

## Take The Right Action

Your participation is needed to improve southeast Oklahoma.

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## Dates To Remember

Bylaw proposals, candidate filing, and the CEC Annual Meeting.

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## Range In The Home

Members warm up to the notion of electric-powered appliances

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For members of **Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

JULY 2020

# 80 YEARS CEC inside your co-op



## Local Teens Click Through Co-op Virtual Energy Camp

*Pandemic prompts switch to online format.*

There was no Capture The Flag, no volleyball, no camp snacks, and no sweaty kids or sweaty counselors. The 2020 Energy Camp held May 26-29 was so unlike previous camp experiences, statewide coordinators had to design a new camp t-shirt to reflect the shift. What changed and why? The in-person camp for 8th graders typically held at Red Rock Canyon became a virtual experience conducted solely on social media. Necessitated by the global pandemic, it was an amazing success.

Brad Kendrick, Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC) member services representative, said campers “met” on Facebook and Instagram every morning at 9 am.

“They heard what was planned for the day and received a direct link to materials and resources, including tons of videos, presentations, tips and tricks, and other information,” he said.

To add to the fun, camp coordinators created a daily activity and challenge for campers to complete. Their participation made them eligible for a daily prize drawing, with winners announced live the next morning.

“This was a very different year for everyone involved but it was fun and educational for each camper, and they seemed to really enjoy it,” Kendrick added.

Eighth graders Dakota Logan of Rattan, and Cale Bible of Broken Bow represented CEC at Virtual Energy Camp. After he submitted an impressive video of his campaign speech for fellow campers to view, the campers



Dear CEC Board of Trustees,  
Thank you very much for sponsoring me for 2020 Energy Camp. Even though camp was cancelled in person, I enjoyed the virtual option provided for campers. I learned a lot about electric safety, cooperatives, and what careers I'm interested in pursuing in the future. It's cool to see how electric cooperatives are dedicated to improving the communities they serve. Thanks again for the opportunity to participate in this awesome youth program!

Sincerely,  
Cale Bible

CEC's 2020 Energy campers Cale Bible of Broken Bow (left) and Dakota Logan of Rattan (right). Bible produced a winning campaign speech that got him hired as the general manager of Virtual Energy Camp. Bible later wrote a note to CEC trustees thanking them for the experience.

**“We are very proud of our campers, and of our statewide association, too, for turning a bad situation on its head.”**

—BRAD KENDRICK, CEC MEMBER SERVICES

Both local and statewide camp coordinators said the response from campers was astounding. More than 50 campers participated, with a daily average of 1,150 people reached. Campers logged in daily from the safety of their homes to learn how their online experience for the day would unfold.

elected Cale Bible as their 2020 Virtual Energy Camp general manager.

“We are very proud of our campers, and of our statewide association, too, for turning a bad situation on its head. Their enthusiasm for camp, plus their creativity and innovation, came together to make it a big success,” Kendrick said. ☺

For more details on Energy Camp, please visit [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop), or call your co-op at 800-780-6486, ext. 209.

MANAGER'S REPORT



# Take The Right Action

*Your participation is needed*

BY KOONEY DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In the middle of this worldwide pandemic, I'd like to call attention to another problem that has plagued our area for years. It's the disease of apathy. When we don't care enough to take action to resolve our problems, we shouldn't be surprised when nothing changes.

In southeast Oklahoma, we have issues that need addressing. Our region suffers from some of the highest poverty rates in the nation, and many of our residents depend on government-funded programs for health care, medicine, and food for their families. Like many rural areas, our county governments are cash strapped. They, too, depend on federal funds to ensure the roads and bridges we drive on are safe, that our drinking water is clean, and our schools can provide a proper education for our children. Even our ability to respond to local disasters and emergencies is reliant upon adequate federal funding.

That aid is based on data gathered by the US Census. Every ten years, we are asked to fill out a census form for our household. It doesn't take long, but many people ignore it. As a result, the numbers for our area aren't as accurate as they should be,

and we miss out on resources that could improve our quality of life.

The 2020 Census is underway right now. According to the Census Bureau, the response rates from Choctaw, McCurtain, and Pushmataha counties

**“According to the Census Bureau, the response rates from Choctaw, McCurtain, and Pushmataha counties are very low—with less than 40 percent of residents responding. Please take the few minutes necessary to fill out and return your Census form.”**

—KOONEY DUNCAN, CEO

are very low—with less than 40 percent of residents responding. Please take the few minutes necessary to fill out and return your Census form.

Next, take the time to vote in your local, state, and national elections, and get active in your electric cooperative! You've witnessed the power of democracy at

work at your co-op. Because members cared enough to take action, Choctaw Electric has undergone many positive improvements and changes over the past five years. That same spirit of determination can bring about positive changes in southeast Oklahoma, but it depends on you to take the first step. ☺

**Lucky Acct #9653700 (\$25)**

If this account number belongs to you, contact CEC by the 5th of the month to claim your \$25 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](http://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  
Hwy 93 North  
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](http://www.choctawelectric.coop)



24 Hour Outage Hotline

**800-780-6486**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Tiffany Hempsted, *Chief Financial Officer*

CEC Leadership

**Silk Announces Resignation From CEC Board**



Joe Silk, District B

Last month, Choctaw Electric Trustee Joe Silk announced his decision to resign from the CEC board. Silk, who represents members in District B, is moving to a new location outside of his district and must resign according to CEC bylaws.

“Mr. Silk has worked hard to successfully guide CEC through difficult and challenging times, and restore the trust and credibility among our members,” said Kooney Duncan, CEO of CEC. “We will miss his contributions and his leadership.”

**Members interested in running for District B trustee must file their intent to run by July 28.** Candidate filing packets are available at CEC offices in Antlers, Hugo and Idabel. Packets include filing forms and instructions, plus details on trustee qualifications and CEC elections. A list of qualifications is also found in the CEC bylaws, available online at [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop).

Elected by co-op members in 2015, Silk served as vice president of the board throughout his time in office. His leadership helped CEC rebound from debt and uncertainty to its current position of financial strength and stability.

DATES WORTH REMEMBERING

- ▶ **July 1** | Candidates for CEC trustee may pick up candidate packets at CEC offices in Hugo, Antlers, and Idabel.
- ▶ **July 28** | Candidate filing for Dist. A, B, C, and G due by 5 pm at CEC Hugo.
- ▶ **August 12** | Revisions of proposed bylaw amendments due at CEC Hugo.
- ▶ **August 27** | CEC voter packets and mail-in ballots mailed to members. Mail-in ballots due by September 26.
- ▶ **September 26** | CEC Annual Meeting, McCurtain Co. Fairgrounds, Idabel

THE HOME **Energy** DETECTIVE

By Brad Kendrick, CEC Energy Use Specialist

**Enjoy Your Swimming Pool Without Higher Electricity Bills**

Now that summer is here, the swimming pool becomes an important gathering spot for families. For our members with backyard pools, or those thinking about getting one, a few tips will help you enjoy your pool at a lower operating cost.

1. Pick the right finish. Darker colors help with heating.
2. Create a natural windbreak.
3. Install a variable-speed pool pump. ENERGY STAR-certified pumps
4. Optimize your pool's plumbing.
5. Use advanced heating technology.
6. Install an automatic pool cover.
7. Use larger pool filters.
8. Maintain your cleaning system.
9. Install LED lighting
10. Automate your pool operations.

Enjoy your summer!



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](mailto:bakendrick@choctawelectric.coop).

**Attention Vendors:**

Plans for the CEC Annual Meeting may change depending on social distancing recommendations from local health department officials. We will notify you of any changes by August 21. Thank you, we appreciate your understanding.



**2020 CEC Annual Meeting**

**Vendor Booth Reservation Form**

Saturday, September 26 • McCurtain Co. Fairgrounds • Idabel

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Products to be displayed/sold \_\_\_\_\_

Number of booth spaces \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Booth spaces are available first come, first serve. Vendors must bring their own tables, chairs and electrical cords.

**Deadline to reserve booth: September 18, 2020**

Please send booth reservation form to:

Jia Johnson, Choctaw Electric Cooperative PO Box 758, Hugo, OK 74743



**A GLANCE BACK**

## Range in the Home

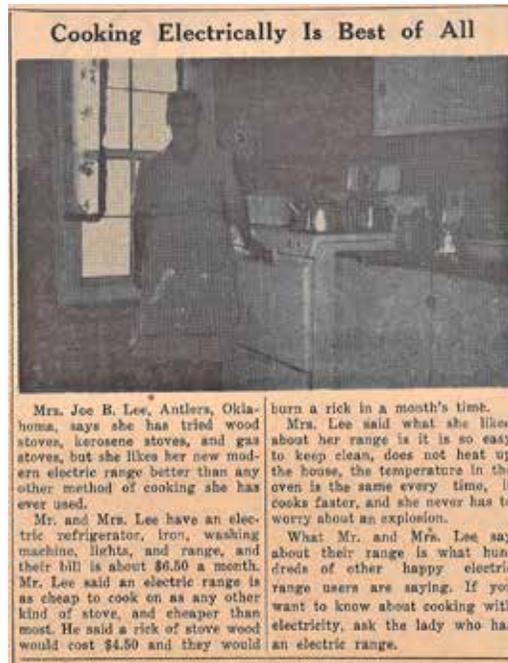
In the early 1950s, Choctaw Electric Cooperative members were just beginning to understand how electricity would change their lives. While some were skeptical about the abilities of certain “new fangled” electric appliances, others couldn’t wait to get their first electric range, refrigerator, or iron.

At that time, many electric co-ops across the country sold appliances as well as electricity; some even offered cooking classes. But all of them encouraged their members to share their experiences with electricity with their neighbors. As rural residents became more comfortable with the notion of electric-powered equipment and appliances, they would begin to realize the amazing time and labor saving benefits of their electric service. From electric milking machines to irons and refrigerators,

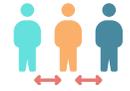
cooperative electricity would finally allow country folk to enjoy the same amenities as those who lived in town.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe B. Lee of Antlers shared their opinion about their new electric range in a 1954 news story published in CEC’s newsletter, *Pushbutton News* (right). At the time, the couple owned an electric fridge, iron, washing machine, lights and a range, and their electric bill ran around \$6.50 per month.

That seemed reasonable to the Lee’s, considering they were accustomed to paying \$4.50 a month for a rick of wood for their cook stove. For only \$2.50 more, they could cook in an even-temperature, smoke-free oven, enjoy refrigerated food, wash their clothes without hand scrubbing, and eat their supper under the even glow of a lightbulb.



Early adopters such as the Lee’s helped other rural residents in southeast Oklahoma embrace a better quality of life made possible by the people and the power of Choctaw Electric Cooperative.



### We Aren't Being Rude, We're Just Keeping Our Distance

To protect the health and safety of members and employees, Choctaw Electric must respect the recommended social distancing guidelines. If you have questions for co-op employees working on your property, please do not approach the employee or their vehicle. Instead, please call the CEC office at **800-780-6486**. We are happy to help you.

# Better Ways to Pay

**Fast & Easy • Safe & Secure**



Choctaw Electric wants to make bill payments as safe and easy as possible. We offer a variety of convenient payment options:

- **Pay Online.** Log on to [www.choctawelectric.coop](http://www.choctawelectric.coop) to pay your bill via CEC's Smarthub. Pay using a credit card, debit card, or e-check.
- **Prepaid.** The perfect payment option for members who prefer the prepaid advantage. CEC's prepaid program lets you pay for electricity in advance and alerts you via email, text or telephone message when your balance is getting low. Another benefit: No late fees!
- **Smarthub App.** Pay via smart phone, iPad or tablet using CEC's Smarthub mobile app. Download the free app for your Android or iPhone.
- **Pay By Phone:** Pay your bill 24 hours a day, seven days a week using American Express, Discover, VISA or Mastercard by calling **800-780-6486**. Please have your account number handy when you call.

■ **Bank Draft.** Enroll in CEC’s automatic bill payment plan and your bill is paid on time every month via automatic draft of your checking or saving account or credit/debit card. You will receive a paper statement for your records.

■ **Budget Billing:** If your bill fluctuates due to summer cooling and winter heating costs, CEC’s average monthly payment plan is for you. This plan averages your usage over the year so your monthly bill is more predictable.

■ **Pay In Person:** Pay your bill around the clock using the payment dropbox located at CEC office locations in Hugo, Antlers and Idabel, or choose one of our convenient PaySite kiosks located at the following locations:

- ▶ **Choctaw Trave Plaza, Atoka,** Antlers, Broken Bow, Hugo, and Idabel. OPEN 24 HRS/7 DAYS A WEEK.
- ▶ **Pruett’s Food, Atoka** MON-SAT, 7 AM-9 PM; SUN, 8 AM-7 PM.