



# inside *your* co-op

Published for members of Choctaw Electric Cooperative



Oklahoma's YouthPower Energy Camp manages to do the impossible. The three-day camp for eighth graders keeps teens entertained and engaged while teaching them basic cooperative principles.

Jia Johnson, director of member services for Choctaw Electric Cooperative says campers get involved by forming their own coke and candy co-op, electing trustees, hiring a manager, and voting on bylaws.

"The process is fun for the campers and it helps them understand basic cooperative principles such as democracy," she says.

When they aren't operating their kid-run co-op, campers enjoy games and activities that test their leadership skills and encourage them to make new friends. The camp also carves out time for pizza parties, go-kart rides, volleyball, swimming, hiking, football

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**Energy Camp helps teens understand democratic principles by forming their own co-op, and voting for trustees.**

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and more. Especially fun for campers is a sky-high lift in a co-op bucket truck and a hands-on lesson in electric pole climbing taught by co-op linemen.

Choctaw Electric will sponsor three students to attend Energy Camp, May 29 - June 1, 2018. The co-op pays all expenses and provides transportation to and from camp. Interested teens must submit a 200-250 word essay about how they can become a leader in their community. Teens must be eighth graders

attending school in the CEC service to be eligible.

Hurry, the deadline to enter is Friday, March 2, 2018.

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For complete details on Energy Camp, including application forms and guidelines, please visit [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop), or call 800-780-6486.

**MANAGER'S REPORT**

# Don't Be Surprised By Your Winter Bill

**W**hen it's time to open your electric bill, don't be surprised if your bill is higher than normal. High winter bills often come as a shock to members for a number of reasons. If you're like me, it's easy to forget the frigid cold snap we experienced last month if the current temperatures are pleasant and you're walking around in a light jacket!

Of course, there's no telling what sort of weather we'll be experiencing when you read this and honestly, that's unimportant. If you're wondering about the electric bill in your hand, remember that you're paying for electricity you used one month earlier. If you recall, the temperatures in early January remained below freezing for several days. When that happens, our heating systems work overtime to keep our homes at a comfortable temperature. For members who heat with air-source heat pumps, the freezing temperatures may cause the backup heat strips to switch on to provide additional warmth. The strips are supposed to switch off automatically, but they've been known to stick in the "on" position. When that happens, your usage will increase dramatically. Another culprit is the emergency heat setting on home thermostats. The emergency setting is located next to the regular heat setting so it's easy to turn it on accidentally. When your thermostat is set on emergency or auxiliary setting, your system will run continuously, which adds a mountain of kilowatts to your bill.

When the cold weather accompanies the holiday season—and it did—people tend to stay inside, turn up the heat, and enjoy a day of football on TV. Meanwhile, the kids are home from school, our ovens are working overtime, and we often find our homes filled with visiting family and friends. Those who are cold natured might find themselves flipping on a space heater to take the chill off.

All of this activity adds up to higher utility bills in February. For Choctaw Electric, the increased demand can cause us to hit a systemwide winter usage "peak." Our summer and winter peaks are determining factors in what Choctaw Electric must pay for power purchased from the power plant. The lower the peak, the lower our wholesale power rates will be in the coming year.

No one enjoys high bills—not your electric co-op and certainly not you. Lowering those bills requires an attitude of cooperation and an awareness of how and why those kilowatts add up. Remember that CEC offers free energy audits and other programs to make your home more energy efficient and help you understand your home's energy consumption. Small improvements can have a huge impact on your usage. Give us call. We're happy to help you.




**BY KOENEY DUNCAN**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## Choctaw Electric Cooperative

*Serving members in Choctaw, Pushmataha, Atoka, and McCurtain counties*

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24 Hour Outage Hotline  
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For information on your elected trustees and voting districts, and more, please visit [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop).

## OFFICIAL MINUTES OF YOUR CEC BOARD MEETING

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 and online at [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop).



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

## ENERGY SAVERS

# Emergency Heat Setting Can Result in Skyrocketing Bills

Choctaw Electric members who own heat pumps know that in addition to “heat,” “cool” and “off” there’s an extra setting on the thermostat labeled “emergency heat.”

Brad Kendrick, co-op energy use specialist, says this setting is the culprit behind 90 percent of winter high bill complaints from members. “Some people flip to emergency heat because they think that’s what they’re supposed to do when it’s really cold,” says Kendrick. “But the emergency heat setting should only be used when your heat pump isn’t working properly.”

During the winter months, a heat pump extracts outside heat from the air and transfers it inside your home, he explained. As temperatures dip, however, the heat pump is not able to pull enough exterior heat to the indoors. When your thermostat senses outdoor temperatures are too cold for the heat pump, it automatically switches to a secondary heating source.

Emergency heat is a manual setting, not an automatic function initiated by the heat pump thermostat. When emergency heat is on, it locks out the heat pump and forces the backup heating source to provide 100 percent of the home’s heating requirements. “If you switch your thermostat to emergency heat on purpose



The emergency heat setting on your thermostat should only be used when your heat pump malfunctions.

or by accident, the result is going to be a drastically higher bill,” Kendrick said.

Members should check their thermostats during cold weather to make sure it stays where it belongs on the regular “heat” setting. If a red light is on indicating emergency heat is activated, turn it to regular heat immediately.

If you have questions about your thermostat or your home energy use, please contact Brad Kendrick at 800-780-6486, ext. 209.

## GOOD TO KNOW

### Struggling to Pay Your Bill?

When money is tight, it can be difficult to keep up with basics such as your monthly electric bill. If you or your loved ones are having difficulty paying your electric bill, please give your electric co-op a call. Your Choctaw Electric billing clerks are happy to help you come up with a payment arrangement you can live with.

Don’t let debt—and worries—pile up. Please call us today at 800-780-6486.

### Right of Way Crews Working Near You

Choctaw Electric right of way crews are doing a turnabout in order to focus on needed maintenance. For several months crews have been working on clearing the right of way from the Hochatown sub.

Contract crews are working in the Sawyer and Eagletown areas. Choctaw Electric crews are working near Valliant. Thank you!

### Please Remember

Entries for Youth Tour are due Friday, February 16, 2018.

## 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



# Meter Tampering is a Crime

If you know of or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please report it to Choctaw Electric immediately.



Breaking a meter seal, opening a meter base, removing a meter or altering an entrance cable in any manner is considered “meter tampering.” Meter tampering is extremely dangerous and can result in electrical shock or even death. It is also illegal.

Anyone caught tampering with a meter or other cooperative equipment will be charged according to Choctaw Electric policy and reported to the Sheriff’s Department.

If you know of or suspect someone of meter tampering, please report it Choctaw Electric at **800-780-6486**. Electricity use that goes unbilled or unpaid increases the cost of electricity for every paying member—including you.

## swap shop

Castor Bean seed. 6 seeds for \$3. 580-298-2682.

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

Submit classified ads online at [classifieds@choctawelectric.coop](mailto:classifieds@choctawelectric.coop) or email [jboling@choctawelectric.coop](mailto:jboling@choctawelectric.coop).

## RECIPES



## French Silk Chocolate Pie

### INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup butter, room temperature
- ¾ cup white sugar
- 2 (1 oz) squares unsweetened baking chocolate, melted and cooled
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 1 (8-inch) pastry shell, baked and cooled.

### DIRECTIONS

Cream butter in a mixing bowl. Gradually beat in the sugar with an electric mixer until light colored and well blended.

Stir in the thoroughly cooled chocolate, and vanilla extract. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating 5 minutes on medium speed after each addition. Spoon the chocolate filling into a cooled, baked pie shell.

Refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving.

Source: allrecipes.com



# Many Ways to Pay

Choose the most convenient method for you!

- Pay online using SmartHub at [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop).
- Pay by phone 24 hours a day using a major credit card at **800-780-6496**.
- Pay via smart phone, iPad or tablet using our SmartHub mobile app. Download the free app at [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop).
- Pay in person or use CEC’s drive-through drop box, available 24/7.

**Or use our Paysite kiosk at one of the following locations:**

- **Save A Lot Grocery, Hugo.** OPEN SUNDAY, 9 AM - 8 PM. MON.-SAT., 7:30 AM - 9 PM
- **Choctaw Travel Plazas at Atoka, Antlers, Broken Bow, and Idabel.** OPEN 24 HRS.
- **Country Market, Clayton.** OPEN 6 AM - 10 PM, 7 DAYS A WEEK.