

## The Cooperative Spirit

Reflections on another year of service.

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## Youth Tour 2024

Junior students are invited to enter 2024 essay contest.

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## When the Lights Came On

Hear about a CEC member's experience of electrification.

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For members of **Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

DECEMBER 2023

# CEC *inside your* co-op

Holiday Spotlight

## The Warming Tree

CEC's holiday drive delivers comfort and care to those in need

Choctaw Electric Cooperative's Warming Tree is more than a holiday decoration; it's a heartwarming example of the cooperative's concern for community. The employee-led holiday tradition, now in its second year, provides warm items to those in need throughout CEC's service territory.

"The concept of giving back is baked into our cooperative principles. We want our members to know that as a co-op, we truly care," Jia Johnson, CEC director of public relations, says.

Johnson explains that the project started because CEC employees wanted to give back during the holidays, and they identified a unique need they could help meet.

"There were several groups in our area hosting food and toy drives during the holidays, but no one was doing anything quite like this. We decided to fill that gap with a program that will help residents of all ages stay warm," she says.

CEC member Sonya Maye, a hospice community liaison for CompleteOK Hospice, helped distribute the donations last year. She says nursing home and hospice patients are often forgotten during the holidays.

"Last year, I delivered donations to different nursing homes and they were incredibly excited and grateful," Maye says. "Some of the residents don't have anyone to come and see them, and without the gifts from CEC they might not have gotten anything for Christmas."

Maye noted that last year's donations were very generous, which allowed her to share the items with five local nursing homes.

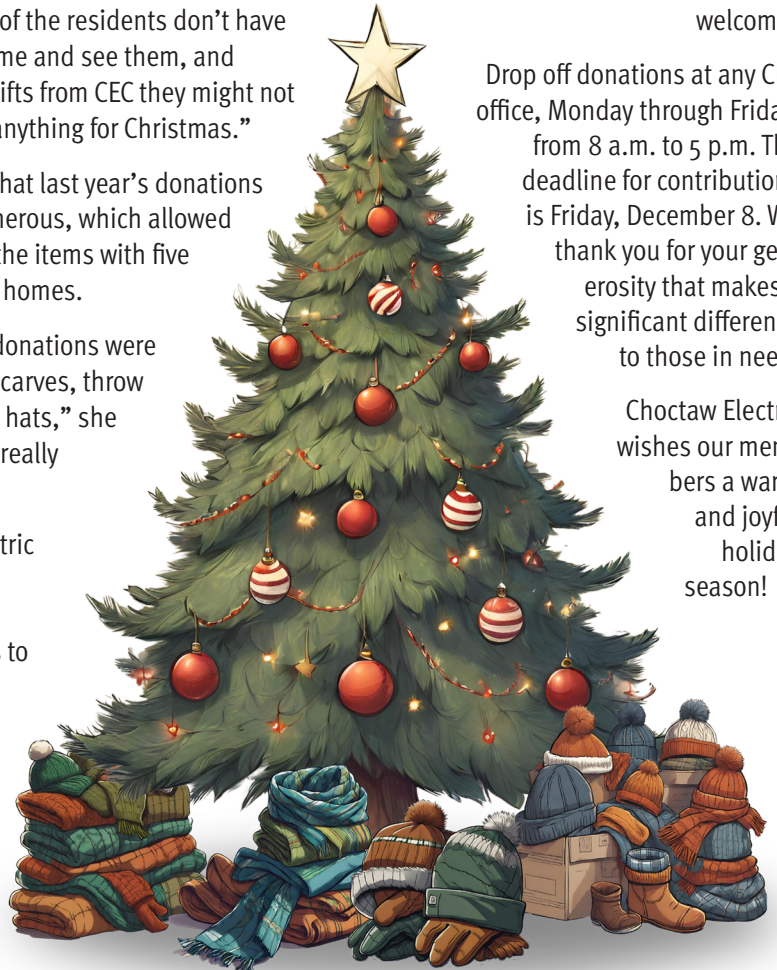
"A lot of the donations were hand-made scarves, throw blankets and hats," she says. "It was really sweet."

Choctaw Electric extends an invitation to our members to contribute to the Warming Tree. Donations of gloves, mittens, winter hats, scarves,

electric blankets, throw blankets, non-slip socks, slippers, sweatshirts and monetary contributions are welcome.

Drop off donations at any CEC office, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The deadline for contributions is Friday, December 8. We thank you for your generosity that makes a significant difference to those in need.

Choctaw Electric wishes our members a warm and joyful holiday season! ❄️



MANAGER'S REPORT



# Celebrating the cooperative spirit

BY KOONEY DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As we approach the end of another year, it's time to reflect upon the year and express gratitude for all we have accomplished together.

At Choctaw Electric, we take pride in being a member-owned cooperative that consistently strives to give back to the community. Our Warming Tree initiative, which you can read about on Page 1, is an embodiment of CEC's concern for community; it's one of the ways we reach out and support our neighbors in need.

Throughout the year, we've actively participated in various community events, reinforcing our dedication to making a positive difference in the lives of our members. Our ongoing support for the Oklahoma Special Olympics, which sees a group of our dedicated employees volunteering each year, is just one example of our continued community engagement.

Our commitment extends beyond the boundaries of our local communities. We have been involved in international electrification projects, sharing the invaluable gift of light with those who do not have the privilege we often take for granted. Our own lineman, Darren Frazier, has participated in two of these life-changing projects. Additionally, we proudly participate in the Shoot for the Nations sporting clay shoot event, which

raises funds for the Oklahoma Energy Trails Foundation for international electrification.

Our members' generosity has touched our hearts as well. We've received calls from members who have made donations to support fellow co-op members. One member made a \$500 donation toward another member's bill. These gestures speak volumes about the kindness within our community.

Finally, our employees' hard work, dedication to the co-op and commitment to our members does not go unnoticed. It has led to one of the most productive periods in CEC's recent history, and I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each Choctaw Electric employee.

As we celebrate the holidays and look

ahead to the coming year, let's continue working together to make southeast Oklahoma a brighter and more compassionate place to live. Reach out to your neighbors and lend a helping hand. I encourage everyone to keep the local food pantries in mind. This time of year can be especially challenging for those in need.

Thank you for being a part of our cooperative family, and for the kindness and generosity you've shown throughout the year. I wish you and yours a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year. ❄️

**“As we celebrate the holidays and look ahead to the coming year, let's continue working together to make southeast Oklahoma a brighter and more compassionate place to live.”**

**Lucky Acct #26027702** If this is your account number, please contact CEC by the 5th of the month to claim your **\$100 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.

## Choctaw Electric Cooperative

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

Monday-Friday • 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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Local: (580) 298-3201

*On the Web:*

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



24 Hour Outage Hotline

**800-780-6486**

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Brent Franks, *President*

Jarred Campbell, *Vice President*

Perry Thompson, Jr., *Secretary Treasurer*

Bill Woolsey	Debbie Cody
Jana Burris	Ken Autry
Stacy Nichols	Jackson Ferguson

### MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Kooney Duncan, *Chief Executive Officer*

Jennifer Boling, *Executive Assistant*

Jia Johnson, *Director of Public Relations*



### December District Meeting

Monday, December 4 at 6 p.m.  
Wildlife Heritage Museum, Antlers

District E - Perry Thompson  
District G - Brent Franks  
District I - Ken Autry



Win a

**\$100 Bill Credit!**



Enroll in CEC's paperless billing.

When you enroll, your name will be entered in our monthly drawing for new paperless accounts. Enroll using SmartHub's payment options or contact CEC at 800-780-6486 for assistance.

## Youth Tour applications are open

High school juniors, apply by December 8

Attention high school juniors! How does an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., sound? If you're interested in winning this trip-of-a-lifetime, now's your chance to apply.

"What our winners see and learn, and the bonds they form with other students on Youth Tour are pretty amazing," said Jia Johnson, Youth Tour coordinator. "Truly, there is no youth trip quite like this one."

Three contest winners will represent CEC on the 2024 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, June 14-20, 2024.

Youth Tour contest guidelines and applications are available at

[www.choctawelectric.net/youth-tour](http://www.choctawelectric.net/youth-tour), or pick up an information packet at any CEC office or local high school. All students who attend school within CEC's service territory, including home-schooled students, are encouraged to apply.

Questions? Please call Jia Johnson at 800-780-6486. The application deadline is Dec. 8, 2023. 📅



Scan here for more information

**Deadline to enter is December 31.**

### HOLIDAY HOURS

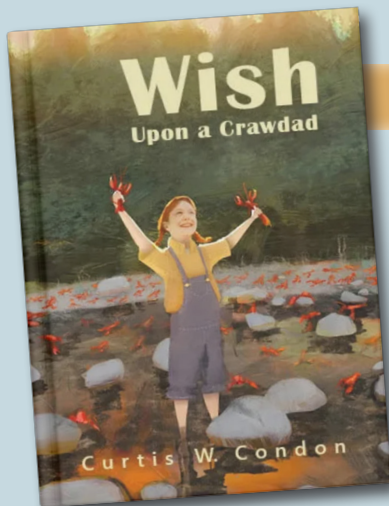
Choctaw Electric will close on the following days in observance of the holidays:

Christmas  
**December 25-26**

New Year's Day  
**January 1**

To report a service problem, please use SmartHub or call 800-780-6486.





### Christmas gift idea!

“Wish Upon a Crawdad” is an award-winning book, geared for fourth to sixth-graders, that centers around the birth of an electric co-op. It’s available for FREE Kindle download on Dec. 10 and 11. It’s also available in hardcover and paperback.

### CHRISTMAS PARADES

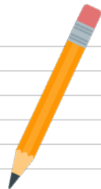
- Dec. 1 - Idabel
- Dec. 2 - DeQueen, AR
- Dec. 4 - Broken Bow
- Dec. 7 - Antlers
- Dec. 9 - Hugo

HO HO HO!



### Winter Efficiency Quiz

Which winter weatherization project will boost your home’s efficiency with the least up-front investment?



- A. Install a high-efficiency furnace.
- B. Replace windows with double-pane, low-E glass windows.
- C. Seal gaps around doors & windows with caulk or weatherstripping.
- D. Add extra insulation to your attic

**Answer:** While each option will improve your home’s efficiency, answer C, sealing leaks, is an easy project that will help you **save more for less!**

### Tree Safety

When decking the halls with twinkling lights, don’t overload your outlets. Remember to unplug lights before you leave home or go to bed!



# When the lights came on

The late Leoma Caldwell was a longtime Choctaw Electric member and an advocate for the co-op. She recalled life before rural electrification and what it meant to her family to get electricity in 1942.

In June 2022, the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives filmed an interview with Leoma. Scan the QR code below to hear her story.



Scan here to watch the interview.

