

The Current

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“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

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NUMBER 11

District 3



Charles Spencer serves as Board Trustee for District 3.



Included within the borders of District 3 are the communities of Elgin and Sterling and parts of Central High, Elgin, Empire, Fletcher, Geronimo, Lawton, Marlow, Rush Springs and Sterling school districts.



Terry Turner



Bob Anderson



Larry Crowell



Scott Dennis



Chad Cowan

When your power goes off in the middle of the night, four line workers are on call to get your lights back on. Responding to outages in this area are Journeyman Linemen Terry Turner, Bob Anderson, Larry Crowell and Scott Dennis. These line workers do not exclusively work in District 3 but aid the system in various places along the eastern side of the service territory. They are under the direction of Operations Superintendent Chad Cowan.



Members in this area are served by four substations: Elgin, Hulen, Marlow and Geronimo. These substations distribute power across approximately 587 miles of line to residential and commercial accounts in District 3.

Spencer serves his home community

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 3 sits on the far east side of Comanche County taking up the north-central part of Cotton Electric’s service territory. Included within the borders of District 3 are the communities of Elgin and Sterling. Parts of Central High, Elgin, Empire, Fletcher, Geronimo, Lawton, Marlow, Rush Springs and Sterling school districts also fall into District 3.

Members in this area are served by four substations: Elgin, Hulen, Marlow and Geronimo. These substations distribute power across approximately 587 miles of line to residential and commercial accounts in District 3. When power distribution issues arise, specific line workers are assigned to restoring power.

When power goes off in the middle of the night, four line workers are on call to get lights back on. Responding to outages in this area are Journeyman Linemen Terry Turner, Bob Anderson, Larry Crowell and Scott Dennis. These line workers do not exclusively work in District 3 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 2001, Charles Spencer was appointed as

trustee and District 3 members have elected to retain him ever since.

Spencer was raised on Cotton Electric lines. In 1973, he and his wife of 56 years, Janis, made their home near Elgin, in the northwest corner of District 3. Their two daughters and two sons have blessed them with a dozen grandchildren.

He has a rich background in agriculture. Throughout the years he has worked for the Oklahoma Hereford Association, Perfecter Cattle Services and taught Agriculture at Elgin public schools. He has been self-employed as a farmer-rancher since 1984.

Owning his own hay business has taught him the importance of continuing education, especially as a trustee. Spencer has gone through several hours of required training and has been awarded his Director Gold Certification. Director Gold recognizes trustees who have earned both their Credentialed Cooperative Director Certification and Board Leadership Certification and are committed to continuing their education throughout their service.

“Before I was appointed to the board, I didn’t have a clue how the cooperative operated,” Spencer said. “Even after 18 years of service, I spend quite a bit of time trying to stay informed and educated. I have learned to never be complacent.”

Spencer has taken this experience and education beyond serving on Cotton Electric’s board. In 2010, he became a representative for Cotton Electric on Western Farmers Electric Cooperative’s (WFEC) board. WFEC is the co-op’s power supplier. Just like members own

and govern Cotton Electric, 22 Oklahoma and New Mexico electric cooperatives own and govern WFEC. Spencer helps oversee the business of WFEC.

“I assist in making decisions that will benefit all co-ops involved while making sure Cotton Electric’s perspective is voiced,” Spencer said. “At the same time, I gain valuable knowledge about new procedures and technology that I can bring back to the board at Cotton Electric.”

This transport of knowledge helps fulfill Cotton Electric’s commitment to bring safe, reliable and affordable power to its members.

“I am amazed by the technology and advancements the co-op has pursued for the benefit of the membership during my time on the board,” Spencer said. “Programs such as Vegetation Management and pole inspection have improved our quality of service tremendously.”

Spencer also points out cooperative programs that focus on community.

“We are owned by the people we serve, so it is very important that the co-op give back to the community in any way that we can,” Spencer said. “I am very fond of supporting our youth through Youth Tour and Energy Camp and Operation Round Up through the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation has been a life-saver for our communities.”

Spencer feels honored to represent the community he grew up in.

“The members of District 3 have been great to work for,” Spencer said. “I do my best to consider all members and make decisions in their best interests.”

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after July 1, 2019, is (\$0.00048) per kWh.

On a member’s average bill of 1250 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a credit of \$0.60 on the July bill.

June 2019 Temperature Extremes								
Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.	
1	93	64	79	16	85	66	76	
2	86	67	77	17	91	63	77	
3	87	67	77	18	93	66	80	
4	89	68	79	19	91	64	78	
5	90	69	80	20	97	68	83	
6	81	67	74	21	99	80	90	
7	90	69	80	22	93	78	86	
8	93	65	79	23	95	68	82	
9	86	68	77	24	91	67	79	
10	81	58	70	25	93	71	82	
11	85	56	71	26	94	71	83	
12	87	60	74	27	94	70	82	
13	87	55	71	28	98	73	86	
14	93	68	81	29	98	70	84	
15	96	69	83	30	91	72	82	

Source: srb.noaa.gov/oun/

Average Daily High: 91 Average Daily Low: 67

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric members in Districts 4, 7 and 9 will have an opportunity to meet and elect representatives this year. Times, dates and places of District Meeting will be in the August issue of The Current.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on Aug. 12, 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



In addition to water filters, the 2019 Energy Trails project hopes to raise enough money to purchase backpacks filled with school supplies for the students and a laptop computer and printer for the classrooms in Sillab, Guatemala, shown above.



Cotton Electric CEO Jennifer Meason traveled to two remote villages in Guatemala when they were electrified in 2018. She helped distribute water filters purchased with funds donated by cooperative members in Oklahoma.

From the CEO

Energy Trails empowers beyond lights

Oklahoma and Colorado delegates of the 2019 Energy Trails team recently met for the first time as they convened in Oklahoma City for team-building exercises and orientation. The team of journeymen linemen is preparing for an electrification project that will bring power for the first time to Sillab, a remote village in Guatemala.

Jarrood Hooper, Cotton Electric’s safety and loss control coordinator, was selected to participate in this year’s project and shares his thoughts about the upcoming trip in a story on Page 3.

The mission is coordinated through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s (NRECA) philanthropic arm, the NRECA International Foundation. The team of linemen will work on a stretch of 6.5 miles in mountainous terrain to wire 60 poles and install four transformers. Each home will



Jennifer Meason, CEO



be equipped with four light bulbs, four light switches and four electrical outlets. The powerlines will belong to a local utility, ADECORK (Association for Community Development Rax Kiche). ADECORK operates a small hydro plant and will generate and distribute electric power to Sillab. Once completed, 60 homes, one elementary school and four churches will have access to power.

I was blessed to witness firsthand the life-changing work of these projects when I traveled to two remote villages in Guatemala when they were electrified last year. The beauty of the Guatemalan landscape is a striking contrast to the harsh reality of poverty

and life without electricity. The villagers grow corn for self-consumption and generate most of their income from the production of cardamom seeds, peppers and coffee. It is exhaustive work to meet the barest of needs, but the villagers are joyful and extremely grateful for the gift of electricity.

What touched my heart most were the children in Pie de Cerro and Tierra Blanca Salinas who attend school in a modest, open-air cinder block structure with simple wooden desks. They had very limited resources but abundant smiles and enthusiasm.

Last year, many of you donated to our water filter project and we are extremely grateful. Because of your generosity, the Energy Trails team donated 110 water filters for the homes that were electrified, two wheelchairs for handicapped children, and a laptop computer and printer for the elementary schools.

This year, we would like to continue blessing the families

with the water filter project and also include donations to the local school. If you are willing to contribute, you can sponsor a backpack donation (backpack, notebooks, pencils, pens, crayons, sharpener and eraser) for \$20 or donate to the laptop/printer fund for a \$40 contribution. A gift of \$35 will purchase a 5-gallon Eco Filtro water filter that will last for two years.

To give online to the water filter project, visit <http://bit.ly/EnergyTrails>. To give online for the Backpack fund, visit: <http://bit.ly/BackpackFund>. You can also mail a check made payable to OETF, PO Box 54309, OKC-OK, 73154-1309. Please write “water filter” or “backpack” in the memo.

The Oklahoma Energy Trails Foundation is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit and all contributions are tax-deductible.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity.
#ItStartsWithPower



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When it’s warm out, avoid using the oven. Try cooking on the stove, using the microwave or grilling outside instead.

Source: energy.gov

TheCurrent

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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.

May 2019 Operating Stats

	2019	2018
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$5,192,287	\$5,159,012
Cost of Purchased Power	3,368,439	3,393,340
Taxes	93,938	88,920
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	977	967
Average Farm and Residential Bill	131	134
Average Farm and Residential kWh	961	1,122
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,452	18,407
Miles Energized	5,200	5,173
Density Per Mile	3.55	3.56
New Service Connects YTD	122	118
Services Retired	36	43



Journeyman lineman Jarrod Hooper will be among those working to bring electricity to Sillab, Guatemala.

Benefits go both ways

Energy Trails project lights up lives of volunteer linemen, too

By Danielle Quickle

Adults and children in the isolated village of Sillab in north-central Guatemala are living in the dark. The village has never had access to electricity, but that part of their story will soon change.

The Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC) is sending a group of volunteer linemen to electrify Sillab in August. Cotton Electric’s very own Jarrod Hooper has been selected to be one of 10 Oklahoma linemen to make the trip this summer.

“This is an opportunity to get back to the grassroots of what a co-op was created for – to get power to those who have never had it,” Hooper said.

Hooper has been a lineman with Cotton Electric for nearly

14 years. At the end of 2018, he was promoted to safety and loss control coordinator. He is excited to get back to working on lines.

“When you change positions, you kind of miss what you used to do,” Hooper said. “I am looking forward to the chance to do line work again.”

The electrification project – dubbed Energy Trails – will be a joint effort between Oklahoma and Colorado electric cooperatives. The diversity of the team provides benefits that go beyond the work that will be done in Guatemala.

“I will get to establish relationships with guys I probably would’ve never met otherwise,” Hooper said. “I’ll be able to talk with them and gain insight about what other co-ops are do-

ing and bring that information back to Cotton Electric.”

For a period of three weeks, the team of linemen will work on a stretch of roughly 6 miles in mountainous terrain to wire 60 poles and install four transformers. Upon completion, 60 homes, one elementary school and four churches will benefit from access to electric power. Each home will be equipped with four light bulbs, four light switches and four electrical outlets.

“The true impact we have will be unknown until we get back, but we know that we are going to change some people’s lives forever,” Hooper said. “I think the kids will see the greatest impact because they will have something to build and expand on. The possibilities become so much more when you have access to power.”

Hooper and the rest of the Energy Trails team fly out for Guatemala on Aug. 21. This trip marks the fourth electrification project Oklahoma electric cooperatives have sponsored in Central and South America.

“This will be my first time out of the country and I’m really looking forward to the experience of it all,” Hooper said. “The challenge of doing something that I love outside of my normal

environment will be an experience of a lifetime, and surely one I will never forget.”

He is hopeful his experience will encourage his fellow linemen to apply for future Energy Trails projects.

The Current will catch up with Hooper when he returns from Guatemala in mid-September. Until then, members can follow the Energy Trails journey by joining the Oklahoma Energy Trails Foundation Facebook group.

The Oklahoma Energy Trails Foundation is a not-for-profit established by Oklahoma electric cooperatives to support electrification projects. Information on how members can play a role in bringing power to developing countries can be found at www.OAEC.Coop/EnergyTrails.

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- ▶ Calf Roping \$65
- ▶ Bull Riding \$50
- ▶ Team Roping (Jackpot) \$40
- ▶ Breakaway roping (\$45)

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Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the August issue, please submit information by July 31, by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com.

Prairie House hosts family films

Backyard Cinema at the Foreman Prairie House means live music, local food trucks and a family-friendly film every third Thursday through August. Tickets are \$5 per person or \$20 per blanket full (up to 8 kids) and can be purchased online or at the gate at 814 W. Oak in Duncan. Gates open at 7 p.m., film starts at twilight.

Dehydrator set for July 27

The 30th annual Dehydrator is a bicycle ride with varied mile routes. Riders leave at 7 a.m. July 27 from the Simmons Center in Duncan. Entry fees are \$30 per person or \$45 per tandem team, non-refundable. A free T-shirt goes to the first 500 entries. A \$5 late fee will be assessed on entries after July 21. For information and registration forms, visit thedehydrator.org.

CTHC plans Day of the Cowboy

The Chisholm Trail Heritage Center recognizes the National Day of the Cowboy with a celebration from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. July 27 at 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway in Duncan. Guests will have the opportunity to visit with Oklahoma author Kristi Eaton, who wrote “The Main Streets of Oklahoma: Okie Stories from Every County.” Pauline Asbury, owner of Habasketry, will be demonstrating basket weaving. Bison rancher James Stepp will feature his bison jerky and other products while sharing adventurous stories.

There will be a game room for children, where they can play Western-style cowboy games, get their faces painted and more. Cowboys at Heart, Gaylon Blankenship and Dedra Frye will be performing live. All of these activities and more will be available all day at the event. Admission is free.

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

Fiesta in Fuqua is Aug. 3

Fiesta in Fuqua is a free, fun-filled day in the park for school-aged children featuring opportunities to learn about healthy living, play games and receive a free hair cut. Cotton Electric’s popular Energy Bike will be among the featured activities.

After completing activities, kids receive a package of school supplies. Fun begins at 8 a.m. and runs through 11:00 a.m. on Aug. 3 at the park on U.S. Highway 81 in Duncan. All children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. For information, call 580-251-8211.

MS Duncan hosts Summer Stroll

Head over to Main Street in Duncan from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 3 for the Annual Summer Stroll. Local shops on Main Street will open their doors for all the Summer strollers to come see new offerings, enjoy in-store specials, live demonstrations, gifts with purchase at selected stores and refreshments all day Saturday during normal business hours.

Rangers Rodeo set for Aug. 7-10

More than 400 top cowboys and cowgirls are expected to compete in the Lawton Rangers Rodeo set for Aug. 7-10 at L.O. Ranch Arena, 2004 SE 60th Street

in Lawton. Featured events include barrel racing, tie-down roping, team roping, steer wrestling, bareback and saddle bronc riding and bull riding.

Gates open at 6:30 p.m. each night and Grand Entry begins at 7:30. Admission is \$5 a carload on Wednesday. Reduced-price admission is on Thursday and Friday. Tickets can be purchased at LawtonRangers.com.

Cache VFD plans fundraiser run

Cache Volunteer Fire Department is sponsoring the Firehouse 5K, a fundraiser scheduled for Sept 7. Proceeds will benefit the Cache VFD. Check-in at the fire station 602 8th Street, is at 9 a.m., 5K Color Run begins at 10 and the 1-mile Family Walk begins at 11. A white shirt for the color run is included with registrations. Online registration is at signmeup.com/reg/form/130157/ registration. For information, call Michael Bolin at 580-919-3740.

Coin show in Stephens County

Duncan’s Annual Coin Show is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept 13 and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 14 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds. Guests will receive appraisals on gold, silver, currency, coins, tokens and supplies. Event includes free parking, admission and refreshments. For information, contact Ed McGill at 580-475-4570.

Lawton Farmers Market open weekly

Lawton Farmers Market is open from 8 a.m. to noon every Wednesday and Saturday from April through October at the Comanche County Fairgrounds, 920 SW Sheridan Road. In addition to local seasonal produce, expect to see specialty foods such as jams, jellies, salsas, baked goods, wine, freshly roasted coffee beans, as well as handmade soap, herbs, plants, eggs, beef and an assortment of handcrafted items and food concessionaires. For information, visit LawtonFarmersMarket 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.

Weekly 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 the visually impaired or blind and their caregivers to learn about the availability of services and equipment. The group also provides information about access to audio books. For information about the group or to arrange free transportation to the monthly meeting, call 580-786-8041 or 427-2933.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



“She walked by the sun at just the right moment and I took a quick picture. The sun made a cross figure in the flag!” Jenifer Patterson snapped this photo of her 10-year-old daughter, Katelyn, practicing carrying the American flag while riding Chief, a horse owned by Sherry Reed. Katelyn and her parents, Jenifer and Michael, live in Lawton.

Enter your “best shot” in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for August is Vacation. 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.

CTHC hosts ‘Texas State of Mind’

“A Texas State of Mind,” an exhibit featuring the art of Larry G. Lemons, will run through Sept. 22 at the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center in Duncan. “The icons of Texas and the great southwest make up my artistic arsenal,” Lemons said. “I have taken colorful and iconic images and wrapped them in a package that I call ‘A Texas State of Mind.’ If you look closely, you will see such universal themes as family values, patriotism, faith, humor, nostalgia and maybe more.” Lemons and his wife own and operate a gallery in Nocona, Texas. Lemons was once a dedicated photographer, having earned his Master Craftsman title. Along the way, he switched to painting. His paintings are Texas bold and feature Texas icons: armadillos, the Lone Star, rusty pickup trucks, horned toads and livestock skulls. His art is fun, reflecting his own personality. “If my art makes you smile, then I’ve done my job,” he said. The Heritage Center, at 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway, is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday. Cotton Electric members can get \$1 off the admission price by showing their Co-op Connections Card.





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August		September		October	
Ad Sales	July 26	Ad Sales	Aug. 30	Ad Sales	Sept. 21
Classified	July 31	Classified	Sept. 4	Classified	Oct. 2
Publish Date	Aug. 12	Publish Date	Sept. 16	Publish Date	Oct. 15

Personnel, policies, lots of paperwork

HR department tends the needs of valuable co-op resource: employees

By Danielle Quickle

Linemen play a crucial role at Cotton Electric, but they aren't the only ones needed to ensure the cooperative runs efficiently.

Cotton Electric employs 87 people who perform a variety of tasks ranging from accounting, engineering, billing and more. All are essential to the success of the co-op.

All employees are assisted by the efforts of Cotton Electric's Human Resources (HR) department.

The HR department consists of two employees: Manager of HR Shane Bowers and HR Personnel Clerk Kim Johnson. The two work together to assist employees and retirees of the co-op.

"We are here to make sure employees are taken care of from an HR perspective," Bowers said. "Whether that be answering their questions about benefits or policies and procedures, or just assisting new employees as they settle into their roles."

Bowers has plenty of experience in HR but has been in the co-op world for only a few years. He admits he has leaned heavily on the experiences of Johnson who has held several positions throughout the cooperative.

"She has been a meter reader, dispatcher and worked for Cotton Elec-

tric Services before finding her home in the HR department," Bowers said. "She has a good general overview of how the co-op operates from being in those positions."

Day-to-day functions of the department include filing and record maintaining of employees' personnel files, reviewing information about benefits, keeping employees up to date on certification and setting up new employees into the system.

Although the department is designed to meet internal needs of the co-op, members may engage with HR if they ever fill out a co-op job application. HR is responsible for accepting job applications, setting up and performing interviews and conducting new employee orientation during an employee's first day on the job. Members can see job opportunities posted on the co-op's website or on either the Cotton Electric or Cotton Electric Services Facebook pages.

"We want members to know that we do have career opportunities available ranging in a variety of fields, not just linemen," Bowers said. "If they or somebody they know might be interested in a future job opening, we encourage them to apply."

HR is also largely responsible for cooperative policy updates. Every policy



Shane Bowers and Kim Johnson work together in the Human Resources department to assist cooperative employees and retirees.

is reviewed at least once a year by the co-op's audit committee to make sure they are up to standards. The HR department spends a great deal of time preparing policies to be reviewed.

"I look at what other co-ops are doing to see if there is anything we are missing or might need to add," Bowers said. "I then send proposed revisions to CEO Jennifer Meason, who presents them to the audit committee."

By keeping policies and procedures up to date and ensuring they meet local, state and federal requirements, Cotton Electric fulfills the commitment of Democratic Member Control at the co-op.

Democratic Member Control is the second of seven co-op principles. It states that cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their

members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decision. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights – one member, one vote. Cotton Electric members can take advantage of this right by attending their district meetings and the co-op's Annual Meeting.

HR works very closely with the marketing department in coordinating Cotton Electric's Annual Meeting each year.

"We work year-round planning and coordinating the Annual Meeting for our members," Bowers said. "We hope that everyone will come out for it."

The 2019 Annual Meeting will be Oct. 3 at the Stephens County fairgrounds in Duncan.

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Your pool pump will run up your power bill

By Heath Morgan

Temperatures are on the climb, and that means pool use is in full summer swing. A swimming pool can be a wonderful addition to any home, but the cost associated with owning and maintaining your pool can add up quickly. According to thinkprogress.org, the average homeowner maintaining a pool year-round can expect to use about 49% more electricity than a home without one. Increased electrical use comes from pump operation (filtration) in addition to pool heating, automatic cleaners and lighting. Yearly operating cost can average around \$300, but can exceed \$700 in some cases. We have put together a list of some simple savings tips to make your pool more energy efficient.

Upgrade to a variable speed pool pump. With the annual cost of pump operation alone running \$200 to \$300, major savings are possible with this upgrade. Traditional single-speed pumps operate at full-throttle, which isn't always necessary. Variable-speed pumps can oper-



Heath Morgan,
Energy Efficiency
Coordinator

ate at multiple speed settings depending on what is needed. Controlling the pump speed also means the ability to control the energy use. Variable speed pumps can use 30-45% less energy than a standard single-speed pump.

Automate the operation of your pool systems. The installation of an electrical timer on systems such as the filtration pump or automatic cleaners can significantly lower your energy use. For most residential swimming pools, filtering the water once daily is sufficient. Normally, this can be accomplished with only 8 hours of run time daily. If your pump is currently set to run nonstop, your pool is being filtered three or more times daily. This also means you are using three times

as much energy as needed. The addition of a timer can limit pump use to what is truly required. You can also set your automatic pool cleaner to operate in conjunction with your filtration pump to optimize use. Set your systems to operate at night to lessen the load on the equipment, and avoid summer peak times.

Maintain your pool's water filtration system. Regular maintenance of your filtration system can lessen the load on your pool's pump. With multiple filter options, speak to your pool professional to determine what is the best option for you.

Solar covers. Solar pool covers are available in a variety of forms and price points. Solar covers save money by preventing water and heat loss from evaporation. These covers can reduce water loss by 30-60% according to intheswim.com. You will also lower the percentage of heat loss attributed to evaporation and save on chemicals used to treat replacement water.

Be aware of pool heater operation.

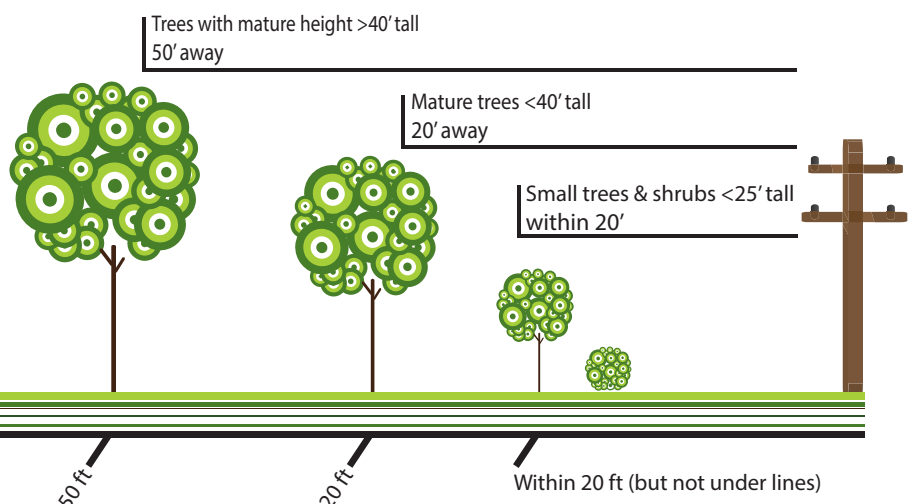
Turn the pool heater down when not in use. Just like the thermostat setting in your home, the setting on your pool heater can affect your electric bill. Recommended settings for pools are 78-80 degrees for active swimming, and 82-84 degrees for recreational use. Raising the water temperature by just one degree can cost an additional 10-30%. There are also a number of new methods of heating your pool to ask about during your next scheduled maintenance.

Upgrade pool lighting to LED. LED lighting for pools and spas is the most energy efficient option available. These lights can save 80% or more over conventional lighting systems, and can last three times as long.

Much like many other systems in your home, regularly scheduled maintenance by qualified professionals can save you some serious money in the long run. Talk to your pool maintenance contractor about these and other upgrades to determine what will work best for your pool.

Plant the right tree in right place

Trees planted too close to power lines grow into a BIG problem. To prevent power outages and safety hazards, these trees need to be trimmed and sometimes removed. Do your part to keep trees healthy and prevent power outages. Always plant trees a safe distance from power distribution lines.



VM crews make way for pole changes

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 sched-

ROW update

uled intervals to apply a specially formulated herbicide that will prevent tree growth while protecting grasses. Spraying is done only during the growing season. Wet weather has slowed efforts to clear vegetation along the north Hulen circuit. Crews will return to the area as it dries out. 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 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.



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- ☐ High humidity in summer?
- ☐ House just never seems comfortable?
- ☐ There doesn't seem to be enough airflow?

- ☐ Dust buildup within 2 days of dusting?
- ☐ Problems with your system since it's been installed?
- ☐ Anyone with allergies or asthma?
- ☐ AC starts and stops frequently or runs all the time, and house is still not cool?

☐ Have been told by other contractors that the problem cannot be fixed?

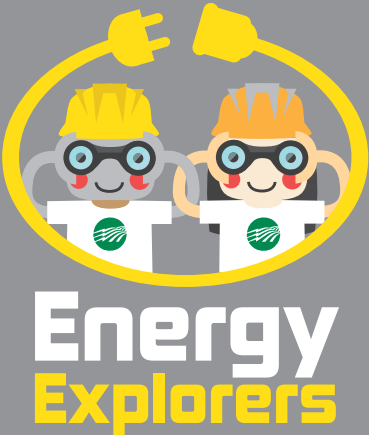
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B. twice a year

C. once a month

2. Overloading electrical outlets and power strips can create an electrical fire hazard.

A. True

B. False

3. What's the most dangerous place to use electricity?

A. Outdoors

B. Near other electrical equipment

C. Near water

4. It's safe to run an electrical cord under a rug or carpet as long as the cord is not damaged.

A. True




B. False

5. Which is safest to play near?

A. Power lines

B. Pad-mounted transformers

C. Neither A or B - both are dangerous



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

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

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Level: Beginner

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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 August. For now, test your skills with this sudoku.



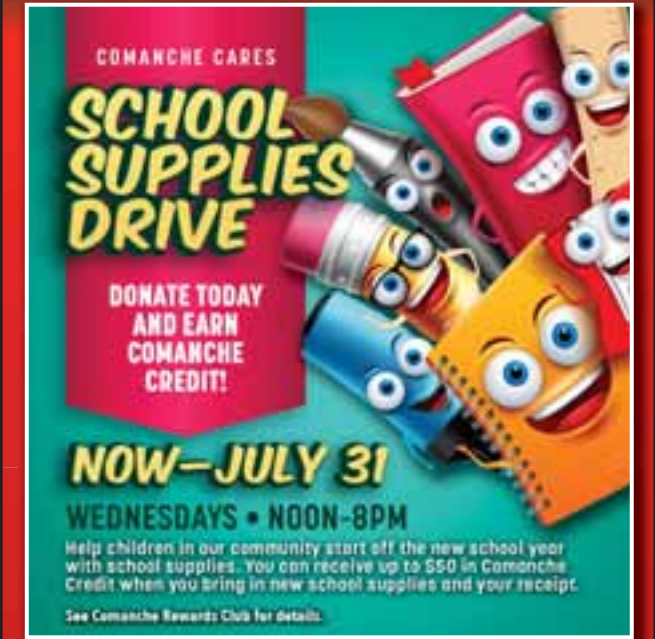
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Buffalo Macaroni and Cheese Burger

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes
Servings: 8

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 pound Bob Evans Original Roll Sausage
- 1 package (20 ounces) Bob Evans Macaroni and Cheese
- 8 hamburger buns
- 1 package crumbled blue cheese (optional)
- 4 teaspoons Buffalo sauce

In large mixing bowl, blend ground beef and sausage; divide into eight patties.
On grill over medium heat, cook burgers on each side until no longer pink in center and internal temperature reaches 160 F, about 15 minutes.
Heat macaroni and cheese according to package instructions.
Place patties on buns and top each with 1/4 cup macaroni and cheese, 1/2 teaspoon Buffalo sauce and sprinkle with blue cheese, if desired.

Simplify Summer ON THE GRILL

FAMILY FEATURES
Summer is typically a busy time for families, making those moments you spend together all the more precious. The hustle and bustle of the season doesn't have to mean sacrificing wholesome meals, however. Take advantage of the warm weather and step outside the kitchen to focus on enjoying the outdoors with family around

grilled favorites, such as burgers. You can even make meals on the grill your own by putting twists on a classic, such as Barbecue Macaroni and Cheese Burgers or Buffalo Macaroni and Cheese Burgers. Another time-saving tip: Consider refrigerated side dish options like mashed potatoes and macaroni and cheese from Bob Evans Farms, which are ready in just six minutes and provide

homemade taste. In addition to topping burgers, these sides can be used as an ingredient in appetizers like Crunchy Jalapeno Potato Poppers and Pulled Pork Mac and Cheese Sliders, which are perfect for snacking on while catching up on the events of the day. Find more recipes and time-saving ideas to make the most of grilling season at BobEvansGrocery.com.



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Heat up the grill instead of the kitchen

Barbecue Macaroni and Cheese Burger

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes
Servings: 8

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 pound Bob Evans Original Roll Sausage
- 1 package (20 ounces) Bob Evans Macaroni and Cheese
- 8 hamburger buns
- 4 tablespoons barbecue sauce

1/2 cup French fried onion straws

In large mixing bowl, blend ground beef and sausage; divide into eight patties.

On grill over medium heat, cook burgers on each side until no longer pink in center and internal temperature reaches 160 F, about 15 minutes.

Heat macaroni and cheese according to package instructions.

Place patties on buns and top each with 1/4 cup macaroni and cheese, 2 teaspoons barbecue sauce and fried onion straws.



Crunchy Jalapeno Potato Poppers

Prep time: 25 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes
Servings: 48

- 1 package (24 ounces) Bob Evans Original Mashed Potatoes
 - 1 cup Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
 - 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
 - 4 ounces diced jalapeno peppers, drained
 - 8 ounces taco flavored tortilla chips
 - 2 large eggs
 - 6-8 tablespoons vegetable oil
 - 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
 - sour cream (optional)
- Stir together cold mashed potatoes with Monterey Jack and cheddar cheeses and diced jalapenos.
- Scoop 48 tablespoonfuls of potato mixture and place on parchment- or wax paper-lined baking sheet. Refrigerate 15-20 minutes.

In bowl of food processor, pulse tortilla chips to fine crumbs or place chips in large, zip-top bag and smash using rolling pin. Pour crumbs into shallow bowl.

Beat eggs and pour into separate shallow bowl. Set aside.

In fryer or Dutch oven, heat oil to 350 F.

Remove mashed potato scoops from refrigerator and roll into balls. Roll each mashed potato ball in flour, tapping off excess. Once potato balls are coated in flour, dip each into egg, allowing excess to drip off, then into tortilla chip crumbs, making sure to coat evenly. Set on clean baking sheet. Discard excess flour, egg and tortilla chip crumbs.

In hot oil, fry small batches of mashed potato poppers until golden brown, 30-40 seconds. Remove from fryer and place on paper towel to drain excess oil. Repeat until all poppers are cooked. Serve hot with sour cream, if desired.

Note: To reheat poppers, bake 6-8 minutes at 350 F.



Pulled Pork Mac and Cheese Sliders

Recipe courtesy of Karly Campbell of Buns in My Oven
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 10 minutes
Servings: 12

- 1 pound pre-packaged, fully cooked pulled pork in sauce
- 12 slider rolls
- 1 package (20 ounces) Bob Evans Macaroni and Cheese
- 2-3 tablespoons barbecue sauce
- 6 slices cheddar cheese
- 1 tablespoon barbecue dry rub
- 1/4 cup butter, melted

1 teaspoon dried parsley

Heat oven to 350 F.

In microwave, warm pulled pork according to package instructions.

Slice rolls in half. Place bottom halves of slider rolls in 9-by-13-inch baking dish and top each with pulled pork.

Microwave macaroni and cheese according to package directions and spoon evenly over pork on each sandwich roll.

Drizzle barbecue sauce over sandwiches.

Lay cheese in two rows of three over sliders.

Top with top halves of slider rolls.

Stir dry rub into butter. Spoon evenly over tops of sandwiches. Sprinkle with parsley.

Bake, uncovered, 10 minutes.

Monk fruit sweetens safely; nutritional value unknown

In 2010, monk fruit sweetener received the designation of Generally Recognized as Safe by the United States Food and Drug Administration. It is considered a non-nutritive sweetener, meaning it adds sweetness without a significant amount of calories.

Monk fruit sweetener comes in liquid and in powdered form, and in addition to being added to hundreds of different foods, it can also be found in the artificial sweetener section of the grocery store.

Monk fruit is a gourd from South China. It has been used for centuries in Chinese medicine and food recipes. It is

purported to have been originally cultivated by monks, hence the common name “monk fruit.”

It grows on a vine and is green and round with fine hairs covering the outside. When fresh, it is crushed for liquid sweetener. When dried, it is steeped or ground for powdered sweetener.

The sweetening effect of monk fruit does not come from sugar; it comes from a chemical component of the fruit called mogroside. Mogroside is 100 to 250 times sweeter than sugar. It has been shown to have antioxidant and antidiabetic effects in animal models.

Research in humans reveals similar associations but other than establishing that it is safe for humans to consume, the health benefits of monk fruit remain controversial.

If you are trying to reduce calories in your diet, monk fruit sweetener is a safe option. Food manufacturers are finding that the flavor profile of monk fruit sweetener is preferred over other non-nutritive sweeteners.

Based on current research, there is not enough data to encourage the use of monk fruit sweetener over others in terms of health benefits.



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

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Cotton Electric sponsored six eighth-graders at the 2019 Youth Power Energy Camp. Campers included: back row from left, Chance Dorough, Jess Gateley; middle row, Libby Grace Carter, Grace Williamson, Emma Lee Youngblood and Shaylie Fletcher. The co-op also sent Energy Efficiency Coordinator Heath Morgan, front row, as a counselor.



At left, Jess Gateley is helped into climbing hooks, gloves and a safety harness before attempting to climb a pole during Youth Power Energy Camp. Right, Emma Youngblood tests the safety harness.



Energy Campers power through summer’s first week

By Karen Kaley

Gather nearly 80 eighth-graders from all over the state to spend four electrifying days at Canyon Camp and what have you got? Youth Power Energy Camp! Most Oklahoma cooperatives kick off summer with a drive to Hinton on the day after Memorial Day. In 2019, Cotton Electric transported six students to the camp near Hinton, and one employee stayed on to serve as a counselor.

Selected after an application and interview process, Cotton Electric campers included Walters students Emma Youngblood and Shaylie Fletcher; Libby Carter of Ryan; and Comanche students Grace Williamson, Chance Dorough and Jess Gateley. Heath Morgan, Cotton Electric’s energy efficiency coordinator, was a first-time Energy Camp counselor.

Organized by Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC), the camp agenda featured a set of daily goals. The first day meant getting acquainted while learning about cooperatives and contemplating life without electricity. Activities on following days included setting up a co-op complete with board members and a manager; learning about the construction, delivery and careers associated with an electric cooperative; climbing poles and riding truck buckets and electric bikes; and playing a few reality games.

The soon-to-be freshmen also had plenty of time for swimming, hiking and other games. The final night of camp featured a neon dance party complete with karaoke.

During the ride back to Cotton Electric headquarters and in thank-you notes, the campers offered plenty of positive feedback.

Jess Gateley said he was impressed by

the Cooperative Principles, particularly that membership is open to all who can use its services.

Libby Carter praised the camp and counselors and looked to the future: “I hope many eighth-graders to come will also have this amazing opportunity!”

Emma Youngblood said she enjoyed the motivational speakers and noted that she made some forever-friends during the week.

Shaylie Fletcher echoed the value of meeting new people and making new friends while learning to work well as a team.

Grace Williamson enjoyed climbing a pole and riding in a bucket truck in addition to hiking, swimming and playing volleyball. “I wish I could stay here longer.”

Chance Dorough said he learned many new things at Energy Camp and would like to return for more fun and learning.

First-time camp counselor Heath Morgan described Energy Camp as a great experience. He was impressed by the way OAEC’s Stacy Howeth had developed engaging and fun ways to present information about electric cooperatives.

“I learned about co-ops from it, too,” he said, noting that he has been a co-op employee for a little more than a year.

Morgan said the experience with the students was the best part of Energy Camp.

“It was really interesting to watch so many young people go from being strangers to becoming fast friends in such a short time. They worked well as teams and were engaged with the presentations. They were full of questions.

“I think we’ll see many of them again in a few years when they can go on Youth Tour.”



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Happy 70th Wedding Anniversary!

Betty & Ellsworth Lewis are celebrating their 70th Wedding Anniversary July 24, 2019. Childhood friends and sweethearts, Betty Hollinshead and “Sunny” “EG” Lewis were both raised in Braintree, Massachusetts and married in Watertown, New York while EG was stationed at Camp Drum. He is retired from both the army and teaching and she is a “semi-retired” stay-at-home mother of 6 children, 4 grandchildren, a dozen or so great-grandchildren, fostered over 80 children and fed and housed so many friends there’s no number that could cover it. • No formal celebration is being given, but the family is proposing a “Card Shower”, so please, feel free to send your heartfelt good wishes to this amazing couple at 824 E. Nevada St, Walters, OK 73572.

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Area teens up to the challenge of Youth Tour

By Karen Kaley

Eighteen monuments. Five museums. Four U.S. representatives, two senators and two guards at the national cemetery, all from Oklahoma. A live musical production at the Kennedy Center, a White House tour and a private exploration of the Capitol building. Seventy new friends from the Sooner State added to more than 1,700 from across the nation. All done in six days.

Whoo! Youth Tour!

The annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is a challenge from start to finish. At Cotton Electric, it starts with an essay contest. Late last fall, information packets were sent to all high schools within the service area, inviting juniors to write an essay to answer this question: What do find most interesting about electric cooperatives?

A total of 92 essays were entered from eight schools. The challenge was a three-part process including evaluation, inter-

view and oral presentation.

First, there was writing a good essay of about 600 words. The top 25 essay-writers had to respond well to judges when asked about themselves and their submissions. Finally, the top 10 were asked to recite their essays in front of three more judges and a room full of parents, teachers and cooperative employees and board members.

Judges of the final round selected four students exhibiting excellent speaking ability, knowledge of subject, poise, personality and appearance: Jessie Bone of Walters High School; Colby Gilpen, Lawton MacArthur; Aurelia Holguin, Marlow High School, and Aryanna North, Central High High School.

The payoff for meeting those challenges was a one-week expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. The daily agenda was packed with activities from sunup to sundown during a hot, humid – sometimes rainy – week in the nation’s capital.



From left, Aryanna North, Colby Gilpen, Jessie Bone and Aurelia Holguin pause for a “Co-op Photo Op” outside the U.S. Capitol.

Organized by the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC), Youth Tour packs as much as possible into a day of orientation and six days out of state. The break-neck touring pace began with a 3 a.m. wake-up call to catch a plane out of Will Rogers World Airport.

Stacy Howeth, the OAEC Director of Member Services, along with the essential assistance of Members Services Specialist Nikki Bode, had arranged the entire adventure for 71 students, two teachers and eight chaperones. They purchased airplane tickets, set the agenda, purchased more tickets for admissions and events, arranged transportation, designed t-shirts ... they were up to the challenge.

So was everyone else on the trip. “Our group was awesome,” Howeth said.

“We made many changes to the agenda – avoiding rain! – had to deal with several different levels of security, had inconsistent meal times, early wake-up calls,

late room checks ... But our students and chaperones were flexible, respectful and absolutely a joy to have on the trip.”

The students must have felt it was a joy, too. Asked what she had gained, Jessie Bone was succinct: “More friends!” but she also noted the trip was an eye-opening view of the political side of society.

Colby Gilpen said the trip was all he thought it would be and more. He added, “I learned a lot about our national government.”

Aryanna North said she learned a lot about America’s rich history and “I had no idea that I’d see so many monuments.”

Aurelia Holguin was looking to the future. “I gained an inner compass. I know what I want to do and know how to get there thanks to (U.S. Rep. Markwayne) Mullen.”

Challenges met and only one remains: How will the cooperatives of Oklahoma make the 2020 Youth Tour experience even better?

Turner Land Company Welcomes Krissie Gordon



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2019 Youth Tour essay topic: What do you find most interesting about electric cooperatives?

Colby Gilpen
Lawton MacArthur High School



Cooperative values make me proud

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



It's December 26, and while I envision a white Christmas, I feel as though Oklahoma winters have turned to tropical summers of a remote island. The rain is unbelievable, not a mist, but a monsoon. Before all is said and done, over five inches of rain flooded areas for miles, and as expected, numerous downed power lines and outages. As we load the pickup to check cattle, fences and the welfare of elderly neighbors, I can already spot bucket trucks making their way across the countryside. You see, rural electric, actually all electricity, is at a standstill for the moment. While this is only a day after Christmas, the linemen and their families realize their holiday break and plans will be on hold until the community power is restored to normal – a selfless act that supports Cotton Electric's seventh principle: concern for community.

I live on a farm, so unexpected weather of any sort calls for immediate attention to our cattle and other livestock to ensure their safety. I am overwhelmed at the realization of the responsibility linemen have during every outage, in any

weather or event and on any given day. I am amazed at the selfless mentality they possess. The situation lent itself to a conversation about Cotton Electric and rural electric cooperatives.

It was surprising to realize how much rural electric is used in the farm setting. I always thought Oklahoma rural cooperatives only served farm areas in the country, but was surprised to find that Cotton Electric has grown from the original (150) members in 1938 to more than 20,000 members along 5,169 miles in southwest Oklahoma. Cooperatives make up 42 percent of the nation's electric distribution lines to include 42 million people in 47 states! Although I attend a city school, I live in the country on a farm filled with animals and acres of open pasture lands. I am extremely appreciative that the cooperative's efforts in

1939 to continue to stretch power to rural homes like mine. The fee at inception was \$5, and perhaps the best money ever spent to light up the first 150 homes along 109 miles. Cotton Electric's values and beliefs from their origin remain steady with members owning the cooperative and actively participating in policy and decision-making. Members are elected to the board and democratically make decisions. Just last month, linemen came out to work on a line that was hanging too low on the light poles in our corrals and made repairs that assisted us in our show calf care and preparations. Washing and blowing out animals in the barns would be impossible without electricity. The electric cooperatives are relentless in their efforts to improve technology and lead the industry. The recent signing of the Trump Farm Bill Act was a huge win for rural America and co-ops alike, allowing better service for all members.

I am mesmerized by the old-school mentality encompassed in the cooperative's seven principles to include working with and for the community. Over a total of \$12 million has been returned to members as their share in margins as part of the third co-op principle: members' economic participation. That is staggering! I've personally experienced their community efforts involving schools, ed-

ucation and the practice of giving back. We show cattle each year at the Oklahoma Youth Expo and the State Fair, both large livestock shows in Oklahoma City. The electric cooperatives are recognized as proud corporate sponsors of this huge event. In addition, my parents are participants in Cotton Electric's Operation Round Up program. The program is effective by rounding up members' monthly bill to the next dollar and then donating the extra change to individuals or groups in need. I have been to the yearly meetings with my grandparents and am very excited this year to have an opportunity to possibly represent southwest Oklahoma at Washington, D.C., on the Rural Electric Youth Tour.

I pause in silence as we finish putting the last clip on the fence that folded over due to the debris in the floodwaters. I can hear the cooperative's trucks in the distance and a sense of pride rushes over me. Too many times in today's society, we do not take time to concern ourselves with others, and yet Cotton Electric Cooperative, my cooperative, is a huge advocate of just that. I often question my plans beyond high school. While I am uncertain of specifics, I hope to work in an exciting, service-oriented industry that will instill pride in my heart. The values electric cooperatives encompass easily puts them on my list.

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- 11½ acres with home 300575 Old Hwy 7 Velma, OK. \$176,000
- 80 acres near Chattanooga S2 SE 22 1S 14 W On Hwy 115, north of Chattanooga \$144,000
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- 251 acres ½ mile West of Hwy 81 on Paul Rd \$602,400
- 3 Executive homebuilding lots located in Cole Creek Add. located 2.5 mi. East in Camelback Road, Duncan. Lot #5 \$40,000 Lots 6 & 7 \$65,000
- 1310 N Mendian, Waunka OK. Updated 2 bed, 1 bath with original hardwood flooring, new CH&A, Pella windows, new metal roof and a 40x40 shop. Listed at \$65,000.
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Tournament raises funds for CECF

Mild temperatures and a light breeze made for a pleasant outing when 94 golfers turned out for the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation Summer Classic on June 24 at The Territory Golf and Country Club in Duncan.

The 11th year for the event drew 24 teams that were divided into two flights. Scorecard playoffs determined placings in a tie in the Championship Flight.

The team of Josh Wolverton, Clint Powell, Mo Mayfield and Keaton Mullenix, representing Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, placed first with a score of 52 in the Championship Flight. The team boosted the result of the fundraising event by donating winnings back to Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation.

Second place was awarded to the team of Jeff Elroy, Ethan Elroy, Jeff Jones and Zach Dennis, representing City Mart Energy and also scoring a 55.

The team of Austin Partida, Blake Bechtel, Jason Darey and Andrew Rawdon, representing Generac, was third in the flight with a score of 57.

First place in “A” Flight was awarded to the Southwest Rural Electric Cooperative team composed of Kelby Boyd, Justin Marsh, Colton Wolfe and Mike Wolfe. The team scored a 62.

Second place went to the team of Steve Robinson, Bobby Whan and Megan Hooper. Representing Cornish Construction, the team scored a 63.

The team of James Branscum, Rick Allred, Terry Dennis and Kent Huddleston, representing Targa Resources, filled the third-place slot with a score of 64.

Closest to pin awards went to Mark Scott on the 13th hole; and Scott Overstreet, 17th hole.

Megan Hooper had the women’s longest drive, and Jacob Caldwell won the men’s longest drive.

“We would like to express our appreciation to the players who took time to support this great cause and to the hole sponsors and contributors who continue to help make the tournament a success,” said Bryce Hooper, vice president of marketing and subsidiary services for Cotton Electric.

“We would also like to thank Russ Davies and his staff at The Territory for having the course in excellent shape and always going out of their way to take care of our tournament participants,” Hooper said.

Proceeds are expected to exceed \$11,000. Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation will distribute proceeds to organizations and individuals in need.

Second-quarter grants benefit children and their advocates

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 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, 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: Carly Douglass, Danny Marlett and Carter Waid.

The board met in June to review 17 grant applications. Grants totaling \$18,760.18 will be distributed to 10 of the applicants. All of the grants issued this quarter happen to benefit organizations whose projects are dedicated to serving the young people in southwest Oklahoma.

Second-quarter grants include:

Cameron University Foundation: A grant of \$1,675 to cover the cost of tickets to the science museum and materials to build rocket and model airplanes during the summer STEM academy.

CASA of Southwest Oklahoma Inc.: A grant of \$2,102.27 will go toward the purchase of computer equipment that will help the agency expand services into Cotton and Tillman counties in addition to work they do in Stephens, Jefferson and Comanche counties.

Chisholm Trail Heritage Center: A \$500 grant will allow CTHC to maintain and increase outreach to students in a 100-mile radius of the facility in Duncan.

Duncan Area Literacy Council: A \$1,200 grant will purchase 900 children’s books to be handed out during events in Stephens County.

Gabriel’s House Inc.: A grant of \$1,529.74 will purchase an AED equipped with child-sized pads and a storage cabinet.

Make-A-Wish Oklahoma: A \$2,500 grant will go toward granting the wish of a critically-ill child in the Cotton Electric service territory.

Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma: Kids Backpack programs in the area will benefit from a \$3,500 CECF grant.

Safe Center (formerly known as Women’s Haven): While clients are receiving services, their children will have a safe and engaging place to play in a yard that includes a wooden swing set purchased with a \$499 CECF grant.

Sterling Public Schools: Science labs will be more robust with equipment and supplies purchased using a \$2,254.17 CECF grant.

Tillman County Fair Board: Uses for the concession area of the fair barn in Grandfield will increase after a concrete floor is installed using a \$3,000 CECF grant.

CECF has awarded or pledged grants totaling \$1,177,108.35 since the foundation was established in 2004.

Applications for 2019 third-quarter grants are due Sept. 10. Downloadable applications are available at CottonElectric.com.

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program and members may opt out at any time by calling or sending a letter or email stating the account holder’s name, account number and the request to be removed.

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