26	45	27	59	39	49
13	62	50	56	28	65	39	52
14	65	33	49	29	70	35	53
15	72	31	52	30	75	40	58
				31	55	34	45

Source: [www.srh.noaa.gov/oun/](http://www.srh.noaa.gov/oun/)  
Average Daily High: 60 Average Daily Low: 34

### Did You Know?

Have you downloaded the SmartHub app? With SmartHub, co-op members can check energy use, pay power bills and more! Download SmartHub in Google Play or the Apple Store.

The next issue of *The Current* should arrive in mailboxes Feb. 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

## Balancing electricity supply and demand

Electricity is essential for nearly every aspect of daily life—and so reliable that we rarely think about how it’s produced and delivered to our homes. You might be surprised to learn that behind the scenes, a network of experts is working daily (and even by the minute) to anticipate how much electricity you need before you even use it.

We’re all connected to the electric grid, so ensuring the right amount of electricity for all involves a complex process of forecasting energy demand, planning for capacity and securing enough supply to meet Americans’ needs.

### Powerful sources

First, electricity must be generated at a power plant using

either traditional sources, such as coal, natural gas or nuclear energy, or from renewable sources, such as solar, wind or hydropower.

At Cotton Electric Cooperative, we work closely with Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), our local wholesale power provider, to secure enough electricity for our communities, using a diverse mix of energy sources to generate the power we deliver to your home or business. By maintaining a diverse energy mix of coal, natural gas, wind, solar and hydropower, Cotton Electric has options to ensure reliable power at a competitive cost.

On a larger scale, across the country, electricity supply and demand are managed through a

market that includes long-term planning agreements, where electricity is bought and sold just like other common goods and services. Because Cotton Electric works with our wholesale power partner, which is also a cooperative, we are able to pool resources and expertise to deliver affordable power to our local communities.

Electricity supply changes throughout the day because demand fluctuates based on consumers’ needs. For example, Cotton Electric knows that we need to ensure more electricity in the mornings when you’re starting your day, and in the evenings when you’re cooking dinner and running appliances. Demand also increases when weather patterns change, such as extremely warm or cold temperatures.

### Managing supply and demand across the grid

Across the country, other electric utilities are managing the same task of balancing supply and demand, which is why we have a larger network of key players in place to ensure enough power is delivered across the grid.

In most cases, the amount of electricity generated and how much is sent to specific areas are coordinated and monitored by regional transmission organizations (RTOs) and independent system operators (ISOs). In other areas, individual electric utilities perform these tasks.

RTOs, ISOs and electric utilities act as air traffic controllers for the electric grid. They forecast when you, your neighbors and communities across a large region will need more power. These organizations take measured steps to ensure there’s enough supply to meet demand.



Jennifer Meason, CEO

Our wholesale power supplier, WFEC, is a member of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), a nonprofit RTO that has members in 14 states and has a service territory of 552,885 square miles. The SPP system includes 967 generation plants, 5,267 substations, and 72,820 miles of transmission lines.

### Looking ahead

As the energy sector undergoes rapid change, it’s important for all consumers to understand the basics of electricity supply and demand.

Electricity use in the U.S. is expected to rise to record highs this year and next, with the demand for electricity expected to at least double by 2050. At the same time, energy policies are pushing the early retirement of always-available generation sources, which will undoubtedly compromise reliable electricity.

Cotton Electric remains committed to providing affordable, reliable energy to the members we serve. That’s why we are preparing now for increased demand and other challenges that could compromise our local electric supply.

Managing the balancing act of electricity supply and demand is a complex job, which is why we have a network of utilities, power plant operators and energy traffic managers in place to direct the electricity we need and keep the electric grid balanced.

To learn more, visit [www.cottonelectric.com/about-cotton-electric](http://www.cottonelectric.com/about-cotton-electric).

**A Balancing Act: ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

Behind the scenes, a network of people and facilities work together to ensure you have electricity when you flip the switch.

Electricity is generated at a power plant, then sent across the grid to homes, schools and businesses.

The amount of electricity generated and how much is sent to where it's needed are typically coordinated and monitored by regional grid operators that essentially act as energy traffic managers.

Regional Grid Operators: Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs), Independent System Operators (ISOs), Electric Utilities.

As electricity demand varies throughout the day, grid operators, power plant operators and electric utilities work to forecast, plan and purchase enough electricity for everyone.

Ensuring communities have the exact amount of electricity they need is a challenging task, but behind the scenes, a network of industry experts make it happen every day.

**Factors that Impact Electricity Supply and Demand**

- Demand Surges
- Extreme Temperatures
- Infrastructure Costs and Availability
- Supply Chain Challenges
- Fuel Costs
- Federal and State Regulations

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Taking steps to help your home heating system run more efficiently can reduce energy use and lower your winter bills. Check to see if any air vents around your home are blocked by furniture, curtains or other items. Obstructed vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and can increase pressure in the ductwork, causing cracks and leaks to form. If necessary, consider purchasing a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture or other obstructions.

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

	2024	2023
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$6,032,530	\$5,716,190
Cost of Purchased Power	4,197,873	3,809,283
Taxes	117,233	109,537
Total Operating Expense per Mile	1,176	1,090
Average Farm and Residential Bill	127	134
Average Farm and Residential kWh	959	1,099
Total Meters Billed (Farm, Residential)	19,767	19,510
Miles Energized	5,281	5,265
Density per Mile	3.74	3.71
New Service Connects YTD	380	408
Services Retired	168	176

February	
Ad Sales	Jan. 31
Classified	Jan. 31
Publish	Feb. 14
March	
Ad Sales	Feb. 28
Classified	Feb. 28
Publish	March 14

## The Current

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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

## How your home can be energy efficient year-round

As we enter 2025, making energy efficiency a year-round New Year's resolution can significantly impact both your wallet and the environment. Here are some key strategies to incorporate into your daily life to reprioritize efficiency in your home:

### Home energy evaluations

Start by conducting an energy evaluation of your home. This crucial step

helps identify areas where you can save energy and make informed decisions about upgrades. Cotton Electric provides free energy efficiency evaluations for members to help them decide the most economical ways to improve their home's energy-efficiency.

### Smart-home technology

Install a programmable or smart thermostat to optimize your heating and cooling. This can lead to substan-

tial energy savings by automatically adjusting temperatures when you're away or asleep.

### Lighting upgrades

Replace incandescent bulbs with LED lights, which use at least 75% less energy and last 25 times longer. Make it a habit to turn off lights in unoccupied rooms and take advantage of natural daylight when possible.

### Appliance efficiency

#### HVAC system

- Schedule regular maintenance for your cooling and heating equipment.
- Replace air filters monthly to ensure efficient operation.
- Remove obstructions from air vents and return registers.

#### Water heater

Lower your water heater temperature to 120°F to reduce energy consumption without sacrificing comfort. Consider insulating hot water pipes to minimize heat loss.

#### Other appliances

Maintain appliances for peak efficiency, such as cleaning refrigerator coils. When it's time to replace appliances, search for more energy-efficient brands and models.

#### Weatherization

Seal air leaks around doors and windows with weather stripping or caulk to prevent energy loss. This simple step can significantly improve your home's energy efficiency.

#### Power management

Use smart power strips to cut power to devices when they're not in use, reducing phantom energy loads. Make



**Heath Morgan,**  
Energy Efficiency  
Coordinator

it a habit to unplug electronics and chargers when not in use.

### Seasonal strategies

#### Summer

• Use window coverings to prevent heat gain during the day.

• Utilize fans for cooling, remembering to turn them off when leaving the room.

#### Winter

• Take advantage of sunlight for natural heating.

• Cook and bake efficiently to minimize energy use while keeping your home warm.

By implementing these strategies, you can make energy efficiency a year-round habit, leading to significant cost savings and a reduced carbon footprint. Remember, small changes in daily behavior, combined with strategic upgrades, can have a substantial impact on your energy consumption throughout the year.

For questions or more information on energy efficiency, call 580-875-3351 or visit [www.cottonelectric.com/energy-efficiency](http://www.cottonelectric.com/energy-efficiency).

- 1 Use your ceiling fan** counterclockwise in the summer for a down breeze, and clockwise in the winter for an updraft to force warm air down into your room.
- 2 Turn off lights** and unplug chargers and electronics when not in use.
- 3 Regularly change or clean your furnace and indoor AC filters** as recommended, and keep the area around your outdoor AC unit clear of obstructions.
- 4 Close or lower window coverings** to keep out heat or cold.
- 5 Insulate your home** and weatherproof windows and doors.
- 6 Use a programmable or smart thermostat.** Adjust the temperature a few degrees for overall savings.

Get more tips on creating a resilient and efficient home:

**Safe Electricity.org**

## Heating Degree Day and Cooling Degree Day Calendar

# DECEMBER

HDD	YEAR	CDD
536	2024	0
563	2023	0
662	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.

# LOCALLY OWNED BY OUR MEMBERS

**COTTON**  
ELECTRIC CO-OP

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative





# Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation



A Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) grant was awarded to Empire High School for camera equipment. Pictured left to right: Cotton Electric Director of Marketing and Communications Zach Young, Empire High School photo journalism students, and Empire High School Photo Journalism Teacher Scott Smith.



A CECF grant was awarded to Walters Elementary School for a portable evaporative cooler fan. Pictured left to right: Cotton Electric Director of Marketing and Communications Zach Young, Cotton Electric CEO Jennifer Meason, Walters Elementary Physical Education Teacher Taylor Noland, and Walters Public Schools Superintendent Jimmie Dedmon.



Douglass Eastside Senior Citizens Center received a CECF grant for food. Pictured left to right: Douglass Eatery volunteer Trevin Holman, Douglass Eastside Senior Citizens Center Executive Director Shannon Hall-Sanders, Douglass Eastside Senior Citizens Center assistant and Douglass Community Center Organization Board Member Michael Fugett, Douglass Eatery volunteer Tony Dean, Douglass Community Center Organization President Rudy Sanders, Cotton Electric Director of Marketing and Communications Zach Young, and Douglass Eatery volunteer Treasure Holman.



Duncan Area Literacy Council (DALC) was awarded a CECF grant for books. Pictured left to right: Cotton Electric Communications Specialist Carli Eubank, DALC Board President Nancy Litsch, DALC Executive Director Bill Jones, and DALC Administrative Assistant Jacqui Carson.

**STORM PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST:**

- FLASHLIGHT
- BATTERIES
- GENERAC WHOLE-HOME GENERATOR**

**Exclusive to co-op members**

Contact Heath Morgan for details at 580-875-3351

## Is Your Water Safe?

**Give Your Back a Break...Stop Adding Salt to Your Softener**

Minerals in your water form scale deposits that build up inside your pipes, water heater, shower heads, and other water using equipment like cholesterol in your arteries. These deposits significantly decrease the efficiency of your plumbing systems. Drinking water and icemakers are also negatively affected, as are health quality of water and taste. Hard water is not safe for you, your family or your home.

**Benefits of a No-Salt Water Conditioning System:**

- ▣ Maintain healthy calcium & magnesium levels
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- ▣ No environmental discharge of salt or chemicals
- ▣ Reduces iron staining
- ▣ Extends appliance life by 50% or more
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- ▣ Cleaner bodies, clothes, and dishes
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# Stay safe on winter roads

Winter months can bring snow, ice and windy conditions, which create additional hazards for drivers.

Should an accident occur, it is important to be prepared. Automobile crashes always present danger, but when electricity is involved, decisions made in the moments after the accident are especially crucial.

## Before the winter storm

Prepare ahead for cold temperatures, snow and ice with seasonal maintenance on your car to ensure:

- Batteries are charged.
- Tires have sufficient tread.
- The spare tire is inflated.
- Jumper cables are in good condition.
- A winterized car emergency kit is on board.
- Windshield wipers work.
- Headlights, brake lights and turn signals work.
- The gas tank is at least half full.

## Create a car emergency kit

Be especially cautious driving, and keep an emergency kit in your vehicle, which should include:

- Blankets
- Flares
- Ice scraper
- Portable shovel
- Sand or kitty litter for traction
- First aid kit
- Phone charger
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Warm hat
- Non-perishable snacks and water

## If you are stranded in your car after an accident, watch for signs of frostbite or hypothermia. Observe the following precautions:

- Do not stay in one position for too long.
- Stay awake.
- Do not overexert yourself to avoid strain on your heart.
- Watch for signs such as a change in skin color, numbness, shivering, slurred speech, loss of coordination or confusion.

## Downed power lines

Due to the potential for a winter storm to bring down power lines, individuals should only venture outside if necessary.

Slow down when driving in icy conditions, and always keep your eyes out for hazardous conditions or downed power lines. Also, watch for debris near down poles and lines, as it may be energized as well.

If you see a car in an accident with a power pole, keep your distance from the vehicle and all electrical equipment that has been damaged. Instruct those in the car to stay inside until the power has been shut off.

If you must exit the vehicle because it is on fire, jump clear of it with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Keeping your feet together, shuffle or “bunny hop” to safety.

Doing this will ensure that you will not have different strengths of electric current running from one foot to another.

Keep in mind that a downed line does not need to be sparking to be energized. It is best to assume that all low and downed lines are energized and dangerous.

Never drive over a downed line because that could pull down a pole or other equipment, causing additional hazards.

If you see a downed line, do not get out of your car. The safest place is inside your vehicle. Contact 911 to notify the utility immediately.

For utility crews, repairing damaged power lines is especially dangerous during storm conditions. The increased hazards mean that extra time and attention must be dedicated to ensure power is safely restored.

Have patience while linemen work in these adverse conditions to turn the power back on, and remember to observe safety precautions and be prepared for driving in dangerous winter conditions.

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

**Stay Safe on Winter Roads**

Winter months can bring snow, ice and windy conditions, creating hazards for drivers. It is important to be prepared in case there is an accident.

**Before a winter storm**  
Perform seasonal maintenance on your car to ensure:

- Batteries are charged.
- Tires have sufficient tread.
- Spare tire is inflated.
- Jumper cables are in good condition.
- A winterized car emergency kit.
- Windshield wipers work.
- Headlights, brake lights and turn signals work.
- At least a half-full tank of gas.

**Prevent frostbite and hypothermia**  
If you are stranded in your car after an accident, observe the following precautions:

- Do not stay in one position for too long.
- Stay awake.
- Do not overexert yourself to avoid strain on your heart.
- Watch for signs such as a change in skin color, numbness, shivering, slurred speech, loss of coordination or confusion.

**Winter storms and power lines**  
Always treat sagging and downed power lines as energized and dangerous. Keep at least 50 feet away from the area.

- If your vehicle hits a power pole, stay inside.
- Contact 9-1-1 and wait for the power to be shut off by utility workers.
- If your vehicle is on fire, jump clear with feet together, avoiding contact with both the vehicle and ground simultaneously.
- Shuffle or “bunny hop” away from the vehicle, keeping feet together to prevent different electric currents through your body.
- Never drive over a downed power line, which can cause additional hazards.

SafeElectricity.org

**Bowie's Second Monday** has evolved into one of the largest flea markets on five acres!

**SECOND MONDAY TRADE DAYS** takes place the weekend prior to the second Monday of every month.

**NEXT TRADE DATES**  
**Feb. 7-9**

**Information Hours**  
Monday - Friday • 8am - 5pm  
secondmonday@cityofbowietx.com

**Event Hours**  
Saturday & Sunday • 8am - 5pm

[www.cityofbowietx.com](http://www.cityofbowietx.com)

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## Time for New Year's financial resolutions

Now that the calendar has flipped, it's time for some New Year's resolutions. You could decide you're going to exercise more, lose weight, learn a new skill, reconnect with old friends — the possibilities are almost limitless. This year, why not add a few financial resolutions to your list?



Here are a few to consider:

- Reduce your debts. It may be easier said than done, but if you can cut down on your debt load, you'll increase your cash flow and have more money available to invest for your future. So, look for ways to lower your expenses and spending. You might find it helpful to use one of the budgeting apps available online.
- Boost your retirement savings. Try to put in as much as you can afford to your IRA and your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored retirement plan. If your salary goes up this year, you've got a good opportunity to increase your contributions to these retirement accounts. And once you turn 50, you can make pre-tax catch-up contributions for your 401(k) and traditional IRA. You might also want to review the investment mix within your 401(k) or similar plan to determine whether it's still providing the growth potential you need, given your risk tolerance and time horizon.
- Build an emergency fund. It's generally a good idea to maintain an emergency fund containing up to six months' worth of living expenses, with the money kept in a liquid, low-risk account. Without such a fund,

you might be forced to dip into your long-term investments to pay for short-term needs, such as an expensive auto or home repair.

- Keep funding your non-retirement goals. Your traditional IRA and 401(k) are good ways to save for retirement — but you likely have other goals, too, and you'll need to save and invest for them. So, for example, if you want your children to go to college or receive some other type of post-secondary training, you might want to invest in a tax-advantaged 529 education savings plan. And if you have short-term goals, such as saving for a wedding or taking an overseas vacation, you might want to put some money away in a liquid account. For a short-term goal, you don't necessarily need to invest aggressively for growth — you just want the money to be there for you when you need it.
- Review your estate plans. If you haven't already created your estate plans, you may want to do so in 2025. Of course, if you're relatively young, you might not think you need to have estate plans in place just yet, but life is unpredictable, and the future is not ours to see. If you have already drawn up estate plans, you may want to review them,

especially if you've recently experienced changes in your life and family situation, such as marriage, divorce, or the addition of a new child. Because estate planning can be complex, you'll want to work with a qualified legal professional. You may not be able to tackle all these resolutions in 2025. But by addressing as many of them as you can, you may find that, by the end of the year, you have made progress toward your goals and set yourself on a positive course for all the years to come.

If you have already drawn up estate plans, you may want to review them, Edward Jones, Member SIPC

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**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING



# Small contributions lead to big impacts in local communities

Pennies, nickels and dimes do not seem like much, but when you add them together with more than 16,000 members, the impact can be great. That is the mission of Operation Round Up.

When members participate in Operation Round Up, their power bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar, and all of those partial dollars are pooled together. It adds up to some significant funds that can make a huge difference in the quality of lives throughout the Cotton Electric service area.

Thanks to you, our generous members, the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) issued 34 grants in 2024 for a total of \$70,435.75. Grant

recipients included schools and youth programs, volunteer fire departments, nonprofit organizations and communities.

“The goal of CECF is to improve the lives of our members, and we feel these contributions have made a difference in improving the quality of life in southwest Oklahoma,” said Jennifer Meason, Cotton Electric Cooperative CEO.

Since its beginning in 2004, CECF has awarded more than 600 grants for a total of approximately \$1.6 million to assist the needs of organizations and individuals in our community.

## Cotton Electric announces rebate standards for 2025

Cotton Electric Cooperative has announced standards for the 2025 Rebate Program for the purchase and installation of certain energy-efficient equipment and fuel conversion measures. The program expanded in recent years to include rebates for air source heat pumps, mini-splits and water heaters installed under certain conditions. Rebate funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Once rebate funds have been exhausted, the program will end for the year.

The maximum rebate in 2025 will be \$4,000 per residence. Heat pumps and mini-splits must be installed by a licensed contractor. Indoor and outdoor equipment must be replaced at the same time. Members will need to provide a rebate application, a copy of their itemized invoice and, from the HVAC contractor or supplier, an AHRI certification and Manual J calculation in order to qualify for the program. Verification by Cotton Electric personnel and an energy-efficiency home evaluation are also required to receive the rebate.

### Ground source heat pumps (GSHP)

Rebates are paid on new installations or GSHP to GSHP replacements. A desuperheater is not required but additional rebates are available if one is part of a GSHP installation. Minimum standards vary for closed and open loop installations and apply to the full load operation of a GSHP, not the partial load. The amount of rebate is determined by the size of each unit, its Energy Efficiency Rating (EER) and Coefficient of Performance (COP).

- Qualifying units can receive a rebate of up to \$750 per ton installed if the unit meets the minimum specifications, which are 15.9 EER and 3.3 COP for closed loop systems and 15.9 EER and 3.6 COP for open loop.

- To qualify for a rebate when replacing an existing GSHP system with another GSHP system, the new installation must increase the EER by at least 3.0. The minimum specification for COP is 3.3 for

closed loop systems and 3.6 for open loop. Rebates are \$300 per ton.

### Air-source heat pumps / Mini-splits

Rebates are paid on replacement of existing heat pumps, new construction or conversion from natural gas or propane furnaces to total electric heat pumps. Rebates are per unit, not per ton. To qualify, units must meet standards that vary with the Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) rating.

- A unit with a 17.00 to 17.99 SEER must have an SEER2 of 16.2 to 17.2. Rebates are \$500 per unit for a replacement and \$750 per unit for a fuel conversion or new construction.

- A unit with an 18.00 to 19.99 SEER must have an SEER2 of 17.1 to 19.0. Rebates are \$600 per unit for a replacement and \$850 per unit for fuel conversion or new construction.

- A unit with 20.00 or greater SEER must have a SEER2 of 19.1 or greater. Rebates are \$750 per unit for a replacement and \$1,000 per unit for fuel conversions or new construction.

### Heat pump water heaters

Rebates are offered for heat pump water heaters replacing traditional resistance water heaters. Conversion from natural gas or propane to an electric, and new construction projects, also qualifies for a rebate.

- The per-unit rebate for a replacement is \$250 and \$500 per unit for a fuel switching or new construction.

Water heaters should have a minimum 40-gallon capacity, an energy factor of 2.8 or greater and a manufacturer’s warranty of 10 years or greater. Tankless water heaters are not eligible. Collecting the rebate requires a rebate application, AHRI reference sheet, invoice or receipt dated after Jan. 1, 2025, and an inspection by Cotton Electric.

For more information or to arrange an inspection, call our office at 580-875-3351 or visit our website at [www.cottonelectric.com/rebate-program](http://www.cottonelectric.com/rebate-program).

## 2024 Grant Recipients

- Betty J. Wood Memorial AmVets Post 11
- Cache High School FCCLA
- Cache Middle School
- Christian Helping Hands of Comanche
- Christians Concerned
- Comanche Fire Department
- Cotton County Sheriff's Office
- Douglass Eastside Senior Citizens Center
- Duncan Area Literacy Council
- Empire High School
- Geronimo Volunteer Fire Department
- Girl Scouts Western Oklahoma
- Hastings Volunteer Fire Department
- Indiahoma, City of
- Indiahoma Community Food Bank
- Leadership Duncan Class XXVIII
- Marlow Samaritans
- Meridian Volunteer Fire and EMS
- One True Light, Inc.
- Pecan Creek Volunteer Fire Department
- Southwestern Quilts of Valor Quilters
- Sterling High School
- Sterling Public Schools
- Think Ability, Inc.
- Velma Community Outreach Center
- Vizavance, Inc.
- Walters Elementary School
- Walters, City of
- Waurika Senior Citizens Center, Inc.
- Waurika Volunteer Fire Department
- Wichita Mountains Prevention Network



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Sunday 7 AM-2PM	Sunday 7 AM-8PM

Call-ins and Take Out (7 Days a week) 2PM-6PM

## UNCOMFORTABLE?

**Does your home have any of these symptoms?**

<input type="checkbox"/> Rooms that get too hot or too cold?	<input type="checkbox"/> Dust buildup within 2 days of dusting?
<input type="checkbox"/> High utility bills?	<input type="checkbox"/> Problems with your system since it's been installed?
<input type="checkbox"/> Thermostat wars with your spouse?	<input type="checkbox"/> Anyone with allergies or asthma?
<input type="checkbox"/> High humidity in summer?	<input type="checkbox"/> AC starts and stops frequently or runs all the time, and house is still not cool?
<input type="checkbox"/> House just never seems comfortable?	
<input type="checkbox"/> There doesn't seem to be enough airflow?	

Have been told by other contractors that the problem cannot be fixed?

**If you answered YES to any of these questions, we can help!**

Pippin Brothers has specialists that can pinpoint and correct these problems and, in many cases, you don't even have to replace your equipment, with the solution usually being easier and costing a lot less than you may think. There is no other contractor in Lawton more qualified than Pippin Brothers at diagnosing and correcting these annoying, inconvenient, unhealthy, comfort-compromising and energy-wasting concerns. Call us today and let us make your home **Feel As Good As It Looks!** After all, your home is your largest investment and you and your family deserve to be comfortable - don't you?

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# Understanding your electric bill

Your monthly Cotton Electric bill includes a lot of useful information. The example below shows a typical residential bill and explanations of expanded information.

Call us at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520 to get help with:

- Discontinuing paper bills through the mail and having them delivered via email instead.
- Signing up for automatic bank drafts, or switching from traditional to prepaid billing.

## Account information

A member's account number, contact information, service address and statement date for this bill. In the case of a bill for multiple meters, there will be a member number and invoice number listed here.

## Account Detail

This area will list your meter(s), bill type, service dates, readings and energy use recorded by the meter.

## Energy Use Graph

Shows energy use history over the past 24 months. Members can spot their energy use trends at a glance.

## Monthly Comparisons

Compares this month's energy use with the previous month and also the same month from the previous year.

## Contact Us

General information about our business hours and phone numbers is located in the upper right corner. The Pay By Phone number can be used to make electronic check or credit/debit card payments.

## Current Amount Due

We know most members want to know only two things: What do I owe and how soon do I need to get it paid? That's why we made this big and put it at the top, so you can tell at a glance. If an account has an outstanding balance, the outer circle will be in red. Avoid a late fee and pay before the delinquent date.

## Kiosk Bar Code

Unique to each member account, this bar code will automatically pull up the account when exposed to the code reader of a payment kiosk at the Cotton Electric office at 1101 W. Oak in Duncan. Cash or credit/debit card payments can be made at any time at this outside kiosk.

## Service Detail

This shows a detailed breakdown of charges. **There are no increases or additions to the fee structure;** we're just breaking everything out for you. This section shows the previous balance, payments, and the components of current charges.

Depending on the type of service a meter provides, the Service Detail box may include some of this information:

**Facility Charge** A cooperative member's equal share of fixed costs so power can be available at your location. This includes the cost of poles, wires, trucks, billing, vegetation management, meters, transformers and substations. This is a fixed cost attached to all meters.

**Energy Charge** The amount of electricity used as measured in kilowatt-hours, multiplied by the current rate. The amount of electricity used is controlled by you, the member.

**Power Cost Adjustment (PCA)** This can be a decrease or increase, depending on the true cost of wholesale power purchased from our G&T, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative. PCA is applied to kWh consumed and to fees for lights.

**Outdoor Light** Charges vary according to the type of light installed.

**Gross Receipts Tax** Cotton Electric is required to collect a 2% state gross receipts tax on all power bills. This is NOT a sales tax and is not eligible for exemption.

**Operation Round Up** Participants in Operation Round Up can see how much the bill is rounded up to the nearest dollar, an amount that will never be more than 99 cents.

**COTTON ELECTRIC CO-OP**  
A Turnstone Energy Cooperative

Office Hours: 8 AM - 5 PM Monday - Friday  
580-875-3351 or 1-800-522-3520  
Pay by Phone: 855-940-3923  
Pay Online: www.cottonelectric.com

Account #: 1234567890  
CURRENT AMOUNT DUE: **\$186.00**  
DELINQUENT DATE: 03/01/2025

Service Address: NW-00-0N-00W

Meter #	Description	Bill Type	Reading Dates From	To	Days	Readings Previous	Present	Meter Multiplier	kWh Billed
AA00001	HOUSE	Regular	01/07/25	02/06/25	30	28119	31013	1	1680

**ENERGY USE COMPARISON**

- This Month: 1680 kWh (30 Days)
- Last Month: 1650 kWh (31 Days)
- This Month Last Year: 2310 kWh (30 Days)

**SERVICEDETAIL**

Activity	Amount
Previous Account Activity	\$ 245.00
Payment Received 1/30/25 Thank you!	(\$ 245.00)
Account Balance Before Current Charges	\$ 0.00
<b>Current Activity</b>	
Facility Charge	\$ 30.00
Energy Charge 1680 kWh @ 0.08950	\$150.36
PCA Charge 1680 kWh @ -0.004330	(\$ 7.27)
Outdoor Light	\$ 8.81
Light PCA	(\$ 0.30)
Gross Receipts Tax	\$ 3.63
Operation Round Up Amt	\$ 0.77
<b>Total Current Charges</b>	<b>\$ 186.00</b>

**PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN THIS PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT**

Account #: 1234567890

CURRENT BILL AMOUNT	\$ 186.00
BALANCE FORWARD	\$ 0.00
<b>AMOUNT DUE BY 03/01/25</b>	<b>\$ 186.00</b>
AMOUNT DUE AFTER 03/01/25	\$ 191.58

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:  
COTTON ELECTRIC CO-OP  
226 N. BROADWAY  
WALTERS, OK 73572-1226

360222217700002100027152000026711030520171

# 2025 Electrical Rates

## General Service

### Monthly Rate

#### Customer Charge:

Single-Phase Service \$30.00 per month

Three-Phase Service \$35.00 per month

#### Energy Charges:

All kWh \$0.08950 per kWh

The rate includes 6.25 cents per kWh of wholesale power in our base charge for electricity. Any amount above or below 6.25 cents will be computed in the Power Cost Adjustment.

#### Available To:

Available to general service customers for farm, home and residential use subject to the established rules and regulations of the Cooperative. No resale, standby or auxiliary service permitted.

#### Type of Service:

Single-phase, at available secondary voltage or three-phase at the discretion of the Cooperative.

#### Minimum Charges:

(1) A charge of \$30.00 per month for single-phase service and \$35.00 per month for three-phase service; or

(2) Compliance with Operational Policy 556, if applicable, of the Terms and Conditions of Service.

(3) A charge of \$30.00 per month for single-phase service and \$35.00 per month for three-phase service, plus a charge of \$1.00 per kVA of transformer capacity in excess of ten (10) kVA.

#### Adjustments:

The listed rates do not include power cost adjustments, Winter Storm Uri recovery, gross receipts tax and franchise taxes where applicable.

#### Service Reconnection:

When a reconnection of service is made for a Member at the same location within a 12-month period after the date the service was disconnected at the Member's request, a charge equal to the sum of the minimum monthly bills determined for the months that service was disconnected will be billed to the customer and must be paid, in addition to the charges for connection in compliance with Operational Policy 553 of the Terms and Conditions of Service.

## General Service HD

### Monthly Rate

#### Customer Charge:

Single-Phase Service \$25.00 per month

Three-Phase Service \$30.00 per month

#### Energy Charges:

All kWh \$0.07690 per kWh

The rate includes 6.25 cents per kWh of wholesale power in our base charge for electricity. Any amount above or below 6.25 cents will be computed in the Power Cost Adjustment.

#### Available To:

Available to residential consumers in franchised municipal areas with a line density of 11 customers per mile or greater, subject to the established rules and regulations of the Cooperative. No resale, standby or auxiliary service permitted.

#### Type of Service:

Single-phase, at available secondary voltage or three-phase at the discretion of the Cooperative.

#### Minimum Charges:

(1) A charge of \$25.00 per month for single-phase service and \$30.00 per month for three-phase service; or

(2) Compliance with Operational Policy 556, if applicable, of the Terms and Conditions of Service.

(3) A charge of \$25.00 per month for single-phase service and \$35.00 per month for three-phase service, plus a charge of \$1.00 per kVA of transformer capacity in excess of ten (10) kVA.

#### Adjustments:

The listed rates do not include power cost adjust-

ments, Winter Storm Uri recovery, gross receipts tax and franchise taxes where applicable.

#### Service Reconnection:

When a reconnection of service is made for a Member at the same location within a twelve-month period after the date the service was disconnected at the Member's request, a charge equal to the sum of the minimum monthly bills determined for the months that service was disconnected will be billed to the customer and must be paid, in addition to the charges for connection in compliance with Operational Policy 553 of the Terms and Conditions of Service.

## Commercial Service

### Monthly Rate

#### Customer Charge:

Single-Phase Service \$40.00 per month

Three-Phase Service \$45.00 per month

#### Energy Charges:

All kWh \$0.08620 per kWh

The rate includes 6.25 cents per kWh of wholesale power in the base charge for electricity. Any amount above or below 6.25 cents will be computed in the Power Cost Adjustment.

#### Available To:

Available for commercial and industrial consumers up to fifty (50) kVA of transformer capacity, subject to the rules and regulations of the Cooperative. Available for commercial and industrial consumers to one hundred fifty (150) kVA of transformer capacity at the discretion of the Cooperative. Service under this rate is not available wherein transformer capacity requirements exceed one hundred fifty (150) kVA. No resale, standby or auxiliary service permitted.

#### Type of Service:

Single-phase or three-phase at available secondary voltages.

#### Minimum Charges:

(1) A charge of \$40.00 per month for single-phase and \$45.00 per month for three-phase service plus a charge of \$1.00 per kVA of transformer capacity in excess of ten (10) kVA; or

(2) Compliance with Operational Policy 556, if applicable, of the Terms and Conditions of Service.

#### Adjustments:

The listed rates do not include power cost adjustments, Winter Storm Uri recovery, gross receipts tax and franchise taxes where applicable.

## Commercial Service HD

### Monthly Rate

#### Customer Charge:

Single-Phase Service \$35.00 per month

Three-Phase Service \$40.00 per month

#### Energy Charges:

All kWh \$0.07940 per kWh

The rate includes 6.25 cents per kWh of wholesale power in our base charge for electricity. Any amount above or below 6.25 cents will be computed in the Power Cost Adjustment.

#### Available To:

Available for commercial and industrial consumers up to fifty (50) kVA of transformer capacity, in incorporated areas with a line density of 11 customers per mile or greater, subject to the rules and regulations of the Cooperative. Available for commercial and industrial consumers to one hundred fifty (150) kVA of transformer capacity at the discretion of the Cooperative. Service under this rate is not available wherein transformer capacity requirements exceed one hundred fifty (150) kVA. No resale, standby or auxiliary service permitted.

#### Type of Service:

Single-phase or three phase, at available secondary voltages.

#### Minimum Charges:

(1) A charge of \$35.00 per month for single-phase service and \$40.00 per month for three-phase service plus a charge of \$1.00 per kVA for transformer capacity in excess of ten (10) kVA; or

(2) Compliance with Operational Policy 556, if applicable, of the Terms and Conditions of Service.

#### Irrigation Rate

##### Monthly Rate

Customer Charge \$32.50 per month

Energy Charge \$0.06650 per kWh

Horsepower Charge \$2.70 per horsepower of connected load per month

#### Available To:

Available to Members for pump irrigation service subject to the established rules and regulations of the Cooperative. Service under this rate shall be under the standard Cooperative contract. Motors shall be ten (10) horsepower or greater. No resale, standby or auxiliary service permitted.

#### Type of Service:

Single-phase or three-phase, at available secondary voltages.

#### Minimum Charges:

(1) \$32.50 plus a charge of \$2.70 per horsepower of connected load per year; or

(2) Compliance with Operational Policy 556, if applicable, of the Terms and Conditions of Service.

#### Service Reconnection:

When a reconnection of service is made for a Member at the same location within a twelve-month period after the date the service was disconnected at the Member's request, a charge equal to the sum of the minimum monthly bills determined for the months that service was disconnected will be billed to the customer and must be paid, in addition to the charges for connection in compliance with Operational Policy 553 of the Terms and Conditions of Service.

#### Interruptible Irrigation

##### Monthly Rate

Customer Charge \$32.50 per month

Energy Charge \$0.06650 per kWh

Horsepower Charge \$2.70 per horsepower of connected load per month

The Interruptible Irrigation Rate includes 6.25 cents per kWh of wholesale power in the basic charge for electricity. Any amount above or below 6.25 cents will be computed in the Power Cost Adjustment.

#### Available To:

Available to Members for pump irrigation service subject to the established rules and regulations of the Cooperative. Service under this rate shall be metered with "Time-of-Day" metering or shall have "load interrupting" devices installed on the service. Electric power and energy usage under this rate is prohibited from June 20 through Sept. 9, between the hours of 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Each year, Members will be given credit for horsepower charges, applied toward but not to exceed energy charges, if no power was used during the prohibited time period. No resale, standby or auxiliary service permitted.

#### Minimum Charges:

(1) \$32.50 plus a charge of \$2.70 per horsepower of connected load per year; or

(2) Compliance with Operational Policy 556, if applicable, of the Terms and Conditions of Service.

#### Service Reconnection:

When a reconnection of service is made for a Member at the same location within a twelve-month period after the date the service was disconnected at the Member's request, a charge equal to the sum of the minimum monthly bills determined for the months that service was disconnected will be billed to the

customer and must be paid, in addition to the charges for connection in compliance with Operational Policy 553 of the Terms and Conditions of Service.

#### Large Power Rate

Large Power Rates are available for large industrial loads with a transformer capacity of more than 50 kVA. For details about LP Rates, contact the cooperative at 580-875-3351. Special rates also are available for Cotton Gins.

#### Outdoor Lighting

##### Monthly Rate

(1) Where an approved Outdoor Light is installed on an existing pole; and (a) where the Outdoor Light is installed on the Cooperative's side of the meter, the monthly charge per light shall be \$8.81 for 175-Watt Mercury Vapor, 100-Watt High Pressure Sodium or LED; and \$20.87 for 400-Watt Metal Halide; or (b) where the Outdoor Light is installed on the consumer's side of the meter, the monthly charge per light shall be \$2.60 for 175-Watt Mercury Vapor; \$3.12 for 100-Watt High Pressure Sodium or LED; and \$5.98 for 400-Watt Metal Halide.

(2) Should the Member desire a location other than an existing pole, the cost of installation shall be determined by figuring the total cost of labor, materials installed, plus digging and hauling charges, and will be incurred by the consumer. The wire, pole and material will become the property of the consumer.

#### Available To:

Available to all Members of the Cooperative for illumination of outdoor areas at any point on the distribution or service lines, subject to the established rules and regulations of the Cooperative.

#### Vandalism:

In the event the Outdoor Light is damaged by vandalism, such as gun shots, rocks, or any other type of vandalism, the Member shall be responsible for the cost of repairing the Outdoor Light.

#### Adjustments:

The listed rates do not include power cost adjustments, Winter Storm Uri recovery, gross receipts tax and franchise taxes where applicable.

## Cotton Electric is required to collect a 2% state gross receipts tax on all power bills.

#### Power Cost Adjustment:

Due to fluctuations in the cost of fuel for generating wholesale power, it is impossible to buy electricity at the same cost per kWh each month. The base rates include 6.25 cents per kWh of wholesale power cost. Any variation above or below 6.25 cents per kWh of wholesale power cost must be computed as Power Cost Adjustment. The actual PCA factor is indicated on each power bill and is reported in your monthly Cotton Electric Current. Occasionally, when hydro or other low cost generating power is available, a credit is shown on your bill.

This adjustment shall be based on 70 kWh per month per 175-Watt Mercury Vapor Light, 40 kWh per month per 100-Watt High Pressure Sodium Light or 160 kWh per month per 400-Watt Metal Halide, applicable to Rate (1), Plan (a).

#### Adjustment for the recovery of

##### Winter Storm Uri costs:

For rate classes with a Power Cost Adjustment, an adjustment for the recovery of Winter Storm Uri costs will apply. Charges for these rate classes shall be up to \$0.0045 per kWh for the costs associated with Winter Storm Uri in February 2021. This charge shall remain in effect until the entire cost obligation has been recovered, but in no event longer than December 31, 2027.



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**Billingsley Ford Lincoln Mercury of Duncan, Inc**

10% discount on all service department repairs, up to a \$40 discount. No parts or body shop repairs included.

**Brooks Meat Market**

10% off meat purchases over \$20.

**Cast & Bang Outfitters**

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10% Off ASF Products and 5% Off Guided Hunts. Discount can not be applied to transportation quotes for ASF products, or to food and lodging on guided hunts.

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\$1 off admission per card, per visit.

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10% off of all services. Card must be present at time of service and prior to any ordering of parts.

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Free vacuum cleaner with purchase of \$2,000 on Stainmaster carpets.

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\$5 off full service oil changes.

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15% off all regular priced purchases.

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5% discount on 8x10 & 6x8 storm shelters; 10% discount on 8x12 and larger.

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10% off Professional's Choice merchandise.

**Stephens County Humane Society**

\$10.00 off adoption fee.

**Sue Cabelka, Realtor**

\$500 off seller's closing costs.

**Sylvan Learning**

Schedule an assessment and \$40 will be deducted from the cost.

**The Salt Cellar**

15% off non-sale items. Excluding boxed cards and gift cards.

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10% off new purchases.

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# Co-op Life

## From crewman to journeyman: Cotton Electric employees complete apprentice program

By Carli Eubank

The path to becoming a journeyman lineman is a challenging one, requiring four years of physical strength, a deep understanding of electricity and safety, excellent member service and much more. Last December, Cotton Electric linemen Prestin Green, Case Hurst, Billy Kennard and Quaid Ogletree were recognized for achieving journeyman status, earning a certification through Northwest Lineman College.

The program begins with spending some time working as a crewman, gaining first-hand exposure to the job's demands and assessing the crewman's ability to perform lineman duties.

"When I applied for Cotton Electric and joined the apprentice program, I saw this is an opportunity to be able to learn a skill that not everyone is able to," Hurst said. "One of the benefits of working through the program is being able to create a career with little to no experience, and I've enjoyed getting to continually expand my knowledge on electricity."

After at least six months at the co-op, crewmen can enter the four-year lineman's apprentice program. Hurst shared there is a balance between hands-on experience with daily work at the co-op and studying material through Northwest Lineman College. The academic portion includes four 10-part modules of study, with the apprentice expected to complete 10 tests each year.

Apprentices also gather regularly with other apprentices from across the state for Essential Skills instruction at Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC). OAEC also serves as an administrator for the program, ordering modules from Northwest Lineman College and tracking progress of journeyman candidates.



(Pictured left to right) Last December, Cotton Electric linemen Prestin Green, Case Hurst, Quaid Ogletree and Billy Kennard received their journeyman lineman certification from Northwest Lineman College. Photo courtesy of OAEC.

At Cotton Electric, apprentices work alongside experienced lineworkers in various responsibilities, furthering their experiences for on-the-job training and moving up to a lineman position after three years as an apprentice lineman.

"The program is a great opportunity for an individual to earn their journeyman lineman certification while working full-time. The apprentice linemen invest a lot of time and energy to studying, attending schools and applying what they've learned as they work for the members," said Cotton Electric CEO Jennifer Meason. "Another important piece is the education and training they receive from Cotton Electric journeymen linemen as they work with them daily. I'm very proud of their dedication."

Ogletree worked in the vegetation management and warehouse departments for a combined total of five years before joining the apprentice program and working toward his goal of becoming a journeyman lineworker.

"While I was an apprentice, I rotated between different maintenance crews and the construction crew each quarter," Ogletree said. "Being able to learn and get a feel for different areas of the job was really beneficial to me."

During the apprentice program, employees are also evaluated every quarter by Cotton Electric Director of Safety, Loss and Vegeta-

tion Management Jarrod Hooper, where he observes their performance in areas like job briefings, communication with coworkers and members, and taking the lead on day-to-day tasks. Hooper oversees the apprentice program, monitoring their progress, administering tests and serving as an additional mentor.

"The depth of the apprentice program goes beyond the academics and the work," Hooper said. "It requires a real commitment on the part of the employee, the co-op, and even myself."

Once they complete the program, apprentices attend a ceremony hosted by OAEC where they receive a nationally recognized certification from Northwest Lineman College and earn the rank of journeymen linemen.

"There is a great deal of dedication an apprentice puts into achieving journeyman status," Hooper said. "Members can feel confident and trust the experience and knowledge our linemen have."

Each Cotton Electric Cooperative lineworker shows great commitment to their work from completing the apprentice program and continuing regular trainings to braving extreme weather conditions and providing safe, reliable power to our local communities and members.



Sign up for VCP today at [www.voicesforcooperativepower.com](http://www.voicesforcooperativepower.com)



# Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the February issue, please submit information by calling 580-875-3351 or sending an email to [TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com](mailto:TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com) by Jan. 31. Only events occurring after Feb. 14 will be published in the next issue.

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

### Kick off 2025 with a splash

Join in on the fun at Fort Sill Family & Morale, Welfare and Recreation's first 2025 Run Series Run: The Polar Bear 5K Plunge. Participants will receive a T-shirt, medal, beanie, towel, and bib. Run packages are limited and can be preordered or purchased for \$55 at the Welcome Center (151N) or Fires Fitness Center. The event is scheduled for 10 a.m. Jan. 25 at Lake Elmer Thomas Recreation Area. For more information, call 580-442-4329 or visit their Facebook page.

### Duncan hosts monster truck event

Experience the thrill of 12,000-pound monster trucks in head-to-head competitions at Duncan Monster Truck Wars. Watch as world-famous trucks battle it out in the dirt arena. The event will also feature kids' Power Wheel races, where

your child can bring their own Power Wheels and race them around the fairgrounds. There will be two showings of Monster Truck Wars: noon and 6 p.m. Jan. 18 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds, 2002 S. 13 St., Duncan. To purchase tickets, visit [www.monstertrucks.fun](http://www.monstertrucks.fun).

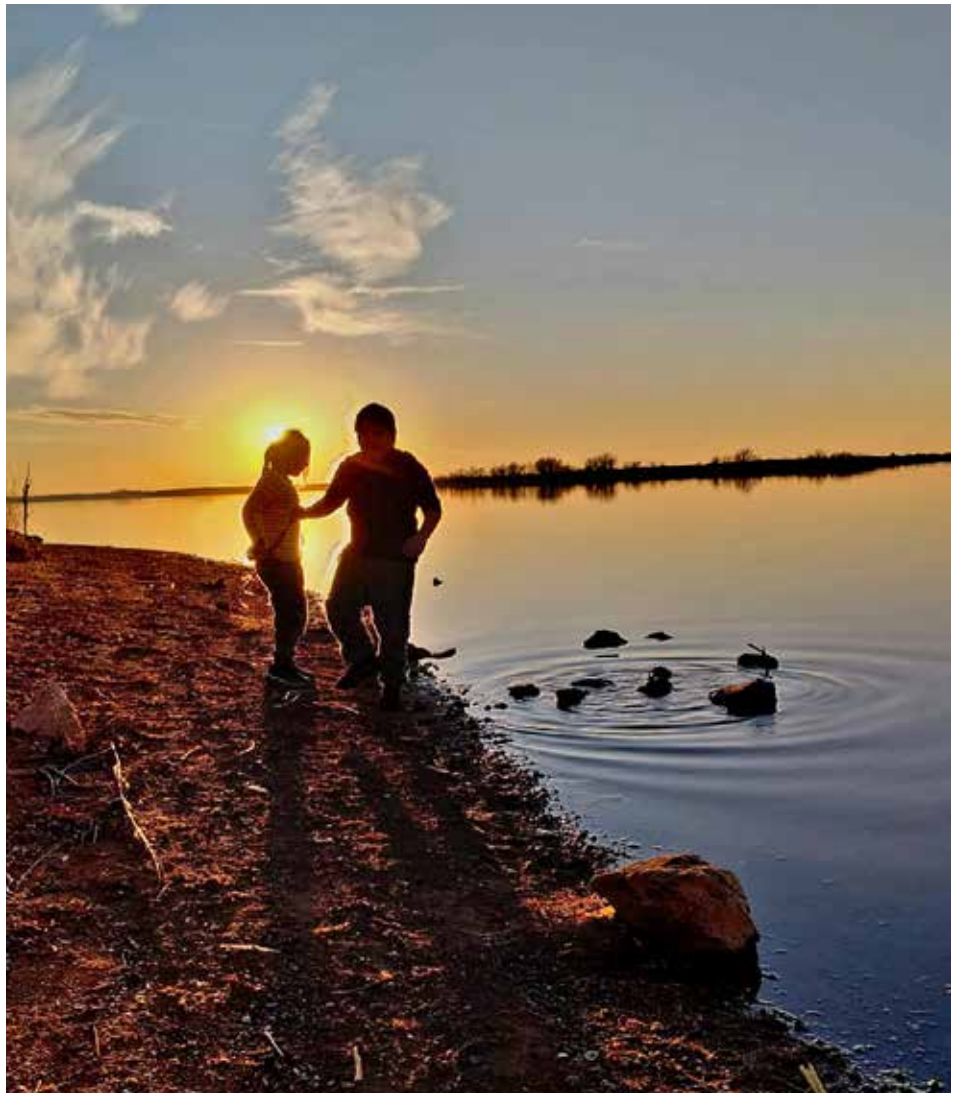
### Medicine Park Polar Plunge

Enjoy a day of winter events and take the Polar Bear Plunge in Bath Lake during the Medicine Park Plunge. Participants will meet at the Park Tavern and join other plungers in a parade leading to the big plunge. The event is scheduled for 2 p.m. Feb. 1 in Medicine Park. For questions or more information, call 580-529-2825 or visit their Facebook page.

### Showcasing Oklahoma talent

Join the Chisholm Trail Arts Council for an evening of enjoying a variety of Oklahoma talent at the Taste of Oklahoma Talent concert. Guests will see performances by cellist Sam Kahre and artist Kyle Trudelle, saxophonist Jermaine Mondaine, and OK3 as seen on *The Voice*. The concert is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Feb. 7 at the Simmons Center Theater in Duncan. To purchase tickets, visit [www.chisholm-trailarts.com](http://www.chisholm-trailarts.com) or call 580-252-4160.

# PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Grandkids of Cotton Electric members Gerald and Diane Jones enjoy a beautiful sunset at Waurika Lake.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. The theme for February is Heartfelt Moments! 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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# Updated criteria for healthy claim on food label



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

**Food For THOUGHT**

In December 2024, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration issued a new rule on what criteria foods must meet to legally have the claim “healthy” on the food label. This is in response to updated scientific evidence on total fat versus types of fat, foods with added sugar versus naturally occurring sugars, sodium content, and a focus on encouraging foods like whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and dairy. The rule is effective in February but will not be enforced until 2028. The use of the claim is voluntary.

At the population level, the U.S. continues to fall short on the consumption of whole grains, fruit, and vegetables,

and exceeds the recommended consumption of added sugars, saturated fat and sodium. This contributes to the rise of chronic conditions like obesity, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and cancer. Chronic conditions are costly to individuals and contribute to the escalating cost of health care.

Foods that are now eligible for the healthy claim include fatty fish, avocados, water, nuts and seeds, and olive oil. Products like fortified white bread and yogurt and cereals with added sugar will no longer qualify.

The scientific evidence contributing to this change is also informing the upcoming

release *2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is also considering a healthy symbol that could be used by food manufacturers on food labels.

What does this mean to an individual? The new rule reinforces the need for everyone to pay attention to their dietary intake of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, evaluate nutrition facts labels as they relate to saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars, and use this to craft meals and snacks that positively contribute to your overall health and wellness. This should be done for every eating episode, every age group, every day.



## Simplify family dinner with a one-pot soup

(Culinary.net) After a busy season of groups and gatherings, sometimes a new year calls for easy, filling meals you can enjoy with your nearest and dearest. Warm, hearty Meatball Tortellini Soup can do just that as a delicious one-pot solution. Visit Culinary.net to find more warming winter recipes.

### Meatball Tortellini Soup

Recipe courtesy of “Cookin’ Savvy”

Servings: 6-8

#### Ingredients

- 4 cups beef broth
- 1 can (14 ounces) diced tomatoes
- 16 ounces frozen meatballs
- 19 ounces tortellini
- 6 ounces frozen spinach
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 3/4 cup Parmesan cheese, plus additional for serving, divided
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- bread, for serving

#### Directions

- In Dutch oven, pour in beef broth and diced tomatoes. Fill empty diced tomatoes can with water and add to pot. Stir in meatballs, tortellini and spinach. Cook over medium heat then add onion powder, garlic powder, Italian seasoning and 3/4 cup Parmesan cheese. Add salt and pepper, to taste.
- Cook 25 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add heavy cream and cook 5 minutes.
- Serve with bread and additional Parmesan cheese.

## Tuna Noodle Casserole

#### Ingredients

- 6 ounces egg noodles
- 1 cup peas (canned or frozen)
- 2 cans (5 ounces each) light chunk tuna in water, drained
- 1 can (10 1/2 ounces) cream of celery soup
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon celery salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped, plus additional for garnish (optional)
- nonstick cooking spray
- 1/4 cup dry breadcrumbs
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- Parmesan cheese

#### Directions

Preheat oven to 350 F and cook egg noodles according to package instructions.

In large bowl, mix egg noodles, peas, tuna, soup, milk, 1 1/4 cups cheddar cheese, celery salt, pepper and 2 tablespoons parsley.

Spray 9-by-13-inch casserole dish with nonstick cooking spray and add tuna mixture. Cover with aluminum foil and bake 20 minutes until hot and bubbly.

While casserole is baking, mix breadcrumbs and melted butter. Remove casserole from oven and top with breadcrumb mixture and remaining cheddar cheese.

Bake, uncovered, 5-10 minutes, until breadcrumbs are golden brown and cheese on top is melted. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and additional parsley, if desired, before serving.



### Warm up with a comforting casserole

(Culinary.net) When colder temperatures roll in, there are few things like a hearty meal shared with loved ones to help warm you up from the inside out.

Made using ingredients you may already have on hand, this Tuna Noodle Casserole is a classic comfort food featuring canned tuna, noodles, cheese, veggies and a creamy sauce, topped with breadcrumbs. Filling, affordable and easy to prepare, this heartwarming dish is perfect for busy weeknights and may even find its way into your family’s comfort food rotation alongside dishes like chicken and dumplings, chili, meatloaf and chicken pot pie.

Visit Culinary.net to find more easy family meal ideas.



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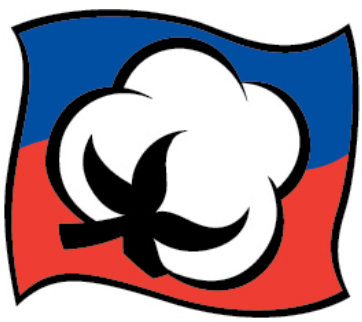
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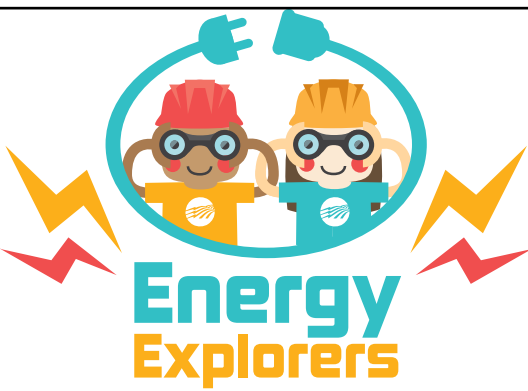


# COTTON

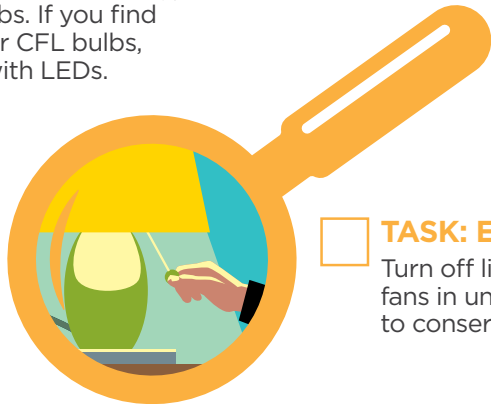
## ELECTRIC CO-OP

### ENERGY SAVINGS SCAVENGER HUNT

Saving energy at home is a great way to help the environment (and save money). With the help of an adult, look for ways you can save energy around your home. Use the tips below to get started, then check off the areas where you've identified ways to save!



**TASK: Bright Ideas**  
Ensure your home uses energy-saving LED bulbs. If you find incandescent or CFL bulbs, replace them with LEDs.



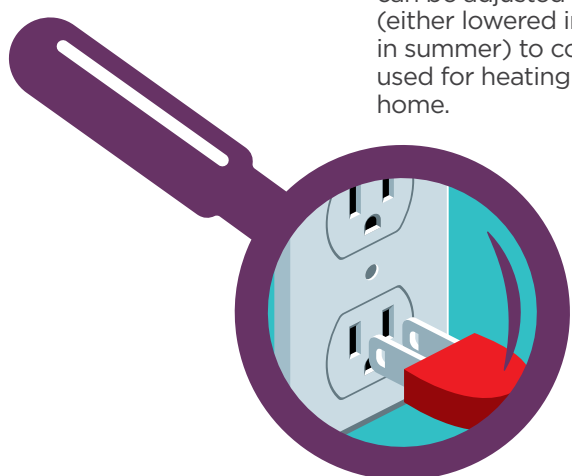
**TASK: Empty Rooms**  
Turn off lights and ceiling fans in unoccupied rooms to conserve energy.



**TASK: Sealed for Savings**  
Check windows to make sure they are closed and locked. Sealed windows help prevent air leaks, which saves energy.



**TASK: Set to Save**  
Check the thermostat to see if it can be adjusted a few degrees (either lowered in winter or raised in summer) to conserve energy used for heating or cooling your home.



**TASK: Slay Energy Vampires**  
Energy vampires are devices that consume energy even when they're not being used. Unplug these items, like phone chargers and tablets, when you're not using them.



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- Unacceptable
- Mr. T's "The A-Team" character
- American national park
- One point south of due east
- Assist in a crime
- Greek mythological personification of Earth
- A major division of geological time
- German courtesy title
- English family dating back to Norman times
- Discounts
- South American nation
- Former Milwaukee Buck Michael

**DOWN**

- Supreme god of ancient Egyptians
- Nevada city
- Energy, style and enthusiasm
- Bird's beak
- Language
- Midway between south and southeast
- Punjab village
- Small biting flies
- Sportscaster Patrick
- Hostile
- Passports and drivers licenses are two
- Discourages from doing
- A way to get around
- Repeat
- A way to cook with fat
- Temporary loss of consciousness
- Reciprocal of a sine
- Fir tree genus
- "Transformers" director Michael
- Criminals who steal
- Genus of leaf-footed bug
- Music product
- "Talk to you"
- Santa says it three times
- Doctors' group
- African nation
- Ageless
- When you hope to get somewhere
- Worn
- Deprives of vigor
- Used to have (Scottish)
- Where you live
- Muslim ruler title
- Basics
- Type of drug (abbr.)
- Spanish soldier
- It precedes two
- Illuminated



# Parting Shot



Last November, Cotton Electric Cooperative Board President Brian DeMarcus congratulated Board Trustee Shan Files on his time and efforts serving as Board President from 2021-2024. DeMarcus was elected Board President by the co-op Board of Trustees last October, and Files will continue to serve as the Board Trustee of District 1. Photo by Zach Young.

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