

CEC *inside your* co-op

For members of Choctaw Electric Cooperative | MARCH 2026



Powering the Future

WFEC uses cost mitigation strategies to plan for future energy needs

Ensuring an adequate supply of electricity while increasing reliance on renewable energy sources can be challenging due to the variable nature of generation. Meeting these demands requires significant investment, as infrastructure upgrades—along with transmission, distribution and new generation—come with substantial costs. However, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC) is planning proactively to meet future energy needs.

WFEC is a not-for-profit wholesale power supplier that provides electricity to Choctaw Electric Cooperative, one of 21 member distribution cooperatives across Oklahoma and New Mexico, as well as Altus Air Force Base.

How WFEC and CEC are responding

WFEC is actively responding to in-

creased electricity requirements by making targeted investments in infrastructure, exploring diverse energy sources and promoting energy efficiency savings. These efforts include upgrading and building new power plants fueled by natural gas, upgrading transmission lines and incorporating battery storage.

A mix of owned assets combined with power purchase agreements diversifies the financial risks as well. WFEC is planning carefully and working to meet these challenges.

Managing costs to protect members

Spreading out project costs, using competitive bidding on projects, seeking economical borrowing costs (borrowing less than 100% of a project cost) and using an “all of the above” approach to additional generation

have proven beneficial for WFEC.

Through these steps and other sound decisions by WFEC’s board of trustees, these sizable projects are designed to help minimize rate impacts for distribution cooperative members.

It would be preferable not to see electric bills increase; however, maintaining the level of reliability members expect may require additional investment. Each member cooperative will experience different impacts based on local conditions and needs.

On the plus side, the higher reliability goals put in place with these additions should lessen the impact of future severe events. With additional generation capacity, distribution members should be able to support normal load growth moving into the future.

Learn more at www.wfec.com.

Prepared When it Matters Most

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

When Winter Storm Fern moved through our service area in late January, it brought treacherous conditions, including sleet, freezing rain and prolonged extreme cold, that tested electric systems across the region. I'm proud to say Choctaw Electric Cooperative met that challenge head-on, and our employees worked tirelessly to keep the lights on and restore power as safely and quickly as possible.

Outages began early Saturday, around 2 a.m., as ice accumulated across our entire system. At the height of the storm, approximately 3,000 members experienced outages. Despite hazardous road conditions and icy lines, the majority of outages were restored by Sunday evening. With the help of contract crews, most of the dozen broken poles had been replaced by the time power was restored.

Several factors worked in our favor. While ice accumulation was significant in some areas, we were spared high winds, which can dramatically increase damage. Just as important, CEC began planning for Winter Storm Fern a week in advance, building on years of focused maintenance. Continued right-of-way clearing, system inspections and replacing aging poles strengthened our infrastructure and reduced

the overall impact of the storm. These investments, supported by our board of trustees, are made with one goal in mind: improving reliability for our members.



CEO Kooney Duncan

Behind the scenes, power costs from our wholesale power provider, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative, increased significantly as natural gas prices climbed under extreme demand. Managing those costs during and after the event is critical to limiting long-term impacts for our members. At the same time, extreme cold

drives electricity usage much higher at the individual level. Electric heating systems often rely on heat strips when temperatures drop because heat pumps cannot always keep up. Many members also turn to space heaters to stay warm. While understandable, these are inefficient heat sources that use substantially more electricity, resulting in higher usage during severe winter weather.

Staying warm and safe during severe winter weather is essential, and we understand the stress and disruption storms like this can cause. Our mission is to be ready when our members need us most. Winter Storm Fern reinforced why we plan, invest and maintain our system day in and day out—to serve you reliably, no matter the conditions.

**Eighth-graders, apply now for
an all-expense-paid trip to**

Energy Camp 2026

To learn more, [scan here](#) or visit
choctawelectric.net/energy-camp



DEADLINE: FRIDAY, MARCH 6 AT 5 P.M.



Four Tips to Help You Go Green for St. Patrick's Day

You don't need luck to go green this St. Patrick's Day. A few energy-smart choices can help you save!

☘ Replace your HVAC filter

Generally, these need to be replaced every three months, but factors such as having pets, climate and age of your system can cause this to vary.

☘ Install a smart thermostat

A smart thermostat can add convenience, generate savings and you can set it to adjust your home's tempera-

ture depending on your schedule.

☘ Analyze your energy bill

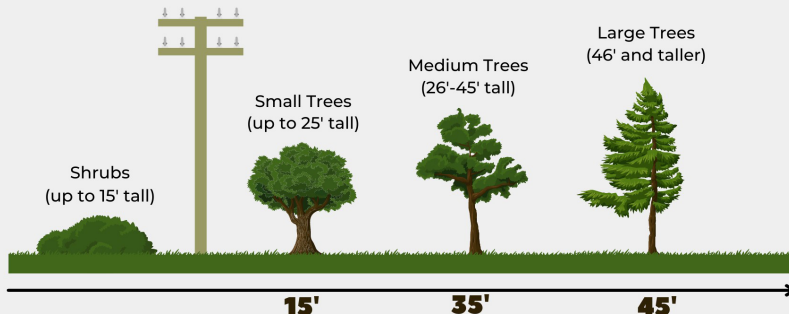
Review past bills to better understand your energy consumption patterns. These patterns can help you decide when to run appliances, whether to pursue energy efficiency upgrades and how to start reducing your usage.

☘ Upgrade your appliances

Look for ENERGY STAR-certified appliances. They use 10-15% less energy and water than standard models.

Plant the RIGHT TREE in the RIGHT PLACE

The larger the tree, the farther it should be from a power line. Avoid planting beneath power lines, near poles or close to electrical equipment.



Remember, know what's below by calling 8-1-1 before you dig.

Learn more at: [Safe Electricity.org](https://www.safeelectricity.org)

Go Paperless!

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

Help Us Stop Copper Theft

Throughout 2025 and into 2026, CEC has experienced repeated copper thefts resulting in significant financial loss and operational disruption. When accounting for material replacement, labor, equipment use, downtime and administrative hours, the total cost to our members is substantial. These are not minor nuisances—they are criminal acts that directly impact the safety, resources and infrastructure of our community.

If you know of or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please contact us immediately to report it. Our goal is to work collaboratively with the Sheriff's Department to reduce these thefts and ensure appropriate attention and enforcement are directed toward this issue.

March Efficiency Tip

As spring arrives, take advantage of milder temperatures to save energy at home. Open windows on pleasant days to bring in fresh air instead of running your HVAC system. It's also a great time to replace dirty air filters, which helps your system run more efficiently and improves indoor air quality. As daylight increases, turn off unnecessary lights and rely on natural sunlight when possible. Small seasonal adjustments like these can reduce energy use, lower monthly bills and help keep your home comfortable as winter transitions into spring.

Source: NRECA

Lucky Acct. #38867603

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.



Winter Storm Wonders

Severe weather, like we experienced during Winter Storm Fern, can wreak havoc on our system. It can also create stunning moments, like those captured by CEC member Kristi Wood, who snapped these photos from her front window in Garvin.

Do you rely on life support?

If you rely on electricity to power life support equipment, it's time to update your records with Choctaw Electric. CEC maintains a record of our life-support-dependent members so the co-op can notify you of scheduled outages in your area. To protect your health and safety, we ask members to submit a life support member form every year, by March 31.

Forms are available on our website: choctawelectric.net/applications-and-forms or by calling 800-780-6486. Life-support-dependent members should be prepared with battery back-up or another source of alternate power during a power outage. Your safety is our top priority. Thank you for your cooperation!



Daylight Saving Time Begins March 8

Don't forget to set your clock ahead one hour. It's also a good time to replace your smoke alarm batteries and to test the alarms to make sure they're working properly.

Cooperative Crumbs

Creamy Chicken Casserole

Serves 4 to 6 | Recipe from the kitchen of Brad Kendrick

Ingredients:

- 2 10-ounce cans cream of chicken soup
- 1 cup sour cream
- 20-ounce bag frozen shredded chicken
- 10-ounce bag frozen mixed vegetables
- Salt & pepper
- Garlic powder
- Onion powder
- 2 cups grated cheese
- 1 1/2 sleeves Ritz crackers, crushed

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F. To a 9-by-13-inch baking dish, add the soup, sour cream, chicken and mixed vegetables. Season with salt, pepper, garlic and onion powder to taste. Cover with cheese and top with cracker crumbs. Bake for 35-45 minutes.

Energy-saving tip:

Skip the full-sized oven and bake the casserole in a toaster oven instead; it heats up faster, saving both baking time and energy.

