

The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

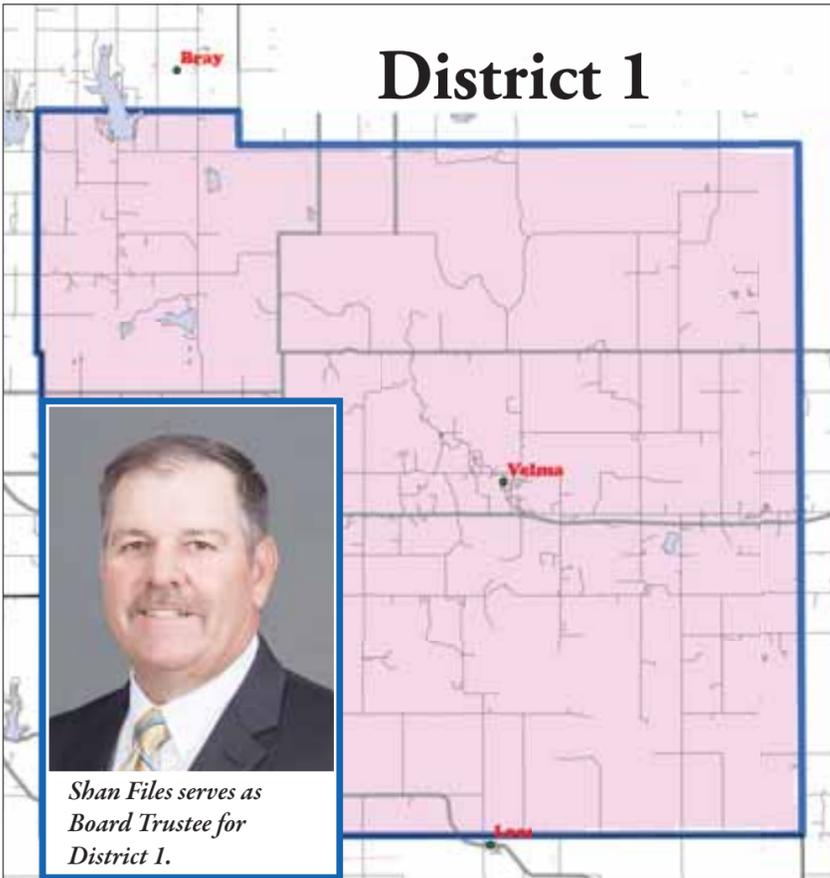
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

VOLUME 62

June 10, 2019

NUMBER 10



District 1



Shan Files serves as Board Trustee for District 1.



Included within the borders of District 1 is the community of Velma and parts of Bray, Comanche, Duncan, Fox and Velma school districts.



Terry Foster



Dillon Wiygul



Case Hurst



Prestin Green



Chad Cowan

When your power goes off in the middle of the night, four line workers are on call to get your lights back on. Responding to outages in this area are Journeyman Linemen Terry Foster and Dillon Wiygul and Crewmen Case Hurst and Prestin Green. These line workers do not exclusively work in District 1 but aid the system in various places along the eastern side of the service territory. They are under the direction of Operations Superintendent Chad Cowan.



Members in this area are served by seven substations: Baseline, Harrisburg, Loco, Pinto, Skelly, Spectrum and Velma. These substations distribute power across approximately 584 miles of line to residential and commercial accounts in District 1

Files represents members of District 1

By Danielle Quickle

Cotton Electric is a not-for-profit organization, governed by the members it serves. Its service territory is divided among nine districts, each unique from the next. In 2019, The Current will feature information about each district, one per month.

District 1 sits on the far east side of Cotton Electric's service territory. Included within the borders of District 1 is the community of Velma and parts of Bray, Comanche, Duncan, Fox and Velma school districts.

Members in this area are served by seven substations: Baseline, Harrisburg, Loco, Pinto, Skelly, Spectrum and Velma. These substations distribute power across approximately 584 miles of line to residential and commercial accounts in District 1. When power distribution issues arise, specific line workers are assigned to restoring power.

When your power goes off in the middle of the night, four line workers are on call to get your lights back on. Responding to outages in this area are Journeyman Linemen Terry Foster and Dillon Wiygul and Crewmen Case Hurst and Prestin Green. These line workers do not exclusively work in District 1 but aid the system in various places along the eastern side of the service territory. They are under the direction of Operations Superintendent Chad Cowan.

Members participate in the governing of their electric cooperative by electing a member from each district to serve a three-year term as a trustee on Cotton

Electric's board. In June of 2010, Shan Files of Velma was appointed as trustee and District 1 members have retained him ever since.

Files grew up on Cotton Electric lines. In 1985, he became a member himself when he and his new bride settled down west of Velma.

He and his wife, Starlet, have been married for nearly 34 years. Together they have two children, Trenten and Shalyn, a daughter-in-law, Laura, and a granddaughter, Aspen.

Files makes his living in the oil field and on the farm as co-owner of Sonny's Tank Trucks, Inc. and Files Farm, LLC. His experience in these fields has helped shape him into the trustee he is today.

"I actually never even thought of serving as a trustee for Cotton Electric," Files said. "It was an opportunity I kind of lucked into when I was appointed and I have been here ever since."

During his time on the board, Files has earned the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) Certificate as well as the Board Leadership Certificate (BLC). Director Certificate Programs are specifically designed to help electric cooperative directors, at every stage of their service, understand their roles and responsibilities, stay up-to-date on key issues and trends in the industry and prepare them to meet the challenges facing electric cooperatives now and in the future.

"As trustees, we go through extensive training through the National Rural Electric Cooperative As-

sociation (NRECA) and the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC)," Files said. "I have gone through several days of courses that have been extremely helpful in understanding the world of cooperatives."

The fifth cooperative principle states that cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees. This required training is meant to enhance effective contributions to the development of the co-op.

Not only has Files gained knowledge as a trustee, but also as a member.

"Probably the most valuable thing I have learned at the co-op is that all members have an equal say," Files said. "Cotton Electric is owned by the members and each member has a voice that is valued by the co-op."

Files serves as vice president on the board and has previously served as secretary and treasurer. As a trustee out in District 1, he makes himself available to his fellow cooperative members.

"I am open to questions or concerns, as is the rest of the board," Files said. "We are doing our best to provide the greatest quality electric service at an affordable rate."

He admits he may not always have the solution, but he can help point members in the right direction.

"Cotton Electric has excellent faculty and staff who are always willing to address the concerns of our entire membership," Files said.

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated				May 2019 Temperature Extremes				Did You Know?	Contact Us	What's Inside	
<p>The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after June 1, 2019, is \$0.01424 per kWh.</p> <p>On a member's average bill of 1250 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$17.80 on the June bill.</p>	Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.	<p>Cotton Electric offices will be closed Thursday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.</p> <p>The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on July 15, 2019.</p>	<p>Do you have a story idea for The Current or do you need to place an ad? If so, let us know.</p> <p>We can be reached at 580-875-3351 or by email at info@cottonelectric.com.</p> <p>You can also drop us a line at Cotton Electric Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572.</p>	<p>Operating Stats 2</p> <p>Co-op News 2-3</p> <p>Community 4,6</p> <p>Co-op News 5</p> <p>Puzzles 7</p> <p>Recipes 8-9</p> <p>Co-op News 11-13</p> <p>Classifieds 14-19</p> <p>More news at cottonelectric.com</p>
	1	82	62	72	16	89	62	76			
	2	73	59	66	17	87	68	78			
	3	71	60	66	18	80	61	71			
	4	72	57	65	19	81	56	69			
	5	81	54	68	20	84	63	74			
	6	86	65	76	21	79	62	71			
	7	84	64	74	22	87	56	72			
	8	74	60	67	23	88	74	81			
	9	64	50	57	24	86	66	76			
	10	65	43	54	25	87	66	77			
	11	64	50	57	26	86	70	78			
	12	77	46	62	27	88	72	80			
	13	83	51	67	28	90	70	80			
	14	85	54	70	29	77	63	70			
	15	88	58	73	30	86	59	73			
Source: srh.noaa.gov/oun/				31	88	62	75				
Average Daily High: 81				Average Daily Low: 60							

From the CEO

Cooperative values safety above all else

Working with electricity can be a dangerous job, especially for line workers. In fact, USA Today lists line repairers and installers among the most dangerous jobs in the U.S. That's why for Cotton Electric, safety is the number one priority. This is not empty talk. Over time, we have created a culture of putting our crews' safety, and that of the community, above all else.



Jennifer Meason, CEO

Our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, our consumer-members. Yes, we strive to deliver affordable and reliable electricity to you, but equally important, we want our employees to return home safely to their loved ones. This requires ongoing focus, dedication, vigilance – and your help!

Stay away from downed power lines

If you see a downed power line, always assume it is energized and dangerous. Downed power lines can energize the ground up to 35 feet away, so always keep your distance. Avoid going near it or anything in contact with the power line, never drive over a downed

line or through water touching the line, and don't try to move a downed power line. Contact us immediately and we will dispatch our crews to make the area safe and make repairs.

Distractions can be deadly

While we appreciate your kindness and interest in the work of our crews, we ask that you stay back and let them focus on their task at hand. Even routine work has the potential to be dangerous, and it takes their full attention and that of their colleagues, who are also responsible for the team's safety. Distractions can have deadly consequences. If a line worker is on or near your property during a power outage, for vegetation management or routine maintenance, please allow them ample room to work. These small accommodations help protect our crews – and you.

If you have a dog, try to keep it indoors while line workers are on or near your property. While most dogs are friendly, some are defensive of their territory and can't distinguish between a burglar and a utility worker. Our crews work best without a pet "supervising" the job.

We recognize that for your family's safety, you want

to make sure only authorized workers are on or near your property. You will recognize Cotton Electric employees by their uniform shirts with the cooperative logo and the white service trucks with our name and logo on them. Contractors working for the cooperative will also have signs on their trucks with the Cotton Electric logo and the word "CONTRACTOR" below it. You may also recognize our line workers because they live right here in our local community.

Slow down and move over.

In addition to giving line workers some space while they are near your property, we also ask that you move over or slow down when approaching a utility vehicle on the side of the road. This is an extra barrier of safety to help those who help all of us.

Thank you for your continued support of Cotton Electric and the employees who work hard daily to provide power that is safe, reliable and affordable. Please contact us at 580-875-3351 with any questions, concerns or recommendations you have.

KEEP US UPDATED

If your address or contact information has been changed due to E911 or for any other reason, please let us know.

Information can be sent in the mail or be dropped off at Cotton Electric, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572 or at the Duncan office, 1101 W. Oak.

Information can be emailed to info@cottonelectric.com or by phone by calling 580-875-3351.

Name : _____

Account #: _____

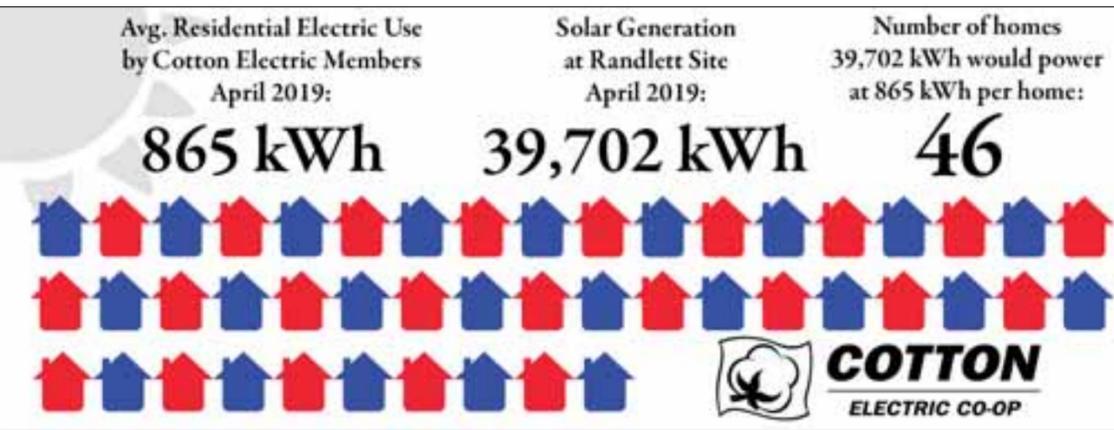
Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____



Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation issued a \$1,500 grant to Stephens County Honor Guard for the purchase of storage lockers, flag equipment and a speaker. SCHG members gathered to accept the grant include auxiliary member Cheryl Swanson, Commander Ken Youngblood, Duke Goddard, Armorer Jerry McAdory, Johnny Seely, John Williams, Vice Commander and Chaplain Burch Swanson and George Parker. Making the presentation are Cotton Electric CEO Jennifer Meason, HR Director Shane Bowers and Marketing Vice President Bryce Hooper.



Skeptical about the effect of weather on your power bill? Mild temperatures in April mean Cotton Electric members used 36% less electricity than in March, on average. Our solar site generated only 8.25% more electricity but would have served 70% more homes.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Want to light up your outdoor space without increasing your energy use? Try outdoor solar lights! They're easy to install and virtually maintenance free. Remember, solar lights work best when the solar cells receive the manufacturer's recommended hours of sunlight.

Source: energy.gov

The Current

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider & employer.

MISSION STATEMENT
 Our mission is to be the leader in providing the most reliable and innovative electric system, with affordable rates, through the positive, enthusiastic and professional use of its resources and people.

	2019	2018
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$4,782,508	\$4,551,795
Cost of Purchased Power	3,287,718	3,287,653
Taxes	100,347	93,757
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	943	944
Average Farm and Residential Bill	115	110
Average Farm and Residential kWh	865	970
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,418	18,360
Miles Energized	5,197	5,170
Density Per Mile	3.54	3.55
New Service Connects YTD	97	75
Services Retired	36	31

3-Step HVAC Test

As summer temperatures rise, so do electric bills. Follow these steps to test the efficiency of your HVAC unit.

The outdoor temperature should be above 80 degrees, and you should set your thermostat well below the room temperature to ensure the system runs long enough for this test.

1. Using a digital probe thermometer (about \$12), measure the temperature of the air being pulled into your HVAC filter.
2. Measure the temperature of the air blowing out of your A/C vent.
3. Subtract the A/C vent temperature from the HVAC filter temperature. You should see a difference of about 17 to 20 degrees. If the difference is less than 17 degrees, you may need a licensed technician to check the coolant. If the difference is greater than 20 degrees, your ductwork may need to be inspected for airflow restrictions.



Ten tips to keep your summer bill chill

With air conditioners running longer to combat the heat, kids home from school using electronics and summer sports gear adding to the piles of laundry, it's no wonder most people anticipate higher energy bills in the summer.

With a little preparation, home energy use can be wisely managed and prevent bills from skyrocketing along with the temperatures.



Heath Morgan, Energy Efficiency Coordinator

Schedule Your A/C Tune-Up or Upgrade

Scheduled maintenance can help reduce summer bills by ensuring your system is running at peak efficiency. Annual tune-ups may identify failing parts before they cause costly damage. Take advantage of Cotton Electric's tune-up rebate to help with the initial cost of a yearly servicing.

If you're ready to take your savings to the next level, talk to a contractor about a system upgrade and what efficiency rebates a new system may qualify for. Heating and cooling systems are responsible for nearly half of a home's energy use. A high-efficiency upgrade can result in some serious savings. All rebate information is available on Cotton Electric's website.

Be Smart With Your Thermostat

Try a thermostat setting of 78 degrees during summer months, or as high as your comfort allows. According to the Department of Energy (DOE), every degree above 72 can save you up to 3 percent on cooling expenses. Consider investing in a smart or programmable thermostat and explore different program settings to see what works best for your home.

When these thermostats are used properly, they can save you up to \$180 annually in energy costs. Not only are these thermostats beneficial during the hot summer months, they can provide savings year-round. For tips on setting up a thermostat programming schedule, visit EnergyStar.gov.

Use Fans to Help Stay Cool

According to Department of Energy research, the use of ceiling or portable fans can allow you to raise the setting on your thermostat up to four degrees without any reduction in comfort. Indoor comfort is more about how the air feels on your skin than actual air tempera-

ture. Ceiling fans work by causing a wind chill effect and can make a room feel up to 10 degrees cooler. This allows you to raise your thermostat setting to prevent the air conditioner from coming on.

Fans use less than 10 percent of the energy it takes to operate an air-conditioning system. Keeping interior doors open is another way to encourage airflow throughout your home, making it feel cooler. Ensure your fan is rotating in a counterclockwise direction for summer and turn fans off when no one is in the room. Fans don't cool rooms, they cool people.

Keep the Sun Out and The Cool In

Use window coverings to keep direct sunlight out of the house. Direct sunlight coming through windows will heat the air and any surface it shines on. In turn, this will cause an air conditioner to run more often in attempt to cool the room and furnishings.

Take note of lower temperatures after the sun goes down. If the outdoor temperature is below the thermostat setting, this might be a great time to turn the unit off and open those windows.

Find Alternative Ways of Cooking

Avoid using the oven or stove top during the hotter parts of the day. Using an outdoor grill, microwave, air fryer, or Instant Pot are all great alternatives. Oven use can raise the indoor temperature by 10 degrees. This temperature increase, accompanied by a high outdoor temperature, means your air conditioner will be working overtime.

If you need to bake or use the oven, consider baking in the morning when outdoor temperatures are cooler and your home is easier to cool down.

Limit Daytime Use of Large Appliances

Using appliances like dishwashers and dryers can add unwanted heat and humidity to your home. Most of these tips are designed to lessen the load on your air conditioner during the warmer parts of the day.

Being the largest energy consumer in your home, the less time your A/C runs during these times, the better. Adding humidity to the air can cause air temperatures to feel warmer than they actually are. Normally, this is going to cause you to drive the setpoint on your thermostat down in hopes of being comfortable again. To avoid using these appliances during peak times, try running your dishwasher or dryer at night or early in the morning.

Remove or Unplug

Extra Refrigerators or Freezers

A refrigerator or freezer located in an unconditioned space, like a garage or porch, has to work considerably harder in warmer temperatures. A freezer consumes vast amounts of energy trying to maintain a zero-degree temperature in a 90-100-degree environment.

If these appliances cannot be removed, ensure they are full. Filling a refrigerator or freezer with food, sodas, or water bottles helps to maintain the temperature inside.

Lower Your Water Heater Setting

Water heating accounts for approximately 18 percent of your home's energy use. Savings of up to 5 percent can be seen on water heating costs just by lowering the setting 10 degrees. The DOE recommends a setting of 120 degrees. Experiment with different settings to see what works best for your household.

Sealing Keeps Warm Air Out

Seal cracks and openings around your home to prevent warm air from leaking in. Caulking or weather stripping can be used to seal around doors and windows. Spray foam products can be used to seal larger openings. Don't forget about air leakage between your attic or crawlspace into the home.

Lots of smaller air leaks around the house can add up to be the equivalent of an open window or door in your home. Sealing these smaller leaks can prevent warm air infiltration and lighten the load on your air-conditioning system. Visit Energy.gov for air sealing tips and tricks.

Monitor Your Energy Use

One of the most critical steps in saving energy is understanding how you are using it. Cotton Electric's SmartHub app makes monitoring your daily energy use easy. The more aware you are of your energy use and habits, the easier it will be to make energy-conscious decisions.

SmartHub gives members the ability to track their energy consumption and compare it to weather data. To avoid peak bills during the hottest and coldest months, members may want to consider an average billing plan. Cotton Electric's Member Services can help members find the best billing option for their account.

Is Your Water Safe?

Give Your Back a Break...Stop Adding Salt to Your Softener

Minerals in your water form scale deposits that build up inside your pipes, water heater, shower heads, and other water using equipment like cholesterol in your arteries. These deposits significantly decrease the efficiency of your plumbing systems. Drinking water and icemakers are also negatively affected, as are health quality of water and taste. Hard water is not safe for you, your family or your home.

Benefits of a No-Salt Water Conditioning System:

- ▣ Maintain healthy calcium & magnesium levels
- ▣ No sodium added to water
- ▣ No waste water vs. up to 10,000 gallons per year with salt softeners
- ▣ No environmental discharge of salt or chemicals
- ▣ Reduces iron staining
- ▣ Extends appliance life by 50% or more
- ▣ Descales inside of pipes & water heater
- ▣ Cleaner bodies, clothes, and dishes
- ▣ 25% or more reduced detergent use
- ▣ Clothing will last longer
- ▣ Cleaner more refreshing water
- ▣ Improves water heater efficiency and thus lowers energy bills

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ESTATE AUCTION

Saturday, June 15th, 2019 @ 10am

183262 N. 2800 Road, Comanche, OK 73529

Preview of Sale: Friday, June 14th, 2019 1-6pm

Scroggins Auction Service has been commissioned to offer at public auction the Personal Property of the Estate of Mr. L.V. Williams.

Directions: From Hwy 81 & Hwy 53 go West 2 miles to Edgewood Store, then go South ¼ mile, East side of road.

AUCTION ITEMS: Cargo trailer, Flatbed trailer, Small utility trailer, Antique farm implements, Hand tools, Power tools, Yard tools, Propane bottles, Stove Irons, Knives, Railroad Sign, Railroad Lantern, Antique stone sharpening wheel, 2 Man Crosscut Saw, Antique Ice Tongs, Metal gas cans, Old Fishing poles, Tackle boxes, Incubator, Old Milk cans, Old cookers, Old Iron skillets, Old Waffle iron, Pots & pans, Kitchenware, Bedroom furniture, Old heavy metal wheel barrow, Old metal washtubs, Antique Dienwood Organ, Old glass bottles, Old insulators, Old kids toys, Old Marbles, Wood display cases.

Lots and Lots more that we are still going through.

There will be many things not listed. You won't want to miss this auction!!

Auctioneers Message: This is an absolute auction, no reserve on the Personal Property. Everything will sell to the highest bidder. Announcements made day of sale supercede any previous advertisements. Everything sells AS-IS, WHERE-IS. **Terms & Conditions of Sale:** Cash, Personal & Company checks accepted with valid ID. Buyers MUST provide a copy of Sales Tax Permit to avoid sales tax.

Scroggins Auction Service, Parker Scroggins - Auctioneer: 580-656-4416
For photos log onto www.auctionzip.com, enter Auctioneer ID #17788

Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the July issue, please submit information by July 3, by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com.

LCT presents 'Peter Pan'

Lawton Community Theatre closes the 2018-19 season with the musical "Peter Pan."

Peter and his mischievous fairy sidekick, Tinkerbell, visit the nursery of the Darling children late one night and, with a sprinkle of pixie dust, begin a magical journey across the stars that they will never forget. Music is provided by Morris "Moose" Charlap with lyrics by Carolyn Leigh.

Performances are set for 8 p.m. June 14, 2 and 8 p.m. June 15 and 8 p.m. June 16 at the McMahon Memorial Auditorium. Ticket information is available at LawtonCommunityTheatre.com, by calling 580-355-1600 or at the Lawton Community Theatre box office located at 1316 NW Bell.

Lawton honors Hispanic heritage

The theme for the 2019 Lawton Chautauqua is "From Pizarro to Picasso: Hispanic Legacy in America Today." The event is a series of historical enactments, workshops and discussions examining the legacy of Hispanic historical figures.

Daytime workshops will be at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Museum of the Great Plains. Evening programs will be at 7 p.m. in the Lawton City Hall Auditorium. Performances will run from June 18 through June 22.

Evening events will include first-person presentations and audience questions to a historical figure in character and to the scholar portraying the character. Portrayals of figures such as Francisco Pizarro, Elizabeth Catlett and more will provide a close-up view of this genre of Hispanic history.

All Chautauqua programs are free and open to the public.

Auction to benefit Duncan program

Gabriel's House Academy's 11th annual benefit dinner and art auction will begin at 6:30 p.m. June 20 at the Simmons Center in Duncan. All proceeds will support programs and services offered by Gabriel's House to the children in Duncan and surrounding communities.

The event begins with drinks and hors d'oeuvres followed by dinner and auction at 7 p.m. This year's theme is "beach."

The event sells out every year, so don't wait to purchase your tickets. Ticket reservations can be made by calling Gabriel's House Academy at 580-252-4782 or emailing GabrielsHouseInc@gmail.com. Sponsorship opportunities are still available.

Annual Duncan parade in June

Duncan's annual Founder's Day Parade will commence from 10-11 a.m. June 22 in downtown Duncan. The parade is in conjunction with the City of Duncan's Founder's Day activities.

Traditionally an exclusive tractor parade, the organization has expanded the procession to consist of floats, classic cars and more.

Spectators are encouraged to enjoy the parade on Walnut Avenue and Main Street anywhere from 7th to 12th street.

The parade is free to enter and attend. Registration and information can be found at MainStreetDuncan.net/Events.

Church celebrates anniversary

All are invited to Alma Baptist Church to celebrate its 121st anniversary on June 22. Free hot dogs will be served begin-

ning at 5 p.m. followed by live bluegrass and old-time gospel music from 6 to 8:30 p.m.

Guests are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets for seating. For information, call 580-504-1536.

Lions rodeo set for June

Duncan Noon Lions will present the 39th annual open rodeo at 7:30 nightly June 27, 28 and 29 in Claud Gill Arena, just south of the Stephens County fairgrounds.

Admission price at the gate is \$10 for adults and \$3 for children.

Proceeds from the event are used in Stephens County to promote vision conservation, provide scholarships and support other local charitable efforts.

CTHC recognizes Day of Cowboy

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Center recognizes the National Day of the Cowboy with a celebration from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. July 27 at 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway in Duncan.

Guests will have the opportunity to visit with Oklahoma author Kristi Eaton, who wrote "The Main Streets of Oklahoma: Okie Stories from Every County." Pauline Asbury, owner of Habasketry, will be demonstrating basket weaving. Bison rancher James Stepp will feature his bison jerky and other products while sharing adventurous stories.

There will be a game room for children, where they can play Western-style cowboy games, get their faces painted and more. Cowboys at Heart, Gaylon Blankenship and Dedra Frye, will be performing live.

All of these activities and more will be available all day at the event. Admission is free.

CTHC is an Oklahoma Outstanding Attraction and a True West Top 10 Western Museum. For information, call 580-252-6692 or email info@onthechisholmtrail.com.

Freedom Fest set for June 29

Lawton Fort Sill's annual Freedom Festival will last all day June 29 at Elmer Thomas Park.

The festival is among the largest free fireworks displays in Oklahoma. Features such as the splash pad, shaded playground area and disc golf make this event something the whole family can enjoy.

Patrons are encouraged to bring lawn chairs, flashlights and picnic baskets. Personal fireworks, drones, alcohol and pets are prohibited.

To learn how to become a sponsor, vendor, or volunteer, call the Arts and Humanities Division at 580-581-3470 or 581-3471.

For rules and regulations, visit Freedom Festival's website at www.lawtonok.gov or the Lawton Fort Sill Freedom Festival Facebook page.

Western Day Celebration is June 29

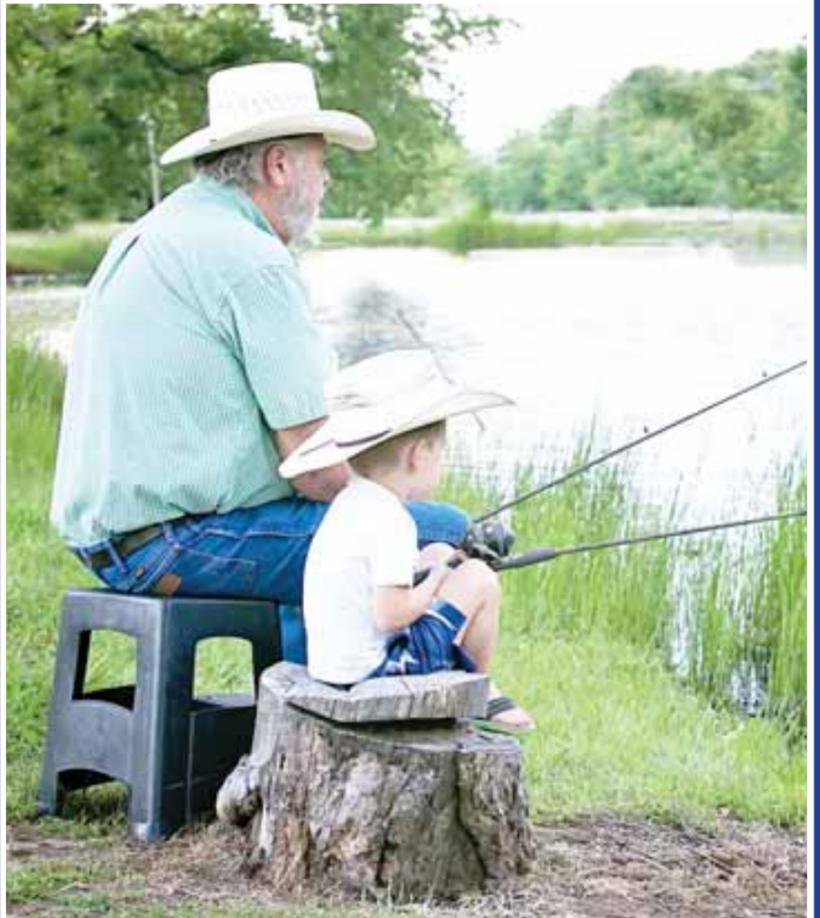
Lawton Bethel Assembly of God will host its 15th annual Western Day Celebration at 6 p.m. June 29 in the Bethel Assembly of God activity center located at 1115 D Ave.

This year's theme is "The Legend of Bose Ikard." Guest speaker Wallace Moore will give a historical presentation of the life and times of Bose Ikard. A donation-only meal of beans, cornbread and dessert will be served prior to the presentation.

The celebration is open to the public. For information, contact Alvie L. Cater Sr. at 580-699-2382 or 917-0544.

More Community Spotlight on Page 6

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Cotton Electric member Pam DaVoult submitted this photo of her husband, Gary Don, enjoying the great outdoors with their grandson, Landon. Landon is the son of Cotton Electric members Jacob and Melanie Jones.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for July is Patriotism. Entries can be emailed to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com or mailed to The Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572. Winners will receive a Cotton Electric prize package of CEC goodies.

SWOK bridal expo set for weekend in June

Allure Bridal Boutique is hosting the 2019 Southwest Oklahoma Bridal Expo from noon to 4 p.m. June 30 at the Hilton Garden Inn Lawton Fort Sill and Convention Center in Lawton.

Plan your big day at one event. Vendors for gowns, tuxes, DJs, photography and caterers will be showcased. Chances for door prizes will be available and a fashion show will commence at 3 p.m. Tickets are available at EventBrite.com.

WE KEEP THEM UP HERE FOR A REASON.

STAY CLEAR OF DOWNED POWER LINES.

Helping members use electricity safely, that's the power of your co-op membership. Learn more from the experts themselves at TouchstoneEnergy.com.

COTTON
ELECTRIC CO-OP
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

July		August		September	
Ad Sales	June 28	Ad Sales	July 26	Ad Sales	Aug. 30
Classified	July 3	Classified	July 31	Classified	Sept. 4
Publish Date	July 15	Publish Date	Aug. 12	Publish Date	Sept. 16



Cotton Electric employees Talia Gammill and Jennifer Kriz are joined by former CEO Warren Langford at the 2019 Special Olympics Oklahoma State Games.



Jennifer Kriz and Ty Logan prepare to hand out water at the opening ceremonies of the Special Olympics Oklahoma State Games.

Co-ops continue tradition at Special Olympics

By Danielle Quickle

Cooperatives around the world operate according to the same set of core principles and values. These seven principles are a key reason that America's electric cooperatives operate differently from other electric utilities, putting the needs of their members first.

The sixth and seventh cooperative principles, Cooperation Among Cooperatives and Concern for Community, state that by working through local, national, regional, and international structures, cooperatives improve services, bolster local economies, and deal more effectively with social and community needs. Every year, cooperatives in Oklahoma exemplify these principles through volunteering at Special Olympics Oklahoma.

Special Olympics provides year-round sports training and athletic competition to special needs children and adults, giving them the opportunity to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Nineteen electric cooperatives from across the state sent more than 100 volunteers to serve at the 2019 Special Olympics Oklahoma State Games in May. Among those volunteers were Cot-



ton Electric employees Talia Gammill, Ty Logan and Jennifer Kriz, as well as former CEO Warren Langford.

Jennifer Kriz has been representing Cotton Electric at Special Olympics Oklahoma for eight years. Her love for the games can be traced back to her childhood.

"I grew up in a family with special needs kids," Kriz said. "They would go to Special Olympics every year and participate in events at every level, from local to national. They loved it and we always had so much fun."

Athletes qualify for the state games by competing at local events, such as Lawton and Duncan Special Olympics.

"The state level is really important,"

Kriz said. "Some of these kids are there to win and compete so they can go on to nationals. Apart from a few exceptions, it is held just like any other athletic event."

Electric co-ops are responsible for helping out at the track and field events. Walking, running and wheelchair races happen simultaneously on both ends of the track with girls on one side and boys on the other. Each event can have up to eight participants at a time.

"There is nothing better than being around all those kids and seeing the sheer joy on their faces as they cross that finish line," Kriz recalled. "You just don't see that level of excitement every day. I love being around it and I love being a part of it."

Volunteers are needed to get the athletes lined up, record their times, assign them a placing and walk them to staging where they receive their awards. The chaos of it all can be overwhelming for some athletes and requires all hands-on deck. This is why it is so important that Cotton Electric, other organizations and individuals continue to volunteer each year.

"Special Olympics needs as many volunteers as they can get," Kriz said. "There is rarely anybody volunteering that isn't being utilized in some way."

Volunteers often reap just as much benefit, if not more, as the athletes competing. Kriz encourages members to get involved with the community in some way.

"Whether it is Special Olympics, your local humane society or something else, just get involved and include your children," Kriz encouraged. "I don't think I would have the passion for volunteering that I do now if I hadn't been exposed to it as a kid."

Members can get involved by visiting the official website of Special Olympics Oklahoma at SOOK.org. Volunteering at local, state or national levels is as simple as filling out an application located under the Get Involved tab.

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Rebate deadline quickly approaches

Time is running out to qualify for a rebate on an HVAC system tune-up.

Typically, tune-ups on cooling systems that have been neglected for a few years can provide as much as 15 percent energy savings. A yearly tune-up can increase the life of the system.

Cotton Electric is offering a rebate of up to \$50 per home (50 percent of the cost of your tune-up, excluding repairs, up to \$50) for members who get a tune-up for their HVAC systems.

In order to qualify, the following guidelines must be met:

- Must be a Cotton Electric Cooperative member. Residence must be within Cotton Electric's service territory.
- Rebate is not available for new construction.
- A completed Rebate Application is required. Application forms can be downloaded at CottonElectric.com/rebate-program and will be available at the Walters and Duncan offices, or by calling 580-875-3351. Ask for Heath Morgan.
- Application for rebate must be signed and dated by both the member and a licensed and bonded HVAC contractor.
- Member must submit a dated, itemized invoice as proof of service completion from a qualified contractor. Failure to provide required information will result in denial of rebate.

• Rebates are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until program funds have been depleted.

• Gas-fired furnaces and window units are not eligible for rebates.

• Rebate limited to one tune-up per home annually.

• HVAC tune-ups must be completed by June 20, 2019. Rebate applications must be received by June 30, 2019.

Tune-Up Checklist

Tune-ups must be performed by a qualified service professional and must include the following criteria:

- Check and correct unit's refrigerant pressure and tubing
- Check thermostat settings, wiring and other electric parts and connections
- Inspect air filters
- Test AC and furnace starting capabilities
- Test safety controls
- Clean and adjust blower components
- Measure temperature difference
- Measure volts/amps on AC and furnace
- Lubricate all applicable parts
- Check temperature calibration and adjust, if needed
- Check AC evaporator coil and clean, if necessary
- Clean AC condenser coil
- Clean AC condensate drains
- Check thermostat operation

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Community Spotlight

Dehydrator set for July 27

The 30th annual Dehydrator is a bicycle ride with varied mile routes. Riders leave at 7 a.m. July 27 from the Simmons Center in Duncan.

Entry fees are \$30 per person or \$45 per tandem team, non-refundable. A free T-shirt goes to the first 500 entries. A \$5 late fee will be assessed on entries after July 21.

For information and registration forms, visit thedehydrator.org.

Coin show in Stephens County

Duncan's Annual Coin Show is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept 13 and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 14 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds.

Guests will receive appraisals on gold, silver, currency, coins, tokens and supplies. Event includes free parking, admission and refreshments.

For information, contact Ed McGill at 580-475-4570.

Senior center hosts weekly dances

Duncan Senior Citizens Center presents country and western dances from 7 to 9:30 p.m. every Tuesday and Saturday. Tuesdays feature Bill Dewbre and Old Country. Buzz Carter and the Shadow Riders play every Saturday. Admission is \$6 and includes free coffee and soft drinks. Donations are appreciated. For information, call the center at 580-255-6902.

Lawton Farmers Market open weekly

Lawton Farmers Market is open from 8 a.m. to noon every Wednesday and Saturday from April through October at the Comanche County Fairgrounds, 920 SW Sheridan Road.

In addition to local seasonal produce, expect to see specialty foods such as jams, jellies, salsas, baked goods, wine, freshly roasted coffee beans, as well as handmade soap, herbs, plants, eggs, beef and an assortment of handcrafted items and food concessionaires.

For information, visit Lawton Farmers Market on Facebook.

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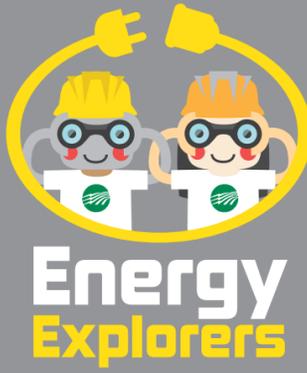
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WIND ENERGY WORD SEARCH



Did you know wind can be used to generate electricity?

The wind blows, turning the blades on the wind turbine, which turns the generator inside the turbine - this produces electricity.

Circle the words associated with wind energy in the puzzle below.



Word Bank

- TURBINE
- WIND
- ELECTRICITY
- BLADES
- POWER
- WIND FARM
- SPIN
- RENEWABLE
- GENERATOR
- ENERGY

Fun Fact

Wind farms are built in flat, open areas where the wind blows at least 14 miles per hour.

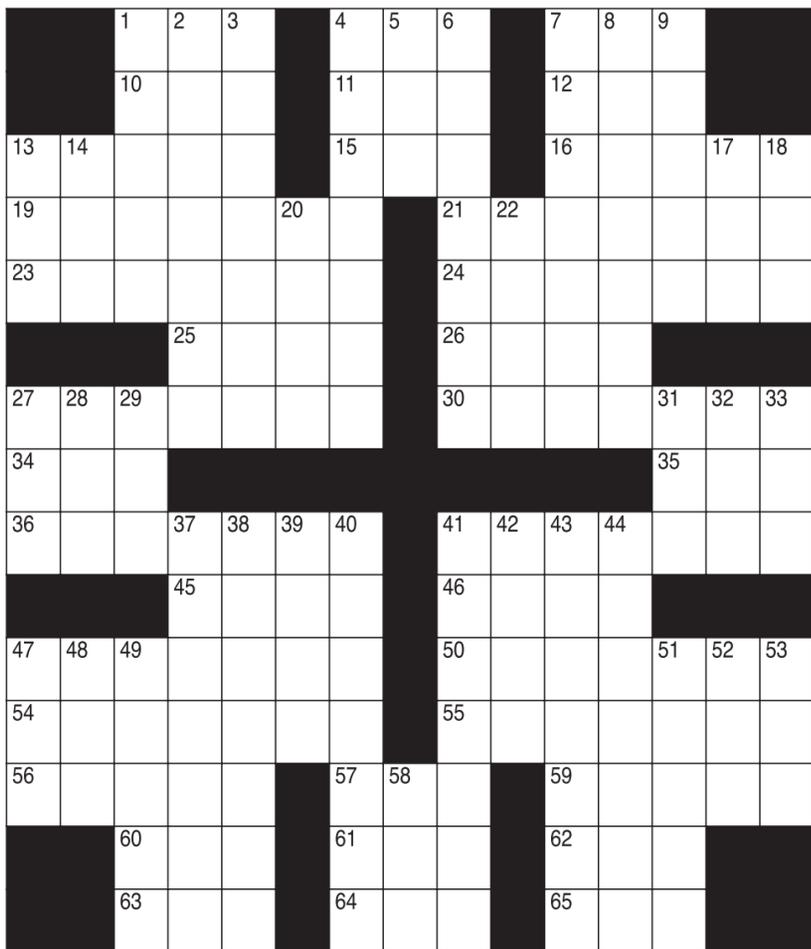


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ACROSS

1. Mathematical term (abbr.)
4. Seaport (abbr.)
7. "Unforgettable" singer
10. The GOAT
11. Used to harvest agave cactus
12. Luke's mentor ___-Wan
13. Muses
15. IBM operating system
16. Hungarian village
19. Popular conversation topic
21. N. Atlantic island
23. Fail to discern correctly
24. The President has one
25. Irish Gaelic language
26. Gasteyer and Ivanovic are two
27. Garnished
30. National capital
34. Basics
35. Initial public offering
36. Winged horse
41. English synthpop duo
45. Mars crater
46. A lot
47. Small organelles
50. By reason of
54. "Growing Pains" actor Kirk
55. Free from contamination
56. Genus in the mahogany family
57. Body part
59. A belief in a supreme being
60. Talk a lot
61. Actors' group



- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 62. Unit of measurement | Arabian peninsulas | 39. Freshwater mussel genus |
| 63. Slick | 13. Corrie | 40. Opposite of happiness |
| 64. No seats available | 14. Hawaiian flower necklace | 41. Ban on trade |
| 65. A way to change color | 17. Midway between northeast and east | 42. Bitterly regrets |
| | 18. Insecticide | 43. Assented |
| | 20. Comfort | 44. Well-proportioned |
| | 22. Town in Galilee | 47. Part of (abbr.) |
| | 27. Informal greeting | 48. Indigenous people of Thailand |
| | 28. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.) | 49. A man of your stature (abbr.) |
| | 29. Used to check the heart | 51. Advantageous |
| | 31. Western India island | 52. Female sibling |
| | 32. Credit card term | 53. Electronic counter-measures |
| | 33. Female deer | 58. Swiss river |
| | 37. British football team | |
| | 38. Persian jurisdiction | |

DOWN

1. Belongs to the daughter of Chaos
2. Wardrobe
3. Derek and Jeff are two
4. Disfigured
5. Hawaiian dish
6. What a hack drives
7. Horse gear
8. Do away with
9. Narrow straits between Sinai and

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Red, White and Blue Watermelon Parfait

Red, White and Blue Watermelon Parfait

- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 container (6 ounces) Greek yogurt (vanilla, lemon or coconut)
- 1 cup watermelon, plus three pieces diced watermelon whipped cream, for serving

In pint canning jar, layer blueberries, yogurt and 1 cup watermelon. Top with whipped cream and garnish with three diced watermelon pieces.

Note: To make ahead or make thicker, drain Greek yogurt on paper towels to absorb some liquid.

FAMILY FEATURES

There's no time like a hot summer picnic to let your patriotic spirit show. These all-American snacks featuring a classic favorite fruit – watermelon – are the perfect solution for nearly any summertime celebration.

Watermelon is a patriotic picnic staple for countless reasons, not the least of which is that it's a beloved treat that many people associate with memories from childhood. However, nostalgia isn't the only reason adults are just as likely to gravitate toward watermelon at a summer event. Its sweet, cool and refreshing flavor also makes it a favorite for all ages.

From a practical standpoint, watermelon is also quite portable, versatile and easy to serve, and with a composition of 92% water, it's a simple way to sneak in some extra hydration on a hot day. Another benefit is its value; watermelon is one of the best values in the produce section among fruit, and just one watermelon can feed up to three dozen people.

Serving watermelon at a party can be as simple as slicing wedges, or you can prepare a dish such as:

- A fruit basket, with the rind serving as a colorful bowl to hold the watermelon and other fresh fruits.
- A charcuterie board with a selection of fruit, cheese and protein for simple snacking.
- Creamy parfaits, perfect for a summery brunch or alternative to more traditional desserts.
- A creatively colorful and patriotic "cake" that makes for a tasty centerpiece on the dessert table.

Find more ideas for incorporating watermelon into your summer festivities at watermelon.org.

Sweet, Refreshing Summer Snacks

Flag Kebab Cake

- 1 pint fresh, washed blackberries
 - 12 wooden skewers
 - 1 seedless watermelon, flesh cut into 1-inch cubes
 - 1 angel food cake, cut into 1-inch cubes (white part only)
- dips, such as yogurt, chocolate, caramel or marshmallow (optional)

Thread five blackberries on each of five skewers, followed by alternating watermelon and cake cubes.

On remaining skewers, alternate watermelon and cake so first and last cubes are watermelon. Place skewers on platter; fruit and cake will create stars and stripes when lined properly.

Serve with dips, if desired.



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Patriotic Fruit Salad

- 1 watermelon
- honeydew
- blueberries

Slice 1/4 inch off bottom of watermelon, lengthwise, to create stable base.
 Use pencil to draw zig-zag lines for basket opening. Using paring knife, make cuts through rind.
 Carefully remove top section, pull out large chunks of flesh and cut them into 3-by-3-inch squares.
 Trim 3/4-inch thick slices off squares to use for cutting out stars with 1 1/2-3-inch, star-shaped cookie cutters.
 Use ice cream scoop to remove flesh from inside basket and cut scoops into quarters for fruit salad. Place in bottom of basket. Add honeydew and blueberries; stir to combine.
 Cut out white stripes from honeydew.
 Garnish top of fruit salad with watermelon stars, honeydew stripes and blueberries.



Patriotic Charcuterie Board

- 1/2 medium seedless watermelon, cut into wedges
- 1/2 cup fresh raspberries
- 1 1/2 cups fresh blueberries
- 10 strawberries (dipped in white chocolate, if desired)
- 5 ounces fresh goat cheese
- 1/2 cup toasted, salted cashews
- 2 ounces cured meats like prosciutto, pancetta, coppa, salami, soppressata, sausage or pepperoni
- 1 Honeycrisp apple, cored and sliced
- lemon juice
- fresh basil leaves

On large board or platter, arrange watermelon, raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, cheese, cashews, meat and apples. Drizzle fruit with lemon juice. Garnish with basil leaves before serving.

Easy Summer Thirst Quencher



A simple fruit-infused water can give your summer event an instant upgrade in no time at all. Add extra dimension and complexity to the flavor by adding some of your favorite herbs like basil and mint.

Watermelon-Infused Water

- 2 cups watermelon balls or cubes
- 1 cup other fruit, such as berries
- herbs, such as basil or mint

Place watermelon, fruit and herbs in pitcher and cover with water. For best flavor, allow to chill in refrigerator at least 30 minutes before serving.

Studies continue to contradict myths about carrageenan

Carrageenan is a plant-based additive used across the food industry as a thickener, emulsifier and stabilizer. It is extracted from seaweed and is a common ingredient in yogurt, ice cream, lunch meats, protein shakes and shelf-stable milk.



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For Thought

If you search for information on carrageenan on the internet, you will find claims that it causes serious health issues including intestinal ulcers, tumors and intestinal inflammation.

These negative health effects are not attributed to the carrageenan in food. An extract of carrageenan, called poligeenan, is responsible for these health effects in animals. Unfortunately, poligeenan used to be called "degraded carrageenan" and health advocates theorized that when carrageenan goes into the stomach, it is converted to degraded carrageenan. This is simply not true.

Degraded carrageenan, or poligeenan, is made by exposing carrageenan to high temperatures and acid at levels much higher than in the stomach. Poligeenan is not approved for use in food because overexposure can result in serious health consequences. However, it is used in safe amounts in medicine to complete certain x-ray procedures.

A review article written by McKim and colleagues that was published in Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition in 2018 describes the differences in the

non-harmful food additive carrageenan and poligeenan. The title of the review article is "Clarifying the confusion between poligeenan, degraded carrageenan and carrageenan: A review of the chemistry, nomenclature and in vivo toxicology by the oral route."

Studies continue to show that carrageenan is completely safe. There is no need to avoid the ingredient, although some food manufacturers are moving to other emulsifiers and stabilizers because of the continued misrepresentation of the effect of carrageenan on the body. Some studies actually point to carrageenan being linked to lower LDL cholesterol, and improved immune function.

There is no need to avoid carrageenan, but there is also no need to seek it out as an important part of your diet. Focus more on eating fruits and vegetables, lean protein, healthy carbohydrates, and exercising.

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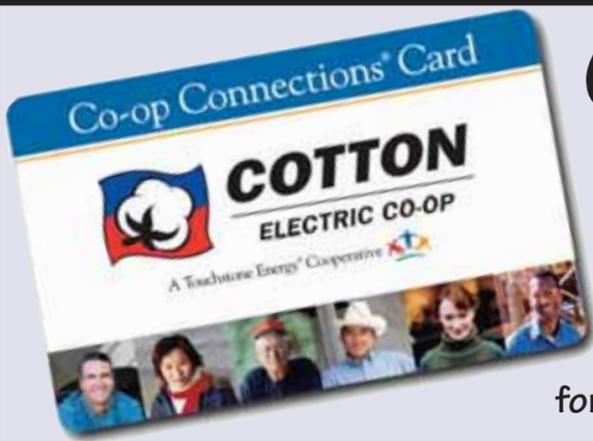
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In 2018, members used their cards for discounts on 899 prescriptions not covered by insurance. A total of \$16,467.67 was discounted for an average

savings of \$18.32 per use. The card is free to all members and can be obtained by calling 580-875-3351.

To find a participating pharmacy, call Member Services at 800-800-7616 or visit www.locateproviders.com. Type 2203OK19 into the Group field and click 'log in' to start your search.



2019 Youth Tour essay topic:

What do you find most interesting about electric cooperatives?



Aryanna North
Central High High School

Cooperatives beneficial to rural areas

Editor's note: Four area high school juniors won a trip to Washington D.C., in Cotton Electric's annual Youth Tour essay contest. Each of the essays will appear in The Current.



It's a cold night in January and I am on my way to hog jackpot. My heart is racing and adrenaline pulses through my veins as I think about getting into the show ring. Once I arrive, I step out of the pickup and I am instantly hit with Oklahoma's brutal wind. My hands turn to ice.

I'm trying to unload my pigs but they refuse to step out into the frigid weather. I'm cold, frustrated and starting to grow worried. Finally, after a good 30 minutes of hassling with stubborn pigs, they budge and we make our way to the show barn.

As I take a step inside, my senses are overwhelmed with the bright barn lights, the country music playing in the background and the fantastic warmth that begins to flood my body. My hands begin to thaw and the shivering stops completely.

Then I am hit with a sudden realization of how blessed Oklahoma is to have such dedicated electric co-ops. Without them, I wouldn't have been fortunate enough to take home Grand Champion Hampshire Barrow that night.

Electric co-ops, such as Cotton Electric, have made showing so much easier for me. If it wasn't for them, my stock

wouldn't have a heat lamp to keep them warm at night. They've made what I do possible and I couldn't be more thankful for that.

When my Ag teacher told me about this essay, showing pigs was the only example I could really think of and I knew that wouldn't cut it. Knowing that I could possibly win a trip to Washington, D.C., meant that I really had to step up my game, because the competition would be fierce.

I wasn't sure where to start and I definitely wasn't sure how I'd make my approach in explaining what I find most interesting about electric cooperatives. It's a pretty simple concept, but a simple answer is not good enough. I had to think of something good.

So, I began doing extensive research and I was shocked! I had no idea that the majority of electric co-ops are privately, independently and voluntarily owned.

Then I dug deeper.

Co-ops serve more than 19 million businesses, homes, irrigation systems and countless other establishments, all while being a not-for-profit organization. It feels good knowing that co-ops provide affordable and reliable energy.

Furthermore, cooperatives are vastly beneficial to people who live in rural areas who ultimately have no other access to electricity. Some companies are reluctant to serve areas where customers are scarcer, but that's what is so great about Cotton Electric in particular. They don't ignore us country folk just because we may be inconvenient to some.

In addition to that, countless electric co-ops consider their community residents their members, rather than customers. Not to mention, they go the extra mile to improve our quality of life and that is what I find most interesting.

Cooperatives' main focus is service, not profits. Electric co-ops are recognizing that their local communities need efficient and renewable energy programs and are working tirelessly to accomplish this goal. Today, there are more than 900 electric co-ops serving 42 million people in 47 states! Plus, they are providing electric for 56 percent of America's landmass.

Ultimately, electric co-ops make our lives a little more comfortable. They electrify our homes, towns and so much more. They are on the path to providing a cleaner, more sustainable future for all of us. Electric co-ops are even powering

America with jobs and education. More importantly, they are taking this enthusiasm to developing countries across the world and are improving their quality of life as well.

As I was thinking about how I would approach this essay, I'll be the first to admit that I had major writers block. I wanted to impress whoever would read this; I wanted to sound knowledgeable and original. Most importantly, I wanted to stand out from the rest of the hundreds of essays they would read.

Now sure, I could write a factual essay and go into details about electric co-ops and type all kinds of mumbo jumbo, but that's not what I find most interesting. Yes, facts and statistics are important but what I truly find interesting is how electric co-ops are changing the future.

They are going to change the world for the better. Not only are they going to change the world, but they're also going to change somebody's world. This essay is an exceptional opportunity and I couldn't be more grateful to be a part of it.

In closing, electric cooperatives are shaping America's future for the better and I'm just one of the many Oklahomans who have benefited from you guys. Thank you, Cotton Electric, for all you have done for me and my community.

I'm excited to see what else electric cooperatives will accomplish for the next generations to come.

Warehouse responsible for co-op inventory

By Danielle Quickle

From bucket trucks and poles to wire, nuts and bolts, a variety of equipment is needed to maintain Cotton Electric's 5,197 miles of energized line. All of this equipment and more is part of the co-op's warehouse inventory.

The warehouse is managed by three employees: Purchasing Agent Justin King, Warehouse Supervisor Ty Logan and Warehouse Materials Handler Dane Kerr. Cotton Electric runs anywhere from \$900,000 to \$1 million worth of inventory yearly. Every single piece of equipment that comes in or out of the co-op must be accounted for.

Equipment is checked out each morning to line crews in order to meet the needs of service orders to be completed that day. If, for any reason, equipment goes unused, it is checked back into the warehouse at the end of the day.

The department carries the responsibility of making sure Cotton Electric has all equipment needed to perform necessary jobs. Routine light changes and pole repairs, to name a few, would not be possible without required equipment on hand.

Not only do warehouse workers keep track of inventory, they are in charge of ensuring the shelves stay filled. Warehouse personnel make purchasing orders for all materials at the Walters warehouse, as well as at the several satellite warehouses scattered throughout the co-op's service territory.

"Our biggest priority is keeping the warehouses stocked for our line crews," King said. "We need to make sure they have everything they need, when they need it, to get the job done."

This priority becomes especially important during this time of year.

"Storm season can be extremely unpredictable," King said. "One storm has the potential to take down 20 poles, and that is something we have to be prepared for."

Thanks to the efforts of Cotton Electric's Vegetation Management and pole replacement program, the co-



Warehouse workers Ty Logan, Justin King and Dane Kerr must account for every item of inventory that leaves or enters Cotton Electric.

op has seen minimal equipment damage during recent storms.

Warehouse staff is on call 24/7 should line workers need access to equipment during after-hours outages or if they need an extra set of hands out in the field.

"We will get called in if we have poles down or for similar situations that require materials beyond what a bucket truck is equipped with," King said. "Ty Logan will often double as a ground hand to help get the lights back on quicker."

Known for wearing many hats, warehouse personnel are willing to help out whenever and wherever they are needed at the co-op.

"We get called for just about anything and everything," King said. "If the main office needs something moved, if our construction crew needs a few more hands or if the transformer shop needs some assistance

at the pole yard, we try to find a way to help."

King emphasizes the presence of the cooperative spirit between individual departments.

"That's just how the co-op, especially the warehouse, operates," King said. "We help out when we can but we also receive a lot of assistance from other departments."

Members catch a glimpse of this cooperative spirit through services offered to them by the warehouse.

"We have members who call in searching for a certain type of wire for projects they have going on and, if we have it, we will sell it to them," King said. "We also get calls asking if there are any broken poles available and we will actually release those to members for free."

Every department at Cotton Electric is geared toward better serving the membership. When the lights go out, members can add these three to the list of devoted employees determined to get the power back on.

Smartphone information susceptible to hackers

For many users, their smartphones are never too far out of reach. This is strongly due to the role these devices now play in everyday life, as well as, the amount of sensitive information contained within them.

The treasure trove of personal data, including banking information, personal emails and private photos that smartphones contain, makes them tempting targets for skilled cyber criminals. Though phones come with built-in security features, savvy smartphone users recognize the importance of going beyond such features to protect their devices from hackers.

- Update your operating system. It can be a nuisance to update a phone's operating system (OS). In fact, many smartphone users have bemoaned an OS update feeling the updates changed the look and performance of apps they have grown accustomed to. However, operating system updates are offered for various reasons, one of which is to guard against glitches or bugs in old operating systems



that might have made phones more vulnerable to hackers. When prompted to update a smartphone's operating system, do so right away.

- Avoid public Wi-Fi. Hackers target victims in many ways, including through public Wi-Fi hotspots. Smartphone users who don't have unlimited data plans may be tempted to use public Wi-Fi when out and about. Doing so makes users vulnerable to hackers who are waiting to access personal information, such as

financial data. When leaving the house, turn off the Wi-Fi on your phone, only turning it back on when you have access to a secure network.

- Accept two-factor authentication. Two-factor authentication was designed so internet users would have another layer of protection against hackers. When attempting to sign into an account, whether it's email, social media, banking, or another login that requires a username and password, you may be asked if you

want to enroll in two-factor authentication. This refers to the system in which a user receives a temporary code via text, phone call or email that only the user has access to. Some might say two-factor authentication is a nuisance, but receiving and entering a short code will only take a few seconds and is a great extra measure of protection against hackers.

- Only buy apps from your phone's official app store. When purchasing and downloading apps, only use official app stores such as the Apple Store or Google Play. Some hackers access phones via apps offered through websites that seem legitimate. However, such apps contain viruses and malware that make it easy for hackers to access phones once they've been installed.

Smartphone users must recognize the importance of protecting all sensitive information on their phones from hackers.

Source: Metro

Bill Robinson

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Cooperative bolts into new technology

By Danielle Quickle

Cotton Electric is always looking for new ways to serve its membership by providing education about safety, energy efficiency and emerging technology. The co-op recently purchased a 2019 Chevrolet Bolt electric vehicle (EV) in hopes of providing insight to members about the unfamiliar advancement in the world of electricity.

Cotton Electric's Energy Efficiency Coordinator, Heath Morgan has been heavily involved in the process of researching, purchasing and gathering data for the EV.

"The basis behind us having the EV is to kind of be the first to try it so we can pass our findings on to our members," Morgan said. "We can see the ins and outs of the vehicle in a real-world application and determine if it is something that would be beneficial to our members."

The Bolt is a 4-door sub compact total electric vehicle, meaning it runs completely off of electricity as opposed to a hybrid which can be fueled by electricity or gasoline.

"It only made sense to go with total electric," Morgan said. "It seems like there are quite a few manufacturers that are geared toward going total electric in the future."

Apart from its fuel source, some of the noticeable differences between the EV and a typical gas fueled vehicle is the level of noise and the number of moving parts in the engine.

Internal combustion engine vehicles have more than 2,000 moving parts, on average. Electric vehicles have only about 20. This can be beneficial to drivers for a number of reasons.

"Fewer moving parts means less maintenance, less

breakdowns, and less opportunity for failure," Morgan said.

Another noticeable difference is the miles per gallon (MPG) of an internal combustion vehicle and the miles per gallon equivalent (MPGE) of an EV. The MPGE takes into account how many miles are driven on how many kilowatt hours (kWh) it took to charge the battery.

"The way we have it in our spreadsheet, it is calculated at \$2.50 per gallon of gasoline versus roughly \$0.09 per kWh," Morgan explained. "That comes out to about 27.78 kWh for the same price as a single gallon of gas. On average, we have been between 80-120 MPGE since receiving the EV in March."

Charging the battery of an EV can be done using any one of three levels of chargers. A level one charger is the standard manufacturer charger that comes with the vehicle upon purchase. This charger can be plugged into a regular outlet because it has a low amperage, but therefore leads to a slow charge. This level of charger will take about a day and a half to completely charge an empty EV battery.

A level two charger is what is installed at Cotton Electric headquarters for the EV and is realistic for EV drivers to have professionally installed in their homes. On close to an empty battery, a level two charger can have an EV at full capacity in about five hours, making it ideal for those who wish to charge overnight.

Level three chargers are those that can be seen at gas stations or designated charging stations. These chargers can have vehicles fully charged in as little as 15-20 minutes.

At this time, there are no commercial charging stations located in Cotton Electric's service territory.

However, this is expected to change as electric vehicles become more popular.

"The Charge Oklahoma Program that is going on right now is designed to incentivize businesses to install level three charging stations along the I-44 corridor," Morgan said. "The idea is to fill the charging gap between Oklahoma City and the Red River."

Members can view all registered charging stations in the United States by visiting ChargePoint.com. Once infrastructure is expanded, range anxiety should be somewhat relieved for drivers considering owning an EV and make it more realistic for members in our area to own one..

"I think at one time it was believed that electric vehicles were only for people who lived in big cities with short commutes," Morgan said. "Now I think it has become so diverse, that once infrastructure expands, an EV could be ideal for anyone."

Major manufacturers like Chevrolet and Ford are starting to come out with a variety of EV styles, such as SUVs and trucks, that can meet the needs of any individual or family.

With a variety of vehicles to choose from, body type, range and price are just a few of the things that need to be considered before making a purchase. Members interested in purchasing an EV are encouraged to do research to see what options would best fit their needs and contact Cotton Electric if they have any questions.

"We are always here to help our members," Morgan said. "If I don't know the answer, I will do what I can to find it."

Heath Morgan can be reached by calling Cotton Electric at 580-875-3351.

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