

Co-op Icons

A tribute to your electric cooperative line workers.

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Youth Tour Winners

Local teens win trip to Washington D.C.

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Kilowatt Kid's Camp

CEC's free day camp for kids welcomes enrollments.

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For members of **Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

APRIL 2020

80^{YEARS} CEC *inside your* co-op

Co-op Board Member *Announces* Resignation

George Burns resigns to run for 5th district Senate seat

Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC) Trustee George Burns announced that he will officially resign from the co-op board on March 31. Burns, of Haworth, is resigning in order to run for the state Senate seat vacated by Joseph Silk. Sen. Silk (R)-Broken Bow, is running for the 2nd District Congressional seat held by Rep. Markwayne Mullin.

Burns must resign his trustee position to comply with a CEC bylaw that prohibits candidates for public office or elected officials from serving on the co-op board.

CEO Kooney Duncan said Burns leadership on the board helped restore trust in the co-op and helped put the co-op on the right track. Under the board's guidance, CEC reduced debt from \$71 million to \$43 million, increased equity to 53 percent, returned roughly \$4.4 million in capital credits to members, and cleared more than 2,000 miles of right of way.

"He took his job seriously," Duncan added. "He was devoted to learning as much as possible about the electric co-op industry so he could make the best possible decisions for members. We will miss him."

CEC members elected Burns as District A trustee in 2015. For two years, he

served as president of the board. He also served as CEC's representative on the Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC) board of directors for three years. During his tenure as trustee, Burns completed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Credentialed Co-op Director and Board Leadership programs. He also earned the NRECA Director Gold certificate. To achieve the Gold designation, trustees must complete 22 courses requiring more than 176 hours of training.

Burns said serving on the CEC board influenced his decision to run for public office. "I have learned much by serving our co-op, and I am very thankful for the support, opportunity, and faith my district has shown in me," he said.

With an accountable board in place, Burns added that now is the perfect time to reach out and serve all residents in the 5th district. "When you listen and pay attention to the needs of the people, and do the right thing for a cause higher than yourself... this is best way I know to give back to my community," he said.



George Burns



**CORONAVIRUS
COVID-19**

CEC UPDATE

Because Choctaw Electric is a cooperative, we have a responsibility to act in the best interests of our members. With growing concerns over the coronavirus, CEC is taking extra measures to protect employees and members by limiting exposure, disinfecting surfaces in the office, keeping a ready supply of sanitizing wipes and Lysol in public areas, and encouraging employees to be extra vigilant about hygiene. and maintaining the recommended distance of six feet between themselves and others.

At newsletter press time on March 17, the CEC lobby remained open, but we encourage members to use the telephone, drive-thru window, night deposit box, payment kiosks, and online tools such as the SmartHub app to conduct business. To reduce wait time in the drive-thru lane, please call us with your questions when possible. CEC employees will continue to make necessary service calls to residences while keeping a safe distance.

"Our goal is to decrease the likelihood of illness and resulting work disruptions so we can continue to provide our members continuity of service," said Kooney Duncan, CEO of the cooperative.

CEC also cancelled all third-party meetings on CEC premises. Other non-critical meetings, training, and travel may be canceled depending on the situation.

Questions? Please call us **800-780-6486**.

MANAGER'S REPORT



Our Co-op Icons

A tribute to CEC linemen

BY KOONEY DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Choctaw Electric (CEC) employees know a thing or two about navigating tough times. When a storm hits, we're all working to protect your power supply. But for some members of our team, the sacrifice is particularly personal.



Jonathan Lacy
JULY 17, 1984 - MARCH 28, 2018

CEC linemen give up holidays, birthday parties, and time with family and friends to work crazy long hours in awful conditions. So we can have lights. Blazing heat, bitter cold, toad-strangling rains, floods, ice, snow, and straight-line winds are things they contend with to keep your electricity flowing. Poison ivy, poison oak, greenbriar, ticks, mosquitoes, snakes, skunks, mean dogs, and sometimes mean people are obstacles they face while out in the field. It's not glamorous, but what they do is essential to our lives—and they do it with an attitude of selflessness that amazes me.

Truly, CEC's line workers are the icons of our industry. They represent our co-op values, commitment, and dependability.

I hear Jonathan Lacy was that kind of lineman. A longtime resident of Little River Ranch, Jonathan worked for CEC for six years. His coworkers tell me he had a positive attitude that the worst thunderstorm couldn't

rattle. When CEC needed someone to climb a pole in the pouring rain, Jonathon was the first to step up. Linemen seem to understand that as uncomfortable, unpleasant, and scary as their job can be, there are people out there relying on them. They also understand the risk of injury or death goes along with the job.

Jonathan died of cancer on March 28, 2018. He was 34. While he was battling the disease, his neighbor, Sandra LaPlace, would spend time chatting with Jonathan's young daughters on the front porch. When one of the girls had a dream about a big spider, she told Sandra about it. The story stuck with the artist, and she developed the idea into an illustrated children's book. "Meredith's Dream" is available on Amazon, and is dedicated to Jonathon and the Lacy family. Proceeds go to Jonathon's three girls.

On April 13, the nation celebrates Lineworker Appreciation Day. I hope you'll take a moment to thank the crews who put their lives on the line for you. Please remember Jonathon, too. He is missed. ♡

Choctaw Electric Cooperative

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

Monday-Friday • 8 am - 5 pm

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HC 67 Box 62
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Local: (580) 298-3201

On the Web:

www.choctawelectric.coop



24 Hour Outage Hotline

800-780-6486

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Brent Franks, *President*

Joe M. Silk, *Vice President*

Mike Brewer, *Secretary Treasurer*

Stacy Nichols Bill Woolsey

George Burns Debbie Cody

Ken Autry Perry Thompson Jr.

MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Kooney Duncan, *Chief Executive Officer*

Jennifer Boling, *Executive Assistant*

Jia Johnson, *Director of Public Relations*

Tiffany Hempsted, *Chief Financial Officer*

Lucky Acct #38852450(\$25)

If this account number belongs to you, contact CEC by the 10th of the month to claim your \$25 bill credit. Unclaimed bill credits will roll over each month by \$25 for a maximum credit of \$100. To claim your credit, please call 800-780-6486, ext. 207.

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF YOUR CEC BOARD MEETING

Scan this code with your smartphone or tablet to read the monthly minutes of your co-op board meeting. Minutes are also available at any CEC location and online at www.choctawelectric.coop.

To scan the code, install a Bar Code Scanner app, available at the App Store.



MANAGER'S REPORT

CEC Names Youth Tour Winners

Topics such as meatless meat, advanced robotics, and community service became winning entries in Choctaw Electric's 2020 Youth Tour competition. High school juniors Tucker Bundy of Idabel; Kaelin Clay of Idabel; and Olivia McCarter of Antlers selected topics of interest and developed either a video presentation or an essay to enter in the contest. Jia Johnson, CEC Youth Tour coordinator said Youth Tour judges were impressed with the quality of the entries, especially the three winners.

"We think our winners are exceptional this year. We are proud to have them represent CEC on the tour," Johnson said.

Students will tour Washington, DC with more than 70 Youth Tour winners from across Oklahoma. The tour includes stops at major



Kaelin Clay Olivia McCarter Tucker Bundy

historical sites, monuments, museums and government buildings. Teens will also meet with congressional leaders, take an evening cruise on the Potomac River, and enjoy cultural attractions in and around the nation's capital.

For more information on Youth Tour, please visit www.choctawelectric.coop, or call Jia Johnson at 800-780-6486, ext. 241.

THE HOME Energy DETECTIVE

By Brad Kendrick, CEC Energy Use Specialist



A Mound Of Problems

When I make visits to a member's home, finding the source of their energy use problem is not always easy. Last month, I visited a home where everything appeared to be turned off, yet something was still pulling power. After testing other breakers, the member eventually flipped off the breaker for the aerobic septic system and the meter stopped. After investigating further, we discovered a mound of fire ants compacted in the pump! This caused the pump to run nonstop, and add a lot of kilowatt-hours to their electric bill.

Ants love to congregate in cool, dark places such well pumps and outside AC units. If you have any of the above, remember to service your systems regularly, and pay attention to any warning lights that signal an equipment malfunction.

We Appreciate Your Patience!



Efforts to contain the coronavirus may alter plans for cooperative-sponsored events such as Member Appreciation Days, Kilowatt Kid's Camp, Youth Tour, and Energy Camp. We will do our best to keep you informed of postponements and/or cancellations in advance via our monthly newsletter, website, Facebook, SmartHub and local news media. If you plan to attend any of these activities, be sure to check with us beforehand to make sure it will continue as planned. Thank you!

CHOCTAW ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Member DAYS Appreciation

From 10 am until 2 pm on the following dates:

- Tues., April 7 | CEC HUGO
- Weds., April 8 | CEC ANTLERS
- Thurs., April 9 | CEC IDABEL

PLEASE CALL CEC BEFOREHAND TO CONFIRM THIS EVENT WILL BE HELD. 800-780-6486.

- COMPLIMENTARY wellness exams W/ BLOOD PRESSURE & VALUABLE HEALTH INFO
- WIN A bill credit & OTHER PRIZES
- REGISTER TO VOTE!
- LEARN ABOUT OUR energy saving services & OTHER PROGRAMS
- FREE hotdogs DRINKS & DESSERTS



Do you have questions for CEC's energy sleuth? Please call Brad Kendrick, CEC energy use specialist, at 800-780-6486, or email questions to: bakendrick@choctawelectric.coop.

Talk To Us. We Appreciate Your Opinion.

When you have a question or comment about your CEC service, we want to hear from you! Please message us via www.choctawelectric.coop or our Facebook page. To chat by phone, please call 800-780-6486. Your opinion matters.



A GLANCE BACK

Linemen from Long Ago

Choctaw Electric's first field crews had a big job ahead of them. As supplies and construction materials slowly became available after World War II, they got to work. A story published in the June 2005 issue of CEC's newsletter featured pioneer lineman, Ike Simpson (pictured to right), who recalled the early days.

Simpson began working for CEC in 1946, digging holes for high line poles with a shovel. Back then the co-op used mule teams to pull the line across the rugged southeast Oklahoma mountains. "When it rained, we got stuck...a lot," Simpson recalled.

Some supplies were still limited due to war shortages. The crew had one rubber glove and the foreman wore it. "The rest of us wore leather gloves, and we only had two or three hot sticks to connect and disconnect the lines," he said. "But it was start."

Today, CEC employs 22 linemen. Each one has a full set of rubber gloves, as well as other critical safety equipment. ☺



This photo of Choctaw Electric linemen from 1954 appeared in the co-op's newsletter, the Push Button News. (Front row) Billy Teague; Cyde Johnson; James Clark; and John Houchens. (Back row) Harry Nelms; Ike Simpson; Willis Brents; Odell Popchoke; Superintendent Winfield Doyle; and Elmer Hinsley. Five linemen are missing from the photo. They are James Bush; George Monday; Johnnie Rector; Leslie Moore and Berry Roan, Jr.



CEC Kilowatt Kid's Camp

Hugo | June 3 Idabel | June 9

CEC's Kilowatt Kid's Camp offers a fun, educational experience for kindergarteners through third graders. Campers spend the morning making crafts and playing games that teach them about renewable fuels and other energy sources, energy conservation, and how to stay safe around electricity.

CEC is currently enrolling students for our half-day camps in Hugo and Idabel. The camp is free and includes all snacks and camp activities. To enroll, please fill out the form to the right and return it CEC by May 31, 2020. For more information, please call Jia Johnson or Brad Kendrick at **800-780-6486**, ext. 241.

2020 KILOWATT KID'S CAMP ENROLLMENT FORM

Student Name (Print): _____

Age: _____ Grade: _____

Parent Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Home Tele: _____ Work Tele: _____

Cell: _____

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

Emergency Contact: _____

Home Tele: _____ Cell: _____

Camp (Please circle):

Hugo Camp | June 3 Idabel Camp | June 9

K-3rd grade: 9 am to 11:30 am K-3rd grade: 9:00 am to 11:30 am

Mail enrollment form by May 31, 2020 to:
 Jia Johnson or Brad Kendrick/ CEC/ PO Box 758/Hugo, OK 74743