

Gas Prices And Your Bill

PCA reflects inflation across the nation.

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Energy Camp

Campers learn about electric co-ops and make friends for life.

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CEC Community Dollars

A fund that helps local organizations help others.

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For members of **Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

FEBRUARY 2022

CEC *inside your* co-op

Back To School

Custom Classes For Students

CEC offers free energy education programs designed to fit your classroom needs.

No one knows what students need to learn better than their school teacher. For that reason, Choctaw Electric staff work with local educators to design the most effective energy education programs for their students. CEC's energy education classes make learning about energy fun for kids of all ages.

"We always visit with the teacher beforehand because we want to make sure our programs meet their needs," said Jia Johnson, CEC director of public relations.

Johnson and fellow staff member Brad Kendrick aim to create an educational experience that is fun and interactive. Some teachers want to focus on electrical

"We don't just stand up there and talk to them. We get the students involved in what we're teaching."

safety; others want programs on renewable energy or how electricity is generated. They've also created programs on careers in the electrical industry.

While Johnson and Kendrick are happy to bring their programs to the classroom, some teachers prefer to bring their class to CEC.

"A field trip is fun because students can visit our dispatch room and see how we track



Student at Broken Bow Middle School learns about solar power as part of CEC's free energy education program.

AT A GLANCE

CEC's energy education programs:

- Designed to meet your classroom needs
- Suitable for all ages, 1st -12th grade.
- Topics include safety, energy conservation, renewable energy, electricity basics, generation, transmission and delivery, careers in the electric co-op industry, and more.
- All materials and programs are free!

outages. The kids get to see the whole process in action and they love it," Johnson says.

The ability to see and touch the equipment that delivers power to their homes makes an impact on students, Kendrick adds. That's why the classes are designed to be interactive. "We don't just stand up there and talk to them. We get the students involved in what we're teaching," he says.

One teacher used the CEC course to prepare her students for year-end tests. She knew the test had questions about alternative energy and thought the hands-on

activities would help her students retain the information.

Because the courses rely so heavily on student participation, the pandemic curtailed many CEC school visits. After a year and half of Covid restrictions, Johnson and Kendrick say they are eager to work with teachers to create the best possible learning experience for students. ☺

For more information on CEC's free energy education programs, please call **800-780-6486**, ext. 241 or 209, or visit **www.choctawelectric.coop**.

MANAGER'S REPORT



Gas Prices and Your Bill

PCA reflects inflation across the nation

BY KOONEY DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

If it seems like prices change every time you go to the store, you're not wrong. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) says that prices climbed over the past year at the fastest pace in more than 42 years. Families everywhere feel the effects while businesses must reevaluate their operations to survive.

A recent survey by the National Federation of Independent Businesses found that 57 percent of US businesses have raised their prices in the past year. Even the Dollar Tree, where everything costs one dollar or less, must raise its item price to \$1.25. (I don't know about you, but the "Dollar And A Quarter Tree" just doesn't have the same ring to it.)

The electric utility industry is also grappling with rising prices. Choctaw Electric (CEC) hasn't raised its rates in several years, and we aren't planning to do so. CEC works hard to maintain a reliable system without increasing costs. But that doesn't mean the electricity industry is immune to crazy ripples in the economy.

Power plants use fuels such as coal, natural gas, and renewables to generate electricity. When prices for these fuels go up or down, the cost to generate electricity also changes. You will see this fluctuation on your monthly bill in the power cost adjustment (PCA). The PCA helps cover the cost of power that CEC purchases from its wholesale supplier.

The Oklahoma Corporation Commission established the PCA to protect consumers from unnecessary rate increases. The fluctuating PCA keeps power costs as close as possible to the actual costs of generating and transmitting electricity and shares these costs among consumers to lessen the impact. Generating costs are higher than usual due to the higher-than-normal cost of natural gas.

To give you an example of how much gas prices spiked, from October 2020 to October 2021, the average cost of natural gas delivered to Oklahoma power plants tripled. That is significant.

Every time I fill up my truck, I wish I had more control over oil and gas prices, but I don't. Unfortunately, neither does CEC nor our wholesale power supplier.

But what goes up will come back down. We've all seen these swings before. Eventually, prices will stabilize, and so will the PCA on your bill. In the meantime, CEC is ready and willing to help you get through this as best we can. Please call us at **800-780-6486** so we can create a payment plan that works for you.

Lucky Acct #38848602

If this account number belongs to you, 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.

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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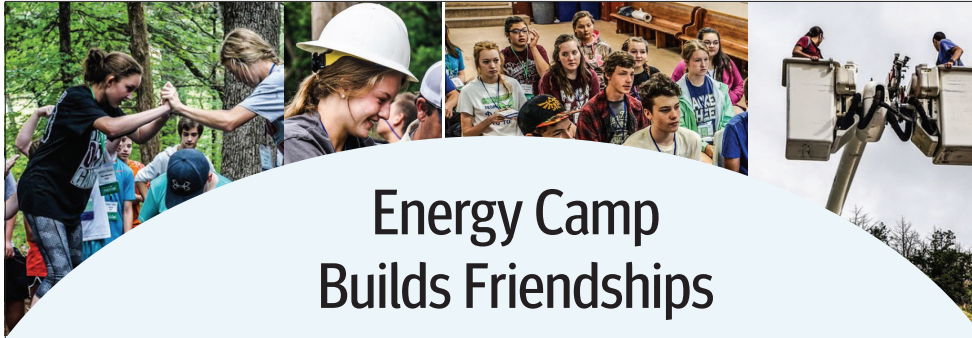
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Jennifer Boling, *Executive Assistant*

Jia Johnson, *Director of Public Relations*



Energy Camp Builds Friendships

Tell your eighth grader to enter by March 11, 2022!

For eighth graders who attend Oklahoma's YouthPower Energy Camp, making new friends isn't a possibility, it's a promise.

"These friendships often extend well beyond the four days they spend together at camp. These kids stay in touch over the years," said Brad Kendrick, Energy Camp coordinator for Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC).

Kendrick added that it's not unusual to find campers encouraging one another to apply for Youth Tour so they can meet again.

This year, CEC will select three eighth grade students to attend Energy Camp. For interested teens and parents, here's what you need to know:

■ It's 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 31 - June 3 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 are asked to write a 150 to 200 word essay on the seventh Cooperative Principle, commitment to community and what it means to them.

■ Deadline

Essay deadline is March 11. Please attach an entry form to your essay that includes the student's name and telephone number, and the name and telephone number of their parent or legal guardian. *Do not write your name on your essay.* Entry forms are available at www.choctawelectric.coop.

■ Questions?

Please call Brad Kendrick, CEC Energy Camp coordinator, at 800-780-6486, ext. 209, or send email to bakendrick@choctawelectric.coop.



REMINDER

■ **February 11**
YouthTour entries due by 5 pm.

■ **March 11**
Energy Camp essays due by 5 pm.

■ April 4

Member Appreciation Days, 11 pm - 1 pm
CEC Idabel

■ April 6

Member Appreciation Days, 11 pm - 1 pm
CEC Hugo

■ April 14

Member Appreciation Days, 11 pm - 1 pm
CEC Antlers

Are You On Life Support?

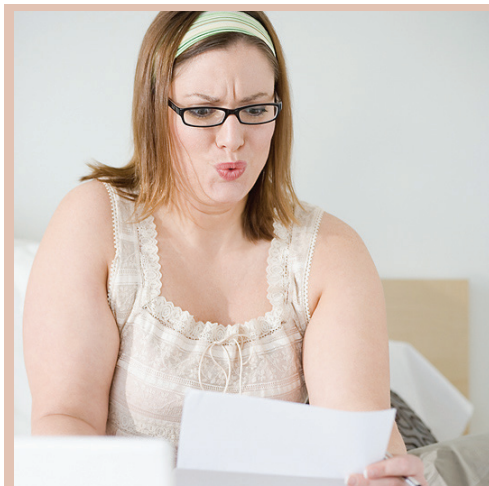
Choctaw Electric needs to know

If you rely on electricity to power life support equipment, please let Choctaw Electric (CEC) know by filling out a life support dependent member form.

The forms are available for download at www.choctawelectric.coop, or call us at 800-780-6486.

CEC maintains a record of all life support dependent members so the co-op can notify them of scheduled outages in their area. CEC updates these records every year in March. Life support members must submit the form every year.

In the event of a power outage, life-support-dependent members should be prepared with battery backup or another source of alternate power.



END HIGH BILL SURPRISE.

Log on to CEC's Smarthub and monitor your usage by the hour, day or week. Knowing how and when your household energy use goes up can help you adjust your usage behavior and lower your bill. Log on at www.choctawelectric.coop.



Lessons in Giving

Members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Idabel, above, helped CEC staff with Christmas shopping for CEC's Angel Tree. The teens help determine the budget for gift giving, track spending, and help select toys and other gift items. CEC staff deliver the gifts to the local DHS in December for distribution to families in need.



Growing Stronger Communities

CEC Fund Helps Those Who Help Others

Could your organization use a little help in its mission to better southeast Oklahoma? If so, consider applying for community dollars from Choctaw Electric (CEC).

Every year, your co-op allocates funds within its budget to be contributed to programs that improve our local communities. Nonprofit organizations may apply for funds using the community donation request form found at www.choctawelectric.coop. CEC's donation committee reviews the

CEC Helps You Swap Old Appliances For More Efficient Models

When it comes to household energy use, it pays to have the most efficient appliances and equipment. Over time, refrigerators, washers and dryers, water heaters and even your heating and cooling unit operates less efficiently. As a result, you could find yourself paying higher utility bills than necessary.

If you've put off an appliance purchase due to the price tag, Choctaw Electric (CEC) can help. CEC offers loans on select energy efficient appliances and energy-saving home improvements.

■ **CEC APPLIANCE LOANS** offer up to \$2,500 for the following Energy Star-rated appliances:

- Washers and dryers
- Refrigerators and freezers
- Electric ranges, cook-tops
- Dishwashers
- Water heaters
- Stoves and ovens

New Energy Star-rated washing machines use **25% less energy** and **about 70 to 75% less water** than agitator washers did 20 years ago.

SOURCE: ENERGY STAR

■ **CEC ENERGY LOANS** cover up to \$7,500 for the following energy saving improvements:

- Caulking and weather-stripping
- Heat pumps and central heat and air systems of SEER 16 or higher.
- Storm windows and doors
- Programmable thermostats
- Attic ventilation fans

For more details, please call Lacy Peters at **800-780-6487**, ext. 213.

COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE

#7 Commitment To Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

requests monthly. Funding requests must meet certain eligibility requirements, and focus on at least one of the following:

■ **Human Needs:** Programs and organizations that support the physical and emotional well being of local people.

■ **Education:** Programs that motivate and educate local youth and adults.

■ **Culture and Art:** Cultural and arts activities that enhance the communities we serve.

■ **Civic:** Community organizations and programs that promote community improvement.

■ **Environment:** Programs that work for a clean, safe and healthy environment that sustains our communities.

CEC community donations reflect the co-op's commitment to the Seven Cooperative Principles. The seventh principle is Commitment for Community.

For more info on CEC donations, please call **800-780-6486**, or download the donation request form at www.choctawelectric.coop.