

Positive Partnerships

Teamwork comes together for the Forest Heritage Center.

■ PAGE 2

Member Appreciation

CEC is throwing a party for its members—you're invited.

■ PAGE 3

Co-ops Vote

CEC and other co-ops are working to encourage rural residents to vote.

■ PAGE 4

For members of **Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

MARCH 2020

80^{YEARS} CEC **inside your co-op**



Communication, it is said, is a two-way street. As Choctaw Electric Cooperative (CEC) staff and trustees seek new ways to improve member relations, they are turning to co-op members for help. A newly created member advisory committee will provide another way for CEC to engage with members on issues, share ideas, and encourage a better understanding of issues based on education, research and facts.

CEO Kooney Duncan said co-ops across the country rely on local member advisory groups to help them build stronger relationships with their members.

“The committee members help us stay in touch with our members. And they gain a better understanding of the co-op that helps them explain programs and decisions from an informed point of view,” he said.

Just like CEC trustees provide a sounding board for co-op member concerns, the member advisory committee will also encourage a back and forth flow of information, Duncan explained.

Taking Our *Members'* Advice

CEC's new member advisory committee aims to keep doors of communication open.

“The more open we are to listening and learning from one another, the more successful this co-op will be,” he said.

The CEC committee is comprised of nine members that best represent the co-op's diverse membership.

“We serve farms, small businesses schools, seasonal cabins, and corporations. Our members have differing opinions and needs, and we want to hear from all of them,” said Duncan.

The committee met for the first time on February 13 at CEC in Hugo. Attendees got a crash course in co-op history, legal governance and services with ample time for questions and discussion. Future meetings and topics will be decided by the committee. Please watch your co-op newsletter, website and Facebook page for more information. [th](#)

“It is wiser to find out than to suppose.

—MARK TWAIN



Be Counted!

A lot rides on an accurate census count. Please don't ignore it.

By April 1, you should receive an invitation in the mail to participate in the 2020 U.S. Census. Your response is important.

Every year billions of federal dollars go to schools, hospitals, fire departments, road and other resources based on data collected by the federal census. Numbers collected in the census also determine how legislative districts are drawn and how you and your family are represented.

You may respond to the census by mail, phone or online. Either way, it's important that you be counted.

By law, the Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about you, your home, or your business, even to law enforcement agencies. That's protected under Title 13 of the U.S. Code.

MANAGER'S REPORT



Positive Partnerships

Team effort helps local museum save money

BY KOONEY DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

People who actively support their community understand the importance of partnerships. Without the willing participation of businesses, schools, and other organizations working together to improve things, a small town suffers.

The same is true for your cooperative. We partner with other co-ops and organizations because it makes good sense. By pooling resources to meet a common goal, progress happens. It's most rewarding when we are able to share these benefits with our members and our local communities.

This happened recently at the Beaver's Bend Forest Heritage Center. As many of you know, the center is an important attraction for our area. Every year, it welcomes some 150,000 visitors from around the world. This includes scores of local students and residents who tour the museum to learn about southeast Oklahoma's history and natural resources. Most come away with a deeper appreciation for the place we call home.

Over the past few months, Choctaw Electric worked with the Kiamichi Technology Center, state park officials, and Western Farmers Electric Cooperative to complete a massive lighting project at the center. The project replaced 465 aging light fixtures with new energy efficient models.

The new lighting will improve safety and help the museum save money. We will monitor the energy use over the coming months and report the savings benefit in greater detail. In the meantime, you will find more details about the project in this month's issue of *Oklahoma Living*. I encourage you to read it.

It's no secret that electric co-ops believe in partnerships. Just look at our history. If our pioneer members hadn't worked together to electrify rural areas, we'd still be sitting in the dark. So, yes, there's a lot of power in a shared commitment to a common goal, and I'm proud of what we were able to do for a local museum and co-op member that brings so much to our area.

I want to congratulate everyone who worked to help the Forest Heritage Center shine more light on southeast Oklahoma. Thank you all for a job well done. 🙌

Lucky Acct #38855650 (\$25) If this account number belongs to you, contact CEC by the 10th 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.

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



24 Hour Outage Hotline

800-780-6486

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A GLANCE BACK



The More Things Change, The More They Don't

The tendency to compare your Choctaw Electric bill with your neighbor is as common today as it was 70 years ago—and just as fruitless. An article from a 1954 issue of CEC's PushButton News reminds members that homeowners have different lifestyles and energy use habits. Sound familiar? The article also calls attention to the electric bill at the White House at the time, which ran \$3,240 per month. 2009 data finds the 55,000 sq. ft. White House used an estimated 71,000 kilowatt-hours (kwh) every month. At the going rate of 12.7 cents/kwh for the DC area, that's about \$9,017 per month. Maybe they could use an energy audit?

THE HOME Energy DETECTIVE

By Brad Kendrick, CEC Energy Use Specialist



Don't Let Your Money Fly Up The Chimney

When it's chilly outside, a lot of CEC members like to burn wood to stay warm. When I make visits to homes with wood burning fireplaces or stoves, I often find the damper open when the fireplace is not in use. As a result, the heat in the house goes out the chimney. To compensate for that lost heat, some members may crank up the thermostat or use space heaters. Remember to close your damper or seal off the fireplace when you're not using it. This will help your home stay warmer by keeping the heat inside where it belongs.



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.

Talk To Us. We Appreciate Your Opinion.

When you have a question or comment about any aspect of your CEC service, we want to hear from you! You can message us via our website at www.choctawelectric.coop or visit our Facebook page. To chat by phone, please call **800-780-6486**, or stop in and see us during regular office hours. Your opinion matters.

- COMPLIMENTARY wellness exams W/ BLOOD PRESSURE & VALUABLE HEALTH INFO**
- WIN A bill credit & OTHER PRIZES**
- REGISTER TO VOTE!**
- FREE hotdogs DRINKS & DESSERTS**
- LEARN ABOUT OUR energy saving services & OTHER PROGRAMS**

Please join us for

CHOCTAW ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Member DAYS Appreciation

From 10 am until 2 pm.

- Tues., April 7 | CEC HUGO** : Join us for one day or attend
- Weds., April 8 | CEC ANTLERS** : all three! For details, please
- Thurs., April 9 | CEC IDABEL** : call 800-780-6486.

Getting Out *the* Rural Vote

Let's make sure rural issues aren't forgotten



America's electric cooperatives want to make sure rural concerns aren't overlooked by federal policies and programs. That's the reason behind Co-ops Vote, a non-partisan, nationwide effort to encourage voter participation in rural areas.

"Co-ops Vote will help our members know when elections are and what's at stake," said Jia Johnson, director of CEC public and member relations. "Who folks vote for isn't really as important as the fact that they do vote."

The Co-ops Vote initiative focuses on issues such as improving rural infrastructure and access to high speed broadband that are important to rural communities. Other issues include affordable energy, health care, cybersecurity and low-income energy assistance.

A large percentage of southeast Oklahoma residents qualify for low income assistance so protecting this program is important to many of our members," Johnson added.

Co-ops Vote does not endorse candidates for office. "This isn't about one party or another. It's about making sure our government knows that rural residents matter," Johnson said.

Upcoming Elections & Voter Registration Deadlines

TUES. MAR 03	Oklahoma Democratic & Republican Presidential Primary
TUES. JUN 30	Oklahoma Primary Election <i>Voter registrations must be received by June 5, 2020.</i>
TUES. NOV 03	General Election <i>Voter registrations must be received by October 9, 2020</i>

Members can find information on voter registration, candidates, election dates and key rural issues at www.vote.coop.

■ WHERE TO REGISTER

Register to vote at CEC in Idabel on March 2, or stop by CEC Member Appreciation Days April 7 (CEC Hugo); April 8 (CEC Antlers); or April 9 (CEC Idabel) and look for the voter registration booth. Oklahoma residents can also register to vote online <https://www.ok.gov/elections/>. ☎

Safe Shelter Is As Close As Your Own Backyard.

Every spring, Oklahomans count on the arrival of dark skies, thunderstorms and tornados. Are you prepared? Make sure your family can ride out any storm safely by installing an in-ground storm shelter from your electric co-op. Choctaw Electric offers manufactured concrete storm shelters in two sizes. With prices as low as \$2,500 and financing that guarantees low monthly payments, you can afford to keep your family safe.

Don't wait for the sky to fall. A limited number of storm shelters are available, so please call Choctaw Electric today.

800-780-6486 • www.choctawelectric.coop