

The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

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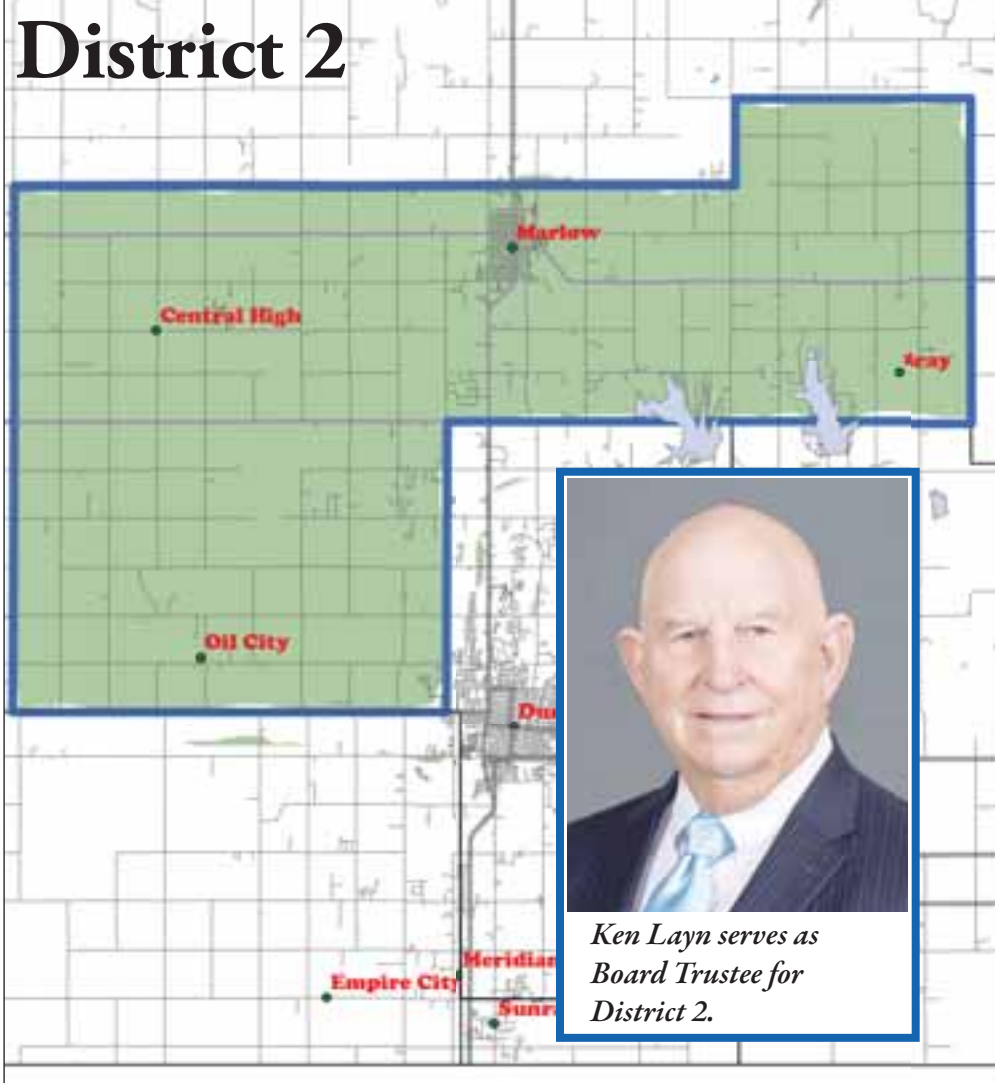
"The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957"

VOLUME 62

May 13, 2019

NUMBER 9

District 2



Ken Layn serves as Board Trustee for District 2.



Scott Dennis



Terry Turner



Larry Crowell



Bob Anderson



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 Scott Dennis, Terry Turner, Larry Crowell and Bob Anderson. These line workers do not exclusively work in District 2 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.



Included within the borders of District 2 are the communities of Bray, Central High and Marlow. Parts of Bray, Central High, Duncan, Empire and Marlow school districts also fall within district borders.



Members in this area are served by five substations: Bray, Marlow, Hulen, Empire and Stephens. These substations distribute power across approximately 406 miles of line to residential and commercial accounts in District 2.

Layn emphasizes cooperative spirit in District 2

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 2 sits completely within the boundaries of Stephens County, taking up the northern and northwest areas of the county. Included within the borders of District 2 are the communities of Bray, Central High and Marlow. Parts of Bray, Central High, Duncan, Empire and Marlow school districts also fall within district borders.

Members in this area are served by five substations: Bray, Marlow, Hulen, Empire and Stephens. These substations distribute power across approximately 406 miles of line to residential and commercial accounts in District 2. When power distribution issues arise, specific line workers are assigned to restoring power.

When your power goes off in the mid-

dle of the night, four line workers are on call to get your lights back on. Responding to outages in this area are Journeyman Linemen Scott Dennis, Terry Turner, Larry Crowell and Bob Anderson. These line workers do not exclusively work in District 2 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 2010, Ken Layn of Marlow was appointed as trustee and District 2 members have retained him ever since.

Layn has been a Cotton Electric member in Stephens County nearly all his life. He was born into a Cotton Electric family and grew up on co-op lines.

"All I knew as a kid was that the power was there when we turned on the lights," Layn said. "As God's plan would have it,

I wound up being a part of the organization that distributed that power."

In 1970, Layn and his wife, Sharon, married and made their home in Marlow. Together they have two daughters, Candace and Malynnda, two sons-in-law and five grandchildren.

He devoted many years to public education as a teacher, coach, principal, superintendent and board member. He credits the many roles he has served throughout his life as experiences that have prepared him to serve on Cotton Electric's board.

"I have learned, in all things, that if you act with integrity the rest tends to take care of itself," Layn said. "Board decisions have to be made with great integrity because of all the members we represent. I also have the responsibility to make decisions based on the knowledge and experience I have."

Perhaps the most valuable thing he has learned during his time of service is the importance of the cooperative spirit, for trustees and members alike.

"The cooperative spirit is the greatest benefit to Cotton Electric members," Layn said. "Through this spirit, members get to engage in a democratic process to ensure safe and affordable power. It is what gives rural America the opportunity to remain rural America."

Layn first gained interest in Cotton Electric's board because of the opportunity it provided to make a difference in the community and be of service to cooperative members.

"I want our members to know that I am always available to them if they have questions or issues. That is my job as their representative," Layn said. "Based on my knowledge of issues, experiences in this organization and leadership positions I have had, I will do my very best to represent Cotton Electric member-owners and make decisions on their behalf."

Layn is preparing to address the membership for the very first time as board president at Cotton Electric's Annual Meeting this fall.

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after May 1, 2019, is \$0.00746 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1250 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$9.33 on the May bill.

April 2019 Temperature Extremes

| Day | High | Low | Avg. | Day | High | Low | Avg. |
|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|
| 1 | 61 | 37 | 49 | 16 | 75 | 53 | 64 |
| 2 | 75 | 35 | 55 | 17 | 84 | 59 | 72 |
| 3 | 69 | 52 | 61 | 18 | 74 | 54 | 64 |
| 4 | 77 | 52 | 65 | 19 | 70 | 46 | 58 |
| 5 | 79 | 48 | 64 | 20 | 82 | 41 | 62 |
| 6 | 77 | 59 | 68 | 21 | 86 | 55 | 71 |
| 7 | 77 | 60 | 69 | 22 | 76 | 62 | 69 |
| 8 | 85 | 53 | 69 | 23 | 70 | 58 | 64 |
| 9 | 90 | 49 | 70 | 24 | 69 | 56 | 63 |
| 10 | 91 | 59 | 75 | 25 | 84 | 51 | 68 |
| 11 | 77 | 41 | 59 | 26 | 77 | 47 | 62 |
| 12 | 65 | 38 | 52 | 27 | 86 | 57 | 72 |
| 13 | 54 | 41 | 48 | 28 | 85 | 57 | 71 |
| 14 | 65 | 38 | 52 | 29 | 77 | 61 | 69 |
| 15 | 83 | 50 | 67 | 30 | 79 | 61 | 70 |

Source: srb.noaa.gov/oun/

Average Daily High: 77 Average Daily Low: 51

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed Monday, May 27, in observance of Memorial Day. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on June 10, 2019.

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 info@cottonelectric.com.

You can also drop us a line at Cotton Electric Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572.

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More news at cottonelectric.com

From the CEO

Spotting electrical hazards at home

Electricity plays many roles in our lives, from powering baby monitors, cell phones and lighting, to running HVAC systems and appliances. No wonder we get so comfortable with its instant availability that when we flip a switch, we expect most systems or devices to do the job.



Jennifer Meason, CEO

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and here at Cotton Electric, we think it's a great time to look around your home and check for potential safety hazards.

Remember, every electrical device has a purpose and a service lifespan. While we can extend their operations with maintenance and care, none of them are designed to last or work forever. When electricity is involved, failures can present electrical hazards that might be avoided with periodic inspections.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters

Outdoor outlets or those in potentially damp locations in a kitchen, bathroom or laundry room often include GFCI features. They are designed to sense abnormal current flows, breaking the circuit to prevent potential electric shocks from devices plugged into the outlets.

The average GFCI outlet is designed to last about 10 years, but in areas prone to electrical storms or power

surges, they can wear out in five years or less. Check them frequently by pressing the red test button. Make sure you hit the black reset button when you are done. Contact a licensed electrician to replace any failing GFCI outlets.

Loose or Damaged Outlets or Switches

Unstable electrical outlets or wall switches with signs of heat damage or discoloration can offer early warnings of potential shock or electrical fire hazards. Loose connections can allow electrical current arcing. If you see these warning signs, it may be time to contact an electrician.

Surge Protectors

Power strips with surge protectors can help safeguard expensive equipment like televisions, home entertainment systems and computer components from power spikes. Voltage spikes are measured in joules, and surge protectors are rated for the number of joules they can effectively absorb. That means if your surge protector is rated at 1,000 joules, it should be replaced when it hits or passes that limit. When the limit is reached, protection stops, and you're left with a basic power strip.

Some surge protectors include indicator lights that flicker to warn you when they've stopped working as designed, but many do not. If your electrical system takes a major hit, or if you don't remember when you bought your surge protector, replacement may be the best option.

Extension Cords

If you use extension cords regularly to connect devices and equipment to your wall outlets, you may live in an underwired home. With a growing number of electrical devices connecting your family to the electricity you get from Cotton Electric, having enough outlets in just the right spots can be challenging. Remember, extension cords are designed for temporary, occasional or periodic use.

If an extension cord gets noticeably warm when in use, it could be undersized for the intended use. If it shows any signs of frayed, cracked or heat-damaged insulation, it should be replaced. If the grounding prong is missing, crimped or loose, a grounded cord will not provide the protection designed into its performance. And always make sure that extension cords used in outdoor or potentially damp locations are rated for exterior use.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 51,000 electrical fires are reported each year in the United States, causing more than \$1.3 billion in annual property damage.

Electricity is an essential necessity for modern living, and Cotton Electric is committed to providing safe, reliable and affordable power to all of our members. We hope you'll keep these electrical safety tips in mind so that you can note any potential hazards before damage occurs.

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: _____



CECF golf tourney set for June

Golf enthusiasts have a great opportunity to spend a day on an 18-hole championship course while helping to raise funds to help organizations and individuals throughout southwest Oklahoma.

The 11th annual Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) Summer Classic will be June 24 at The Territory Golf and Country Club in Duncan. The tournament is held to raise awareness of CECF and to generate funds for Operation Round Up (ORU).

ORU is primarily funded by Cotton Electric Cooperative members who "round up" their monthly bill to the nearest dollar. The funds are administered by CECF, which meets quarterly to consider grant applications. Since its inception in 2004, CECF has awarded more than \$1 million to volunteer fire departments, youth, senior citizen and public safety organizations, schools,

communities and individuals throughout the Cotton Electric service area.

Registration for the four-person scramble will begin at 7:30 a.m. with a shotgun start at 8:30. The registration fee of \$600 per team will include range balls, cart, and a meal following the round.

Individual, team and door prizes will be awarded.

To enter, players' names and handicap or average scores can be faxed to 580-875-3101. Deadline for entries and fee payment is Friday, June 14.

Two levels of hole sponsorship are available. Hole sponsors who also enter a team receive a \$100 discount on entry fees.

For information about the scramble or becoming a sponsor, call Bryce Hooper at 580-875-3351 or email bhooper@cottonelectric.com.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the A/C to run longer than necessary.

Source: energy.gov

The Current

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COTTON ELECTRIC CO-OP
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 | \$5,575,640 | \$4,842,066 |
| Cost of Purchased Power | 3,692,880 | 3,352,605 |
| Taxes | 126,588 | 112,996 |
| Total Operating Expense Per Mile | 1,036 | 953 |
| Average Farm and Residential Bill | 156 | 124 |
| Average Farm and Residential kWh | 1,358 | 1,085 |
| Total Meters Billed (farm, residential) | 18,403 | 18,327 |
| Miles Energized | 5,197 | 5,169 |
| Density Per Mile | 3.54 | 3.55 |
| New Service Connects YTD | 74 | 58 |
| Services Retired | 29 | 21 |

Cooperative tune-up rebates underway

Have you scheduled your annual HVAC system tune-up yet? With tune-up rebates underway and hot summer months quickly approaching, now is the perfect time to have your system serviced.



Heath Morgan,
Energy Efficiency
Coordinator

of in the same way. Proper maintenance of these systems should be taken seriously in order to protect your investment. An annual maintenance plan is a great place to start.

Annual maintenance plans, or system tune-ups, are designed to address manufacturer recommended cleanings, component inspections and required servicing. Along with regular air filter replacement, these services can help keep your unit running at peak efficiency. Dirty air filters can raise the energy consumption of your system by 5 to 15 percent and your system's overall efficiency can be decreased by up to 25 percent over a five-year period if neglected. Keeping your system running efficiently can help to avoid unusually high electric bills for this time of year.

Efficiency and safety standards continue to rise, meaning systems that heat and cool our homes are becoming more complex. These systems contain components that work together in order to operate. The failure of a smaller, less expensive, component may not seem like a pressing issue, but could lead to costly



damages if left unattended. As systems run for longer periods of time in attempt to keep up with hotter days, components are at a greater risk for failure.

Scheduled maintenance checks allow contractors the opportunity to find weak or failing parts before they lead to bigger issues. Spring weather doesn't hang around for very long in Oklahoma. Cotton Electric recommends having your

HVAC tune-up scheduled before the dog-days of summer hit.

As part of the qualifications for a rebate, members must have their tune-up completed by June 20 and submit their application to the cooperative by June 30. Tune-up rebate details and applications are available on Cotton Electric's website at www.cottonelectric.com/content/hvac-tune-rebate.

VM prepares for pole replacements

Cotton Electric's Vegetation Management (VM) program is a proactive effort to ensure quality power delivery. Aggressive and preventive vegetation management is a good value to the co-op's members from a service and an economic perspective. Keeping trees away from power lines is also a matter of safety.

Scott Crew, vegetation management coordinator for Cotton Electric, oversees an in-house crew and several contract crews in the year-round effort to clear trees and prevent regrowth.

He said all tree-clearing crews make every effort to contact land and home owners in person as they move into an area. In some cases, they will leave bright-colored door hangers either 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," he said, noting that he is likely to be out on the job.

After trees are cleared, crews return to the area at regularly scheduled intervals to apply a specially formulated herbicide that will prevent tree growth while protecting grasses. Spraying is done only during the growing season.

During the second quarter of the year, Northeast Rural Services (NRS) will have two crews working in the east Walters circuit of Cotton Electric's service territory in preparation for contractors

coming to remove bad poles. They will be prioritizing the clearing of vegetation to improve power quality and make room for pole changeouts.

The VM department is working around the lines serving the Duncan Lake areas. As always, Cotton's vegetation management crews will work with district linemen on VM clearing where needed throughout the service area.

Scott Crew said his crews are always looking for land and home owners in need of free untreated wood chips. Because these 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 the co-op, too. With the new 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. Work crews will deliver wood chips only to members they can reach by phone and whose location is nearest the day's work. 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.

Avg. Residential Electric Use by Cotton Electric Members March 2019

1,358 kWh

Solar Generation @ Randlett Site March 2019

36,676 kWh

Number of homes
36,676 kWh would power @ 1,358 kWh per home

27

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Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the June issue, please submit information by May 29, by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com.

Armed Forces honored May 18

Billed in years past as the largest in the nation, the Armed Forces Day Parade begins at 10 a.m. May 18 on C Avenue in downtown Lawton.

More than 100 participants are set to march in this year's parade themed "A Step Into The Past." Celebrating Fort Sill's 150th birthday and honoring Armed Forces history, participants are encouraged to incorporate elements of the past into their floats.

The annual event serves to showcase Armed Forces and community collaboration.

Parade entries are available at visitlawtonok.com and will be accepted until 3 p.m. on May 10. For information, contact Logan Ralston at 580-355-3541 or lrals@visitlawton.com.

Annual GOP Fish Fry is May 18

Stephens County's 15th annual GOP fish fry and Republican governor's debate will begin at 6 p.m. May 18 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds.

The event is sponsored by Stephens County Republican Party. This year's expected speaker is the newly elected state governor, Kevin Stitt.

Ticket purchases and reservations can be made by calling Leon Farris at 580-656-7951.

CTHC presents new exhibit

"Bison: Ancient. Massive. Wild." is a nationally touring exhibit that will open May 24 at the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center (CTHC) in Duncan.

Several pieces of historic bison art will be on display in CTHC's Garis Gallery of the American West. Visitors will explore the significance of bison in the culture of Plains Indians – particularly as a resource for food, clothing, shelter and tools.

The exhibit runs through July 27. CTHC is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday. For information, contact 580-252-6692 or info@onthechisholmtrail.com.

Cotton Electric members can show their Co-op Connections card at the door and receive \$1 off admission.

Get moving with Open Streets

Lawton-Fort Sill community presents the spring Open Streets from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. May 25 in downtown Lawton on C Avenue.

Brought to you by a multitude of community organizations, Open Streets is a newer concept that turns city streets into a temporary public park with activities for the whole family designed to get people moving.

Activities for the family will include fitness classes, obstacle courses, imaginary playground, skate park, hula hoops, art, face painting, bounce houses, photo booth and more.

Open Streets events are increasingly common in cities seeking innovative ways to achieve environmental, social, economic and public health goals. For more information, visit the Lawton-Fort Sill Open Streets Facebook page.

Lawton police chief honored May 27

Members of the Deputy U.S. Marshals Living History Interpretive Group from the Fort Sill Museum and representatives of the Lawton Police Department will pay tribute on Memorial Day to an old

west hero who was Lawton's first police chief.

A short public ceremony honoring the life of Henry Andrew "Heck" Thomas will be held at noon May 27 at Thomas' gravesite in Highland Cemetery, 2201 Fort Sill Boulevard.

For information, contact Alvie L. Carter, Sr. at 580-699-2382 or 917-0544.

Spring Trail Ride is June 1

Duncan Lake Horse Club is planning their Spring Trail Ride on June 1 at Duncan Lake. Riders will leave the lake pavilion at 10 a.m. and participants may want to bring a snack for trail break.

A meal will be served approximately 30 minutes after riders return to the pavilion.

Negative Coggins required. The cost is \$20 per rider. Fees are payable with a credit card at kiosk on site.

Directions to Duncan Lake: From U.S. Highway 81, travel east on Plato Road for 9 miles. Go ½ mile south on Duncan Lake Road and look for a sign posted on the west side of the road.

For information about the ride, call Brenda Benedict at 580-475-7190 or visit DuncanLakeHorseClub.com.

Founder's Day parade is June 22

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.

Lions rodeo set for June 27-29

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 \$8 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.

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.

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.

More Community Spotlight on Page 6

Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

| June | | July | | August | |
|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|--------------|---------|
| Ad Sales | May 24 | Ad Sales | June 28 | Ad Sales | July 26 |
| Classified | May 29 | Classified | July 3 | Classified | July 31 |
| Publish Date | June 10 | Publish Date | July 15 | Publish Date | Aug. 12 |

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Jonathan Jeffrey took this photo of his children, Jack and Georgia, having fun in the mud after a recent rain in Duncan. Jack and Georgia are the grandchildren of Cotton Electric members Rick and Terre Wiens and Cotton Electric employee Vikie Jeffrey.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for June is The Great Outdoors. 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.

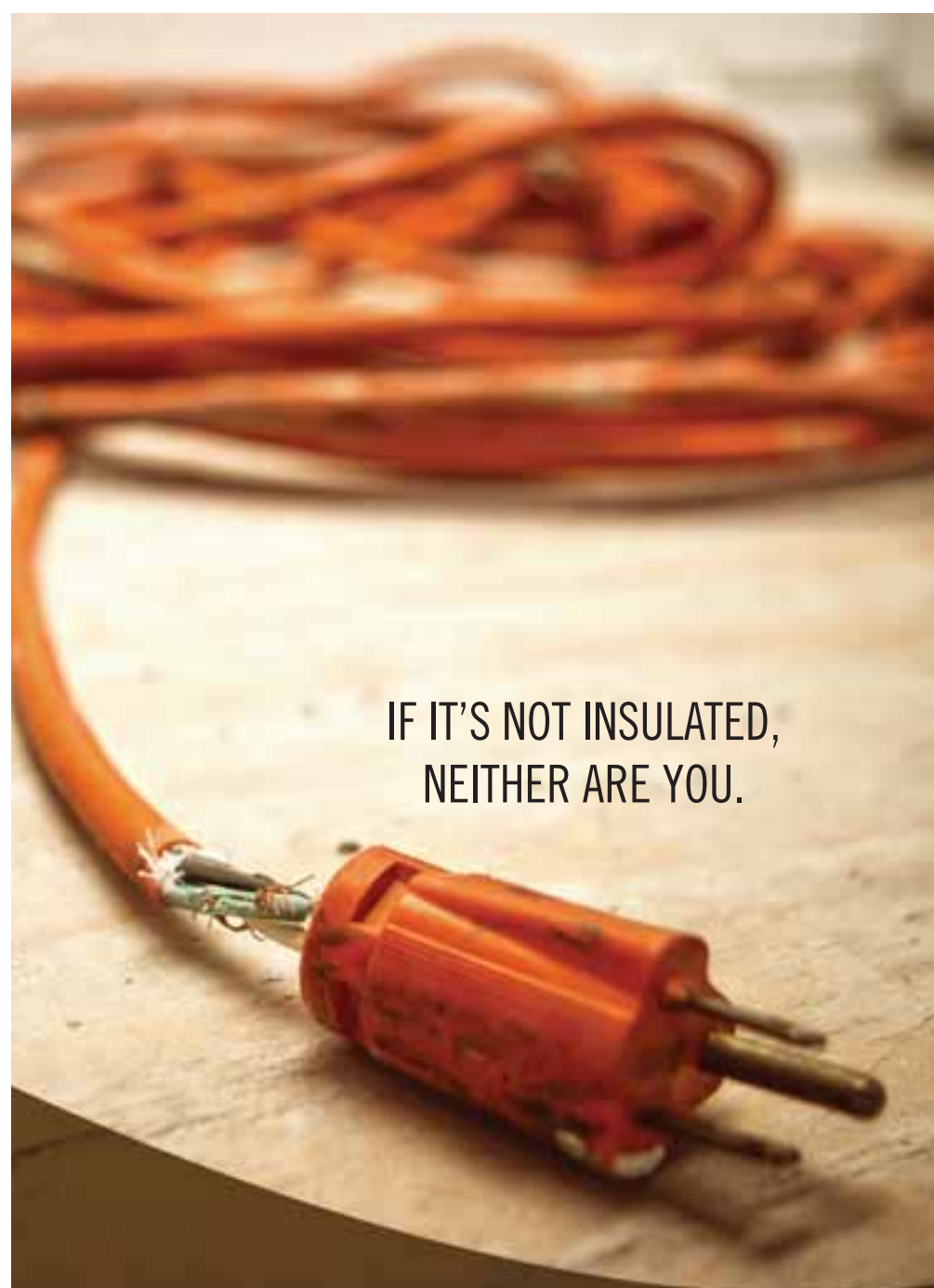
Chuck Wagon Fest set for weekend in May

National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum is hosting its annual Chuck Wagon Festival from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 25-26 in Oklahoma City.

The fun-filled family weekend showcases chuck wagon food samples, live music, Western re-enactors, children's

activities and much more.

General admission is purchased at the door for \$15. Children and museum members get in free. For more information about festival activities, visit nationalcowboymuseum.org/chuckwagon.



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2019 Youth Tour essay topic:

What do you find most interesting about electric cooperatives?



Jessie Bone
Walters High School

Cooperatives committed to community

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.



So many features go into a rural cooperative. I am very intrigued by both the fifth principle, educational training opportunities, and the seventh principle, concern for the communities. I appreciate all rural cooperatives' concern for the communities, as rural cooperatives do so much to maintain the members' well-being.

They do all that they can to make the communities they serve a better place. Not only do I appreciate their concern for community, but I am amazed by how many educational opportunities they offer for students.

A great example of a rural cooperative that shows concern for their community and offers many educational opportunities is the Cotton Electric Cooperative located in Walters, Oklahoma.

In 1957, the Cotton Electric Cooperative premiered the first and only cooperative newspaper in the United States called the Cotton Electric Current. One thing Cotton Electric does for its members and communities that no other co-

operative does is publish their own newspaper. When the first issue of the Cotton Electric Current was published, it was a four-page broadsheet.

I found it intriguing that The Current has been published for 61 years and there is still nothing else like it. It keeps members updated on what is happening in southwest Oklahoma. The Current reaches residents in eight southwest Oklahoma counties and is distributed to more than 15,000 homes every month.

Since 1957, it has grown into a 16- to 20-page broadsheet publication. For Cotton Electric, there is no better way to keep members informed on what is happening in southwest Oklahoma than by publishing local news in their very own newspaper.

As community involvement goes, nobody does it better than Cotton Electric. They put on local events in Walters and help the community whenever they get the chance. Every year, Cotton Electric sponsors the Youth Power Energy Camp for eighth-graders. I had the privilege of attending this camp my eighth-grade year.

While I was there, I learned so much about leadership and my local cooperative. Going to this camp was such a great experience that I would not trade it for anything. It was the best camp I have ever attended.

Cotton Electric also aids the community by helping out with the local 4-H programs and giving safety presentations for all the schools in their service area. Cotton Electric has always been serving their communities.

In the 1980s, they pioneered the Good Neighbor concept by adding a crime watch to prevent vandalism in rural areas. Also, in the 1980s, Cotton Electric made headlines and started a trend by donating satellite receiver systems to 24 area schools for educational opportunities available only via satellite. In the '90s, Cotton Electric launched many economic development projects to assist southwest Oklahoma with small business, in-

dustry and job-creating projects. There is just no stopping Cotton Electric when it comes to providing for the community.

Not only does Cotton Electric do for the community but it also helps out local charities. In 2004, Cotton Electric began the Operation Round Up program and established the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation.

All proceeds from the program go to the Operation Round Up fund. The program provides assistance to worthwhile individuals and organizations. Under the program, voluntary contributions are made when participating cooperative members' bills are rounded up to the next highest dollar. Operation Round Up has contributed more than \$1 million toward improving the lifestyle of their members and communities.

Like all rural electric companies, Cotton Electric does a multitude of things for the betterment of the lives and education of their members.

It is so fascinating how much cooperatives manage to do for the communities they serve and still get their own jobs done. Rural cooperatives are a shining example of what it means to put their community first.

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Community Spotlight

Kids' activities in Central High

Central High presents Story Time from 10-10:30 a.m. every Wednesday while school is in session at the high school library.

Participants will read a story, sing songs and do an activity. Children who have not yet started school are welcome if accompanied by parent or caregiver.

For more information, call 580-685-2929, Ext. 6.

Chapter of the Blind meets monthly

Duncan Chapter of the Blind meets at 1:30 p.m. on the third Saturday of each month at the Stephens County Historical Museum, 1402 W Beech Ave.

This is an opportunity for those who are visually impaired or blind and their caregivers to learn about the availability of services and equipment such as white cane training and large lighted magnifiers. The group also provides information about free access to an extensive library of audio books.

For information about the group or to arrange free transportation to the monthly meeting, call 580-786-8041 or 427-2933.

Food pantry opens twice monthly

Walters Community Food Pantry is open from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month. The pantry is in the old City Hall, 131 1/2 W. California Street.

Pantry organizers try to provide a two-week supply of basic staples to anyone with identification.

For information, call Roger Noland at 580-591-6826.

Monthly lecture at The Foreman Prairie House

Join the docents and volunteers at The Foreman Prairie House at noon every third Thursday of the month for lunch and lecture. Listen to artists, historians and craftsmen while enjoying a homemade artisan-style lunch.

The subject and speaker for the lecture change every month so you get new knowledge with every freshly prepared meal.

Cost is \$12 per person. Reservations are required and can be made by dialing or texting 580-512-9153.

Honor guard serves SW Oklahoma

Seeing a need in the area, several military veterans formed an honor guard in 2007 to provide services at funerals for all military veterans. The guard is made up of veterans from all branches of the armed forces and three veterans' organizations.

The uniformed guard furnishes a 21-gun salute, plays taps and folds a flag for presentation to the family. The

guard travels anywhere in Stephens, Cotton, Comanche and Jefferson counties, and has made special trips into Grady and Carter counties.

There is no charge for the service, though donations are accepted.

For information about joining the guard or securing its services, call Kenneth Youngblood at 859-684-5128 or Clinton Swanson at 580-251-0629 or visit The-SCHG.com.

SWOBA meets monthly

Southwest Oklahoma Beekeeper Association meets at 7 p.m. every second Thursday of the month at the Stephens County Fairgrounds.

The association strives to improve beekeepers and beekeeping methods for the local community and provide a beneficial resource to facilitate and augment the cultivation and conservation of wild and managed bee populations across the great state of Oklahoma.

More information can be found by visiting OkBees.org/SWOBA.

Blessings Boutique open monthly

Marlow First United Methodist Church opens its Blessings Boutique every first and third Tuesday of the month. Clothing donations drop-off days are Tuesdays, or donors can call the church at 580-658-2765 to make other arrangements.

Senior activities find new home

A variety of activities and weekly sponsored events will continue for the Wichita Mountains Area Senior Citizens Center at the First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall in Medicine Park until a permanent home can be found or the Legion Building can be rebuilt.

The Legion Building hosted senior center members up until the building came down in flames on Feb. 9.

Potluck dinners, games and TV will continue to be offered every Monday from 6 to 10 p.m. Activities continue on Tuesdays and Thursdays with dominoes, other table games, Tai Chi and stretch and balance exercises starting at 10 a.m. Lunch is served at noon, with events continuing into the afternoon.

Senior Center President Puddin McKenzie encourages all of the senior center members to come to the Fellowship Center to play, eat, volunteer and help the senior citizen center recover.

For information about other activities, visit WichitaMountainSeniors.org.



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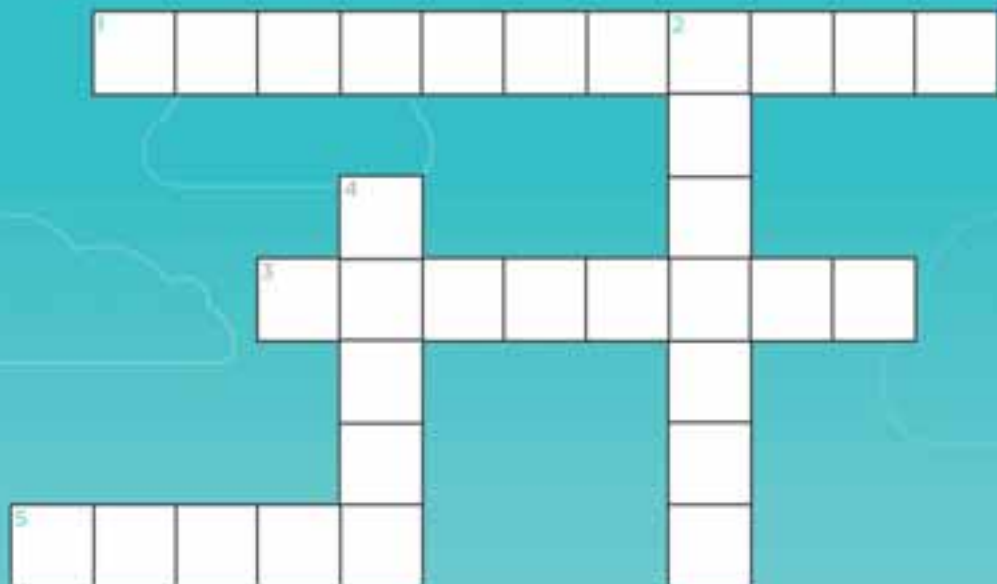
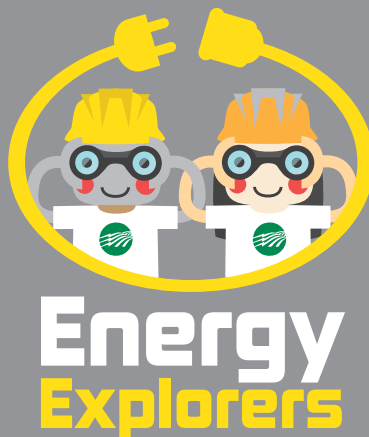


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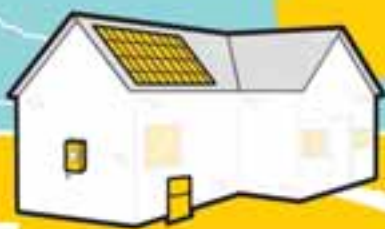
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- DOWN:** The alternating current flows from the inverter to the home's breaker box, where it's used to _____ appliances and other electrical items in your home.
- ACROSS:** If the _____ panels generate more electricity than the home needs, the unused electricity is sent back to the power lines, or electric grid.



ANSWER KEY

1 ACROSS: ELECTRICITY
2 DOWN: CURRENT
3 ACROSS: CONVERTS
4 DOWN: POWER
5 ACROSS: SOLAR

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| | | 3 | 7 | | | 9 | | 1 |
| | 2 | 9 | | | 4 | | | |

Fun By The Numbers

Level: Beginner

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!

Editor's Note:

For 2019 we will be alternating between crossword and sudoku puzzles to challenge the mind differently each month. The crossword puzzle will be back in June. For now, test your skills with this sudoku.

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Add Apples to Your Brunch Buffet

As part of a balanced brunch, these Apple Strudel Pancakes feature whole grains rich in fiber, minerals and vitamins to provide energy for you and your guests. With a rich, nutty flavor, buckwheat flour complements the sweet taste of apples and maple syrup for a twist on traditional pancakes. Find more nutritious recipes at aicr.org.

Apple Strudel Pancakes

Reprinted with permission from the American Institute for Cancer Research
Servings: 8

Apple Strudel Mixture:

- 1 cup water
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/3 cup thoroughly chopped walnuts
- 1 large apple, peeled, cored and chopped

Batter:

- 1 cup buckwheat flour
- 1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups 1 percent buttermilk
- 1/4 cup safflower oil
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- nonstick cooking spray

maple syrup

To make apple strudel mixture: Boil water; add raisins. Remove from heat and let steep until raisins are plump and reconstituted, about 10 minutes. Drain and set aside.

In shallow pan over medium heat, add butter. Once butter melts and is bubbling, stir in brown sugar and cinnamon. Cook about 3 minutes until sugar starts to dissolve. Add walnuts, apples and raisins. Cook apples until just tender when pierced with fork, about 4 minutes. Set aside to cool completely.

To make batter: In large bowl, mix flours, sugar, cinnamon, baking soda and salt. In separate bowl, beat eggs lightly and mix with buttermilk, oil and vanilla extract.

Pour wet ingredients into dry, mixing as little as possible. Add apple strudel mixture and fold all ingredients together. Set aside.

Heat nonstick pan or griddle over medium heat. Grease pan lightly with nonstick cooking spray. Once pan is hot, ladle about 1/4 cup batter per pancake taking care not to overcrowd pan. After 2-3 minutes, flip pancakes once.

Serve pancakes warm with syrup.

Go BIG on Brunch

FAMILY FEATURES

Building out a full menu to please your brunch guests with simple, tasty recipes can help create a fun, flavorful atmosphere when it's time for a morning bite.

By making a variety of dishes to accommodate an array of personal tastes, you can give friends and family the flavors they desire. With choices like Apple Strudel Pancakes and Mini Hash Brown Casseroles, you can fulfill a multitude of food groups from grains and

fruits to dairy and meat. Allow the adults at your gathering to top off the meal with a spicy take on this Watermelon Bloody Mary, featuring simple preparation and a handful of garnish options. Find more brunch recipes at Culinary.net.

A Small Brunch Bite

A full brunch menu calls for small bites on the side to complement the multitude of flavors brought on by a variety of brunch dishes.

For a clever option that's quick to make, these Mini Hash Brown Casseroles provide a morsel bursting with flavor to pair with just about any morning meal. Made with refrigerated Simply Potatoes Shredded Hash Browns, which are pre-shredded for a faster fridge to fork kitchen experience, you can make a batch of the tasty cups in less than an hour.

Find more brunch solutions and recipes at simplypotatoes.com.

Mini Hash Brown Casseroles

Prep time: 10 minutes
Total time: 30 minutes
Servings: 24

- 1 package refrigerated Simply Potatoes Shredded Hash Browns
- 1 pound Bob Evans Farms Original Sausage Roll
- 4 large eggs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1 cup ham, cubed
- 1 cup red pepper, diced
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Heat oven to 350 F.
Remove hash browns from refrigerator and let rest.
In skillet, cook sausage according to package directions.
Lightly grease two 12-cup muffin tins. In bowl, whisk eggs and milk. Add hash browns, butter, ham, red pepper, black pepper and cheese; mix.
Fill muffin tins 2/3 full. Bake 27-30 minutes. Serve warm.



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Sipping on Sweet and Spicy

Take your brunch the extra mile with a twist on the traditional mid-morning beverage. By adding jalapeno and horseradish to this Watermelon Bloody Mary, you'll have a spicy, tasty version of a traditional brunch drink ready for your guests.

With watermelon balancing out the jalapeno, it's an ideal balance of spicy and sweet with just the right amount of kick. Find more brunch recipes at watermelon.org.

Watermelon Bloody Mary

Recipe courtesy of the National Watermelon Promotion Board
Yield: 4 cocktails

- 2 cups seedless watermelon, cubed
- 1 medium jalapeno pepper, stem removed, chopped
- 2 limes, juice only
- 6 ounces low-sodium tomato juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon fish sauce
- 1 teaspoon horseradish hot sauce, to taste
- 1/3 cup vodka
- lime wedges
- chili lime salt
- ice
- 4 bamboo skewers (6 inches long)
- watermelon wedges (optional)
- prosciutto (optional)
- cucumber slices (optional)
- jalapeno slices (optional)
- green olives (optional)

In blender, blend watermelon cubes and jalapeno pepper until completely smooth. Pour mixture through fine sieve set over pitcher.

Add lime juice, salt, pepper, fish sauce, horseradish and hot sauce, to taste, to pitcher; stir to combine. Taste and adjust seasoning as needed. Add vodka and stir.

Line rims of four glasses with lime juice from lime wedges; dip in chili lime salt poured on plate. Carefully put ice in each glass and divide Watermelon Bloody Mary mixture evenly.

Add garnishes, as desired, by skewering watermelon wedges, prosciutto, cucumber, jalapeno and green olives. Place garnishes in glasses and serve.

Flaxseed jam packed with nutritional properties

One of my fondest food memories from childhood is my mom making the most delicious jam from wild plums found in a small grove in one of our pastures. Sometimes I get a craving for foods from my childhood and decide to give it a go but with my own twist.

This week it was strawberry jam with flaxseed. Sounds delicious, right?

Why would I ruin a good thing by adding flaxseed? Flaxseed has some interesting nutrition properties, including fiber, protein and healthy fats. Two tablespoons of milled or ground flaxseed contains 4.8 grams of healthy fat, specifically omega-3 fatty acids which benefit your heart. It also contains 3 grams of dietary fiber (the recommended daily intake for adults is 35-45 grams of fiber per day), and 2 grams of protein. That's a lot of really good nutrition packed into 50 calories.

Flaxseed, when mixed with liquid, has a gelling property, similar to pectin or



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT

tapioca. The flavor is mild, slightly nutty and adds some texture to the food it's paired with, similar to finely ground nuts.

There are many recipes online for jam with flaxseed. Some require cooking and

some do not. Some call for fresh fruits and some call for frozen fruits. If you want to give flaxseed jam a try, find a recipe that matches the time, equipment, and ingredients you have on hand. Once you feel comfortable, you will find that you can whip up a flaxseed jam quickly with whatever you have on hand. The key ingredients are fruit, acid (like lemon or lime), something to make it gel and some sweetener.

Flaxseed can be incorporated into your diet in many ways. You can add whole or ground flaxseed directly to foods like smoothies, yogurt, pudding, jello, baked goods or cereal. Adding it to smoothies, yogurt, or cereal is the best way to get the full nutritional benefit.

If you are only adding 2 tablespoons to a batch of jam, you will need to eat the whole batch to get the full nutritional benefits. If you are adding 2 tablespoons to a serving of yogurt, you get the full nutrition benefits all at once.

Flaxseed is not a superfood. I would argue no food is a super food. Super food is a term made up to market foods. Studies have suggested that flaxseed may lower cholesterol and blood pressure but in 30-gram doses (roughly 6 tablespoons) per day in patients who already have heart disease.

It may be worth discussing with your healthcare providers if you already have heart disease. Otherwise, flaxseed can add beneficial nutrients to foods you already eat.

My strawberry flaxseed jam is delicious. I have used it on pancakes instead of syrup and it's also great just eating it straight out of the jar. It's the consistency of chunky pudding and pairs well with a dollop of whipped cream. It is not as good as the wild plum jam from my childhood, but it helped me repurpose some ripening strawberries while adding heart healthy fats and fiber to my diet.

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As golf carts are limited, reserve by calling Janell Philpott 875-2616 or Lakeside Golf Course 875-3829.



From left, Stacy Abbe and Greg Kohout pose with the cooperative's new wrecker. The wrecker is instrumental as the two repair equipment out in the field in hopes of getting linemen quickly back to work restoring power to members.

Cotton Electric mechanics improve fleet safety

By Danielle Quickle

Cotton Electric requires a variety of vehicles to service and maintain its 5,197 miles of energized power lines. Southwest Oklahoma's terrain can take its toll on vehicles in the co-op's fleet, requiring frequent maintenance and repairs from Cotton Electric's in-house mechanics.

Stacy Abbe and Greg Kohout manage Cotton Electric's garage and have a combined 56 years of working on co-op vehicles. There is no such thing as a normal day for the department. From flats to oil changes to equipment failure, the two stay busy with a variety of calls coming in requesting their services. Their work at the cooperative is instrumental to the safety of co-op employees.

"We see most of these trucks every single day," Kohout said. "A lot of times we can tell if something is wrong just by listening to it start up."

Cooperative vehicles require specific equipment in order to operate correctly, which is something that could be overlooked by someone not familiar with this grade of machinery.

"Sometimes if you send a vehicle out to get serviced, it may go to someone who doesn't know or doesn't care about the specific needs of the truck – like types of oil



and hoses," Abbe said. "We put a little more care and attention to detail into our work since we personally know the people who will be operating these vehicles."

Their services go beyond the garage as they are often called out into the field.

"Some situations make it difficult to bring a vehicle into the garage to be serviced, like if the truck won't run or if a lineman is stuck in the air in a bucket," Kohout said. "For those situations we go out and repair the issue."

After storms and heavy rains, the duo will frequently receive calls requesting the use of their wrecker to pull

bucket trucks and other equipment out of the mud. For Cotton Electric linemen, this is their only form of rescue.

"Most wreckers around here aren't 4-wheel drive," Abbe said. "The ones that are, aren't always able to go where our linemen are located."

Like linemen, Kohout and Abbe are on call 24/7 in case their services are needed during an outage.

"When linemen are facing issues with their equipment or are stuck somewhere, they call us and we immediately respond," Abbe said. "Getting them fixed up and back to work means quicker power restoration for members."

Beyond bucket trucks, the department has serviced a variety of vehicles including fork lifts, diggers, trenchers, skid steers and even the wheelchair of a former employee. Now add to the list Cotton Electric's new electric vehicle.

"The electric vehicle hasn't really impacted our job so far," Kohout said. "We were excited to hear that we got one and it'll be interesting to figure out our role with it in the future."

Look for more information about Cotton Electric's new Chevy Bolt in the June edition of The Current.

Ivanka Vassileva, MD



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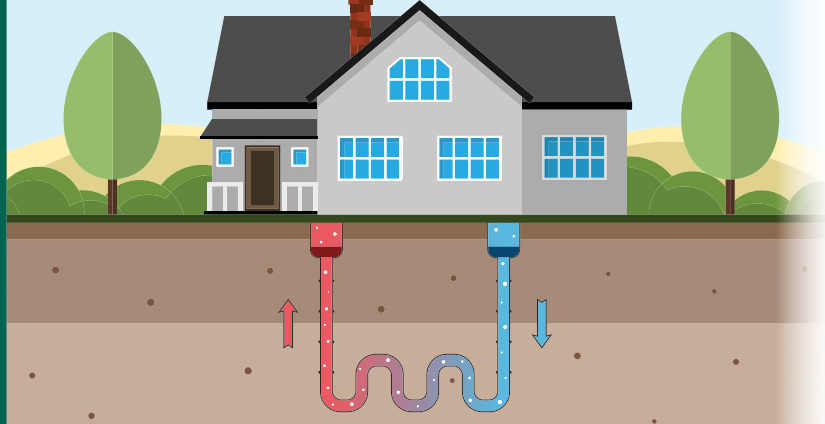
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2019 pole top and basket rescue



Cotton Electric's new warehouse materials handler, Dane Kerr, focuses for his turn during the basket rescue drill.



Journeyman Lineman Matt Winburn uses his tools to safely retrieve the practice dummy during the pole top rescue drill.

Pole top rescue drills are required for all linemen, the only employees trained to climb poles. All employees likely to be in the field perform basket rescue drills once a year. This includes line workers, engineers, meter technicians, vegetation management, warehousemen and more going through the steps.



Journeyman Lineman Bob Anderson works to secure the practice dummy during pole top rescue.



Operations Superintendent Clint Ingram demonstrates how to successfully perform a basket rescue.

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Making a difference in the world of cybersecurity

By Heather Mahalik

Cybersecurity is something we read about in the news almost every day as organizations and governments around the world continue to get hacked. There is a huge demand for people trained in cybersecurity to help defend against this growing threat.

In fact, it is estimated there are almost 3 million openings globally. Have you considered a career as a cybersecurity professional? It is a fast-paced, highly dynamic field with a huge number of specialties to choose from, including forensics, endpoint security, critical infrastructure, incident response, secure coding, and awareness and training.

In addition, a career in cybersecurity allows you to work almost anywhere in the world, with amazing benefits and an opportunity to make a real difference.

But Do I Need a Computer Science Degree?

Absolutely not. Some of the best security professionals have non-technical backgrounds from English, pre-med, or history majors to auto mechanics, artists, and stay-at-home moms.

The key is a passion to learn—cybersecurity is all about learning how things work. Once you have an understanding of how technologies work you can then better secure them. What is so exciting about cybersecurity is you can learn how these technologies work at your own pace in the comfort of your own home.

How to Start

Not sure where to start? Start exploring different technologies and see what interests you.

- **Coding:** Learn the basics of programming; a good place to start is Python, HTML, or JavaScript. Not sure where to start learning? Consider an online training



site or grab any beginner's book on programming.

- **Systems:** Learn the basics of administering an operating system, such as Linux or Windows. If you really want to nerd out, start with Linux. Learning how to administer a Linux system from the command line is a powerful skill that will help you no matter what path you take.

- **Applications:** Learn how to configure, run, and maintain applications, such as a web server or DNS server.

- **Networking:** Learn how a network functions, including how computers and devices talk to each other by capturing and analyzing network traffic. This can be great fun as your home is most likely already a networked environment with all sorts of devices connected to it.

A great way to learn is to set up your own lab at home. This is quite easy as you can create multiple virtual operating systems on the same physical computer, or set up a lab using Cloud resources such as Amazon's AWS or Microsoft's Azure. Once you get your operating systems up and running, start interacting with them and learn everything you can.

Another option is to meet and work with others in cybersecurity. Consider attending a local cybersecurity conference (often called 'con') near you. Just about every major city has several events a year.

A well-known series of cybersecurity events designed to help beginners is called BSides. The hardest part is finding that first event or meetup. Once you attend one, your network and opportunities will exponentially grow.

Other options for learning include YouTube videos, online forums, subscribing to blogs from security professionals, or participating in online Capture the Flag (CTF) events. Finally, there are numerous programs to help you start your career, including CyberTalent Immersion Academies, Cyber Aces, and Cyber Patriot programs.

Ultimately, do not let your education or background hold you back. No matter what your background is, you bring something unique and special which cybersecurity desperately needs. The key is a passion to learn. Once you start developing your skills and you begin to meet others in the field, the opportunities will come.

Source: SANS Security Awareness

Preparation for home efficiency, safety

Cook efficiently to save energy

Buying appliances with the federal government's Energy Star label is a smart way to find devices that are energy-efficient and could help you cut your electric bill. But Energy Star doesn't rate ovens, microwaves or ranges.

That means it's up to you to conserve energy as you prepare your meals. Here are few tips:

- Microwaves use about half as much energy as a conventional oven and cook food faster. Use the microwave whenever you can.

- If you're cooking for one or two, consider preparing your meal in a portable appliance like an electric frying pan, grill or toaster oven. Those small appliances eat up about two-thirds less electricity than an oven's broiler.

- Cooking a big meal? Cram as many of the baked dishes into the oven at once, even if the recipes call for varying cook-

ing temperatures. Variations in heat of 25 degrees in either direction will still brown your food nicely.

- Skip the preheating, especially when broiling or roasting.

- Resist the urge to peek at your food as it bakes or broils. Every time you open the door of a hot oven, you waste heat.

- Clean your oven after every use so you won't have to use its energy-inefficient self-cleaning features.

Surprise newlyweds and grads with energy-efficient gifts

It's wedding and graduation season. Why not make a difference in the lives of those you're buying gifts for?

Grads and newlyweds who are furnishing their first homes need everything from small kitchen appliances, such as toasters and mixers, to powerhouse machines such as a vacuum cleaner. If that's the gift you'd like to give, consider select-

ing an energy-efficient model.

Here are some ideas:

- Microwave ovens and slow cookers use less energy than the oven or stovetop to cook meals, and they often require less effort.

- Wrap up an electric blanket as a gift to help your friends stay warm in the winter and reduce heating bills. Choose one with an automatic shutoff for safety.
- If your friends have asked for bathroom fixtures, choose a low-flow showerhead. They use up to 50 percent less hot water than a regular model without reducing the quality of a shower.

- A high-quality, shock-absorbing power strip never goes out of style and is always welcome. Plus, it's a pretty sure bet that nobody else will give that gift.

June is Home Safety Month

June is National Safety Month, and safety starts at home.

Join the observance by checking for electrical accidents-waiting-to-happen in your home. Here's how:

- Inspect every appliance in your home to determine if it is still in working order. Turn each one on and then off as you listen to the sound of the motor. Inspect plugs and cords for damage.

- If you have young children at home, plug wall outlets with child-safety caps.

- When you replace appliances, buy the ones with a rating from a testing laboratory like UL.

- Choose light bulbs with the correct wattage for each lamp and overhead light fixture. You'll find the maximum safe wattage imprinted on the fixture.

- Put away extension cords. They're designed for temporary use.

- If you're hiding any cords under the carpet, move them. Covering cords can cause them to overheat and start a fire.

Source: Pointers and Prose

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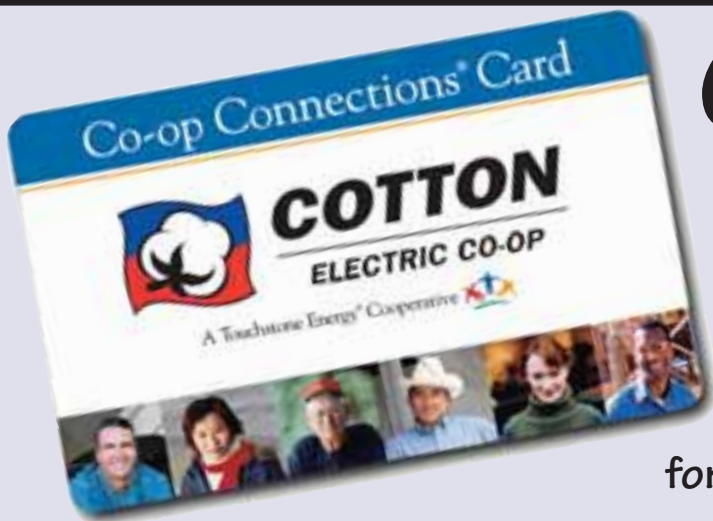
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