

Power Behind The Power

Co-op lineworkers
deserve our thanks.

■ PAGE 2

Through The Roof

Struggling to make ends meet? Remember,
CEC offers payment assistance.

■ PAGE 3

Kilowatt Kid's Camp

Kato the Safety Cat helps
campers stay safe outdoors.

■ PAGE 4

For members of **Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

APRIL 2022

CEC *inside your* co-op

SCAM WARNING

Choctaw Electric members report scam attempts

Members beware: The con artists are at it again. This time they're trying to trick innocent victims into giving out their credit card numbers. Two members of Choctaw Electric reported scam attempts recently.



card number in order to receive the money.

When the suspicious member refused to provide the information, the caller became so pushy that the member hung up on them and reported

the incident to CEC.

On February 28, a Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC) member contacted the co-op office in Hugo to report a suspicious telephone call. The member said the caller claimed to represent CEC. The caller told the member CEC was giving away \$125 to every account holder. The catch: The member had to provide a credit

On March 3, another co-op member phoned the CEC office in Idabel to report a similar scam attempt.

CEC posted warnings about the scam on social media and continues to advise members to

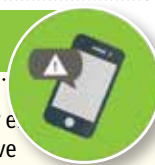
be on high alert. Hilary Pound, CEC manager of billing and customer services, urges members to report to CEC any suspicious calls or visits from persons claiming to represent the co-op. They should also contact their local law enforcement agency.

"If one member gets a suspicious call, others have probably gotten one, too," Pound said. "The sooner we hear about it, the sooner we can warn others."

Pound added that members should be wary of any caller asking for information, even if Caller ID shows the name and number of a familiar business. Scammers today use technology to "spoof" real telephone numbers to trick vulnerable consumers.

Don't get duped! The tips listed below will help you avoid becoming a victim. Report suspicious calls to CEC at **800-780-6486**. 💡

AVOID UTILITY SCAMS AND OTHER CONS



- **NEVER** provide personal or financial information to a caller or visitor you don't know.
- **NEVER** wire money or provide credit card or numbers from gift cards to anyone who contacts you on utility matters. *CEC will NEVER ask for this information over the phone!*
- **DON'T GET SCARED.** A scammer will tell you that your power is about to go out or a "great deal" will expire unless you take immediate action. *REMEMBER, CEC delivers delinquent notices by mail and automated phone messages.*
- **NEVER** let an unfamiliar utility employee into your home unless you have scheduled an appointment or reported a problem. Even if you have a scheduled appointment, check their ID first.
- **NEVER** click on links in a utility-related email or text message unless you're certain it's from the real company.
- **NEVER** call a telephone number left by a caller claiming to be from CEC. Use the phone number on your electric bill to contact your co-op.

Please report suspicious calls or visits to CEC immediately at **800-780-6486**. For more details about common scams and how to avoid them, visit www.bbb.org/all/scamtips.



PLEASE NOTE OUR Holiday Hours

Choctaw Electric Cooperative will close on **April 15** for Good Friday. To report an outage, please call **800-780-6486** or report your trouble online using Smarthub.

Please enjoy a safe holiday!

MANAGER'S REPORT



Power Behind Your Power

CEC linemen are part of an essential team.

BY KOONEY DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

On April 11 the nation celebrates Lineworker Appreciation Day. It's a special day for electric utilities because we understand, better than most, that a lineworker's job is difficult and dangerous. When it comes to keeping the power flowing across our country, lineworkers serve on the front line and they deserve our gratitude.

But lineworkers aren't the only individuals working to ensure your lights stay on.

At Choctaw Electric, there's a team of 62 employees, including 20 linemen whose commitment to protecting your power deserves praise. These employees work behind the scenes doing all the important and necessary tasks that often get overlooked. From our meter department to billing, member services, customer service, right of way, warehouse and more, our employees work together to make sure your co-op accomplishes its mission to deliver reliable power as efficiently as possible.

When our linemen are called out to climb a 30 foot pole carrying 50 lbs worth of equipment in the driving rain, that's worth noting. And while they brave the elements, working around the clock to restore power, there's another team backing them up.

When a severe storm causes major outages, it is "all hands on deck" at Choctaw Electric. Our employees

answer the phones, load and deliver supplies, coordinate and communicate with repair teams, and prepare a steady supply of meals and snacks for the crews slogging it out in the field. Yes, our linemen pull heroic shifts during a crisis, and there are plenty of other folks doing their share back at the office.

There's a saying that lineworkers must be committed to their career because "it's more than a job, it's a lifestyle." Their job is listed as one of the top ten dangerous professions in the US, so it requires a unique commitment plus specialized skills, experience, and an ongoing mental toughness. There's no room for error when working around high voltages.

It can be hard to equate the rigors of linemen work to that of a billing clerk, service rep, secretary, or a technology specialist. But believe me, these jobs also come with challenges. They require a skill set of their own and a bona fide commitment to serving their co-op. At CEC, every employee contributes to a process that is essential to our lives.

So, the next time you see a co-op employee, please thank them for the work they do. They are the power behind your power. . 💡

Lucky Acct #38847154

If this account number belongs to you, contact CEC 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. 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.



Choctaw Electric Cooperative

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

Monday-Friday • 8 am - 5 pm

HUGO OFFICE

PO Box 758
1033 N. 4250 Road
Hugo, Oklahoma 74743
Toll Free: (800) 780-6486
Local: (580) 326-6486
FAX (580) 326-2492

IDABEL OFFICE

2114 SE Washington
Idabel, Oklahoma 74745
Toll Free: (800) 780-6486
Local: (580) 286-7155

ANTLERS OFFICE

HC 67 Box 62
Antlers, Oklahoma 74523
(One mile east of Antlers)
Toll Free: (800) 780-6486
Local: (580) 298-3201

On the Web:

www.choctawelectric.coop



24 Hour Outage Hotline

800-780-6486

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Brent Franks, *President*

Jarred Campbell, *Vice President*

Perry Thompson, Jr., *Secretary Treasurer*

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Kooney Duncan, *Chief Executive Officer*

Jennifer Boling, *Executive Assistant*

Jia Johnson, *Director of Public Relations*



Through *the* Roof

High prices rocking your world? We get it. Talk to us about payment assistance *before* your bill is overdue.

Since the pandemic struck in 2020, consumers around the world have experienced shortages of everything from roofing shingles to car parts. Meanwhile, the prices kept rising. Now, with war in the Ukraine, consumers face the highest fuel prices in history.

The situation is forcing many Choctaw Electric (CEC) members to make difficult decisions in order to pay for basic necessities.

"We understand that times are tough right now. We want our members to know that we're here to help if they need us," said Kooney Duncan, CEO of CEC.



Duncan added that high prices are affecting the co-op, too. Transformers, wire, poles and other equipment needed to maintain the CEC system have doubled, and in some cases, tripled in price.

Members who are unable to pay their electric bill are urged to contact the co-op as soon as possible. CEC billing clerks will help you set up a payment schedule you can manage. Don't delay—call your co-op today at 800-786-6486.



Have A Cookie On Us

at CEC Member Appreciation Days!

Stop by our offices for cookies and refreshments, plus a chance to **win a \$25 electric bill credit**. It's our way of saying thanks. It's an honor to serve you!

Monday, April 4

11 pm - 1 pm
CEC Idabel

Wednesday, April 6

11 pm - 1 pm
CEC Hugo

Thursday, April 14

11 pm - 1 pm
CEC Antlers

We hope to see you there!



SMART PAYMENTS

SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB.



Save time. Avoid service interruptions. Eliminate late fees.

With Smarthub, you'll be notified when your bill is due and can pay securely online or use the app, anytime, anywhere.

Sign up for automatic payments, set your secure preferred payment method, and put your account management on autopilot!

It's all in the palm of your hand and online.

How To Make and Set Up Payments

1. Payments can be made by clicking on the **Make Payment** or **Pay** button on the home screen.
2. To set up recurring payments, simply click on **Bill and Pay** and **AutoPay Program**.

Questions? Please call CEC at 800-780-6486. We are happy to walk you through the process.

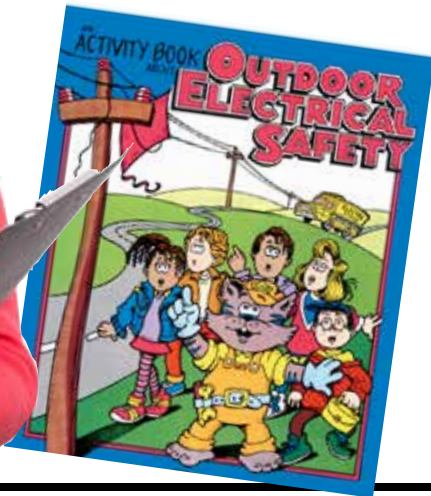
Kilowatt Kid's Camp Welcomes Kato the Safety Cat

Do you have children in the kindergarten through third grade age range? If so, they are sure to enjoy CEC's Kilowatt Kid's Camp. This year, Kato the Safety Cat will teach young campers about outdoor electric hazards and how to stay safe while playing outside. With Kato's help, campers will participate in a variety of hands-on activities and games that make Kilowatt Kid's Camp a fun learning experience!

Camp is scheduled at CEC in Idabel on June 15 from 8:30 am to 11:30 am, and CEC in Hugo on June 22 from 8:30 am to 11:30 am. The camp is free and includes all snacks, activities, and materials. To enroll, please submit the form (right) by June 1, 2022. For more info, please call 800-780-6486, ext. 241.



Save the dates!
June 15 • Idabel June 22 • Hugo



2022 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):

Idabel Camp • June 15

Hugo Camp • June 22

K-3rd grade: 8:30 am to 11:30 am

K-3rd grade: 8:30 am to 11:30 am

Mail enrollment form by June 1, 2022 to:
Jia Johnson or Brad Kendrick
Choctaw Electric Cooperative
PO Box 758
Hugo, OK 74743

Spring Storms Can Topple Power Lines

It's not every day that a power line falls to the ground, so most of us have little experience on how to handle the situation. These tips from Choctaw Electric Cooperative will help you stay safe.

The best thing to do if you see a fallen electrical line: **Stay far, far away from it.**

A downed line can energize the ground as far away as 35 feet—and even farther when the ground is wet. **Never drive over a downed line, pick it up, or attempt to move it.** Instead, call 911 and keep others away until the professionals arrive.

Remember, any downed line could be live! That means it's extremely dangerous. **Steer clear of it—and teach your children to do the same.**



Spot A Safety Hazard On Our Line?
We want to know about it! Please call CEC as soon as possible at **800-780-6486**.