

A Reliable New Year

Amid nationwide reliability concerns, CEC strengthens local system.

■ PAGE 2

Coming Soon: Buddy Ball

CEC announces inclusive baseball program, starting this spring!

■ PAGE 3

Safe & Efficient Winter

Learn how to stay safe and save money this winter.

■ PAGE 4

For members of **Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

JANUARY 2024

CEC *inside your* co-op



Energy Camp 2023 participants gather for a group photo at Canyon Camp in Hinton, Oklahoma. Right: CEC 2023 Energy Camp winners include (left to right): Emerson McElroy, Tayen McDaniel and Eliza Bryant.



Energy Camp applications are now open

Eighth-graders apply by March 1

Hey eighth-graders! What are your summer plans? How about an all-expenses-paid trip to summer camp? Choctaw Electric is sending three eighth-graders to Energy Camp in Hinton, Oklahoma, May 28-31.

Energy Camp is designed to develop students' leadership skills, teach them about one of rural America's most important industries—rural electrification, all while having fun and making new friends. Each year, more than 80 students from across

Oklahoma participate in the camp and get to understand electricity in a new light! Campers have the opportunity to experience a bucket truck, climb a pole, watch a live electric safety demo, check out an EV car showcase, interact with a robot, and much more.

Applicants must be eighth-grade students attending a school in the CEC service area. Download an application at choctawelectric.net/energy-camp. Questions? Please call Jia Johnson at 800-780-6486. ☎

Application Guidelines

Write a 150-200-word essay on the following topic:

What are the pros and cons of a pedal bicycle vs. an electric bicycle?

Essays will be judged on:

- ✓ Originality and creativity - 60%
- ✓ Composition and grammar - 20%
- ✓ Neatness - 10%
- ✓ Spelling - 10%

Deadline: March 1, 2024 at 5 p.m.



**Scan here
for more
information**

MANAGER'S REPORT



A reliable new year

BY KOONEY DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

There's a buzz of hope and optimism in the air as we ring in a new year. At Choctaw Electric, our team looks forward to where we're going as a cooperative and how we can better serve you, the members of CEC, in the year ahead.

As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important to us. Reliability has been the focus of much attention in the electric utility industry as co-ops respond to rising demand, fuel supply issues and extreme winter weather events. So how are we working to ensure reliable and affordable power while adapting to a changing energy landscape and our community's evolving needs?

"In addition to advocating for a reliable energy mix, Choctaw Electric has made improvements on a local level to sustain reliability."

A critical component of reliable power is the mix of energy resources used to generate that electricity. You might not realize it, but CEC doesn't generate electricity. Instead, we purchase it from our Anadarko-based energy provider, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative. From there, we distribute it to homes and businesses throughout our service area. WFEC's energy resource mix comes from a variety of sources including coal, natural gas, wind, solar and hydropower.

Even with diversified generation, seasonal peak demand—like we saw during Winter Storm Uri in 2021 and Winter Storm Elliott in 2022—can threaten power reliability. The

North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the not-for profit regulatory authority focused on assuring grid reliability, released a winter reliability assessment which revealed that two-thirds of the U.S.—including Oklahoma—faces 'elevated risk' of blackouts during extreme winter conditions.

Maintaining a diverse energy mix is crucial for reliability, especially during times of peak demand. There's a push to use more electricity generated from renewable (intermittent) energy sources, but we also know the critical role baseload generation plays in ensuring reliable power is available to our members whenever you need it.

In addition to advocating for a reliable energy mix, Choctaw Electric has made improvements on a local level to sustain reliability: we are constructing a new substation in McCurtain County to divide the electric

load there; we are working on projects to increase existing substation capacity; we are increasing the size of wire on feeders to carry more load; and we've added more switches to our system to further break down our load. These switches reduce the impact of outages and help us restore power with less risk of overwhelming the system.

As we focus on what's ahead in this new year, CEC will continue working to provide the reliable electricity you expect at a cost local families and businesses can afford. ☺

Choctaw Electric Cooperative

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

Monday-Friday • 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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.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*

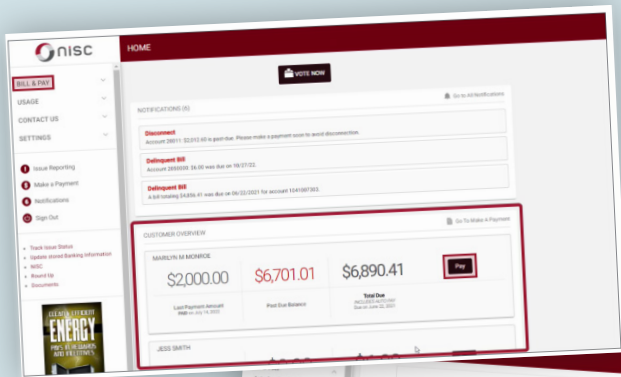
Tanya Roebuck, *Executive Assistant/
HR & Benefits*

Jia Johnson, *Director of Public Relations*

Lucky Acct #38856705 If this is your account number, please 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.

New year, new features!

With Choctaw Electric's SmartHub app, you can pay your bill, sign up for Auto Pay, view usage history, report outages, update contact information and more!
If you have questions, please call customer service at 800-780-6486.



Scan here to learn more & sign up!



JANUARY District Meetings

Districts A, D & F
Monday, Jan. 15 at 6 p.m.
Valliant School Cafeteria

District B
Monday, Jan. 22 at 6 p.m.
Broken Bow Library

District A - Jarred Campbell
District B - Jana Burris
District D - Bill Woolsey
District F - Debbie Cody



Batter up for Buddy Ball

Get ready to swing into action with CEC's inaugural Buddy Ball game

Choctaw Electric is stepping up to the plate to offer a new community event this spring—Buddy Ball.

Buddy Ball is an athletic league designed for individuals with special needs—both children and adults. It offers a non-competitive sports environment tailored for those with physical, intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, providing them with an inclusive opportunity to engage in the game of baseball. The impact of this opportunity

extends beyond the field, instilling values such as teamwork, fostering self-esteem, encouraging turn-taking, promoting physical fitness and nurturing social skills. The league also strengthens support networks for the athletes and their families.

In cooperation with several local sponsors, the inaugural Buddy Ball game is scheduled for April 20. Participation in the event is free of charge. Registration forms will be available at all CEC offices and local schools.



Secure your home for winter

Five essential tips to keep you warm and safe

As temperatures plummet and daylight dwindles, the natural inclination is to transform our living spaces into warm and inviting sanctuaries. Yet, with the increased usage of heating appliances, candles and electrical devices during the winter months, the risk of home fires escalates. Here are five ways to safeguard your home this winter.

Ensure proper functioning of detectors.

Regularly check that your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are in optimal working condition. For battery-operated detectors, replace the batteries semi-annually. Conduct monthly tests and ensure the sensors are free of dirt and debris by giving them a thorough dusting.

Inspect electrical cords. Before use, always examine extension cords, electric blankets and portable heater cords for signs of wear and tear. Be sure cords are not frayed or cracked. Maintain a safe distance of at least three feet between portable heaters and flammable objects. Opt for models with auto shut-off and overheat protection features. Never connect a space heater to a power strip.

Don't overload outlets or power strips.

Overloaded outlets and power strips can overheat and pose a fire hazard. Verify that the power strip can handle the electrical load before using it for multiple devices. For added safety, choose power strips with surge protection.

Maintain your fireplace. Enjoying a cozy fire on a chilly night is delightful, but it's crucial to keep the fireplace well-maintained for safety. The combustion of wood results in the buildup of creosote in the chimney. Left unchecked, this can lead to chimney fires. Schedule an annual cleaning to reduce fire risks, enhance air circulation and limit the ingress of carbon monoxide indoors.

Practice kitchen safety. Be vigilant about potential fire hazards. Never leave food cooking and unattended on the stovetop. Keep cooking surfaces clean and promptly address spilled foods. Mindfully place flammable items like dish towels to prevent accidents.

As winter unfolds, Choctaw Electric Cooperative encourages you to prioritize household safety. These precautions will ensure a secure and cozy home environment throughout the season. ❄️



Emergency heat: *what it is and when to use it*

When winter weather arrives, it's essential to optimize your thermostat settings for both comfort and efficiency. Be mindful of the emergency heat setting, often denoted as "EmH," on your thermostat. While it might seem like a quick solution to combat the cold, understanding when to use it can make a significant difference in your energy consumption.

Emergency heat is designed to kick in when

the outside temperature drops below freezing. It bypasses your heat pump and activates your furnace's electric heat strips. However, relying on this setting unnecessarily can lead to a significant increase in energy usage, resulting in higher utility bills.

Before reaching for the emergency heat setting, assess the outside temperature. If it's not freezing, it's advisable to stick to your regular heating settings to avoid excess energy

expenditure. Your heat pump is generally more energy efficient than the electric heat strips used in emergency mode.

If you do use the emergency heat setting, don't forget to turn it off when the cold snap is over. By staying mindful of your thermostat settings and optimizing them based on external temperatures, you can stay warm during the winter without compromising on efficiency. ❄️