



inside *your* co-op

For members of Choctaw Electric Cooperative | APRIL 2025

A Shelter From the Storm

CEC program helps members stay safe during severe weather

As storm season begins in Oklahoma, the best time to prepare is now. At Choctaw Electric Cooperative, we want you to have a safe place to go when bad weather strikes. With our easy and affordable storm shelter program, protecting your family has never been simpler.

Lacey Peters, coordinator of the storm shelter program says CEC has installed 32 shelters over the past year, enabling members to stay safe when the weather turns dangerous.

Members Jim and Charla Bushers had a shelter installed in 2022 right before a November 4 tornado hit Idabel, just south of their home. "It's a good investment to have a secure feeling. We have used it several times," Jim Bushers says.

CEC offers both underground and above-ground shelter options. Un-

derground shelters start at \$3,400 and above-ground safe rooms start at \$4,500. She says above-ground safe rooms are particularly popular with older members, who appreciate how easy it is to safely access the shelter.

CEC's loan program offers members an opportunity to finance a shelter through manageable monthly payments. Peters notes that the shelter install process takes about a month, sometimes longer, and encourages members to call as soon as possible. The program is available year-round, making it possible to get started at any time.

"The beauty of being a member-owned electric cooperative is we genuinely care about our members and look for programs that have a direct positive impact on them," CEO Kooney Duncan says. "We've seen first-hand experience of members whose lives were saved as a result of our shelter program."

Generator Safety

Help protect our linemen with these generator tips:

- Make sure your generator is installed safely. Improperly installed generators can create backfeed, which is dangerous to our crews and the community.
- Please let us know if you purchase a generator that you plan to connect to an electric panel.
- Before using the generator, disconnect the normal source of power coming into your home or business.
- Never plug a generator into a wall outlet or operate a generator indoors.

Disclaimer: Safety requirements may differ based on the type of generator you purchase. Thoroughly read the operator's manual and know how to shut off the generator quickly.



Shelter Safely! To learn more about CEC's storm shelter program, call Lacey Peters at 800-780-6486, ext. 213, email lpeters@choctawelectric.coop, or visit choctawelectric.net/cec-loans.

Choctaw Electric Cooperative

Serving members in Choctaw, Pushmataha, Atoka, McCurtain, Bryan and LeFlore counties.

CONNECT WITH US

Monday-Friday | 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

24 Hour Outage Line

(800) 780-6486

Hugo Office

PO Box 758
1033 N. 4250 Rd.
Hugo, OK 74743

Toll free: (800) 780-6486

Local: (580) 326-6486

Fax: (580) 326-2492

Idabel Office

2114 SE Washington
Idabel, OK 74745

Toll free: (800) 780-6486

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Ready to Respond

Employees rise to the occasion when spring storms strike

With April upon us, we've already experienced a preview of storm season. On March 4, a powerful storm system swept across our service territory, bringing high winds and heavy rain that caused significant damage to our electric system. At the peak of the storm, approximately 3,700 members were without power, and we faced 38 broken poles.

Despite the widespread damage, our team at Choctaw Electric Cooperative sprang into action. Our linemen worked tirelessly to assess damage, while contractors assisted in replacing broken poles. Thanks to their dedication and teamwork, we were able to restore power to the majority of members within 24 hours, with all power fully restored within 36 hours. This was our most significant outage event in the past year, affecting our entire service area, and our team met the challenge head-on.

Our call center also played a critical role, handling nearly 800 calls with an average wait time of just 12 seconds. In the midst of fast-moving events, we

know that no response is perfect, but our team managed the chaos to the best of their ability, ensuring members received updates and assistance when they needed it most.

These storms serve as a reminder of why we invest in system reliability. We understand the impact outages have on our members, which is why we offer resources to help members stay safe during these events. One of these is our storm shelter program—read more about it on Page 1.



CEO Kooney Duncan

As we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Month, I want to take a moment to thank our linemen—and our entire team—for their dedication and hard work. From office staff to dispatchers and contractors—each played a crucial role in getting the lights back on. Your commitment to serving our members does not go unnoticed, and we appreciate all you do!

Storm season may just be beginning, but no matter what comes our way, CEC is prepared to respond.

Help Us Preserve Our Legacy!

This year, Choctaw Electric Cooperative is celebrating 85 years of service. We're marking this milestone with a special project to preserve the co-op's rich history. The project will gather, organize and digitize a collection of photos and memorabilia that tell the story of CEC and the communities we serve. To contribute stories, photos, recipes or other memorabilia to CEC's 85th anniversary history project, please contact Jia Johnson at 800-780-6486, ext. 241.



Wired Up for Safety: Enhancing Awareness, Saving Lives

Electrical safety is a top priority at Choctaw Electric Cooperative. That's why we're putting on another Wired Up for Safety event—which is set to be even bigger and more impactful than last year's inaugural event.

Wired Up for Safety will take place May 22 at 9:00 a.m., and will feature an all-new scenario focused on the dangers of downed power lines. The event will bring together multiple emergency response entities, including Air-Evac, the Choctaw Nation, and emergency management teams. These professionals will engage in a real-time safety simulation, providing invaluable insight into proper response procedures.

Throughout the event, CEC CEO Kooney Duncan and Board President Brent Franks will offer commentary, emphasizing the importance of electrical safety in our daily lives. In addition to the live demonstration, attendees can participate in a community blood drive, open to the public. First United of Hugo will be sponsoring lunch for all participants and attendees.

CEC invites the entire community to join this educational experience, reinforcing the cooperative's commitment to safety, preparedness and community engagement. Mark your calendar and join us in making safety a shared priority!



Ella Herron



Chloe Farley



Benny Mthethwa

Congratulations, Youth Tour winners!

Each year, CEC invites high school juniors to participate in an essay contest. Winners receive an all-expenses-paid trip to the nation's capital, where they tour cultural and historic sites and have a chance to meet with Oklahoma's congressional leaders. This year's Youth Tour winners are Ella Herron from Haworth High School and Chloe Farley and Benny Mthethwa from Idabel High School. The three delegates will represent Choctaw Electric in Washington, D.C., June 18-23. Congratulations!

Office Closure

Choctaw Electric Cooperative's offices will be closed on Friday, April 18, in honor of Good Friday. In case of an outage, please call our 24 Hour Outage Line.

Contact Number Change

Attention members in Idabel and the surrounding areas! As of February 18, 2025, Choctaw Electric Cooperative no longer has the telephone line 580-286-7155. Please call 800-780-6486 to reach our offices.

Go paperless!

Sign up for paperless billing via the SmartHub app or call Choctaw Electric Cooperative at 800-780-6486. One lucky member will win two CEC t-shirts and two CEC caps.

Annual Meeting 2025

Save the date! CEC's 85th Annual Meeting is set for Sept. 27, 2025 at the Pushmataha County Fairgrounds in Antlers. More information to follow.

Turn Suds into Savings

Lower your energy use in the laundry room by washing clothes in cold water whenever possible, as heating water accounts for most of the energy used in a laundry cycle. Wash full loads to make the most of energy savings, and use high-efficiency detergent designed for cold washes. For drying cycles, clean the lint filter before each load to improve airflow and use dryer balls to reduce drying time.

Lucky Acct #30548600

If this is your account number, please contact CEC at 800-780-6486, ext. 241 by the 5th of the month to claim your \$25 bill credit. Unclaimed bill credits roll over each month by \$25 for a maximum credit of \$100.

NEW! Register Now for Megawatt Kids Camp

New this year! Students in grades 4-6 are invited to attend Megawatt Kids Camp, Tuesday, June 17, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. in Hugo—with a field trip to Western Farmers Electric Co-op. Register FREE by submitting the form below by June 1. Contact Jia Johnson or Brad Kendrick at 800-786-6486 ext. 241, with questions.

Student Name (Print) _____

Age _____ Grade _____

Parent Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Work Phone (____) ____ - _____ Cell Phone (____) ____ - _____

Allergies: _____ Medications: _____

T-Shirt Size (Circle): Youth XS (4-6) Youth S (6-8) Youth M (8-10)

Youth L (10-12) Adult S Adult M Adult L

Contact information in case of emergency: Name _____

Cell phone (____) ____ - _____

RELEASE FOR MINOR CHILDREN (Under 18)

I, (print name) _____, parent or official

guardian of (child's name) _____ hereby grant permission to Choctaw Electric Cooperative to take and use photographs and/or digital images of my child for use in news releases and/or educational materials as follows: printed publications or materials, electronic publications or websites. I agree that my child's name and identity may be revealed in descriptive text or commentary in connection with the image(s). I authorize the use of these images without compensation to me. All negatives, prints and digital reproductions shall be the property of Choctaw Electric Cooperative.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

10 Reasons We Appreciate Our Linemen

During Lineworker Appreciation Month—and every day—we are grateful for our Choctaw Electric Cooperative linemen. Here are 10 reasons why:

1. They're expertly trained.
2. They're dedicated to maintaining power.
3. They have a heart for service and our communities.
4. They conquer heights without hesitation.
5. They prioritize safety every second of every day.
6. They answer the call, day or night, to restore power.
7. They endure extreme weather conditions.
8. They go when they are needed, even nationwide.
9. They work together like family.
10. They power our lives and our communities!



Chocolate Mousse Trifle

Ingredients

- 1 box brownie mix
- 16 ounces heavy whipping cream
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3.9-ounce box instant chocolate pudding mix
- 1/2 cup water
- 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk

Instructions: Prepare brownies according to package directions. Cool completely and cut into 1-inch squares. Whip heavy cream with sugar and vanilla until stiff peaks form. In a large bowl, combine pudding mix, water and sweetened condensed milk. Fold in half of the whipped cream. In a trifle dish, make a layer of brownies. Spread 1/3 of the chocolate mixture on top, and then 1/3 of the whipped cream. Repeat layers. Top with shaved chocolate. Chill overnight.

- *Jacque Compton, Broken Bow*

**CO-OP
CRUMBS**

Watch the preparation!

Visit choctawelectric.net to see Jacque Compton prepare the Trifle.