

### Investing In The Future

CEC Youth Tour grows the leaders of tomorrow.

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### CEC Youth Tour Winners

Three high school students are headed to Washington, DC.

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### Well Pumps

Keep your well pump happy to avoid excess energy use.

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For members of **Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

JUNE 2023

# CEC *inside your* co-op



*Spotlight*

## BEHIND THE LINES

### CEC'S CUSTOMER CARE TEAM

EMPLOYEE	YRS OF SERVICE
Shonda Hendon	39
Lori Bryan	24
Chandy Abney	24
Amanda Daniel	22
Chrystal Winship	16
Mary Ann Webb	16
Sierra Sappington	2
Andrea Mitchell	1

### CEC's customer service team perform vital services that keep your co-op on track

**P**ole-climbing linemen braving the elements to keep the power flowing to our homes. That's who typically comes to mind when most folks think about Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC), but there are others on Team CEC whose jobs serve a different, yet equally important purpose.

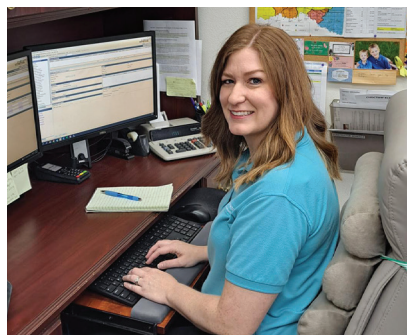
Take CEC's customer service representatives, for example. Your co-op employs nine customer service reps who work at CEC offices in Idabel, Antlers, and Hugo. These employees are often the first point of contact between a member and the co-op. Because first impressions can be long lasting, this initial exchange is extremely important.

"A CEC service rep is the first voice a member hears when they call CEC, and they are the first face a member sees when they walk through our door," says Hilary Pound, supervisor of CEC's Customer Service Center.

It is Pound's job to ensure the co-op's service hub not only meets a member's needs, but exceeds their expectations.

Not an easy task. CEC customer service reps not only handle all incoming calls,

they juggle a number of other important duties such as processing payments, issuing service orders, answering emails and correspondence from consumers, scheduling staking appointments, performing account maintenance updates, and handling all billing procedures and reports, to name a few.



*Hilary Pound oversees the CEC Customer Care Center. She has worked at the co-op for 17 years.*

Because member requests are hardly "one size fits all," CEC's customer care includes options that aim to satisfy the varied needs of its 13,000-plus membership. This includes multiple payment plans and a choice of payment options—online, bank draft, pay by

phone, payment kiosk, or in-person. The ever-increasing service options include managing CEC's Smarthub. The app makes it easy for members to review their usage, set alerts, check payment balance, pay bills, and more. It falls to CEC's customer care team to help members navigate Smarthub and learn how to make the best use of its many benefits.

All of the above, plus handling an average of 170 phone calls each day, keep CEC service reps busy, to say the least.

"Our team needs to be knowledgeable about all of CEC's programs and services, even those that aren't part of the customer care department," Pounds adds. "If a rep can't answer a service-related question, they connect the member with someone who can."

Like many of CEC's employment positions, the customer care job requires excellent people skills and a sincere commitment to the co-op's mission to serve.

"Our reps job is to serve our members and they are great at it," says Kooney Duncan, CEO of CEC. "I'm proud of every one of them." ☺

MANAGER'S REPORT



# Investing In The Future

CEC Youth Tour grows the leaders of tomorrow

BY KOONEY DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

In a few days, Choctaw Electric Youth Tour winners will head to Washington, DC. I love Youth Tour for a lot of reasons, but my favorite is the trip filled with ‘firsts.’ For many of these students, it is their first trip away from home, first time they’ve traveled outside of Oklahoma, it’s their first airplane ride and their first visit to a major metropolitan city.

They say the journey of lifetime begins with a single step. For many of these high school students, Youth Tour is the all-important first. What they see and do, and who they meet while touring the capital city, inspires and challenges them to actively serve their community and their country.

For me, it is an honor to work for an organization that makes this life-changing experience available for rural students. From the moment Youth Tour teens land in Washington DC, they are learning important lessons about our nation’s history, how our government works, and their role and responsibilities as U.S. citizens.

Youth Tour winners not only learn while on the tour itself, they also absorb important facts about electric cooperatives as they prepare their entries for CEC’s Youth Tour contest.

Like many of the participating co-ops, CEC holds a contest every year to select its Youth Tour winners. The three high school juniors with the highest scores in the competition represent CEC on the tour.

During the trip, Youth Tour teens visit historic monuments and memorials. They tour major museums, and stroll the halls of the U.S. Capitol, the cradle of our government. During their stay, they meet with congressional leaders and staff, who are more than happy to answer questions from rural America’s best and brightest students.

I’d like to think our elected officials see these teens as the future leaders of our country. Your CEC board and staff certainly do. That’s why CEC places such an emphasis on its youth programs. I think of them as investments in our collective future. Youth Tour, Energy Camp, and even CEC’s energy curriculum for schools help our rural students grow into the most effective leaders they can be.

I don’t know about you, but I’d rather my future lie in the hands of someone who knows Rural America and will speak up to protect it. Furthermore, I want those leaders to understand how democracy works and why so many gave their lives to preserve it.

Through programs such as Youth Tour, we lay the right foundation for our futures. ☺

**“...I’d rather my future lie in the hands of someone who knows Rural America and will speak up to protect it.”**

## Choctaw Electric Cooperative

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

Monday-Friday • 8 am - 5 pm

HUGO OFFICE

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and  
On the Web:  
[www.choctawelectric.net](http://www.choctawelectric.net)



24 Hour Outage Hotline  
**800-780-6486**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

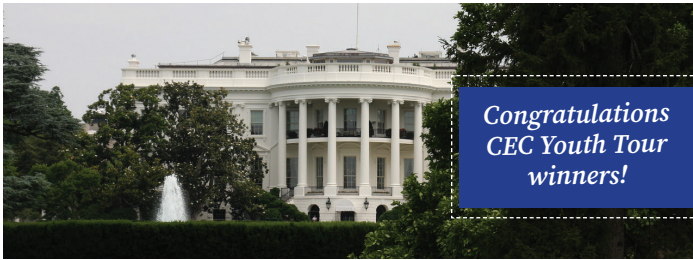
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Stacy Nichols	Jackson Ferguson

MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Kooney Duncan, *Chief Executive Officer*  
Jennifer Boling, *Executive Assistant*  
Jia Johnson, *Director of Public Relations*

**Lucky Acct #38852044.** If this is your account number, please contact CEC by the 5th of the month to claim your \$75 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.



## Teen Leaders Bound For Washington

Three local high school students will soon wing their way to Washington, DC as part of Oklahoma's Youth Tour. The teens earned their spot on the tour by submitting the top scoring entries in Choctaw Electric Cooperative's annual Youth Tour contest.

Winners this year are Cale Bible, Broken Bow; Jakus Hatcher, Antlers; and Kate Clifton, Soper.

The competition invites teens from high schools in and around CEC service territory to compete for a chance to participate in the prestigious, all-expenses-paid tour.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is regarded as one of the finest teen leadership opportunities in the nation. Teens spend the week touring the many historic memorials, museums, and buildings that pay homage to our nation's history. The teens also meet with their congressional leaders and enjoy the cultural sights and sounds of our nation's capital. Along the way, they make memories and friendships that last a lifetime.

CEC congratulates its 2023 Youth Tour winners on their achievement. Please have a wonderful trip!

Youth Tour will be held June 16 - June 22 in Washington, DC. For more details on the tour, please visit [www.oaec.coop](http://www.oaec.coop), or call your co-op at 800-780-6486.



Cale Bible, Broken Bow



Jakus Hatcher, Antlers



Kate Clifton, Soper



### CHOCTAW ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE 2023 Board Meetings

The Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC) board of trustees meets at 9 am on the last Tuesday of every month at co-op headquarters in Hugo. Meetings are open to the public. Meeting minutes are available at [www.choctawelectric.net](http://www.choctawelectric.net) or at any CEC location. To read the minutes on your smartphone or tablet, please scan the bar code to the right.



- June 27
- July 25
- August 29
- September 26
- October 31
- November 28



## SAVE THE DATE!

- JUNE 26  
Bylaw amendments due at CEC by 5 pm.
- JULY 25  
Trustee candidate filing date for CEC Districts B, C, and G.
- AUGUST 9  
Revisions due to proposed amendments.
- AUGUST 24-29  
Mail-in ballots delivered to members.
- SEPTEMBER 23  
CEC Annual Meeting  
Choctaw County Agriplex  
Hugo, Oklahoma



## 2023 Annual Meeting Vendor Booth Reservation Form

Saturday, September 23, 2023  
Choctaw County Agriplex

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

- Booth spaces are available first come, first serve.
- Vendors will set up outside the Agriplex.
- Vendors must bring their own tables, chairs, electrical cords and tent.
- **Deadline to reserve booth: September 16, 2023.**

Please mail booth reservation form to:

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



*Watt-Wise*

## Keep Your Well Pump Happy

If you're a rural homeowner, chances are you rely on a well for water and an electric-powered well pump to deliver it.



The amount of energy used by your household well system depends on the equipment and your water use. As the homeowner, it's your job to maintain the well, ensure drinking water is safe, and pay for the electricity needed to run the well pump. There are steps you can take to maintain your well and help it use less electricity.

### Steps To Greater Efficiency

1. *If you're concerned about how much you pay to pump water from your well, start with an inspection.* Similar to heating and cooling systems, well pumps work daily and the parts wear over time. A little maintenance can improve your well pump's efficiency and increase its lifespan.
2. *Proper system design and sizing can save energy.* Oversizing equipment wastes energy. Ask a professional if your well equipment is properly sized for your needs. In some cases, adding a variable-speed drive can save energy. Keep in mind, well systems don't last forever. Consider design and sizing before the existing system fails.
3. *Remember, problems with your well can be hard to spot.* The water system may continue to act normally with good water pressure and flow, but the pump is quietly using more energy and causing higher bills!

One of the most common causes of increased energy use is underground water line leakage between the pump and the home. Water lines can freeze and break or be damaged by digging or a car driving over underground lines. Other issues include waterlogged pressure tanks and malfunctioning equipment. Even if your well is in good working order, a little T.L.C. will help you avoid any high bill surprises.

If you suspect your pump is using more energy than normal, please contact CEC's Energy Use Advisor Brad Kendrick. He can help you pinpoint the problem. 800-780-6486, ext. 207, or email [bakendrick@choctawelectric.coop](mailto:bakendrick@choctawelectric.coop).

Win a **\$100 Bill Credit!**

*Enroll in CEC's paperless billing.*

When you enroll in paperless billing, your name will be entered in our monthly drawing for new paperless accounts. Enroll today using Smarthub's payment options, or sign up by phone at **800-780-6486**.



Congratulations to **James D. of Hugo**, our \$100 bill credit winner for the month of April. We appreciate your participation.



Don't become part of a tragic fishing story. Keep an eye on weather conditions and know when to call it a day.

### SEEK SHELTER

If you see or hear signs of weather rolling in, stop fishing and retreat to a four-sided building or hard-top car. If you ignore the signs and keep fishing, it could cost you your life.



### WAIT 30 MINUTES

Wait 30 minutes after you see or hear lightning before heading back outside.

### REMEMBER

Always look up for overhead power lines before casting.



## LIGHTNING FACTS 2006-2020:



Two-thirds of lightning deaths occurred during outdoor activities.



Of those deaths, 33% happened during water-related activities.



Fishing accounted for most, or 44%, of those water-related activities.

Source: National Lightning Safety Council

Learn more:

