

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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CEC President George Burns addresses the crowd at the CEC Annual Meeting on September 24.



Younger members show off the CEC hard hats given away for kids at the CEC Annual Meeting.

Trustee and Bylaw Elections Highlight Annual Meeting

Warm, humid weather on September 24 did not dampen the festive spirit of Choctaw Electric's 76th Annual Meeting. Arts and crafts, barbecue sandwiches and amiable conversation aside, members seemed happy to tend to important business at hand.

Seven bylaw amendments prepared and proposed by a member-driven bylaw committee awaited approval or rejection, and candidates for co-op trustees in Districts G and I faced an election. Voting in person and via mail-in ballot, Choctaw Electric (CEC) members approved all proposed amendments and seated new trustees on the co-op board.

New trustees are Stacy Nichols, Smithville, District C; Brent Franks, Antlers, District G; and Ken Autry, Snow, District I.

CEC President George Burns commended members in District G and I for their heavy attendance at the meeting. "It is important that members attend this meeting and stay involved and aware of what's going on."

Cont'd on page 5.



Cooperative members read over proposed bylaw amendments before casting their ballot at the CEC Annual Meeting. Members approved seven proposed amendments by a strong majority.

A monthly newsletter of
Choctaw Electric Cooperative.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Brent Franks, *President*

Joe M. Silk, *Vice President*

Mike Brewer, *Secretary Treasurer*

Stacy Nichols Bill Woolsey

George Burns Norman Ranger

Ken Autry Becky Franks

MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Kenneth J. Gates, *Chief Executive Officer*

Jennifer Smith, *Executive Assistant*

Jia Johnson, *Director of Public Relations*

Craig McBrain, *Chief Financial Officer*

Jim Malone, *Director of Operations*

Darrell Ward, *System Services Manager*

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MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

One Vote At A Time

If you attended the CEC Annual Meeting, you know why attendance was especially important this year. CEC asked members to decide on bylaw amendments and trustees that will govern the co-op. Without a quorum of members present, this important business would not have taken place.

A special thanks to members who attended this year. Thanks, also, to those of you who took advantage of CEC's first ever mail-in ballots. When all was said and done, our third party voting company counted a total of 951 ballots. That's seven percent of CEC's 13,281 accounts.

In the future, I would like to see that number increase because voting shows that members care enough about their co-op to cast a ballot. The same can be said about our state and national elections.

With a few exceptions here and there, voter turnout during presidential elections has declined since the 1960s. In the 2016 primary election cycle, voter turnout in most states was only 21 to 30 percent. Oklahoma saw a higher turnout with 39.5 percent of registered voters voting in the presidential primaries. These numbers, less than half of registered voters, actually set records for being the highest in recent years!



BY KENNETH J. GATES
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Some speculate the reason voters don't vote nowadays is because they simply aren't interested in politics. Maybe the candidates aren't speaking to the issues we care about. Or perhaps we don't feel like we understand the candidates' stances on the issues, or even the issues themselves. But we can change this.

To help voters feel more engaged in the process, electric co-ops created Coops Vote. It's a non-

partisan campaign with a simple goal: increase voter turnout at the polls this November. By visiting vote.coop, you can learn about your political candidates, access voter registration information and more.

We encourage you to visit vote.coop and take the pledge to learn more about the issues that impact us as a nation, as a state and right here at home. Whether voting for a cooperative trustee or a presidential candidate, your vote counts.

Let's work together to improve our communities by increasing voter turnout and changing our country, one vote at a time.



FIND IT ONLINE

■ **Connect with Savings.** Choctaw Electric's Co-op Connections card provides members with multiple ways to save money. Use it at the pharmacy to save on prescriptions, dental visits, eyeglasses and more. It's also good for savings at hundreds of participating retail stores, restaurants and hotels. Find out how you can save with Co-op Connections at www.choctawelectric.coop. Click on Member Services, and then Co-op Connections.

Tech Divide Shrinks Among Electric Co-op Members

A survey conducted by Touchstone Energy finds the technology divide between young and old co-op members is shrinking, as the latter continue to embrace technology.

The 2015-2016 National Survey on the Cooperative Difference finds that among members 65 and older, 46 percent now have a smartphone, up from just six percent in a 2011 survey. For members in the 55-64 age bracket, the jump went from 20 percent to 70 percent.

At the same time, landlines continue to vanish, even among the 65 and up members.

Seventy-two percent of them now have a landline, down from 86 percent in 2011.

The survey found that tablets are already found in the majority of members' homes where the head of the household is younger than 55. And their popularity is increasing even among seniors.

"Ease of use of tablets has undoubtedly led to a growing presence in senior households with one-third of those over age 74 now owning a tablet computing device," wrote researchers from TSE Services, which conducted the survey for Touchstone Energy.



New Trustees For Choctaw Electric

Stacy Nichols, District C; Brent Franks, District G; and Ken Autry, District I, are the newest members of the Choctaw Electric board of trustees. Members approved the trio via mail-in ballot and in-person voting at the CEC Annual Meeting on September 24.

Coming Soon: Pay Site Kiosks

CEC members will soon be able to pay their electric bills using Pay Site kiosks located throughout the service area. More details, including kiosk locations, will be announced. Keep an eye on your CEC Facebook page, website and newsletter for more info.



CEC Board Elects New Officers

The Choctaw Electric board of trustees met on Tuesday, September 27 to elect new officers for the coming year.

The new officers for the CEC board of trustees are:

- Brent Franks, president
- Joe Silk, vice president
- Mike Brewer, secretary-treasurer

The board of trustees elects new officers every year immediately following the CEC Annual Meeting. To contact your trustees, please visit www.choctawelectric.coop, click on About Us and then Board.

Dates WORTH REMEMBERING



✓ **November 1, 2016**

CEC Member Appreciation Day in Hugo. Stop by CEC for free hotdogs, prizes and other gifts.

✓ **November 2, 2016**

CEC Member Appreciation Day at CEC in Antlers.

✓ **November 3, 2016**

CEC Member Appreciation Day at CEC in Idabel.

✓ **November 6, 2016**

Daylight Savings Time ends. Set your clock back one hour.

✓ **November 8, 2016**

General Election. Please get out and vote!

✓ **November 11 & 24**

CEC offices will close for Veteran's Day on November 11 and Thanksgiving on November 24.

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 THE BIG WINNERS

Co-op members —and kids— win prizes at CEC Annual Meeting



▲ Payne McCarter, Antlers Elementary School, winner of the CEC Annual Meeting coloring contest. Other winners are Bella Manous, Boswell Elementary School and Adicyn Ebert, Denison Elementary School.



▲ CEC President George Burns (center) with the \$500 grand prize winners at the CEC Annual Meeting. From left are Joe Fuller of Ringold; Tina Eagleroad of Hugo; and Norma Waller of Atoka.



▲ Olivia McCarter of Hugo, winner of the iTunes gift card worth \$40.



▲ Harlie Martin of Soper, winner of the girls bicycle with Jett Provence and Chad Beck of Wright City. Beck won the boy's bicycle, but he graciously gifted it to his younger nephew, shown here.

Burns Points To Progress

Cont'd from page 1

In his speech to members, Burns noted it is his fiduciary responsibility to report to members. "At last year's annual meeting I spoke about the present and the past. But today, I am speaking about the present and the future of our coop," he said.

Burns emphasized the board's progress over the past year that includes creating mission and vision statements to guide the co-op. "Our vision statement serves as a stake in the ground placed five years in the future that says this is what the board wants Choctaw Electric Cooperative to look like," he said.

CEC's values statement is:

The members of Choctaw Electric view the cooperative as a stable organization characterized by high levels of Member trust and satisfaction, an effective and engaged board of trustees, and a dedicated and capable workforce.

The mission statement, Burns explained, identifies the primary reason CEC exists and who it exists to serve.

CEC's mission statement is:

Choctaw Electric Cooperative shall continually improve customer service and satisfaction by providing its members with high quality electric and related services at fair and equitable rates.

Burns said the board identified key measures in areas of finance, service reliability, employee safety, rates, and member and employee satisfaction that they will use to monitor the co-op's progress.

They also established a written values statement that solidifies the board's commitment to transparency and openness, accountability, integrity and honesty, and loyalty to cooperative principles, among others. "These values are the behaviors that all trustees and

employees are expected to consistently demonstrate as they fulfill their respective duties and responsibilities," Burns said.

Burns concluded by commending the board for their teamwork over the past year. "We are all unified in our desire to continue to keep this cooperative a financially sound organization with high values, integrity, and with ethical and upright business practices that you the members can depend on," he said.

CEC has avoided borrowing any short or longterm loans, financial margins are growing, and debt is reduced, Burns noted. His comments supported a more detailed report by CEC Treasurer Mike Brewer, who told members that 2015 was a good year financially for CEC with operating margins of \$2.5 million. In 2014, the co-op experienced a net loss from operations.

Brewer stated that CEC made drastic changes in accounting and operations to enhance the interpretation of the co-op's financial standing. CEC also hired a new auditing firm who increased both the depth and scope of CEC's financial audit.

CEC General Manager Kenneth Gates wrapped up CEC reports at the meeting by thanking members for their involvement. "We have been fractured by mistrust, but we've picked up the pieces. Today, we are getting employees more involved in decision making and are working with member advocacy groups for advice on bylaws," Gates said. "We are making a sincere effort to make CEC a world class cooperative.

"No one else has members so dedicated to the co-op cause, and we appreciate your loyalty," Gates concluded.

To view detailed election results for CEC bylaw amendments and CEC trustees, please visit your co-op website at 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.

NOVEMBER

- 1 CEC Member Appreciation Days, Hugo
- 2 CEC Member Appreciation Days, Antlers
- 3 CEC Member Appreciation Days, Idabel
- 6 Daylight Saving Time Ends
- 8 Election Day
- 11 Veteran's Day, CEC offices closed for the holiday.
- 11-13 Beavers Bend Folk Festival & Craft Show
- 24 Thanksgiving
- 24-25 CEC offices closed for the holiday.
- 29 Christmas Tree Lighting, Idabel

DECEMBER

- 2 City of Lights Christmas Parade, Idabel
- 5 McCurtain County Christmas Parade, Broken Bow
- 10 Valliant Christmas Parade
- 25 Christmas

\$ Lucky Account #38854393 (\$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.

WINTER IS COMING

Is Your Home Ready?

Make sure both your home and your heating system are prepared for chilly weather with a little preventive maintenance. Brad Kendrick, Choctaw Electric energy use specialist, encourages co-op members to give their home and Heating Ventilation Air Conditioner (HVAC) system a thorough checkup to ensure the best savings on monthly energy bills. Do these tasks now before winter arrives and again in the spring. To visit with Kendrick about other ways you can save on energy costs, please call **800-780-6496**, ext. 209

Give Your HVAC A Timely Tuneup

Maintenance on an HVAC system can uncover faulty equipment in need of repair before the entire system breaks. It can also reveal problems that could cost you extra money in energy loss.

A typical maintenance check-up includes:

- Tightening electrical connections and measuring voltage and current on motors. Faulty electrical connections can cause unsafe operation of your system and reduce the life of major components.
- Lubrication of all moving parts. Parts that lack lubrication cause friction in motors and increase the amount of electricity you use.
- Inspection of the condensate drain in your central air conditioner, furnace and/or heat pump (when in cooling mode). A plugged drain can cause water damage in the house and affect indoor humidity levels.

- Checking controls of the system to ensure proper and safe operation. Check the starting cycle of the equipment to assure the system starts, operates and shuts off properly.
- Cleaning evaporator and condenser coils. Dirty coils reduce the system's ability to cool your home and cause the system to run longer, increasing energy costs and reducing the life of the equipment.
- Checking central AC refrigerant level and adjust if necessary. Too much or too little refrigerant will make your system less efficient, increasing energy costs and reducing the life of the equipment.
- Cleaning and adjusting blower components to provide proper system airflow for greater comfort levels. Airflow problems can reduce your system's efficiency by up to 15 percent.

Do you need a pro? Talk to your co-op about scheduling a free energy audit for your home. Energy audits help you understand how your home is using energy and where possible problems exist that can cost you money. To schedule an audit, call, 800-780-6486, ext. 209.



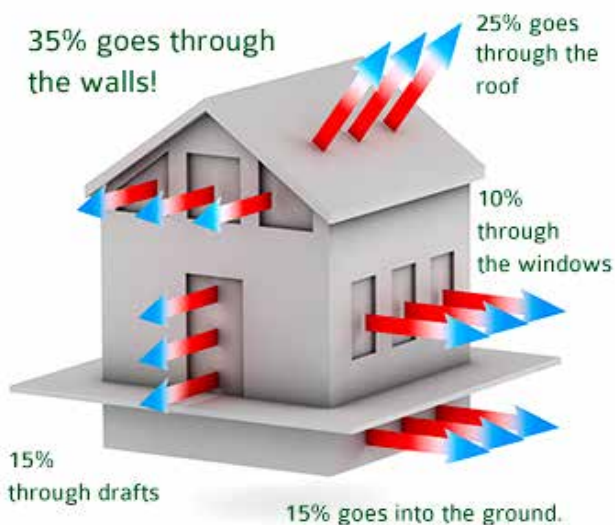
Weatherproof your house

Want to save money on your energy bills this winter? Begin with sealing leaks in your home. Even the tiniest gaps around windows, doors, light fixtures, electrical outlets and air ducts can slowly let your home's heated air escape to the outdoors. That can add up to substantial heat loss.

Here's how to avoid leaks:

- Caulk throughout the house wherever walls meet floors or door frames, and between the outside of the window frame and the siding. Choose caulk designed for the surface you're caulking, and try a higher quality caulk, which will last longer.
- Apply weather-stripping to all exterior doors and windows. Weather-stripping is a thin piece of material that seals the gap between where the door or window meets the jamb. Self-stick foam pieces are quick and easy to apply.
- Replace worn door sweeps on exterior doors to help prevent heat loss under the door.
- Seal windows with thin plastic sheets using an insulator kit. Shrinking the plastic film with a hair dryer ensures a smooth and tight seal.

How Energy Escapes from Your Home



CEC Board Members and Employees Commit To Certain Values

At the CEC Annual Meeting, President George Burns told members that co-op trustees and employees are committed to certain values. He assured members that CEC is pledged to demonstrate these values consistently. They are:

- **Transparency and openness** in our dealings with members, fellow trustees and employees, policy makers and other stakeholders.
- **Dedication to a culture of safety** and commitment to the mutual well-being of our employees, members and the general public.
- **Accountability for all of our decisions and actions.**
- **Commitment to innovation and forward thinking.**
- **Integrity and honesty** beyond reproach.
- **Loyalty to the philosophy of cooperative ownership and adherence to the Seven Cooperative Principles**

The Seven Cooperative Principles are guidelines by which cooperatives around the world put their values into practice. These principles are:

1. **Voluntary and open membership.** Co-ops are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.
2. **Democratic member control.** Co-ops are controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In

primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-ops at other levels are also organized in a democratic manner.



3. **Members economic participation.** Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-op. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-op, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-op; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.
4. **Autonomy and independence.** Co-ops are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.
5. **Training, education and information.** Co-ops provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute to the co-op's development. They inform the public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of cooperation.
6. **Cooperation among cooperatives.** Co-ops serve members most effectively by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.
7. **Commitment to community.** Co-ops work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.



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

■ What are smart meters and how do they work?

Choctaw Electric smart meters work by monitoring your home's electricity usage and communicating that usage information back to the CEC office in near real time.

Unlike the old days when members read their own meters or CEC personnel took the reading, smart meters do it all remotely. The meter's ability to measure usage and transmit it directly to CEC eliminates bill estimating, which means fewer surprises for you.

If you are concerned about your usage, smart meters provide information on how much and when you use energy. This information is invaluable for members who are serious about taking control of their energy consumption and their monthly bills.

The ability to monitor your usage through CEC's Smart hub would not be possible without smart meters.

As CEC refines its outage management system, smart meters will play an increasingly important role in outage detection and notification. Smart meters have the ability to detect and report power outages on their own, making the restoration process move much faster.

It's smart meter technology that will eventually allow CEC to text updates to you about your service and let you track the power restoration process by viewing an online map. We've barely scratched the surface of what these devices can do. These conveniences and plenty more, all begin with smart meters.

november

Best days according to Moon phases.



Best planting days

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| Above ground crops ... | 3-5, 8-9, 12-13 |
| Root crops | 16-17, 23-27 |
| Seed beds | 16-17, 26-27 |
| Kill plant pests | 21-22 |

Best fishing days

| | |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| ☞ Best | 8-9, 16-17 |
| ☺ Good | 6-7, 12-13, 26 |
| ☺ Fair | 3-5, 11, 14-15, 21-22, 27 |
| ☹ Poor | 1-2, 10, 18-20, 23-25, 28-30 |

Best days to do other stuff

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Begin diet to gain weight | 10, 13 |
| Begin diet to lose weight | 18, 22, 27 |
| Begin logging | 4, 5 |
| Breed animals | 26-28 |
| Make sauerkraut, can, or pickle | 17-18, 26-28 |
| Cut hair to discourage growth | 24-25 |
| Cut hair to encourage growth | 9-10, 13 |
| Cut hay | 11-12 |
| Destroy pests and weeds | 11-12 |
| End projects | 28 |
| Go camping | 1-3, 29-30 |
| Graft or pollinate | 17-18 |
| Harvest above ground vegetables | 9-10 |
| Harvest below ground vegetables | 17-18, 26-27 |
| Go to the dentist | 21-23 |
| Plant above ground vegetables | 9-10 |
| Plant below ground vegetables | 17-18, 26-27 |
| Prune to discourage growth | 19-20 |
| Prune to encourage growth | 1-3 |
| Quit smoking | 18, 22, 27 |
| Set posts or pour concrete | 4-5 |
| Set chicken eggs | 15-16 |
| Start projects | 30 |
| Wean animals and children | 18, 22, 27 |

—from the *Old Farmer's Almanac*

Good Eats

IN SOUTHEAST OKLAHOMA

Awesome Creamy Corn Casserole

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 (8.5 oz) package dry corn bread mix
- 1 (15 oz) can whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 (14.75 oz) can creamed corn
- 1 cup sour cream



DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F, and lightly grease a 9x9 inch baking dish.

In a medium bowl, combine butter, eggs, corn bread mix, whole and creamed corn and sour cream. Spoon mixture into prepared dish.

Bake for 45 minutes in the preheated oven, or until the top is golden brown.

YIELD: 8 servings.

■ swap shop

FREE CLASSIFIED ADS FOR CEC MEMBERS

■ LIVESTOCK & PETS

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

Nigerian dwarf goats for sale. 580-306-7866

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. We also have dogs and cats ready for adoption. 580-236-2275.

■ MISCELLANEOUS

32 Big Box cast iron stove with 2 top openings. Mfg. Columbus Iron works, Small ding on lid swivel, \$100. 580-326-0088.

Wanted: I am in need of several tons of hardwood mulch for a large garden. If you know where I can get bulk mulch, please contact me at 972-231-4190 or bstamps@swbell.net.

New 16,000 watt propane Generac generator, three new 360 degree strobe beacons (lights) for wide load hauling. 580-326-4333.

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.