



inside your co-op

For members of Choctaw Electric Cooperative | JULY 2025



Left: Mail day was a community event in the once-thriving community of Nelson, Oklahoma. Photo circa 1920. Above: Karla Clifton stands in front of a 19th-century well house, the last original structure on the family land.

The legacy of Nelson, Oklahoma: A History Hidden in Plain Sight

Tucked in the quiet countryside six miles north of Soper, Oklahoma, a stretch of pastureland looks like any other. But beneath the lush grasses and grazing cattle lie the remnants of a once-thriving community—Nelson, Oklahoma.

Before statehood, Nelson stood at a bustling crossroads within the Apukshunnubbee District of the Choctaw Nation, then part of Kiamitia (Kiamaichi) County. The town was named after Col. Cole E. Nelson, national attorney of the Choctaw Nation. Also known as McCafferty's Station, it served as a vital rest stop along the Butterfield Overland Mail route, which linked Paris, Texas, to Fort Smith, Arkansas. Stagecoaches paused here for rest and water before continuing their journey through Indian Territory.

By 1881, a post office had been established in Nelson. Mail days were community events,

drawing neighbors to the general store where the post office operated. The first postmaster, E. B. Bryan, was later succeeded by his son, John A. Bryan—who would go on to help found Choctaw Electric Cooperative and serve on the inaugural board of directors.

At its heyday, Nelson was a vibrant settlement with two general stores, a drug store, barber shop, blacksmith shop, cotton gin, ice house, grist mill, schoolhouse, church and a resident physician. The Nelson and Vinson General Store, a two-story landmark co-owned by Nelson and C.S. Vinson, anchored town life. Nelson lived in the lower story of the Bryan residence—a house built with lumber hauled from Boggy Depot in 1865 and remodeled in 1913. It burned down in 2009.

But progress can be unkind. In the 1880s, the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway bypassed Nelson, shifting commerce and settlement

toward Hugo and Antlers. The town began to dwindle. After the post office closed in 1954, Nelson all but disappeared from the map.

Today, the land is owned and stewarded by Randy and Karla Clifton, whose family roots run deep here. Randy's grandfather, Andrew Antwine, was among the first in the area to receive electricity from Choctaw Electric Cooperative. The Cliftons still point out pieces of the past: the worn trace of the old stagecoach road, a 19th-century well house, the foundation stones of the Bryan estate, and even the small, overgrown tomb of a Nelson child—nearly swallowed by time and brush, visible only if you know where to look.

The town of Nelson may no longer be visible, but its legacy lives on in the land that holds its stories and in the families who remember them. Its history is not lost, it quietly endures—hidden in plain sight.

Choctaw Electric Cooperative

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

CONNECT WITH US

Monday-Friday | 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

24 Hour Outage Line

(800) 780-6486

Hugo Office

PO Box 758
1033 N. 4250 Rd.
Hugo, OK 74743

Toll free: (800) 780-6486
Local: (580) 326-6486
Fax: (580) 326-2492

Idabel Office

2114 SE Washington
Idabel, OK 74745

Toll free: (800) 780-6486

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Download the free SmartHub
app in your device's app store

Report Outages Fast—Two Simple Ways

At Choctaw Electric Cooperative, our goal is to provide the most reliable service possible to our members. We invest year-round in system improvements and maintenance to help prevent outages before they happen. But as we all know, Oklahoma weather doesn't always cooperate—and when storms roll in or unexpected issues arise, our team is ready to respond.

When the lights go out, efficient communication becomes critical. We want you to know how we manage outages and two ways you can report them quickly and effectively.

During normal business hours, your calls are answered by the staff in our Hugo and Idabel offices. However, when major outages hit, the number of calls coming in can quickly exceed the capacity of our phone lines. That's why we partner with the Cooperative Response Center (CRC), a call center that works exclusively with electric cooperatives like ours. CRC serves more than 400 co-ops across the country and has

a trained staff of 180 agents who are ready to answer calls 24/7. CRC helps us manage high call volumes and ensures that your outage reports don't get lost in the shuffle.



CEO Kooney Duncan

Still, the quickest and most efficient way to report an outage is through the free SmartHub app. Just tap "Report an Issue," and your report is instantly sent to our system—no waiting on hold, no call menus to navigate. We understand that many members prefer to speak with a local voice, especially during stressful

moments. We value that connection too. But during large-scale outages, tools like CRC and SmartHub empower us to respond faster, to keep crews moving and to restore power safely and quickly.

Thank you for your continued support and patience during outage events. You can count on CEC to keep you informed, powered and prepared—through every season and every challenge.

Outage Reporting Just Got Easier!

At CEC, we're committed to making outage reporting simple and stress-free. That's why we've launched a five-part Outage Reporting video series to walk you through the process. Watch the full series on our Facebook page: facebook.com/choctawelectriccooperative

The series includes:

- ▶ An overview of outage reporting
- ▶ Reporting an outage during business hours
- ▶ Reporting an outage after business hours
- ▶ Answers to frequently asked questions
- ▶ How to sign up for and use SmartHub

Scan here
to watch!





Local Students Take the Lead at Energy Camp

Three local eighth-graders represented Choctaw Electric Cooperative at Energy Camp 2025. The camp, held May 27–30 at Canyon Camp in Hinton, brought 72 students from across the state for four days of learning, leadership and hands-on activities.

Campers gained a deeper understanding of electric cooperatives, how electricity is delivered and what it means to be a leader. From pole-climbing and skits to a mock boardroom experience, campers practiced communica-

tion, decision-making and teamwork.

Fellow students voted Choctaw Electric Cooperative camper Harper McElroy as the Energy Camp Board of Directors General Manager and CEO. She did a fantastic job leading the camp in her role. CEC delegate Jalyn Lundry served as Board President and Danielle Kemp represented CEC on the Board of Directors. We're proud of these students for representing Choctaw Electric Cooperative with excellence!

Co-op Crumbs

Are you craving a cool treat? Don't miss out on Independence Day No-Bake Delight. Watch a video of CEC member Callie Clifton preparing it, now on our website!



Scan here
for the
recipe!



Office Closure

Choctaw Electric Cooperative's offices will be closed Friday, July 4, in celebration of Independence Day.

Summer Peak Hours

A summer peak alert may be called between June 20 and September 9, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. We will announce peak alerts on our Facebook page, via the SmartHub app and on the radio. Please help us reduce electricity use during peak hours as it helps keep our cost stable.

Go Paperless!

Sign up for paperless billing via the SmartHub app or call Choctaw Electric Cooperative at 800-780-6486. One lucky member will win two CEC T-shirts and two CEC caps.

Buddy Ball is Back

Grab your glove and meet us on the diamond this fall—Buddy Ball returns October 18, 2025! This free, non-competitive game is designed for children through adults with physical, intellectual or developmental disabilities. Contact Jia Johnson or Brad Kendrick at 800-780-6486, ext. 241, for more information or to volunteer. Let's play ball!

Help Us Preserve Our Legacy

CEC is celebrating 85 years of service! We're marking this milestone with a special project to preserve the co-op's rich history. The project will gather, organize and digitize a collection of photos and memorabilia that tell the story of CEC and the communities we serve. To contribute stories, photos, recipes or other memorabilia, please contact Jia Johnson at 800-780-6486, ext. 241.

Lucky Acct #38841195

If this is your account number, please contact CEC at 800-780-6486, ext. 241 by the 5th of the month to claim your \$50 bill credit. Unclaimed bill credits roll over each month by \$25 for a maximum credit of \$100.

Below: An Air Evac helicopter crew was one of the first responder organizations that participated in CEC's Wired Up for Safety demonstration on May 22. Right: CEC President Brent Franks, CEC CEO Kooney Duncan and OAEC CEO Nikki Fuller at Wired Up for Safety.



Choctaw Electric Cooperative Gets Wired Up For Safety

On May 22, Choctaw Electric Cooperative hosted its second Wired Up for Safety event at the co-op headquarters in Hugo. This year's event featured two live line demonstrations. One simulated a power line that had fallen on a truck, resulting in a worker being electrocuted upon exit. In the other, a power line fell on a swing set with two children swinging—with one child demonstrating the bunny hop to safely exit the area.

Multiple emergency response agencies, including local police, highway patrol and Air Evac, participated in the simulations to reinforce real-world

safety practices around electricity. CEC CEO Kooney Duncan and Board President Brent Franks provided live commentary, highlighting the life-saving importance of electrical awareness and proper response. Following the demonstrations, CEC Safety and Loss Control Director Guy Dale facilitated a debrief with first responders to evaluate the response and identify areas for improvement.

CEC is grateful for the support of the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives. OAEC CEO Nikki Fuller attended the event and First United Bank of Hugo provided lunch for attendees.

2025 Annual Meeting Vendor Booth Reservation Form

Saturday, September 27, 2025 | Pushmataha County Fairgrounds

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 must bring their own tables, chairs and electrical cords. **Deadline to reserve booth: September 19, 2025**

Send booth reservation form to: Jia Johnson
Choctaw Electric Cooperative | PO Box 758, Hugo, OK 74743

Save
T.H.E
DATE

Please save the date for

Choctaw Electric Cooperative's 2025 Annual Meeting

September 27 | 8 a.m.

Pushmataha County Fairgrounds in Antlers

OTHER NOTABLE DATES

July 29

Trustee candidate filing for CEC Districts A, H, & I due at CEC by 5 p.m.

August 13

Revisions due to proposed amendments

August 28-September 2

Mail-in ballots delivered to members