

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

Published for members of Choctaw Electric Cooperative

TOP STORY

TUNED IN

CEC board takes member requests to heart: Storm shelter loans are back!

Safety concerns, strong finances and the listening ears of nine Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC) trustees resulted in a unanimous vote to restore the co-op's storm shelter loan program. The board approved the decision at their monthly meeting in January.

"Both trustees and staff members have heard from a number of members who say they would like to see the program restored," said Kooney Duncan, CEO of CEC.

The storm shelter program makes loans available to qualifying CEC members who wish to purchase an in-ground storm



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—KOONEY DUNCAN, CEO

shelter. The loans pay for the cost of the storm shelter, installation and delivery. To keep loan payments low and affordable, financing is available for up to five years. Loan payments will appear on your monthly electric bill.

The storm shelter offered through the program is a manufactured concrete, in-ground model with a slope front. Options include an easy entry style with taller doors and less steep steps, or the standard unit. The shelter comes in two sizes: 6 feet by 8 feet, and 6 feet ten inches by 10 feet. Prices start at \$2,500.

CEC created the program in 2002 to make it more affordable for co-op members of all income levels to enjoy a safe haven from tornadoes. ☼

For more details on CEC storm shelters or available financing, please call Jennifer Boling at 800-780-6486, ext. 207, or visit us online at www.choctawelectric.coop.



You Can Afford To Stay Safe.

With a CEC storm shelter loan you enjoy a safe, in-ground shelter and low monthly payments that fit your budget. Contact us today for more details.

800-780-6486 • www.choctawelectric.coop



MANAGER'S REPORT



Good Reasons To Crow

Study shows CEC in great financial shape

BY KOONEY DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

If you keep up with your co-op, you know we've been crowing about the notable uptick in CEC's financial health. Skepticism abounds, however, and the Doubting Thomases among us may wonder if things are genuinely rosy, or are we guilty of looking through tinted glasses?

I'm happy to report that we are not, and the proof lies in an in-depth cost of service study conducted by C.H. Guernsey and Co. The Oklahoma-based company specializes in providing accurate and sometimes painful financial assessments for electric utilities across the country. When Guernsey consultants get to work, they reveal the good, the bad, and the ugly so the utility can make adjustments to ensure it remains in business. If a co-op needs to raise rates, borrow money, reduce expenses, or alter its rate structure to ensure all rate classes bear their fair share of operating expenses, this study will shine a light on it.

I think of it as a business road map. It examines all the details that could affect CEC's progress—system growth, income and expenses, long term debt, load factor, power costs, rates and more. Basically, all the factors that influence CEC's ability to meet, and hopefully exceed, our members' expectations. Through the Guernsey lens, we see our

financial situation in hard focus—no Glamour Shots. The information allows us to examine our goals, determine if they are attainable, and weigh the possible impact of these decisions.

Granted, the cost of service study isn't a magical glass ball. It can't predict devastating storms, global events that affect energy prices, or even the wisdom

“Through the Guernsey lens, we see our financial situation in hard focus—no Glamour Shots.”

of CEC staff, trustees, or the members who elect them. But it can help us determine if CEC is doing the right things now to prepare for the known and unknown challenges ahead.

The great news is it is. The study shows CEC is a strong, stable co-op in sound financial condition. Thanks to our vigilant commitment to efficient operations, we can continue to pay down debt, improve services for members, and focus on increasing reliability through vigorous right of way maintenance.

That's sweet music to the ears, isn't it? Congratulations, members, your electric co-op is back on track and moving forward. 🎉

Lucky Acct #38827600 (\$75) If this account number belongs to you, contact CEC by the 10th of the month to claim your \$75 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.



Choctaw Electric Cooperative

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

Monday-Friday • 8 am - 5 pm

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24 Hour Outage Hotline

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Jia Johnson, *Director of Public Relations*
Tiffany Hempsted, *Chief Financial Officer*



FRIENDS • LEADERSHIP • FUN

Free Camp For 8th Graders

If a free trip to camp appeals to your eighth grader, tell them to enter CEC's YouthPower Energy Camp contest. It's easy to enter and the reward just might be the highlight of their summer! Here's what they need to know:

What Makes it Fun

Energy Camp rolls plenty of activity into four days, but the focus is on building leadership skills, learning important cooperative principles, and making new friends—a lot of them.

Date and Location

Energy Camp will be held May 26-29 at Canyon Camp near Hinton, Okla. The camp is located near the scenic Red Rock Canyon.

Meals and Transportation

CEC provides transportation to and from camp. All meals, snacks and camp activities are paid, courtesy of your co-op.

Requirements

Students must be eighth graders attending school in CEC service territory.

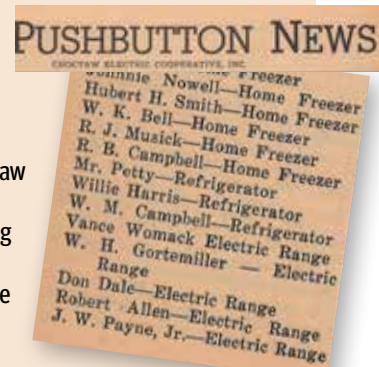
How To Enter

Teens enter to win by creating a three to five minute video on how they can help save energy in their home. Please submit videos by March 6 to: bakendrick@choctawelectric.coop. The entry must include the student's name and telephone number and name and number of their parent or legal guardian.

A GLANCE BACK

Appliances Make The News

Your new fridge might not make headlines now, but years ago it was big news. As Choctaw Electric (CEC) began energizing homes in the 1940s, appliance sales gradually increased.



Long denied the luxury of electricity, co-op members could now enjoy the convenience of the electric range, freezer, refrigerator, and iron.

An article in CEC's newsletter, *PushButton News*, asked members to notify the co-op when they purchased a new electric appliance. A list of purchases were published in the newsletter each month, along with the member's name. Members were proud of their new appliances and gladly shared the news.

THE HOME Energy DETECTIVE

By Brad Kendrick, CEC Energy Use Specialist

Heating and cooling accounts for more than 40% of energy used in the typical home. Insulation can reduce this energy use and lower bills.



Co-op Member Learns Added Insulation Pays Off

Several months ago, I visited a member who needed ideas on how they could lower their electric use in their home. After an inspection, I found they only had about four to six inches of insulation in their attic. I suggested they add 12 to 14 inches of insulation to increase the R-value. The member agreed and added the extra insulation. Later, we compared their monthly usage, as well as the outside temperatures, to their home's usage before they added more insulation. A notable

reduction! They used fewer kilowatt-hours (kwh) with temperatures in the 20s than they did with temps in the 40s.

Their wise decision paid off by lowering their kwh usage and extending the life of their HVAC unit. A happy ending!



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.



REMINDER

BYLAW BANTER

The Choctaw Electric bylaw committee will meet this month to review bylaws. For details, please call 800-780-6486, or watch for our post on Facebook.

RECIPE DEADLINE IS MARCH 31

CEC seeks recipes for its 80th Anniversary Cookbook. Please use the recipe format found on page 4 of the January issue of *Inside Your Co-op*, available at www.choctawelectric.coop. Submit your favorite dish by March 31 to:

Choctaw Electric Cooperative
Attn: Recipes
PO Box 758, Hugo, OK 74743

Recipes may be submitted via email to: jboling@choctawelectric.coop
jjohnson@choctawelectric.coop

Questions? Please call 800-780-6486. ext. 207 or 241.

How Long Until My Power Comes Back On?

Check CEC's online outage map to watch the restoration process in real time

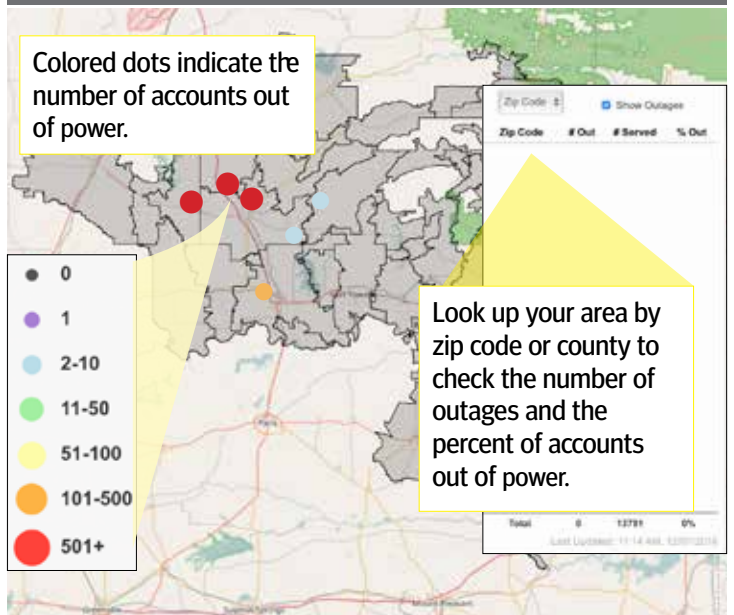
During a power outage, the first thing members want to know is when their power will be restored. In the midst of a major outage, that question is impossible for any electric utility to answer with certainty. But by using Choctaw Electric Cooperative's online outage map, members can easily track the restoration process in real time and get a better idea of when their power will come back on.

The map allows members to view regions by zip code or county, see the number of outages in that area, and the percentage of members affected.

Color-coded icons help members to determine the severity of an outage. For example, a red circle indicates a major outage affecting more than 500 members. As outages are restored, the colored icons change, indicating that progress is being made.

To view the map, please visit www.choctawelectric.coop and click the Outage and Storm Center icon in the middle of the homepage.

Choctaw Electric's Online Outage Map



Check it out at www.choctawelectric.coop

GENERATOR *Safety*



A safety message from
CHOCTAW ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO ENSURE EVERYONE'S SAFETY:

- Make sure there is **nothing plugged into the generator when turning it on**. Use a **heavy-duty** extension cord to connect appliances to the outlets on the generator.
- Always operate the generator on a stable, dry surface **outside the home**—and well away from garage, doors, windows, and vents leading into your home. Generators produce **deadly** carbon monoxide.
- **Never** connect your portable generator to the home directly. This **can result in potentially deadly backfeed**, which happens when electricity is fed back through the electrical system onto power lines, creating a serious hazard for line workers and others.



Learn more at

