

### Cooperative Principle #2

Discover the seven principles that guide the way we do business.

■ PAGE 2

### Buying a Home?

Ask these three efficiency questions first!

■ PAGE 3

### DIY Safety

Check out our home safety guide and learn when to hire a pro.

■ PAGE 4

For members of **Choctaw Electric Cooperative**

MARCH 2024

# CEC *inside your* co-op

## Exploring Southeast Oklahoma

Agritourism is in bloom year-round at Holly Creek's J&C Greenhouses

**N**estled on two acres in Holly Creek, J&C Greenhouses, owned by Joni and Chris Schatte, is a blossoming Southeast Oklahoma agritourism destination.

The Schattes relocated to the area in 2017, after retiring, and have spent the past 7 years building a thriving nursery.

"We love this area. The people are friendly, welcoming, and have included us as part of the community," Joni says.

The couple's passion for plants has roots in the early years of their marriage, when they began vegetable gardening. "We've always been into gardening and plants," Joni says, adding that they had more than 75 fruit trees at their previous home.

Chris brings a wealth of experience from

decades of work in nurseries and managing landscaping businesses.

"We planned to be part-time and seasonal and then Hochatown boomed," Joni explains. "We're happy to stay busy."

J&C Greenhouses proudly offers a wide array of products including seeds, vegetable plants, fruit trees, berry vines, shade trees, privacy shrubs and ornamentals. They grow 95% of their bedding plants, and Joni is currently creating 350 mixed hanging baskets. A highlight of the nursery is their 250 roses in unique colors. Open year-round, J&C Greenhouses also offers gardening essentials, fertilizer, potting mix, compost and mulch.

Joni says she cherishes the connections formed with her customers. "I love plants and planting, but I really enjoy my customers. Plant people are my people."

The Schattes are actively restoring a burnt-out cabin on the property. It will soon become home to a shop featuring locally sourced gifts and food items, including homemade jelly from Joni's own Broken Bow Jelly Company. It will also house the Broken Bow Fly Shop and serve as headquarters for Chris' business, Beavers Bend Fly Fishing Guide Service.

As spring approaches, J&C Greenhouses invites plant enthusiasts to stop by and experience all they have to offer! 🌱

### Winter Hours

Tuesday-Friday: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Saturday: 8 a.m. to noon  
Closed Sunday & Monday



Chris and Joni Schatte, owners of J&C Greenhouses.

Check out J&C Greenhouses online: [www.facebook.com/JCGreenhousesnursery](https://www.facebook.com/JCGreenhousesnursery)

MANAGER'S REPORT



## Cooperative Principle #2

### Democratic Member Control

BY KOONEY DUNCAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

This month we continue our series, exploring the Seven Cooperative Principles. The second principle is Democratic Member Control. Cooperatives are unique in the way they operate because they are controlled by the members—who are owners—as they participate in setting policies and making decisions for the co-op.

Choctaw Electric Cooperative is well suited to meet the needs of our members because we are locally governed. Each member gets a voice and a vote in how the co-op is run, and each voice and vote is equal.

Our board of directors, who help set long-term priorities for the co-op, also live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected by neighbors just like you. Our close connection to our communities ensures we get a first-hand perspective on members' priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments that are priorities for our members.

Each year, three trustee positions are

up for election. Members who are interested in running for the board are encouraged to pick up an information packet at one of our offices.

We know our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we encourage you to weigh in on important co-op issues by participating in elections. Voting takes place during our Annual Meeting in September. We have implemented electronic balloting to allow members the opportunity to participate in voting, even if they can't attend the Annual Meeting. This is one of the many ways we try to ensure all our members' voices are heard.

Finally, our offices are open to our members at any time, and we welcome members to share ideas and voice concerns. Our monthly board meetings,

the last Tuesday of each month, are open to members as well.

It means a lot to us to be member-owned and democratically controlled. We know the decisions we make impact our members and we take that responsibility very seriously.

**“Choctaw Electric Cooperative is well suited to meet the needs of our members because we are locally governed.”**

## 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](http://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 #38774700** 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. 241.

## Volunteers needed for April Buddy Ball game

**D**o you love baseball? Do you enjoy serving others? Choctaw Electric is seeking volunteers for a new 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 are available at all CEC offices and local schools.

To volunteer, please contact Choctaw Electric at 800-780-6486, ext. 241. ☎



## Are you on life support? Please update us!

**I**f you rely on electricity to power life support equipment, it's time to update your records with Choctaw Electric.

CEC maintains a record of our life-support-dependent members so the co-op can notify you of scheduled outages in your area. To protect your health and safety, we ask members to submit a life support member form every year in March.

Forms are available on our website: <https://choctawelectric.net/applications-and-forms> or by calling 800-780-6486.

Life-support-dependent members should be prepared with battery back-up or another source of alternate power during a power outage. Your safety is our top priority. Thank you for your cooperation! ☎

## Are you in the market for a new home?

Be sure to add energy efficiency to your must-have list! Here are three items to ask a home inspector to check out before making a purchase.

### 1. What is the age and condition of the HVAC system?

HVAC systems are expensive to replace (\$5,000-\$10,000). They typically last 15 to 20 years.

### 2. How old is the water heater?

Water heaters last about 10 years and cost \$1,000-\$3,000, depending on unit type.

### 3. Are insulation levels sufficient?

Adequate insulation saves energy, reduces outdoor noise and increases a home's comfort.





# Are you DIY-ing it safely?

## Four reminders for your next home project

**T**ackling do-it-yourself (DIY) projects for the home can be fun and cost-effective, so why not roll up those sleeves and get started? Whether you're painting the front door with a fresh hue or finally upgrading those patio lights, successfully completing a DIY home project is incredibly satisfying. Many of these projects do not come without risks. Here are a few safety tips to keep in mind as you get to work.

### Start by selecting a designated work area.

The amount of space you'll need will depend on the size and scope of your project, but make sure you have adequate lighting and ventilation (if necessary). Required tools and equipment should be located in your workspace and organized for easy access.

**PPE is your friend.** We know you're not a pro but investing a few bucks in personal protective equipment is essential for most home projects. Stock up on safety goggles, dust masks, ear plugs (or noise reduction ear protectors), gloves and any other kind of protection you'll need for your project. Remember to wear appropriate clothing and shoes.

**Work slowly and clean as you go.** When you rush through a DIY project, you'll likely end up with less-desirable results than you intended, or worse, you could make a costly or dangerous mistake. Take your time and remember that you are in control of the project. You should also clean as you go to ensure a safer workspace. Pick up any scrap materials, tools that aren't in use, and any tripping hazards.

**Be cautious with power tools.** Annually, 8% of electrocutions in the U.S. are attributed to improper use of power tools. The Electrical Safety Foundation International offers the following safety tips:

- ✓ Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) with every power tool to protect against electrical shock.
- ✓ Never use power tools near live electrical wires or water pipes.
- ✓ Use extreme caution when cutting or drilling into walls where electrical wires or water pipes could be accidentally touched or penetrated.
- ✓ If a power tool trips a safety device while in use, take the tool to a manufacturer-authorized repair center for service.
- ✓ Do not use power tools without the proper guards.
- ✓ When using a wet-dry vacuum cleaner or a pressure washer, be sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions to avoid electrical shock.

Remember, you should only tackle DIY home projects within your skill and comfort level. For projects that require extensive electrical work, we strongly recommend you hire a licensed, qualified electrician for assistance.

To learn more about electrical safety, visit our website: <https://choctawelectric.net/home-safety>. 🔌



## Five tips for hiring an electrician

A licensed electrician can help with a variety of home projects, from lighting upgrades to full renovations. Keep the following tips in mind if you're looking to hire an electrician.

### 1. Hire a licensed, qualified electrician for the job.

Look for a master electrician to manage the project. Master electricians have the most experience and will often oversee the work of a journey-level electrician or apprentice.

### 2. Make sure the electrician is insured.

Seasoned electricians know the importance of protecting themselves in case of an accident.

### 3. Read all the reviews.

Hire an electrician that has several positive reviews—not just one or two. Read reviews on different sites, like Nextdoor, Yelp and HomeAdvisor, and consider asking your neighbors for recommendations.

### 4. Determine your budget. Get two quotes.

Knowing your budget upfront helps move the process along. Prices can greatly vary, so get multiple quotes (at least two).

### 5. Talk timeline.

Some electricians accidentally overbook projects. If your job is time-sensitive, convey that early on and discuss a realistic timeline with the electrician.

