



# inside *your* co-op

Published for members of Choctaw Electric Cooperative



## Printing Dates Delay Coverage Of Annual Meeting

Choctaw Electric's newsletter goes to press every month on the 15th. Because of our printing deadline, it is impossible for us to include news from the CEC Annual Meeting in the October newsletter. Please look for stories and photos from the meeting in the November issue of *CEC Inside Your Co-op* or check CEC's Facebook page for highlights from our big event.

Thank you for your interest in our 2018 Annual Meeting!

## ■ CYBER SAFETY

# Protecting Your Data Is Serious Business

**T**echnology breaches—think customer credit card data being stolen from Target, or consumer data stolen from Amazon—are commonplace today. At Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC), this new reality requires increased security measures and the constant monitoring of organizational and personal data to ensure your identities, credit card numbers or bank accounts are never compromised.

Keeping systems secure is not solely the responsibility of your co-op's information technology employees. It falls on every employee to do their part to keep critical personal and organizational data safe from potential breaches.

It's a little overwhelming at times, but CEC remains vigilant about protecting your data by making sure its computer software—including web browsers—are updated with the latest software. Keeping software up-to-date ensures security patches deployed by our information technology (IT) team can succeed in blocking security threats.

CEC employees are also trained to recognize and avoid potential cyber threats. The co-op also works with an independent security company that tests the co-op's cyber defenses and provides a thorough evaluation. Because electric co-ops work together across county and state boundaries, co-op employees are able to share news of attempts to breach

online defenses, making it more difficult for hackers to find a "weak link."

At the national level, electric co-ops—with the Department of Energy and National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)—are working together through the Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities (RC3) program to better protect members from security threats. The program includes training, tools and resources geared toward small and medium-sized co-ops. Such partnerships among co-ops foster a culture of cybersecurity and ensure that warnings and threats, as well as solutions, are shared in a timely fashion.

■ **MANAGER'S REPORT**

# Remaining True To Our Roots

**CEC's democratic governance helps ensure balanced decisions that are best for all members**

**C**hoctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC) members make up a broad cross section of people that includes mom and pop business owners, families, single parents, elderly residents on fixed incomes, big industries, farmers and ranchers, tourist attractions, and out-of-state vacation home owners. Every CEC member is unique and brings to the table a different set of priorities and concerns. Finding the balance among these priorities can be a challenge, but thankfully, CEC's democratic form of governance helps ensure member concerns are dealt with fairly. Of course, this process works best when people actually participate.

For example, when an individual shows up at a CEC District Meeting, it tells me they understand their role as a member. CEC District Meetings provide a place for members to meet and interact with their elected trustees, ask pointed questions, express concerns, and even fume a little if they feel that's necessary. It's also a place to learn more about the issues ahead for your co-op and how these issues could affect you and other members. At our meetings this year, we shared a lot of positive news about CEC—namely the co-op's 27 percent debt reduction and our ongoing commitment to right of way improvements. We also shared some frank discussion about what's ahead. I'd like to thank the members who attended these meetings in Hugo, Antlers, Wright City, Smithville, and Haworth. We appreciate your presence and your concerns.

For those who couldn't make it, there are other ways to connect with us. Your CEC board of trustees meets on the last Tuesday of every month. These meetings are open to all members. CEC's Facebook page provides a forum for you to interact 24/7 and ask questions. My favorite, however, is face-to-face communication. When you have questions or concerns, by all means, stop by and visit with me or any of your co-op employees. Our doors are open, our phones are ringing, and we welcome the opportunity to visit with you. I can't promise that everyone will like what they hear, but I can guarantee that the information given is honest and straightforward, and our decisions are weighed by what's best for the membership as a whole. Good things are happening at CEC and good things will continue to happen, if we remember that we are a cooperative first—in our actions, decisions, and values.



**BY KOONEY DUNCAN**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**Lucky Acct #38844552 (\$25)**

If this account number belongs to you, contact CEC by the 10th of the month to claim your \$25 bill credit. Unclaimed bill credits will roll over each month by \$25 for a maximum credit of \$100. To claim your credit by phone, please call 800-780-6486, ext. 207.

**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.



**Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

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

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*24 Hour Outage Hotline*

**800-780-6486**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Brent Franks, *President*

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Mike Brewer, *Secretary Treasurer*

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MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Kooney Duncan, *Chief Executive Officer*  
Jennifer Boling, *Executive Assistant*  
Jia Johnson, *Director of Public Relations*  
Tiffany Hempsted, *Chief Financial Officer*

■ GOOD TO KNOW

## Missing Your Capital Credit Check?

Updating your member records helps ensure you receive your fair share

Choctaw Electric returned more than \$800,000 in capital credits to members in August. The retirement was distributed to members who belonged to the co-op in 1988 and 1993. If you belonged to the co-op during this time and did not receive a check, please contact Choctaw Electric immediately.

Choctaw Electric mails each account holder a capital credit check to the mailing address on file in the co-op data system. Many of the checks come back "Return to Sender" due to incorrect or insufficient addresses.

Make sure you receive what is rightfully yours by providing us with your current mailing address and telephone number.

Please provide an up-to-date address using the following 911 address standards or PO Box:

House # and Street/Farm Road/PO BOX  
Town and Zip Code



### How To Update Your Member Records

- Drop by any CEC office, or call 800-780-6486.
- Email info to [info@choctawelectric.coop](mailto:info@choctawelectric.coop). Be sure to provide your account number, your old address, and the new information.
- Visit CEC's Smarthub and click Contact Us. From the menu, choose Address Change Request and enter the correct information.

Without the proper address, your check cannot be delivered. Thank you for your cooperation!

## Fall Is Here! Time to Check Your HVAC

Before it gets too chilly outside, give your central heating system a once-over. It's important to inspect your unit every fall.



Routine maintenance ensures your system is running as efficiently as possible. Between check-ups, head off trouble by doing the following:

- Replace air filters once every three months. Dirty filters prevent air from flowing through and make your system work harder.
- When you turn the heat on, listen for banging, rattling or other odd sounds. They could be a malfunction-in-the-making.
- If windows are steaming up or you see rust or a lot of dirt on your vents, something is wrong. A professional can diagnose the problem.
- If some rooms feel cold, while others are comfy, something's not right. Have it checked.

# ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES ARE



COMMUNITY  
BORN

COMMUNITY  
LED

FOCUSED ON  
YOU

# OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH



# When Your Appliance Poops Out

CEC loan program will get you up and running again

It happens to everyone at some point: You open the fridge for a cold drink and discover it's as warm as pudding inside. When an appliance poops out, please remember CEC's loan program for energy efficient appliances. We'll get you up and running in a jiffy!



CEC appliance loans pay up to \$2,500 for the purchase of the following Energy Star-rated appliances:

- o Clothes washer
- o Clothes dryers
- o Refrigerator/freezer
- o Dishwasher
- o Water heater
- o Cooktop
- o Oven
- o Microwave
- o Stove

For details and loan applications, please visit [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop), or give us a call at 800-780-6486.

## RECIPES



### Venison Stew

#### INGREDIENTS

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2 T. vegetable oil         | 1 T. salt                   |
| 2 pounds venison stew meat | 3 cups water                |
| 3 onions, chopped          | 7 small potatoes, quartered |
| 2 cloves garlic, minced    | 1 pound carrots, sliced     |
| 1 T. Worcestershire sauce  | ¼ cup all-purpose flour     |
| 1 bay leaf                 |                             |
| ½ teaspoon dried oregano   |                             |

#### DIRECTIONS

In a skillet, deeply brown the meat in oil. Add onions, garlic, Worcestershire sauce, bay leaf, oregano, salt, and water. Simmer, covered, for 1½ to 2 hours, or until meat is tender.

Add potatoes and carrots; cook until tender.

Combine flour and water. Stir into the stew. Remove bay leaf before serving.

Source: allrecipes.com

# Many Ways To Pay

With CEC's convenient payment options, you can pay anytime, anywhere.



**L**ife gets busy enough without worrying over how and when to pay your bills. To make paying bills more convenient, Choctaw Electric offers a variety of payment options.

Choose the payment option that suits your busy lifestyle.

**Pay Online.** Log on to [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop) to pay your bill via CEC's Smarthub. Pay using a credit card, debit card, or e-check.

**Prepaid.** The perfect payment option for members who prefer the prepaid advantage. CEC's prepaid program lets you pay for electricity in advance and alerts you via email, text or telephone message when your balance is getting low. Another benefit: No late fees!

**Smarthub App.** Pay via smart phone, iPad or tablet using CEC's Smarthub mobile app. Download the free app at [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop).

**Pay by Phone:** Pay your bill 24 hours a day, seven days a week using VISA or Mastercard by calling **800-780-6486**. Please have your account number handy when you call.

**Bank Draft.** Enroll in CEC's automatic bill payment plan and your bill is paid on time every month via automatic draft of your checking or saving account or credit/debit card. You will receive a paper statement for your records.

**Budget Billing:** If your bill fluctuates due to summer cooling and winter heating costs, CEC's average monthly payment plan is for you. This plan averages your usage over the year so your monthly bill is more predictable.

**Pay in Person:** Pay your bill 24/7 using the payment dropbox located at CEC office locations in Hugo, Antlers and Idabel, or use our convenient payment kiosks located at various businesses in CEC service territory.