

# CEC *inside your* co-op

For members of Choctaw Electric Cooperative | APRIL 2026

## Why are upgrades to infrastructure needed?

Reliable power depends on more than generation. It requires a resilient delivery system capable of meeting today's demand and preparing for tomorrow's growth.

## Why infrastructure investment matters:

- ☑ Energy demand continues to grow.
- ☑ Aging equipment must be replaced.
- ☑ Systems must be hardened against extreme weather.
- ☑ Proactive upgrades help prevent costly outages.

Western Farmers Electric Cooperative, like utilities nationwide, is making targeted improvements to strengthen reliability and reduce the likelihood of weather-related disruptions. Strengthening infrastructure today helps minimize outages tomorrow and supports dependable service in the long term.



## Powering the Future

### WFEC's electrical infrastructure investments will help reduce service disruptions

Choctaw Electric Cooperative's wholesale power provider, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), is making infrastructure investments that will reduce the likelihood of disruptions from extreme weather events. These investments will help to harden the system and add grid reliability.

Having adequate energy supply to meet existing—and growing—electricity requirements, while maintaining affordability, is necessary to move power to its intended destination. Grid investment expands the overall system capacity to meet that demand in the most efficient and affordable way possible.

"WFEC is in the same condition as the rest of the country. Its transmission infrastructure needs additional investments to uphold and expand the system to maintain reliability," WFEC CEO Gary Roulet said.

WFEC has been rebuilding and replacing transmission structures across its service territory through capital investment projects that are included in each year's budget. New steel poles that are more resilient are being utilized in some areas, replacing the wooden structures; conductor capacity increases are also helping support transfer capability between resource and load.

The Southwest Power Pool (SPP), a regional transmission organization of which WFEC is a member, is enabling rapid, reliable and innovative solutions for the interconnection of high impact loads and is positioning the region as an attractive destination for major power users.

For more information, please visit the WFEC website: [www.wfec.com](http://www.wfec.com).

# Copper theft impacts us all

## 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

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Kooney Duncan | CEO  
Tanya Roebuck | Executive Assistant/  
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### FOLLOW US ONLINE

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### MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT

[choctawelectric.smarthub.coop](http://choctawelectric.smarthub.coop)



Download the free SmartHub app in your device's app store

Copper theft is once again becoming a serious issue for Choctaw Electric Cooperative. As copper prices rise, so does the frequency of incidents. What some may see as a quick opportunity for cash puts lives at risk and impacts every member.

Let me be clear: Copper theft is incredibly dangerous. The equipment attached to our poles and facilities is part of an energized system. Even components that appear harmless can carry current. When someone tampers with that equipment, they risk severe injury or death. They also leave behind damage that creates instability on our lines, leading to voltage issues and service disruptions. When our crews respond, they often walk into situations where poles have been damaged, wires are torn down and equipment is left in an unsafe condition.

These incidents often happen at night or over a weekend, which makes the inconvenience even greater for our members. Safety Director Guy Dale says his crews have even seen chains hooked to energized meter loops that are pulled down with vehicles, breaking poles and tearing down power lines. In one case, a pole was pulled down and caused a major outage

during winter weather. Families were left without power, and what started as theft quickly became a serious community safety issue.

The cost of these incidents is also significant. A single theft can cost CEC thousands of dollars in labor and materials. Because we are a cooperative, those costs are ultimately shared by the membership.



CEO Kooney Duncan

As a co-op, we are taking steps to reduce the occurrence of theft. We are using copper-clad and steel materials that have little resale value. Many times what is being taken is not worth what the thief

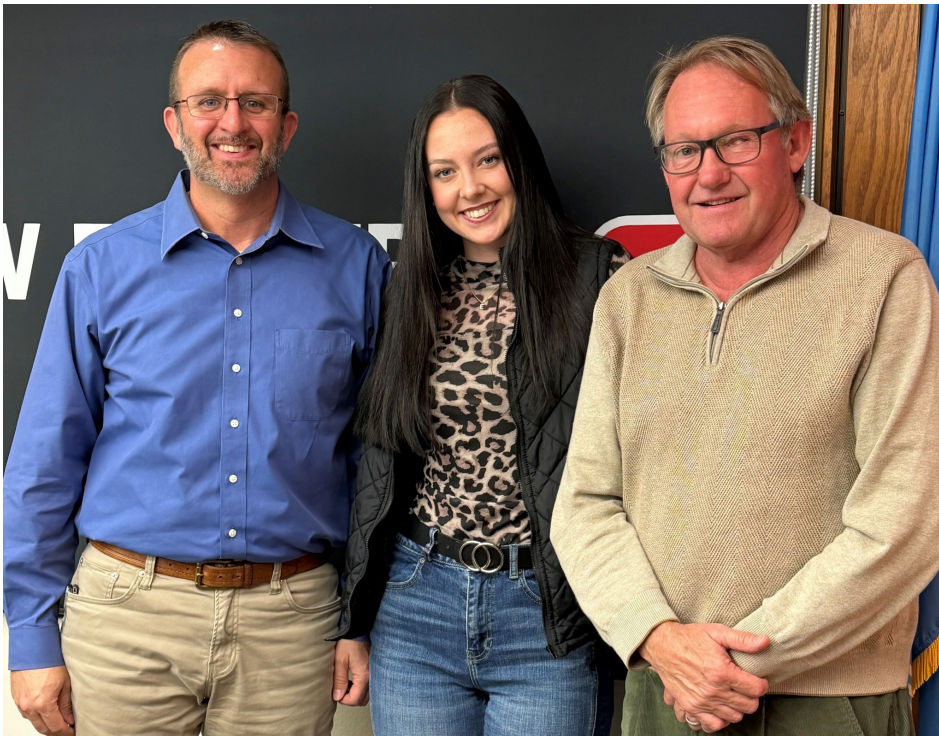
expects. We are also installing shields and reinforcing equipment to make access more difficult. In addition, we are retiring abandoned services, such as lines to old houses, barns and wells that have not been used in years, so we are not maintaining facilities that can become easy targets.

If you see something suspicious, please call us. We work closely with local law enforcement to protect our system and our membership. Safety matters: for our crews, our communities and even the person tempted to put their life in harm's way for a bit of copper.



## Operations update: roadway expansion near Idabel

The Oklahoma Department of Transportation is expanding the roadway along Highway 37 west of Idabel to add shoulders, improving safety. As part of this project, Choctaw Electric Cooperative will relocate approximately 2 miles of electrical distribution lines within the project limits to accommodate the roadway improvements.



Above (from left): CEC CEO Kooney Duncan, Youth Ambassador Ella Herron and CEC Board President Brent Franks at February's board of directors meeting.

## A bright future ahead for CEC Youth Ambassador Ella Herron

Ella Herron, Choctaw Electric's current youth ambassador, is completing the final semester of her senior year at Hawthorn High School. Throughout her time in the ambassador program, she has proudly represented CEC at numerous speaking engagements across our service area.

Most recently, Ella assisted with Youth Tour presentations at several local schools and attended February's Choctaw Electric Cooperative board of directors meeting.

After graduation, Ella plans to at-

tend Southern Arkansas University, where she will pursue a bachelor's degree in biology. She intends to continue her education in graduate school, focusing on oncology or dentistry.

Ella was recently selected to serve as a page for Rep. Eddy Dempsey. She said she is looking forward to this incredible opportunity and becoming more actively engaged in the legislative process.

Congratulations, Ella, on your outstanding achievements and exciting opportunities ahead!



## Go Paperless!

Sign up for paperless billing via the SmartHub app or call Choctaw Electric Cooperative at 800-780-6486.

## Lineworker Appreciation Day

On April 13, we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day to recognize the men who keep power flowing, rain or shine. When the lights go out, Choctaw Electric Cooperative crews are ready to answer the call to safely restore power and keep our communities moving forward. They take pride in powering the places we call home. We thank our lineworkers for their service and commitment, today and every day.

## Stop Utility Scams

Don't fall victim to power outage scams. When widespread outages occur, scammers may target affected utility customers. They could contact you via call, text or email, urging you to act quickly and provide personal information to restore service. Always communicate with CEC through official channels, such as our website, mobile app or the phone number listed on your bill. Your safety and personal information are worth taking a moment to pause and verify unknown senders. Source: FTC.gov

## April Efficiency Tip

As we prepare for the seasonal shift, remember to set your ceiling fan rotation accordingly. In summer months (or whenever your home cooling system is running), blades should rotate counterclockwise, which produces a downdraft or windchill effect that makes you feel cooler. When used correctly, ceiling fans can boost comfort and allow you to adjust the thermostat a few degrees for energy savings. Source: energy.gov

## Lucky Acct. #25962906

If this is your account number, please contact CEC at 800-780-6486, ext. 241, by the 5th of the month to claim your \$50 bill credit. Unclaimed bill credits roll over each month by \$25 for a maximum credit of \$100.

# Local highlights: Choctaw Electric Cooperative in the community



## Celebrating kindness

On Feb. 23, Amy White of First United Bank in Hugo presented Choctaw Electric Cooperative with the United Acts of Kindness traveling trophy, recognizing CEC as the organization with the most recorded acts of kindness.

Each year on Feb. 13, CEC partners with First United Bank to spread a little extra kindness throughout our communities. We're proud to be part of an effort that shows how meaningful it can be to reach out and make a difference—one act of kindness at a time.



## Congratulations, Kristi!

CEC member Kristi Mack's photo was named a finalist in March's "Okie Snaps" contest, featuring a sweet moment with her grandson, Brystyn. We love seeing support for Oklahoma Living Magazine and the special snapshots of our community. Enter at [www.okl.coop/contests/okie-snaps/](http://www.okl.coop/contests/okie-snaps/).



Emerson McElroy



Clay Loard



SadieLynn Bundy

## 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 Emerson McElroy and Clay Loard (Idabel High School) and SadieLynn Bundy (homeschool). The three delegates will represent CEC in Washington, D.C., June 13-19. Congratulations to these outstanding students!



## Choctaw Electric Cooperative at the Capitol

On Feb. 18, CEC linemen Jimmy Jenkins (second from right), Jeremy Billingsley (right) and Kaleb Payne (second from left) represented Choctaw Electric Cooperative at the Oklahoma Capitol.

While there, they met with legislators to advocate for electric cooperatives and gained firsthand insight into how

policy decisions impact the cooperative community. They also listened in on important discussions regarding Wildland Fire Protection and other issues affecting rural Oklahoma.

We appreciate their dedication and leadership in representing the members and communities we serve.