

The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

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NUMBER 11



Cloudy skies did not stop pole top and basket rescue drills held recently at Cotton Electric headquarters in Walters. The 2021 safety drill was the first large gathering of Cotton Electric employees in more than a year.

An overall emphasis on safety



Apprentice Lineman Case Hurst works ropes used in a pole top rescue drill.



Apprentice Lineman Billy Kennard stands on the storage cabinet of a utility truck to offer information about basket rescue drills. Most of the employees in the group he is addressing are likely to be working in the field but don't operate the baskets on a daily basis. The drills serve as an important refresher about how the bucket and boom operate.

Annual drills ensure field workers are prepared for emergency rescues

By Karen Kaley

Many of Cotton Electric's employees have daily tasks that make them more likely to encounter hazardous situations. Some tramp around in undeveloped areas that may be swampy, or overgrown with grass and weeds concealing trenches. They are exposed to the wild Oklahoma weather and unpredictable dogs, killer bees, and crazy goats. They hoist transformers, use chain saws on tree branches and operate heavy equipment.

Line workers strap on hooks and climb poles or go up as high as 60 feet in truck baskets to work around power lines. They build, maintain and repair those lines and the poles that hold them up. They also work around transformers and meters and inside substations.

These tasks are risky; they could get hurt. Their lives could change in an instant. So, we have safety drills.

All cooperative employees likely to be in the field go through basket rescue drills once a year. That includes line workers, engineers, meter technicians, vegetation management workers, and warehousemen.

They go through these steps: Make the mayday call. Climb onto the back of a basket truck and switch control of the basket and boom to the lower panel. Lower the basket and tilt it. Climb down and reach into the basket as if to pull a colleague out.

Pole top rescue drills are required for all linemen, the only employees trained to climb a pole. The drill begins with the same mayday call.

The line worker straps on climb-

ing gear and makes their way up the pole to throw a rope over a cross arm or drive a screwdriver into the pole to loop it over. The other end is tied around a mannequin's chest. After its safety belt is cut with a knife, the mannequin is lowered to the ground and CPR is started.

The rescue drills are supervised by Oklahoma's Association of Electric Cooperative's Safety and Loss Control Instructor, Greg Hambrick. Cotton Electric's Safety and Loss Coordinator, Jarrod Hooper, assists by timing each run and watching every move to make sure linemen are using safe and efficient methods.

The goal is for each lineman to complete the drill in four minutes or less, as recommended by the American Heart Association. For each minute that passes, the victim's chance of survival decreases by 10%. Completing the drill in four minutes allows for a 60% chance of reviving the victim.

The drills are a component of an overall emphasis on safety at Cotton Electric. All employees receive regular safety training pertinent to their jobs. The more risky the job, the more safety precautions.

Line workers and field crews are required to ensure everyone is informed about tasks and hazards before a job begins; trucks are grounded; personal protective equipment is always worn.

The focus on safe practices has paid off. According to Cotton Electric records, there have been no electrical contact accidents in more than 30 years.

That's a pretty good record.

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after July 1, 2021, is \$0.00745 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$9.68 on the July bill.

June 2021 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	76	59	68	16	98	65	82
2	78	54	66	17	98	66	82
3	85	57	71	18	98	67	83
4	86	59	73	19	98	66	82
5	82	60	71	20	99	67	83
6	87	66	77	21	79	58	69
7	85	68	77	22	86	53	70
8	91	70	81	23	97	71	84
9	94	73	84	24	98	77	88
10	95	72	84	25	98	78	88
11	95	73	84	26	88	70	79
12	93	69	81	27	86	68	77
13	95	69	82	28	87	70	79
14	96	71	84	29	83	72	78
15	96	67	82	30	90	71	81

Source: srh.noaa.gov/oum/

Average Daily High: 91 Average Daily Low: 67

Did You Know?

Some 64% of Cotton Electric accounts have been accessed through SmartHub, either online or via the app. Members can check energy use, pay bills and much more with SmartHub.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes by Aug. 9, 2021.

Contact Us

Do you have a story idea for The Current or do you need to place an ad? If so, let us know.

We can be reached at 580-875-3351 or by email at TheCurrent@cottonelectric.com.

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

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More news at cottonelectric.com

From the CEO

Electricity enhances quality of lives

Most of us use electricity, either directly or indirectly, at almost all times. Because electricity is so abundant and available with the simple flip of a switch, it's easy to take it for granted.



Jennifer Meason, CEO

According to the Energy Information Agency (EIA), the typical U.S. household now uses more air conditioning, appliances and consumer electronics than ever before. The average home also contains 10 or more internet-connected devices. Considering everything that is powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally might wince at our monthly bill. But keep in mind, it's no longer just the "light bill."

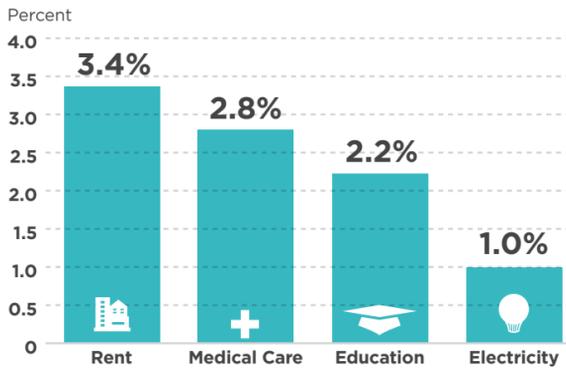
Electricity powers quality of life

Electricity powers our quality of life. From the infrastructure of your home (appliances, water heater and HVAC system) to charging your smartphones, computers, TV and Wi-Fi router, your energy bill covers so much more than lighting. Today, there is more demand for electricity than ever before. At home, in schools and business, and in commercial sectors such as transportation,

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2015-2020



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

the need for electricity is increasing.

Typically when demand goes up, so too does the price, as is the case with most goods or services, like cable or even your

favorite specialty coffee.

However, that's not true with electricity. Let's take a look at how the value of electricity compares to other common expenses.

Over the last five years,

the cost of rent increased 3.4%; medical care increased 2.8%; and education increased 2.2%. But the cost of electricity increased only 1%. Considering all the ways we depend on electricity, it still remains a great value.

So, the next time you're enjoying your favorite podcast, TV series or movie, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life.

We care about you, the members we serve, and understand that electricity is more than a commodity – it's a necessity. That's why Cotton Electric Cooperative will continue working hard to power your life, reliably and affordably.

Renewable energy helps power our world

WHAT IS RENEWABLE ENERGY?

The Answer is Blowing in the Wind

We hear a lot about renewable energy, but what is it, exactly?

It is an energy source that is perpetual ... inexhaustible... "to infinity and beyond!" Renewable energy has storage limitations, however, and some types are not available 24/7.

A FEW FACTS

- According to the University of Michigan (U-M) Center for Sustainable Systems, about 80% of the nation's energy comes from fossil fuels, 8.4% from nuclear and 11.4% from renewable sources.
- In 2019, renewable energy sources accounted for about 17% of energy generation, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA).
- The EIA projects that the share of renewables used for U.S. electricity generation will increase from 21% in 2020 to 42% in 2050.
- Wind and solar are the fastest-growing renewable sources, but they provide just 3.8% of total energy used in the U.S., according to the U-M center.

THE MAJOR TYPES OF RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES ARE:

- BIOMASS, INCLUDING BIOFUELS** (comes from plants and animals)
- WATER OR HYDROPOWER**
- GEOTHERMAL** (comes from the heat of the earth)
- WIND**
- SOLAR**

SafeElectricity.org

Renewable energy is continuous energy supplied by natural resources. It is "naturally replenishing but flow limited," according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA). Although renewable energy is inexhaustible, the amount of power produced in a specific time period is restricted.

So how does renewable energy fit into the larger (energy) picture?

According to the University of Michigan (U-M) Center for Sustainable Systems, about 80% of the nation's energy comes from fossil fuels, 8.4% from nuclear power and 11.4% from renewable sources. Wind and solar are the fastest-growing renewable sources; however, they provide just 3.8% of energy used in the U.S., according to U-M.

In 2019, renewable energy sources accounted for about 17% of energy generation, according to the EIA. The administration projects that will have increased from 21% in 2020 to 42% in 2050.

Types of renewable energy include: **Wind Power**, which uses wind energy to make electricity. Wind occurs because the sun cannot heat the surface of the earth evenly. In 2019, wind turbines were the source of approximately 7.3% of the total U.S. utility-scale electricity generation.

Geothermal Energy is energy garnered from the heat of the earth. This type of en-

ergy can be used in different ways, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). It can heat and cool homes and buildings through heat pumps; it can generate electricity via geothermal power plants; and it can heat structures directly.

Solar Power, or energy from the sun, is the most abundant energy resource on earth according to the DOE, with 173,000 terawatts of solar energy striking the earth continuously. That is more than 10,000 times the world's total energy use. Solar panels that take in the sun's energy are made of silicon photovoltaic cells that convert sunlight into electricity instead of heat (photovoltaic = photo as in light, and voltaic = electricity).

Hydroelectric power relies on the water cycle for power. According to the EIA, hydropower was one of the first sources used for electricity generation and it is the largest single renewable energy source for U.S. electricity generation. Besides dams, other forms of hydropower include waves and tides.

Biomass is organic material that comes from plants and animals. Examples of biomass include wood, agricultural crops; food, yard and wood waste in garbage; and animal manure and human sewage. According to the EIA, biomass fuels provided 5% of total primary energy use in the U.S. in 2019.

Source: SafeElectricity.org



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

During summer months, run large appliances that emit heat (like clothes dryers and dishwashers) during the evening when it's cooler. This will minimize indoor heat during the day when outdoor temperatures are highest.

Source: Energy.gov

COTTON ELECTRIC CO-OP

Mission Statement
Our mission is to be the leader in providing the most reliable and innovative electric system, with affordable rates, through the positive, enthusiastic and professional use of its resources and people.

May 2021 Operating Stats

	2021	2020
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$5,150,795	\$4,926,307
Cost of Purchased Power	3,520,542	3,264,864
Taxes	99,008	93,609
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	968	926
Average Farm and Residential Bill	118	130
Average Farm and Residential kWh	880	1,058
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,916	18,655
Miles Energized	5,211	5,204
Density Per Mile	3.63	3.58
New Service Connects YTD	184	145
Services Retired	73	68

The Current

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Jennifer MeasonCEO
Bryce Hooper..... Vice President
Karen Kaley.....Marketing & Communications
Kaila Williams..... Display Advertising

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Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the August issue, please submit information by July 28 by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com. Events that occur before Aug. 9 will not be published in the next issue.

CTHC notes Day of the Cowboy

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Center (CTHC) recognizes the National Day of the Cowboy with a celebration from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., July 24, at 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway in Duncan. The 2021 theme is Native Americans.

Guests will have the opportunity to visit with Oklahoma children's author Tina Hawkins, who will read about Bella and Stella. Joe Don Brave is the featured artist in the Garis Gallery of the American West.

There will be a game room and art project for youth, where they can play Western-style cowboy games, get their faces painted and more. Cowboys Opry Band will be performing live. All of these activities and more will be available all day at the event. Admission is free.

CTHC is an Oklahoma Outstanding Attraction and a True West Top 10 Western Museum. For information, call 580-252-6692 or email info@on-thechisholmtrail.com.

Boland and Stragglers to appear

Jason Boland and the Stragglers with Jarrod Morris are scheduled to appear July 17 at the Stephens County fairgrounds, 2002 S. 13th in Duncan. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.

Jason Boland & the Stragglers are leading lights in the Red Dirt scene, a grassroots movement that mixes honky tonk, outlaw, and contemporary country, and is powered by constant touring. The Red Dirt sound has two homes, Texas and Oklahoma, and Boland and his band hail from the latter.

Information and tickets are available at outhousetickets.com

Dehydrator set for July 31

The 31st annual Dehydrator is a bicycle ride with varied mile routes. Riders leave at 7 a.m., July 31 from the Simmons Center in Duncan.

Entry fees are \$30 per person or \$45 per tandem team, non-refundable. A free T-shirt goes to the first 500 entries. A \$5 late fee will be assessed on entries after July 20.

For information and registration forms, visit thedehydrator.org.

Fiesta in Fuqua returns Aug. 7

Fiesta in Fuqua is a free, fun-filled day in the park for school-aged children featuring opportunities to learn about healthy living, play games and receive a free haircut. Cotton Electric's popular Energy Bike will be among the featured activities.

After completing activities, kids receive a package of school supplies.

Fun begins at 9 a.m. and runs through 11 a.m., Aug. 7 at the park on U.S. Highway 81 in Duncan. All children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

For information, call 580-656-0530.

Lawton Rangers Rodeo Aug. 11-14

More than 400 top cowboys and cowgirls are expected to compete in the Lawton Rangers Rodeo set for Aug. 11-14, at L.O. Ranch Arena, 2004 SE 60th Street in Lawton. Featured events include barrel racing, tie-down roping, team roping, steer wrestling, bareback and saddle bronc riding and bull riding.

Gates open at 6:30 p.m. each night and Grand Entry begins at 7:30. Admission is \$5 a carload on Wednesday. Reduced-price admission is on Thursday and Friday. Tickets can be purchased at LawtonRangers.com.

LPO presents 'Oklahoma!'

For Lawton's 120th birthday, Lawton Philharmonic Orchestra will feature a local cast performing the groundbreaking musical "Oklahoma!" Performance of the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic begins at 7:30 p.m., Aug. 28, at McMahon Memorial Auditorium, 801 NW Ferris Avenue in Lawton.

Set in the Oklahoma territory in the early 1900s, this musical tells the story of two pairs of lovers. Curly is a cowboy who has trouble admitting his feelings to Laurey, as she does to him, because of their stubbornness. Judd, the hired hand at Laurey's farm, tries to come between them. Ado Annie is torn between Will, a cowboy who has strong feelings for her, and Ali Hakim, a peddler who's a ladies' man and doesn't want to marry her.

For information and to purchase tickets, visit www.LawtonPhil.com.

VVA plans Sept. 13 golf tourney

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 751, is calling for teams and sponsors for a golf tournament to be held Sept. 13, at Fort Sill Golf Course. Check-in and tee time assignments for the 4-person scramble begins at 10 a.m. Lunch follows at 11.

Organizers hope to sign up 18 teams and that among them is at least one all-female team.

Players will have opportunities to win significant hole-in-one prizes and door prizes.

The event has been a major fundraiser for the chapter for 17 years. Proceeds go to programs supporting Vietnam veterans and their families.

Entry information is available between 9:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., Monday through Friday at the VVA Chapter 751 office at 1004 B Avenue or by calling 580-699-5096.

DALC offering classes

Can you read this? One in five adults in America can't. Duncan Area Literacy Council (DALC) has started free classes for Adult Basic Education (ABE), Citizenship, and English Language Learners (ELL) to help those who want to read.

Learners pay nothing for tutoring. It is confidential, and attendees can walk away with confidence to fill out a job application, pay bills, understand prescriptions, follow a recipe or help their children with homework.

Tutors are available in the morning, afternoon or evening and most tutoring takes place at The Duncan Public Library.

If you or someone you know are in need of these services, please contact Mary or Joy at 580-736-1170 or email DALC73533@gmail.com to be placed on a list for free classes.

DALC is a non-profit organization providing free services for those living in Stephens County and surrounding areas.

Blessings Boutique open monthly

Marlow First United Methodist Church opens its Blessings Boutique from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every first and third Tuesday of the month.

Clothing donation drop-off days are Tuesdays, or donors can call the church at 580-658-2765 to make other arrangements.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



This RED, WHITE & BLUE photo was taken by Mandi Gammill during 2021 harvest near Grandfield. Her father, David, is in the foreground and her brother, Josh, operates the combine. Josh flies the American flag during harvest as a reminder to all that American farmers are the backbone of our nation and to show support for our country and all who fought for our freedom.

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

Food pantry open once monthly

Walters Community Food Pantry is open from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month. The pantry is in the old City Hall, 131 1/2 W. California Street. Organizers try to provide a two-week supply of staples to anyone with identification and proof of Cotton County residency.

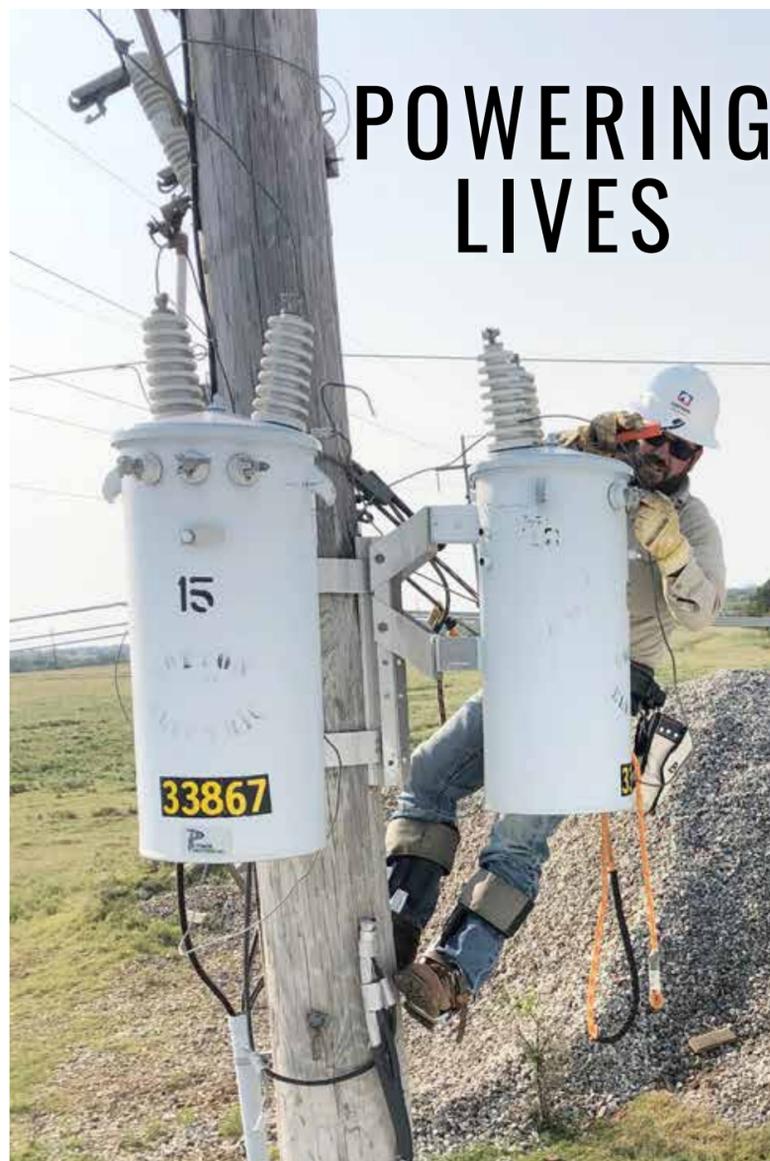
Monetary donations may be sent to Food Pantry, c/o Paul Metcalfe, 211 E. Colorado St., Walters, OK 73572. For information, 580-591-6826.

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Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

August		September		October	
Ad Sales	July 23	Ad Sales	Aug. 20	Ad Sales	Sept. 24
Classified	July 28	Classified	Aug. 25	Classified	Sept. 29
Publish Date	Aug. 9	Publish Date	Sept. 7	Publish Date	Oct. 12

Is it time to invest in your efficiency and comfort?



It's the hottest time of the year, when outdoor temperatures soar over the hundred-degree mark. This is when our air conditioning systems work the hardest and also when those units are more likely to break down. Proper maintenance helps extend their operational life, but eventually the time for replacement will come. Here are a few things for you to consider when deciding if that time is now.



Heath Morgan,
Energy Efficiency
Coordinator

continue to climb as the unit ages and the problems become more severe. Each time you are forking over money for repairs, you could be investing that same amount in a system upgrade. Everyone has their breaking point where they feel the cost of the repairs are no longer worth it. Be sure to consider the estimated life left in your system as part of the decision.

Increasing energy bills: As temperatures outside increase, electric bills will do the same. This is the price we pay for the comfort we enjoy in our homes. We should expect to see some fluctuation in summertime bills based on the weather patterns compared to previous years. However, if your energy usage has climbed significantly over an average bill for this time of year, it may be an indication that your cooling system is no longer operating at peak efficiency.

We promote servicing your air conditioner prior to the hottest time of the year to ensure your system is at its best when you need it most. Even with proper servicing, over time the efficiency of your air conditioner declines. The efficiency is calculated by how much energy it uses to produce a specific amount of cooling. As your efficiency declines, your system will use more and more energy to produce the same amount of cooling. A loss in cooling capacity or your system's inability to keep up can be a red flag indicating a significant issue.

Once you decide to update your cooling system, be sure to talk to your contractor about what other updates may be needed. Ductwork is frequently overlooked when replacing systems. If ducting is not properly sealed and insulated, it can cancel out the efficiency you just invested in. Leaky ductwork can allow conditioned air to escape into your attic. This can also allow hot unfiltered attic air to enter your system's airflow.

Consider adding a programmable or smart thermostat to your install. These thermostats allow you to adjust temperature settings for when you are not home or when less cooling is required. Some smart thermostats have a feature that learns your patterns over time and builds a custom schedule based on those patterns.

Ask about the warranty on your new system. Many manufacturers offer warranties of 10 years or longer with their equipment.

Finally, be sure to speak with your contractor about what systems qualify for Cotton Electric's energy efficiency rebates. These rebates can help offset the cost of moving up to a more efficient unit.

While this investment is normally one of the largest made in a household, it is also a big investment in your comfort and can lead to some major energy savings as well.

HAY TOOLS

That Work As Hard As You Do

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Energy Saver 101: Everything You Need to Know About

Home Cooling

6%

The percentage of the average household's energy use that goes to space cooling.



2/3 of all U.S. homes have air conditioners.

\$29B

The amount it costs homeowners every year to power their air conditioners.

#DidYouKnow:

You can reduce air conditioning energy use by 20-50 percent by switching to **high-efficiency air conditioners** and taking other actions to lower your home cooling costs.

ENERGY-SAVING TIP:

The quickest way to save energy on home cooling is to regularly clean and replace your cooling unit's filters.

Maintaining Your Air Conditioner

Annual maintenance can help improve your comfort and the efficiency of your air conditioner while prolonging the life of your unit.

Routinely replace or clean your air filters — it can lower your air conditioner's energy consumption by 5-15 percent.

Check your air conditioner's evaporator coil every year and clean it as necessary.

If your coil fins are bent, use a "fin comb" to straighten them.

If you have a split system, be sure to clean debris and leaves from the fan, compressor and condenser.

Occasionally pass a stiff wire through your unit's drain channels to prevent clogs.

For window air conditioners, inspect the window seals to keep cool air from escaping.

Hire a certified professional when your unit needs more than basic maintenance.

Common Air Conditioner Problems

Your unit isn't cooling properly

Refrigerant

Your refrigerant could be low or leaking. Call a trained technician to repair the leak and recharge the system.

Sensor Problems

If you have a window unit, the thermostat sensor could be knocked out of position. Carefully bend the wire holding it in place to properly position it.

Thermostat Issues

Check your thermostat to make sure it is set properly and it is reading the correct temperature.

Drainage Problems

Check your unit's drain to make sure it isn't clogged.

Dirty Filter

A clogged filter restricts airflow through the unit, decreasing its efficiency and reducing its ability to effectively cool the air.

Your unit isn't turning on

Electric Control Failure

Your compressor and fan controls could be worn out from having your system turn off and on too frequently. Contact a professional to check your unit's electrical connections.

Thermostat

Make sure your thermostat is working — it might need new batteries or might need to be replaced entirely.

Limited airflow

Ductwork Problems

Your ducts could be leaking air or be clogged or constricted. Work with a professional to clean and air seal your ducts.

Dirty Filter

A clogged filter restricts airflow through the unit, decreasing its efficiency and reducing its ability to effectively cool the air.

Ventilation

Ventilation is the least expensive and most energy-efficient way to cool a home.



Natural ventilation relies on the wind to create a "chimney effect" to cool a home. A simple natural ventilation strategy is opening windows to create a cross-wise breeze.

ENERGY-SAVING TIP:

If you live in a cooler climate, take advantage of the wind to naturally cool your home.



Fans circulate air in a room, creating a wind chill effect that makes occupants more comfortable. Fans for cooling come in a variety of options, including ceiling, table, floor and wall-mounted.

ENERGY-SAVING TIP:

Turn off your fans when you leave the room — fans cool people, not rooms.



Whole house fans pull air in through windows and exhaust it through a home's attic and roof. To ensure proper sizing and safety, professional should install whole house fans.

ENERGY-SAVING TIP:

In many climates, a whole house fan can provide cooling needs even on the hottest days.

Tips for Lowering Your Cooling Costs

Install and set a programmable thermostat — it could help you save up to 10 percent on heating and cooling costs a year.

Use a fan. Ceiling fans will allow you to raise the thermostat setting about 4 degrees without impacting your comfort.

Insulate your attic and walls, and seal cracks and openings to prevent warm air from leaking into your home.

Insulate and seal ducts — air loss through ducts accounts for about 30 percent of a cooling system's energy consumption.

Don't heat your home with appliances. On hot days, consider using an outdoor grill instead of your oven.

Install energy-efficient window coverings that let natural light in and prevent solar heat gain.

Buy an ENERGY STAR-qualified AC unit — on average, they're up to 15 percent more efficient than standard models.

Use the bathroom fan when taking a shower or bath and a range hood when cooking — this helps remove heat and humidity from your home.

SOURCES: Energy Saver (www.energy.gov/energysaver), the Energy Department's Building Technologies Office (www.energy.gov/eere/buildings/building-technologies-office), Energy Star (www.energystar.gov), Weatherization Assistance Program Technical Assistance Center (www.watpac.org)



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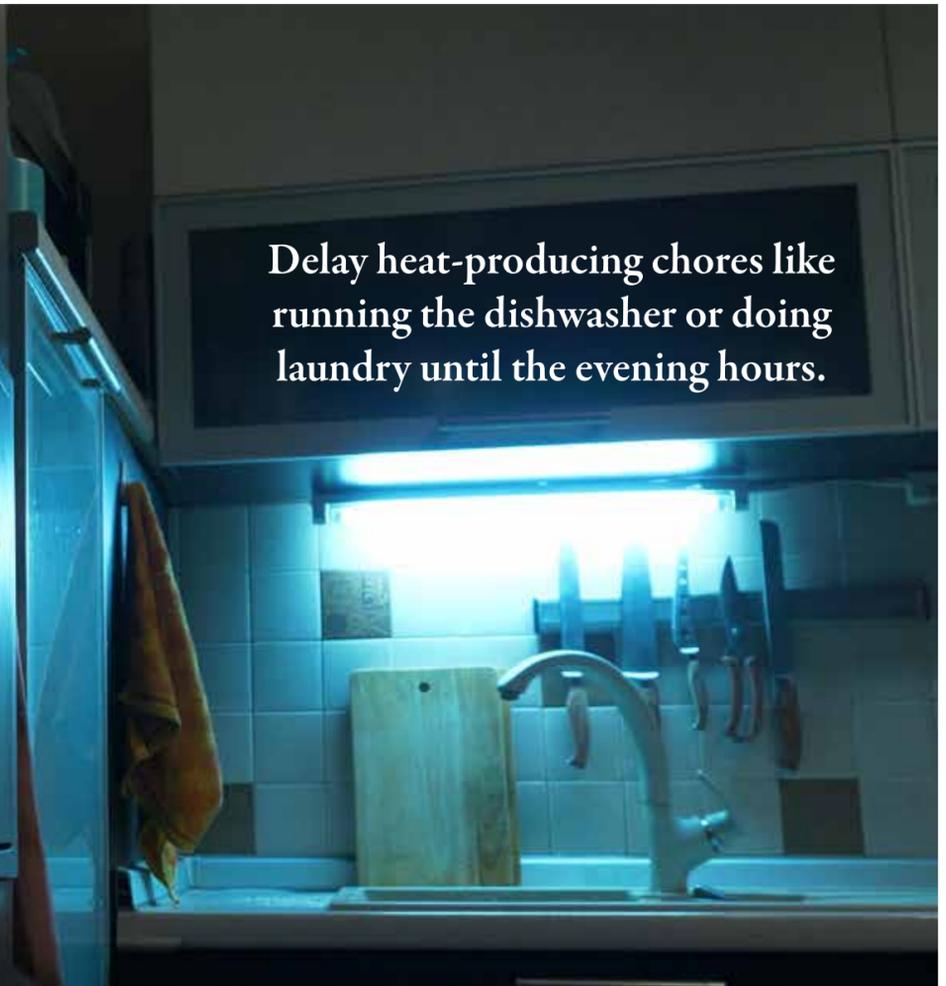
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Find more safety info at CottonElectric.com

BEAT THE PEAK

We can help find ways to save energy and money



Delay heat-producing chores like running the dishwasher or doing laundry until the evening hours.

Cotton Electric Cooperative is here for you, and given the challenging times we've all experienced for more than a year, we'd like to share some information and ideas to help our members save energy and money.

Home energy evaluations

Summer is a great time to conduct an energy use evaluation of your home and identify ways to boost efficiency. Understanding how your home uses energy can help you determine the best ways to modify energy use and keep more money in your wallet.

An energy evaluation is one of the best ways to determine how energy efficient your home is – an audit can also identify areas for potential energy savings. Cotton Electric provides free energy efficiency home evaluations for members to help determine the most economical ways to improve a home's energy efficiency.

If you'd prefer to do an energy evaluation yourself, try Energy Star's online audit. Visit www.energystar.gov, then enter "home energy yardstick" in the search box to get started. But keep in mind, an online audit won't be as thorough as an in-person

in-home evaluation.

Another do-it-yourself source is provided by Touchstone Energy. Access the Home Energy Adventure at adventure.touchstoneenergy.com.

Shift energy use to off-peak hours

By performing some of your daily chores such as running the dishwasher or doing laundry during off-peak hours (when people are using less electricity), you can have a meaningful impact on demand and the long-term cost of power generation. Use your programmable thermostat to adjust the settings so that your heating and air conditioning systems sync with the off-peak times. Use automatic timers to run hot tubs, pool pumps, water heaters and other appliances in the same way. Be sure to program the timers so there is less demand between 4 and 7 p.m. during the summer.

Putting power in your hands

Prepaid metering is intended to aide in budgeting your monthly energy costs. With Cotton Electric's MyChoice program, members can pay for electricity before it is used, then use the electricity until the

credit expires. During the time period you've paid for, you can set up your account to send regular notifications about your balance. Industry studies show that consumers who participate in prepaid metering plans use up to 10% less electricity.

Whether your account is pre-paid or is a traditional monthly-billed account, it can be monitored with SmartHub. Accessible either online at CottonElectric.com or via the SmartHub app, members can see historical information about electricity use, manage payments and keep contact information up-to-date.

Download the SmartHub app by visiting www.SmartHubApp.com.

Lastly, if you have recently purchased a new Energy Star-rated appliance or product, make sure you are taking advantage of any special offers or rebates that are available.

As your trusted energy advisor, we're here to help. If you have questions about your bill or additional ways to save energy, please let us know. We're only one click or phone call away.

Our numbers are 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520. Keep those numbers handy for reporting outages, too!



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Defend Your Data

Caller unknown?

*Could be a scammer.
Let it go to voicemail.*

When you think of a cyber criminal you probably think of an evil mastermind sitting behind a computer, launching sophisticated attacks over the internet. While some of today's cyber criminals do use advanced technologies, many simply use the phone to trick their victims.

There are two big advantages to using a phone: Unlike other attacks, there are fewer security technologies that can detect and stop a phone call attack; also, it is much easier for criminals to convey emotion and build trust over the phone, which makes it easier to trick their victims. Let's learn how to spot and stop these attacks.

How do phone call attacks work?

First, understand that these criminals are usually after your money, information, or access to your computer (or all three). They do this by tricking you into doing something you should not do, a technique called "social engineering." Cyber criminals often create situations that feel very urgent and realistic on the call. Some of the most common examples include:

- The caller pretends they are from the government and informs you that you have unpaid taxes. They explain that if you don't pay your taxes right away you will go to jail, then pressure you to pay your taxes with your credit card over the phone. This

is a scam. The government will send official tax notifications only by regular mail.

- The caller pretends to be from a company such as Amazon, Apple, or Microsoft Tech Support and explains that your computer is infected. Once they convince you that your computer is infected, they pressure you into buying their software or giving them remote access to your computer.

- An automated voicemail informs you that your bank account or credit card has been canceled, and you have to call a number back to reactivate it. When you call, you get an automated system that asks you to confirm your identity as well as all sorts of private questions. This is really not your bank. They are simply recording all your information for identity fraud.

Protecting yourself

The greatest defense you have against a phone call attack is yourself. Keep these things in mind:

- Anytime anyone calls you and creates a tremendous sense of urgency or pressure, be extremely suspicious. They are attempting to rush you into making a mistake. Even if the phone call seems OK at first, if it starts to feel strange, you can stop and say "no" at any time
- Be especially wary of callers who insist that you purchase gift cards or prepaid debit cards.

- Never trust Caller ID. Bad guys will often spoof the number, so it looks like it is coming from a legitimate organization or has the same area code as your phone number.

- Never allow a caller to take temporary control of your computer or trick you into downloading software. This is how they can infect your computer.

- Unless you placed the call, never give the other party information that they should already have. For example, if the bank called you, they shouldn't be asking for your account number.

- If you believe a phone call is an attack, simply hang up. If you want to confirm that the phone call was legitimate, go to the organization's website (such as your bank) and call the customer support phone number directly yourself. That way, you really know you are talking to the real organization.

- If a phone call is coming from someone you do not personally know, let the call go directly to voicemail. This way you can review unknown calls on your own time. Even better, on many phones you can enable this by default with the "Do Not Disturb" feature.

Scams and attacks over the phone are on the rise. You are the best defense at detecting and stopping them.

Source: SANS.org

Don't fall victim to utility scams

By Abby Berry

Every day, millions of Americans are targeted by scammers through phone calls, emails, text messages, online or in person. Scammers' tactics can change daily, which is why it's important for consumers to stay on top of the latest scam reports from local and national news outlets, as well as your local utility companies.

It seems like every week, we get reports that electric cooperative members in Oklahoma and elsewhere were targeted through a phone scam where the scammers demanded immediate payment and threatened to shut off power if the money was not received. Remember, Cotton Electric will never call you and demand immediate payment without notice.

We want you to be aware of two trending scam tactics. One is the overpayment trick, where a scammer contacts you and claims that you have overpaid your utility bill. The scammer will say they need your personal banking information to deposit the credit back to your checking account.

Don't fall for this scam! If you make an overpayment on your energy bill, Cotton Electric will automatically apply the credit to your account, which will carry over to your next billing cycle.

Another trending scam is smishing (short for SMS phishing). Many consumers know to watch out for suspicious emails, but we tend to trust text messages sent to our smartphones. Always question suspicious texts, especially from someone claiming to represent a utility. Cotton Electric will only send you important updates via text if you've signed up for them through the SmartHub app.

These are just a couple examples of trending scams, so it's important to watch for any red flags.

Here are a few reminders on how to take control of the situation when you've been targeted by a scammer:

- Take your time. Utility scammers try to create a sense of urgency so that you'll act fast and hand over personal information, especially over the phone. Take a

moment to think about the situation before acting.

- Be suspicious. Scammers typically request immediate payments through prepaid debit cards or third-party apps. Unusual requests like this should raise red flags. Remember, if the request seems strange and out of the ordinary, you're likely being targeted by a scammer.

- Confirm before you act. If you're contacted by someone claiming to represent Cotton Electric or another utility but you're unsure, just hang up the phone and call the utility directly. You can reach us at 580-875-7259 or 800-522-3520 to verify the situation.

Our increasingly connected world provides scammers with more opportunities to connect with unsuspecting consumers. Be vigilant, and please report any utility scams to Cotton Electric so we can let others in our community know. Together, we can help prevent our friends and neighbors from being victimized.

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Second-quarter grants announced

Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) recently completed a fiscal year. In spite of challenging circumstances, the CECF board was able to convene quarterly to consider applications and issue grants between July 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021. Through the generosity of Cotton Electric members, a total of \$86,446.22 went toward improving the quality of life in southwest Oklahoma.

Eight grants were issued to five school systems and another six grants went to organizations serving the youth in the Cotton Electric service area. Five of the grants went toward fighting food insecurity. Another four went to equipping fire departments.

A complete list of FY 2020-21 grant recipients is below.

- Armed Services YMCA of Oklahoma
- Chisholm Trail Heritage Center
- Comanche Area Toys 4 Tots
- Cotton County Sheriff's Office
- Duncan Area Literacy Council
- Duncan Fire Department
- Duncan Public Schools
- Empire Public Schools
- Gabriel's House
- City of Geronimo
- Grandfield Fire Department
- Indiahoma Fire Department
- Indiahoma Public Schools
- Medicine Park Economic Development Authority
- Porter Hill VFD
- Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma
- Rush Springs UMC Food Bank
- Safe Center
- Sterling Public Schools
- United Methodist Women, Duncan
- Walters Public Schools

Even during tough economic times, it's important that we continue to support our local communities. That's the philosophy behind Operation Round Up (ORU), a charitable program governed, funded and supported by Cotton Electric members like you.

Most Cotton Electric members participate in ORU, in which power bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar. The amount rounded up each month can be as little as 1 cent and is never more than 99 cents. On average, each participating member contributes about \$6 each year.

The funds are pooled and administered by the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF), a board of directors that meets quarterly to consider grant applications. The board consists of Jennifer Meason, the co-op's CEO; Ken Layn, president of the co-op's board of trustees; and three representatives from the Cotton Electric service area: Danny Marlett, Carter Waid and Cindy Zelbst.

The board met in June to review several grant applications. Grants totaling \$20,000 will be distributed to seven of the applicants. Second-quarter grants include:

- Chisholm Trail Heritage Center: A \$1,000 CECF grant will support a creative writing program

for area sixth-graders.

- Duncan Area Literacy Council: A \$1,500 CECF grant will purchase children's books to be distributed during Fiesta in Fuqua.

- Emerson Elementary School in Duncan: A \$2,500 CECF grant will go toward the purchase of tables for an outdoor classroom.

- Duncan High School, Pathways to Future Careers Internship Program: A \$2,500 CECF grant will go toward the purchase of soft skills curriculum.

- Grandfield Fire Department: A \$5,000 CECF grant will go toward the purchase of equipment and community outreach materials.

- Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma: A \$5,000 CECF grant will support the Food For Kids programs in the Cotton Electric service area.

- Sterling Public Schools: A \$2,500 CECF grant will go toward outfitting an elementary classroom with a Smart Panel.

CECF has awarded or pledged more than 550 grants totaling \$1,333,805.03 since the foundation was established in 2004.

Applications for 2021 third-quarter grants are due Sept. 14, 2021. Downloadable applications are available at CottonElectric.com/grant-applications.

Download CECF grant applications at CottonElectric.com.

Deadline for third-quarter 2021 grant applications is Sept. 14.

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program and members may opt out at any time by calling or sending a letter or email stating the account holder's name, account number and the request to be removed.



Mark your calendars!



Cotton Electric's Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Night is

Sept. 23, 2021 at Stephens County Fairgrounds in Duncan

Registration begins at 5:30 p.m.
Business meeting begins at 7 p.m.

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Sizzling Meals Made for Summer

FAMILY FEATURES

Summertime, for many, represents an opportunity to enjoy freshly cooked meals while enjoying time outdoors. Taking your dishes from ordinary to extraordinary starts with chef-inspired recipes that call to mind the flavors of the season.

Whether you're a steak enthusiast who enjoys nothing more than a tender cut or a summer burger connoisseur looking for a fresh twist on tradition, these recipes call for high-quality beef from Omaha Steaks. Created by Omaha Steaks Executive Chef David Rose, the New York Strips Oscar-Style complement the thick, juicy, marbled flavor of the steaks with sauteed asparagus, bearnaise sauce and jumbo lump crab meat. Or turn your attention to Fried Lobster Po Boy Burgers with pimento remoulade sauce for a tempting way to combine two summertime favorites – seafood and burgers.

Visit OmahaSteaks.com for more summer meal inspiration.

Fried Lobster Po Boy Burgers



Fried Lobster Po Boy Burgers

Recipe courtesy of Omaha Steaks Executive Chef David Rose
Prep time: about 20 minutes
Cook time: about 20 minutes
Servings: 2

Pimento Remoulade:

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 1/2 tablespoons minced pimentos
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon minced bread and butter pickles
- 1 pepperoncino (seeded and minced)
- 1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 3 dashes hot sauce
- kosher salt, to taste

Fried Lobster Tails:

- Vegetable oil, for frying
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 large egg
- 1 tablespoon water
- 2 dashes hot sauce
- 1/4 cup potato chips, finely blended in food processor
- 1/3 cup panko breadcrumbs

- 1 tablespoon minced flat leaf Italian parsley
- 2 Omaha Steaks lobster tails (5 ounces each)

Cheeseburgers:

- 1 pound Omaha Steaks premium ground beef salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2 brioche buns
- 2 slices yellow cheddar cheese
- 3 leaves romaine lettuce, shredded

To make pimento remoulade: In small bowl, mix mayonnaise, pimentos, mustard, pickles, pepperoncino, paprika, garlic powder, black pepper, lemon juice and hot sauce until well incorporated. Season with salt, to taste.

To make fried lobster tails: Preheat grill to 400 F and add oil to 10-inch cast-iron pan about 1/2-inch deep.

In medium bowl, whisk flour, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, garlic powder and smoked paprika until well incorporated. Set aside.

In separate medium bowl, whisk egg, water and hot sauce. Set aside.

In third medium bowl, whisk potato chips, panko breadcrumbs and parsley until well incorporated. Set aside.

Cut lobster tails in half lengthwise, remove meat from shell and season

with remaining kosher salt and black pepper.

Toss halved lobster tails in flour mixture first, egg mixture second then potato chip mixture third, coating thoroughly.

Fry lobster tails 3-4 minutes on each side until golden brown and cooked through. Close grill lid between flipping.

To make cheeseburgers: Preheat grill to 450 F using direct heat. Form ground beef into two 1/2 pound patties, each about 1/2-inch thick.

Using thumb, make dimple in center of each patty to help cook evenly.

Season both sides of burger with salt and pepper, to taste. Spread butter on each cut side of buns.

Grill burgers 4-5 minutes per side for medium doneness.

Add one slice cheddar cheese on each burger, close lid and grill about 30 seconds to melt cheese. Remove patties from grill to clean plate. Place buns cut sides down on grill grates and toast 20-30 seconds, or until well toasted, being careful to avoid burning.

To assemble: Place desired remoulade on buns. Place cheeseburgers on bottom buns. Top each with two fried lobster tail halves. Place handful shredded lettuce on lobster tails. Top with buns.

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Servings: 4-6

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

In blender, puree strawberries.
In bowl of stand mixer, beat whipping cream and sweetened condensed milk until stiff peaks form. Fold in strawberry puree. Pour into loaf pan. Freeze 5 hours.
Before serving, let ice cream soften 5-10 minutes.

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New York Strips Oscar-Style

New York Strips Oscar-Style

Recipe courtesy of Omaha Steaks Executive Chef David Rose
Prep time: about 30 minutes
Cook time: about 3 1/2 hours
Servings: 4

Sauteed Asparagus:

- 1/2 pound jumbo asparagus (about 1 bunch), blanched
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons minced shallots
- salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Bearnaise Sauce:

- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons minced shallots
- 1 tablespoon chopped tarragon
- 3 egg yolks
- 2 tablespoons water, plus additional for boiling, divided
- 2 dashes hot sauce
- 12 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Jumbo Lump Crab Meat:

- 1 pound jumbo lump crab meat

2 tablespoons kosher salt

- New York Strip Steaks:**
- 4 Omaha Steaks Private Reserve or Butcher's Cut New York Strips (10 ounces each)
- salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- water
- 4 tablespoons grapeseed oil
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 garlic cloves
- 2 fresh thyme sprigs

To make asparagus: Cut asparagus stalks into 1/4-inch pieces. Heat large pan over medium-high heat and add olive oil.

Add garlic and shallots to pan; lightly saute about 20 seconds, or until fragrant.

Add asparagus to pan; saute about 2 minutes until lightly browned. Add salt and pepper, to taste.

To make bearnaise sauce: In small saucepan, bring vinegar, shallots and tarragon to boil then reduce to simmer 3-4 minutes until reduced by about half. Cool to room temperature.

Bring medium pot half full of water to slow boil.

In small bowl, whisk egg yolks, vinegar reduction, water and hot sauce until well incorporated.

Place bowl over pot of boiling water and continue whisking ingredients until it starts to emulsify

and becomes sauce-like. Alternate whisking on and off heat every 30 seconds to prevent eggs from scrambling.

Gradually add melted butter, continuously whisking until sauce becomes rich with ribbony consistency and sets up. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. If too thick, add 1 tablespoon water at a time and whisk to desired consistency.

To make crab meat: In medium bowl, lightly toss crab meat with salt until well coated.

To make steaks: Pat steaks dry with paper towels and season heavily with salt and pepper, to taste. Bring steaks to room temperature.

Place sous vide immersion circulator in pot of water and set to 5 F below target doneness.

Place seasoned steaks in sous vide bag or zip-top bag and cook 2 hours.

Remove bag and remove steaks from bag. Pat steaks dry with paper towels.

Warm large cast-iron pan over high heat and add oil. Add steaks, butter, garlic cloves and thyme leaves. After about 1 minute, steaks should start to brown.

Flip steaks and baste with butter until caramelized. Remove steaks from pan and rest 7-8 minutes.

To assemble: Place asparagus on bottom of plate. Top with steaks (whole or sliced), crab meat and bearnaise sauce.

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Obesity still concerning when otherwise healthy

Extra weight can lead to poor health later in life even if you are otherwise healthy. A new study published in June 2021 looked at metabolically healthy obese individuals and found that, over time, the extra weight had negative effects on health.

Researchers in Glasgow, U.K., examined data collected over an average of 11 years from 381,363 adults across England, Scotland, and Wales. They wanted to find out if obese individuals who were metabolically healthy were more likely to develop health issues later in life compared to normal weight adults who were metabolically healthy.

Ziyi Zhou and colleagues defined obesity as body mass index (BMI) greater than 30, and metabolic health was measured by looking at blood pressure and five other blood-based biomarkers.



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT

A participant was metabolically healthy if four out of the six measurements were normal.

Participants who were obese but otherwise healthy at the beginning of the study, were more likely to have diabetes, cardiovas-

cular disease, heart failure, respiratory diseases and/or experience death than those who were normal weight and otherwise healthy. This transition from obese but metabolically healthy to metabolically unhealthy tended to happen within 3 to 5 years. The average age of the participant was 55 at the beginning of the study.

This study looked at associations and cannot definitely say obesity caused the negative health consequences. When you are obese but your blood work looks great, you may be tempted to dismiss weight management recommendations. Your healthcare provider may not even discuss weight loss with you. However, you should discuss your weight goals with your health care team and take action to give yourself a better chance of staving off negative health consequences later in life.

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Don't Let Investments Go On Vacation

Now that we've gained at least some space from the COVID-19 pandemic, summer travel is heating up. But while you might be eager to hit the road, you won't want your investments to take a vacation – you need them to work hard for you consistently. But how can you make this happen?

Here are some ideas:

•Know your destination.



"If you don't know where you want to go, then it doesn't matter which path you take." This bit of wisdom, paraphrased from the classic children's book, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, may be appropriate for, say, hikers exploring a new landscape. But as an investor, it matters a great deal which path you take. If you only dabble in investing, occasionally putting some money into one investment or another, it will be difficult to build a portfolio that's consistently working in your best interest. It's important to create a long-term investment strategy based on where you want to go in life – that is, how long you plan to work, what sort of retirement

lifestyle you envision, and so on.

•Match goals with investments. Some investments are designed to achieve certain goals. To illustrate: When you contribute to an IRA and a 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan, you're investing for one specific, long-term goal: a comfortable retirement. While you can tap into these accounts for other purposes – though doing so might incur immediate taxes and penalties – they are designed to provide you with income during your retirement years. Similarly, you may have other investments for other purposes, such as a 529 education savings plan. Here's the key point: Goals-based

investing, by its nature, can help ensure your portfolio is always working on your behalf, in the way you intended.

•Invest for growth. Ideally, hard work produces results, and one of the main results you want from your investments is growth – that is, you want your investments to appreciate in value so they can eventually help you meet your goals. But if you are overconcentrated in vehicles such as certificates of deposit (CDs) and government securities, you may end up lowering your growth potential. That's not to say that CDs and Treasury bills are in some sense "lazy." They can provide you with income and help you reduce the impact of market volatility on your portfolio.

But to achieve most of your goals, you'll need a reasonable number of growth-oriented investments working for you, with the exact percentage based on your needs and life stages.

•Check your progress. How else can you ensure your investments aren't just taking it easy? By checking up on them. If you follow a buy-and-hold strategy, your portfolio shouldn't require many changes if it already reflects your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon. Too much buying and selling could jeopardize your ability to follow a consistent, long-term strategy. However, "buy and hold" doesn't mean "buy and forget." By reviewing your

portfolio at least once a year, you can determine if your investments are performing as they should. If they're not working for you as you'd like, you may need to make some changes.

If you're traveling this summer, relax and enjoy yourself – but keep those investments working hard.

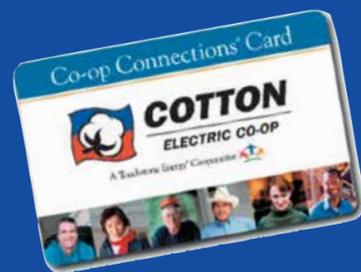
This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

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MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

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Parting Shots



Braylin Dowlen, left, and Bill Kennard are apprentice linemen for Cotton Electric. As part of the 4-year apprentice program, they recently went through Essential Skills training at Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives in Oklahoma City. This 3-day school teaches the fundamentals of linework and provides students with training in

the areas of truck and equipment operations. All subjects are classroom lectures with practical application later in the training field. The course covers safety considerations, materials, tools, and equipment used every day in distribution line construction and maintenance. In addition to general safety instructions, specific safety information related

to DOT trucks and equipment is included. The apprentices are trained in inspection and proper fit of climbing gear, and proper techniques in climbing wooden poles. Apprentices also learn about basic electricity fundamentals and the elements of transmission and distribution systems.

Photos by Nikki Bode, Oaec

ESTATE AUCTION

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Personal Items Including: Antiques, Furniture, Tables, Recliners, Desk, Bedroom Set, Pictures, Couch, and many more items.

Tractor:

1994 7800 John Deere with 4-wheel assist front-end loader and guidance – 8154 hours with major overhaul including new crank at 4233 hours. Transmission overhauled also. Replaced CLS hydraulic remotes. NEW tires on front. This tractor has been very well maintained and is ready to go.

Vehicles & Trailer:

2013 6.7 power stroke – deleted – 205,000 miles.
350 Super Duty Diesel with Deweze Bale Spike and 1200+3C feeder – very well maintained.
1999 Freightliner F-L80 – 9 speed transmission, good rubber used to haul round bales, not sure on miles but in excellent shape
1965 2-ton C-60 Grain truck with steel bed
18' Simpson Stock Trailer with covered top, has lifetime floor, but needs work on sides
16' Flatbed trailer – needs work on floor
8' Flatbed trailer for 4-wheeler

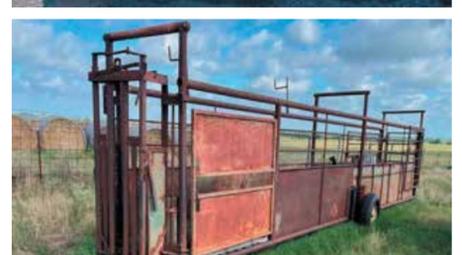
Equipment:

13' Shaffer Disc – discs are in good shape
NEW Priefert calf chute
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25' Spring loaded chisel plow
2 – 4 row cotton planters
4 row cultivator
Big sweep plow – 3 large sweeps
30' chisel plow for parts

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5 Sand Augers
6 – 22.5 – aluminum wheel and tires – good rubber
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