

The Current

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

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Call for entries launches co-op essay contest

Challenges presented in 2020 have required adaptations. Big and little changes were made to ensure safety in the workplace and communities. One big change was the cancellation of the annual Rural Electric Youth Tour.

Cotton Electric and electric cooperatives all over Oklahoma and the United States had already chosen high school juniors to send for a week-long all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. In the interest of safety, the event was cancelled by the National Rural Electric Cooperatives of America (NRECA).

As we plan for 2021, there are still many uncertainties. Cotton Electric still intends to hold an essay contest to select high school juniors to be honored but there will be little and big changes.

Little changes include conducting a “no-touch” contest. Materials will be loaded onto our website instead of delivered to schools. Essays will be submitted electronically. Interviews will be carried out as video meetings. Final recitations of essays will be video



submissions.

Big changes in Cotton Electric’s 2021 contest are the result of much discussion leading to difficult decisions. Two final winners will each receive a \$1,500 scholarship instead of traveling.

The topic for Cotton Electric’s 2021 Scholarship Contest is “How do the 7 Cooperative Principles satisfy the needs of a community?”

The contest is open to all high school juniors in the Cotton Electric service area. The students and their families do not have to be Cotton Electric members.

The contest is broken into three rounds and starts with the essay contest. Area juniors may submit an essay

of approximately 600 words to Cotton Electric.

Writers of the top 15 essays move to the second round, a live video interview. The question-and-answer video call between students and independent judges will be arranged by Cotton Electric.

The top 5 will advance to the final round. The finalists will be required to record a video of themselves reciting their essay in a speech-type format. Videos will be submitted to another set of judges and the final two winners will be determined.

The contest launched the first week of November. Information such as contest rules and regulations, entry forms, cooperative information and

basic details of the contest can be found on our website at <https://www.cottonelectric.com/scholarship>.

The deadline to submit an essay is Jan. 18.

In addition to the information included on our website, students are encouraged to use other sources of information found at the local library or from the internet. Preparing for the Cotton Electric essay contest is a good way to work on creative writing skills that are important for all high school students, especially those planning to attend college.

For more information regarding the essay contest, call Cotton Electric at 580-875-3351 or email YouthPrograms@CottonElectric.com.

Updated pricing, warranty on generators begins Dec. 1

As the recent October ice storm has proven, there are times when power outages are out of the cooperative’s control. This is why Cotton Electric has worked with Generac-certified contractors to develop a base package designed to meet the needs of the majority of the co-op’s membership. The program was first announced in December of 2019 and offered special pricing to co-op members.

Due to hurricane and storm season, generators are in high demand and have led to a price increase throughout the industry. While special pricing is still being offered to Cotton Electric members, a few changes at Generac have led to updates to our base package. The cooperative is proud to continue of-

fering a competitive price on generators to its members. Beginning Dec. 1, members will be offered the same equipment package with a newly available 10-year extended warranty for \$8,499.

The base package includes a 22kW Generac generator, an automatic transfer switch, battery, equipment pad and an installation that includes a total of up to 50 feet of combined gas and electrical lines. Installation and equipment are included.

Generac generator orders currently have an eight-week lead time. Members hopeful to have a generator before the end of winter should not hesitate to take advantage of this offer.

To get started, members can call Cotton Electric

at 580-875-3351 and ask to speak with Heath Morgan.

“When a member calls in, we will begin the process of scheduling an initial appointment,” Morgan said. “The homeowner and Generac’s certified contractor will work to pin down a date to meet at the member’s home.”

After the initial meeting, equipment is ordered and is handed over to one of two Generac certified contractors in Cotton Electric’s territory to complete the installation. Time of installation may be estimated at the initial appointment, but is dependent upon arrival of equipment and the work load of the contractor.

STORM PREPAREDNESS CHECKLIST:

- ☒ FLASHLIGHT
- ☒ BATTERIES

✓ GENERAC WHOLE-HOME GENERATOR

- 22kW Generac generator
- Automatic transfer switch, battery and concrete pad
- 50 feet of combined gas and electrical line
- Installation by a Generac certified contractor
- *10-year Extended Warranty
Previously a 7-year extended warranty

FOR **\$8,499**
Plus tax

NEW
PRICING &
WARRANTY

Exclusive to co-op members

Contact Heath Morgan for details, 580-875-3351

8-WEEK
LEAD TIME

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after Nov. 1, 2020, is \$0.00036 per kWh.

On a member’s average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$0.47 on the November bill.

October 2020 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	78	51	65	16	70	39	55
2	76	41	59	17	82	46	64
3	80	48	64	18	77	47	62
4	77	50	64	19	63	45	54
5	81	44	63	20	87	52	70
6	84	52	68	21	89	57	73
7	90	51	71	22	88	66	77
8	89	57	73	23	73	41	57
9	85	54	70	24	58	33	46
10	87	60	74	25	50	40	45
11	98	63	81	26	40	29	35
12	81	45	63	27	34	29	32
13	84	39	62	28	40	34	37
14	94	49	72	29	60	35	48
15	75	53	64	30	66	31	49
Source: srh.noaa.gov/oun/				31	74	37	56
Average Daily High: 75				Average Daily Low: 46			

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed Nov. 26-27 for Thanksgiving. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on Dec. 14, 2020.

Contact Us

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

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More news at cottonelectric.com

From the CEO

Meason thankful for CEC employees

2020 continued to dish out the unexpected as our area was hit with an October ice storm. This storm brought a different set of challenges since trees were still covered in leaves as the freezing rain fell. The additional weight brought down ice-laden tree limbs resulting in numerous outages. See photos on Page 16.

Although we never want you to be without power, these are some of the moments when I'm most proud and thankful for our employees. Everyone chips in and lends a hand as we all work on a joint mission of restoring your power safely and efficiently. We are your friends and neighbors, so the mission has special meaning.

This mission-focus is evident



Jennifer Meason, CEO

throughout our group, especially with four of our employees who are military veterans. You can learn more about them on Page 4.

I'm honored that our cooperative is part of the Vets Power Us program and am thankful for all of the veterans in our area who proudly served our country.

I'm also thankful for their commitment to community service and giving back. Inspired by all of the members who participate in Operation Round Up, our employees established the Cotton CARES fund in 2017. Employees and friends of the co-op donate to the fund and host fundraisers throughout the year.

For example, CEC employees recently engaged in a friendly rivalry competition to see which team could bring the most items for food baskets. Our community center was filled with boxes generously donated by the group.



CEC employees donated hundreds of items to be distributed to families in need and to local schools.

We had such a good response that the additional items will be donated to area schools for their food closets and backpack programs.

As employees of Cotton Electric, we often repeat that we work for the best people in southwest Oklahoma. That opinion continues to be reinforced by your support and encouragement. We thank you and are committed to giving you our all, each and every day.

We wish you a happy Veterans Day and a blessed Thanksgiving.

Vegetation Management

prioritizes power quality

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

Vice President Mike Ottinger oversees Cotton Electric's in-house four-man crew, as well as contract crews throughout the year, as they clear vegetation and prevent re-growth.

Employees make every effort to contact land and homeowners in person as they move into an area. If members are not home, an effort will be made to contact owners by phone and, in some cases, a bright-colored door hanger will be left at the house or tied to a gate post. Updated member contact information helps with this process. Give the co-op a call at 580-875-3351 to make sure we have the correct contact information on record.

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

"Spraying keeps crews from returning

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

Crews have been working across Cotton Electric's service territory as needs arise while social distancing and following CDC guidelines.

Northeast Rural Services (NRS) has resumed their work in the west Geronimo circuit and will move towards east Geronimo. They will be prioritizing the clearing of vegetation to improve power quality and make room for pole changeouts.

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

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

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

Leave a message at 580-875-4235 to have your name added to the list of members willing to take wood chips.

WE WILL BE

Closed

Thanksgiving



COTTON
ELECTRIC CO-OP

business offices will be closed
Thursday, Nov. 26
and Friday, Nov. 27

Emergency calls will be answered at
580-875-3351
or
800-522-3520




Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Keep cold air out to save energy. Seal air leaks around pipes and any gaps around chimneys and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.


Source: www.energy.gov



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.

September 2020 Operating Stats			
	2020	2019	
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$4,865,548	\$5,007,499	
Cost of Purchased Power	3,213,013	3,510,123	
Taxes	112,852	115,383	
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	933	990	
Average Farm and Residential Bill	128	138	
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,125	1,405	
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,783	18,474	
Miles Energized	5,207	5,200	
Density Per Mile	3.61	3.55	
New Service Connects YTD	310	247	
Services Retired	124	100	

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Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the December issue, please submit information by Dec. 2 by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com. Events that occur before Dec. 14 will not be published in the next issue.

Comedy & Coffee set for Nov. 12

The 5th Annual Comedy & Coffee event is set for Nov. 12 at the Simmons Center in Duncan. Doors open at 6 p.m. with comedian Bob Smiley kicking off the show at 7 p.m. Viridian Coffee will serve coffee and Special Days Cake Boutique will serve a variety of cakes and desserts. Photographer Debbie Duggar will be on site to provide photo opportunities. For information, call Kimberla Treat at 580-786-6000.

Shop Small Event held Nov. 14

Get your Christmas shopping done while shopping small at the first ever Copper Ridge Shop Small Event from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Nov. 13 and 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Grady County Fairgrounds. Admission is free and the event includes more than 50 local vendors to take care of all your holiday shopping needs. For vendor information, email copper.ridge.clothing@gmail.com.

OCC sends gifts around the world

Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, an international relief organization. Gift-filled shoeboxes are sent to 150 countries around the world to delight children in need. In 2019, more than 11 million shoebox gifts from all over the world were collected and distributed. National Collection Week is always the 3rd week in November, so this year that is Nov. 16-23. Volunteers staff centers around the U.S. to give donors a convenient place to leave their gifts. Local drop-off sites are in Walters, Duncan, Lawton and Elgin. The Duncan site is the north end of First United Methodist Church, 2300 Country Club Road.

Samaritan's Purse is making accommodations due to COVID-19 protocols. Donors may pack a traditional box, build a shoebox online or both. Online boxes can be built at SmaritansPurse.org. The organization plans to collect shoebox gifts from more than 4,000 locations across the U.S. this year, with each offering a curbside drop-off option. For information about how to fill a box and the hours for drop-off centers, visit SamaritansPurse.org and explore the drop-down tab labeled What We Do.

CTAC hosts Holiday Art Show

The Chisholm Trail Arts Council (CTAC) will host the 2020 Holiday Art Show and Sale from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Nov. 19 at the CTAC office located at 810 W. Walnut Ave. in Duncan. Awards and prize money will be distributed to artists who have participated in the event. Prize money totaling \$1,875 will be awarded during the come-and-go reception.

All art pieces will remain on exhibit and available for purchase from Nov. 19 to Dec. 17. This is a great opportunity to support local artists and purchase local art for the holidays. Admission is free. For information, visit ChisholmTrailArts.com or call Darcy at 580-252-4160.

CTAC continues live concert series
Jukebox Saturday Night is the second in the 2020-21 Chisholm Trail Arts Council Live concert series with their presentation of the music of Mancini. Jukebox Saturday Night celebrates the compositions of Henry Mancini from his early work with the Glenn Miller Orchestra, including his memorable melodies from TV and film classics such as Peter Gunn, Breakfast at Tiffany's, The Pink Panther and many more. A concise narration throughout the show includes historical information from Mancini's very successful career, from his childhood in Pittsburgh, PA, to his stardom in Hollywood. Performance is set for 7:30 p.m. Nov. 21 at the Simmons Center in Duncan. Tickets are available at the door or through the ChisholmTrailArts.com website.

Kiwanis tree sales begin Nov. 27

Chisholm Trail Kiwanis Club of Duncan Christmas tree and stand sales begin Nov. 27 in Kiddieland in Fuqua Park. Trees range from \$10 to \$100. Hours are 2 to 8 p.m. Mondays through Fridays; 10 to 7 p.m. Saturdays; and 1 to 5 p.m. Sundays.

Market returns to winter hours

Lawton Farmers Market, an initiative of the Southwest Oklahoma Growers Association, returns for winter months in the Cameron University Animal Sciences building at the Agriculture Facility from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. each Saturday, running through the beginning of May 2021. Shoppers will find a variety of choices at the winter market, including winter produce, sprouts, micro greens, meat, eggs, honey, nuts, and handmade and artisan items. The building is located on Southwest 38th Street and is south of Dr. Elsie Hamm Drive and the railroad crossing. Parking is available on the south side of the building. For more information about the market or becoming a vendor at the market, visit LawtonFarmersMarket.com or send an email to lawtonfarmersmarket@yahoo.com.

Food pantry open once monthly

Walters Community Food Pantry is open from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. on the second Saturday 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 and proof of Cotton County residency. Monetary donations may be sent to Food Pantry, c/o Paul Metcalfe, 211 E. Colorado St., Walters, OK 73572. For information, call Roger Noland at 580-591-6826.

Blessings Boutique open monthly

Marlow First United Methodist Church opens its Blessings Boutique from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every first and third Tuesday of the month. Clothing donation drop-off days are Tuesdays, or donors can call the church at 580-658-2765 to make other arrangements.

Nutrition Center open weekdays

Marlow Nutrition Center is open to the public from 11 a.m. to noon Monday through Friday at Redbud Park in Marlow. Nutritious meals are served as carry out ONLY, \$2 for guests 60-years-old and older or \$5.85 for guests younger than 60 years. To place carry-out orders or for further details, contact Linda at 580-658-5773.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Cotton Electric member Jessica Matthesen submitted this photo of her 5-month-old daughter, Kinsley. This 'treat' of a photo reminds Jessica how thankful she is to be Kinsely's mom and spend the holidays with her. Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for December is Traditions. 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.

Jazz Festival begins Nov. 27

First ever event of its kind in Lawton, the All-Star Women in Jazz Festival is from 6:30 to 10 p.m. Nov. 27 and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Nov. 28 at the Great Plain Coliseum. Performers include Paula Atherton, Carol Albert, Ragan Whiteside, Sunnie Paxson, Candace Woodson, Andrea Brachfeld, Heidi Tann and many more. The event blends art, contemporary, Latin, smooth and traditional jazz from female artists from around the nation. For contact and ticket information, visit WestCoastJazzSociety.net or the West Coast Jazz Society Inc. Facebook page.

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY



**COTTON**
ELECTRIC CO-OP
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

At Cotton Electric, we're proud to be a part of it, bringing people together by providing energy for all the things you love.

December		January	February
Ad Sales	Nov. 25	Deadlines for 2021 to be announced in coming issues.	Deadlines for 2021 to be announced in coming issues.
Classified	Dec. 2		
Publish Date	Dec. 14		



Cotton Electric employees Dillon Wiygul, left, James Apriesnig, Heath Morgan and Jason Red Elk are military veterans. For their unwavering dedication to our safety and freedom, Cotton Electric thanks all veterans for their service.

Honoring those who served

Cotton employees share experiences from military service

By Karen Kaley

It comes around every year, on the 11th day of the 11th month – Veterans Day. We celebrate the service of all U.S. military veterans on this day. Grateful gestures range from the public with showy parades to the private with a moment of silence. Many will offer a general “Thank you for your service.”

Another way to honor a person’s service, on Veteran’s Day or on any day you discover a co-worker, neighbor or acquaintance once served in the U.S. military: Ask them about it.

Ask them when and where they served, what their job was, how high up they got in their ranks. Ask about a beautiful place they visited, a meal they didn’t care for or a moment that meant a lot to them. You might be surprised by the answers.

There are four military veterans among the Cotton Electric employees. Their combined service of 42 years had some similarities and some differences. For example:

- All four entered the service shortly after graduating high school, looking for and finding a path to adulthood that would strengthen positive qualities they already possessed.
- All planned to serve the minimal stint but one found a 30-year career.
- All served during times of conflict but the longer career began during what is considered a time of peace.
- None cared for food “in the field” but the meals are great aboard ship and on the Marine Corps birthday.
- All are very proud of the time they served and happy to talk about it.

James Apriesnig entered the military in 1979. He had been impressed by the presence and poise of an acquaintance, which influenced his choice of the U.S. Marine Corps. The 17-year-old enlisted with the blessing and signature of his father, a World War II veteran.

Test scores indicated Apriesnig was best suited for work with data systems. Early on, it was with the mainframe



Napoleon is attributed with this quote: “A soldier will fight long and hard for a bit of colored ribbon.” James Apriesnig brought along his ribbons and said, “It’s meaningful to be recognized.”

IBM System/360 and later the field was expanded to include other computers, radio, satellite and wire communications.

He progressed through the ranks to master gunnery sergeant and held a position similar to middle management. “I managed smart people who did all the technical work. As a gunnery sergeant, I was able to impact the most. I was leading a lot of Marines and yet was not all the way up to the top.”

Apriesnig rose to that rank because he chose to stay beyond his original contract end date in 1982. He is proud of every rank he achieved, and said each carries a degree of importance. Pride is embedded in the medals and ribbons he brought along for an interview, noting they indicate another Marine had noticed his efforts and nominated him for the recognition.

After 30 years with the USMC, Apriesnig took advantage of the 911 GI Bill and got an accounting degree at Cameron University. He has embarked on a second career, serving the members of Cotton Electric Cooperative as an accountant since July 2018.

Jason Red Elk served in the U.S. Navy from 1990 to 1994. He is one of many in his family who have served in the military.

Red Elk chose the service for the job opportunity and chose the Navy for the travel. He worked as a machinist’s mate/throttleman and served the

majority of his time out to sea in the Mediterranean and Caribbean seas. “I never got seasick,” he said.

Like the others, nearly everything Red Elk has to say about his time in the service is positive. He’s proud of all the ranks and medals he earned. The food on board was great, even when heavy seas meant smaller meals.

The nature of Red Elk’s service meant he got to visit more places. His favorite was Rhodes, Greece, but he also spent time in Israel, Spain, France, Italy, Sicily, Azores, UAE, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharja and Bahrain.

Looking back on it, he said, “The military experience helped me grow up, to become a responsible adult.”

Red Elk is a meter tester who recently marked 10 years with the co-op.

Heath Morgan served in the U.S. Air Force from 1999 to 2003. He enlisted in the military for an education and the opportunity to serve his country. Testing identified Morgan’s high level of mechanical aptitude and a gift for problem-solving.

Stationed primarily at Tinker AFB in Oklahoma City, Morgan’s duty was as an aircraft electronic-environmental systems technician, particularly for the E-3 AWACS. This meant he was on duty and in one of the airplanes escorting Air Force One and President George W. Bush to safety on a fateful day in September 2001.

He went on to receive the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal

during Operation Enduring Freedom. He rose to the rank of E-4, tested and achieved the rank of E-5 but a quirk of timing had the date he was to sew on the rank fall after his last day in the service.

Morgan credits his time in the Air Force for his increased level of self-accountability, higher level of attention to details, and in turn, a raised level of self-worth.

His skills have proven valuable to Cotton Electric members, too. Morgan has been the energy efficiency coordinator since April 2018.

Dillon Wiygul signed up for the U.S. Marine Corps when he was a junior at Marlow High School. His active duty began just after his senior year in 2004 and ended in May 2008, a few weeks after he achieved the rank of E5 Sergeant.

Wiygul was based at Camp LeJeune in North Carolina. His duties were in small arms repair, ranging from pistols up to heavy machine guns. He worked on weapon systems, carrying out preventative maintenance, scheduled calibrations, and rifle range repair.

He had two 8-month deployments in Iraq. “During that time, the Marines were engaged in service in the Middle East,” he said. “There was one goal: to bring guys in and out of Iraq.”

Wiygul sees similarities between the military and Cotton Electric, where he has worked toward and earned the title of journeyman lineman over the past 6 years. “The flow of this place reminds me so much of the Marine Corps. Every department works toward a common goal: to keep the lights on.”

“This is the best outfit that I’ve been a part of. I’m surrounded by people who want to be here. I’ve found a home. Everything happens for a reason and I’m glad all those reasons led me here.”

We’re glad you’re here, too. Thank you for your service, Dillon, Heath, Jason and James.

Thank you to all veterans.

Protect Your Family from Long-term Care Costs

Like everyone, you want to remain physically and financially independent throughout your life. But if you lose some of this freedom, the last thing you’d want is to become a burden on your family. How can you keep this from happening?

First of all, you need to be aware of the risk. Someone turning 65 today has almost a



70 percent chance of eventually needing some type of long-term care, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Of course, this doesn’t necessarily mean that you face that 70 percent likelihood. In reality, you have either a zero percent chance of requiring long-term care (you’ll never need it) or a 100 percent chance (you’ll definitely need it).

Nonetheless, if you think you’ve got that zero percent chance, you’re taking a gamble – and it could be a big one, because long-term care is expensive. The median annual cost for a private room in a nursing home is over \$102,000, according

to Genworth, an insurance company. Other long-term care services, such as those provided by a home health care aide, also don’t come cheaply.

Furthermore, you can’t count on Medicare paying all these costs – in fact, it would probably only cover a small portion of a nursing home stay and provide limited assistance for home health care. So, if you were financially unprepared for the expense of long-term care, the burden might fall on your loved ones. This could be a big financial challenge, in two ways.

First, if a family member had to become your caregiver, this individual might have to abandon a career, or at least

substantially reduce their working hours. Not only would this result in a loss of income, but it could also lower the amounts that could be contributed to a 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement plan.

Second, if your family members couldn’t leave their jobs or cut back on their hours, or they were simply unable to provide the type of long-term care you need, they might be forced to pay for a nursing home stay or home health care worker out of pocket.

To avoid these outcomes, you have a couple of options:

- Self-insure – You could

conceivably “self-insure” against the costs of long-term care by devoting a portion of your investment portfolio specifically to this purpose. However, if at some point you require admission to a nursing home, it may require a significant commitment of your resources. • Purchase protection – Over the past decade or so, there’s been an increase in the types of long-term care protection vehicles available. These instruments vary widely in cost and in what they cover, but by choosing a protection option, you may greatly lower the financial risk you might face. By consulting with a financial professional, you should be able

to find an arrangement that’s appropriate for your situation.

Preserving your financial independence and helping protect that of your family should be a key financial goal. And you can make progress toward accomplishing this by recognizing the potential cost of long-term care and taking steps to deal with it.

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Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Four ways to save energy in the kitchen

Ah, the kitchen. It’s undeniably one of the most-loved rooms in our homes. It’s where we gather with family and friends for our favorite meals and memories. But like most of us, you probably aren’t thinking about saving energy when you’re planning that perfect dish. Here are four ways you can save energy in the kitchen with minimal effort.



Heath Morgan,
Energy Efficiency
Coordinator

one-third to one-half as much energy as a full-sized oven.

Unplug appliances that draw phantom energy load.

Halloween may be over, but it’s possible you have energy vampires in your kitchen – these are the appliances that draw energy even when they’re not in use, like coffee makers, microwaves and toaster ovens. The Department of Energy has estimated that one home’s energy vampires left plugged in year-round can add up to \$100-\$200 in wasted energy costs. Unplug them when they’re not in use, or better yet, use a power strip for convenient control.

Help large appliances work less.

There are small ways you can help your larger kitchen appliances run more efficiently. For example, keep range-top burners clean from spills and fallen foods so they’ll reflect heat better. When it’s time to put leftovers in the refrigerator, make sure the food



is covered and allow it to cool down first. That way, the fridge doesn’t have to work harder to cool warm food.

Use your dishwasher efficiently.

Only run full loads, and avoid using the “rinse hold” function on your machine for just a few dirty dishes; it uses 3-7 gallons of hot water each use. You can also save energy by letting your dishes air dry.

If your dishwasher doesn’t have an automatic air-dry switch, simply turn

it off after the final rinse and prop the door open so the dishes will dry faster.

Bonus tip:

The best way to save energy is to not use it. Try a tasty, no-bake dessert recipe. Your sweet tooth (and energy bill!) will thank you.

By slightly adjusting a few of your habits in the kitchen, you’ll be well on your way to energy savings. Contact us to learn about additional ways you can save energy and money at home.

EV charging stations pop up across co-op territory

By Danielle Quickle

In early 2019, Cotton Electric added a Chevy Bolt electric vehicle (EV) to its cooperative fleet. The purchase was a result of the desire to provide co-op members considering owning an EV with first-hand experience and information.

Our most recent project with the co-op’s Bolt has been centered around options for charging an EV.

Charging equipment is one thing to consider when purchasing an EV. Factory level one charging equipment is included with the purchase of an EV and can take up to 68 hours to fully recharge the vehicle. Level two chargers are around four times faster than level one, bringing charging time down to around 8-9 hours for a complete charge. Cotton Electric has a level two charger installed at co-op headquarters specifically to accommodate the Chevy Bolt.

Level three chargers are the commercial chargers that can be seen at certain gas stations and shopping centers. While there is no industry standard on how quickly these chargers can bring your EV to a full charge, resources such as EV Town, ChargeHub and ChargePoint advertised an 80% charge in 30 minutes for a 120-mile-range battery.

Within the last year, six level three chargers have been installed in Cotton Electric’s service territory. Since August, Energy Efficiency Coordinator Heath Morgan has performed a series of charging tests at each charger in order to help the manufacturers of these chargers improve and to provide first-hand experience to co-op members.

“The average charging time we have experienced would allow us to go from a 20% charge to an 80% charge in roughly an hour,” Morgan said. “Which is pretty accurate to the advertised charging times for our Chevy Bolt, which has a 230-mile-range battery.”

Since the arrival of the vehicle, co-op employees have driven roughly 12,500 miles at a cost of only \$353 worth of electricity at Cotton Electric’s residential rate of \$0.09. If we had charged solely on level three chargers, the same distance would’ve cost more than \$1,300 in electricity at the rate of \$0.33 per kilowatt-hour (kWh.)

“Direct current (DC) level three chargers are meant for in-transit use, for when you’re making



a long trip that exceeds the range of your battery,” Morgan said. “Using them as a primary charger can become very expensive.”

Before making your trip, locate charging stations along your route. Many EV charger manufacturers have their own mobile app which will locate charging stations, let you know when stations are unavailable, activate charging and let you know when your vehicle is charged.

Once you have arrived at a charger, park and shut off your vehicle. The level three chargers in Cotton Electric’s service territory have two nozzles to choose from, one universal connect and another built specifically for Teslas. Select the appropriate nozzle for your vehicle and plug it into the charging port. Activating charging can be done by credit card, through the app or by using a radio frequency identification (RFID) card. To use a credit card, simply insert your card at the charger and follow a series of prompts on the screen. Let the app know which charger you are hooked up to and follow the prompts to start activation. The RFID card is the most reliable way to activate charging. RFID cards work even when the charging stations have poor connectivity. A RFID card can be requested through the account settings of whichever mobile app you have downloaded.

“Due to where we live, connectivity has been the biggest problem with the chargers,” Morgan said.

Once connectivity is established, your vehicle will

begin charging. Many vehicles will allow you to set a certain charge percentage instead of automatically charging to 100%. For example, if a 50% charge would be enough to get you home, you could set up your vehicle to stop charging once it hits that 50% mark.

Our experience with level three chargers has had its ups and downs.

“They seem to work okay once you learn some little quirks on how to use them,” Morgan said. “It’s definitely a new technology and a learning experience for all parties involved.”

Since 2016, EV purchases in Oklahoma have grown from 263 sales per year to 4,674 sales annually. With more EV drivers on the road and more of our membership considering the purchase of an EV, Morgan advises drivers to be patient with level three chargers.

“I equate it to the start of the internet. Back then it took eight times to connect. Once you connected, it was really slow and if someone picked up the phone it messed everything up,” Morgan said. “Now we are all walking around with the internet in our pockets, available at our fingertips. EV charging will develop and evolve just as the internet did.”

If you are considering the purchase of an EV, Cotton Electric is available as a trusted resource to assist members in any way possible.



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All-Day Holiday Delights

Celebrate the season with dishes from morning to night

FAMILY FEATURES

The holiday season and all its celebrating often means full days of visiting family and friends, opening gifts and enjoying moments with loved ones, even if much of that interaction may take place virtually this year. With all the laughter and happiness, you're bound to get hungry, and feeding the family throughout the day means you'll need recipe ideas ready for the occasion.

Starting the big day with a bountiful breakfast helps begin the festivities on a high note, while appetizers help hold everyone over for the main course, sides and, of course, dessert. Consider these tasty dishes to take your holiday gatherings to new heights from morning to night.

Visit Culinary.net to find more holiday meal ideas.

One Terrific Turkey

Centering your holiday meal around a turkey cooked to golden perfection is the ideal way to serve a feast. Without the right preparation and execution, however, your bird could fall short. To ensure your holiday dinner centerpiece lives up to expectations, follow these simple tips, from purchase to plate:

1. **Buy the right bird.** Finding a turkey that's just the right size for your expected party is the start to a successful gathering. One

common rule of thumb is to buy 1 pound of turkey per person – so, for a 10-person meal, purchase a 10-pound turkey. Don't forget that nearly everyone loves leftovers, so you may consider buying a few pounds more than necessary.

2. **Be patient.** If you opt for a frozen turkey, don't rush the thawing process. For larger turkeys, it can take days to defrost properly.
3. **Timing is everything.** Finding the right amount of time for your turkey to spend

in the oven is crucial but not always the easiest thing to do. For an 8-12-pound bird, aim for 2.5-3.5 hours; 12-16 pounds for 3.5-4 hours; 16-20 pounds for 4-4.5 hours, and so on. The key is bringing the turkey to a temperature reading of 170 F.

4. **Let it rest.** Instead of pulling the turkey out of the oven and immediately carving it, give it a chance to rest for 20-30 minutes, which allows the juices to soak into the meat and moisten it up.

An Easy and Cheesy Holiday Appetizer

If you need a last-minute appetizer or want to impress your friends, but don't have the time to spend hours making something, consider this easy-to-make, easy-to-eat cheesy treat.

This Cheeseball recipe calls for a handful of common household ingredients like cream cheese, cheddar cheese, vegetables and Worcestershire sauce rolled together and chilled for a tasty dip served with crackers. For added flavor, it's made using Buddig Beef, which has been feeding traditions for more than 75 years with its time-tested appetizer.

Find more holiday recipe ideas at buddig.com/recipes.

Cheeseball

Total time: 30 minutes
Servings: 10

- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 2 cups (8 ounces) finely shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 can (2 1/4 ounces) sliced black olives, drained
- 2 tablespoons minced green onion
- 2 tablespoons minced red bell pepper
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 2 packages (4 ounces) Buddig Beef or Ham, chopped, divided
- 1 package assorted crackers

In large bowl of mixer on medium speed, beat cream cheese and cheddar cheese until creamy.

Mix in black olives, green onion, red bell pepper, Worcestershire sauce, pepper and 2 ounces chopped beef until well combined.

Form into ball. Wrap in plastic wrap. Chill at least 2-3 hours to allow flavors to blend.

Just before serving, roll in remaining chopped beef until completely coated. Serve with assorted crackers.





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Call Together Loved Ones with Cookies

A true holiday celebration calls for sharing moments with loved ones and creating memories that can last a lifetime. Crafting a sweet dessert to cap off the festivities is a perfect way to come together in the kitchen and enjoy the moment with those who matter most. These Gingerbread Cookies made with C&H sugar can be a hallmark holiday treat that allow kids to help in the process. Once they're out of the oven, ask little ones to help decorate the festive and delightful cookies.

Visit chsugar.com to find recipes perfect for entertaining and celebrating with family throughout the year.

Gingerbread Cookies

Recipe courtesy of Bernice Baran
Prep time: 30 minutes
Cook time: 10-12 minutes
Yield: 24 cookies

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
- 1/2 cup C&H® Dark Brown Sugar
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- royal icing

In large bowl of electric mixer fitted with paddle attachment, cream butter and sugar about 2 minutes on medium speed until light and fluffy. Add egg and molasses; mix until well incorporated.
In separate bowl, whisk flour, baking soda, salt, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves. Use mixer on low speed to add to butter mixture until combined and dough is formed.
Divide dough in half, wrap with plastic film and refrigerate at least 1 hour.
Preheat oven to 350 F and line baking sheets with parchment paper.
Flour clean work surface. Roll dough 1/8-1/4 inches thick. Cut out shapes with desired cookie cutters.
Transfer cookies to lined baking sheets and bake 10-12 minutes, or until firm. Let cookies cool on baking sheets 2-3 minutes then transfer to cooling rack. Cool completely.
Decorate cookies with royal icing.



A Memorable Morning Breakfast

Holiday mornings are iconic for those moments spent together opening gifts, sharing stories and enjoying a meal. Skip the cereal and frozen foods for a spread like these Orange Eggs Benedict with a homemade hollandaise sauce. With six servings, it's perfect for a family breakfast to fill empty stomachs after a morning of gift-giving. Plus, kids can join in on the fun by helping make the hollandaise, which simply requires mixing a few ingredients before pouring over the completed dish. Find more breakfast recipes at [Culinary.net](https://culinary.net).

Orange Eggs Benedict

Serves: 6

- Orange Hollandaise:**
- 2 egg yolks
 - 1 orange, juice only
 - 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
 - 1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
 - 1 tablespoon white vinegar

- 8 eggs
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 6 French baguette slices, 3/4-inch thick each
- 6 thick slices ham
- 1/2 cup orange marmalade
- orange zest, for garnish

To make Orange Hollandaise: In small bowl, blend egg yolks, orange juice and salt until combined. Gradually add melted butter into egg mixture while blending. Set aside.
In skillet, add water halfway up sides. Add vinegar. Bring to simmer. Break eggs into water to poach. Cook 3-4 minutes until whites are cooked through and yolks are still runny. Using slotted spoon, remove eggs and drain on paper towels.
Spread butter on one side of bread slices. Place bread in skillet and cook until golden brown. Add ham to same skillet and cook until browned on both sides.
To assemble, spread bread slices with orange marmalade. Top each with one slice cooked ham and one poached egg. Pour hollandaise over eggs and garnish with orange zest.



Food choices maintain immune system

The immune system is a complex set of functions, cells and substances that provide your body with protection from and against microbes that may cause harm. The current pandemic is pushing many to wonder what is the best way to care for the immune system. Immune-boosting is not the answer; it's a marketing ploy and is not backed by science. Diagnosing and pre-



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT

venting a nutrient deficiency can help keep your immune system in fighting shape. Food provides the "ingredients" required by the complex processes of your immune system. These nutrients are generally provided in adequate quantities in a healthy, non-restrictive diet that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, protein, healthy fats and whole grains. Following a restrictive diet, taking certain medications and conditions that impair your ability to absorb nutrients put you at risk for nutrient deficiencies. Specifically, not consuming enough protein, zinc, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, selenium, and

the B vitamins can impair immune function. If you have a nutrient deficiency, it should be addressed to keep your immune system in tip-top shape. Work with your healthcare provider to assess your risk. You may need to track your food intake over several days and do some blood work. A multi-vitamin may be warranted or a single nutrient supplement may be recommended if you are unable to get enough of the deficient nutrient from increasing your intake of specific foods. To educate yourself on what a healthy diet means for you and what foods are good sources of key nutrients, check out www.choosemyplate.gov.

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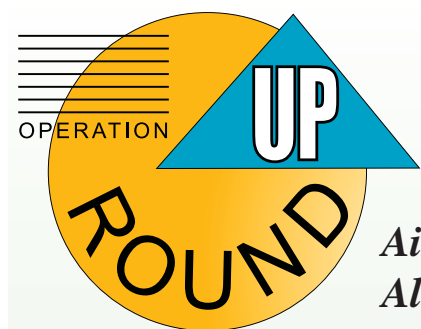
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Golf tournament raises funds for CECF

Heavy dew and fog did little to dampen the enthusiasm of 76 golfers who turned out for the rescheduled Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation Summer Classic on Oct. 9 at The Territory Golf and Country Club in Duncan. The day was so pleasant that plans are in the works to permanently move the annual event from June to October.

The 12th year for the event drew 22 teams although three were unable to play on the day of the tournament. The remaining teams were divided into two flights. Scorecard playoffs determined second and third place in both flights.

The team of Jeff Elroy, Brent Bostick, Jeff Jones and Alfred Palma, representing City Mart Energy, placed first with a score of 57 in the Championship Flight.

The team of Terry Snider, Bryce Hooper, Jenni-

fer Meason and Jimmie Dedmon representing JH Davidson, was second in the flight with a score of 58. Third place was awarded to the team of Steve Robinson, Scott McMurran, Megan Hooper and Bobby Whan, representing Cornish Painting and Construction and also scoring a 58.

First place in “A” Flight was awarded to the Comanche Nation Casino team composed of Eric Dedmon, Adam Red Elk, Lance Red Elk and Bradly Wahnee. The team scored a 63.

Second place went to the team of Scott Crew, Stacy Abbe, Quaid Ogletree and Rick Emons. Representing Cotton County Drug, the team scored a 65.

The team of Michael Hazleton, Brent Moffet, Jerid Macadoo and Blake Scott, representing Anixter, filled the third-place slot, also with a score of 65.

Closest to pin awards went to Ken Layn on the

fourth hole; Rick Emmons, eighth hole; Bobby Cobb, 13th hole; and Kelby Boyd, 17th hole.

Jennifer Meason had the women’s longest drive and Jeff Elroy 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 \$10,000. Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation will distribute proceeds to organizations and individuals in need.

Actions considered to protect kids online

By Chris Pizor

Kid’s attention is online more than ever, from socializing with friends and interacting with family to online learning and education. As parents, we want to make sure they do so in a safe and secure manner. Ensuring online safety may be difficult for many parents because their own childhood did not include such a digital influence. Below we cover key steps on how you can help kids safely and securely make the most of online technology.

Education and Communication

First and foremost, make sure that you foster good, open communication with your children. Far too often parents get caught up in the technology required to block content or what mobile apps are appropriate. No parental control technology is perfect, and some technologies have privacy concerns due to the data they collect. Ultimately, this is not a technology problem; it is a behavior and values problem.

A good place to start would be teaching your kids to behave online as they would in the real world. Create a list of expectations with your kids. Here are some to consider:

- Times when they can or cannot go online and for how long.
- Types of websites or games they



can access and why others are not appropriate.

- What information they can share and with whom. Children often do not realize what they post is permanent and public, or that their friends may share their secret with the world.
- How to report problems they encounter, such as strange pop-ups, scary websites or if someone online is creepy or being a bully.
- Treat others online as they would want to be treated themselves.
- Realize people online may not be who they claim to be or that not all information is accurate or truthful.
- What can be purchased online and by whom, to include in-game purchases.

Consider tying these rules to their academic grades, completion of chores or how they treat others. Once you decide on the rules, post them in the house and have everyone review the

rules and sign the document; that way everyone is in full agreement. The earlier you start talking to your kids about your expectations, the better.

Not sure how to start the conversation? Ask them what apps they are using and how they work. Put your child in the role of teacher and have them show you what they are doing online. Keeping communication open and active is the best way to help kids stay safe in today’s digital world.

For mobile devices, consider a central charging station somewhere in your house. Before your children go to bed at night, have all mobile devices placed at the charging station, so your children are not tempted to use them when they should be sleeping.

Security Technologies and Parental Controls

There are security technologies and parental controls you can use to mon-

itor and help protect your kids. They typically provide capabilities to enforce usage limits or hours as well as content protections. These solutions tend to work best for younger children.

Older kids not only need more access to the Internet but often use devices that you do not control or cannot monitor, such as those issued by school, gaming consoles or devices at a friend’s or relative’s house.

This is why communicating with your kids about your expectations and the dangers that exist on the internet is so important.

Leading by Example

Set a good example as parents or guardians. When your kids talk to you, put your own digital device down and look them in the eye. Consider not using digital devices at the dinner table and never text while driving.

Finally, when kids make mistakes, treat each one as a learning experience instead of engaging in an immediate disciplinary action. Make sure they feel comfortable approaching you when they experience anything uncomfortable online or realize they themselves have done something wrong.

Source: SANS Security Awareness

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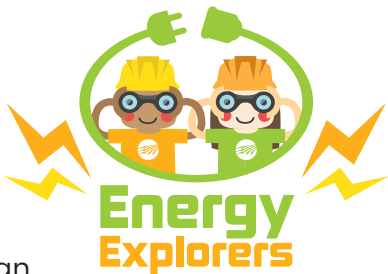
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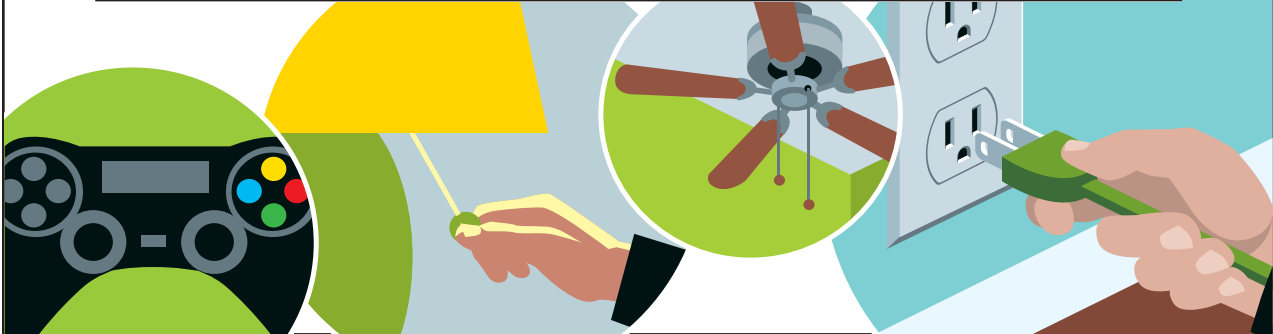


ENERGY SAVINGS
PLAN FOR THE
FAMILY

There are several easy ways you and your family can save energy at home! Clip out this chart, assign each energy-saving task, then place it on your fridge so your family can work together to save energy – and money.



WAY TO SAVE ENERGY	ASSIGNED TO:
Turn off lights in empty rooms.	
Replace any incandescent and/or CFL bulbs with LED bulbs.	
Turn off electronics that aren't in use (TVs, gaming consoles, etc.).	
Unplug phone chargers that aren't in use.	
Turn off ceiling fans in empty rooms.	
Adjust the thermostat when you leave the house. (Set it higher in the summer and lower in the winter.)	
Once a week, make a meal that doesn't require cooking in the kitchen. (Make PB&Js or cook outside.)	
Make sure all doors and windows are closed when the air conditioner or heater is running.	



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Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

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


Here's How It Works:


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



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