



# inside *your* co-op

Published for members of Choctaw Electric Cooperative

## TOP STORY

### Claim Your Fair Share

#### Capital credits owed to deceased members can be paid to legal heirs

**M**r. and Mrs. Jones raised a family on Choctaw Electric lines. Eventually their children moved away and the couple died. The kids never realized their folks had money coming to them from their electric co-op.

Today, Choctaw Electric maintains a list of individuals like the Joneses' whose heirs are not aware that electric co-ops return profits to members through a process known as a capital credit retirement. This occurs periodically when the co-op board feels the co-op is financially able to release the funds. Unclaimed money remains in the account.

If you think your deceased family member might be owed capital credits, please contact Choctaw Electric and request an estate capital credit form. The co-op can advise you about requirements and if legal representation is necessary.

Because co-op profits are divided among members based on their annual electricity usage, capital credits may vary drastically among members.

For more details on estate capital credits or general capital credit retirements, please call your co-op at **800-780-6486** or visit [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop).



### CEC Shines In Statewide Communications Competition

Choctaw Electric Cooperative received several awards in the 2018 Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives Communications Competition. The contest judges the merits of newsletters, websites, annual reports and other communications produced by co-ops in Oklahoma. Choctaw Electric awards include an award of excellence/newsletter column; award of merit/news story; award of merit/feature story; an award of merit/website; and honorable mention/newsletter layout and design.



## HOLIDAY HOURS

Choctaw Electric Cooperative will close Monday, December 24 and Tuesday, December 25 for Christmas. Our offices will also close Tuesday, January 1, 2019, for New Year's Day.

To report a service problem during this time, please call **800-760-6486**, or report your problem through SmartHub at [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop), or use the app.

■ **MANAGER'S REPORT**

# System Usage Spikes In 2018

To find out why, we turned to Oklahoma Mesonet

**C**an you remember what the weather was like one year ago to this very month? Neither can I, but that information is important when comparing your electricity usage. At Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC), we study our systemwide usage much like you do when you get your monthly bill. When we see a spike in demand compared to the previous year, we want to know why it happened.

force our heating and cooling equipment to work extra hard and use more energy

What I discovered on the Mesonet site surprised me. So far this year, our area has experienced 36 heating degree days compared to only 18 heating degree days in 2017. The comparison for cooling days is even more dramatic: 93 cooling degree days in 2018 compared to 53 cooling days in 2017.

Suddenly, it becomes very clear why CEC's systemwide demand jumped in 2018. We've experienced nearly twice as many days of extreme temperatures!

Viewing the data drove home two important points: 1) Just because I can't remember weather extremes doesn't mean they didn't happen; and 2) We have no control over the weather, but making our homes more energy efficient can lessen its affect on our electricity bills.

Choctaw Electric offers several free services that can help you make your home more energy efficient. Please call or stop by and visit with us about these programs, or any other concerns. My door is always open.



**BY KOONEY DUNCAN**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

**"When we see a spike in electricity demand, we want to know why it happened."**

This year, Choctaw Electric's systemwide usage is already eight percent higher than our usage in 2017. The 305 million kilowatt hours burned thus far this year were used all the typical ways we consume energy—heating and cooling, lighting, water heating and so on—but somehow we used 23 million kwh more than last year. Because weather plays such a huge role in electricity demand, and I can't recall daily temperatures for last year, I turned to the best expert I know of—the Oklahoma Mesonet.

Data resources there allowed me to check our area for the number of heating degree days (days when temperatures rise above 90°F), and cooling degree days when temperatures remain below 32°F. Temperature extremes matter because they

## Choctaw Electric Cooperative

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

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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 #4589800 (\$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](http://www.choctawelectric.coop).

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



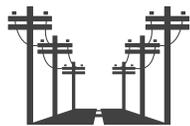
## GOOD TO KNOW

# All The Way To Quebec

Right of way crews cover a lot of miles in 2018

In 2018, Choctaw Electric Cooperative kicked off a focused effort to improve service reliability for members through vigorous right of way clearing and spraying. The most labor intensive and costly of electric utility operations, keeping lines clear of trees is the most important action CEC can take to ensure a steady flow of power, protect the public, and keep employees safe.

Proper maintenance includes trimming and removing brush, limbs and trees, followed by herbicide treatment.



# 1,700

Miles of right of way maintained this year.



Crews trim trees near Holly Creek.

When the ball drops on 2018, Choctaw Electric crews will have sprayed 1,000 miles of right of way and cleared 700 miles of line. At 1,700 miles total, that's roughly the distance from Hugo to Quebec, Canada—and a gain of 500 miles over 2017's maintenance record. We're proud of the team that made this happen. Way to go!

## YOUR ELECTRIC BILL

# Cold Snap? Be Careful.

Little mistakes add big costs to your winter bill

Freezing temperatures cause your energy costs to go up, but there are common mistakes that will send it through the roof. Guard against these three common culprits to keep your winter energy costs in the normal range:



- **Emergency Heat.** When adjusting your thermostat, don't flip it to the emergency heat setting by mistake. Emergency heat causes your unit to run nonstop and your bill to skyrocket.
- **Heat Tapes On.** If you own a heat pump, make sure your heat tapes don't get stuck in the "on" position during a cold snap. This is the number one cause of CEC winter high bill complaints. When the heat tapes run constantly, rather than cycling on and off as needed, electricity use increases drastically. Be sure to check yours after every cold snap.
- **Space Heaters.** Who doesn't appreciate the toasty heat radiating from a space heater? Problem is, that little appliance eats up a lot of electricity. If you need something to take the chill off, try an electric blanket instead.

## #HolidaySafety

Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before turning in or leaving home.



## FIND HELP WITH WINTER HEATING BILLS

If you're struggling to pay your electricity bill, please contact Choctaw Electric at 800-780-6486 for a list of agencies that provide bill payment assistance. We also offer payment plans to help you.

## ■ SWEET DEAL

# Get Paid To Save.



Sign up for the Cooperative Home Energy Efficiency Program (CHEEP) and get money back for making your home more energy efficient. The program includes:

- A professional on-site evaluation of your home that includes a blower door test and duct blasting. **FREE!**
- List of recommended improvements based on evaluation results. **FREE!**
- Rebate of \$1 per watt of estimated savings (up to \$1,000 maximum) for improvements you choose to make.
- Freedom to choose any or none of the suggested recommendations.

Please call **800-780-6486** today for more details, or visit [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop).

## RECIPES



### Microwave Peanut Butter Chocolate Fudge

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 (24 oz) pkg white almond bark, broken in half
- 12 oz peanut butter, or more to taste
- 3 (1.5 oz) bars milk chocolate candy bars (such as Hershey's)

#### DIRECTIONS

Line an 8-inch square pan with waxed paper or spray with cooking spray. Place 1 almond bark half in a microwave-safe bowl; heat in the microwave, in 30-second intervals, stirring after each melting until smooth, 1 to 3 minutes. Add peanut butter and mix well. Add remaining almond bark to the bowl; push to the bottom of bowl. Heat mixture in the microwave for 1 minute; stir to break up large pieces. Continue heating in 30 second intervals until melted. Pour fudge mixture into the prepared square pan.

Melt chocolate bars in a microwave-safe bowl in 30-second intervals, stirring after each melting, for 1 to 3 minutes. Drizzle melted chocolate over fudge. Swirl the chocolate into the fudge with a knife. Refrigerate fudge until solid, about 1 hour. Source: allrecipes.com

# Winter brings higher heating bills.

Prepare for it now by enrolling in one of CEC's convenient bill payment programs.

- ✓ **Prepaid billing** lets you pay ahead for your usage and avoid late fees.
- ✓ **Budget billing** averages your usage over the year to balance seasonal ups and downs.
- ✓ **Bank draft** offers the convenience of paying via automatic draft of your bank or credit card account.

For more information, please call your co-op at **800-780-6486**, or visit us online at [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop).