

# CEC inside your co-op

Published for members of Choctaw Electric Cooperative

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A supplement to Oklahoma Living.

## Plans Shaping Up for CEC Annual Meeting

Members should expect a few changes due to new location in Idabel

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If you're planning to attend the Choctaw Electric Annual Meeting on September 23, please remember to point your car toward Idabel.

After holding the event in Hugo for many years, the CEC board of trustees voted this spring to move the meeting to the Larry Brinkley Event Center at the McCurtain County Fairgrounds.

The venue is air conditioned, which will make it more comfortable for members. Members should also expect a few changes in the location of various meeting activities.

Members will find registration booths and concessions at the entrance to the Show Pavilion Center. Be sure to register so you can vote and be eligible for the prize drawings that will take place during the meeting.

You will find information on trustee elections and bylaw amendments in the voting booth located inside the event center. Look for arts and crafts and kids activities in the area adjacent to the Brinkley Center.

To speed up the registration process, please remember to bring your annual meeting notice

with you to the meeting. Official meeting notices will be mailed by August 29, so please watch for it.

Plenty of prizes will be given away at the meeting this year so please plan to arrive early. Electronic gadgets, tools, home decor, small appliances, bicycles for kids, and more will be given away beginning at 8:45 am. The grand prize drawings will be held at the conclusion of the business meeting. You could win one of three \$500 bill credits, so be sure to stick around.

We hope to see you there!



### High Flyers

Kids attending Choctaw Electric's Kilowatt Kids Camp enjoy flying kites they made and decorated while attending camp. The campers spent the morning making crafts and participating in learning activities that focused on outdoor electrical safety. A safety curriculum and Safety Town demonstration explained the dangers of using electrical equipment in the rain and the importance of keeping ladders and equipment away from power lines. Kids also learned what to do if a power line falls on their car and other electrical safety practices.

Kilowatt Kids Camp is free for all students. To learn more about the camp, visit [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop), or call 800-780-6486. PHOTO/BRAD KENDRICK.

A monthly newsletter of  
Choctaw Electric Cooperative.

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24 Hour Outage Hotline

**800-780-6486**

## MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

# Weathering the Storms

*Thank you, members, for your patience*

There's nothing worse than a power outage in the summer. Unless it's a power outage over a summer holiday weekend that includes a flood.

For Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC), July got off to a rough start. On July 1, a snake caused a power outage near Finley that left 500 members without power for one hour. You can find more details about that situation on page 6.

On July 3, three feeders went down due to high winds and storms. This situation left members in Haworth, Hochatown, Speer, Rattan and Fort Towson without power for several hours.

Choctaw Electric crews barely had a chance to rest from these events when a series of storms ripped through our area over July 4th. The high winds that accompanied the storms blew trees into power lines, broke five poles and 20 transformers, and knocked out power to 1,800 co-op members in the Broken Bow, Valliant and Tom areas.

To make matters worse, the 16-inch rainfall flooded roads and highways and prevented our crews from reaching several outage locations. It didn't stop them from working, though.



**BY KOONEY DUNCAN**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

By 9 am on July 5, crews had restored power to all but 500 members. They continued to work throughout the day and by 4:30 pm all but eight members were up and running.

Although the conditions for misery were ripe that first week of July, co-op members remained extremely patient and we are all grateful. To the members who conveyed their support and appreciation on Facebook and in person to our linemen, thank you! These

gestures go a long way in making those miserable working conditions much more bearable for the co-op personnel involved.

For the Choctaw Electric crews who kept slogging away to get the lights on and the A/C's blowing, your commitment is remarkable. To the team inside who answered over 1,500 outage calls, you also deserve great credit.

Thank you all for pulling together. It's what "cooperative" is all about.

OFFICIAL



MINUTES

Scan this code with your smartphone or tablet to read the monthly minutes of your co-op board meeting. Minutes are also available at any CEC location.

To scan the code, install a Bar Code Scanner app, available at the App Store.



# Watch For Voter Packets To Arrive In The Mail

Mail-in ballots due by September 22

Choctaw Electric members are encouraged to take ownership of their co-op by voting on bylaw changes, trustees and other important co-op business at the CEC Annual Meeting. If you can't attend the meeting this year, please vote using the official mail-in ballot.



To ensure fairness, all stages of the election including tabulating, cross checking and counting ballots will be handled by Coop Ballot and its employees.

Mail-in ballots will arrive in a clearly marked envelope that will include information on proposed changes to the CEC bylaws. If members live in CEC Districts B, C or D, the envelope will include information on trustee candidates. A return envelope is included.

If you choose to vote by mail, the following details are important:

- Mail in ballots must be mailed using the return envelope provided.
- Mail-in ballots must be received on or before September 22.
- Mail-in ballots must be mailed to be valid. Do not bring your ballot to the CEC office.
- Members must use the mail-in ballot in their voting packet. Each ballot contains a unique pin number that is important when votes are tabulated. If you lose your mail-in ballot, no "extras" are available.

If you have questions about mail-in ballots or your upcoming CEC elections, please call 800-780-6486, ext. 241, 207 or 209.



## Voting Their Minds

Choctaw Electric members review proposed bylaw amendments at the 2016 CEC Annual Meeting. Information on proposed bylaw changes is made available to members at the meeting so they can make informed decisions when they vote. The information is also included in the voting packet that is mailed to members 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting.

## ANNUAL MEETING FREEBIES

Choctaw Electric members who register at the Annual Meeting will take home the free tote bag (right) along with the following gifts: a CEC ink pen, chapstick, oven mitt, CEC ball cap, key chain, a fidget spinner, and 2018 Farmer's Almanac. Be sure to bring your annual meeting notice with you to the meeting to speed the registration process.





## CEC ANNUAL MEETING

*September 23 · McCurtain County Fairgrounds · Idabel*

**Y**ou never know who might show up at the CEC Annual Meeting. Bigfoot made an appearance at the meeting last year, proving its never too hot or humid to attend. If the big guy shows up at the meeting this year, he'll appreciate the new air conditioned venue at the McCurtain County Fairgrounds in Idabel.

With food, arts and crafts, kid's games and more, there's something fun for everyone.

Please plan on joining us!

- **Free Hot Dogs and Soda Pop!**
- **Bounce Houses for Kids!**
- **Arts and Crafts!**
- **Prizes! Prizes! Prizes!**
- **Grand Prizes - 3 \$500 Bill Credits!**
- **Trustee Elections -Districts B, C & G!**

2017 CEC Annual Meeting

### VENDOR BOOTH RESERVATION FORM

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Products to be displayed/sold \_\_\_\_\_

Do you require electricity? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

Number of booth spaces required \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Vendors must bring their own tables, chairs and electrical cords, if needed.

*Deadline to reserve booth:*

**September 15, 2017**

*Please mail booth reservation form to:*

Jia Johnson, Choctaw Electric Cooperative  
PO Box 758, Hugo, OK 74743

# WATCH THAT **PEAK!**

Please use less electricity 4 pm - 6 pm

When CEC issues a 'Peak Alert' it means the system-wide energy use is extremely high. That peak demand plays a role in wholesale power costs, so it's important to use less energy when a peak alert is issued. Watch for peak alerts on our Facebook page, or sign up for special alerts through Smarthub.

PEAK  
MONITOR:



## Hot, Dry Weather Can Lead To Fires

A few tips to help reduce the chance for wildfires

In 2016, more than 65,000 wildfires burned 5.4 million acres of land in the United States according to the National Centers for Environmental Information. The worst part? Many of these wildfires could have been prevented.

While some wildfires are caused by lightning, approximately 90 percent are caused by human error. Many times, wildfires occur when campfires are left unattended, debris is burned improperly or cigarettes are carelessly discarded.

A wildfire can grow rapidly out of control when the three following conditions are present: oxygen, fuel and a heat source. The fuel can be any materials that are flammable near the wildfire, and the heat source can be a variety of things, like campfires, cigarettes or even warm winds. When these three conditions are met, a violent wildfire can ensue.

By taking a few extra precautions, campers and outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy the sights of nature without causing a wildfire. Here are a few tips from National Geographic to help prevent wildfires:

- Never leave a fire unattended, and make sure you completely extinguish the fire when you're done. Drench the fire with water and stir the ashes until cold.



- Play it safe when using fueled lanterns, heaters and stoves. Lighting and heating devices should be cool before refueling. Keep flammable liquids and fuel away from appliances.
- Never discard cigarettes, matches and smoking materials from moving vehicles, or anywhere on park grounds. Completely extinguish cigarettes before disposing of them.
- When burning yard waste, follow local ordinances. Avoid burning in windy conditions, and keep a shovel, water and fire retardant nearby to keep fires in check.

If conditions are right and you find yourself in the path of a wildfire, evacuate immediately. Listen to local emergency notifications for the most up-to-date information. Better yet, make a wildfire plan for you and your family before a fire occurs.

Visit <https://www.ready.gov/wildfires> for more information about wildfire safety and prevention.



## Community Events

Help us promote your event by sending event details in advance. Please send event information to Jennifer Boling/Inside Your Co-op/ PO Box 758, Hugo, OK 74743; or e-mail info to [jboling@choctawelectric.coop](mailto:jboling@choctawelectric.coop). Events and dates are subject to change.

### AUGUST

- 11 Pickin' on the Porch, 6-9 pm  
Wildlife Heritage Center  
Antlers
- 12 Ele Birthday Celebration,  
Endangered Ark Foundation  
Hugo
- 25 Pickin' on the Porch, 6-9 pm  
Wildlife Heritage Center  
Antlers
- 31 – Choctaw Nation Labor  
Sept. 4 Day Festival, Tuskahoma

### SEPTEMBER

- 5-9 McCurtain County Fair  
Idabel
- 7-9 Choctaw County Fair  
Hugo
- 8 – 15 Master's at Work  
Woodturning Competition  
Forest Heritage Center  
Beavers Bend
- 13-16 Pushmataha County Fair  
Antlers
- 13-16 Atoka County Fair
- 23 CEC Annual Meeting  
McCurtain Co. Fairgrounds  
Idabel

**\$ Lucky Account # 2326700** (\$25 Bill Credit). If the account number above belongs to you, contact your co-op by the 10th of the month to claim your \$25 bill credit. Call Jennifer Boling at **800-780-6486**, ext. 207, or contact CEC via email or in person.



ANIMAL RELATED POWER OUTAGES:

**TOP OFFENDERS**

- Squirrels
- Birds
- Snakes
- Possums
- Raccoons
- Rats/Rodents
- Cats

# SNAKE AND BAKE

## Snake causes power outage near Finley

**H**igh winds and wet weather left some 1,800 Choctaw Electric members without power over July 4th, but a more slippery character is to blame for 500 outages near Finley.

On July 1, Choctaw Electric linemen responding to outage reports found a large snake coiled in the line. The snake triggered the outage when it attempted to crawl onto the hot wire, creating a path for electricity.

Animal-related power outages are nothing new for electric utilities. Many animals including bobcats, house cats,

rats, possums, raccoons and snakes, are drawn to substations and power poles because they are popular nesting spots for birds. For electric co-ops that serve isolated areas with plenty of wildlife, they are particularly troublesome.

According to the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), the biggest troublemakers are squirrels. Next to storm damage and trees, the EPRI finds squirrels are the third leading cause of power outages in the U.S.

The squirrel problem is such an issue the website Cybersquirrel.com is dedicated to tracking



A chicken snake in the power line, above, left members near Finley without power on July 1.

squirrel-related outages. On the website, a former deputy director of the National Security Agency said he believes the national electric grid is more threatened by natural disaster than cyberattack. The number one threat, he said, is squirrels.

**Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

**PAY Site**

**PAYING IN PERSON**  
Has Never Been Easier

- Immediate payment posting
- Easy-to-use payment system
- Convenient location
- FREE cash/check/card
- Leave with a receipt
- Available after office hours

**FREE**  
cash/check/card

**CHOCTAW**  
TRAVEL PLAZA

**SAVE-A-LOT**

Paysite kiosks are available at the following locations, or use the online paysite kiosk locator at <http://paysitekiosklocator.com/>.

**ATOKA**  
Choctaw Nation Travel Plaza  
OPEN 24 HOURS

**ANTLERS**  
Choctaw Nation Travel Plaza  
OPEN 24 HOURS

**BROKEN BOW**  
Choctaw Nation Travel Plaza  
OPEN 24 HOURS

**IDABEL**  
Choctaw Nation Travel Plaza  
OPEN 24 HOURS

**HUGO**  
Save A Lot Grocery  
OPEN SUNDAY, 9 AM- 8 PM  
MONDAY-SAT., 7:30 AM-9 PM

## Big TVs Equal Bigger Bills

Consider operating costs before you buy

If you find the giant TV of your dreams in an end-of-summer sale, take a minute to check how much electricity it uses before you buy it.

It used to be that a huge television screen would use as much energy in a year as your refrigerator. But manufacturers have done a good job of making models that consume much less electricity and have a minimal effect on your electric bill.

The exception is the plasma TV: That one is still something of an energy hog.

A few tips if you're buying a TV during the next big electronics sale:

- Buy a screen with LED technology. Like the LED light fixtures in your home, this technology uses less energy and the lights burn for longer.
- Study the yellow-and-black Energy Guide label that the U.S. government requires on every new TV. It will tell you approximately how much running that set will cost you in utility costs so you can compare products.

Another label to look for when you shop for a new TV: The Energy Star label. This one's not required, but TVs that qualify to display it use about 27 percent less energy than others.



If you're also buying a set-top box, Blu-Ray player and soundbar, look for Energy Star-qualified models. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that you can save nearly \$140 over the life of the products.

For more energy saving suggestions, please visit [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop) or [www.touchstoneenergy.com/togetherwesave](http://www.touchstoneenergy.com/togetherwesave). To schedule a free energy audit, please call CEC at 800-780-6486.

## POWER OUTAGE?

Stay informed about your service status by signing up for alerts via Smarthub.

With Smarthub, you can choose the alerts you would like to receive and how you'd like to receive them—by text or email.

Select from the following:

- Billing Change
- Planned Power Outage
- Power Outage (if you report the outage through smarthub or app)
- Power Restored (if you report the outage through smarthub or app)
- Peak Time Alerts
- Planned Outage Message

To sign up for alerts, visit [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop) and click on Smarthub.

# august

Best days according to Moon phases.



## Best planting days

Above ground crops . . .	3-5, 23-27, 31
Root crops . . . . .	8-10, 13-14, 17-18
Seed beds . . . . .	17-18, 26-27
Kill plant pests . . . . .	1-2, 6-7, 11-12, 15-16, 19-22, 28-30

## Best fishing days

☞ Best . . . . .	6-10, 17-18
☺ Good . . . . .	4-5, 26-27
☹ Fair . . . . .	3, 13-14, 31
☹ Poor . . . . .	1-2, 11-12, 15-16, 19-25, 28-30

## Best days to do other stuff

Quit smoking . . . . .	10, 14
Begin diet to lose weight . . . . .	10, 14
Begin diet to gain weight . . . . .	22, 27
Cut hair to encourage growth . . . . .	24, 25
Cut hair to discourage growth . . . . .	13, 14
Go to the dentist . . . . .	22, 23
Start projects . . . . .	22
End projects . . . . .	20
Go camping . . . . .	1-3
Plant above ground vegetables . . . . .	26-28
Plant below ground vegetables . . . . .	9, 10
Destroy pests and weeds . . . . .	11, 12
Graft or pollinate . . . . .	17-19
Prune to encourage growth . . . . .	1-3, 29-30
Prune to discourage growth . . . . .	11-12
Harvest above ground vegetables . . . . .	4-5, 31
Harvest below ground vegetables . . . . .	13-14
Make sauerkraut, can, or pickle . . . . .	9-10
Cut Hay . . . . .	11-12
Begin Logging . . . . .	4-5, 31
Set Posts or Pour Concrete . . . . .	4-5, 31
Breed Animals . . . . .	26-28
Wean animals or children . . . . .	10, 14

—from the *Old Farmer's Almanac*

# Good Eats

IN SOUTHEAST OKLAHOMA

## Easy Smoked Sausage Skillet

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 (14 oz) package smoked sausage, diagonally cut into ¼-inch slices
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 large red bell pepper, sliced thin
- 1 small yellow onion, sliced thin
- 1 (10 oz) package frozen broccoli, thawed
- ½ cup chicken broth or water
- ½ cup tomato sauce
- 2 cups instant rice
- ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese



### DIRECTIONS

Heat olive oil and crushed garlic, stir in smoked sausage slices and cook until smoked sausage is browned.

Add pepper, onion, broccoli, chicken broth and tomato sauce and simmer for about 10 minutes until vegetables are tender and the liquid is absorbed.

In the meantime, cook rice according to package instructions. Stir rice into the skillet, sprinkle with cheese and serve.

## ■ swap shop

### FREE CLASSIFIED ADS FOR CEC MEMBERS

#### ■ LIVESTOCK & PETS

Ark of McCurtain County offers discount spay/neuter services +mobile spay/neuter services. We also have dogs and cats ready for adoption. 580-236-2275.

HAVN low cost spay and neuter clinic in Fort Towson. To make an appt., please call 580-873-2771. Your call will be returned.

#### ■ MISCELLANEOUS

25 ft. gooseneck trailer, all steel w/ 2 axles. 8ft. Ford flat bed in good shape. 580-209-2592.

1982 30 ft. 5th wheel Coachman Trailer, \$700 OBO. 580-326-3881 or 903-715-2032

#### ■ RVs

1982, 30 ft. 5th wheel trailer. \$700 OBO. 580-326-3881 or 903-715-2032

#### ■ REAL ESTATE

2 acres on Hwy 259 north of Broken Bow. 3BR, 2BA home w/ custom cabinets, farmhouse sink, hardwood, claw foot bathtub, and walk in shower. Also 30' x 30' metal shop. Great location for a business, ½ mile from Hochatown. \$289,000. 580-236-6644.

SWAP SHOP ads are free for CEC members. Submit ads online at [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop), email to [jboling@choctawelectric.coop](mailto:jboling@choctawelectric.coop), or mail ads to CEC *Inside Your Co-op*, PO Box 758, Hugo, OK 74743. Ads must include a telephone number or email address. Please provide your name, mailing address and CEC account number when submitting an ad.