

Storm “After Math”

Mountains of paperwork remain after storm clouds clear.

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Hand To Hand

A donation for a local organization that fed hungry storm victims.

■ PAGE 3

Ice On Power Lines

Why ice is a force to reckon with for your co-op.

■ PAGE 4

For members of **Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

JANUARY 2023

CEC *inside your* co-op



Rural Broadband Funding Relies On Accurate Data

“If the final map contains bad information, thousands of Oklahomans could be left out.”

If your service is lacking, it’s time to speak up!

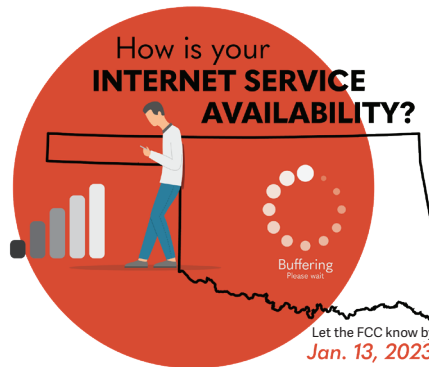
Sometimes maps can be misleading. For example, the newly released broadband availability map from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). According to the map, all parts of Oklahoma—that’s every backroads home and business from the tip of the Panhandle to the last stop in Tom—enjoys access to high speed broadband of at least 100 mbps upload/20mbps download.

Does this sound right to you? If you question the accuracy of map, which was compiled using data from service providers, the Oklahoma Broadband Coalition needs your help. Residents who report discrepancies to the map help ensure Oklahoma’s underserved areas remain eligible for billions of dollars in federal broadband funding.

“We have reason to believe that some of the information listed on the site, especially in rural areas, is not accurate,” said Kirk Martin, interim director of the Oklahoma Broadband Office. “In many cases, the map lists service that is simply not available.”

Any Oklahoman, business, school, church, library, or place with internet service can look at the map and challenge the information.

The request to check the map is urgent. The FCC has set a **deadline of January 13, 2023**, to provide correct information.



What To Do:

1. Check your address for service availability at <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home>. The map allows you to look up your address and see if the information is accurate.
2. If the data for your address is wrong, please submit corrected information by clicking the Availability Challenge link.
3. Please submit your challenge by the **January 13, 2023** deadline.

“After the challenge process is completed, the data in the final version of the map will be used to determine how much grant money Oklahoma will get to improve internet service throughout the state,” Martin said. “If the final map contains bad information, thousands of Oklahomans could be left out.”

Electric cooperatives are working with the Oklahoma Broadband Coalition by urging their consumer-members to thoroughly review the map and get corrections to the FCC quickly. For co-ops, the benefit to families, farms, businesses, and communities is this generation’s equivalent to the impact of rural electrification nearly 100 years ago.

“Reliable broadband is a necessity for the growth, development, and economic prosperity in Oklahoma’s rural and suburban communities. Electric cooperatives care about the communities they serve and strive to be difference makers within their service territories. Having access to reliable broadband is crucial to the quality of life in co-op service areas throughout the state,” said Chris Meyers, general manager of the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives. ☝

The Oklahoma Broadband Coalition is on a five-year mission to develop and administer grant programs to make affordable, high-speed internet available to all Oklahomans. The broadband office regularly updates its website at broadband.ok.gov with the most recent information.

MANAGER'S REPORT



The After-Math

Restoring power is only half of the story.

BY KOONEY DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

When storms cause outages, Choctaw Electric shifts into overdrive to get your life back to normal. We do our best to keep you informed during these times, but sometimes, we get so caught up in the restoration process, clean up and safety issues that we fail to mention the other half of the story.

For Choctaw Electric, the aftermath of a bad storm includes a lot of “after math.” By that, I mean the all-important bean counting, record keeping, expense tracking, and damage assessments. To determine the severity of a disaster, and whether that event qualifies for federal assistance, electric co-ops must document every step of our work and report the information to the federal government in 30 days or less.

Besides the broken limbs and piles of debris, a storm like the one we experienced on November 4 dumps a mountain of paperwork on your co-op. There are meetings, phone calls, and endless forms to file—all i’s dotted and t’s crossed. Local government entities and tribes must follow a similar process. It is rigorous, to say the least.

It’s also essential. The damage assessments we submit will determine if a disaster qualifies for millions of dollars in emergency assistance. If the total damage assessments from our region fail to meet the Federal Emergency Management

Administration’s (FEMA) \$7.2 million threshold, we will be responsible for the storm costs incurred.

For Choctaw Electric, that amounts to roughly \$1.25 million.

Yep, it’s a bitter pill to swallow but as I’ve said more than once, emergencies are our business. We are trained for such situations and that is the difference between a glancing blow and gut punch.

In Oklahoma, our crazy weather requires electric co-ops to make readiness an essential part of everything we do—from stockpiling materials and maintaining our right of way, to managing

our finances with an eye on the future. We don’t know what Mother Nature has planned for us, but we are committed to meeting her challenges with as little pain on you as possible.

We have a new year ahead of us. Plenty can happen. We can’t promise clear skies, sunshine and low gas prices, but we can promise this: We work for you and we never forget it.

Thank you and please have a happy New Year!

“Besides the broken limbs and piles of debris, a storm like the one we experienced on November 4 dumps a mountain of paperwork on your co-op.”

Lucky Acct #29713600

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.

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

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.coop



24 Hour Outage Hotline
800-780-6486

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Helping Those Who Help Others

Volunteers with Hand to Hand, Inc. with Kooney Duncan, CEO of Choctaw Electric Cooperative. Duncan presented the Haworth non-profit organization with a \$2,500 donation from the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC) Disaster Relief Fund. The fund exists to help rural organizations and communities meet local needs following a disaster.

Hand to Hand was founded in 1989 to help people during emergencies. After the November 4 tornado outbreak, the group stepped up to provide free meals for thousands of local residents.

“The storms had a devastating impact and this group went above and beyond to help out,” said Duncan. “We are proud to help a group that does so much for our local area.”

For more information on Hand to Hand and their services, please visit www.handtohandinc.org.

Watt-Wise

Crunching the Numbers for New Year's Energy Savings

If your New Year's resolution to spend less and save more fizzles out by March, don't fret. With a few simple adjustments in your home, you can save energy on your electric bill each month. Here's how:

SAVE up to 20 percent on heating by installing a programmable thermostat and setting it to automatically lower the heat when you leave the house for more than five hours and when you go to bed for the night.

SAVE 1 to 3 percent on heating costs for each degree you turn the thermostat down. For optimal savings, set the thermostat at 68°F. while at home and 65°F. when you are sleeping.

SAVE up to 20 percent on heating and cooling bills by sealing around doors and windows with caulk and weatherstripping. This inexpensive energy saver will pay for itself within a year.

SAVE at least 25 percent on air conditioning when you replace your old, inefficient central AC with one that has a seasonal energy-efficiency ratio (SEER) of 14 or higher.

SAVE up to 40 percent on what you spend to run your refrigerator by replacing your unit with a new Energy Star-certified model.

Talk to us! CEC can help you save by making new appliances and other home improvements more affordable.

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SAVE more than 50 percent on energy for cooking when you use a microwave oven instead of a conventional oven to heat meals.

SAVE more than 10 percent on your water heating bill by lowering the water temperature from 140°F. to 120°F.

SAVE 75 percent or more on energy for lighting by replacing incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs. They also last about 25 times longer. Switching out CFLs for LEDs will reduce lighting costs as much as 50 percent.

WINTER STORMS:

It's Never Too Soon To Prepare

At Choctaw Electric, an ice storm ranks last on the weather event popularity scale. Frigid temperatures, dangerous working conditions, and unhappy members make for some long hours on the job. While your co-op team is trained to prepare for the worst, co-op members are also encouraged to be ready. Planning ahead and keeping your emergency kit stocked with supplies will help you and your family stay as safe and comfortable during and after a storm.

Make a Plan: Make sure loved ones know how to reach you during emergencies and keep emergency contact list by the phone. If you require prescription medicine, make sure you have enough to last a few days if you are stranded. Same goes for clean water and non perishable food items. Stock up.

Check Supplies: Make sure you have a flashlight, batteries, and a camp lantern or two handy. A battery operated radio will provide local updates, or use your smart device to track the restoration progress via CEC's online outage map or SmartHub.

Stay Safe: If you plan on staying in place until power is restored, make sure you have extra blankets, gloves and winter clothes to help you stay warm. If you don't have a secondary source of power such as a generator or wood burning stove to provide heat, consider going to an emergency shelter or staying with neighbors. To locate shelters in your area, please call 2-1-1.

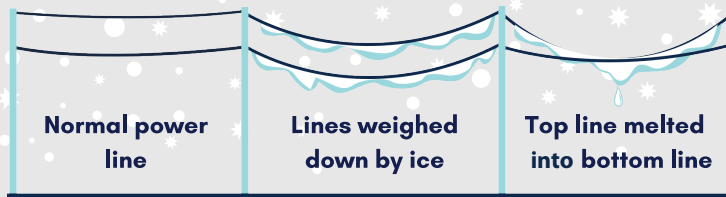


WORTH NOTING

Co-op Crews Continue Meter Change-Outs

If you live near Farris, Moyers, Finley or Antlers, you may have noticed Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC) personnel and trucks in your area. The teams are upgrading residential meters in the western portions of co-op service territory.

The new meters will improve outage detection and notifications, provide daily demand readings that improve grid maintenance, and save money on fuel costs by allowing the co-op to disconnect meters from the office.



ICE ON POWER LINES IS A WEIGHTY SUBJECT



When it comes to getting electricity across power lines and into homes, ice can be a force to be reckoned with.



ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30x heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch.

OTHER ICE FACTS

- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch
- 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages