

# The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

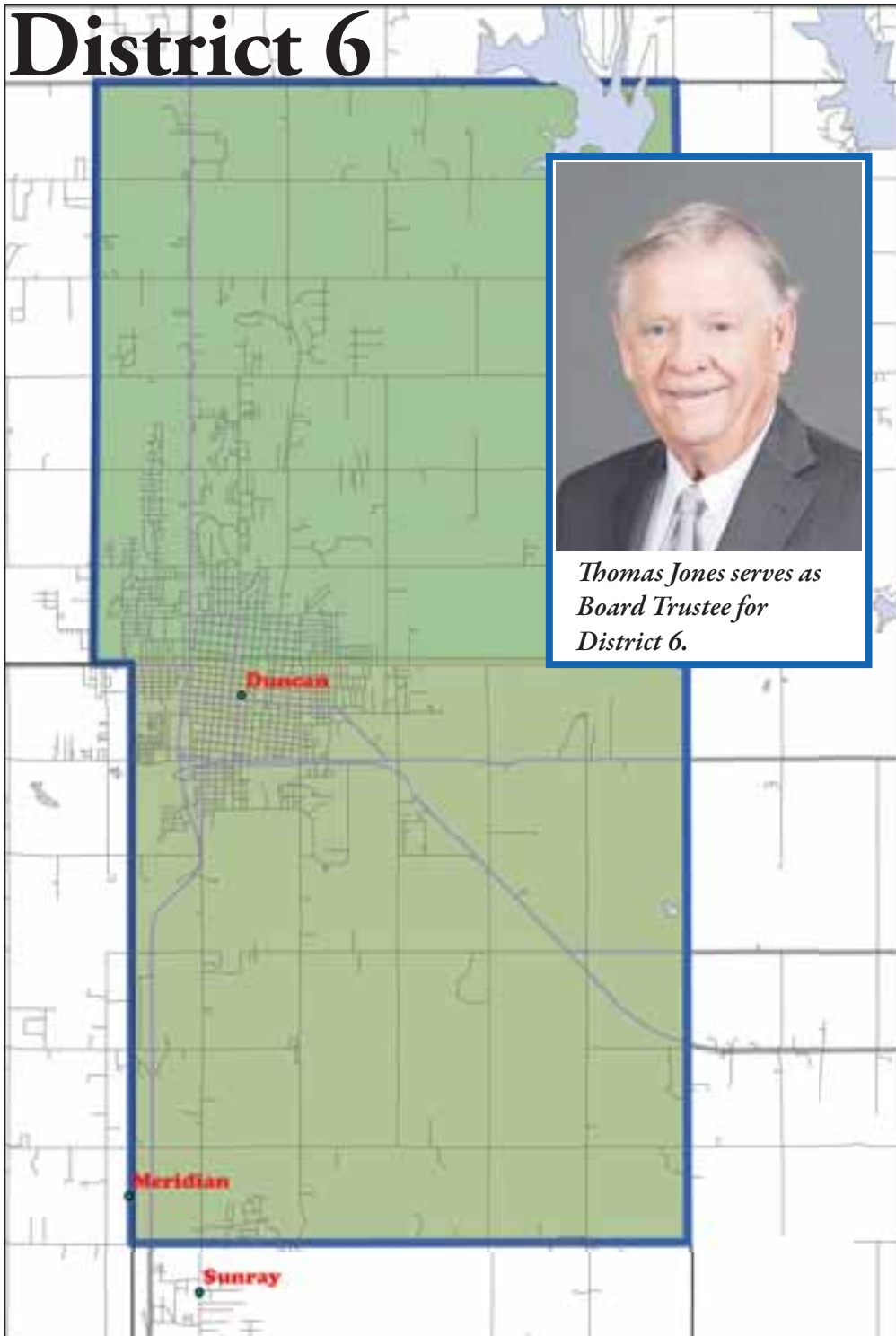
“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

VOLUME 62

February 19, 2019

NUMBER 6

## District 6



Thomas Jones serves as Board Trustee for District 6.



Bob Anderson



Chad Cowan



Terry Turner



Larry Crowell



Scott Dennis



Dillon Wiygul



Matt Winburn



Darrell Loveday



Norman Condit

When the power in District 6 goes off in the middle of the night, eight line workers are on call to get the lights back on. Reporting to the Duncan Warehouse are Journeyman Linemen Bob Anderson, Chad Cowan, Terry Turner, Larry Crowell, Scott Dennis, Dillon Wiygul, Matt Winburn and Heavy Equipment Operator Darrell Loveday. These line workers are under the direction of Operations Superintendent Norman Condit.

## District 6 represented by Jones

By Danielle Quickle

Cotton Electric is a not-for-profit organization that is 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 6 hosts Cotton Electric's satellite facility in Duncan. Sitting in the heart of Stephens County, it is the smallest district when it comes to surface area, taking up only 72 square miles of the service territory. However, a large number of members reside in this area.

Although not served by Cotton Electric, included within the borders of District 6 is the community and school district of Duncan. Parts of Bray and Comanche school districts also fall inside District 6.

Members of District 6 are served by two substations: Stephens and Duncan. These substations distribute power across approximately 215 miles of line to residential and commercial accounts. When power distribution issues arise, District 6 has specific linemen assigned to restoring power.

When your power goes off in the middle of the night, eight line workers are on call to get your lights back on. Reporting to the Duncan Warehouse are Journeyman Linemen Bob Anderson, Chad Cowan, Terry Turner, Larry Crowell, Scott Dennis, Dillon Wiygul and Matt Winburn as well as Heavy Equipment Operator Darrell Loveday.

These crew members do not exclusively work in District 6 but aid the system in various places along the eastern side of the service territory. They are under the

direction of Operations Superintendent Norman Condit.

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 1984, Thomas J. Jones Jr. of Duncan was appointed to the board. Members of District 6 have held him over ever since to represent them and make decisions regarding co-op business on their behalf.

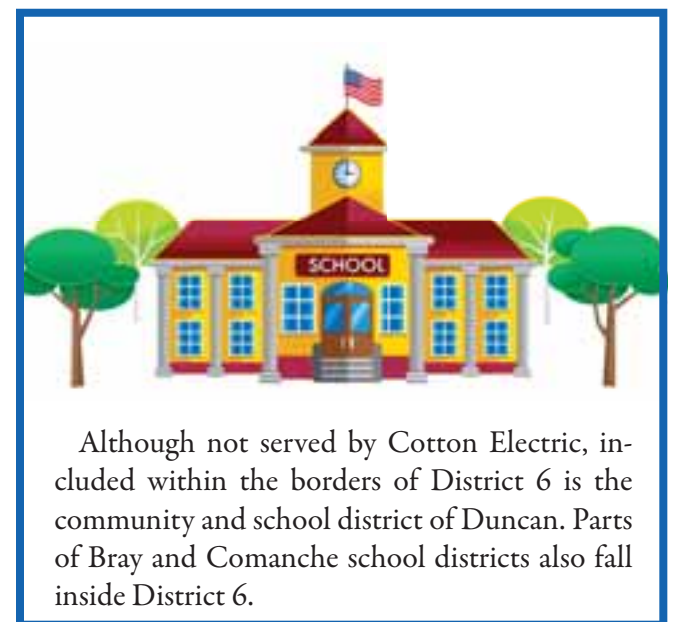
Jones has been a Cotton Electric member since 1971 and has served its membership as a trustee of District 6 for the last 35 years.

Jones and his wife, Kaye, have made their home in northern Duncan. Together they have three children: two daughters, Janalyn and Judy, and a son, Jeff. They have seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

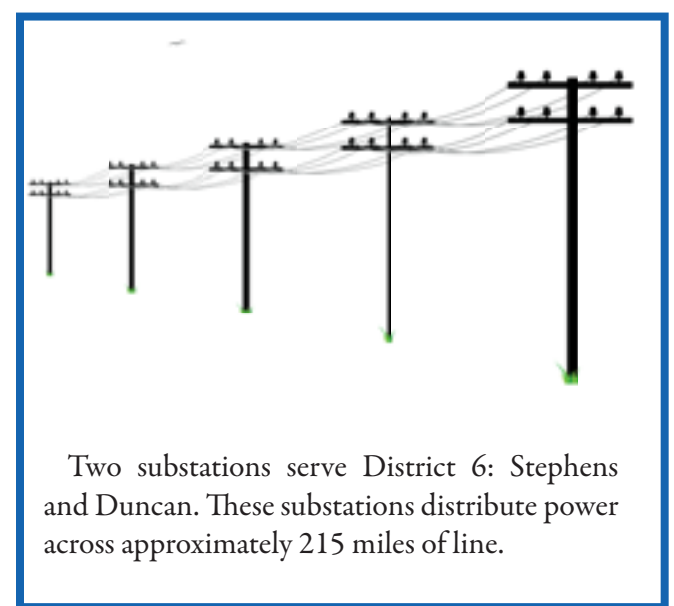
His business interests over the years have included banking and real-estate but his passion lies with his oil business, Jones Oil Company. Founded by his family in 1933, Jones inherited the business from his father and has been an oil man ever since.

Jones believes the experiences he has gained throughout his life have helped him make decisions that are beneficial for the members of District 6.

As a Trustee, Jones' top priority is the members of District 6. Jones wants the membership to know that he is available to them when it comes to cooperative business. Members of District 6 can learn how to contact Thomas Jones by calling Cotton Electric at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.



Although not served by Cotton Electric, included within the borders of District 6 is the community and school district of Duncan. Parts of Bray and Comanche school districts also fall inside District 6.



Two substations serve District 6: Stephens and Duncan. These substations distribute power across approximately 215 miles of line.

### Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after Feb. 1, 2019, is (\$0.00122) per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1250 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a credit of \$1.53 on the February bill.

### January 2019 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	31	26	29	16	59	35	47
2	32	27	30	17	55	36	46
3	35	31	33	18	67	33	50
4	44	30	37	19	41	24	33
5	59	29	44	20	46	22	34
6	64	32	48	21	61	31	46
7	66	38	52	22	63	27	45
8	57	35	49	23	50	25	38
9	56	30	43	24	57	25	41
10	51	31	41	25	42	20	31
11	52	42	47	26	54	21	38
12	47	36	42	27	62	26	44
13	37	33	35	28	52	27	40
14	43	31	37	29	46	19	33
15	53	29	41	30	54	25	40
				31	63	25	44

Source: srb.noaa.gov/oun/

Average Daily High: 52 Average Daily Low: 29

### Did You Know?

Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 a.m. Sunday, March 10. Turn clocks forward one hour.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on March 18, 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](mailto: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](http://cottonelectric.com)



From the CEO

# Considering solar? We're here to help

Today's consumers want and expect options, including the type of energy powering their homes. Many homeowners are looking for a less expensive form of energy with ongoing savings. Some are looking for a green energy source. These two motives are why many homeowners are exploring rooftop solar panels.



Jennifer Meason, CEO

The interest in alternative energy sources is also being fueled by decreasing costs for rooftop solar, the availability of financial incentives and the proliferation of companies offering solar panel installation.

However, as attractive and popular as rooftop solar may appear, it is important for members to fully understand its true costs, the operational reality of this form of energy and actual energy savings.

To determine whether rooftop solar is right for a particular situation, careful research is needed and we're here to help.

**We're here to help.**

As your trusted energy advisor, Cotton Electric staff can offer a candid assessment of your specific situation. After all, Cotton Electric has a different "bottom line" that is not directly tied to the sale of a product or service. We constantly strive to find new ways to help you

use energy more efficiently.

Cotton Electric is seeking to keep pace with the changing energy environment and evolving technology. We are exploring more options that will help you manage your energy use such as free energy efficiency home evaluations and a rebate program for ground source and air source heat pumps, mini-splits and water heaters. We take a holistic, objective view of how to achieve energy savings.

**Is rooftop solar right for you?**

To help determine whether rooftop solar is right for you, Cotton Electric's energy advisors will look at the:

- overall energy efficiency of the home/building
- age and pitch of the roof
- orientation of the home/building in relation to the sun
- tree coverage near the home/building
- weather patterns for the region

Unlike a solar company that has one objective--to sell their products and services--we will look at the total energy picture and help you determine the best options for your home. While rooftop solar certainly works for many people, it's not the answer for all.

When helping co-op members determine whether rooftop solar is right for them, a co-op energy advisor will also discuss the many financial considerations:


- Is there a large, up-front payment required or are fees spread out over time?

- Will the homeowner own the panels or will they be leased?
- Are there any hidden costs, i.e., does the roof need to be replaced before installing the panels?
- Are there ongoing maintenance fees?
- Are there rebates or other financial incentives available?
- Is the estimated energy savings worth the investment?
- Is it more cost effective to invest in other energy saving measures?

Most importantly, an energy advisor will provide perspective on the total energy puzzle. Taking into account current energy consumption, the home "envelope," age and efficiency of the HVAC system and home site, an energy advisor can help co-op members determine whether rooftop solar is the best choice given the homeowners' objectives.

When assessing solar options, it is an excellent time to examine other potential energy efficiency improvements for your home. For example, it may make sense to insulate the attic at the same time as installing solar.

Cotton Electric recognizes that consumer interest in green energy sources and renewables is at an all-time high, and we stand ready to help our members determine their best options. Please contact us at (580) 875-3351 and ask for the cooperative's energy efficiency coordinator, Heath Morgan.

**YOUTH POWER** 

**ENERGY CAMP**

## Applications deadline is March 4

Eighth-graders interested in developing leadership skills, learning about electric cooperatives and energy delivery, and having some great summertime fun are encouraged to enter the annual Energy Camp youth writing contest.

To participate, students are required to write a short paragraph, 50 words or less, on why they would like to attend Energy Camp. Students and their families must be Cotton Electric members.

Winners from Cotton Electric's service area will be selected from contest participants to attend the 2019 Youth Power Energy camp held May 28-31 at Canyon Camp near Red Rock Canyon, southeast of Hinton.

At Energy Camp, which is sponsored by Oklahoma's electric cooperatives, students learn first-hand the world of electric co-ops through demonstrations by

electric crews. There will be opportunities to put on a lineman's work belt and gloves before climbing a pole and to see the camp from 60 feet above in the basket of a utility truck. Plus, students will set up and run their own cooperative business.

Activities will include nature hikes, games and other outings with other students representing cooperatives from across Oklahoma. Contest information has been distributed to area English teachers and is available on the Cotton Electric website under Member Services / Youth Programs. Students should ask for contest rules and entry forms, or contact Cotton Electric Cooperative at 580-875-3351 or by email at info@CottonElectric.com.

Deadline for entry is March 4.

**SMART TIPS**

**SPACE HEATER SAFETY**

Space heaters can be a cost effective option when heating no more than one or two small areas.

-  Review and follow all manufacturer directions.
-  Place them out of high-traffic areas and on a hard, level floor surface.
-  Keep them at least 3 feet away from flammable items.
-  Plug them directly into outlets. Avoid using an extension cord.
-  Turn them off before you leave the room or go to sleep.

Learn more at: [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Laundry Tip: Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter-weight clothing. You'll spend less time running the dryer for lighter-weight items, which saves energy.

Source: 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.

	2018	2017
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$5,054,693	\$4,778,323
Cost of Purchased Power	4,017,554	3,791,800
Taxes	94,877	95,118
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,086	962
Average Farm and Residential Bill	137	121
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,230	997
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,407	18,310
Miles Energized	5,167	5,169
Density Per Mile	3.56	3.54
New Service Connects YTD	278	268
Services Retired	116	141

## The Current

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Karen Kaley.....Marketing & Communications  
Danielle Quickle ..... Editor  
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# Cooperative plans meter changeout

By Danielle Quickle

Cotton Electric is constantly striving to improve power quality and efficiency for members. One way the co-op plans to achieve this goal is with a meter changeout across the entire service territory. Beginning in the first quarter of 2019, the cooperative will start the process of swapping out all current system meters in exchange for new TWACS (Two-Way Automatic Communication System) meters.

The TWACS meter has been piloting in a small portion of Cotton Electric service territory for the past two years. Based on the results, the Board of Trustees has approved the expansion of the system to the rest of Cotton's grid. The expansion will strengthen communication concerning power consumption, billing and power outages.

Internal Grid Communications Spe-

cialist Cody Pennington has been taking the lead on the project and believes the changeout will take approximately three years to complete.

"Our goal is to change out eight substations in year one, eight substations in year two and six substations in year three," Pennington said.

Work will begin in the east side of the territory near Velma, where the majority of Cotton Electric's three-phase meters are located. The current metering equipment is not capable of reading three-phase meters and they have to be read manually each month.

"With the new system, we will be able to get automatic readings off of three-phase meters," Pennington said. "Not having to read the meters manually will free up some of our metermen's schedules so they can help with the changeout in different ways."

This will be Meter and Transformer Shop Supervisor Bill Pulis' third encounter with a meter changeout at Cotton Electric. He is confident that members will be affected minimally during the changeout process.

"When we change a meter, a member's service will only go off for maybe 30 seconds," Pulis said. "Apart from having to reset their clocks, members shouldn't see any inconveniences during the changeout."

Pulis notes that members can expect to hear from Cotton Electric when the time comes to change their meter.

"We will have to contact members to make sure we can get to their meters to change them," Pulis said. "It is important to know if there are animals or a gate we will need to get through as we plan the changeout."

Benefits from the new system include

more accurate and real-time readings of power consumption and alerts when power outages occur.

"We will have a better idea of what is going on out in the field during outages," Pulis said. "The new equipment should be able to pinpoint issues by showing us exactly who is with or without service."

In the future, members will be able to track their near real-time energy use through the SmartHub app or by speaking with a member services representative. Until then, members must wait 24 hours for this information to be updated.

It will be all hands on deck once equipment has arrived as the meter changeout becomes a top priority for the co-op. Everyone from linemen to metermen to maintenance workers will be engaging in the meter changeout in hopes of completing the project within three years.

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**PUBLIC AUCTION**  
**Saturday**  
**February 23, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.**  
**907 West Pecan Avenue**  
**Duncan, Oklahoma**  
 Gary Criswell Auction Service & Real Estate, Inc. has been commissioned by Mrs. Suzanne J. Johnson to offer at Public Auction her Real Property located at 907 West Pecan Avenue, Duncan, Oklahoma.  
**Real Property Consists of:** consists of a nice 1 Bedroom Home with approximately 1,605 square feet with a living room (knotty pine walls), family room, office (may be used as a second bedroom), kitchen with dining area, large utility room and a full bath.  
**Additional Improvements:** The Home has vinyl siding and storm gutters, also includes a 12' x 20' storage building/shop and a 9' x 11' storm shelter. All situated on a nice 75 ft. x 140 ft. lot with a fenced in back yard in a good neighborhood.  
**Terms of Sale:** 10% Earnest Money on the day of Sale. Balance due at Closing upon delivery of Title and Deed.  
**Preview of Real Property** will be held Friday afternoon, February 22, 2019 from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Announcements made day of sale supersede all other advertisements.  
**Auctioneer's Note:** Mrs. Suzanne J. Johnson has relocated out-of-state and now resides in Festus, Missouri. The Home with Improvements will be offered at 10:00 a.m. Sharp! The Real Property will be offered "As-Is-Where-Is". The Seller reserves the right to accept or reject the final bid. Stephens County Abstract Company will serve as the Closing Agent on the Real Property.  
**Gary Criswell Auction Service & Real Estate, Inc.**  
 (Auctioneer/Broker) garycriswellauctioneers.com (Cell Phone) 580-255-8162 • 806 West Main • Duncan, OK • 580-467-2248

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**TERMS OF THE AUCTION**  
 \*All Consignors will be charged a pro-rated share of the advertising expenses (based on dollar amount sold). \*6% per item over \$500 - 15% per item under \$500. \*Please, no household related items. \*Equipment hauling to sale site available. \*Any items left on auction site for 30 days will be sold for storage and all proceeds retained by Brink Auction Service unless previous arrangements have been made. \*Brink Auction Service assumes no liability on any item that has a title. If any litigation arises, Buyer and Seller assume all responsibility.

**Terry H Brink, CAI Auctioneer**      **brinkauction@gmail.com**  
**580-335-4126**      **www.brinkauction.com**

**Use energy wisely.**

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



# Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the March issue, please submit information by March 6, by calling 580-875-4255 or send an email to [TheCurrent@cottonelectric.com](mailto:TheCurrent@cottonelectric.com).

### Horse club plans annual clinic

Duncan Lake Horse Club is having its annual Coggins Clinic from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 4 at Duncan Lake Pavilion. In addition to Coggins testing, other vaccines will be offered, including Eastern/Western, tetanus, rabies, West Nile and flu/rhino.

Coggins testing will be \$25 per horse. The clinic, conducted by Dr. Connie McLemore of Countryside Veterinary, is open to the public with no limit on the number of horses. Rain date will be March 9.

Other DLHC activities that day for members include the annual Chili Cook Off at 6 p.m. at the Pavilion. New members are encouraged to attend these events. Annual dues are \$12 for an individual and \$15 for a family.

For information, call 580-475-7190.

### DLT presents 'Shrek the Musical'

Duncan Little Theatre brings "Shrek the Musical" to the Simmons Center stage. Performances will be held Feb. 22-23 at 7:30 p.m., Feb. 24 at 2 p.m., and March 1-2 at 7:30 p.m. at the Simmons Center Theater located at 800 Chisholm Trail Parkway in Duncan.

Based on the Oscar-winning DreamWorks Animation film, "Shrek The Musical" is a Tony Award-winning fairy tale adventure, featuring all new songs from Jeanine Tesori. Shrek brings all the beloved characters you know from the film to life on stage and proves there's more to the story than meets the ears.

Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$15 for students, seniors and military personnel. Children 4 and under are free if sitting on an adult's lap. Otherwise, they will need their own ticket.

### Local church performs live

Area churches present "Heaven's Gates or Hell's Flames" 7 p.m. nightly March 10-12 at Waurika Baptist Church. This live drama presentation asks audiences where they will be when reality strikes. For more information, call the church at 580-228-2106.

### MP hosts ParkStomp March 16-17

ParkStomp is two days of live bluegrass music in Medicine Park. The weekend also includes V-Dubs in the Park, a campout and show event.

Music on the main stage begins at noon March 16. Entertainers include Just Strangers, Whispering Willows, Brad Fielder Trio, Chucky Waggs and Arkansauce.

Final performances begin at 1 p.m. March 17. Acts include The Burney Sisters, Red Oak Ruse and Ginstrings.

V-Dubs in the Park is set for March 17. Open to all Volkswagens, whether air- or water-cooled, show quality or a work in progress. Only VWs will be allowed to park in the show area. Details about competition and camping are available at [MedicinePark.com](http://MedicinePark.com).

### AARP offers free tax assistance

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

No appointment is necessary but certain documents are. Taxpayers should take last year's income tax return, all W-2 and 1099 forms, information about any other income, adjustment and deduc-

tion documents, Social Security cards for each person on a return, and property taxes if he or she plans to itemize.

Trained IRS volunteers will be available from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays, and from noon to 4 p.m. Wednesdays at the Center for Creative Living, 3501 Dr. Elsie Hamm Drive, Lawton.

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

The free service is available from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the Duncan Public Library Annex, 2211 N. U.S. Highway 81.

### Annual Car Cruise begins March 22

Car enthusiasts of all types gather for the Friday Night Car Cruise around downtown Duncan. First car cruise of 2019 set for March 22 from 5-10 p.m. Only \$10/vehicle, license and insurance are required.

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

For more information, visit the Main Street Duncan Facebook page.

### Apache Rattlesnake Fest set for April

Mark your calendars for the Apache Rattlesnake Festival set for April 18-21 in downtown Apache. The event features exhibits, arts, crafts, vendors, carnival rides and games, rattlesnake catching contests, food, music and fun.

While all food booth spaces are filled, vendor booth space is still available. Call 580-588-2880 to leave a clear message and get information.

Funds raised by the Apache Rattlesnake Association are funneled to service projects.

### Kona Ice fundraiser in Lawton

Kona Ice Truck will be serving shaved ice all year and flavored hot chocolate in the winter months from 3-4:15 p.m. every fourth Thursday of the month until May 2019 at 704 W. Gore Blvd in Lawton.

Twenty percent of proceeds go to St. Mary's Catholic School. Kona Ice is lower sugar with sugar-free options and fortified with Vitamins C and D and antioxidants. Options are also allergy-friendly because they are gluten free, nut free, dairy free and include no high fructose corn syrup.

For more information visit the Kona Ice Fundraiser Facebook page.

### Market open for 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 end of March 2019.

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](http://LawtonFarmersMarket.com) or send an email to [lawtonfarmersmarket@yahoo.com](mailto:lawtonfarmersmarket@yahoo.com).

### More Community Spotlight on Page 6

## Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

March		April		May	
Ad Sales	Mar. 1	Ad Sales	Mar. 29	Ad Sales	Apr. 26
Classified	Mar. 6	Classified	Apr. 3	Classified	May 1
Publish Date	Mar. 18	Publish Date	Apr. 15	Publish Date	May 13

## PHOTO OF THE MONTH



These love birds are also newlyweds. Cotton Electric members Colton and Angie Beck are commemorating four months of marriage by submitting this photo captured by Amanda Redwing Photography.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for March is GRAND TIMES WITH GRANDKIDS. Entries can be emailed to [TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com](mailto: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.

## Home, garden show begins March 22

Find practical home improvement ideas and visit professional home and garden service providers during Lawton Home Builders 55th annual Home and Garden Show.

Doors will be open from 5 to 8 p.m. March 22, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. March 23, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 24 in the Great Plains Coliseum and Annex. Admission is free.

EVEN THREE IS A CROWD.

NEVER OVERLOAD OUTLETS.

Helping members use electricity safely, the power of your co-op membership. Learn more from the experts themselves at [TouchstoneEnergy.com](http://TouchstoneEnergy.com).

**COTTON**  
ELECTRIC CO-OP  
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From left, Cotton Electric employees Zac Hoodenpyle, Jason Red Elk, Anthony Reed, Sam Gonzalez, Bill Pulis, Rex Hiebert, Adam Metcalfe and Josh Belcher work together to complete day-to-day functions of the Meter and Transformer Shop.

# Department instrumental to cooperative accuracy

By Danielle Quickle

Cotton Electric has a variety of departments geared to perform specific tasks that keep your electric co-op operating efficiently.

Every day, more than 22,000 meters are tracking power consumption of Cotton Electric residential and commercial members. To ensure accuracy and reliability, these meters, and the transformers they are paired with, are regularly tested, read and maintained by Cotton Electric's Meter and Transformer Shop.

Eight employees have the responsibility of keeping meters and transformers running at 100 percent efficiency.

Before meters go out into the system, they are tested to ensure their accuracy. Meter Technician and Shop Foreman Sam Gonzalez and Meter Tester Jason Red Elk do most of the meter testing. Both are meter technicians whose primary duty is to ensure meters meet the co-op's standards.

If issues arise after a meter is out in the field, it is likely that members will see the friendly faces of Field Journeyman Meter Representatives Rex Hiebert and Anthony Reed. Meters can sometimes have problems, just as all mechanical devices do, and meter representatives have the primary job of monitoring the health of every meter.

Often assisting them are Apprentice Field Meter Technician Adam Metcalfe and the co-op's sole Meter Reader Josh Belcher. Metcalfe has been training to be-



come a Field Journeyman Meter Representatives so he can help in more areas and improve the efficiency of the department.

Every meter is paired with a transformer that steps down power from distribution lines into usable energy for members. The meter shop's Apparatus Technician Zac Hoodenpyle specializes in transformers. He inspects, repairs and refurbishes equipment to ensure there is a ready supply at all times.

The team is led by Supervisor Bill Pulis, who coordinates the day-to-day functions of the department.

"Every morning, we all get together to go over the work orders for the day," Pulis said. "We may all have different specialties, but when it comes to getting a job done, we step in where we are needed."

Pulis has been in Cotton Electric's meter shop for

several years. He has learned that the key to success is communication between cooperative departments.

"We engage regularly with nearly all of the other departments in the co-op," Pulis said. "If maintenance needs us for something, they will give us a call. We work very closely with the billing department and we usually try to check with engineering every day to see what kind of transformers they need."

The department emphasizes accuracy in their work so that all members are billed properly. For half of the group, they include themselves when referring to Cotton Electric's membership.

"Metering accuracy would have to be our number one priority," Pulis said. "The meters have to be accurate so that member's monthly bills are accurate."

Very seldom is there a problem with a meter. When problems are found, it is usually because of broken equipment that has caused the meter to slow down or stop completely. Only twice in 45 years has Pulis seen a meter that was running too fast.

"If a member monitors their power consumption daily and suspects there could be a problem with their meter, we want them to call in immediately," Pulis said. "The sooner we know about a problem, the quicker we can get out there to fix it."

The Meter and Transformer Shop is gearing up for a meter changeout project across Cotton Electric's entire service territory that will begin in the first quarter of 2019. Read more about the meter changeout on Page 3.

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## Community Spotlight

### 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 New Hope Baptist Church, 200 S. 42nd Street.

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

For information about the group or to arrange free

transportation to the monthly meeting, call 580-786-8041 or 427-2933.

### Food pantry opens twice monthly

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

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

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

### Honor guard serves SW Oklahoma

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

The uniformed guard furnishes a 21-gun salute, plays taps and folds a flag for presentation to the family. The guard travels anywhere in Stephens, Cotton, Comanche and Jefferson counties, and has made special trips into Grady and Carter counties.

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

For information about joining the guard or securing its services, call L.D. Williams at 580-439-8244.

### Monthly lecture at The Foreman Prairie House

Join the docents and volunteers at The Foreman Prai-

rie House at noon every third Thursday of the month for lunch and lecture. Listen to artists, historians and craftsmen while enjoying a homemade artisan-style lunch.

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

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

### SWOBA meets monthly

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

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

More information can be found by visiting [OkBees.org/SWOBA](http://OkBees.org/SWOBA).

### Blessings Boutique open monthly

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

# Cyber scams become more personalized

Cyber criminals continue to come up with new and creative ways to fool people. A new type of scam is gaining popularity — personalized scams. Cyber criminals find or purchase information about millions of people, then use that information to personalize their attacks. Below, we show you how these scams work and walk you through a common example. The more you know about these scams, the easier it is for you to spot and stop them.

### How Does it Work?

Email or phone call scams are not new. Cyber criminals have been attempting to fool people for years. Examples include the "You Won the Lottery" or the infamous Nigerian Prince scams. However, in these traditional scams, cyber criminals do not know their targets. They simply create a generic message and send it out to millions of people. Because these scams are so generic, they are usually easy to spot.

A personalized scam is different; the cyber criminals do research first and create a customized message for each intended victim. They do this by finding or purchasing a database of people's names, passwords, phone numbers, or other details. This type of information is easily



available due to all the websites that have been hacked. It is also commonly available on social media sites and in publicly available government records. The criminals then target everyone they have information about.

One common trick cyber criminals use is fear or extortion to force you into paying them money. The attack works like this:

They find or purchase information on people's logins and passwords obtained from hacked websites. They find your account information included in such a database and send you (and everyone else in the database) an email with some personal details about you, including the original password you used on the hacked website. The criminal refers to your password as "proof" of having

hacked your own computer or device, which is of course not true. The criminal then claims that while they hacked your computer they also caught you viewing inappropriate material online. The email then threatens that if you do not pay their extortion fee, they will share with your family and friends evidence of embarrassing online activities.

The catch is, in almost every situation like this the cyber criminal never hacked your system. They don't even know who you are or which websites you've visited. The scammer is simply attempting to use the few personal details they have about you to scare you into believing they hacked your computer or device, and to trick you into paying them money. Remember, bad guys can use the same techniques for a phone call scam, also.

### What Should I Do?

Recognize that emails or phone calls like these are a scam. It's natural to feel scared when someone has personal information about you. However, remember the sender is lying. The attack is a part of an automated mass-scale campaign, not an attempt to directly target you. It is becoming much easier for cyber criminals today to find or purchase personal information, so expect more personalized scams like these in the future. Some clues to look for:

- Whenever you receive a highly urgent email, message, or phone call, be very suspicious. If someone is using emotions like fear or urgency, they are trying to rush you into making a mistake.
- When someone is demanding payment in Bitcoin, gift cards, or other untraceable methods.
- When you get a suspicious email, search on Google to see if other people have reported similar attacks.

Ultimately, common sense is your best defense. However, we also recommend you always use a unique, long password for each of your online accounts. Can't remember all your passwords? Use a password manager. In addition, enable two-step verification whenever possible.

Source: SANS Security Awareness

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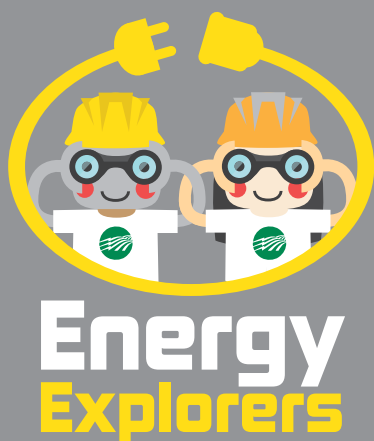
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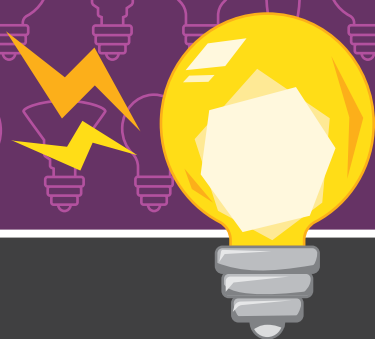
# ELECTRIFYING WORD SEARCH



Y R X B P O S T X K C G W A E  
 E T E U L X B I K W B A P G W  
 X B I W N P L U K L T B A L Z  
 A X I C O K U C V T K T H J L  
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 M F A U R A T C V M U D E T E  
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 J F E J I X X C E L M M W Z L  
 C U R R E N T T T F E X I L B  
 R X O P P P G S E R I W T I K  
 O M O B R A I Q O S Q E C A R  
 D Q T H C L L A L W B R H E Z  
 H T Z P H G G V V O C J I S S

## Word Bank

- |                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| <b>ELECTRICITY</b> | <b>POWER</b>   |
| <b>CIRCUIT</b>     | <b>SWITCH</b>  |
| <b>WATTS</b>       | <b>VOLTAGE</b> |
| <b>CURRENT</b>     | <b>BULB</b>    |
| <b>WIRES</b>       | <b>CHARGE</b>  |



### ACROSS

1. Civil rights organization
5. Cause to lose courage
10. Outside entertaining area
14. Botswana currency
15. Comedic Actor Tim
16. Barbary sheep
17. German river
18. Take
19. Catches
20. Eating houses
22. Consumed
23. Lawyers try them
24. Hugh Jackman character
27. Basics
30. No (Scottish)
31. Duct
32. Athlete who plays for pay
35. Unit of distance
37. Female bird
38. Predatory reptile
39. Regions
40. Dishonorable man
41. Dry white Italian wine
42. A way to understand
43. Actors' organization
44. Beach hut
45. Disappointment
46. Police officer
47. Digital audiotape
48. Western Thai people
49. Of a polymer
52. Secret political clique
55. Sound unit
56. Cavalry sword
60. Whale ship captain
61. Eastern Austria spa town
63. Holds food
64. Filippo \_\_, Saint
65. Holds bottles of milk
66. Intestinal pouches
67. Arab ruler
68. Chicago political family

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13	
14					15						16				
17					18						19				
20				21		22					23				
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27	28	29		30				31				32	33	34	
35			36				37				38				
39						40					41				
42					43				44						
45				46				47				48			
			49					50				51			
52	53	54				55					56		57	58	59
60						61				62		63			
64						65						66			
67						68						69			

69. "Transparent" actress Kathryn

### DOWN

1. Detailed drawing
2. Class of comb jellies
3. Musical symbol
4. Hall of Fame ballplayer Rod
5. Pouch
6. Split
7. Having wings
8. Set aside
9. Midway between northeast and east
10. Daughter of Acrisius
11. Periods of time
12. Rapper Ice \_\_
13. Any of several candies

21. Units of loudness
23. Central nervous system
25. Resinous secretion of insects
26. 007's creator
27. Separate from
28. Exposes to view
29. Harsh squeaking sound
32. Fishing vessel (Naut.)
33. Western Ukrainian city
34. The sea
36. Unhappy
37. Old miserable woman
38. Corn comes on it
40. Guinea pig-like mammal
41. Self-immolation by fire rituals
43. Fifth note of a major scale
44. Automobile
46. Military title (abbr.)
47. Expunge
49. Chadic language Bura-\_\_
50. Something you win
51. Grab
52. Town in Galilee
53. Polite interruption sound
54. Italian Seaport
57. La\_\_ Tar Pits
58. "To \_\_, his own"
59. Tom Clancy hero Jack
61. These three follow A
62. One of Napoleon's generals

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For creative, simple, tasty family meals, consider these globally inspired recipes that highlight inventive ways to incorporate veal as a satisfying main ingredient in nearly any dish. From sandwiches to salads, the versatility of an ingredient like veal can help you build out a full menu with a wide array of protein-rich dishes. With recipes like these, veal can become a staple on your family's weekly menu.

Visit [vealmadeeasy.com](http://vealmadeeasy.com) for additional recipes and complete nutrition information.

**Classic Veal Parmesan Sandwiches**

Prep time: 10 minutes  
Cook time: 10 minutes  
Serves: 6

- 6 veal cutlets (3 ounces each)
- salt, to taste
- ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 egg wash
- 1 cup breadcrumbs
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 12 tablespoons tomato sauce
- 3 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, grated
- 6 slices provolone cheese
- 6 slices mozzarella cheese
- 6 sub rolls

Heat oven to 350 F.

Pound each veal cutlet between sheets of parchment or plastic wrap until 1/4-inch thick.

Blot veal dry. Season each cutlet with salt and pepper, to taste. Dredge veal in flour; shake off excess. Dip in egg wash and dredge in breadcrumbs.

In large skillet over medium heat, heat about 1/8-inch oil to about 350 F. Working in batches, add breaded veal to hot oil and pan fry first side until golden brown and crisp, about 2 minutes. Turn once and pan fry second side until it reaches internal temperature of 160 F, about 1-2 minutes.

Drain on paper towels or wire rack set over baking sheet.

Add 2 tablespoons tomato sauce to each veal cutlet and sprinkle 1/2 tablespoon Parmesan cheese on top. Add one slice provolone and mozzarella cheese to each cutlet.

Place veal parmesan in oven 2-3 minutes, or until the cheese begins to melt and veal is hot.

Add veal to sub rolls and serve.



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**Event Hours**  
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### Veal Za'atar Flatbreads

Prep time: 15 minutes  
Cook time: 25 minutes  
Serves: 4

- 1/4 cup za'atar seasoning
- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 package (10 ounces) flatbreads
- 1 onion (4 ounces), finely chopped
- 1/2 pound ground veal
- 1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1 tomato (6 ounces), cored and chopped
- 1 chopped parsley, for garnish

Heat oven to 425 F. In small bowl, combine za'atar seasoning and 2 tablespoons olive oil.

Spread about 1 tablespoon za'atar mixture on each flatbread. Arrange flatbreads on large baking sheet; set aside.

In 10-inch skillet over medium heat, heat remaining olive oil. Cook onion 4-5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add veal and cook 4-5 minutes until no longer pink, stirring to break up meat.

Remove skillet from heat; stir in feta cheese. Spoon 1/4 veal mixture onto each flatbread. Sprinkle each flatbread with tomato. Bake 8-10 minutes, or until hot. Sprinkle each flatbread with parsley.

Source: Family Features



### Mediterranean Grilled Salad

Prep time: 20 minutes  
Cook time: 10 minutes  
Serves: 4

- 1 large orange (12 ounces)
- 1/2 cup Italian salad dressing
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 veal cutlet (12 ounces), pounded to 1/4-1/8-inch thick
- 1 bulb fennel (7 ounces), trimmed, halved and cored
- 1/2 small red onion (1 1/2 ounces), thinly sliced
- 1 1/2 cups cooked farro
- 2 cups packed baby arugula (about 3 ounces)
- 1 head radicchio (4 ounces), cored and torn (about 2 cups packed)
- 1/2 cup toasted hazelnuts, chopped
- 1 ounce Parmesan cheese

Grate 1/2 tablespoon zest from orange; reserve orange. Stir zest into salad dressing.

Use knife to remove skin and pith from orange. Use knife to cut between fruit and membrane to release each orange section. Squeeze membrane to extract 1/4 cup juice; reserve juice and orange sections.

In bowl, whisk reserved orange juice, mustard and salad dressing. Remove 1/4 cup dressing to re-sealable food storage bag. Add veal cutlets to dressing in bag. Re-seal bag and turn several times until veal is coated with dressing; set aside.

Prepare grill or heat grill pan over medium-high heat on stovetop. Remove veal cutlets from dressing; discard dressing. Grill veal cutlets 5-6 minutes, turning once. Remove cutlets from heat. Place on cutting board and cut into bite-size pieces.



Thinly slice fennel halves and place in bowl. Add red onion, farro, arugula and radicchio; toss. Add veal, orange sections, reserved salad dressing and hazelnuts.

Draw blade of vegetable peeler across surface of cheese to make thin ribbons. Toss to coat with dressing. Divide salad among four bowls.

Source: Family Features

## Diet and exercise improve mental health

If your New Year's resolutions include mental health, you may want to increase your focus on diet and exercise. Two studies released in January 2019 point to the positive effects of diet and exercise on depression. Together, they have been linked to preventing the onset of depression and reducing its symptoms.



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT

The study by Karmel Choi and colleagues, published in JAMA Psychiatry, a publication of the American Medical Association, sought to reveal a causal relationship between exercise and depression. Results concluded that 15 minutes of vigorous physical activity, like running, or an hour of moderate physical activity, like brisk walking, reduces the risk of major depression by 26 percent.

Another study published in Psychosomatic Medicine by Joseph Firth and colleagues combined smaller studies on diet and depression symptoms and ran additional analysis to see if they could find a link. The dietary interventions that produced significant reduction in depressive symptoms involved weight loss and reducing fat intake and were directed by a nutrition professional.

Physical activity is important from an early age, not just for physical health but for mental health as well. Teaching children to be physically active is just as important as teaching them to read or write. Children do not have to be star athletes, but they need to know how to move their bodies and enjoy being physically active.

Although diet did not show a preventive effect when looking at depression, it is interesting that making dietary changes can help improve depressive symptoms. More research needs to be done on which types of dietary changes are most effective at reducing symptoms, but working with a nutrition professional can help point you to dietary strategies that work for you specifically.

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## Official Notice

### 2019 Annual Meeting

Walters Co-op Elevator Assn.  
Walters, Oklahoma

**Meeting will be held as follows:**

- Date: March 7, 2017
- Place: Cotton Electric Community Center
- Time: Meal Served at 12:00 Noon  
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# Parkinson's programs offered in southwest Oklahoma

By Danielle Quickle

Sixty thousand Americans are diagnosed with Parkinson's Syndrome every year. Without help, the disease can rob patients of their independence, health and voice. Programs are offered to improve the lives of those with Parkinson's, but often go unutilized.

For years, residents of southwest Oklahoma would have to travel hours to participate in programs designed to improve the effects of Parkinson's. Thanks to the Parkinson Foundation of Oklahoma, programs such as the Parkinson's Voice Project are conveniently available at Southwestern Medical Center (SWMC) in Lawton.

Parkinson's Voice Project treats individuals with Parkinson's and Parkinson-plus syndromes. It is a two-step program that focuses on teaching participants to live with intent. The first step of the program is SPEAK OUT! \*. It consists of individual meetings with Speech-Lan-

guage Pathologist Roni Gardner three times a week for four weeks. Participants learn speech, voice and cognitive exercises that target their intentional motor system. These exercises are outlined in a comprehensive workbook provided to every patient in the U.S. as a gift from Parkinson Voice Project.

"Performing these exercises regularly will naturally fix an array of problems," Gardner said. "The development of tremors, slow movement, posture instability, weak voice and swallowing problems that lead to life-threatening issues are dramatically decreased."

To enter the program, Parkinson's patients need only to ask their doctor for a referral. Gardner is SPEAK OUT! \* certified and capable of determining if an individual is a good candidate to benefit from the program. SPEAK OUT! \* can be billed through insurance and is completely covered by Medicare.

"If insurance or cost are an issue, we

still encourage people to apply," Gardner said. "We will do our best to figure out how to get participants through the program."

Completion of SPEAK OUT! \* allows patients to graduate and move on to the second step of the Parkinson's Voice Project, the LOUD Crowd \*.

LOUD Crowd \* continues the practices instilled during SPEAK OUT! \* in a group setting. Participants sit among other Parkinson's patients who have undergone similar circumstances, giving them access to accountability and support for life.

LOUD Crowd \* meets every Wednesday afternoon at SWMC and is completely free to patients, thanks to funding provided by the Parkinson Foundation of Oklahoma.

Rob Rooker is the Southwest Oklahoma Director for the Parkinson Foundation of Oklahoma and a participating member of LOUD Crowd \* in Lawton.

His passion for the program derives from how he has seen his own life impacted as a Parkinson's patient.

"Before SPEAK OUT! \*, I mumbled a lot and wasn't a very effective communicator," Rooker said. "Now it is so easy for me to communicate with my loved ones that they probably wish I would just stop talking."

Although fairly new to Lawton, the Parkinson's Voice Project has been operating since the late '90s. Gardner has high expectations for the future of the programs.

"Down the road, I would like to expand the programs and get more people involved," Gardner said. "It is so important that people in this area have something here for them to utilize and make their lives easier."

Those interested in finding more information about these programs can talk with their doctor or visit [ParkinsonVoiceProject.org](http://ParkinsonVoiceProject.org).

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# Stay safe, save energy this upcoming spring

## Steer clear of power lines during spring chores

You teach your kids to stay far away from power lines while they're playing outdoors in the spring and summer. Heed that advice when you're working in the yard or roof.

Contact with a live wire can damage your equipment. Worse, if you happen to be touching the equipment when it touches the wire, you could get electrocuted.

Here are a few springtime safety tips:

- Don't move a ladder or any tall equipment within 15 feet of any power line. A ladder that tips over should easily clear the wire.
- For safety's sake, assume every wire is live. Do not assume the wire is a telephone or cable line. Call your electric cooperative to make absolutely sure.
- Never touch a branch if it is touching a wire. Report the situation to your electric cooperative and keep everyone away from it until help arrives.
- Don't work outdoors in the rain. You could slip and fall, causing your ladder or equipment — or yourself — to topple onto a power line.

## Clean lint trap — and more

It's automatic for most people to swipe the lint out of the clothes dryer's lint trap after every load of clothes. But that's not enough to keep your dryer from becoming a fire hazard.

Here's what else you can do:

- If your clothes are still damp when the dryer shuts off, it's possible the machine's exhaust duct is clogged or blocked. Don't use the dryer again until you clear it.
- Clean the dryer vent and exhaust duct at least once a year. The duct is the coil that sends the hot dryer air to the outdoors. The vent is the hole where the hot air leaves the house.
- Both can get clogged with lint and overheat, send dirty, moist air back into your home, or even catch on fire. You might have to disconnect the exhaust duct from the dryer and from the vent to remove a blockage.
- Sweep behind your dryer regularly. Lint can accumulate there and also underneath. Move the dryer and clean the back of it. This might be a job for a service technician rather than for a do-it-yourselfer.
- If your exhaust duct is plastic or foil, replace it with a rigid or corrugated, semi-rigid metal duct. Plastic and foil are too flexible and trap lint easily. They're also easier to crush, which will prevent air from flowing through to the vent.
- Avoid throwing gasoline-, oil- or chemical-soiled clothes and towels into the dryer. Instead, wash them several times and line-dry them. If you have to use the dryer for them, choose the lowest setting, and remove them the minute the cycle is finished. Even washed-and-dried clothes that have come into contact with volatile chemicals can ignite.
- Instead, safely dispose of the clothes.

## Save money on water heating

Next to heating and cooling your home, heating your water uses more energy than anything else in the house.

Your family probably spends in the neighborhood of 18 percent of your utility dollars on water heating, according to U.S. Department of Energy estimates.

Here are eight ways to lower your water heating bill:



1. Replace old showerheads and faucets in every bathroom. Older models push out way more water than you need to take a comfortable shower or wash up at the sink. Replace them with low-flow faucets and aerating showerheads. The less water you use, the less you have to pay to heat it.
2. Repair leaky faucets. It might not seem like those few drops of water add up much but they can: The U.S. Geological Survey says that a faucet that drips 20 times per minute will waste a full gallon of water every day. If it's the hot-water faucet that's leaking, you're paying to heat water that you're wasting.
3. Turn the thermostat on your water heater to 120 degrees. The Department of Energy says that's a safe and sanitary temperature, and it will keep you comfortable in the shower.
4. Wrap an insulated blanket around your electric water heater. Take care to leave the thermostat uncovered. And if your tank is gas or oil-fueled, don't cover the top or bottom of the heater or its burner compartment. You might need to ask a plumber for help.
5. Wrap the hot and cold water pipes that connect to the water heater — for about six feet out.
6. Drain about a quart of water from the tank every three months to remove sediment. Built-up gunk in the water heater can make it inefficient because it has to work harder to transfer heat to the water.
7. If you're in the market for a new water heater, choose a high-efficiency model with the Energy Star label. High-efficiency water heaters use 10 percent to 50 percent less energy than traditional models.
8. Water heaters last for up to 15 years, but new models are so much more energy efficient than older ones that it's worth it to replace yours if you've had it for seven or more years.

## Energy savings: think about it

Saving energy isn't difficult, but it's not automatic. You need to plan to buy energy-efficient appliances and

to develop energy-wise lifestyle habits.

Here are a 15 few easy things to do around the house to save electricity and pare down your energy bill:

1. Adjust your thermostat. Even one or two degrees can add up to great savings.
2. While it's cold, keep blinds open in the daytime to allow heat in. Close them as it gets warmer.
3. Install a programmable thermostat to help you save energy while you work and sleep.
4. Wash your clothes in cold water and do only full loads.
5. Change your air filter to reduce the strain on your heating and cooling system.
6. For dinner, choose a meal you can cook in the microwave or a crockpot.
7. Don't preheat the oven unless making bread.
8. Keep your refrigerator full, but allow air to flow between items.
9. Examine windows and doors for air leaks. Repair damages or install weather-stripping to prevent heat loss.
10. Reduce the temperature on your water heater to 120 degrees to save money and prevent scalding.
11. Unplug second refrigerators or freezers if you can't keep them full. Otherwise, fill vacant space with water or ice.
12. Use your clothes dryer's moisture sensor cycle. This shuts it off when clothes are dry even if the cycle hasn't finished.
13. Turn off the drying function on your dishwasher and crack the door to allow dishes to air dry.
14. Shut off your computer if you will be gone for more than 20 minutes.
15. Unplug cell phones chargers, laptop batteries, and other small appliances when not in use.

Source: Pointers and Prose

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# Safely 'do it yourself'

If you are a homeowner, you know that there is always a project to complete around the house. Building a new deck, remodeling the basement, fixing the garage door, planting a tree...the list seems endless. There is one item that needs to be at the top of your list, no matter the project, and that is electrical safety.

Safety tips to keep in mind when tackling DIY projects include:

- Take a few minutes to prepare for the job. Make sure you have the right tools for the job, and check cords for any cracks or frayed insulation and proper connections.
- Take note of potential hazards in the work area. Be sure to look up and around you. Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long metal tools like ladders, pool skimmers, and pruning poles; when installing rooftop antennas and satellite dishes; or when doing roof repair work.
- Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines. Never trim trees near power lines—leave that to the professionals. Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines. Contact a professional maintenance contractor.
- Use only extension cords that are rated for outdoor use when working outside. Keep your work area tidy and do not allow your power cords to tangle.

- Use heavy-duty, three-prong extension cords for tools with three-prong plugs. Never remove or bend back the third prong on extension cords. It is a safety feature designed to reduce the risk of electrocution or shock.

- If your projects include digging, like building a deck or planting a tree, call 8-1-1 to have utility lines marked before you begin. Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. This service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted, and can help you avoid serious injury.

- Electricity + water = danger. If it is raining or the ground is wet, do not use electric power or yard tools. Never use electrical appliances or touch circuit breakers or fuses when you are wet or standing in water. Keep electric equipment at least 10 feet from wet areas.

- Make sure outdoor outlets are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). If your outdoor outlets do not have them, use a portable GFCI. It is also a good idea to have GFCIs professionally installed in wet areas of the home—such as the kitchen, bath, and laundry.

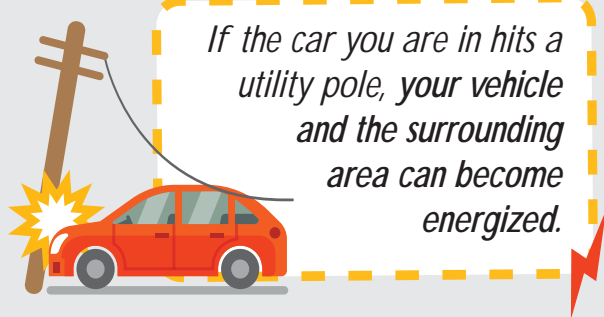
For more information on staying safe around electricity while you complete your DIY project, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

Source: *Safe Electricity*

## KNOW WHAT TO DO



*if in an Auto Accident with Power Lines*



*If the car you are in hits a utility pole, your vehicle and the surrounding area can become energized.*

*Even if you do not touch lines or equipment, you can still be killed or seriously injured.*



1. Do **NOT** leave the car, and warn others to stay away.

2. Call **911** to have the utility notified.



3. Wait until a utility professional has told you it is safe.



The **only** reason to exit the vehicle is if it's on fire.

If the car is on fire, jump clear of the vehicle: **with feet together, and without touching the car and the ground at the same time.**



Continue to **hop away** with your feet together as far as you can.



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# Daily steps to keep your heart healthy

Heart disease is a formidable foe. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, heart disease accounts for nearly 25 percent of all deaths in the United States each year.

Issues relating to the heart affect both men and women, and an estimated 15 million adults in the U.S. have coronary heart disease, the most common type of heart disease. And heart disease is not exclusive to the United States, as the Heart Research Institute says that every seven minutes in Canada someone dies from heart disease or stroke.

Such statistics are disconcerting, but they can serve as a wake-up call that compels people to prioritize heart health. Fortunately, heart disease is often preventable and people can employ various strategies to reduce their risk.

- Stop smoking right now. One of the best things to do to protect the heart is to stop smoking. The Heart Foundation indicates that smoking reduces oxygen in the blood and damages blood vessel walls. It also contributes to atherosclerosis, or a narrowing and clogging of the arteries.

• Eat healthy fats. When eating, choose polyunsaturated and unsaturated fats and avoid trans fats as much as possible. Trans fats increase one's risk of developing heart disease by clogging arteries and raising LDL (bad) cholesterol levels. Read food labels before buying anything at the store.

- Keep your mouth clean. Studies show that bacteria in the mouth involved in the development of gum disease can travel to the bloodstream and cause an elevation in C-reactive protein, a marker for blood vessel inflammation. Brush and floss twice daily, and be sure to schedule routine dental cleanings.

- Get adequate shut-eye. Ensuring adequate sleep can improve heart health. One study found that young and middle-age adults who regularly slept seven hours a night had less calcium in their arteries (a sign of early heart disease) compared to those who slept five hours or less or those who slept nine hours or more.



- Adopt healthy eating habits. Changes to diet, including eating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein, can help you lose and maintain a healthy weight, improve cholesterol levels and reduce blood pressure — leading to a healthier heart.

- Embrace physical activity. Regular moderate exercise is great for the heart. It can occur at the gym, playing with the kids or even taking the stairs at work. A healthy heart begins with daily habits that promote long-term heart health.

Source: Metro



# Mattress types can affect sleep quality

People make many renovations around their homes to improve their quality of life. When attention turns to the bedroom, some changes can greatly affect quality of sleep.

The temperature of the bedroom, its configuration and lighting can impact a person's ability to get a good night's sleep. However, the item that may bear the most influence is the mattress.

The Better Sleep Council says whether one wakes up feeling rested and healthy depends largely on the age of a mattress and its condition. A good mattress should alleviate pressure on joints while providing bodily support. It should not be a contributor to aches and pains. Mattresses that are seven years or older may need to be replaced.

A century or two ago, mattresses were constructed of whatever people had on hand — from feathers to pine needles to straw. That's all changed today. But even though there are many options, it's key for people to discover which material is right for them.

## Innerspring

Innerspring, also called coil, mattresses have been around for some time. These metal springs provide internal support. The number of coils, types of coils and distribution pattern throughout the mattress impacts how well the bed will conform to the body. These mattresses may be best for back or stomach sleepers due to their level of support. Keep in mind that innerspring mattresses may have limited durability and may start to sag after just a few years.

## Memory foam

Memory foam mattresses are relatively recent additions to the market. According to the mattress shopping resource The Sleep Judge, memory foam mattresses may eventually replace innerspring mattresses. Famous for its ability to contour to the shape of the user's body, memory foam envelops a person and absorbs energy. This means there's less motion transfer. That's a big plus when sleeping with a partner who moves around in bed. Memory foam provides a high level of pressure

point relief and promotes proper spine alignment.

## Gel foam

Gel foam mattresses bounce back to their original form when pressure is released. Hollow columns in the mattress allow for increased air flow that improves this pressure release and enables people to sleep coolly and comfortably. Sometimes gel is paired with memory foam for a hybrid mattress.

## Latex

Latex mattresses are coveted due to their durability and comfort. Latex also conforms to the body, but more generally than memory foam, so it bounces back quickly. One of the biggest draws to latex mattresses is how natural they are. Latex is made from natural rubber. Cost can be prohibitive, however, as latex mattresses tend to be expensive. Purchasing a new mattress can lead to better sleep. This is a bedroom renovation worth pursuing.

Source: Metro

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