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New Partnership Promises Savings For CEC Members

Rebates make energy efficient home improvements more affordable

An innovative partnership with power supplier Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC) and private enterprise will make it more affordable for co-op members to make their homes more energy efficient. A pilot program to assess CEC member support of the program kicks off May 1 - June 30.

The program works like this: Interested members receive a free professional energy assessment of their home performed by Precise Building Performance. The company offers a full spectrum of certified energy efficiency services to clients across Oklahoma and Texas. The evaluation includes a blower door test to determine how well your home is sealed. It also includes a thorough inspection of your home's exterior and interior, and a visual inspection of attic insulation.

Once the evaluation is complete, the member receives a list of suggested upgrades with the projected longterm energy savings and estimated installation costs for each improvement. CEC members may choose to do nothing, or they may select one or more improvements based on their budget.

Members who choose to make upgrades will receive a rebate of \$1 per watt of estimated savings, with a maximum rebate of \$1,000. For example, an upgrade with an estimated savings of .73 kilowatts would qualify for a \$730 rebate. Rebates are applied to the cost of the project.

"Depending on the improvements a person chooses to make, some members could see their installation costs reduced by half," said Brad Kendrick, CEC energy use specialist. "It's a win for the member all the way around. They enjoy an immediate discount on the home improvements, plus the longterm energy savings."

Furthermore, Kendrick added members can pick and choose improvements based on what they can afford and are assured knowing the work is performed by licensed professional contractors.

To sign up for a free energy assessment, please visit www.oknm.coop. To visit with a CEC representative about the program, please contact Brad Kendrick at 800-780-6486, ext. 209, or email bakendrick@choctawelectric.coop.



MEMBER BENEFITS:

- Total energy evaluation of your home by professional energy auditors. Includes blower door test for accurate detection of leaks in the home. Est. value: \$500. **Free for CEC members.**
- List of suggested energy improvements prioritized by projected energy savings. Members may accept or reject any suggestions. Est. value: \$100. **Free for CEC members.**
- Team of professionals qualified to make improvements approved by the member. Est. value: Varies. **Member responsible for cost.**
- Rebates of \$1 per watt of projected savings for each improvement accepted. Est. value: Varies based on choice of upgrades. Example: An upgrades with a projected savings of .73 kilowatts would receive a \$730 rebate. **Rebate is applied to total project cost, providing the member with a sizable discount. Maximum rebate value: \$1,000.**

A monthly newsletter of
Choctaw Electric Cooperative.

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IDABEL OFFICE

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Idabel, Oklahoma 74745

Toll Free: (800) 780-6486

Local: (580) 286-7155

Monday-Friday • 8 am - 5 pm

ANTLERS OFFICE

HC 67 Box 62

Antlers, Oklahoma 74523

(One mile east of Antlers)

Toll Free: (800) 780-6486

Local: (580) 298-3201

Monday-Friday • 8 am - 5 pm

On the Web:

www.choctawelectric.coop



24 Hour Outage Hotline

800-780-6486

MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

Democracy Lives Locally

Member participation and engagement are important

Members in good standing with their co-op have the right to seek election to the board of directors. While serving on a board isn't for everyone, it is healthy for any co-op to have an active membership with a portion of the members interested in serving in a leadership role.

At Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC), we are governed by a board of nine directors, elected by the membership, who provide direction and guidance to make certain CEC continues to serve the interests of you, the member-owner.

While democracy itself is an imperfect system, it remains the best way to assure the maximum number of voices is heard. Democracy cannot and should not be taken for granted.

As the utility industry enters an era of change and people have more choices for the way they receive electricity, it is critically important that we hear your voice and the voices of the most diverse group of members. Only through active engagement and participation of our members can we ensure CEC is leading in a direction that its members will want to follow.



BY KENNETH J. GATES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In addition to ensuring the co-op serves the best interests of its members, the CEC board of trustees is committed to providing solutions that maintain the well being of our local communities. Being a co-op trustee requires a real commitment of time and effort, and an attitude of being a servant leader, meaning trustees should want to engage with co-op members and their community to make a real contribution.

One of the greatest resources in southeast Oklahoma is our people. This year CEC members will nominate trustees for Districts B, C and G. If you are interested in running for a seat on Choctaw Electric's board of trustees, we'd like to hear from you. Please contact us at **800-780-6486** to learn more. I also encourage you to read the Choctaw Electric bylaws for proper procedure for nominating trustees, qualifications for serving, elections and more. You can download a copy at www.choctawelectric.coop, or drop by any CEC office and pick up a copy.

Thank you for your interest and involvement in your co-op.

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.



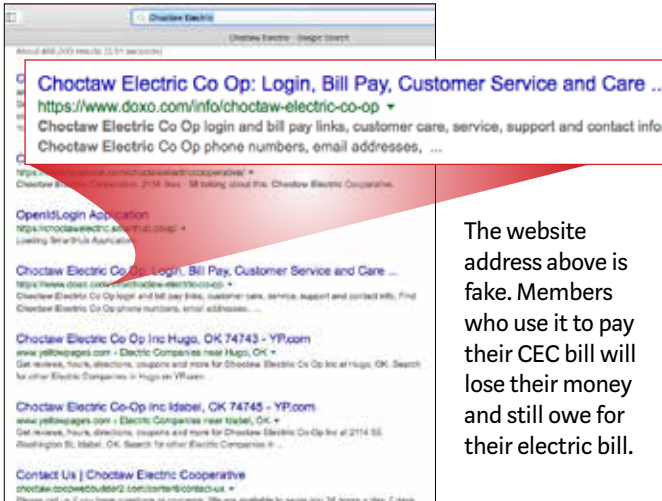


CEC Member Falls Victim To Fraudulent Bill Payment Site

If you Google your electric co-op to find Choctaw Electric's bill payment site, you'll notice a long list of possible links. One of these links is a fraud and recently stole over \$300 from an unsuspecting co-op member.

The site pops up as <https://www.doxo.com/info/choctaw-electric-co-op>, which looks legitimate. Compare it to the correct address, however, and you'll notice the difference. Choctaw Electric's online payment site is <https://choctawelectric.smarthub.coop/>.

Be sure to study website addresses carefully before clicking on them. Choctaw Electric never uses web addresses hosted on other domains. For instance, www.doxo.com is a domain. If you're unsure about an address or website, please contact your co-op for verification at **800-780-6486**.



The website address above is fake. Members who use it to pay their CEC bill will lose their money and still owe for their electric bill.

Telephone Survey Reminder

If you get a call this month asking you to participate in a CEC survey, please don't hang up. Your honest feedback is needed and will help CEC improve its services. Thank you!

UPCOMING CO-OP EVENTS

- Tuesday, April 4
Member Appreciation Day
11 pm - 2 pm, CEC Idabel
- Wednesday, April 5
Member Appreciation Day
11 pm - 2pm, CEC Hugo
- Wednesday, April 5
District D Meeting
5 pm, Wright City School Cafeteria
- Thursday, April 6
Member Appreciation Day
11 pm - 2 pm, CEC Antlers



■ *Know your bylaws.* If you've ever wondered about the rules governing your electric co-op elections, meetings, and more, it's all covered in your CEC bylaws. To view or download your co-op bylaws, visit www.choctawelectric.coop and click on the Bylaw link at the bottom of the home page.



Same Old Meeting.

CEC 78th Annual Meeting • Saturday, September 23 • Hugo

All New Venue.

McCurtain Co. Fairgrounds in Idabel

Talking Shop

Meeting Focuses on Agribusiness Needs

Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC) members are a diverse group with different needs and interests. Second home owners in Hochtatown, single parent families struggling to make ends meet, farmers, ranchers, schools, churches, and large commercial businesses are all a part of CEC's membership.

To find out what members expect from their co-op, CEC is hosting a series of member focus groups. The first meeting for agribusiness owners took place on February 16 at the Idabel Chamber of Commerce.

Ten members representing poultry, forestry, and cattle businesses attended the meeting, along with CEC staff and a representative from Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC). Focus group meetings are small to encourage members to ask questions and speak out concerns.



Ken Gates, CEO of Choctaw Electric Cooperative, explains the co-op's 2017 strategic business plan to agribusiness owners at the CEC focus group meeting in Idabel.

Members at the agribusiness meeting offered little in the way of criticism. An attendee with poultry barns served by CEC and another utility praised the co-op for its service. Other questions and comments from members focused on broader issues in the electric utility industry. One member asked about the status of the investigation of former CEO Terry Matlock. Another wondered if WFEC plans to build any additional coal-fired generating plants. Other attendees asked about right of way maintenance procedures and purchase power costs.

CEC plans to hold additional focus groups throughout the year. The goal is to reach out to members in all corners of CEC service territory. Members will be notified prior to the meeting date. CEC encourages members to participate and voice their questions and concerns.

For more info on CEC focus group meetings, please call your co-op at **800-780-6486**, ext. 241.

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

PAY Site Choctaw Electric Cooperative

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
HOURS: SUNDAY, 9 AM - 8 PM
MONDAY-SATURDAY, 7:30 - AM - 9 PM

Co-op Tax Benefits Local Schools

Collected by CEC and paid to the State, the electric co-op gross receipts tax provides a financial boost to rural schools

Choctaw Electric members with billing questions often wonder about the gross receipts tax they pay every month. Why would a not-for-profit cooperative collect taxes?

For one, it's state law—and its a tax that CEC and other co-ops are happy to pay. Why? Ninety-five percent of collections go to schools in their service areas. The remaining five percent is retained by the Oklahoma Tax Commission to pay costs associated with administering the tax funds.

Oklahoma statutes require electric co-ops to pay a two percent gross receipts tax on the annual sale and distribution of electricity. In 2016, CEC and its power supplier Western Farmers Electric Cooperative paid nearly \$12.8 million in gross receipts taxes for schools in southeast Oklahoma.



The amount paid to schools is determined by the number of miles of CEC and WFEC power line in each school district.

Co-ops prefer the gross receipts tax structure because it provides direct financial help to local schools. Only 50-60 percent of ad valorem taxes collected by investor owned utilities benefit schools.

If you have questions about the gross receipts tax, please call your co-op at **800-780-6486** or email info@choctawelectric.coop.



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 change.

APRIL

- 1 Dogwood Days Festival Idabel
- 4 Member Appreciation Day CEC, Idabel
- 5 Member Appreciation Day CEC, Hugo
- 5 District D Meeting, 5:00 pm Wright City School
- 8 American Youth Leadership Powwow, McCurtain Co. Sports Complex, Broken Bow
- 6 Member Appreciation Day CEC Antlers
- 10 Town Hall w/Mark Wayne Mullins, location TBA
- 14 Good Friday CEC offices closed
- 15 Easter Sunday
- 22 Beavers Bend Kayak Classic

MAY

- 31- June 4 PRCA Rodeo, Hugo

2016 GROSS RECEIPTS TAX PAID TO LOCAL SCHOOLS

Choctaw Electric Cooperative and Western Farmers Electric Cooperative Collections

Boswell.....	\$46,957.60	Haworth.....	\$58,781.59
Ft.Towson.....	\$110,259.77	Valliant.....	\$99,253.45
Soper.....	\$50,033.04	Eagletown.....	\$19,193.00
Hugo.....	\$103,879.66	Smithville.....	\$40,151.92
Whitesboro.....	\$1,993.50	Wright City.....	\$20,230.08
Forest Grove.....	\$34,726.60	Battiest	\$54,406.67
Lukfata.....	\$23,465.84	BrokenBow.....	\$115,311.48
Glover.....	\$12,242.24	Nashoba	\$15,703.29
Denison.....	\$28,948.58	Rattan.....	\$82,651.68
Holly Creek.....	\$21,020.09	Clayton.....	\$11,826.89
Idabel.....	\$41,694.34	Antlers.....	\$120,212.03
Lane.....	\$72,528.51	Moyers.....	\$24,495.42
Bennington.....	\$23,853.13	Grant.....	\$15,616.81
		Swink.....	\$23,486.78

\$ Lucky Account #35549600 (\$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.

CEC Power Poles Take a Pounding

Wind, weather and woodpeckers take a toll on CEC infrastructure

The wind and weather are hard on Choctaw Electric power poles, but lately it's the wily woodpecker that gives them a solid pounding.

Over the past year, co-op employees discovered several poles bearing the tell tale signs of powerful pecking. Most damages occurred near heavily wooded areas near Carter Mountain, Hochatown, Antlers and Unger.

Thousands of co-op power poles are scattered across CEC service territory. Over the years, they become susceptible to rot, decay, weather, wildlife, and vandalism. The co-op recently hired a company to complete visual and sound tests on every pole in the CEC system. The company will inspect roughly 6,000 CEC poles per year.

Jim Malone, CEC director of engineering and operations, said the inspection process is time consuming, but important to protecting the integrity of CEC electric system. The inspections are part of the co-op's bigger push for measurable, longterm improvements in system reliability. In some areas, the co-op plans to replace wooden poles with iron poles. Iron poles are extremely fire resistant—and unattractive to woodpeckers.

Studies show woodpecker damage is the most significant cause of power pole damage in the U.S. While Malone isn't sure what's behind the rash of recent woodpecker-related vandalism, one pole had holes "big enough I could stick a hand in," Malone said.

Researcher and wildlife biologist Richard Harness works for EDM International, a utility consulting company. According to Harness, heat and pressure treated poles leave cavities inside when they cool. Sensing a void inside, the birds drill exploratory holes searching for insects.

Trees, barns, houses and other wooden structures are all potential pecking grounds for woodpeckers. They also drill holes to create nesting cavities. Large holes tend to indicate nesting behavior. In the springtime, woodpeckers drum incessantly to attract mates.

Eleven species of woodpeckers call Oklahoma home. Harness claims pileated woodpeckers and flickers cause the majority of woodpecker related damage to power poles.



Pileated woodpecker.
PHOTO/RICHARD HARNISS, EDM INTERNATIONAL.

CEC power poles took a beating from woodpeckers over the past year. Most problems occurred near wooded areas near Carter Mountain, Hochatown, Unger and Antlers.

If you notice a damaged electric pole in your area, please notify the co-op immediately at 800-780-6486.

With no eye witnesses to the CEC's pole damage, co-op personnel are hesitant to blame the crime on a particular type of woodpecker, however, the size of some of the holes seems to indicate a larger bird, most likely a pileated woodpecker.

Photos of one damaged pole (See photo, top left) inspired some amusing theories among CEC employees. The most popular: Flying beavers.

POWER POLE FACTS



\$210 Avg. cost for one 40 ft, class 4 southern pine power pole.

\$545 Avg. est. installation cost per 40 ft. single phase power pole.

62,832 Estimated, total number of power poles in the Choctaw Electric power system.

80% of wooden poles on the market are comprised of southern pine.

25-50 years Avg. lifespan of a wooden pole dependent on soil and climate conditions.

CEC Pole Inspection Underway

Lee Inspection and Consulting services, Inc. is working with CEC to inspect and inventory power poles. Members may notice Lee Inspection employees and vehicles working in the Nashoba area from mid-April through June. When necessary, the company may use off-road vehicles to access poles.

If you have questions regarding the pole inspections, please contact Darrell Ward at 800-780-6486, ext. 201.

Storm Moving In?

Know the right way to move out of harm's way

When thunderstorms are heading your way, stay safe with these helpful tips from the American Red Cross:

- Listen to local news or NOAA Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, like darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing wind.
- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are likely to occur. Many people struck by lightning are not in the area where rain is occurring.
- If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, take shelter in a substantial building or in a vehicle with the windows closed. Get out of mobile homes that can blow over in high winds.
- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be in danger from lightning. If thunder roars, go indoors! The National Weather Service recommends staying inside for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap.

- Avoid electrical equipment and telephones. Use battery-powered TVs and radios instead.
- Shutter windows and close outside doors securely. Keep away from windows.
- Do not take a bath, shower or use plumbing.
- If you are driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. Avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.
- If you are outside and cannot reach a safe building, avoid high ground; water; tall, isolated trees; and metal objects such as fences or bleachers. Picnic shelters, dugouts and sheds are NOT safe.

For more electrical safety information, please visit www.choctawelectric.coop, or call your co-op at 800-780-6486.



THANK YOU FOR POWERING OUR LIVES.

NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

APRIL 10, 2017

Get ready for CEC's Kilowatt Kid's Camp!



Camp is free for ages 7-10.

Tuesday, June 20

9:00 am - 11:30 am
CEC Hugo

Thursday, June 22

9:00 am - 11:30 am
CEC Idabel

CAMP ENROLLMENT FORM

Student's Name _____

Age _____ Grade _____

Parent Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone (_____) _____ - _____

Work Phone (_____) _____ - _____

Cell Phone (_____) _____ - _____

Please clip and mail to:

Choctaw Electric Cooperative
Attn: Member Services Department
PO Box 758 • Hugo, OK • 74743

Questions? Please call 800-780-6486, ext. 209.

april

Best days according to Moon phases.



Best planting days

Above ground crops . . .	2-3, 9-10, 26, 29-30
Root crops	11-13, 16-18, 21-22, 25
Seed beds	2-3, 11-13, 29-30
Kill plant pests	1, 4-8, 14-15, 19-20, 23-24, 27-28

Best fishing days

☞ Best	2-3, 11-13, 21-22, 29-30
😊 Good	8, 19-20
☺ Fair	7, 9-10, 14, 16-18
☹ Poor	1, 4-6, 15, 23-28

Best days to do other stuff

Quit smoking	13,26
Begin diet to lose weight	13, 23
Begin diet to gain weight	3, 8
Cut hair to encourage growth	5-6, 27
Cut hair to discourage growth	22-23
Go to the dentist	11-12
Start projects	27
End projects	25
Go camping	14-16
Plant above ground vegetables	3-4, 30
Plant below ground vegetables	12-13, 22-23
Destroy pests and weeds	24-25
Graft or pollinate	3-4, 30
Prune to encourage growth	5-6
Prune to discourage growth	14-15
Harvest above ground vegetables	7-8
Harvest below ground vegetables	17-18
Make sauerkraut, can, or pickle	21-23
Cut Hay	24-25
Begin Logging	17-18
Set Posts or Pour Concrete	17-18
Breed Animals	12-13
Wean animals or children	13, 23

—from the *Old Farmer's Almanac*

Good Eats

IN SOUTHEAST OKLAHOMA

Lemon Ice Box Pie



INGREDIENTS

- 1 (9 inch) prepared graham cracker crust
- 2 (8 oz) pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- 1 (14 oz) can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 lemons, juiced
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest

DIRECTIONS

In a medium mixing bowl, beat cream cheese until fluffy. Add condensed milk, lemon juice, and lemon rind. Mix until smooth. Pour mixture into crust. Refrigerate at least 2 hours before serving. Garnish with whipped cream and mint leaves if desired.

SOURCE: ALLRECIPES.COM

■ swap shop

FREE CLASSIFIED ADS FOR CEC MEMBERS

■ LIVESTOCK & PETS

Miniature donkey business for sale. 580-326-7672 or 580-326-1438.

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., call 580-873-2771. Your call will be returned.

■ MISCELLANEOUS

Yamaha Keyboard P-105, full keys, sustain pedal, stand, transpose key feature, built-in speakers. Fender Starcaster J Bass Guitar, Behringer Ultra Bass Bx1800, black. These items are like new, used very little. 580-584-2710 or 580-212-0316.

Lincoln Ranger 8 welder with leads. Can be used as a generator. \$1,250. 1928 Model A Roadster. Ready to reassemble. Original parts

and extra motor and transmission. \$4,500. 1959 Auto Bianca, no motor. \$3,500. Massey Harris pacer tractor with cultivator. Needs tires, \$1,500. 1984 C-4 Corvette with removable top. \$5,000. 580-244-3593. No Saturday calls please.

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 580-317-5411.

■ REAL ESTATE

East of Antlers, 2300 sq. ft. home on 10 acres. 4 bedroom, 2 full baths, 2 dining areas, fireplace, 2-car garage and 2-car carport. Price negotiable. 580-271-0320 or 580-775-4796 after 5:00 pm.

SWAP SHOP ads are free for CEC members. Submit ads online at www.choctawelectric.coop, email to 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.