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ATTENTION TEENS

Put Yourself In This Picture

Enter CEC's Youth Tour Contest to win a free trip to DC!

New friends, new places, and the opportunity to see memorials and monuments to the events and people who shaped U.S. history. Throw in a cruise on the Potomac River and other activities and you've got a snippet of all the fun taking place on the 2018 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. The tour will be held June 8-15 in Washington, DC.

If your teen is a high school junior, he or she could be a part of the all-expenses paid trip courtesy of Choctaw Electric Cooperative. To be considered, teens are asked to enter a three- to four-minute multimedia presentation on a topic or issue they feel passionate about—team sports, recycling, solar power, organic food, school funding, animal welfare, you name it.

The presentation may be submitted as a video or slides. Slide presentations should include audio of the student leading the presentation or submit a smartphone video of the student-led presentation. Please include a brief, written summary of the presentation that cites at least two qualified sources.

Based on the entries, Choctaw Electric will invite finalists to sit for a brief interview with judges. Afterward, they will announce the three Youth Tour winners.

"It's a wonderful opportunity for any student and one of the best programs we offer for kids," says Jia Johnson, Youth Tour coordinator.

For Youth Tour entry forms and guidelines, please visit www.choctawelectric.coop or call 800-780-6486, ext. 241.



A monthly newsletter of
Choctaw Electric Cooperative.

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www.choctawelectric.coop



24 Hour Outage Hotline
800-780-6486

MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

How Can We Better Serve You?

Drop in and see us, we're ready to listen.

It's amazing what we learn through listening and observation. Here at Choctaw Electric we've provided members with a mobile application called SmartHub that enables you to check the status of your electric service, and receive real-time updates on your energy use.

Choctaw Electric members are using the app to conduct routine business with us, like online bill payments, arranging service transfers and viewing real-time outage updates.

These mobile services are just new ways of connecting with people, much like the member services representatives you reach when you call us, or greet you from behind the counters at our office. They help us offer the quality services you expect us to provide.

One of our goals at Choctaw Electric is to find ways to help you control energy costs. That's why we offer programs like the Cooperative Home Energy Efficiency Program (CHEEP). This program helps you locate energy loss problems in your home and offers participants a rebate to offset the cost of qualifying improvements.

We offer the CHEEP program because we know energy prices are a worry for our members. We hear you. When you



BY KOONEY DUNCAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

tell us what troubles you or about other services you'd like from your co-op, we listen. While we can't satisfy everyone, we believe listening builds better understanding and cooperation— and that leads to real solutions.

It's why Choctaw Electric still loves face-to-face time with our members. Events like our annual meetings and Member Appreciation Days give us time to visit and get to know one another. It's also why you'll

find the door to my office is always open. I'm available for any member and so are the other employees of your co-op.

So, how can we serve you better in 2018? The same way many of us try to serve our community and family better each day—by listening. In our offices, on telephones, through social media and in-person, we're ready to listen.

When you have questions about your co-op or any of our services, just ask us. When we know what you want, we're in a better position to deliver successful results. So, drop in and see us, we're glad to hear from you.

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.



CEC Members Love Prepaid And Here's Why—No Deposit.

Designed to help co-op members avoid the debt cycle that accompanies chronic overdue bills, Choctaw Electric's prepaid program is enjoying a surge in popularity, especially among new members.

Hilary Pound, call center supervisor, says when people realize they don't have to pay a deposit of \$325 and up to get electric service, they are sold on prepaid almost immediately.

The program's other benefits are also appealing—no late fees and the freedom to choose how much you pay and when you pay it. You can use a variety of payment methods, including the 24-hour PaySite kiosks located at six convenient locations in and around CEC service territory. There's even an app available to help you locate PaySite kiosks in CEC territory.

To date, 606 members are enrolled in prepaid billing. Find out why member love the program by calling your co-op at **800-780-6486** or visiting www.choctawelectric.coop.



**FLEX PAYMENTS. NO DEPOSIT.
NO FEES. INTERESTED?
GO PREPAID! 800-780-6486**

COMING SOON

New Look For Your Newsletter

Cost cutting measures mean fewer pages

From cars to furniture to mobile phones, styles tend to change. It's the same with magazines and newsletters.

Next month, your Choctaw Electric newsletter will undergo a makeover. The name will remain the same, but you'll see different fonts and a "refreshed" layout. One of the goals of the revised design is to make the best use of our limited space and your limited time.

With Facebook, Smarthub and the website, Choctaw Electric has more ways to communicate with its members. We're able to reach out to you—and you're able to communicate with us—virtually around the clock. Our goal is to sync our communication tools and make the best use of our communication budget.

When news is slow, we may reduce the number of newsletter pages. When we have important information to share with you about elections, bylaws, and other issues or services you should know about, we will add pages as needed.

With the change in format, we must say goodbye to the *Farmer's Almanac*. Fans of the farm and garden "best days" advice can pick up a free copy of the complete *Farmer's Almanac* at the CEC Annual Meeting or at our main office. Best days information is also available in CEC's free calendar.

We hope you will appreciate the changes and will let us know what else we can do to serve you better. Thank you for your time, and please keep reading!

We'll pay you to save energy.

Sign up for the Cooperative Home Energy Efficiency Program (CHEEP) and get money back for making your home more energy efficient. The program includes:

- A professional on-site evaluation of your home that includes a blower door test and duct blasting. **FREE!**
- List of recommended improvements based on evaluation results. **FREE!**
- Rebate of \$1 per watt of estimated savings (up to \$1,000 maximum) for improvements you choose to make.
- Freedom to choose any or none of the suggested recommendations.

Please call us today for more details or visit us online:

800-780-6486
www.choctawelectric.coop



The Sparks and Fire Flew

When a simple tree removal job goes wrong, co-op members learn that assumptions can be deadly.



FAST FACT:

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reports the most common types of serious tree-trimming accidents are:

- Electrocutation
- Falling From Trees
- Being Struck by Trees or Limbs

W.J. Mock never thought much about the power line that spanned his yard. After his neighbor vacated an old Airstream trailer located next door, he became the last resident on a stretch of Choctaw Electric power line located roughly 10 miles southeast of Boswell.

As time passed and trees grew up around the abandoned trailer, Mock decided to buy it and fix it up. The 82-year-old retiree called on his grandsons to help him move the Airstream, but first, they needed to take down those trees.

As Mock recalls, a 25-foot tree was growing close to the power line, but he didn't give it much thought. It had been eight years since anyone lived in the trailer and he assumed the line was dead.

After roping off the tree and cutting it at the base, his grandsons began to lower it to the ground. That's when all hell broke loose.

"The tree got hung up in the lines and my grandsons started pulling the rope to shake it loose. When they did that, the power lines got to flopping together and sparks and fire flew everywhere," says Mock.

Horrified at the sight of 7,200 volts surging through the tree leaves, Mock hollered at his grandsons to stop.



"It liked to scared me to death. I thought that line was dead," Mock says

That was mistake number one, says Guy Dale, director of safety and loss control for Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC). "You should treat every power line like it's hot," he stresses. "Never make assumptions. When in doubt, call us."

Although the line was energized, his grandsons decided they could lower the tree if they did it "v

That was mistake number two. "When tangled in a hot line, we tell people they're doing, get as far from the line and then call us immediately



"Rope is not tested and approved for protection against high voltages. Even a clean, new rope can track 7,200 volts."

—GUY DALE, DIRECTOR OF SAFETY & LOSS CONTROL

Mock's grandsons continued to slowly lower the tree using the ropes. They figured they were safe, Mock recalls, because the rope would not conduct electricity.

Wrong again. "Rope is not tested and approved for protection against high voltages," says Dale. "Even a clean, new rope can track 7,200 volts."

A few days later, Mock spoke with his son-in-law who works for a power line company. "When I told him what happened, he said it was a miracle nobody got killed," Mock says. "He's seen electricity jump ten feet to a tree!"

Choctaw Electric linemen also visited with Mock and explained the dangers. But Mock says what he doesn't understand is why the co-op didn't remove the line to the empty trailer.

"We typically don't take the line down because someone might need power to that property one day," Dale says. Leaving primary lines energized is also co-op policy.

Mock says he realizes now that making assumptions about electricity can lead to deadly consequences. "I sure won't make that mistake again," he says. ■

Public safety is your co-op's number one priority. If you have questions about electrical safety or need to report an unsafe electrical situation, please call Choctaw Electric at **800-780-6486**. For more safety tips or to learn about our free safety programs, please visit www.choctawelectric.coop.



get tree smart

Trimming trees is one of leading causes of accidental contact with power lines. Because trees contain moisture, and are good conductors of electricity, trimming a tree that's touching a power line can result in serious injury or death. Before you fire up the chainsaw, please consider these safety tips:

- Assume all power lines are energized and dangerous.
- Electric wires can hide among limbs and leaves. Before you trim trees or shrubs, inspect the area carefully to be certain it's clear of power lines.
- Never trim trees that are tangled in or located near power lines. If power lines are nearby, please call Choctaw Electric (**800-780-6486**) before you begin.
- Although the service wire running from the transformer to your electric meter is usually insulated, never assume it is safe to work around. The insulation can deteriorate over time, creating a hazard.
- Keep workers and equipment at least 10 feet from power lines at all times. Remember that electricity can jump from the power line to nearby objects and trees, even if they aren't touching the line.

If power lines are causing sparks or arcing in tree branches....

If broken branches are entangled or hanging from power lines....

If you are clearing trees near power lines....

CALL CEC IMMEDIATELY.
800-780-6486

zed, Mock and could continue to very gently."

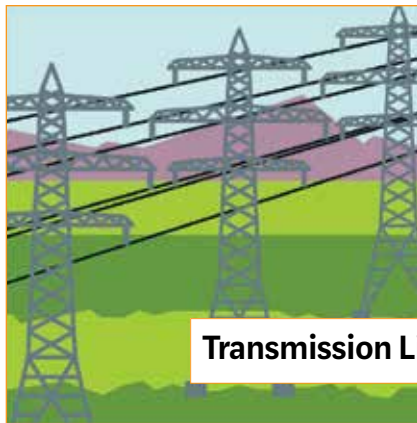
o. "If a tree is people to stop what that tree as possible," says Dale.

Your connection to

VITAL ELECTRICITY

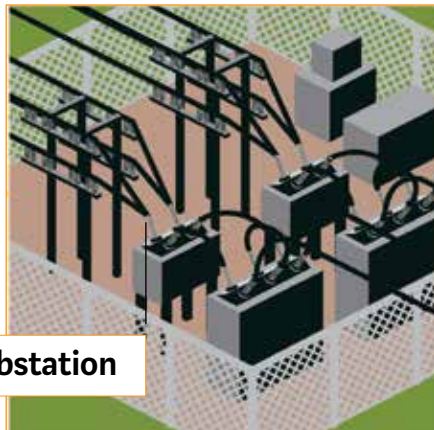
The electricity you use is provided to your electric cooperative by a generation and transmission cooperative, also known as a G&T.

G&Ts may own power plants or they may purchase electricity produced by a variety of fuel sources. Your G&T is owned by Choctaw Electric Cooperative and other electric co-ops. Together, they work to ensure an affordable, reliable supply of electricity to cco-op members.



Transmission Lines

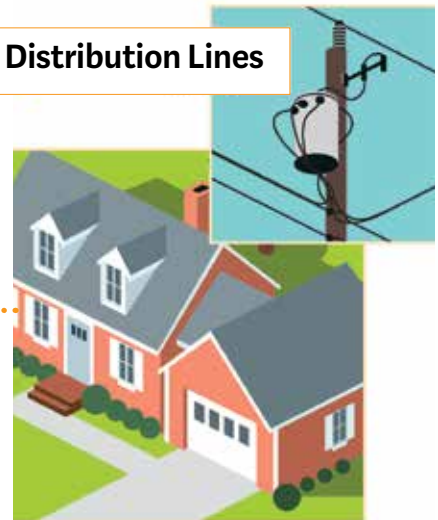
Choctaw Electric Cooperative purchases the power it needs from Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), a G&T. The power is sent over transmission lines to electric substations.



Substation

At the substation, electricity is stepped down to a safer level for your home, then routed over distribution lines to homes and businesses.

Distribution Lines



The safe, reliable power you depend on is delivered to your home.



HEY, DID YOU TURN THE Heat Down?

With a programmable thermostat, you can forget about it and still save plenty of money.

Nest programmable thermostats allow users to control their thermostat setting from their smartphone. For more information, visit www.nest.com.

10%

Annual estimated heating and cooling savings for homeowners who turn their thermostat back seven to eight degrees for eight hours a day.

If you leave your heat at the same temperature all day and night, you're missing out on some serious energy savings.

There's no need to keep your home toasty warm while nobody's in it—like during the day when everyone leaves for work and school. And when you're wrapped up tight in a comfy blanket overnight, it stands to reason that you'll be perfectly comfortable sleeping in a home that's a bit cooler than it is before bedtime.

Brad Kendrick, Choctaw Electric's energy use specialist says your best bet for comfort and savings is to invest in a programmable thermostat. These devices automatically turn the heat down when you leave for work; up when you're due to get home; down again right after you go to bed; and up again a half-hour before your alarm wakes you up in the morning.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that you can save up to 10 percent a year on heating and cooling if you turn your thermostat back seven to 10 degrees for eight hours a day. By using a programmable thermostat, it does the work for you.

Find information and tips on programmable thermostats and other energy-saving advice at www.energystar.gov.

How Do You Choose the Right Thermostat for You?

Programmable thermostats come with different settings and special function to meet your particular needs. To decide which model is best for you, think about your schedule and how often you are away from home for regular periods of time — work, school, other activities — and then decide which of the three different models best fits your schedule: the 7-day, 5+2-day, or the 5-1-1-day.

■ **7-day models** are best if your daily schedule tends to change, say, if children are at home earlier on some days. They give you the most flexibility, and let you set different programs for different days — usually with four possible temperature periods per day.

■ **5+2-day models** use the same schedule every weekday, and another for weekends.

■ **5-1-1 models** are best if you tend to keep one schedule Monday through Friday and another schedule on Saturdays and Sundays.



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. Events and dates are subject to ch

JANUARY

- 1 New Years Day
- 1 First Day Hike
McGee Creek State Park
- 15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 26 Gene Watson & Moe Bandy
Choctaw Event Center, Grant

FEBRUARY

- 9 38 Special
Choctaw Event Center, Grant
- 24 Wynonna & the Big Noise
Choctaw Event Center, Grant

MARCH

- TBA Spring Livestock Show
Fairgrounds, Idabel
- TBA Bass Fishing Tournament
Broken Bow
- TBA Spring Wood Art Exhibit
Forest Heritage Center
Broken Bow

APRIL

- 7 Dogwood Festival, Idabel

💰 **Lucky Account # 6363600** (\$75 Bill Credit). If the account number above belongs to you, contact your co-op by the 10th of the month to claim your \$75 bill credit. Call Jennifer Boling at **800-780-6486**, ext. 207, or contact CEC via email or in person.

january

Best days according to Moon phases.



Best planting days

Above ground crops . . .	16, 19, 20-21, 24-25, 28-29
Root crops	1-2, 7-11, 14-15
Seed beds	1-2, 9-11, 28-29
Kill plant pests	3-6, 12-13, 17-18, 22-23, 26-27, 30-31

Best fishing days

☞ Best	1-2, 19, 21, 28-29
😊 Good	9-11,
😐 Fair	4-6, 17-18, 24-25, 30-31
☹ Poor	7-8, 12-16, 22-23, 26-27

Best days to do other stuff

Quit smoking	6, 11
Bake	1-2, 29-30
Brew	10-11
Dry fruit/vegetables/meat	3-4, 12-13
Make jam and jellies	20-21
Can, pickle or make sauerkraut	10-11
Begin diet to lose weight	6, 11
Begin diet to gain weight	21-15
Cut hair to encourage growth	20-21, 24-26
Cut hair to discourage growth	7-9
Perm hair	17-19
Color hair	24-26
Straighten hair	12-14
Have dental care	5-6
Start projects	3
End projects	1
Demolish	10-11
Lay shingles	3-4, 31
Paint	7-9, 24-26
Wash windows	22-23
Wash floors	20-21
Breed animals	13-15
Go camping	12-14

—from the *Old Farmer's Almanac*

Good Eats

IN SOUTHEAST OKLAHOMA

Tender Italian Baked Chicken

INGREDIENTS

- ¾ cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¾ tsp. garlic powder
- ¾ cup Italian seasoned bread crumbs
- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts



DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 425° F.

In a bowl, mix the mayonnaise, Parmesan cheese, and garlic powder. Place bread crumbs in a separate bowl.

Dip chicken into the mayonnaise mixture, then into the bread crumbs to coat. Arrange coated chicken on a baking sheet.

Bake 20 minutes in the preheated oven, or until chicken juices run clear and coating is golden brown.

SOURCE: ALLRECIPES.COM

■ swap shop

FREE CLASSIFIED ADS FOR CEC MEMBERS

■ LIVESTOCK & PETS

Rabbits for sale for show or meat. 580-982-8267

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

White baby bed w/ mattress. 5ft Brush Hog and Seeder spreader. 580-372-8698 or 580-372-7523.

Volunteer Your Time to Change a Child's Life. Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children, a volunteer-powered network of committed people from all walks of life who believe society has an obligation to these children. We believe every child has the right to be treated with dignity, to be safe, and to thrive in the embrace of a loving family. For more information, call 580-298-2921. Address: LDCAA, 603SW B Street, Antlers, OK, 74523.

■ RECREATIONAL VEHICLES

1952 Spartan 33 ft. \$2,000 OBO. 1982 Coachman 5th wheel, \$500. 580-326-3881.

SWAP SHOP ads are free for CEC members. Submit ads online at classifieds@choctawelectric.coop or email to jboling@choctawelectric. Ads must include a telephone number or email address. Please provide your name, mailing address and CEC account number for verification.