



inside your co-op

For members of Choctaw Electric Cooperative | FEBRUARY 2025



International Year of Cooperatives

Cooperatives Build a Better World

Left: CEC's original headquarters in Hugo. Above: The United Nations declared 2025 as the International Year of Cooperatives. The yearlong theme, Cooperatives Build a Better World, highlights the impact co-ops have on local communities.

Celebrating 85 Years of Member-Focused Service

Eighty-five years ago, families in rural Oklahoma joined together to bring electricity to their homes and farms. Founded in 1940, Choctaw Electric Cooperative was built on a simple but powerful idea: neighbors helping neighbors.

When CEC began, utility companies couldn't justify extending power lines to sparsely populated areas. Rural families took matters into their own hands, working together to establish a cooperative that would serve their communities.

As we enter our 85th year in 2025, that same spirit of cooperation continues to guide us. Today, CEC celebrates not only its rich history of service but also its place in a global movement that proves the cooperative model makes life better for people everywhere. CEC's not-for-profit business model is

designed with one goal in mind—serving our members. Every member has a voice in how the cooperative operates, from electing board members to participating in key decisions. That sense of ownership is what makes cooperatives unique and ensures we remain focused on the needs of the people we serve.

This milestone year coincides with the International Year of Cooperatives, a global celebration of the cooperative business model. Around the world, cooperatives are recognized as a sound way to empower individuals, strengthen communities and improve quality of life. The theme, Cooperatives Build a Better World, reflects the impact cooperatives have in creating positive change, from fostering economic growth to addressing local needs.

CEC is proud to be part of this move-

ment. Over the past 85 years, we've worked to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy services to our members. But our commitment doesn't stop there. We invest in our communities, support local initiatives and offer programs that make a difference in the lives of our members.

As we celebrate this special year, we reflect on the achievements of our past while looking forward to the opportunities of the future. The cooperative model has proven its value time and again—right here in southeastern Oklahoma and around the world.

Join us throughout 2025 as we honor 85 years of service, the strength of our community and the power of cooperation. Together, we'll continue to build a brighter future for generations to come.

Stay Warm, Save Smart

Understanding Energy Costs This Winter

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

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2114 SE Washington

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

February often brings the coldest weather of the year, leading to higher energy use as heating systems work harder to keep homes warm. Along with increased energy consumption, external factors can also impact electricity costs.

When you receive your monthly bill from Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC), it includes a summary of your electricity use, helping you identify trends like higher usage during particularly cold days or when hosting guests. However, several external elements also play a role in electricity prices:

Fuel Costs

CEC purchases electricity at a wholesale rate from Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC). The cost of fuels like natural gas and coal, which are used to generate electricity, fluctuates based on supply and demand. These changes can affect electricity prices, though CEC and WFEC plan ahead to stabilize costs for members.

Extreme Weather

During extreme cold or heat, demand for electricity spikes, often increasing its cost. CEC prepares for such events by analyzing weather patterns to help mitigate price fluctuations.



CEO Kooney Duncan

Infrastructure Costs

Each member pays a monthly Customer Charge to support the cost of maintaining equipment, power lines, substations and other essential infrastructure. This ensures reliable electricity for homes and businesses in CEC's service area.

Energy Policy

Federal regulations and the transition to renewable energy sources require costly upgrades to infrastructure, which can raise electricity prices. Electric co-ops nationwide

are advocating for balanced energy policies to ensure reliability and affordability.

Ways to Save

While external factors influence electricity costs, managing energy use at home can make a big difference. Lower your thermostat to the coolest comfortable setting, service your heating system annually and seal air leaks to improve efficiency.

CEC is committed to helping members save energy and keep costs manageable. Visit choctawelectric.net/energy-efficiency-program to explore energy efficiency programs. Together, we'll continue working to provide reliable, affordable power.

Call 811 Before You Dig!

Homeowners, landowners and contractors must contact OKIE811 at least 3 business days before digging to have underground lines located and marked. Call 811 if you are planning on planting trees, landscaping, installing a deck, digging for a patio, installing a mailbox or any other project that requires digging. Digging without knowing the location of underground lines can disrupt vital services, resulting in costly repairs. Even worse, it could cause personal injury or loss of life. Visit okie811.org to learn more.





Keeping Our System Strong

A 2025 Operations Overview

At Choctaw Electric Cooperative, we are committed to ensuring reliable, safe and efficient service for all our members. As we move into 2025, we're excited to share some of the key initiatives planned to maintain and improve our system's performance.

Right-of-Way Maintenance

Keeping power lines clear is essential for reliability. In 2025, our team will continue to clear approximately 500 miles of right-of-way (ROW) through contracted and in-house efforts. In the spring we'll treat about 900 miles with herbicides to prevent vegetation regrowth. For members who prefer not to have herbicides applied on their property, we encourage you to reach out, and we'll do our best to accommodate your request. Rest assured, our crews are mindful of members' concerns and avoid using herbicides in residential yards. Updates about ROW and herbicide treatments will be shared on Facebook, so stay tuned.

Pole Inspections

Starting in January, you may have noticed activity in the Hayworth and Garvin areas as contractors began inspecting over 13,700 poles. These inspections involve visual evaluations to identify issues, with some poles requiring further examination at the base to check for ground rot. Inspectors

will display magnetic signs identifying them as Choctaw Electric Cooperative contractors for easy recognition.

Infrastructure Upgrades

To support the growing needs of our communities, particularly in the Hochatown area, we'll continue critical infrastructure projects. This includes the ongoing respan and reconductor project from the Bethel substation to Hochatown, which we anticipate completing by year-end, weather permitting. These upgrades will enhance capacity and reliability by upgrading conductors and existing lines. Another major project slated for spring involves upgrading 4 miles of conductor from Hochatown to the Creekside RV Park.

Planning for the Future

At CEC, our approach to system improvements is guided by a strategic four-year work plan, developed in collaboration with our engineering consultants, Allgeier, Martin and Associates. They use advanced modeling to evaluate system performance under extreme conditions. We prioritize projects that boost reliability and capacity in key areas. By addressing today's challenges and anticipating future needs, we stay true to our mission of providing safe, reliable and affordable energy services for our members and the communities we serve.

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 his and her CEC t-shirts and 2 CEC caps.

Energy Saving Tip

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace. Use ENERGY STAR®-rated equipment, which consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life. Another way to save energy in your home office is to use efficient lamps for task lighting. Replace any older bulbs with energy-saving LEDs.

Avoid Energy Scams

Scammers will try anything to deceive utility customers, including a tactic that claims customers have overpaid their bill. If you receive a call, text or email from someone claiming you overpaid a utility bill and need to provide your banking or credit card information to receive a credit, it's likely a scam. In case of overpayment, CEC will apply a credit to your account to cover future charges or refund an overpayment with a mailed check.

Lucky Acct #30470401

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.



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 in March.

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



Bee-utifully captured! Congratulations to CEC member Ashkea Logan! Her close-up photo of a bumble bee was recognized among Oklahoma Living Magazine's Best of 2024 Okie Snaps.

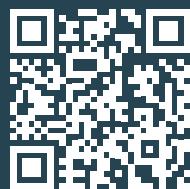
Apply Now for Energy Camp

Eighth-graders, don't miss out! Submit your Energy Camp application by Friday, March 7. Learn more: choctawelectric.net/energy-camp



Lighting the Way

CEC member and retired CEC employee Johnie Courtwright recalls the early days of rural electrification in Southeast Oklahoma. Scan the QR code to the right or visit our website to watch an interview with Johnie: <https://choctawelectric.net/>



Scan here to watch the interview with Johnie Courtwright.

Boost Your Oven's Efficiency with Regular Cleaning

Did you know that a clean oven can cook your food faster, use less energy, and even improve the taste of your meals? A dirty oven can cause uneven heating and require longer cook times, thus using more energy. Here's how regular cleaning can make a big difference:

Better Heat Distribution: Grease and grime buildup can block proper heat circulation, causing uneven cooking and longer cook times.

Improved Door Seal: A dirty seal can

allow heat to escape, forcing the oven to work harder to maintain temperature.

Efficient Monitoring: A clean oven door lets you check your food without opening the door and losing heat unnecessarily.

Deep cleaning your oven helps it reach the desired temperature more quickly, reduces energy consumption, and ensures heat is distributed evenly. This not only saves energy but also results in better-cooked, tastier meals!

