

# CEC *inside your* co-op

For members of Choctaw Electric Cooperative | AUGUST 2024



Left: Three Rivers Meat Company in Octavia, Oklahoma, opened its doors on April 1. Middle: Three Rivers Meat Company has a line of 70+ Value Added Products. Below: Outside Three Rivers Meat Company. Photos courtesy Three Rivers Meat Company.



## Three Rivers Meat Company helps fill demand for local meat

Meat processing is a significant and growing industry in Oklahoma. After decades of decline, it is experiencing a resurgence, driven by increased demand for locally sourced meat and the impact of COVID-19 on supply chains, according to OSU Extension.

Three Rivers Meat Company, a new USDA-inspected processing facility in LeFlore County, is addressing this demand. Co-owner Dusty Nichols, along with partners, Dr. Brad Morgan, Jason Hering, Brandon White and the Choctaw Nation, founded the company to fill a critical gap in the region.

“The closest federally inspected meat processing facility is about 2 to 3 hours from us. There was a pretty wide gap that needed to be filled,” Nichols says.

Planning for the venture began in 2020. Three-and-a-half years later, Three Rivers Meat Company opened its doors on April 1, 2024.

Nichols explains that the business has a three-fold mission. The first is oper-

ating a USDA meat processing facility with a full-time federal inspector. They process livestock for customers of all sizes, including individuals and branded beef programs. Meticulous tracking ensures each customer takes home the meat from the animal they brought.

“One thing we’re really proud of is our packaging,” Nichols says. “It comes vacuum sealed, in leak-proof packages that stack well in the refrigerator and freezer.”

The second component of the business is Value Added Processing. Three Rivers Meat Company offers more than 70 products: from award-winning beef jerky and sausage to bratwurst, cured ham, smoked meat, cheese and more.

Finally, the front of the facility houses a 3,000-square-foot retail area equipped with deli and meat cases, a freezer section and grocery items. The business once again fills a need in a community where access to fresh meat and produce have been historically limited. Visitors can enjoy a meal in

the Three Rivers cafe where they serve everything from chicken fried steak to hamburgers made with freshly butchered meat.

“Come up and have lunch, take a tour of the facility, and grab some thick prime-graded ribeyes or bratwurst to take home for dinner,” Nichols invites.

The facility was designed to include an educational component. Large windows provide visitors a view of the meat processing operations. They offer tours to schools, agricultural groups and other community organizations.

“I would encourage anyone who wants to come take a tour,” says Nichols. “We’d love to show you what we do.”

### Three Rivers Meat Company

Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.



[www.facebook.com/  
threeriversmeatcompany/](https://www.facebook.com/threeriversmeatcompany/)

## 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

Local: (580) 286-7155

### Antlers Office

417732 SH3  
Antlers, OK 74523

Toll free: (800) 780-6486

Local: (580) 298-3201

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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### FOLLOW US ONLINE

[www.choctawelectric.net](http://www.choctawelectric.net)



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# Your share of our success

## Choctaw Electric returns \$2 million to members

This month, I am pleased to share some exciting news: the retirement of capital credits from 1995 to 1998. This retirement underscores Choctaw Electric Cooperative's commitment to our members and reflects our financial health.

Capital credits represent your ownership stake in Choctaw Electric. They are a tangible benefit of your membership. Through prudent financial management we allocate margins to our members, based on kilowatt hours used.

In Choctaw Electric's early years, we retained excess income to develop new assets. Now, with our solid financial footing and additional revenue streams, we are returning surplus margins from past years, demonstrating our commitment to our not-for-profit status.

This year, we are returning a total allocation of \$2,084,295.19. Of this amount, \$1,778,990.21 is unretired and will be distributed as checks to eligible members. Some credits were previously disbursed as estate capital

credits, honoring our commitment to promptly serve members' families.

In addition, we are returning \$306,730.26 from Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), our wholesale power supplier, of which \$280,506.35 is unretired capital credits from 1998, 1999, and half of 2000. As an owner in WFEC, Choctaw Electric passes these benefits directly to you, our members.

The decision to retire capital credits is a testament to the sound financial

planning and governance by our board of trustees. During our budgeting process, the board prioritizes returning excess margins to our members. Retirement of capital credits represents our cooperative's values of transparency, accountability, and always putting you, our valued members, first. Members anticipating a check can expect to receive it in September.

I hope you'll also plan to attend Choctaw Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting on September 28. I look forward to seeing you there!



CEO Kooney Duncan

## How do capital credits work?

Because CEC is a not-for-profit electric cooperative, any excess revenues, called margins, are returned to members in the form of capital credits.

At the end of the year, CEC completes financial matters and determines whether there are excess revenues, called margins.



When CEC's financial condition permits, the board of trustees decides to retire, or pay, the capital credits.

CEC allocates the margins to members as capital credits based upon their use of electricity during the year.



CEC mails capital credits checks, with the amount based on a member's kWh of electricity used in the years being retired.

# We love our local students!



**Students from Valliant Schools visited Choctaw Electric.**

At Choctaw Electric, we love interacting with students of all ages. From Youth Tour, to co-op tours, we enjoy every opportunity we have to influence tomorrow's leaders.

This summer, three local students—Claire Burris, Jaunnae Lewis and Emma Bundy—represented CEC on Youth Tour, a weeklong trip to Washington, D.C., June 14-20. Here are some of the highlights—from the participants' points of view.

Students from Valliant Schools were one of the many groups who toured Choctaw Electric this summer. To arrange a visit, please call 800-780-6486, ext. 241.

“This week has brought me so much joy and memories that will always be with me ... I was told to pick a highlight from each day, but I found that the highlight of the trip remained the same. It was the friends I made along the way that fueled me to become an even stronger leader ... I will forever be thankful for Choctaw Electric for allowing me such a privilege.”

- Claire Burris



**Youth Tour delegates Emma Bundy, Claire Burris and Jaunnae Lewis.**

“My favorite part of this trip has been Arlington National Cemetery ... We were also able to witness the changing of the guard, and the soldier overseeing the change was from Oklahoma. He talked to our group about his experiences in the military and as an honor guard at Arlington. Overall, it was an amazing experience and one I believe we will all remember for a long time.”

- Emma Bundy

“My favorite part from Monday has to be the Smithsonian Museums. I went to both the Natural history and the American history and both were divine and such a unique experience. I can't say I've ever been to a museum quite like the Smithsonian before.”

-Jaunnae Lewis

## Paperless for the win!

Sign up for paperless billing via the free SmartHub app or call Choctaw Electric at 800-780-6486. Any member who signs up during the month will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a \$100 bill credit!

## Summer peak hours

A summer peak alert may be called between June 20 and September 9, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. We will announce peak alerts on our Facebook page, via the SmartHub app and on the radio. Please help us reduce electricity use during peak hours as it helps keep our cost stable.

## Office closure

CEC's offices will be closed on Monday, September 2, in honor of Labor Day. In case of an outage, please call the outage line.

## Batter up for Buddy Ball

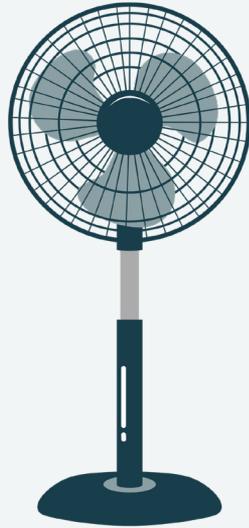
Grab your baseball cap and head to the bleachers! You're invited to join us for Buddy Ball, a sporting event designed for children and adults with special needs. In cooperation with several local sponsors, CEC will host the inaugural Buddy Ball game on September 14. To learn more, contact Choctaw Electric at 800-780-6486, ext. 241.

## Lucky Acct # 38859967

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.

## Help seniors stay cool this summer

In partnership with the Southeast Oklahoma Senior Awareness Coalition, Choctaw Electric is collecting fans to help our elderly neighbors without air conditioning stay cool this summer. If you have a fan to donate, please drop it off at any Choctaw Electric office by September 1. Together, we can make a difference!

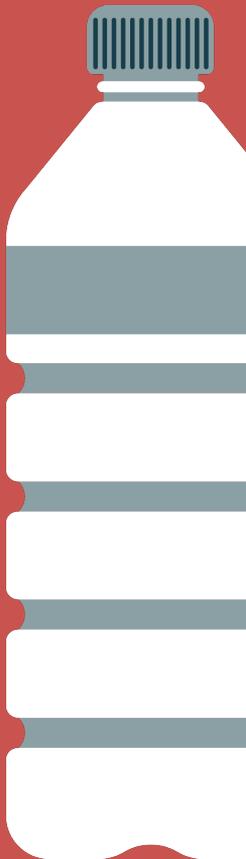


## Grab a cup and fill it up!

Staying hydrated is crucial as August temperatures rise and the risk of heat-related illnesses increases. Drinking enough fluids, especially if you work outdoors, is essential to prevent dehydration and heat exhaustion.

Starting the day well-hydrated helps maintain hydration levels throughout the day. The CDC recommends drinking water regularly, even before you feel thirsty, as thirst indicates you're already dehydrated. Aim for 8 ounces of water every 20 minutes, totaling approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  quart per hour. This approach is more effective than consuming large amounts infrequently. (Don't exceed 48 ounces per hour to avoid potentially dangerous drops in blood salt levels.)

Be sure to hydrate when you're back inside. Replenishing lost fluids will help mitigate the long-term effects of dehydration, particularly when working outdoors in the heat.



8 ounces = 1/2 plastic water bottle

## Save the date for Choctaw Electric Cooperative's 2024 Annual Meeting!

**Saturday, September 28**  
McCurtain County Fairgrounds, Idabel

### OTHER IMPORTANT DATES:

**August 14**  
Revisions due to proposed amendments.

**August 29 - September 3**  
Mail-in ballots delivered to members.

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### 2024 Annual Meeting Vendor Booth Reservation Form

Saturday, September 28 | McCurtain County Fairgrounds

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Products to be displayed/sold: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of booth spaces: \_\_\_\_\_

Booth spaces are available first come, first serve. Vendors must bring their own tables, chairs and electrical cords.

**Deadline to reserve booth: September 20, 2024**

Send booth reservation form to: Jia Johnson  
Choctaw Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 758, Hugo, OK 74743