



CEC inside your co-op

Published for members of Choctaw Electric Cooperative

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A supplement to Oklahoma Living.

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Hello From Washington!

Choctaw Electric's Youth Tour winners Dawson Sullivan, Silas Maple and Indiana McNutt pause for a photo during their recent visit to Washington DC. The trio spent their days seeing the many historic and cultural attractions in and around our nation's capitol. The teens returned from their trip on June 16 and from all reports, had a wonderful time.

A monthly newsletter of
Choctaw Electric Cooperative.

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MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

Let Me Introduce Myself

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC) board of trustees for the opportunity to serve as Choctaw Electric's CEO/general manager. I am committed to providing trustworthy leadership and in ensuring safe, reliable service and reasonably priced electricity for our members, while helping make the communities we serve even better places to live and work.



BY KENNETH GATES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

My career of 40-plus years has allowed me to experience the importance of managing many companies and hundreds of employees. These diverse situations taught me to not only meet, but to exceed expectations. To do that I believe honest, open and willing two-way communication is of paramount importance.

My wife, Lori, is as excited as I am about coming to live and work in this area. The beauty of southeast Oklahoma is extraordinary. Being an avid history buff,

I am fascinated by the rich history of this part of the country and I look forward to learning more. The folks we have met since we arrived are the best.

As for our family, we have two sons. One lives in California with two of our grandchildren, ages 12 and 15. Our other son lives in Alaska. He and our daughter-in-law have 2 1/2 year old twin boys and another set of twins, 3 months old, a boy and a girl. Needless to say, they have a busy household.

The upcoming months will be busy as I familiarize myself with CEC personnel, service territory and operations. I am glad to be here and I look forward to working with CEC members, trustees and our employee team.

As a member-owned cooperative, every individual is important to this organization. We are all in the cooperative family together and together we can do extraordinary things. I am optimistic about the future of Choctaw Electric Cooperative.



FIND IT ONLINE

■ *The Right Place For Trees.* Trees growing in the CEC right of way cause power outages and can hinder outage response time. Help your co-op provide the best possible service by locating trees and shrubs away from power lines. Information on CEC's right of way program and the proper location for trees is found at www.choctawelectric.coop. Click "Safety" and then "Right of Way."

■ *Know Your Bylaws.* Choctaw Electric bylaws serve as a governing document for your co-op. CEC bylaws cover qualifications for trustees, member meetings, the trustee nomination and election process, district boundaries, trustee removal and more. If you've every wondered how to amend bylaws or simply want to know more about your co-op, find a copy of your bylaws online at www.choctawelectric.coop.

High Temperatures Mean Peak Alerts

Help CEC Beat The Peak by using Less electricity on peak days

Hot weather is here. As temperatures climb and air conditioners fight to keep homes cool, Choctaw Electric's engineers will be watching the co-op's system-wide demand for energy. Choctaw Electric will issue peak alerts on Facebook and other media when system wide usage is peaking.

Your co-op issues peak alerts to encourage members to use less energy from 3 pm until 7 pm on peak days. That time frame is typically when Choctaw Electric members use the most electricity. The Choctaw Electric system usually peaks during hot weather in July or August.

System peaks concern Choctaw Electric because they determine what the co-op — and eventually all co-op members — pay for wholesale electricity generated by Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC).

During peak periods, it costs more for WFEC to generate the large amount of electricity being consumed. To meet the huge demand, WFEC's base load power plants are running at full capacity. Firing up additional plants to supply enough electricity to meet the peak demand is expensive. Peak alerts help keep electricity use down and avoid the need to use more expensive generation. In turn, this keeps CEC members' rates lower.

Please do your part by helping CEC "Beat the Peak!" When you see a Peak Alert notice, please keep an eye on your usage. A few simple measures are all that's needed.



Easy Ways to Use Less

- Use appliances like clothes washers and dryers, dishwashers and other electric devices sparingly during peak times, 3 pm to 7 pm.
- Try to avoid running hot water so the demand for your water heater is less during the peak times.
- Set the thermostat on your air conditioning equipment or heat pump up three degrees during the peak time. Use ceiling fans and close your drapes to help the air conditioner even more.
- Instead of using the stove or oven to cook dinner, fire up your charcoal grill.



Time To Renew Your CPR Certification?

CEC offers free CPR classes

Choctaw Electric offers CPR training to the community. The course is designed for nonprofit organizations, fire departments and other groups that must keep their CPR certification up to date. If it's time for you to renew your CPR certificate, contact CEC to schedule a course.

For more details, please contact Guy Dale, **800-760-6486**, ext. 227.

We're working with you to build healthy communities!

Please Save these **DATES**



✓ **July 26, 2016**

Nominating petitions due for trustees in Districts A, B, C, G, H and I.

✓ **September 23, 2016**

Mail-in ballots for trustee elections due at CEC office.

✓ **September 24, 2016**

CEC Annual Meeting, Rodeo Arena, Hugo. Note: A general election will be held for those districts with more than one nominee for trustee. An election will also take place to approve any potential changes to the CEC bylaws.

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. Members requesting hard copies must sign a non disclosure agreement.

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



What's Your Role As A Member?

Choctaw Electric Cooperative is a member-owned business with 77 employees and a nine-member board of trustees.

Each individual has a job to do, from the meter technician and billing clerks to the president of the board and co-op members themselves. For your co-op to function efficiently and effectively, everyone involved in the co-op understands where they fit in and why their job is important to the well-being of the cooperative.

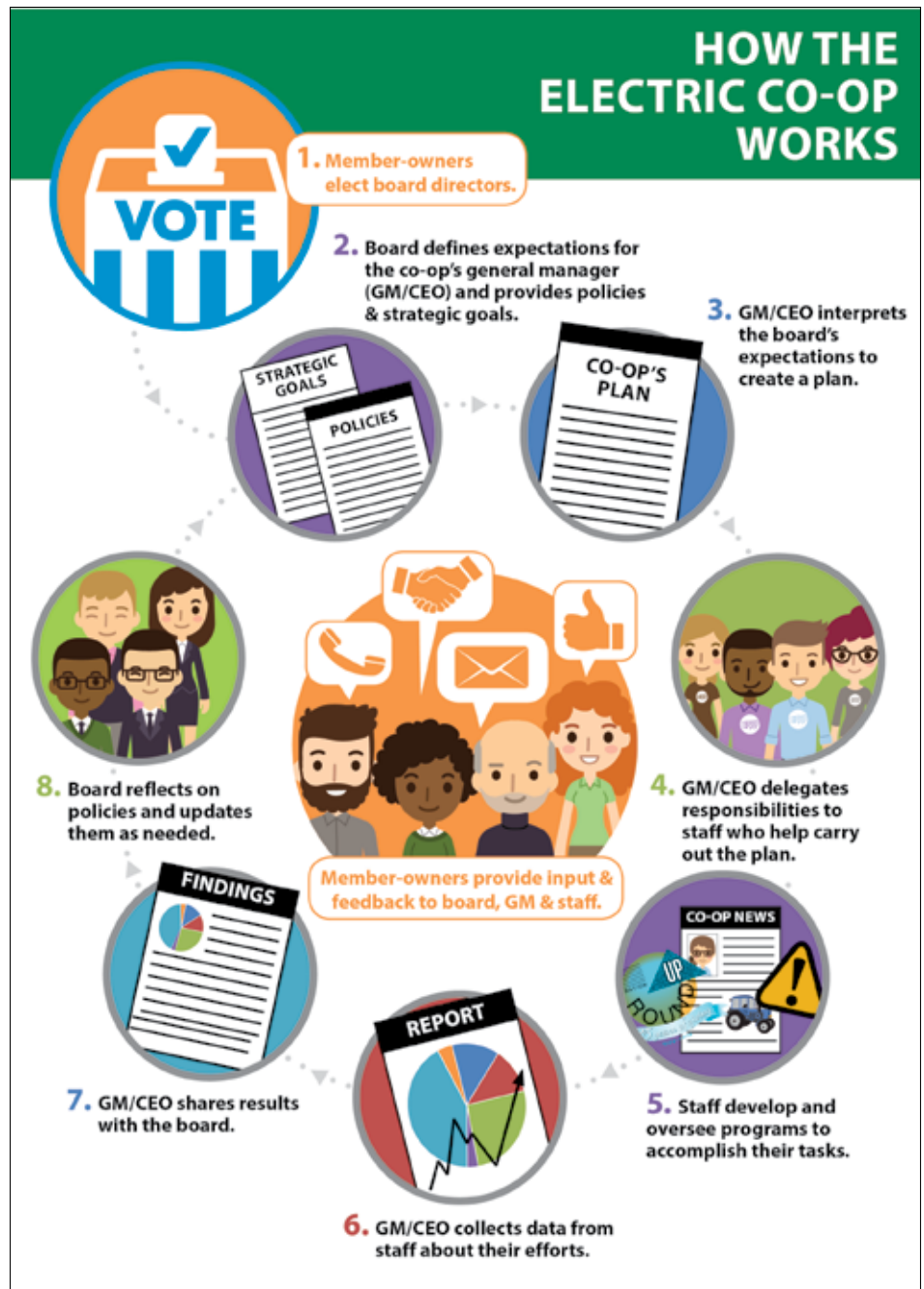
For instance, your elected trustees define the responsibilities of your co-op general manager. They also set CEC policies and establish clear and strategic goals for CEC's future. They convey these goals to the general manager who puts the plan in action by communicating with key staff. Department supervisors oversee the programs and services that make things happen.

All of these efforts revolve around providing the best and most affordable electricity for CEC members, while abiding by the core cooperative values such as helping to improve CEC's local communities.

Co-op members play an important role. It is the member's responsibility to elect trustees who will represent them on the board and serve as their voice. It is also the member's responsibility to stay informed about member meetings and other issues that are important to their co-op.

This information is published in CEC's monthly newsletter, *Inside Your Co-op*, on CEC's Facebook page, and at www.choctawelectric.coop.

Co-op members are encouraged to attend the CEC Annual Meeting and vote on trustees, bylaw changes or other matters. Members who take action by staying involved, voting and



sharing their ideas and concerns with their trustees are key to keeping CEC strong and focused on local needs.

Co-op members are also encouraged to participate in groups like Co-op Owners for ACRE. ACRE stands for the Action Committee for Rural Electrification and it exists to make national and state leaders aware of how certain legislation affects co-op members.

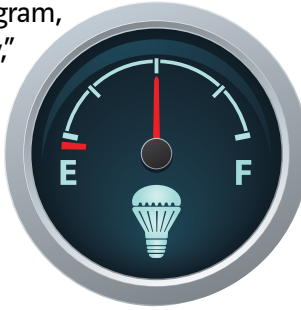
Members who join Co-op Owners for ACRE are kept informed about the key issues that can affect their electric rates. At times, members may be asked to join email campaigns to raise awareness of certain issues. It's yet another way to stay involved and ensure federal and state leaders know exactly how their decisions can affect rural ratepayers.

For more info on ACRE, please visit www.nreca.coop/political-action/acre/.

Prepaid Takes The Shock Away And Helps You Save On Your Electric Bill

Prepaid metering is as simple as it sounds: Consumers pay for electricity before it is used, and then use the electricity until the credit expires. A good way to understand prepaid metering is to think of it like putting gas in your car.

With CEC's prepaid program, as you approach "empty," you add more money to your account. If you run out, the power goes off just like your car stops when it runs out of gas.



Say you only have \$30 for the week to pay for gasoline. You drive down to the station, pump in \$30 and drive off. As you drive during the week, what happens? You monitor the gauge and make sure each trip is necessary. If you drive too much, you burn up your \$30 before the week is out. Literally. By checking the gauge throughout the week, you became more prudent with your gas use and make informed decisions on when and how much to use.

Now let's apply that line of thought to your account with Choctaw Electric. With normal metering, you get a bill after you have used the electricity. Sometimes it comes as a shock. "How could I possibly have used so much electricity?" Prepaid metering is designed to ease – and hopefully eliminate – that shock. Let's take a look at how it works.

The components of a prepaid metering system aren't too different from regular metering. Two extra pieces are required; a way to turn off the power when all your money is used and a way for Choctaw Electric to tell you how much you have left in your account; think of this as your "electricity tank gauge." On the cooperative's side, we handle the extra software and processes.

Now let's see it in action. You have the prepaid metering equipment installed. Now you can choose from three notification methods—smartphone app, emails or text messages.

Next, you decide how often you want to buy electricity. Monthly? Weekly? Then you budget for a certain amount of power and pay the co-op using cash, check, or credit card. Bingo, your electricity tank is full!

During the time period you have paid for you will receive regular feedback on how much you have left in your tank.

As you approach "empty," you add more money to your account and are then set for the next period. If you run out, the power goes off just like your car stops when it runs out of gas.

When you think of it like gas in your car, you become much more aware of how you are using electricity. You turn things off more often. You may change the setting on your thermostat so you don't cool or heat as much. You might cook outside to avoid using the oven or make sure your dishwasher is really full before running it. Industry studies show that consumers who participate in prepaid metering plans use as much as 10 percent less electricity than their counterparts.

Prepaid metering teaches the value of electricity, what uses watts in your home, provides absolute control over how much you pay and helps you reduce your energy use. It is a great way to power your life!

For more information on CEC's prepaid program, please call **800-780-6486** or visit www.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.

JULY

- 3 Fireworks Display
George C. Coffman Football Stadium, Idabel
- 4 Freedom Fest
High School Parking Lot
Haworth
- 4 Fireworks Display, Choctaw Casino, Grant, OK
- 4 CEC Offices Closed
- 11-13 Dino Camp, Museum of the Red River, Idabel
- 29 Watermelon Hoedown 15th Annual Watermelon Festival Valliant

AUGUST - No Events

SEPTEMBER

- 6-10 McCurtain Co. Fair, Idabel OK
- 8-10 Choctaw County Fair, Hugo
- 9-30 Master at Work, Forest Heritage Center, Broken Bow
- 15-17 Pushmataha County Fair Antlers
- 24 CEC Annual Meeting Rodeo Arena, Hugo
- 30-Oct 1 Honobia Bog Foot Festival Honobia
- 30-Oct 1 Deer Festival, Antlers OK



Energy Hogs are not limited to home appliances.

Did you know the average home loses about half of its cooled air through unsealed openings?

Cracks and gaps left unsealed typically add up to a two-foot-square hole in the average home—that's like having a window open all day, every day!

Here are a few tips on how to seal air leak openings:

- Weatherstrip doors and windows with gaps at the frame.
- Use caulk (and a caulking gun) to fill small gaps around outlets or between the baseboard and the floor.
- Use foam insulation, foil insulation, sheeting or a combination of materials to seal larger gaps and holes, like those around pipes in your home.

Source: Dept. of Energy

Help Kids Become Smart Energy Users

"Did you turn off the lights in your room?"

"We're not paying to heat the whole neighborhood!"

"Save some hot water for the rest of us!"

Parents utter these phrases to their children countless times each day. Despite their best efforts, it can be tough to help kids understand the importance of saving energy—and to put that knowledge into action.

Some parents get creative in their attempts to encourage better energy habits in the their kids.

Here are a few tips.

Deputize an "energy enforcer"

Several parents recommended deputizing children to investigate wasteful energy practices. Let them take turns playing the role of energy deputy.

Each week, the appointed child gets a badge and is empowered to seek out energy waste and hold the offending party accountable.

Some parents recommend offering your little energy deputies a bounty for finding leaks, drafts and other wasteful energy practices around the house.

Their progress can be tracked with stickers on a calendar, and when the kids reach their goal, they can be rewarded with a sheriff's badge or small toy of their choice.

The invisible hand

If your child's hand never seems to find its way to the light switch, perhaps the invisible hand of the free market can help them out.

Try fining your child 25 cents for every light bulb he or she leaves on in their rooms. For a ceiling fan with four bulbs, that can become a costly mistake. Kids will learn quickly when the expense is coming out of their own pocket.

No matter what approach you choose, talking to kids about energy use is sure to pay dividends. They might not always follow through, but they'll learn important lessons about the value of energy and the importance of conservation. This knowledge may not pay off for you in your lifetime, but it will for them, particularly when they begin paying their own bills!.

Choctaw Electric offers a number of programs that are designed to help kids become more aware of the importance of conserving energy. CEC's **Tools for Schools** is a free energy curriculum that includes activities and resource materials that educate kids about electrical safety, electricity generation and delivery, and energy efficiency. **Watts Up With Green** helps middle school students learn about wise energy use and why that is important to the environment. **Go ECO**, also designed for middle school classrooms, teaches students about nuclear energy and bio-mass power. For more details, please call **800-780-6486** or visit www.choctawelectric.coop.



Three Ways To Prevent Electrical Fires

Three of the most common causes of electrical fires in the home are 100 percent preventable. Here's how to rid your home of the most common culprits:

Extension cords. These handy wire-stretchers are not designed for continuous use. Too many homeowners use extension cords year-round, and that can cause them to overheat. An overheated cord is a fire hazard.

If you don't have enough outlets, or if your heart is set on locating a lamp out of reach, have an electrician install additional outlets, including one closer to the lamp.

Old wiring and outlets. If your home is more than 20 years old, a hazard could lurk behind its walls.

The electrical systems in older homes were designed to handle less activity. Overloading that system can trigger a fire.

Likewise, electrical components don't last forever. If yours are deteriorating, it's time to replace them.

Finally, older homes have few grounded outlets. All outlets in every room that has water or that gets wet—bathrooms, kitchens, basements, garages and laundry rooms, for instance—need ground-fault circuit interrupters. Adding them is a job for a professional electrician.

Overloaded outlets. Plugging too many appliances, lamps and electronics into a single outlet can overheat the wires and the outlets. That can lead to a fire.

If your circuits are tripping often, that's a sure sign that something's wrong. Call a pro.

For more information on electrical safety or to schedule a free safety demonstration, please call your co-op at **800-780-6486**.



SEND US EMAIL: Please email questions for Ask Your Co-op to: Jennifer Boling, jboling@choctawelectric.coop. Or, mail questions to Choctaw Electric Cooperative, PO Box 758, Hwy 93 North, Hugo, Oklahoma 74743.

ASK YOUR CO-OP

How can I add someone to my CEC account so they can call and get information?

To discuss any aspects of your Choctaw Electric Cooperative account, a person must either be the account holder or be listed on your account. While this seems bothersome at times, it is for your protection and any lenience is a violation of federal privacy laws.

If you wish to create a joint account with another person, that person must complete the account application form with name and contact information and present it to the co-op with a form of identification. Persons listed on a joint account are considered responsible for bills.

Sometimes a Choctaw Electric member may need to add caretakers or family members to their account as contacts only. To do that, simply call Choctaw Electric at **800-780-6486** and give the billing representative the name or names of those you wish to add as contacts.

Individuals listed as contacts on your account have access to billing information and may call Choctaw Electric at any time to ask questions or get information regarding your electric bills. They are not responsible for payments.

\$ Lucky Account # 38846257 (\$100 Bill Credit). If the account number above belongs to you, contact your co-op by the 10th of the month to claim your \$100 bill credit. Call Jennifer Boling at **800-780-6486**, ext. 207, or contact CEC via email or in person.

SAVE YOUR SPACE!



2016 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 _____

Vendors must bring their own tables, chairs and electrical cords.

Reservation deadline: September 16, 2016

Please send booth reservation form to:

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

ATTENTION:

All special requests must be approved prior to Annual Meeting.

The Choctaw Electric Annual Meeting is the perfect place to showcase local crafts, artwork and business products, or increase awareness of your organization.

To reserve a free booth space, please fill out the vendor booth reservation form and submit it to CEC by September 16, 2016.

Join the fun—and reach over 1,500 CEC members, family and friends!

July

Best days according to Moon phases.



Best planting days

Above ground crops ...	4, 10-14, 17-18
Root crops	3, 22-23, 26-27, 30-31
Seed beds	3-4, 12-14, 30-31
Kill plant pests	1-2, 28-29

Best fishing days

👉 Best	19-23, 30
☺ Good	3-4, 12-14, 17-18, 31
☹ Fair	7-9, 16, 26-27
☹ Poor	1-2, 5-6, 10-11, 15, 24-25, 28-29

Best days to do other stuff

Begin diet to gain weight	9, 14
Begin diet to lose weight	23, 27, 31
Begin logging	18-19
Breed animals	13-14
Make sauerkraut, can, or pickle	3, 22-23
Cut hair to discourage growth	22-23, 27-28
Cut hair to encourage growth	10-12
Cut hay	24-26
Destroy pests and weeds	24-26
End projects	3
Go camping	15-17
Graft or pollinate	3-4, 31
Harvest above ground vegetables	8-9
Harvest below ground vegetables	27-28
Go to the dentist	8-9
Plant above ground vegetables	5, 13-14
Plant below ground vegetables	3, 22-23
Prune to discourage growth	24-26
Prune to encourage growth	6-7, 16-17
Quit smoking	23, 27, 31
Set posts or pour concrete	18-19
Set chicken eggs	19-21
Start projects	5
Wean animals and children	23, 27, 31

—from the *Old Farmer's Almanac*

Good Eats

IN SOUTHEAST OKLAHOMA

Lemon Pie Bars

INGREDIENTS

- 2¼ cups all-purpose flour
- ½ cup confectioners' sugar
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 4 eggs
- 1½ cups white sugar
- ½ cup lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon lemon zest



DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Mix 2 cups of flour and confectioner's sugar together. Cut in the butter or margarine. Mix well until the dough resembles pie dough consistency. Press the dough into a 9x13 inch baking pan.

Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown.

Beat together eggs, sugar, 4 tablespoons flour, lemon juice and lemon rind for at least 1 minute. Pour the mixture over the baked crust.

Bake the bars another 20 minutes, or until the lemon topping has set. Sprinkle with confectioner's sugar when cooled. Yield: 32 bars.

■ swap shop

FREE CLASSIFIED ADS FOR CEC MEMBERS

■ MOTORCYCLES & ATVS

1993 Honda Goldwing 1500 Trike. Runs good, 94,000 mi. 580-372-4125 or 580-579-5657

■ PETS

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

HAVN Low Cost Spaying and Neutering. Spaying and neutering your pet makes them healthier. 580-873-2491 or 580-317-5026.

Ark of McCurtain County offers discount spay/neuter services +mobile spay/neuter services. Please help us stop unwanted litters by spaying and neutering your pet. 580-236-2275.

■ REAL ESTATE

For rent: Nice house w/ 3.5BA, located in Union Grove area, SE of Haworth, \$800/month. References required. 580-271-0157 or 580-271-0159.

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