



Troubleshooting a high energy bill



American pride flies behind Cotton Electric logo



On call for you, day and night

# The Cotton Electric Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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

VOLUME 66 September 6, 2022 NUMBER 1

## OFFICIAL NOTICE

### 2022 Annual Meeting back in-person Sept. 20 in Lawton

By The Current staff

Mark your calendars for the 2022 Cotton Electric Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Night to be held Tuesday, Sept. 20 at the Great Plains Coliseum, 920 SW Sheridan Road, in Lawton.

After postponing the 2020 meeting and holding a drive-through format last year, Cotton Electric employees are looking forward to once

again meeting face-to-face with members of the co-op.

The registration process looks a little different this year. From 5:30-7 p.m., members can turn in their official registration card (displayed below). You will be receiving the registration card in the mail so be on the lookout for it as the event approaches. The card is your entry ticket for the prizes, so don't forget to bring it along with you.

The evening promises to be one of good food and fellowship.

We'll treat you to a barbecue dinner with all the fixin's. There will be time to stroll around the venue and visit many points of interest. Cotton Electric employees will have booths set up for members to gather information about our vegetation management program, home energy evaluations and how to report a power outage to name a few.

Our employees will also be on hand to point out parking places and offer golf cart rides for those needing help getting to the building. Further assistance will be available inside to help carry food trays and other items.

Co-op Connections partners and information will be available to members, too.

Be sure to take advantage of this opportunity to put the face with the voice on the telephone, tell us your concerns or learn more about what the co-op does for its members. Our annual meeting makes it possible for us to gather feedback from you by providing a forum where you can let us know how we can better serve you and your family.

Cotton Electric's Board of Trustees, composed of members representing our nine districts will be there to visit with you, as well.

We have lots of goodies planned for the kids' area including cotton

#### 2022 Annual Meeting

##### Time:

Registration: 5:30-7 p.m.  
Business Meeting: 7 p.m.

##### Date:

Tuesday, Sept. 20, 2022

##### Place:

Great Plains Coliseum  
920 SW Sheridan Road,  
Lawton, OK

candy, bounce houses and entertainment from Star Spangle the Clown.

There will be adult goodies, too. Each registered member will get a gift ticket to exchange for one gift bag containing a limited-edition cap and another surprise.

The business meeting required by the co-op's bylaws will begin at 7 p.m. on the dot. Board President Shan Files will call the meeting to order, and other board

members will present their reports. Cotton Electric CEO Jennifer Meason will also address the membership.

When all cooperative business have been discussed and the meeting is adjourned, the prize drawings will be held.

Food, fun, prizes and community. What a great way to spend the evening. We hope to see you there.

### Official Registration Card

#### 2022 Annual Meeting of Cotton Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Tuesday, September 20, 2022  
Great Plains Coliseum • Lawton

Registration.....	5:30-7 p.m.
BBQ Dinner.....	5:30-7 p.m.
Business Meeting.....	7 p.m.
Kids' Area.....	Expo Center

Please present this card at registration. This registration card entitles the holder to one gift ticket per membership. Only connected members in good standing are eligible for the prize drawing. Members must register to be eligible for the prize drawing.

**IMPORTANT!**  
Bring this Registration Card.  
It will be used for attendance  
**PRIZE DRAWINGS!**

## Learn about the 2021 Annual Report on page 8

#### Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after September 1, 2022, is \$0.01761 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$22.89 on the September bill.

#### August 2021 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	98	79	89	16	103	70	87
2	105	72	89	17	93	75	84
3	107	76	92	18	94	72	83
4	108	78	93	19	97	63	80
5	108	79	94	20	98	70	84
6	105	80	93	21	76	68	72
7	102	78	90	22	89	71	80
8	104	75	90	23	87	70	79
9	102	74	88	24	92	70	81
10	100	75	88	25	98	68	83
11	100	69	85	26	95	66	81
12	100	70	85	27	98	70	84
13	100	72	86	28	101	74	88
14	101	68	85	29	not available		
15	102	70	86	30	not available		

Source: [srh.noaa.gov/oun/](http://srh.noaa.gov/oun/)  
Average Daily High: 99 Average Daily Low: 73

#### Did You Know?

Peak demand tracking period ends every year on Sept. 9. Thank you for helping us Beat the Peak this summer!

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

#### Contact Us

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

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

## Members stay updated at meetings

Many thanks to the members who attended our recent district meetings. It was great to have the opportunity to visit with you and get your feedback.

Our mission at Cotton Electric is to safely deliver reliable and affordable power, provide excellent member service, and improve the quality of life in the communities we serve. We had a lot of good discussion at the district meetings about this mission that I would like to share with you.

### Safe, reliable power

Cotton Electric has been proactive in our approach to line inspection and maintenance programs. Your district linemen patrol and inspect line on an ongoing basis, making repairs as needed. In addition, we have a contractor who has been moving throughout the distribution system inspecting poles and identifying those that need to be replaced. This helps us identify weaknesses before they become an issue or result in an outage.

We've also continued our Vegetation Management Program, clearing trees within 15' both directions from the centerline and trimming trees in front of residences. Tree removal is our preference as it is the most cost-effective long term.

If you have trees under co-op power lines that you would like to have removed, please contact us. After trees are removed, we follow up with a herbicide application that is safe for humans and animals and is specially formulated to target trees in our area.

### Fuel diversity, cost of power

Several members had questions about the fuel diversity and reliability of our power provider, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC). WFEC's generation portfolio includes a variety of sources that are dispatched by the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) in the most economical way. These resources include coal, natural gas, hydro, wind, solar and purchased power. In 2021, 31% of WFEC's kilowatt hour input into the Southwest Power Pool Market came from renewable resources (wind, solar, hydro).

We also discussed residential solar installations. I encourage any members who are considering an investment in residential solar to visit our website at [www.cottonelectric.com/](http://www.cottonelectric.com/) solar and give us a call. We will assist you in evaluating the overall efficiency of your home, timing and pattern of your electricity usage for installation sizing, and reviewing the estimated return on investment.

Cotton Electric purchases energy supplied by our members at the Co-operative's Avoided Energy Cost for the energy generated in excess of what was used at the time it was generated. For 2022, the Avoided Energy Cost is \$0.03659/kWh.

This summer has been a long, hot one. After many consecutive 100+ degree days, we saw a large increase in the kWh's used by our members. The cost of power has also been higher than in previous years due mainly to the increased price for natural gas used to generate power.

The combination of the two has resulted in higher electric bills for our members. We know this can be a challenge and we encourage you to call if you need to make payment arrangements or are in need of assistance.

### Quality of life

I'm always happy to share updates about the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) and the Operation Round Up program. Because of your generosity, \$1,369,071.33 has been contributed by CECF to local organizations and individuals in need since 2004.

All of the funds have stayed within our service territory and have helped volunteer fire departments, schools,



### Jennifer Meason, CEO

senior citizen centers and other service organizations. This would not be possible without all of you.

We also discussed last year's member survey. I'm pleased to report that our American Customer Satisfaction Index score was a 90. This favorable rating is considerably higher than the national average for cooperatives, municipal and investor-owned systems. However, we always have room for improvement. If you experience any issues or have concerns, please reach out and let me know.

We will be available to visit again at the upcoming Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Night, which will be held at the Great Plains Coliseum in Lawton on Sept. 20. Registration will begin at 5:30 p.m. and the business meeting will be called to order at 7 p.m.

We welcome your feedback and look forward to seeing you there.



A Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) grant providing children's books for local kids at Fiesta in Fuqua was awarded to Duncan Area Literacy Council. Pictured left to right: Paula Huckabaa, Cotton Electric marketing and communications director; Lanell Taylor, DALC president; and Scott Smith, DALC public relations and media specialist.




Douglass Community Center Organization was recently awarded a CECF grant to cover the costs of industrial drum fans for their gym. Pictured left to right: Patty Winiger, Duncan Ward 3 city councilwoman; Rudy Sander, board president; board members Eva Smith and Dermon Jones; and Paula Huckabaa, Cotton Electric marketing and communications director.



A CECF grant was awarded to Duncan Community Residence Inc for replacement of insulation. Pictured left to right: Eric McGhghy, Board President; Tina Stults, DCR Administrator; Jennifer Akers, Board Secretary; and Paula Huckabaa, Cotton Electric marketing and communications director.



United Way of Stephens County recently received a (CECF) grant to provide children's books for local kids. Pictured left to right: United Way executive director, Helen Stewart and executive assistant Jana Marks, and Cotton Electric editor Carli Eubank, and marketing specialist Zach Young.



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Our faucets and appliances use a lot of hot water. You can lower your water heating costs by using less hot water in your home. Water heating accounts for a large portion of home energy bills.

To save energy (and money!) used for water heating, repair any leaky faucets, install low-flow fixtures and insulate accessible hot water lines. When it's time to purchase a new washing machine or dishwasher, look for models that are ENERGY STAR®-certified.

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

July 2022 Operating Stats		
	2022	2021
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$8,933,822	\$6,548,165
Cost of Purchased Power	6,571,644	4,597,593
Taxes	160,557	122,880
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,621	1,224
Average Farm and Residential Bill	236	176
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,874	1,524
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	19,269	19,028
Miles Energized	5,234	5,213
Density Per Mile	3.68	3.65
New Service Connects YTD	280	278
Services Retired	72	109

Upcoming Deadlines for The Current	
October	
Ad Sales	Sept. 23
Classified	Sept. 28
Publish	Oct. 11
November	
Ad Sales	Oct. 28
Classified	Nov. 2
Publish	Nov. 14

## The Current

Published Monthly at Walters, Oklahoma  
By Cotton Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Jennifer Meason .....CEO  
Shane Bowers..... Vice President  
Paula Huckabaa .....Director  
Carli Eubank .....Editor  
Zach Young ..... Marketing Specialist

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# Energy Efficiency

## Troubleshooting a high energy bill

We all expect our electric bills to go up during the hottest months of the year. But what can you do when a bill is even higher than you expected? Here are some steps to take to help find the reasons why and hopefully prevent another high bill.

### Get your history

First, verify that the bill is truly higher. To do this, start by gathering your usage history. SmartHub is a great place to start. Using your app or the desktop site, members can compare one bill to another with the Usage Comparison Tool. Here you can compare your usage and the weather between the two selected bills.

Energy consumption can fluctuate a lot based on weather patterns and changes in our lifestyle, so start by comparing your current bill to one of the same month, but from a previous year. Try to compare this bill to one where the weather conditions were very similar.

### Find significance of increase

Smaller increases can be caused by slight variations in the weather, visitors staying with you, minor changes to lifestyle, or even a few days difference in the billing cycle.

While a smaller increase isn't something to take lightly, it also may not be a cause for overreaction. Usually, an increase of 30 percent or more is a good indication something has malfunctioned, causing a rise in energy use.

The major consumers of energy in your home are the heating and cooling system, water heater, pool pump, and well pump. A significant increase can also be caused by the addition of appliances to your home, renovations adding square footage, or major changes in your lifestyle.

### Perform a self-evaluation

If you have determined that the increase is significant, the next step is figuring out why.

First, think back over the billing period. You know your habits, and the normal functions of the systems in your home better than anyone.

Ask yourself a few questions: Any additional appliances added? Hot tubs, pool pumps, large fans, or additional air conditioners?

Any problems with the mechanical systems in your home? Air conditioner problems or appliance failures?

Your findings may require you to contact a professional if problems are within your home.

You can take the self-evaluation further. Touchstone Energy's "Together We Save" has provided co-op members with tools to aid them in a home analysis. A link to Touchstone's website is available at [www.cottonelectric.com](http://www.cottonelectric.com) under the Energy Efficiency tab. The Home Energy Adventure and the H.E.A.T. tool will walk you through a basic home analysis. Both tools will help you to determine what additional steps you can take to try and curb future high bills.

There are steps available at [www.energy.gov/energysaver/home-energy-audits/do-it-yourself-home-energy-audits](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver/home-energy-audits/do-it-yourself-home-energy-audits) to perform your own home evaluation, as well.



**Heath Morgan,**  
**Energy Efficiency**  
**Coordinator**

As members of Cotton Electric, you have additional resources available. Representatives in the Member Services department can help with questions regarding bills or billing history.

We also provide members with a free professional in-home energy efficiency evaluation. This evaluation includes a lot of the steps listed above, as well as thermal imaging during a thorough inspection of your home.

If this initial evaluation determines the need, additional air leakage and infiltration testing can be provided to members for a small fee.

To schedule an energy efficiency evaluation of your home, give me a call at 580-875-3351.

The 2022 Annual Meeting & Member Appreciation Night is

Back in Person!

Don't forget to bring your Official Registration Card!

Official Registration Card

2022 Annual Meeting of Cotton Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

Great Plains Coliseum • Lawton

Registration 5:30-7 p.m.

BBQ Dinner 5:30-7 p.m.

Business Meeting 7 p.m.

Kids' Area Expo Center

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IMPORTANT! Bring the Registration Card, it will be used for the PRIZE DRAWINGS!

-2792440 18400 Road Comanche, Oklahoma MLS #2216481 \$225,000 (38 acres of land)

-SOLD: 282234 Croy Rd Meridian/Comanche/Duncan MLS #2225192 \$109,900 (home 3/2/1)

-201 East Iowa Walters, Oklahoma MLS #2219353 \$45,000 (antique home)

More new listings next month! Thank you for reading!

Becky Doyle

Sales Associate - GRI

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Community Spotlight and Photo of the Month

can now be found in the Co-op Life lifestyle section on page 12

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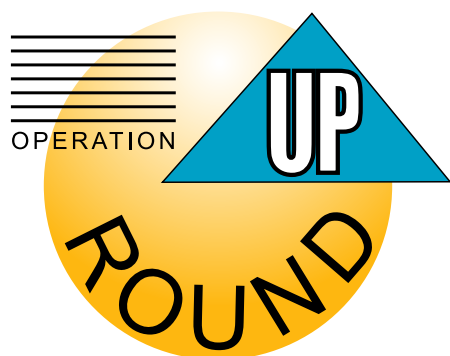
WE'RE PROUD TO POWER YOUR LIFE.

COTTON

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# Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation

## CECF announces third quarter grant recipients

Pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters – set enough of them aside on a regular basis, and the coins add up to dollars. That’s how Operation Round Up (ORU) works.


Most Cotton Electric members participate in ORU, in which power bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar. The amount rounded up can be as little as one 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 who meets quarterly to consider grant applications from individuals and organizations in the area. The board consists of Jennifer Meason, the co-op’s CEO; Shan Files, president of the co-op’s board of trustees; and three representatives from the Cotton Electric service area: Cindy Zelbst, Danny Marlett, and Carter Waid.

The board met in August to review several grant applications. Grants totaling \$8,626.79 will be distributed to 5 of the applicants. Third quarter grant recipients include: Break Bread Together, \$2,500 for food and supplies; Chisholm Trail Kiwanis Club, \$1,466.23 for life vests for their swimming students; Jefferson County Free Fair, \$1,500 for installation of heaters in show barn; Safe Center Inc., \$2,160.56 for equipment and furniture in conference space; and Wichita Mountains Prevention Network, \$1,000 to support a youth conference designed to reduce the misuse of marijuana among adolescents in Jefferson County.


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281715 E 1750 RD, DUNCAN, OK



# Be prepared before disaster strikes

Each September, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) sponsors National Preparedness Month to help Americans be prepared for and able to respond to a variety of natural disasters and emergencies—including those Mother Nature brings.

From tornadoes to floods, storms can cause destruction and power outages. It is important for you and your family to be prepared with needed supplies, a plan, and safety knowledge.

Put together an emergency preparedness kit that contains the essentials, including a first aid kit, flashlights and batteries as well as enough food, water, and other supplies to last for at least 72 hours.

Keep your kit somewhere handy in case you have to evacuate your home quickly.

Get a weather radio to stay up-to-date on changes in the weather. Sign up for alerts to know if storms are coming your way.

It is a good idea to utilize different forms of media, including following local news stations on social media. Some stations may even have an app to download.

Make sure you understand weather terminology, such as the difference between a severe thunderstorm watch and a warning. In a 2013 survey by FEMA, only 55% of the respondents were familiar with local warning systems.

A watch means there is the possibility of storms, and a warning means a storm has been reported and you should take cover.

Create a family plan for emergencies. Identify the responsibilities of each member of the family and places to meet in case you are separated. Ensure everyone knows what they need to do to stay safe.

Also be armed with important electrical safety knowledge should a severe storm or flooding occur:

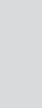





- Do not step into a flooded basement or room if the water is covering electrical outlets, appliances, or cords.
- Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box or touch an electrical appliance if you are wet or in standing water. Call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter.
- If an electrical appliance has been in contact with water, have a professional electrician check it out before it is used. It may need to be repaired or replaced.


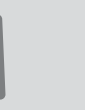




- If the smell of gas is apparent or if there is a suspected leak in your house, leave immediately and call your gas utility company.
- If power lines are on the ground, stay far away from them and warn others to stay away. Contact the local electric utility about the situation because the lines could still be live.
- If driving, never get out of the car if there is a downed power line, and never drive over one.







For questions or more information about safety, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org) or the Safety page under the Residential tab at [www.cottonelectric.com](http://www.cottonelectric.com).

*Source: SafeElectricity*


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UNCOMFORTABLE?

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☐ Rooms that get too hot or too cold?

☐ High utility bills?

☐ Thermostat wars with your spouse?

☐ High humidity in summer?

☐ House just never seems comfortable?

☐ There doesn't seem to be enough airflow?

☐ Dust buildup within 2 days of dusting?

☐ Problems with your system since it's been installed?


☐ Anyone with allergies or asthma?

☐ AC starts and stops frequently or runs all the time, and house is still not cool?

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

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


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# Members help fill local plates through ORU

By Carli Eubank

Cotton Electric members are familiar with the power behind rounding up their bill through Operation Round Up (ORU) – whether it’s one cent or 99 cents.

The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma also recognizes the great power behind contributions. Each dollar they receive can provide four meals to Oklahomans experiencing food insecurity. This means Cotton Electric members helped provide 10,000 meals to local kids with a recent Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) grant allocation of \$2,500.

The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma serves 53 counties in central, western and southern Oklahoma, includ-

ing Cotton Electric’s service territory. In June 2021, the organization received a CECF grant for their Food for Kids programs in Comanche, Cotton, Jefferson and Stephens counties.

Within the Food for Kids program are four outreach opportunities: Backpack Program, Kids Café, School Pantry Program, and Summer Feeding Program. Funds from the grant will go towards the program’s operations in the Cotton Electric counties.

“This grant will help the kids,” said Chan Klingensmith, development officer at Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma. “We have found a student’s physical, emotional and developmental learning abilities are negatively affect-

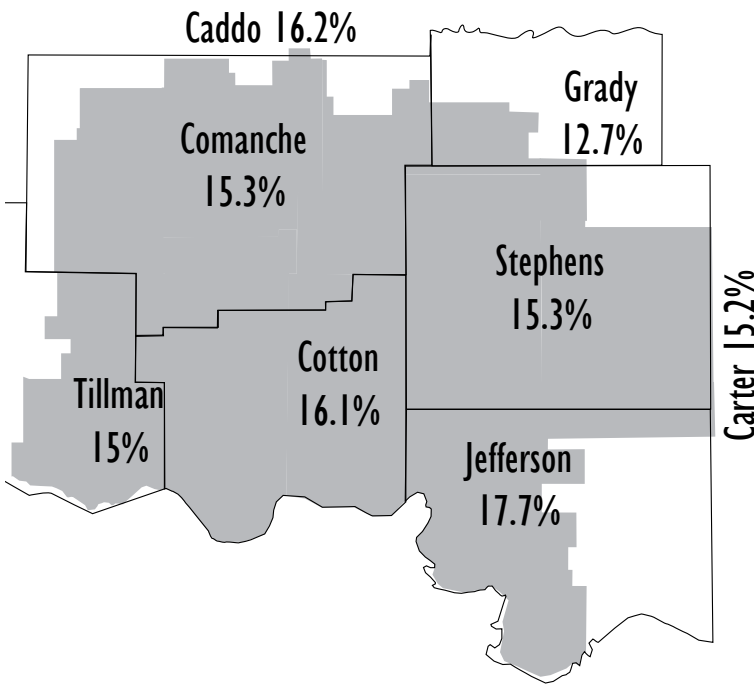
ed when they are experiencing food insecurity. Funds from the grant will go directly to helping us help someone’s kid in that situation.”

With every donation received, Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma employees and volunteers strive to meet certain guidelines before distributing food items. The organization is grateful for any food sources donated, but they are really diligent to get as much protein and fresh produce to others as possible, Klingensmith said.

Unfortunately, the percentage of those fighting food insecurity is higher in our local counties compared to state and national statistics.

“The overwhelming majority of our clients are children, seniors and hardworking Oklahomans who have trouble making ends meet,” Klingensmith said. “For some, all it takes is one event – job loss, health care issue, a pandemic – for them to not have consistent access to food anymore.”

There are three ways to support the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma’s efforts of feeding hungry Oklahomans: food donations, monetary donations and advocacy or time donations. If members are interested in donating livestock



**Food insecurity rates in the Cotton Electric service territory. Source: Regional Food Bank**

to the organization, they will work with you in planning the processing steps, Klingensmith said.

The Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma has one of the few on-site protein packaging centers in the country. This allows the organization to divide and repackage bulk food items in a clean, USDA certified facility, Klingensmith said.

“It’s not a one-size-fits-all when it comes to food distributions,” Klingensmith said. “No matter how big or small, your role is critical in the functioning of this organization to help get people the assistance they need.”

Since CECF grants were issued in 2005, members

have contributed \$31,500 to the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma and their efforts, providing 126,000 meals to southwest Oklahomans.

“We are grateful for the support from the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation,” Klingensmith said. “We appreciate everything that has been done over the course of many years. We are here to feed the line of Oklahomans experiencing food insecurity, and we will always be around to shorten that line.”

For more information or to find ways to get involved with the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, visit their website at [www.regionalfoodbank.org](http://www.regionalfoodbank.org).



**Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation check presentation participants include Chan Klingensmith, development officer; Zach Young, Cotton Electric marketing specialist; and Carli Eubank, Cotton Electric editor.**



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# American pride flies behind Cotton Electric logo

By Carli Eubank

Whether you remember watching the live news coverage or learning about it in a history textbook, no one will forget that morning.

Thoughts and emotions flew around like the ash and debris from the towers. Information was scarce, but the questions were not.

Who did this? Was it an accident? Was it deliberate? What was going to happen?

All you know is something had happened.

Everyone remembers where they were the morning of September 11, 2001.

For Cotton Electric CEO Jennifer Meason, she and the co-op's board of Trustees at the time were attending a strategic planning retreat at Quartz Mountain in Lone Wolf. At the retreat, one of the topics of discussion was a new overall look and brand of Cotton Electric, Meason said.

The unforgettable morning began as usual – everyone met for breakfast and then prepared for a day of business and conversation.

One of the first presenters was Larry Watkins, then general manager of Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives.

When Watkins arrived from Oklahoma City that morning, he made a statement to everyone in the room that was echoed across the nation.

“I don’t know if you all are aware, but there is something tragic happening on the news,” he said.

After hearing the initial news from Watkins, everyone took a break and went to an area to watch the live coverage on TV.

Some were trying to connect with loved ones who served in the military or lived in the vicinity of the attack. Others were waiting for the

news coverage to provide more information.

“It was definitely a very impactful day,” Meason said. “Everyone remembers where they were. Being at Quartz Mountain that day is a very vivid memory of mine.”

At first, it was such a traumatic event as we watched all the lives affected from it, Meason said. As more information came out, we began to get the fuller picture, she added.

Eventually, everyone realized there was nothing they could do at the moment except continue to stay updated and alert of what was going on, Meason said.

Though it was hard to concentrate the rest of the day, they decided the best thing to do was focus on the purpose of why they were together – to discuss the future of Cotton Electric.

The discussion and events from the morning of Sept. 11,

2001 would create great impact in not only the hearts of America, but also the Cotton Electric brand.

As supervisor for marketing and member services at Cotton Electric in 2001, Meason gave a marketing and branding presentation at the retreat. Leading up to the retreat and after, the co-op worked with an advertising agency called DesignWorks in Wichita Falls to create a new logo for Cotton Electric.

Originally, the new logo was designed in a light olive green color with three cotton burs instead of four. After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, the co-op and DesignWorks went back to the drawing board.

For the next couple of months, they worked together until everyone settled on the Cotton Electric Cooperative logo seen today.

The familiar red, white and blue co-op logo was created

with remembrance and meaning in mind.

“After the attack, there were stirrings and feelings of patriotism for our country,” Meason said. “The design being red, white and blue ties to the patriotic aspect and feelings of that day.”

Cotton Electric Cooperative continues to remember and respect the importance of that morning and everyone affected by it.

Knowing the sacrifice and all they’ve made for our country, it’s important to us that we recognize and support those actively serving in the military or as first responders and our veterans, Meason said.

There is always a story behind everything created or designed. When looking at the familiar red and blue flag with a white cotton boll, hopefully there is a newfound, deeper meaning understood within the lines and colors.

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# Remembering cooperative principles and progress

By Carli Eubank

As we reflect on 2021, Cotton Electric Cooperative continues to carry out our mission with keeping our members and safety in mind. Included in the 2021 Annual Report – inserted in this newspaper – members can learn more about the operations and financials of the co-op from 2021. Read a message from Cotton Electric Board President Shan Files and CEO Jennifer Meason as they share an overview of progress at the co-op. Also included are operating statistics, financial statements, and familiar faces of Cotton Electric employees.

Cotton Electric’s subsidiary, Cotton Electric Services Inc., also provided their operating statistics. More than 67,000 gloves were tested and more than 2,000 orders were filled. Members can also see where their participation in Operation Round Up helped fund more than \$69,000 to local organizations, schools, youth programs, public safety services and volunteer fire departments. 2021 brought both challenges and progress that Cotton Electric strives to continually improve. Even though each year comes with change, our priorities at the co-op will never waiver: safety and our members.



(above) The 2021 Annual Report on the income and expenses of Cotton Electric Cooperative is included in this month’s issue of The Current. Members can learn about the co-op’s average system reliability, number of meters upgraded, amount of poles inspected, and SmartHub usage. The report also includes financial information about Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation and our subsidiary, Cotton Electric Services Inc. Members can view the report online at [www.cottonelectric.com/annualreport](http://www.cottonelectric.com/annualreport).



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# Co-op Life

## On call for you, day and night

By Carli Eubank

Cotton Electric employees have always been at the ready to take the call to repair downed power lines and broken poles. Quite a few of them have also answered another type of emergency call: giving their time as local volunteer firefighters.

Larry Crowell, Cotton Electric journeyman lineman, dedicated 40 years of service at Comanche and Marlow fire departments before his fire-fighting retirement in 2021. He held various positions at each station, including training officer, CPR instructor and lieutenant. During those years he saw many changes, but the adrenaline when answering a call never faded.

“You feel pressure when arriving on scene because everyone is leaning on you to know what to do,” Crowell said. “You want to show compassion for people and families affected by a fire or wreck while also getting the job done safely.”

Ty Logan, Cotton Electric staking and line inspection engineer, has been with the Walters Volunteer Fire Department for nine years. He shared how the nerves and adrenaline help to stay on point. Each call delivers a different situation, and you can’t become lax, he added.

Cotton Electric Energy Efficiency Coordinator Heath Morgan has served more than 16 years with the Walters Volunteer Fire Department, and he was named captain about a year ago. For Morgan, the nerves have stayed constant.

“You never know what to expect for each call,” Morgan said, “but that’s what the trainings go toward – to help us stay calm and comfortable in those situations.”

Terry Turner, Cotton Electric journeyman lineman, has been on the Marlow Fire Department crew for a combined total of more than 30 years. For the past eight he has held

the responsibilities as captain. Turner says often the initial rush eases when he arrives at the scene because he gets in a command mode and starts taking action.

Along with the rush of intense emotions is the sense of accomplishment when completing the job.

Jarrold Hooper, Cotton Electric safety and loss control coordinator, currently volunteers at the Hastings Volunteer Fire Department. Combined with his time at the Temple Volunteer Fire Department, he has given more than 16 years to the mission of doing the right thing for others.

“It takes a certain mindset to volunteer to be in tough situations,” Hooper said. “Knowing that you’re saving someone’s livelihood – whether it’s a pasture or home – you get a rush and sense of satisfaction when you’ve done a good job.”

Turner said it’s a big job that’s not for everybody, but somebody’s got to do it for the rural areas. Everyone can use some help, and we get that feeling of satisfaction whenever we get to do so, he added.

“People who volunteer for this are called to serve the community we live in, and it’s rewarding,” Morgan said. “It can get pretty scary at times, but overall, it’s a neat experience that most people never get to be part of. Everyone is in it together, watching out for your brother’s back.”

Fighting fires, answering medical assistance calls, and conducting trainings are only a few of the many ways volunteer firefighters sacrifice their time to keep our communities safe. What may get overshadowed when they arrive at a scene are their loved ones they must leave behind and their hours of the day as Cotton Electric employees.

For Turner, chances are if there is a big grassfire in the co-op’s service territory he will

be called out for Cotton Electric as well.

“Sometimes the situation unfolds with me being on the scene to put out a fire, then leaving to get in a Cotton Electric truck and driving back to fix any pole and transformer damages from the fire,” Turner said. “It is a lot of work.”

Morgan said sometimes they’ll be out all night fighting fires and get home just in time to take a shower, eat and head to work.

Along with Cotton Electric employees, some of those who volunteer their time for Cotton Electric Cooperative and the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) also give their time to VFDs.

Cindy Zelbst, President of the CECF Board of Directors, and Brian DeMarcus, Vice President of the Cotton Electric Board of Trustees, serve on the Meers Volunteer Fire Department. Zelbst is the department’s long-time treasurer and DeMarcus has volunteered as a firefighter for more than 20 years. He is currently serving his first year as chief.

“The men and women who serve as volunteers in all local departments are the real heroes who give up their evenings and weekends to serve our communities,” DeMarcus said.

It’s not just the firefighters who balance work and being away on fire or medical calls. Crowell said there is a lot of time away from family that people may not think about.

“Whether it’s leaving a sporting event, birthday party or dinner, significant others are affected when we’re gone,” Morgan said. “They’re part of the organization as well whether they volunteered or not.”

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, there are 27,181 registered fire departments in the U.S. and 70% of that number are volunteer. That number increases to 81% in Oklahoma.

Even though the responsibilities of a volunteer firefighter can be wearing, their purpose and calling to help others keeps them going.

“Volunteering with the fire department is a way to give back and help build a stronger community,” Crowell said. “Rural areas don’t have the emergency personnel that bigger cities do, so someone’s got to do it and this is what we enjoy doing.”

DeMarcus lives and ranches in a remote area, and he said it always seemed it was their duty to serve on the fire department to protect their rangeland and community.

Volunteer firefighters gear up to serve and protect their communities, and they appreciate opportunities to interact with everyone when they are not in uniform.

“One of my favorite aspects of volunteering with the fire department is hosting fundraisers because it gives us a chance to engage with the community,” Logan said. “I really enjoy seeing everyone come together in support.”

Volunteer firefighters are essential emergency personnel who serve 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Crowell said. Feeling the support from the community really means a lot to crews, he added.

“We don’t sign up for the money,” Turner said. “Everyone can use help and we’ve got each other’s back.”

Cotton Electric employees work to meet the needs of our communities, and many of them continue that mission each time they answer the call as volunteer firefighters.

“If it weren’t for co-ops, rural America wouldn’t have power and it’s a similar story to volunteer fire departments,” Morgan said. “It’s a sense of service and duty, and we’ve found a way to serve a need.”



Many Cotton Electric employees serve at the Walters Volunteer Fire Department. (left to right) Ty Logan, staking and line inspection engineer; Shayne White, journeyman lineman; Heath Morgan, energy efficiency coordinator; Michael Edgmon, crewman; Quaid Ogletree, apprentice lineman; and Stacy Abbe, fleet operations director. Photo by Carli Eubank.



# Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the October issue, please submit information by Sept. 23 by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to [TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com](mailto:TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com). Only events occurring after Oct. 11 will be published in the next issue.

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

### Parkinson's help available

Oklahoma Parkinson's Alliance has support groups and programs for those facing the disease.

Support groups:

- Central Lawton Support Group meets at 2 p.m. on Sept. 8 at Western Hills Church of Christ, 1108 NW 53rd St., Lawton. Contact Rob Rooker at 580-699-2204 for information.

Programs:

- The LOUD Crowd® speech therapy program for Parkinson's patients meets at 4 p.m. every Wednesday at Duncan Regional Hospital (DRH) and at Southwestern Medical Center (SWMC) in Lawton. These programs are free and require no RSVP.
- "SPEAKOUT!" individual speech therapy program available by appointment. Call DRH at 580-251- 8460 or SWMC at 580-351-2469 to schedule.
- Spin Class for Parkinson's is held at 1 p.m., Mondays and Wednesdays at Lawton YMCA
- Rock Steady Boxing is conducted at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesdays and Fridays at the Lawton YMCA.
- Rock Steady Boxing coming soon to the Simmons Center in Duncan.

For more information visit [www.oklahomapa.org](http://www.oklahomapa.org)

### An evening of praise

Join the Gabriel's House Foundation in a night of worship to help raise money to build a forever home for the organization. Performers include Anabelle and Merrielle Wharton, Impact580 Praise Band, and more. Tickets are sold at the door for \$20. The event is from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Sept. 8 at New Hope Baptist Church, 380 S. 42nd St., Duncan. For questions, contact Gina Flesher at 580-467-0299.

### Swanson Memorial Bull Riding

Make plans to attend the 2nd Annual Rowdy Swanson Memorial Bull Riding. Advanced tickets can be purchased at Crutcher's Western Wear and The Moose Lodge for \$7. Tickets will be available at the gate for \$10. Kids 10 years old and younger attend for free. Live entertainment will follow the event at The Duncan Moose Lodge. All proceeds go to the Rowdy Swanson Memorial Scholarship. This event begins at 6 p.m. on Sept. 10 at the Claude Gill Arena at the Stephens County Fair and Expo Center, 2002 S 13th St., Duncan.

### Duncan's Annual Coin Show

Come to Duncan's Annual Coin Show to buy, sell or trade gold, silver, coins, currency, tokens and more. Free appraisals will be available. Free admission and parking. The event is Sept. 16 and 17 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds in Duncan. For questions, contact Ed at 580-475-4580.

### Annual Bull Riding Classic

Watch bull riding and mutton bustin' at the 34th Geronimo Bull Riding Classic. Entry fees for a chance to win a buckle. Tickets can be purchased in advance at Crutchers and Geronimo City Hall for \$10 or at the gate for \$12. Tickets are \$5 for ages 5-12 and free for ages four and under. Street dance will follow the bull riding. The event begins at 4 p.m. on Sept. 17 in Geronimo. For questions, call 580-353-5511.

### 2022 International Festival

Lawton's 43rd International Festival is a free event to promote greater awareness and appreciation of Lawton's diverse heritage. This family-oriented extravaganza is full of fun, food, children's games and activities, demonstration artists, retailers, concerts and multicultural experiences that make the Lawton Fort Sill Community so unique. This three-day event is Friday, 5-10 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sunday, noon-5 p.m. from Sept. 23-25 at Elmer Thomas Park, 3rd and NW Ferris Ave., Lawton. For questions, call 580-581-3470 or visit [www.swokarts.com/international-festival](http://www.swokarts.com/international-festival).

### Local fall craft fair

Browse the work of homemade gift ideas made by more than 50 local artists and vendors at this year's Fall Fest Craft Fair. The event is Friday, noon to 6:30 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sept. 24-25 inside the Chisholm Hall at the Simmons Center, 1330 Chisholm Trail Parkway, Duncan. For more information, call 580-252-2900.

### Painting class in Lawton

Test your painting skills at the Reflections Canvas Painting Event. An instructor leads a class through a step-by-step guided painting of a fall-inspired landscape. Packages start at \$25. This event is from 6-8 p.m. on Sept. 30 at A Pigment of Your Imagination LLC, 10 NW Sheridan Road, Lawton. For more information, call 580-248-2700 or visit [www.apigmentofyourimagination.com](http://www.apigmentofyourimagination.com).

### Bark in the Park in Duncan

Pets and pet owners can celebrate with the Stephens County Humane Society at Bark in the Park. There will be many festivities, concessions, events, contests and much more aimed toward raising awareness and generating funds for the Stephens County Humane Society. This event is from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Oct. 1 at Fuqua Park, Highway 81 and Beech Ave., Duncan. For more information, contact Patti Whitaker at 580-641-0667 or visit [www.stephenscountyshtelter.com](http://www.stephenscountyshtelter.com).

### Celebrate Western heritage

Go back in time and experience Western heritage at the Western Spirit Celebration. The festivities will kick off with a longhorn cattle drive along the old Chisholm Trail followed by a savory chuck wagon meal, cowboy re-enactors and poets, musical performances and more. The event is on Oct. 1 at the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, 2150 Chisholm Trail Parkway, Duncan. For more information, call 580-252-6692.

### Cooking up healthy dishes

Learn how to prepare healthy foods for those dealing with diabetes, heart disease, weight issues, etc. Karen Smith, registered dietician, will hold the sessions. Enrollment is limited, but pre-registration is available. Cost is \$4.50 per class. The event is from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m. on Oct. 6 and Nov. 3 at the Walters Senior Citizen Center, 111 E. Colorado Ave., Walters. For more information, call 580-342-5123.

### Hulen VFD inaugural fundraiser

Support the Hulen Volunteer Fire Department at their inaugural fundraiser. This packed day includes a raffle, street tacos and fajitas, a silent auction, kid's activities, a car show, and more. Raffle tickets are available from any fire department member. Entry fee by donation. The event begins at 9 a.m. on Oct. 8 at Hulen VFD on 13702 SE Baseline Road, Walters.

# PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Brenda Neugebauer, snapped this colorful photo of her rural neighborhood in Indiahoma. She dedicates this photo to her uncle, former Cotton Electric board member, Charles Spencer who passed away in 2021.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. The theme for October is Hello, Fall! 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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# Fiber important to good health



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

## Food For THOUGHT

A new study published in the July 2022 of the The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition examined the effect of fiber supplementation in adults with chronic constipation. Chronic constipation

affects one-third of the adult population in the United States, with an even higher rate in older adults and women. It contributes to increase in healthcare costs and lower quality of life. In this study, Alice van der Schoot and colleagues set out to determine if the current body of evidence could point to a more specific type of fiber, dose, and duration of supplementation to improve symptoms in adults with chronic constipation. The study by van der Schoot and colleagues reviewed 16 randomized controlled trials (gold standard for research) that included over 1200 participants. When the results from these studies were compiled and analyzed, the researchers found that psyllium and pectin fiber supplements had significant effects on chronic constipation with doses greater than 10 grams per day for four weeks. This was in addition to whatever fiber participants got from their diet.

Psyllium fiber comes from the outer layer of seeds from the psyllium plant “Planto ovata”. It contains both soluble and insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber is fermented in the colon to produce short chain fatty acids that feed your good gut bacteria and colon cells and also produces a gel to help with stooling. Insoluble fiber provides bulk to the stool. Most popular fiber supplements contain psyllium. Pectin is a fiber in the cell walls of plants. It is commonly used as a gelling agent in canning and as a dietary supplement. Pectin only contains soluble fiber. What is a normal stooling pattern? Some studies point to a normal pattern as somewhere between three bowel movements per week or three bowel movements per day. If you are outside of that range or have recently experienced a change in stooling patterns, discuss with your doctor immediately. A change in bowel habits or abnormal bowel habits can be a sign of seri-

ous, life-threatening disease. However, if you simply suffer from chronic constipation, have a conversation with your doctor about not only increasing the fiber in your diet (fruits, vegetables and whole grains) but also adding a fiber supplement.





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*\* This has to be the biggest and best collection of guns I have ever seen. Many are new in box (NIB). Some are very old. Some are very unique. All are in extraordinarily good condition. Once in a lifetime chance to own or even see some of these guns.*




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1 tbs. sugar

1 1/2 tsp. baking powder

1 egg, beaten

1 tbs. melted butter

1 c. peeled and diced apple

Directions:

Sift dry ingredients together. Combine and add rest of ingredients to dry mixture. Pour milk into mix to form the batter.

Fry at 365-375 degrees until done. This will take a couple of minutes.

Sprinkle with powdered sugar.



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# Strawberry Cream Cheese Tart

**Crust:**

- 1 1/4 cups flour
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup cold butter, cut into small cubes
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- uncooked rice


**Filling:**

- 8 ounces reduced-fat cream cheese
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons extra-fine sugar
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup strawberry fruit spread

3 teaspoons lemon juice (optional)

1 pound strawberries, halved

whipped cream (optional)



*Source: Family Features*

Heat oven to 375 F.

To make crust: In food processor, add flour, sugar and salt; pulse until combined. Add butter, egg and vanilla extract; pulse until combined and crumbly.

Lightly flour surface then form dough into ball. Slightly flatten to form thick disc. Wrap dough in plastic wrap; refrigerate 1 hour.

Flour surface then roll dough to 11-inch circle. Place dough in 9-inch

tart pan with removable bottom. With rolling pin, roll over top to trim excess dough around edges.

Cover dough with plastic wrap and freeze until firm, about 30 minutes.

Press aluminum foil against crust, covering edges to prevent burning. Fill and distribute uncooked rice evenly. Bake 20 minutes. Cool completely.

To make filling: In medium bowl, beat

cream cheese, sour cream, sugar, lemon zest and vanilla extract until blended and smooth. Spread cheese mixture evenly over crust. Refrigerate 1 hour.

In small bowl, microwave fruit spread and lemon juice, if desired, stirring often.

Arrange strawberry halves around tart. Drizzle heated fruit spread over strawberries. Top with whipped cream, if desired.

## When should you adjust your investment mix?

There are no shortcuts to investment success — you need to establish a long-term strategy and stick with it. This means you’ll want to create an investment mix based on your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon — and then regularly review it to ensure it’s still meeting your needs.

In fact, investing for the long term doesn’t necessarily

mean you should lock your investments in forever. Throughout your life, you’ll likely need to make some changes.

Of course, everyone’s situation is different and there’s no prescribed formula of when and how you should adjust your investments. But some possibilities may be worth considering.

For example, a few years before you retire, you may want to reevaluate your risk exposure and consider moving part of your portfolio into a more conservative position. When you were decades away from retiring, you may have felt more comfortable with a more aggressive positioning

because you had time to bounce back from any market downturns. But as you near retirement, it may make sense to lower your risk level. And as part of a move toward a more conservative approach, you also may want to evaluate the cash positions in your portfolio. When the market has gone through a decline, as has been the case in 2022, you may not want to tap into your portfolio to meet short-term and emergency needs, so having sufficient cash on hand is important. Keep in mind, though, that having too much cash on the sidelines may affect your ability to reach your long-term goals.

Even if you decide to

adopt a more conservative investment position before you retire, though, you may still benefit from some growth-oriented investments in your portfolio to help you keep ahead of — or at least keep pace with — inflation. As you know, inflation has surged in 2022, but even when it’s relatively mild, it can still significantly erode your purchasing power over time.

Changes in your own goals or circumstances may also lead you to modify your investment mix. You might decide to retire earlier or later than you originally planned. You might even change your plans for the type of retirement you want,

choosing to work part time for a few years. Your family situation may change — perhaps you have another child for whom you’d like to save and invest for college. Any of these events could lead you to review your portfolio to find new opportunities or to adjust your risk level — or both.

You might wonder if you should also consider changing your investment mix in response to external forces, such as higher interest rates or a rise in inflation, as we’ve seen this year. It’s certainly true that these types of events can affect parts of your portfolio, but it may not be advisable to react by shuffling your investment

mix. After all, nobody can really predict how long these forces will keep their momentum — it’s quite possible, for instance, that inflation will have subsided noticeably within a year. But more important, you should make investment moves based on the factors we’ve already discussed: your goals, risk tolerance, time horizon and individual circumstances.

By reviewing your portfolio regularly, possibly with the assistance of a financial professional, you can help ensure your investment mix will always be appropriate for your needs and goals.

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Go to [www.connections.coop/healthy-savings](http://www.connections.coop/healthy-savings) and click “Locate Providers.”

Set up your account.

Enter your zip code to search for providers near you.

Or you can call Member Services at 800-800-7616 if you have questions or to find a provider.



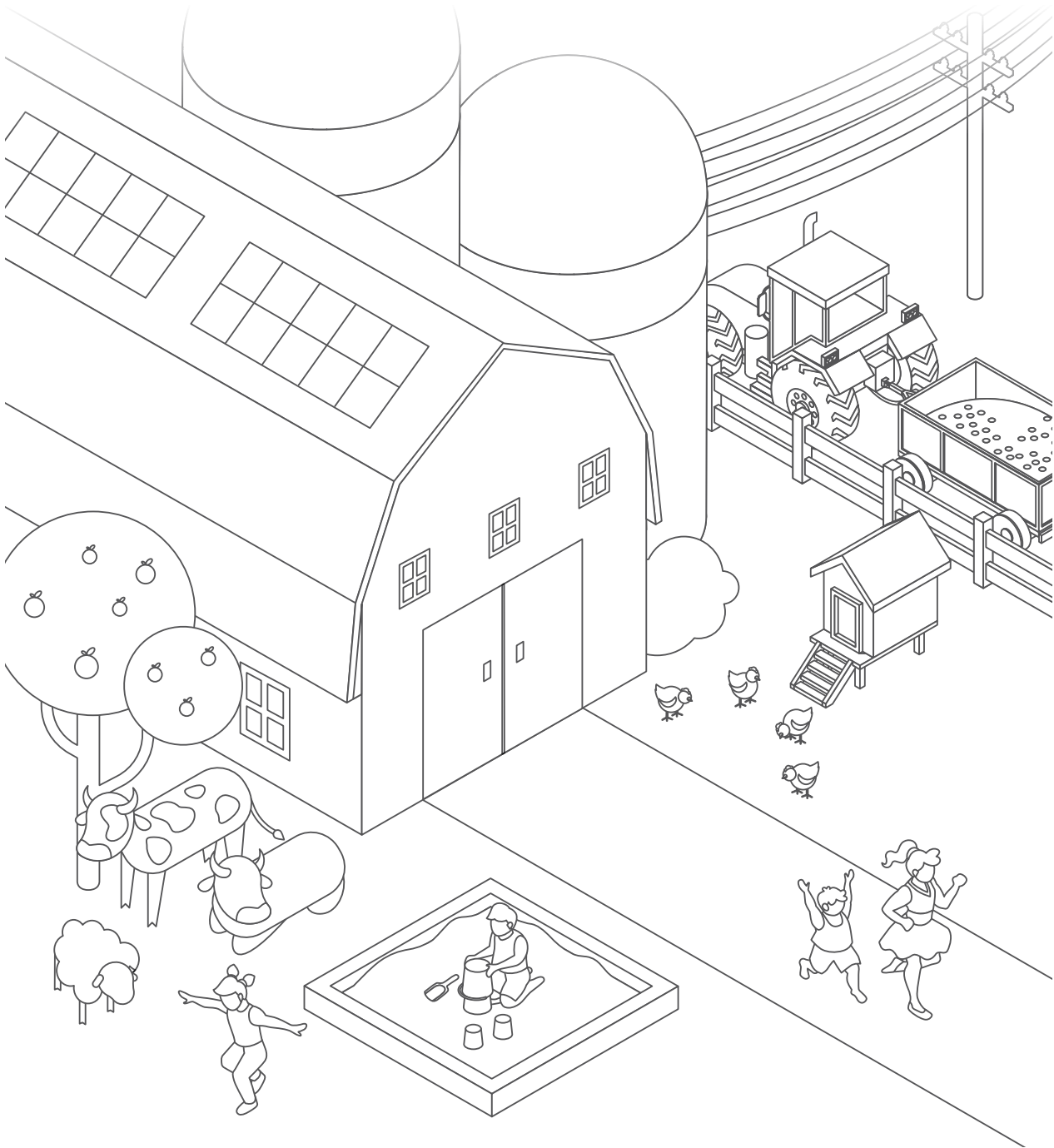
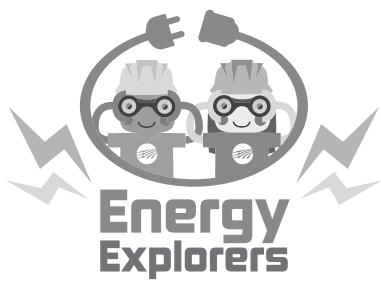


# COTTON

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Thursday 8 a.m.  
Stockers, Feeders, Cows, Bulls & Pairs  
**Apache Video**  
Wednesday 10 a.m.  
800-926-9696 580-588-3840  
  
**Livestock Marketing, Inc.**

**ACROSS**  
1. Grievous  
7. Queens ballplayer  
10. Honorable title  
12. Created  
13. Grillmasters do it  
14. Wartime German cargo ship  
15. Cocoplum  
16. Hebrew calendar month  
17. British thermal unit  
18. Brews  
19. One of Thor's names  
21. Decorative scarf  
22. Clothes  
27. -\_\_ : denotes past  
28. A way to address a lover  
33. Commercial  
34. Utters repeatedly  
36. Google certification (abbr.)  
37. Taxis  
38. Belgian village in Antwerp  
39. Talk excessively  
40. Broad volcanic crater  
41. Surgical instrument  
44. Listens to  
45. Revelation of a fact  
48. Paddles  
49. Heard  
50. Tooth caregiver  
51. Metric capacity units

**DOWN**  
1. Protein-rich liquids  
2. Musician Clapton  
3. Wine  
4. When you hope to arrive  
5. Something one can get stuck in  
6. Midway between east and southeast  
7. Mothers  
8. German river  
9. Israeli city  
10. Discharged  
11. Areas near the open shelves  
32. Argued  
35. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)  
36. Cars have them  
38. Volcanic craters  
40. Made of fermented honey and water  
41. Shelter for mammals or birds  
42. One who utilizes  
43. Moves swiftly on foot  
44. Builder's trough  
45. Architectural wing  
46. 12  
47. Pacific Standard Time



# Parting Shots



During Fiesta in Fuqua, Cotton Electric energy efficiency coordinator Heath Morgan teaches kids about electricity through the energy bike while Paula Huckabaa, Cotton Electric marketing and communications director, shares what all a lineman does. Photo by Carli Eubank.

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