

The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

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NUMBER 7



Finalists in Cotton Electric’s 57th annual Rural Electric Youth Tour competition include, seated from left, Olivia Cantwell, Rachel Retherford, Glory Collins, Savannah Triplett, and, back row from left, Emily Payne, Blaise Morgan, Madison Contreras, Marlon Banner III, and Hailey Franklin. Winners announced on Page 10.

Finalists announced in essay competition

High school juniors from schools across southern Oklahoma submitted essays to compete in Cotton Electric Cooperative’s 2020 Rural Electric Youth Tour contest.

The entries were pared down to the 25 best essays on the topic “What do you find most interesting about electric cooperatives?” and their authors were invited to CEC headquarters in Walters for the interview portion of the competition.

Following the question-and-answer sessions, the co-op named finalists. They and their parents and teachers

were guests of Cotton Electric for a banquet on March 5. During the event, the finalists were required to recite their essay in an oral, speech-type format. As they presented before judges and banquet guests, the final four winners were determined.

The Cotton Electric Youth Tour winners will receive an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. For a week in June, they will join 1,500 students and follow state-planned itineraries, including time with Oklahoma’s congressional delegation.

The students will have an opportunity

to learn about government, the cooperative form of business and the business of rural electrification. The students will become more familiar with the historical and political environment of the nation’s capital through visits to monuments, government offices and cooperative organizations.

Listed by school, the finalists and their parents are:

Comanche High School: Marlon Banner III, son of Jessica McDonogh;

Marlow High School: Olivia Cantwell, daughter of Jonathan and Stacy Cantwell; Madison Contreras,

daughter of Rebecca Marciano; Rachel Retherford, daughter of Jennifer Retherford; Savannah Triplett, daughter of Craig and Kay Triplett; Emily Payne, daughter of David and Shelli Payne;

Walters High School: Glory Collins, daughter of Kathleen RedElk and Bill Cain; Hailey Franklin, daughter of Billy and Dana Franklin; and Blaise Morgan, son of Jonathan and Renate Morgan.

Winners of the competition are listed on Page 10.

STORM PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST:

~~☐ FLASHLIGHT~~

~~☐ BATTERIES~~

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Contact Heath Morgan for details, 580-875-3351*



Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after March 1, 2020, is (\$0.00297) per kWh.

On a member’s average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a credit of \$3.86 on the March bill.

February 2020 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	68	23	46	16	64	36	50
2	80	32	56	17	65	33	49
3	68	40	54	18	57	37	47
4	42	30	36	19	57	33	45
5	33	16	25	20	50	27	39
6	41	13	27	21	48	18	33
7	57	24	41	22	62	36	49
8	62	28	45	23	58	48	53
9	74	42	58	24	59	39	49
10	42	35	39	25	56	36	46
11	44	36	42	26	47	22	35
12	48	36	42	27	64	19	42
13	40	25	33	28	66	28	47
14	48	24	36	29	77	30	54
15	61	37	49				

Source: srh.noaa.gov/oum/
Average Daily High: 57 Average Daily Low: 31

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric members can use SmartHub to monitor daily energy consumption. SmartHub is accessible at our website, CottonElectric.com, or via a free app for your smart phone.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on April 13, 2020.

Contact Us

Do you have a story idea for The Current or do you need to place an ad? If so, let us know. We can be reached at 580-875-3351 or by email at TheCurrent@cottonelectric.com. You can also drop us a line at Cotton Electric Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572.

What’s Inside

Operating Stats.....2
Co-op News..... 2
Community 3,6
Co-op News.....4-5
Puzzles 7
Co-op News 8-11
Recipes 12-13
Classifieds 14-19

More news at cottonelectric.com

From the CEO

New bill design launched, rates unchanged

As your member-owned electric cooperative, we're continually looking for ways to improve through utility plant upgrades, integration of new technology, and better communication. Over the past year, our staff has been working on integrating new technology to develop a billing redesign that will debut next month.

The purpose of the new design is to provide you with more information about your electric service in an easy-to-read format. Although the design is different, our rate structure has remained the same. The rates and fixed monthly costs have not increased since 2015 and no new charges have been added. You can see the fixed rate tariffs on our website, www.cot-electric.com/electric-rates.



Jennifer Meason, CEO

www.cot-electric.com/electric-rates.

When you receive your new bill, please take a few minutes to look at the new format. In the top left section, you'll see several important details like the name on your account, account number, and the phone number we have on file. If the number listed is incorrect, please contact our offices so we can update our files. It's important for us to have a good contact number so that we can follow up with you

during outages or contact you about work in your area.

The first major change is the "Service Detail" section that is in the middle right area of the new bill. The top half will show your previous payment activity and your account balance before the current billing statement. Under "Current Activity" you will see an itemized list of charges (Facility Charge, Energy Charge, PCA Charge and Gross Receipts Tax) that were previously consolidated in a one-line item labeled Energy Charge. We'll continue to list any City Gross Receipts Tax, Outdoor Lighting charges and Operation Round Up contributions separately.

This new format also allows us to provide more information

about your current and past energy consumption. You'll see a bar chart that displays your kilowatt hour (kWh) use by month for the current and previous year. There's also a summary below which highlights your current kWh use compared to last month and the previous year for reference. Our goal is to provide you with useful information to help you track and manage your energy use.

The back side of the bill will provide an "Explanation of Charges," payment options, and what to do in the event of an outage.

You can learn more about the new bill design on Page 4. Please call us at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520 with any questions you might have.

Crew moves to west Walters circuit

Cotton Electric strives to provide the best service to its members. One way this goal is achieved is through the co-op's Vegetation Management (VM.) The VM program is a proactive effort to ensure quality power delivery. Aggressive and preventive vegetation management is valuable to members from a service and an economic perspective. Keeping vegetation away from power lines is also a matter of safety.

Vegetation Management Coordinator Scott Crew oversees Cotton Electric's in-house four-man crew, as well as several contract crews throughout the year, as they clear vegetation and prevent re-growth.

Crew said his employees make every effort to contact land and homeowners in person as they move into an area. If members are not home, an effort will be made to contact owners by phone and, in some cases, a bright-colored door hanger will be left at the house or tied to a gate post.

"Please call the number on the hanger or call me at 580-875-4224. Plan to leave a message," Crew said, noting that he is likely to be out on the job. "Keeping the co-op up-to-date with your contact information will help us out when we try to notify you that we are in the area."

After trees are cleared, crews return to the area at regularly scheduled intervals to apply a specially formulated herbicide that will prevent tree growth without causing harm to grasses. Spraying is done only during growing season.

"Spraying keeps crews from returning to the

same area again and again to trim regrown vegetation," Crew said. "This saves the co-op man-hours and, in turn, saves members money."

Crews have completed the clearing of vegetation along the north Hulen circuit and are now striving to stay ahead of construction crews working on bridge moves throughout the service territory.

During the second quarter of the year, Northeast Rural Services (NRS) will be working on the west Walters circuit and move towards east Geronimo as they progress. They will be prioritizing the clearing of vegetation to improve power quality and make room for pole changeouts.

As always, Cotton Electric's VM crew is continually looking for land and home owners in need of free, untreated wood chips. Since the wood chips are untreated, it is not recommended to use them next to a structure.

Landowners looking for material to help with erosion problems may want to contact Cotton Electric, too. With the co-op's skid steer, the VM crew can deliver stumps and other debris too large to chip or mulch.

Chips and large debris will be delivered to members nearest the day's work location who can be reached by phone. There is no guarantee a member will receive wood chips at any particular time.

Leave a message at 580-875-4224 to have your name added to the list of members willing to take wood chips.

CENSUS 101:
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
 The 2020 Census begins in March!
 What is it? Why is it essential that everyone is counted?

It's about \$1,675 per Oklahoman per year.

The distribution of federal funds, grants, and support to states, counties and communities are based on census data. That money is spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works, and other vital programs.

Source: okletscount.org

Taking part is your civic duty.

Completing the census is mandatory; it's a way to participate in our democracy and say "I COUNT!"

United States Census 2020 **COTTON ELECTRIC CO-OP**



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Placing hot food in the refrigerator makes the appliance work harder than necessary, using more energy. Allow food to cool down before you place it in the fridge.

Source: energy.gov

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.

	2020	2019
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$4,888,439	\$4,928,245
Cost of Purchased Power	4,069,110	4,183,343
Taxes	113,529	107,654
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,055	1,101
Average Farm and Residential Bill	125	124
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,088	964
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,478	18,407
Miles Energized	5,201	5,197
Density Per Mile	3.55	3.54
New Service Connects YTD	39	31
Services Retired	21	17

The Current

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Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the April issue, please submit information by April 1 by calling 580-875-4255 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com. Events that occur before April 13 will not be published in the next issue.

Car Cruise begins March 20

Car enthusiasts of all types gather for the Friday Night Car Cruise around downtown Duncan. First car cruise of 2020 is set for March 20, from 6-10 p.m. Registration is \$10 per vehicle and includes a goody bag. License and insurance are required.

Enjoy the parade of drivers showing off their souped-up cars as they cruise down Main Street at this fun and free community event. There will be food trucks, a free movie and live music. Be sure to check out the Main Street merchants who will be open late with discounts and door prizes.

For information or to learn how to volunteer, call 580-252-8696 or visit the Main Street Duncan Facebook page.

Outdoor show begins Mar. 20

Find practical home improvement ideas and visit professional home and garden service providers during Lawton Home Builders 56th annual Home and Outdoor Show. Drop by the Cotton Electric booth to get energy efficiency tips or ask questions about the co-op.

Doors will be open from 5 to 8 p.m. March 20, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. March 21, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 22 in the Great Plains Coliseum and Annex. Admission is free.

OSBA holds spring conference

The Oklahoma State Beekeepers Association is having their spring conference on March 21 at the Duncan First Baptist Church Life Center located at 901 W. Ash.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. followed by the meeting at 9 a.m. Lunch is catered by Chicken Express for \$10 per person, payment is required at the time of registration.

Sam Comfort of Anarchy Apairies is the guest speaker for the morning and afternoon sessions. For information, contact Clifford McGhghy at 580-736-0640 or Janie Ramming at 606-0564.

TCCA holds annual meeting

Cattlemen from Comanche, Cotton and Tillman counties are invited to attend the annual meeting of the Tri-County Cattlemen's Association.

The gathering begins with a social at 6 p.m. March 28 at the Great Plains Technology Center in Frederick. Supper is at 7, and the organizational meeting will follow.

Each TCCA membership will receive two complimentary steak dinners. Guests must RSVP by March 20.

For information, call Shari Holloway at 580-695-3788 or visit TriCountyCattlemen.org/Annual-Meeting.

CTHC hosts cobbler event

Cowboys and Cobblers Throwdown is a new event coming to the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center in Duncan. It will be Saturday, April 4.

This tasty, fun fundraiser is open to all cowboys, cattle queens and bakers ages 10 and up.

Bakers must enter their own home-baked cobbler. Limit of two recipes per contestant. Dutch oven, large casserole and deep-dish cobblers are all acceptable, but pies will be disqualified.

There is no entry fee for registration forms turned in by March 27. Late registration will be accepted until April 2 with a fee of \$20. Forms are available online at OnTheChisholmTrail.com or may be picked up at CTHC.

Prizes will be awarded in four different categories in both youth and adult divisions. Tickets for tasting will be sold for a minimum of \$5 for 5 samples, each additional sample will cost \$1. Ice cream will be served as well.

Entertainment throughout the day will include cowboy performer Jay Snider of Cyril, Duane Paul and Two Belles of Duncan and a 2-hour finale concert from Gary S. Pratt. There will also be opportunities throughout the day for cowboy poetry performances.

For information, contact Leah or Toni by calling CTHC at 580-252-6692.

JBF spring sale begins April 3

Just Between Friends is recycling at its best. Buy or sell gently-used children's and maternity items at the spring sale April 3-5 at Comanche County Fairgrounds, 920 S. Sheridan Road, Lawton.

Cotton Electric members presenting a Co-op Connections Card are admitted free and can get \$5 off purchases of \$25 or more.

For details about signing up to participate as a consignor, team helper or shopper, visit <http://lawton.jbfsale.com/homeView.jsp>.

Holy City hosts Easter pageant

"The Prince of Peace" Passion play begins at noon April 4 and 11 at the Holy City of the Wichitas in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. There will be a guided tour, music, food trucks and cast members in costume. Guests should arrive early to get a perfect spot. Be prepared for Oklahoma weather.

Admission is free to the nation's longest-running Easter Passion play. For information, visit The Holy City of The Wichitas Facebook page or send an email to TheHolyCityLawton@yahoo.com.

AARP offers free tax assistance

AARP offers free tax assistance and preparation for taxpayers with low-to-moderate income on a first-come, first-served basis through the tax due date of April 15 at several locations in the Cotton Electric service area.

No appointment is necessary, but certain documents are. Taxpayers should take last year's income tax return, all W-2 and 1099 forms, information about any other income, adjustment and deduction documents, Social Security cards for each person on a return, and property taxes if he or she plans to itemize.

Trained IRS volunteers will be available from 8:30-11 a.m. Mondays and Thursdays, and from noon to 3 p.m. Wednesdays at the Center for Creative Living, 3501 Dr. Elsie Hamm Drive, Lawton.

Volunteers will be on hand from 4 to 7 p.m. Mondays, 1 to 5 p.m. Wednesdays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursdays at Lawton Public Library, 110 SW 4th Street.

The free service is available in Duncan from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays at Red River Technology Center, 3300 W Bois D' Arc Ave.

More Community Spotlight on Page 6

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Cotton Electric member La Vonda Lewis snapped this photo of her Longhorn named Bunny feeding her calf, Kit. La Vonda and her husband, James, co-own Happy Trails Ranch where they raise registered Texas Longhorns. Honorable Mention entries can be seen on the back page of this paper.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for April is Adventure. 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.

Rattlesnake Hunt set for April

Mark your calendars for the Waurika Rattlesnake Hunt set for April 9-12 in downtown Waurika. The event features carnival rides, games, food vendors, a flea market, thrill show and caravan hunting of diamondback rattlesnakes.

Prizes will be awarded for longest snake captured, the most rattles and

more. Witness the thrill and excitement as snake handlers perform with live rattlesnakes. Daring guests can have their picture taken with a live diamondback rattlesnake or try eating some deep-fried rattlesnake meat.

For information, visit the Annual Waurika Rattlesnake Festival Hunt Facebook page.

TRUTH BE TOLD, YOUR ELECTRICITY COMES FROM PEOPLE POWER. Thankfully, there's one energy source that co-op members can always depend on – the hard-working dedication and efficiency of your electric co-op linemen. Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at TouchstoneEnergy.com.



Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

April		May		June	
Ad Sales	Mar. 27	Ad Sales	Apr. 24	Ad Sales	May 29
Classified	Apr. 1	Classified	Apr. 29	Classified	June 3
Publish Date	Apr. 13	Publish Date	May 11	Publish Date	June 15

Fresh **new** look, Same **old** rates.

New bill format features red, blue and you

Drumroll, please. Today we unveil a new look.

Cotton Electric members who receive a paper bill in the mail are sure to notice something different in April. We've added graphics in red and blue from our logo. We've unbundled the Energy Charge

to show members what goes into the total amount due.

There is one important thing we did *not* change: Our rates. They are the same as they have been since 2015.

Over the past several months, we have been working diligently to upgrade our

billing design and format. The new bill design is a result of our desire to provide our members with the most information possible in the best format available.

While the colors might be the first thing noticed, a closer look shows more robust in-

formation is provided on the new bills. Members frequently request these details, which helped guide what to include in the new design. You spoke and we listened.

After studying the colorful front of the bill, don't forget to flip it over. Members will

find additional details including terms and definitions, payment and billing options and what to do when your power goes out.

The example below shows a typical residential bill and explanations of expanded information.

Understanding a Cotton Electric power bill

New format begins in April 2020

Account information

A member's account number, contact information, service address and statement date for this bill. In the case of a bill for multiple meters, there will be a member number and invoice number listed here.

Account Detail

This area will list your meter(s), bill type, service dates, readings and energy use recorded by the meter.

Energy Use Graph

Shows energy use history over the past 24 months. Members can spot their energy use trends at a glance.

Monthly Comparisons

Compares this month's energy use with the previous month and also the same month from the previous year.

Contact Us

General information about our business hours and phone numbers is located in the upper right corner. The Pay By Phone number can be used to make electronic check or credit/debit card payments.

Payment Stub

If you are mailing a payment, detach this portion and send with your check.

Current Amount Due

Kiosk Bar Code

Service Detail

We know most members want to know only two things: What do I owe and how soon do I need to get it paid? That's why we made this big and put it at the top, so you can tell at a glance. If an account has an outstanding balance, the outer circle will be in red. Avoid a late fee and pay before the delinquent date.

Unique to each member account, this bar code will automatically pull up the account when exposed to the code reader of a payment kiosk at the Cotton Electric office at 1101 W. Oak in Duncan. Cash or credit/debit card payments can be made at any time at this outside kiosk.

ACCOUNT INFORMATION
 ACCOUNT NUMBER: 1234567890
 Member Name: COTTON MEMBER
 Member #: 5555
 Statement date: 02/15/2020
 Phone #: 580-555-3351

CURRENT AMOUNT DUE
\$186.00
 DELINQUENT DATE: 03/01/2020

Service Address: NW-00-0N-00W

Meter #	Description	Bill Type	Reading Dates From	To	Days	Readings Previous	Present	Meter Multiplier	kWh Billed
AA00001	HOUSE	Regular	01/07/20	02/06/20	30	28119	31013	1	1680

ENERGY USE COMPARISON

This Month	Last Month	This Month Last Year
1680 kWh 30 Days	1650 kWh 31 Days	2310 kWh 30 Days

SERVICE DETAIL

Previous Account Activity
 Previous Balance \$ 245.00
 Payment Received 07/30/19 Thank you! (\$ 245.00)
 Account Balance Before Current Charges \$ 0.00

Current Activity
 Facility Charge \$ 30.00
 Energy Charge 1680 kWh @ 0.08950 \$150.36
 PCA Charge 1680 kWh @ -0.004330 (\$ 7.27)
 Outdoor Light \$ 8.81
 Light PCA (\$ 0.30)
 Gross Receipts Tax \$ 3.63
 Operation Round Up Amt \$ 0.77
Total Current Charges \$ 186.00

PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN THIS PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT

COTTON ELECTRIC CO-OP
 A Tri-State Energy Cooperative
 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572
 1101 W. Oak, Duncan, OK 73533

Account #: 1234567890
 CURRENT BILL AMOUNT \$ 186.00
 BALANCE FORWARD \$ 0.00
AMOUNT DUE BY 03/01/20 \$ 186.00
 AMOUNT DUE AFTER 03/01/20 \$ 191.58

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
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3rd Annual
RED RIVER RED ANGUS SALE

1 P.M. Wednesday, March 25, 2020
 Wilbarger County Event Center, 301 Wilbarger Street, Vernon, TX
SALE CATALOG AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST
 Cody Cribbs 580-481-9449 *This bull sold last year to the Tipton's Children Home, Tipton, OK.* Colby Crawford 580-318-3211

Electric cooperatives contribute more than \$2.5m to area schools



Supporting area schools has always been a priority for Cotton Electric Cooperative. It is our privilege to provide educational presentations, sponsorships and assistance when needed.

The members of Cotton Electric make a substantial impact on local schools in several ways. For example, electric cooperatives in Oklahoma are levied a 2 percent gross receipts tax on the revenue at both the wholesale and retail level in lieu of an ad valorem tax. Although we typically view taxes in a negative light, this tax in particular makes a significant positive impact.

When Cotton Electric members pay electric bills, the cooperative remits the 2 percent gross receipts tax to the state, and 95 percent of those funds go directly back to local school districts. During 2019, \$2,522,731.12 was apportioned back to the 31 school districts in our service area.

On a percentage basis, electric cooperatives contribute more tax dollars to local school districts

than other utilities. In Oklahoma, investor-owned utilities pay ad valorem taxes instead of gross receipts tax, and only 58 percent of these tax monies go to school districts within which investor-owned utilities own property. Municipal utilities contribute no tax money to public schools.

The Oklahoma Tax Commission oversees the apportionment of the gross receipts tax. The amount paid to each school is based upon the number of miles of power lines that Cotton Electric Cooperative and Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC) have in each school district. WFEC, Oklahoma's largest locally owned power supply system, is a generation and transmission cooperative owned by 21 distribution cooperatives, including Cotton Electric.

The table shows the miles of line serving each district and an estimation of amounts contributed through the 2019 gross receipts tax.

2019 Gross Receipts Tax by School Districts

District	Cotton & WFEC Taxes	Cotton miles of line
Apache	36,113.77	1.26
Big Pasture	79,840.09	234.19
Bishop	305.77	1.27
Bray	93,657.18	138.37
Cache	108,406.66	201.37
Central	95,853.78	239.07
Chattanooga	215,488.28	328.15
Comanche	196,323.74	312.42
Davidson	23,939.49	33.45
Duncan	89,374.79	195.51
Elgin	99,635.93	333.93
Empire	86,573.08	240.41
Fletcher	39,936.02	27.20
Flower Mound	346.70	1.44
Fox	4,170.09	17.32
Frederick	62,581.18	6.69
Geronimo	51,774.09	163.72
Grandfield	39,425.65	163.75
Grandview	51,317.32	113.86
Indiahoma	69,382.57	155.84
Lawton	43,462.46	123.98
Marlow	56,953.31	236.55
Ringling	54,085.50	24.71
Rush Springs	138,257.42	152.76
Ryan	41,908.65	120.26
Sterling	66,515.73	167.79
Temple	58,252.96	229.77
Terral	16,798.34	69.77
Velma	299,802.22	510.22
Walters	199,970.22	295.88
Waurika	102,277.93	244.38
Totals	\$2,522,731.12	5,085.29

CECF first-quarter grants announced

Pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters – set enough of them aside on a regular basis, and the coins add up to dollars. That's how Operation Round Up works.

Most Cotton Electric members participate in ORU, in which power bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar. The amount rounded up each month can be as little as 1 cent and is never more than 99 cents. On average, each participating member contributes about \$6 each year.

The funds are pooled and administered by the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF), a board of directors that meets quarterly to consider grant applications. The board consists of Jennifer Meason, the co-op's CEO; Ken Layn, president of the co-op's board of trustees; and three representatives from the Cotton Electric service area: Danny Marlett, Carter Waid and Cindy Zeltst.

The board met in February to review several grant

applications. Grants totaling \$11,100 will be distributed to six of the applicants. First-quarter grants include:

- Oklahoma Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association: A \$2,000 CECF grant will support their Care Connections program.
 - Cache High School: a \$2,000 CECF grant will help purchase graphing calculators.
 - Children United SWOK Community (LETA): A \$2,000 CECF grant will help purchase handicap accessible playground equipment for Elmer Thomas Park.
 - Hearts That Care: A \$1,000 CECF grant will help fund the pharmacy.
 - Safe Center: A \$1,600 CECF grant will purchase an AED for the agency and provide proper use training for staff.
- CECF has pledged \$2,500 to Color Duncan



Beautiful in support of a project to connect sidewalks at Memorial Park. The grant will be issued once all funds are raised.

CECF has awarded or pledged more than 500 grants totaling \$1,289,158.81 since the foundation was established in 2004.

Applications for 2020 second-quarter grants are due May 12. Downloadable applications are available at CottonElectric.com.

Audiology & Hearing AID of Duncan

"Serving Duncan Since 1995"

HEARING EVALUATIONS
HEARING AIDS
HEARING AID SUPPLIES
ALL BRANDS REPAIRED

"We Accept Insurance"
"Pack of Batteries, \$3"
"Resound Dealer"

Cynthia Reidenbach - Hearing Aid Tech
Matt Campbell - M.S., CCC-A
AUDIOLOGIST

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Will Your Money Last as Long as You Do?

What do your fellow citizens fear most? Almost half of them – 49% – are most afraid of running out of money during retirement, a higher percentage than the 44% whose chief concern is failing health, according to a recent survey by Aegon Center for Longevity and other groups.



What steps can you take to help ensure your money will last as long as you do?

Here are a few suggestions:

- Estimate your longevity. None of us can say for sure how long we'll live. However, you can make some educated guesses based on your health and family history. And once you do have at least a ballpark figure, you can then determine about how much money you may need to last the rest of your lifetime. A word of caution: It's probably going to be more than you think. Health care costs alone can run into the hundreds of thousands, even with Medicare.

- Determine when you'll retire. Your retirement age will have a big impact on how long your money can last. The longer you work, the more you can contribute to your retirement plans, such as your IRA and 401(k). Plus, if you have health insurance through work, you should be able to cover some of the out of pocket health care costs you'd normally have to pay if you're retired.
- Invest as much as you can in your retirement. During your working years, contribute as much as you can afford to your IRA and your 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement plan. And every time you get a raise, try to increase the

amount you put into your employer's plan.

- Protect yourself from long-term care costs. If you're fortunate, you'll never need any type of long-term care, such as an extended stay in a nursing home or the services of a home health care provider. Still, there are no guarantees, and long-term care expenses can be big enough to threaten your retirement savings. The average cost for a private room in a nursing home is about \$100,000 per year, while a home health aide costs about \$50,000 per year, according to the insurance company Genworth. Medicare typically pays just a small portion of

these amounts, so you may want to purchase a long-term care insurance policy that will pay for qualified long-term care costs. Or you might consider a "hybrid" policy, which combines long-term care protection with life insurance. So, if you never needed long-term care, your hybrid policy would pay a death benefit to your beneficiary, but if you did need the care, your policy would pay benefits toward those expenses.

- Choose an appropriate withdrawal rate. During your retirement, you'll need to withdraw money from your IRA, 401(k) and other retirement accounts. But you'll

want to avoid taking out too much each year, especially during the early years of your retirement. It's important to establish an annual withdrawal rate that's appropriate for your needs, taking into account your age, sources of income, lifestyle and other factors.

The thought of running out of money during retirement is scary indeed – but by making smart choices, you can go a long way toward alleviating this fear and enjoying your life as a retiree.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC.

Kelsey Avants
1110 N. 10th Street | Duncan, OK 73533 | 580-255-4408
kelsey.avants@edwardjones.com | www.edwardjones.com



Community Spotlight

CU screens 'Spellbound'

Magic Lantern Film Society of Cameron University screens DVD presentations of classic films each month in the CETES Conference Center, Room B. Most screenings begin at 7:30 p.m.

The April 17 feature is "Spellbound" a 1945 drama mystery.

When Dr. Anthony Edwardes arrives at a Vermont mental hospital to replace the outgoing hospital director, Dr. Constance Peterson, a psychoanalyst, discovers Edwardes is actually an impostor. The man confesses that the real Dr. Edwardes is dead and fears he may have killed him, but cannot recall anything. Dr. Peterson, however is convinced his impostor is innocent of the man's murder, and joins him on a quest to unravel his amnesia.

Directed by Alfred Hitchcock, the cast includes Gregory Peck and Ingrid Bergman.

There is no admission charge, but donations are accepted. For information about the society, or to see a schedule of films, visit Cameron.edu/magiclantern.

Find collectibles at April sale

KLAW 101 is sponsoring Lawton's Largest Garage Antique and Collectible Sale from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. April 24 and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 25 at the Great Plains Coliseum.

This is an excellent opportunity to sell items you no longer have room for or have fun browsing through the unique, one-of-a-kind treasures on display.

Booths are available now on a first-come, first-

served basis. Booths start at \$45, and each additional booth is only \$40. For information, you can stop by Townsquare Media offices at 626 SW D Ave in Lawton.

Arts and Crafts show begins May 2

Cotton County Art Council will host its annual Arts and Crafts Festival from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 2 at the Expo Center west of Walters. There will be cash awards for craft and fine-art exhibitors.

Information and entry forms are available on the Cotton County Art Council's Facebook page or by emailing calfinator@yahoo.com.

Market open each Saturday

Lawton Farmers Market, an initiative of the Southwest Oklahoma Growers Association, returns for winter months in the Cameron University Animal Sciences building at the Agriculture Facility from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. each Saturday, running through the beginning of May 2020.

Shoppers will find a variety of choices at the winter market, including winter produce, sprouts, micro-greens, meat, eggs, honey, nuts, and handmade and artisan items.

The building is located on Southwest 38th Street and is south of Dr. Elsie Hamm Drive and the railroad crossing. Parking is available on the south side of the building.

For more information about the market or becoming a vendor at the market, visit LawtonFarmersMarket.com or send an email to lawtonfarmersmarket@yahoo.com.

Plans considered for digital inheritance

Have you ever thought about what would happen to your digital presence if something should happen to you? Many of us have, or know we should have, a will and checklists of what loved ones need to know in the event of our passing. But what about all of our digital data and online accounts? Should we consider some type of digital will? Should we create a "digital inheritance" plan?

Think about your digital presence. Bank and retirement accounts, home mortgages, family photos and videos, smart home accounts, email and social media are just some of the many examples that make up our digital footprint.

In the event of your death or the death of a close family member, family and loved ones may need prompt access to those accounts or data. In addition, legacy data and online accounts left behind could become vulnerable over time to hackers, thus placing family and friends at risk.

Creating a Plan

It is a good idea to discuss your desires with your trusted family or friends, like other end-of-life details. In addition to having these conversations, take inventory and document your digital assets and online accounts.

If you do not provide access to your accounts after you die, it can be very difficult for family members to access or close them. For example, would you want your family members to be locked out of all those years of family photos and videos you have stored online?

One idea is to document your online presences in a password manager. This is a program that securely stores all your logins and passwords, credit cards and other sensitive information. It's designed to make creating, storing, and accessing passwords and security questions vastly simpler. In many ways, this is a powerful tool to catalog your digital presence.

With many password managers you can even configure them to share all or certain passwords with other trusted family members. If you are uncomfortable with that, document access to your password manager and seal that in an envelope; then have that sealed envelope opened after your passing by an executor or trusted family member. This way, they will



have access to your password manager and be able to access your accounts and information stored in there.

In addition, some sites provide the option to identify legacy or trusted contacts. Facebook, for example, allows participants to determine in advance if they would like their account deleted or memorialized after passing. Memorializing creates a space that's only visible to existing friends, where memories can be shared.

Finally, you may want to consider dealing with a lawyer or estate planner who specializes in digital inheritance.

Inheriting Digital Assets

You may find yourself in the situation where you have to recover or access the online accounts of a recently deceased friend or family member. We recommend you first coordinate with a lawyer and other family members before taking action. Other family members could quickly become upset if they see you taking action without consulting them first.

Then start with identifying any passwords you can find. Did the family member write them down or store them anywhere? If that is not an option, can you access any computers or mobile devices they used and are still logged into? If not, you most likely will have to reach out to each site for access to the deceased member's account. This often includes having to provide both a death certificate and proof you are directly related to the family member.

In some cases, you will not be able to access the account or data stored in the account but only delete it. Every site handles these situations differently, which can be a time-consuming process.

In today's digital world, we should not only consider physical assets but also digital assets in our future estate planning.

Source: SANS Awareness

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Comanche 580-439-8809

Waurika 580-228-2085

For Sale

Nice Home on 9.37 Acres
167789 8 Mile Road
Duncan, Oklahoma-73533

Real Property Consists of: A Nice 5 Bedroom Brick Home (Approximately 2,506 Square Feet) with a Large Living Room with Wood Burning Insert, Dining Room, Kitchen, Large Utility Room. The Master Bedroom has a Cedar Lined Walk-in Closet and a Full Bath with Sunken Tub. Also a Full Bath Situated between the Bedrooms.

Improvements also include: An Attached 2 Car Garage, Covered Back Patio (16'x28'), Farm Implement Shed (20'x36'), Hay Shed (20'x24'), Hay Shed (20'x20'), Tool Sheds (3) and Implement Sheds (2).

Additional Improvements Include: The Real Property has some Perimeter Fencing. All Situated on 2 Adjoining Parcels. Tract 1 is 5.18 Acres and Tract 2 is 4.19 Acres for a Total of 9.37 Acres with Street Frontage on 8 Mile Road.

Directions: From New Highway 7 West and 8 Mile Road, Go 3/4 Mile South. The Real Property is Situated on the West Side of the Road. Please follow Lane to Home Site (Central High Area).

Preview of Real Property: Please Call Auction Company to Make an Appointment to Preview Real Property. The Home is Currently Owner Occupied and Move In Ready.

Broker's Note: This is a Nice Home Place with a Large Shop/Implement Shed, a Number of Out Buildings, Situated on a 9.37 Acres. Please see to Appreciate! The Home has been Maintained very well and is Move-in Ready. The Plans are to have a Public Auction on April 18, 2020 on the Personal Property. Personal Property includes a Ford Tractor, 1993 DODGE DAKOTA LE Pickup, John Deere EZ TRAK Riding Lawn Mower, Quality Antiques and Primitives, Household Furnishings, Large Blacksmith Anvil with Billows and Accessories, Farm Implements and too many items to Numerous to Mention. Please call the Auction Property to view the Real Property.

\$185,000

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For Sale

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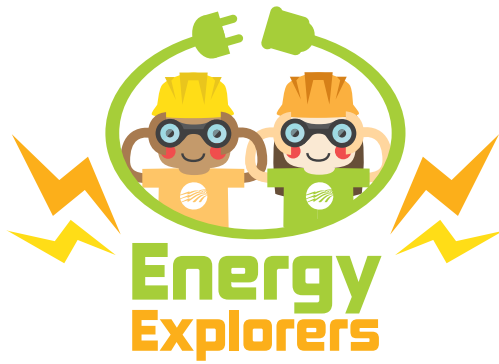
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COTTON
ELECTRIC CO-OP

SPRING EFFICIENCY QUIZ

Spring is just around the corner! Take this quiz to learn how you can help save energy around your home. Hint: Check your work in the answer key below.



1. Sealing air leaks around _____ saves energy and keeps your home comfortable.
A) doors B) windows C) both A and B

2. Unplug devices and electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use, like _____.
A) refrigerators B) cell phone chargers C) dishwashers

3. Ceiling fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when you leave the room to save energy.
A) True B) False

4. LED bulbs typically use _____ less energy than incandescent light bulbs.
A) 25% B) 50% C) 75%

5. Planting _____ around your home can block unwanted heat from the sun.
A) flowers B) shade trees C) vegetables



Answer Key: 1. C 2. B 3. A 4. C 5. B

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DRAWINGS 7PM-11PM

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See Comanche Rewards Club for details.

SENIOR DAY

TUESDAYS
11AM-6PM

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		8		3	4	6		9
6		2			5		7	4
				7		1		
9							3	1
2	8			1		9		7
1		7			3			
		5	4	6				
		1	2		7	4		6
	4			8		2	1	

Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



It's Spring Tune-up Time

HVAC tune-up rebate program begins April 1

Co-op offers rebate program to members

Spring is here, and now is the perfect time to start prepping for summer. From April 1 through June 20, Cotton Electric is offering to help members offset the cost of getting air conditioning units ready for high summer temperatures.



Heath Morgan,
Energy Efficiency
Coordinator

Through the HVAC Tune-Up Rebate program, the co-op will provide a rebate of 50 percent of the cost of your spring tune-up service, excluding repairs and not to exceed \$50.

The goal of this incentive program is to ensure the largest power consuming appliance in member's homes is ready to operate at peak performance when needed the most.

When was the last time you had your home's HVAC system serviced? Heating and air conditioning systems are typically the largest purchase for homeowners, lead only by home and vehicle purchases. Like with a vehicle, lack of maintenance can have a dramatic impact on the efficiency and life of HVAC systems. Many car owners would not even consider skipping the scheduled maintenance of their vehicle; the same type of thinking should be applied to air conditioning service.

There are two schools of thought when it comes to maintaining these systems: Reactive and preventative. Reactive or "run-to-fail" practices are marked by forgoing regular maintenance and running equipment until parts fail. Preventative practices involve periodic maintenance as required by manufacturers.

There are numerous studies showing the effects that poor maintenance procedures have on HVAC systems. A majority of studies show a five percent loss of efficiency over the course of one year. This loss in efficiency can be attributed to a reduction of air flow through indoor and outdoor coils. As dirt attaches to coils, airflow is limited. Units not properly serviced, even for just a few years, can have up to 40 percent loss of efficiency throughout its life.

Lack of maintenance can affect more than just the efficiency of the unit. Restricted airflow can raise op-

erating amperage of motors and compressors, resulting in a shortened operating life span. You wouldn't drive your car with a flat tire, would you? Continuing to drive with a flat tire would result in further damage. The same is true for your air conditioning system. Running components at higher amps than they are designed for will decrease the life of that component.

It may be difficult to see if your unit has a weak start capacitor or is low on refrigerant. This is why we recommend involving a professional contractor. Scheduled tune-ups allow professionals an opportunity to perform recommended cleanings and test specific components and refrigerant levels that keep your system operating properly.

Listed below are the program details. Applications will be available at CottonElectric.com, through your contractor or at one of Cotton Electric's office locations.

Beginning April 1, Cotton Electric is offering a rebate of up to \$50 per home (50 percent of the cost of your spring tune-up, excluding repairs, up to \$50) for members who get a tune-up for their HVAC system. 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 and are available at the Walters and Duncan offices or by calling 580-875-3351. Ask for the Marketing Department.
- Application 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.
- Rebate not valid on gas-fired furnaces.
- Rebate limited to one per home annually.

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

• HVAC tune-ups must be completed by June 20, 2020. Rebate applications must be received by June 30, 2020.

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

▣ Improves water heater efficiency and thus lowers energy bills

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LAND AUCTION

Saturday, April 4th, 10 a.m.

Property Owner: John Cunningham Jr. • Property to be sold: 150 Acres m/l located in the SE S27 T3S R12W, Cotton County • All minerals owned to be transferred at closing • Directions: From Cookietown at 277/5A intersection go East 1 mile to N2550 Rd, then South 1/2 mile to property. WATCH FOR SIGNS!!!

Auctioneers note: This farm has productive soils, good fencing, partition fencing, and improved grass. Several structures for equipment storage and corrals for gathering livestock. Don't miss this opportunity to purchase a good, productive farm.

<p>SE S27 T3S R12W, Cotton County</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 acres more or less • Good fencing, 6 partitioned fields • 2 ponds, water meter, corrals, barn, electricity • 116 ac. Cultivation: bal. improved and native • 2020 Estimated taxes: \$810.00 • Possession: July 1st or completion of harvest • Minerals owned to be transferred at closing • 68 x 57 barn, 50 x 30 metal bldg. • 36 x 31 metal shed for storage • 1940 single family home (needs work) For additional pics, maps & details go to: www.highsauction.com Any questions regarding the sale or any other properties please call 580-875-6500. <p>Brokers & Auctioneers: Rick High</p>	<p>Terms: Buyer to provide 5% of purchase price day of sale with balance due at closing. Closing to be held on or before April 30th, 2020. Personal checks accepted with proper i.d. Seller to provide clear and marketable title. Sale is not subject to any buyer financing contingencies or inspections. Property sold as -is where-is. Customary buyer closing expenses, i.e. title opinion, lender fees, appraisals and/or any required surveys, etc. are the responsibility of the buyer. Closing to be held at the office of Sovereign Abstract & Title, 1609 W. Gore Blvd. Lawton, Ok. Announcements day of sale be pro-rated to day of closing. Please have your financing arranged prior to the sale. By bidding you agree to the terms of the auction.</p>
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Marketing department is more than ‘The Current’

By Danielle Quickle

Over the course of the last year, The Current has been showcasing the different departments that make up Cotton Electric. Now it is time to shed some light on the team who produces the co-op’s monthly newsletter, the Marketing department.

From advertising to content development, proof-reading and editing, each Marketing employee plays their role to ensure this newspaper gets in your mailbox each month. However, the work we do goes beyond The Current.

Perhaps you have seen Cotton Electric’s logo on a billboard, checked the co-op’s Facebook page for updates during an extended power outage, visited CottonElectric.com to fill out a New Service form, used your Co-op Connections card to get a discount on your prescription or received advice on how to cut back on energy use from the cooperative’s Energy Efficiency Coordinator. All of those examples and more are linked to the efforts of the Marketing department.

Five employees can be seen out in the community, replying to social media messages or in the by-lines of The Current as representatives of Cotton Electric’s Marketing department.

Bryce Hooper oversees the responsibilities of the department as the co-op’s Vice President of Marketing and Subsidiary Services. Hooper carries responsibility for coordinating external advertising and maintaining relationships with the co-op’s large energy consumers, or key accounts. He also serves as Chief Operating Officer of Cotton Electric Services, Inc. (CESI), the cooperative’s independent subsidiary. CESI was featured in the February edition of The Current.

Heath Morgan serves the co-op’s membership as Energy Efficiency Coordinator. An excellent energy efficiency resource, Morgan performs energy efficiency evaluations as a free service to members in order to help them find ways to control their energy use with home modifications. He gives safety demonstrations, coordinates the co-op’s rebate and generator programs and writes a monthly energy efficiency column which can be seen to your left on Page 8.

Karen Kaley is the Director of Marketing and Communications for the department. As the previous Editor of The Current, Kaley uses her communicating experience to oversee the co-op’s social media



Cotton Electric’s Marketing department consists of Danielle Quickle, editor, seated left; Karen Kaley, director of marketing and communications; and Kaila Williams, marketing representative; and, standing from left, Bryce Hooper, vice president of marketing and subsidiary services; and Heath Morgan, energy efficiency coordinator.

and website. She works on most of Cotton Electric’s online messaging and presence. Kaley is involved in the administration aspect of the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation and coordinates youth outreach programs such as Energy Camp and Youth Tour, which she will soon be passing on to Marketing Representative Kaila Williams.

Williams is the newest addition to the Marketing department, having been with the co-op a little over six months now. Williams handles every aspect of the display advertisements you see throughout this paper. She also promotes the Co-op Connections program and sees to promotional items, making sure the co-op has plenty of logo-embazoned calendars, caps, pencils and other goodies to hand out to members.

Then there is Danielle Quickle, that’s me. As Editor, my primary role is to take classifieds and determine content and layout for The Current each month. I also handle the internal newsletter for co-op employees and have a hand in the co-op’s social media.

As a department, we strive to create a two-way conversation between the co-op and its members.

“We think it is important to engage with the communities we serve,” Kaley said. “We work to shine a light in both directions: On our members and on our employees.”

Cotton Electric is guided by the 7 Cooperative Principles and the Marketing Department functions with the fifth principle of Education, Training and Information and the seventh principle of Concern for Community.

“We are so much more than a power provider and it is the Marketing department’s mission to make sure that message goes out to all who can benefit from what we have to offer,” Kaley said.

Members who want to know how to get a Co-op Connections card, more about our youth programs, are interested in an energy efficiency evaluation or have questions about any of the services we provide can reach us by email at info@CottonElectric.com or call 580-875-3351 and ask to speak to someone in Marketing.

Cooperative reserves booth at Home and Outdoor Show

Cotton Electric demonstrates the seventh co-op principle of Concern for Community in a variety of ways. Employees often attend all sorts of community events, sometimes just to enjoy the gathering and sometimes as co-op representatives.

You may have noticed the Cotton Electric bucket truck at your local Christmas parade this past winter. Maybe you rode our energy bike at Fiesta in Fuqua over the past couple of years, or if you haven’t, you will get another opportunity this August.

We are active members in local chambers of commerce and civic groups. We provide safety demonstrations to local schools and organizations, and each year we make ourselves available to members at the Stephens County Free Fair in the fall and the Lawton Home and Outdoor Show in the spring.

This year’s Lawton Home and Outdoor Show will be 5-8 p.m. March 20, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. March 21 and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 22 at the Great Plains Coliseum, 920 S.W. Sheridan Rd.

Members can stop by the Cotton Electric booth to visit with employees, ask questions, receive goodies, and enter to win a free duct blast/blower door test performed at their home by our Energy Efficiency Coordinator. Duct blast/blower door tests are helpful in determining ways you can cut back on energy use.

We will also be giving away a gift card to Sutherlands, Crutcher’s Western Wear and The Salt Cellar.

If you have questions for us but are unable to attend the Home and Outdoor Show, you can call us, send us an email or come by the office any time of the year. We are happy to serve our members.



Energy Efficiency Coordinator Heath Morgan demonstrates the difference LED light bulbs can have on energy use.

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Teens to represent Cotton Electric at nation's capital

Since November of last year, students have been competing to win an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., as part of the Rural Electric Youth Tour program.

The competition was prompted by a call for entries answered with submissions from 53 high school juniors from 6 schools in Cotton Electric's service area. These students wrote essays that reflected the topic of "What do you find most interesting about electric cooperatives?"

Each essay was given a number as it arrived, in order to be judged anonymously. After the first round of competition, the essays were narrowed to the top 25 and the students were invited to Cotton Electric for an in-person interview.

Students were asked, among other questions, to state the difference between cooperatives and other businesses and why they would make an excellent representative for Cotton Electric in Washington, D.C. The results of these interviews are what determined our finalists. A list of these finalists can be found on the front page.

Our finalists arrived at Cotton Electric on the evening of March 5 for the final phase of the competition. Each high school junior gave a 5-minute oral presentation of his or her essay in hopes of being selected by the judges as one of the four winners headed to the nation's capital.

Students presented their speeches to Megan Lawrence, manager of member services and marketing for Rural Electric Cooperative; KorDale Lornes, director of marketing at Red River Valley Electric; and Sondra Boykin, communication coordinator for Western Farmers Electric Cooperative.

One speech showcased the co-op's local-minded values stating, "cooperatives are very service-focused and provide service to local rural areas rather than strictly commercial services that provide their service to highly populated urban areas," and another concluded with "airing your grievances with Cotton Electric is as easy as talking to your neighbor, because you are!"



Hailey Franklin of Walters High School, Olivia Cantwell and Savanah Triplett of Marlow High School, and Marlon Banner III of Comanche High School will travel to Washington, D.C., in June.

One student reflected on the co-op's foundation to meet a need in the community by going through the co-op's timeline in a creative manner, while another student highlighted Cotton Electric's continual support of the community today, noting that "the co-op plays a big role in how our community functions, as well as the communities around us."

After each student presented, the judges retired to determine the four winners. Scoring of each speech was weighted 50 percent on speaking ability, 30 percent on knowledge of subject, 10 percent on poise, and 10 percent on personality and appearance.

Total scores revealed the students who would be representing Cotton Electric in Washington this summer: Hailey Franklin, Olivia Cantwell, Savanah

Triplett and Marlon Banner III.

The quartet will join 1,500 students from all over the United States and follow itineraries filled with activities from the moment they arrive until the day they fly back home. The students will have an opportunity to visit with Oklahoma's congressional delegation and learn about government, the cooperative form of business, and the business of rural electrification.

They will become more familiar with the historical and political environment of the nation's capital through visits to monuments, government offices and cooperative organizations. These young Oklahomans will become more knowledgeable about their country, their government and our nation's capital.

4-H student encourages electrical safety at contest

Editor's note: Katelyn Patterson was recently awarded first place in the Comanche County Communications and Expressive Arts Contest for her speech over electrical safety.

Katelyn is a fourth grader and 4-H member at Cache public schools. The following is her award-winning speech.

By Katelyn Patterson

Good Evening, my name is Katelyn Patterson and I am with Cache 4-H Club. Tonight, I want to talk to you about Electrical Safety and how you can prevent electrical fires! Many electrical fires are preventable with a few tips.

My first tip is don't over-use extension cords. A lot of times we plug several items in the extension cords and overload them. This can cause them to burn up or spark.

Also, it is very important to never put an extension cord in use under things like rugs or carpet. Christmas time is when we usually use them too much. Too many Christmas lights are plugged in to one extension cord and they get overloaded and spark.

Second tip is to never cut the third prong on a power cord. These look unimportant but they do help protect you if you have a power surge. And if it is made a certain way, you never change it!

My third tip is to keep all appliance manuals and read them before using a new appliance. People throw the manuals away before reading them and don't use the appliance correctly. This causes many fires every year.

Toaster ovens are the most common appliance



Katelyn Patterson
Cache 4-H

used wrongly which cause fires. We tend to leave them plugged in and sometimes on. Don't do that! Also curling irons, they need unplugged when you are not using them.

The fourth tip is to update your wiring all through your home. Old wiring is not able to handle the excessive use of modern electrical items like newer appliances, TV's, computers, games and other items. We use these items more than before but never think if our electric systems can handle them or not. This causes many fires.

My fifth tip is to watch for warning signs. Burned

outlets, flickering light fixtures, burning smells, and yellow colors around switches. Call an electrician if you see any of these signs. This could be the beginning of a fire.

So, as you can see there are many ways you can prevent electrical fires in your home and be safe.

Following instructions and keeping up with new wiring is very important. Also, a quick safety tip is keep your door closed at night. This helps keep fires from spreading.

Thank you and have a good night.

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Pink Rebel Clothing Co. is a proud partner of Cotton Electric's Co-op Connections program. Pictured from left, part-time employee Becky Vankirk and co-owner Lorri Davis.

Pink Rebel Clothing Co. offers discount to co-op members

By Danielle Quickle

Members who attended Cotton Electric's Annual Meeting this past fall may recall visiting with several Co-op Connections partners. Among them were Pink Rebel Clothing Co. owners Lorri Davis and Cherokee Pierce.

"We did really well at the Annual Meeting," Davis said. "We were able to meet a lot of wonderful people, sell some items and give out information about our business."

Pink Rebel Clothing Co. opened in May of 2018 in Marlow.

"Cherokee saw this place for rent and said 'we should go take a look at it.' I remember asking 'for what?'" Davis said. "Now we have this boutique and things are moving right along."

The mother-daughter team, native to Marlow, wanted to have a boutique where people could find affordable items in a friendly and inviting atmosphere.

Shoppers will find a variety of clothing from youth to plus sizes, shoes, jewelry, gift items, accessories and home décor.

"We try to keep prices as low as possible and carry different things that you don't see everywhere else," Davis said.

Beyond retail, the boutique has an in-house salon service available to customers. Stylist Amanda Fau-

dree provides services day or night by appointment only. Appointments can be made by calling 580-756-0053.

Davis and Pierce each have full-time jobs apart from owning Pink Rebel Clothing Co. They've hired two part-time employees to run the show in their absence.

"I try to be here as often as I can be," Davis said. "I love to visit with whoever walks through the door and it is cool to see people come from all over to shop here."

Cotton Electric members receive 15 percent off all regularly-priced items when they present their Co-op Connections card at checkout.

"I am a Cotton Electric member and have used my Co-op Connections card at various places to receive discounts," Davis said. "I thought it would be nice to offer something exclusive to co-op members and who doesn't love a discount?"

In the coming weeks, Pink Rebel Clothing Co. will have a Saint Patrick's Day sale, special discounts the week leading up to Easter for the Marlow Merchants scavenger hunt and a two-year anniversary sale beginning in May.

The boutique is located at 312 W. Main St. in Marlow, but out-of-towners can still take advantage of deals by placing an online order on Facebook. Follow the Pink Rebel Clothing Co. Facebook



page and join their VIP Shoppers group to get the latest details on discounts and new arrivals. Questions about discounts, items and shipping can be answered by calling the boutique at 580-641-1619.

"We realize there are a lot of places to shop and spend your money," Davis said. "But we would love for you to give us a try!"

Cotton Electric members wanting to know how they can get a Co-op Connections card and business owners who would like to become Co-op Connections partners can get details from the co-op's Marketing Representative Kaila Williams by calling 580-875-3351 or emailing kwilliams@cottonelectric.com.

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Shop tools and equipment: Kubota 22 HP Zero turn mower, Ford 9N tractor (Needs new carburetor) 16" flatbed trailer with ramps, 3 pt 2 bottom turning plow, new roll 6' chainlink, wheel barrow, 55 gallon drums, plywood, lumber and trim, fittings, Mantis small gas powered garden tiller, Cub Cadet RT 65 rear tine tiller, 10' step ladder, Werner 16' little giant style ladder, utility wagon, work benches, parts washer, acetylene sets, extension ladder, Lincoln AC 225 Arc welder (Like new), tons of hand tools, Craftsman tool box, Honda 2700 PSI pressure washer, shelving, 220 Commercial heater, welding table with vice, scroll saw, shop cart, miter saw, drills, sanders, reciprocating saw, jig saws, lots of air tools, 18V Dewalt tools, electric chain saw, drill bits, electric impact gun, come a longs, chain hoists, floor creepers, dollies, commercial pedestal shop fan, bench grinders, tire chains, work benches, big vices, telescoping extension poles, receiver hitches.

Toys, furniture and Misc: AMI jukebox and records, Calloway and Ping golf clubs sets- assorted drivers, Oak queen size sleighbed, old trunk, 3 Telescopes with tripods, stereo's and speakers, desks, pet cages, bicycles, charcoal grills, fishing rods and reels, fishing lures, bait boxes, file cabinets, office chairs, solo flex weight station, Nordic Trac, preacher seat weight bench, entertainment center, Char Grill cooker and smoker, electric foot massager, assortment of bird houses, animal traps, dressers, end tables, pressure cookers, Harley Davidson motorcycle helmets, wrought iron fencing.





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Start Your Day Strong with Breakfast

FAMILY FEATURES

Starting the morning on the right foot can help set a path toward a successful day, and for many, that strong start begins with breakfast. In fact, a lot of research supports the idea of having a balanced meal in the morning. When you turn to breakfast to fuel your morning, look for seasonal recipes that provide a delicious way to start your day.

For example, you can skip high-sugar grains with refined carbohydrates like doughnuts and pastries to instead opt for savory, protein-rich dishes like this Asparagus and Goat Cheese Frittata. If you're an on-the-go eater, try easily transportable recipes like a Tropical Green Smoothie or Vanilla Almond Crunch Overnight Oats.

These breakfast recipes are bolstered by the rich, creamy texture and nutrition profile of fairlife ultra-filtered milk, a lactose-free option with 50% more protein, 50% less sugar and 30% more calcium than regular milk. The recipes also take advantage of fresh, seasonal ingredients.

Find more breakfast inspiration at fairlife.com.



Vanilla Almond Crunch Overnight Oats

Prep time: 10 minutes, plus at least 6 hours refrigeration
 Servings: 2 1/2 (about 2 1/2 cups each)

- 1 carton (5-6 ounces) non-fat or low-fat vanilla Greek yogurt
- 2 teaspoons pure honey
- 2 teaspoons flax seeds
- 2 pinches cinnamon
- 2 pinches kosher salt
- 4 tablespoons blanched, slivered or sliced almonds
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup fairlife Fat-Free Ultra-Filtered Milk

Toppings (optional):
 cut berries or citrus
 additional yogurt
 additional flax seeds
 or almonds

Divide yogurt, honey, flax seeds, cinnamon, kosher salt, almonds, oats and milk evenly between two 8-10-ounce glass jars or small glass bowls with tight-fitting lids.

Securely close or cover containers; refrigerate at least 6 hours, or up to 48 hours.

When ready to serve, remove lid, stir and top with berries or citrus, yogurt and flax seeds or almonds, if desired.

Nutritional information per serving: 380 calories; 9 g total fat; less than 5 mg cholesterol; 280 mg sodium; 53 g total carbohydrates; 22 g protein.

Asparagus and Goat Cheese Frittata

Prep time: 21 minutes
 Servings: 4

- 4 large eggs
- 1/4 cup fairlife 2% Ultra-Filtered Milk
- 1/4 teaspoon kosher or sea salt, plus additional, to taste, divided
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/3 cup thinly sliced basil leaves, plus additional for serving
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 10 medium asparagus spears, cut into 1 1/2-inch lengths
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped shallot or red onion
- 1 1/2 ounces soft goat cheese, crumbled (1/4 cup)

Heat oven to 400° with rack in middle.

In large bowl, beat eggs, milk, 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper, to taste; beat in 1/3 cup basil until just combined.

In 8-10-inch ovenproof nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat until hot but not smoking. Add asparagus and salt and pepper, to taste. Reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, 5 minutes. Add shallot and continue cooking until asparagus spears are lightly golden and just tender, 2-4 minutes. Pour in egg mixture. Cook 1 minute then scatter goat cheese on top.

Bake until frittata is set, 4-6 minutes. Using spatula, slide onto cutting board then sprinkle with salt, to taste, and additional basil. Cut into wedges. Serve warm.

Nutritional information per serving: 140 calories; 10 g total fat; 190 mg cholesterol; 200 mg sodium; 3 g total carbohydrates; 10 g protein.



Tropical Green Smoothie

Prep time: 5 minutes
 Servings: 2 (8 fluid ounces each)

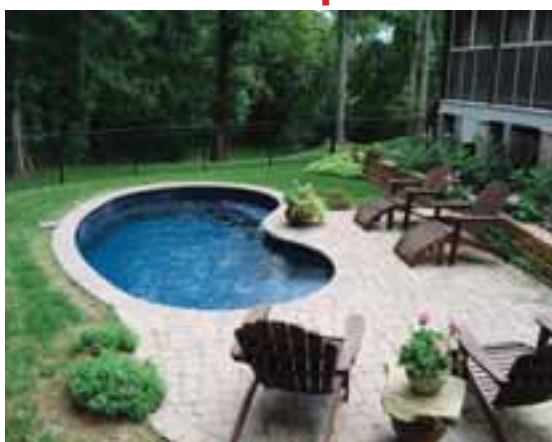
- 1 cup fresh baby spinach or baby kale
- 3/4 cup fairlife 2% Ultra-Filtered Milk
- 1 ripe banana
- 2/3 cup fresh or frozen diced pineapple
- 1 lime, zest only
- 1 lime, cut into wedges
- 1 tablespoon virgin coconut oil
- 3/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1 pinch ground cinnamon
- 3/4 cup ice (optional)

In blender, blend spinach, milk, banana, pineapple, lime zest, juice of one lime wedge, coconut oil, vanilla extract, cinnamon and ice, if desired, until smooth. If refrigerating prior to serving, omit ice.

Nutritional information per serving: 120 calories; 2 g total fat; 5 mg cholesterol; 55 mg sodium; 22 g total carbohydrates; 6 g protein.

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Add Ease to Easter Brunch

FAMILY FEATURES

Whether you are planning to host a small family gathering or a true Easter feast, brunch is the perfect way to celebrate with a holiday-worthy spread. Easter gatherings are an opportunity to elevate traditional brunch dishes, all at bite-sized prices.

Start your celebration with these Ham, Egg and Cheese Brunch Cups, which work

as a handheld snack to begin the day or as the main course. Then end your festivities on a high note with a satisfying sweet like this festive Carrot Cake.

Hosting can be easier and more affordable when you feature delicious dishes like these. Find all your Easter essentials such as premium ham, award-winning wine and cheese, Easter basket essentials and more at a store like ALDI.

Find more Easter inspiration at aldi.us.



Ham, Egg and Cheese Brunch Cups

Recipe courtesy of "Pinch of Yum" on behalf of ALDI

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 25 minutes

Yield: 18 cups

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons Baker's Corner All-Purpose Flour
- 1 cup milk
- 3/4 cup shredded Swiss cheese
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, plus additional, to taste, divided
- 2 sheets puff pastry
- 19 Simply Nature Organic Cage Free Brown Eggs, divided
- 1-2 cups Appleton Farms Spiral Sliced Half Ham, diced
- chopped fresh chives
- pepper, to taste

Heat oven to 375 F.

To make cheese sauce: In small saucepan over medium heat, melt butter. Add flour and whisk to combine. Pour in milk in increments, whisking after each addition. Bring to simmer, whisking until mixture thickens. Remove mixture from heat and stir in cheese. Season with 1/4 teaspoon salt. Set aside.

To make brunch cups: Use rolling pin to roll out puff pastry sheets until thin. Cut sheets into nine squares. Line each well of muffin tin with one puff pastry square, pressing firmly to bottom and sides; edges should come just over top of muffin tin. Fill each cup with spoonful of cheese sauce. Crack one egg into each cup and sprinkle diced ham on top of each egg.

Crack remaining egg and brush exposed portions of puff pastries with egg wash.

Bake 10-15 minutes until eggs are set. Sprinkle with chives, salt and pepper, to taste.



Carrot Cake

Recipe courtesy of Chef Kevin, ALDI Test Kitchen

Prep time: 35 minutes

Cook time: 25 minutes

Servings: 8

- 1 cup, plus 2 tablespoons, Carlini Vegetable Oil
- 1 1/4 cups Baker's Corner Granulated Sugar
- 3 Golden Large Eggs
- 1 1/2 cups shredded carrots
- 1 cup Sweet Harvest Crushed Pineapple, with juice
- 1 teaspoon Baker's Corner Baking Soda
- 1 teaspoon Stonemill Ground Cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon Stonemill Iodized Salt
- 1/2 teaspoon Baker's Corner Baking Powder
- 2 1/4 cups Baker's Corner All-Purpose Flour
- 2/3 cup Southern Grove Chopped Walnuts, divided

Frosting:

- 3/4 cup Countryside Creamery Butter, softened

- 1 1/2 cups Happy Farms Cream Cheese, softened
- 1 teaspoon Stonemill Pure Vanilla
- 5 1/2 cups Baker's Corner Powdered Sugar

Heat oven to 350 F.

In mixing bowl, cream together oil and sugar. Add eggs one at a time. Slowly add in carrots and pineapple.

In separate mixing bowl, sift together baking soda, cinnamon, salt, baking powder and flour.

Add dry mixture to wet mixture and beat until smooth. Fold in 1/3 cup walnuts.

Pour batter into two lightly greased 8-inch round cake pans and bake 25-30 minutes, or until toothpick inserted into center comes out clean. Allow cakes to cool completely; remove from pans.

To make frosting: In mixing bowl, cream together butter, cream cheese and vanilla. Slowly add powdered sugar and mix until smooth.

Trim and level cakes. Spread 1 1/2 cups frosting over one cake and stack second cake on top.

Carefully frost entire cake with remaining frosting and garnish with remaining chopped walnuts.

Healthy eating prepares body to fight viruses

The regular flu season has been a challenge this year, and now we have COVID-19 to deal with. What can you do in addition to washing your hands properly and not touching your face? From a food perspective, there is not a single food or vitamin or mineral or herbal supplement that will 100 percent protect you from the flu or help you get over the flu. What you can do is get your body in the best shape possible so it can perform its flu-fighting functions with as few hindrances as possible. This gives your body the best chance of dealing with any virus.

Use COVID-19 as motivation to follow general healthy eating guidelines every day. Eat more fruits and vegetables and choose whole grains, lean protein and low fat or fat free dairy. Stay hydrated with low calorie or calorie free beverages and of course, water.

An easy way to evaluate your meals is to envision what you are eating on a divided plate. Is half of your plate covered in fruits and vegetables? Is a quarter of your plate lean protein? Is a quarter of



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT

your plate whole grains? Do you have a serving of dairy or something with calcium and Vitamin D? Over the course of the day, are you eating the same foods over and over again, or are you choosing a variety of foods? Variety is the best way to ensure you are getting all the different vitamins and minerals that help your body function.

In addition to healthy eating, exer-

cise, sleep and stress management can help your body fight the good fight. Exercise at least 30 minutes a day, five days per week. Move your body by walking, stretching or some kind of weight-bearing activity. This is the minimum amount of exercise recommended. The more you move your body, the better. Get as much sleep as you can. Sleep recommendations remain 7-8 hours for adults and more for kids depending on age. Use exercise and adequate sleep plus other strategies to keep your mental stress as low as possible.

If you have a chronic disease like diabetes or heart disease, be hypervigilant about keeping it under control during flu season. Keep your blood sugars and blood pressure under control. Be diligent about taking your medication. Investigate what you would need to do if you get the flu. Does your doctor offer telemedicine consults so you don't have to go to the office? What types of over-the-counter medications can you take if you get the flu?

If you happen to get the flu, seek

medical attention and advice. You will most likely feel miserable. The last thing you will want to do is "eat healthy." Stay hydrated and eat what you feel like eating. If you have diabetes, you will need to avoid foods that can spike your blood sugars. If you have high blood pressure, you will still need to watch your intake of high sodium foods. The worst thing you can do is not eat and not drink when you are sick. Don't worry about eating the "healthiest" foods - just eat, drink and rest.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and your local public health officials are the best source of information as to what to do to reduce your risk of contracting the flu. Your physician is your best source of information for what to do if you get the flu. Set your body up to do what it is programmed to do by eating healthy, being physically active, managing stress and chronic disease and getting sleep. If you do get the flu, eat, drink, rest and follow your doctor's advice.



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