

The Current

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“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

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NUMBER 4

Bray Missionary Baptist Church • United Way of Stephens County • Cotton County Graduated Sanctions • Youth Services of Stephens County • Cotton County Museum Association • Indianhoma Ag Boosters • Velma Lions Club • Duncan Kiwanis • Elgin National Junior Honor Society • Gabriel's House • Cache Ag Boosters • Stephens County Sheriff Reserves • Walters VFD • Teen Round-Up • Geronimo • American Red Cross • Geronimo Elementary • Christian Helping Hands • Corum VFD • Cox's Store VFD • Porter Hill VFD • Holy City of the Wichitas • First United Methodist Church of Walters • Walters High School • Duncan Senior Citizens Center • Lawton Food Bank • Gabriel's House • Geronimo Boy Scouts • Oasis of Hope • Youth Services of Stephens County • Medicine Park • Temple Chamber of Commerce • Cache Ag Boosters • FBC of Elgin • First Bank and Trust • United Way of Stephens County • Christian Family Counseling Center • Stephens County Christmas Dinner • Bray City Park • Cotton County Graduated Sanctions • Kidtopia Playground Project • Faxon • Prairie House Foundation • Central High School • Mark Twain PTO • Lawton-Ft. 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Carter Crane Emergency Shelter • Walters Volunteer Ambulance Service • Elgin High School • Tri-County Nutrition Program • Addington VFD • Central High VFD • Meers VFD • Velma VFD • Learn and Serve Duncan • Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth • Toy Shop of Duncan • Loco Cemetery • Stephens County Humane Society • Corum VFD • Grace Fellowship Church • Comanche County Nutrition Project • Bethel Road VFD • Edgewater Park VFD • Waurika VFD • Armed Services YMCA • J. 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ORU, CECF pass another milestone

By Karen Kaley

Sometimes it’s the simple, small things that have the largest impact over time. Through Operation Round Up, Cotton Electric members have a simple way to make small contributions that have made a very significant impact for a decade.

That’s right, folks. Operation Round Up (ORU) and the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) have been making a difference in southwest Oklahoma for 10 years.

When introduced to Cotton Electric members in 2004, the concept of Operation Round Up was already 15 years old, having started at Palmetto

Electric Cooperative in Hardeeville, S.C. The embodiment of the co-op principle of “Concern for Community,” the program was adopted by co-ops across the country as a way to prove that those are more than just words.

Nationally, this year marks the 25th anniversary of Operation Round Up. The program is established in 252 electric co-ops. All that spare change has added up to several hundred million dollars in assistance to charitable causes around the country.

Locally, CECF has issued 343 grants and has distributed more than three-quarters of a million dollars in

ORU funds in an effort to improve the quality of life throughout the service area.

“We were inspired by Oklahoma Electric Cooperative’s program and knew there were unmet needs in our communities,” said Jennifer Meason, who worked with co-op management in 2004 to establish the program and is now Cotton’s vice president of marketing.

“The Cotton board of trustees graciously approved the program, and I’m proud of what we have accomplished over the past 10 years.”

The variety of grants issued over the past 10 years is remarkable. Amounts

ranging from \$100 to \$10,000 have gone to both large and small organizations. Beneficiaries have ranged from entire communities to individuals with special needs.

ORU funds have purchased basic equipment and paid for facility upgrades to help community agencies carry out missions. They now have tables for sorting, computers for tracking, refurbished vinyl floors and roofs that don’t leak.

ORU funds have put food in backpacks, baskets and bellies of school-children, senior citizens and many others who are nutritionally insecure.

See Decade, Page 6



Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment (PCA) applied to bills mailed after Nov. 1 is \$0.01073 per kWh.

On a member’s average bill of 1500 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$16.10 on the November bill.

| October 2014 Temperature Extremes | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|-----|------|-----------------------|------|-----|------|
| Day | High | Low | Avg. | Day | High | Low | Avg. |
| 1 | 96 | 70 | 83 | 16 | 92 | 45 | 69 |
| 2 | 85 | 56 | 71 | 17 | 82 | 60 | 71 |
| 3 | 74 | 43 | 59 | 18 | 76 | 52 | 64 |
| 4 | 81 | 39 | 60 | 19 | 74 | 55 | 65 |
| 5 | 90 | 47 | 69 | 20 | 84 | 53 | 69 |
| 6 | 92 | 60 | 76 | 21 | 83 | 54 | 69 |
| 7 | 99 | 57 | 78 | 22 | 78 | 52 | 65 |
| 8 | 92 | 59 | 76 | 23 | 81 | 61 | 71 |
| 9 | 92 | 69 | 81 | 24 | 88 | 55 | 72 |
| 10 | 82 | 53 | 68 | 25 | 92 | 53 | 73 |
| 11 | 63 | 48 | 56 | 26 | 91 | 52 | 72 |
| 12 | 82 | 43 | 63 | 27 | 88 | 59 | 74 |
| 13 | 68 | 53 | 61 | 28 | 75 | 47 | 61 |
| 14 | 76 | 46 | 61 | 29 | 75 | 37 | 56 |
| 15 | 80 | 44 | 62 | 30 | 81 | 43 | 62 |
| Source: srh.noaa.gov/oun/ | | | | 31 | 63 | 41 | 52 |
| Average Daily High: 82 | | | | Average Daily Low: 52 | | | |

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed Thursday, Nov. 27, and Friday, Nov. 28, for the Thanksgiving holiday. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The December issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on Dec. 15, 2014.

| Corrected September 2014 Temperatures | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|-----|------|--|------|-----|------|
| Day | High | Low | Avg. | Day | High | Low | Avg. |
| 1 | 102 | 76 | 89 | 16 | 91 | 70 | 81 |
| 2 | 100 | 77 | 89 | 17 | 94 | 70 | 82 |
| 3 | 99 | 76 | 88 | 18 | 86 | 70 | 78 |
| 4 | 99 | 73 | 86 | 19 | 90 | 67 | 79 |
| 5 | 97 | 69 | 83 | 20 | 90 | 71 | 81 |
| 6 | 69 | 63 | 66 | 21 | 94 | 67 | 81 |
| 7 | 85 | 64 | 75 | 22 | 84 | 62 | 73 |
| 8 | 93 | 68 | 81 | 23 | 86 | 57 | 72 |
| 9 | 100 | 73 | 87 | 24 | 86 | 60 | 73 |
| 10 | 96 | 71 | 84 | 25 | 87 | 57 | 72 |
| 11 | 80 | 66 | 73 | 26 | 87 | 55 | 71 |
| 12 | 69 | 55 | 62 | 27 | 87 | 64 | 76 |
| 13 | 68 | 51 | 60 | 28 | 87 | 59 | 73 |
| 14 | 77 | 59 | 68 | 29 | 88 | 58 | 73 |
| 15 | 88 | 68 | 78 | 30 | 91 | 63 | 77 |
| Source: srh.noaa.gov/oun/ | | | | Average Daily High: 88 Average Daily Low: 65 | | | |

Leadership group soldiers for a day

During November, we make it a priority to reflect on the many blessings bestowed upon us and to observe Veterans Day. We are very fortunate to live in the great state of Oklahoma and enjoy the freedoms we have as Americans. A recent experience has expanded my view of these freedoms and the young men and women who serve our country.

I have the privilege of joining 50 outstanding individuals from across our great state in the 2014-15 Leadership Oklahoma program. Over the next year, we will discuss social, environmental and economic issues facing Oklahoma.

Our most recent session was held at Lawton-Fort Sill. The primary focus was the impact of military installations in our state and the challenges facing our military. The Lawton-Fort Sill planning committee developed a dynamic and in-depth program for our class. Kudos to all who participated from our surrounding communities.

After a reception and performance by the Field Artillery Half Section and Costello’s Own Bagpipe Corps, we met our hosts for the weekend, the 434th Field Artillery Brigade. The brigade’s motto is “Service with Pride” and the soldiers exemplified that motto.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

By Jennifer Meason

We were introduced to our drill sergeants from the 1-31st Field Artillery Battalion for our “basic training” and were transported to the barracks. We jumped headfirst into an introduction to the mental and physical rigors that new recruits encounter. Our hosts did an excellent job of training the Leadership group – the majority of whom are inexperienced civilians – and demonstrating how to transform “civilian volunteers into disciplined, motivated and fit soldiers.”

Lights out came early due to our 0500 wake-up call for physical training with the soldiers. This experience was the highlight of the weekend for me. A few of my classmates and I joined a graduating unit for their Morale Run. Running alongside the soldiers as they sang their cadences filled our hearts with pride. I wish I could begin every morning with a run like that one.

We also had the opportunity to eat breakfast with the soldiers and speak with them about their experiences during basic training. These young

men and women, all of whom have volunteered to serve our country, are exceptional.

The rest of the day was non-stop, consisting of issues briefs, a convoy demonstration and live fire exercises. We stopped briefly for a field lunch of MRE’s (meals ready to eat) and returned to Post for simulator demonstrations and discussions focusing on the potential effects of sequestration to the military’s budget.

The day quickly came to an end as we observed the Retreat Ceremony and learned more about Fort Sill’s unique history at the Old Post Quadrangle. History buffs should definitely place the Fort Sill National Historic Landmark and Museum on their must-see list.

We moved the next day to my alma mater Cameron University. After taking a moment to digest the experience, we had the opportunity to discuss what we had learned. Overall, we agreed this experience was phenomenal. Growing up in the Lawton-Fort Sill community, I have always valued



Decked out in military gear during recent Leadership Oklahoma activities, Jennifer Meason said of the experience, “I have a lot of respect for the soldiers who wear this gear and a lot more in the field. Those vests and plates are heavy!”

the men and women who serve our country. However, this session forever deepened my appreciation for the sacrifices made in order to keep us safe.

Many thanks to our veterans, military and civil service personnel and the families who keep the home-fires burning. We are indebted to you, and your cooperative thanks you.

Keep holidays happy using these cooking safety tips

The kitchen is the heart of the home. Sadly, it’s also where two out of every five home fires start. Many home fires occur during what’s supposed to be the happiest time of the year – the holidays.

Thanksgiving, Christmas and Christmas Eve hold a tradition of cooking, and safety should always be considered in the kitchen. As we embark on the holiday season, Cotton Electric and the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) urge you to use these simple safety tips to identify and correct potential kitchen hazards:

- Never leave cooking equipment unattended, and always remember to turn off burners if you have to leave the room.
- Supervise the little ones closely in the kitchen. Make sure children stay at least three feet away from all cooking appliances.
- Prevent potential fires by making sure your stovetop and oven are clean and free of grease, dust and spilled food.

- Remember to clean the exhaust hood and duct over your stove on a regular basis.
- Keep the cooking area around the stove and oven clear of combustibles, such as towels, napkins and potholders.
- Always wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can catch fire.
- To protect from spills and burns, use the back burners and turn the pot handles in, away from reaching hands.
- Locate all appliances away from the sink.
- Plug countertop appliances into ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-protected outlets.
- Keep appliance cords away from hot surfaces like the range or toaster.
- Unplug the toaster and other countertop appliances when not in use.
- Be sure to turn off all appliances when cooking is completed.

For more important safety tips to keep you and your family safe this holiday season and throughout the year, visit www.esfi.org.

 **Prevent Common Kitchen Hazards**



COOKING HAZARDS are the #1 cause of home fires.

OLDER ADULTS account for more than **30%** of fire-related deaths annually.



Kitchen Safety Practices



STAY IN the kitchen at all times when you're cooking

KEEP flammable items away from the stovetop and other hot surfaces.

UNPLUG countertop appliances when not in use.

NEVER USE an oven for heating your home.

Four Kitchen Safety Tips to Live By

1 NEVER COOK if you are sleepy, have been drinking alcohol or have taken medications that make you drowsy.



2 USE A TIMER to remind you to check on food that is simmering or in the oven.





3 DOUBLE CHECK that oven burners and appliances are off when you are done.



4 USE GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER (GFCI)-protected outlets for countertop appliances. Found mostly in areas where electrical products might come in contact with water, GFCIs protect against shock and electrocution.



www.esfi.org  facebook.com/ESFI.org  twitter.com/ESFIdotorg



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

To save energy this month, try lowering your water heating costs. Water heating accounts for 14 to 25 percent of the energy you consume. Turn the water heater’s temperature to the warm setting, which is around 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This will save energy – and help you save on your monthly bill.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



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.

| | 2014 | 2013 |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Total Amount Billed/Accrued | \$6,064,782 | \$5,501,766 |
| Cost of Purchased Power | 4,436,102 | 3,884,762 |
| Taxes | 128,486 | 112,862 |
| Total Operating Expense Per Mile | 1,169 | 1,097 |
| Average Farm and Residential Bill | 144 | 138 |
| Average Farm and Residential kWh | 1,248 | 1,330 |
| Total Meters Billed (farm, residential) | 18,280 | 18,113 |
| Miles Energized | 5,148 | 5,128 |
| Density Per Mile | 3.55 | 3.53 |
| New Service Connects YTD | 270 | 282 |
| Services Retired | 125 | 155 |

TheCurrent

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Jennifer Kriz..... Display Advertising

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Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the December issue, please submit information by Dec. 1 by calling 580-875-4259 or send an email to info@cottonelectric.com.

Stephens County hosts Rising Star

Stephens County Fairgrounds will host the 13th annual Rising Stars of Calf Roping, a premier event featuring more than 500 of the most talented ropers in the nation. Activities will take place Nov. 27 through 30. Thursday opens at 8 a.m. with 12 and Under Tie-Down. All-Star Calf Roping begins at 3 p.m. A Thanksgiving meal will be served all day. Friday's activities begin at 8 a.m. with 12 and Under Breakaway. The 13-15 Tie-Down begins around 2 p.m. Saturday starts with 13-15 Breakaway at 8 a.m., with 19 & Under Girls Breakaway set to begin around 2 p.m. Cowboy Church service begins at 8:30 a.m. Sunday, and 16-19 Tie-Down follows at 9:30 a.m. For information, visit RisingStarsCalfRoping.com.

CTAC presents Bryan White

Chisholm Trail Arts Council presents Lawton native Bryan White at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 5 in the Simmons Center. White has charted 17 singles on Billboard's Country Charts, had six number one singles, two platinum records and two gold records. His duet with Shania Twain on "From This Moment On" made it to number four on Billboard's Hot 100 Chart. White has garnered several awards, including a Grammy, a CMA Horizon Award, and an ACM Top Male Vocalist award. Tickets are available at ChisholmTrailArts.com; the CTAC office, 810 West Walnut; or at the box office. Call 580-252-4160 or visit the website for more information.

Christmas Bazaar in Duncan

Crafts, baked goods, Christian articles, gifts and books are some of the goodies to be found at the Christmas Bazaar hosted by Assumption Catholic Church in Duncan. Christmas shoppers won't want to miss this event from 4 to 8 p.m. Dec. 5, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Dec. 6, and 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 7 at 711 W. Hickory. There will be a concession full of tasty treats for hungry shoppers.

LCT presents 'The Game's Afoot'

Lawton Community Theatre's second offering of the season features danger and hilarity in "The Game's Afoot." Renowned for his portrayal of Sherlock Holmes, 1930s star William Gillette assumes the role of the great detective offstage when a weekend of revelry becomes the setting for a real-life mystery.



It's the time of year for parades, tree lightings and special musical presentations. Holiday events are planned throughout the Cotton Electric service area. See a listing of Holiday Happenings on Page 3 of our special Holiday Guide.

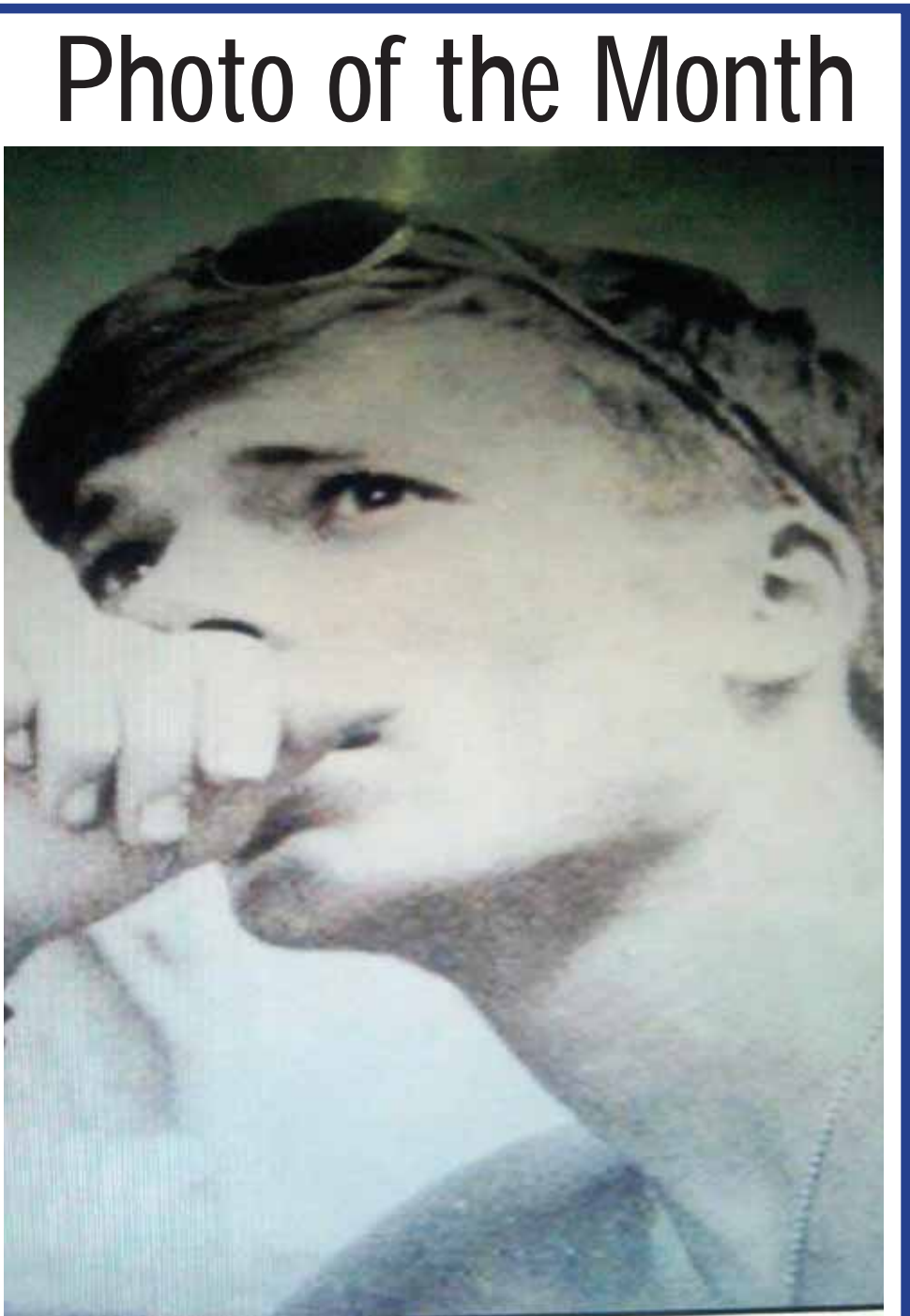
Performances are at Dec. 5-7 and Dec. 11-14 in the John Denny Playhouse, 1316 NW Bell Avenue. For information, visit LCT-OK.org or call 580-355-1600.

Aequalis tour features two homes

Two homes will be featured in the annual Aequalis Christmas Open House Tour from 1 to 4 p.m. Dec. 7 in Duncan. Featured stops include the home of Paul and Susan Scott, 4505 Copperwood. This home is located in the Hickory Hills Addition, 7/10 mile west of U.S. 81 Highway on Camelback Road. The home of Lance and Staci Strickland also hosts the Elf & Co. Sweet Shoppe and Marketplace, offering homemade baked goods and gift selections. The home is three miles east of U.S. 81 on the south side of the road at 284851 East Camelback. Tickets for the tour can be purchased in advance from any Aequalis member or at The Loft, The Ginger Jar, Sumac Trading Company or Dear Friends in Duncan. Tickets can be purchased at either of the featured houses on the day of the event.

Dahlia home tour is Dec. 13




Walters Dahlia Garden Club is making plans for a Christmas Home Tour set for Dec. 13. This is the third year the group has hosted the event, which begins at 2 p.m. and ends at 7. The tour features four homes in Cotton County. Maps will be available at the first stop on the tour, Cotton County Drug, 631 E. Missouri in Walters. There will be refreshments and a bake sale. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door. Tickets can be purchased at Cotton County Drugs, Buzzin' Around Flowers or from any Dahlia Garden Club member. For information, call tour chairman MaryAnn Holman at 580-875-3720 or club president Melanie Spence at 580-483-9712.




Cotton Electric member Trudy Knight submitted this photo in our Veterans-themed contest. This photo of SP4 Regg K. "Pat" Patterson was taken June 6, 1970, in Vietnam. He served as a LRRP/sniper in the U.S. Army, 101st Airborne. Trudy said, "Pat and I spent 14 years, 4 months, and 6 days together before he lost his battle with Agent Orange-related lupus on Jan 6, 2011." Thank you, Pat, for your service, and thank you, Trudy, for sharing the photo. Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for December is Holiday. Entries can be emailed to info@cottonelectric.com or mailed to The Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572. Winners will receive a Cotton Electric prize package of CEC goodies.

High School Juniors: Win an all-expense paid "trip of a lifetime" to Washington D.C.

Travel with other teens from across Oklahoma on the Rural Electric Youth Tour June 12-18, 2015



Check with your English teacher or counselor for details, or call us at **580-875-3351**

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



is for Eighth-Graders!

Join us at the beautiful Canyon Camp near Hinton, where you'll experience the exciting world of rural electricity.

May 26-29, 2015

Volleyball, Swimming and Hiking
Safety Demonstrations
Operate a Cooperative Trivia Contest



Call 580-875-3351 for details.

**COTTON**
ELECTRIC CO-OP

Law man

Doolin keeps co-op on the straight and narrow

By Karen Kaley

Cotton Electric members who have attended district and annual meetings may have noticed a gentleman seated behind the podium, often in quiet discussions with the co-op’s CEO or trustees. He rarely addresses the members, but he is always there.

That’s our Bill Doolin, making sure the meeting is carried out well.

Cotton Electric Cooperative is a business that is owned and democratically controlled by the people who use it, the members. Members gather from time to time to conduct official cooperative business.

Aside from the annual membership meeting, there are triennial district meetings and monthly meetings of the nine members serving as the co-op’s board of trustees.

These are important meetings, where members can actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The weight of those decisions can be such that it is essential for the meetings to be carried out according to co-op bylaws.

That’s where Doolin comes in. He’s the fellow seen more than heard, sitting near the front. During district meetings, he quietly guides chairmen and secretaries through their roles. During annual meetings, he observes registration of members and verifies the presence of a quorum.

The co-op board hired Doolin to serve as its attorney in March 1983. In addition to 31



annual meetings since then, he has been present for 93 district meetings. Of all of those meetings, none was as eventful as the first.

“That first district meeting was in Geronimo,” he recalled. “Members showed up in busloads. A quorum was present, and I was tasked with responsibility of providing parliamentary procedure.”

Doolin described the quorum system as the only feature wholly unique to the cooperative business model. A quorum is the minimum number of members that must be present at any business meeting to make the proceedings of that meeting valid.

Cotton Electric bylaws define a quorum as 5 percent of the members in a district for those meetings and 5 percent of the entire membership for annual meetings. Doolin explained that means at least 5 percent of the members have to care enough to want to make a change. It keeps very small turnouts from determining very big outcomes.

Doolin said there have been very few instances during his time with the co-op when a quorum was present for a district meeting.

“At all but one that fielded a quorum – that first one – the incumbent was re-elected.”

He feels that will be the case as long as the cooperative members are satisfied with the

Spotlight

Bill Doolin

way the co-op conducts business. To that end, Doolin said, everyone at the co-op, from the CEO on down, will do all they can to solve members’ problems.

“Cotton’s trustees are truly dedicated to reasonable rates and top-grade maintenance. I am here to facilitate that in any way I can legally contribute.”

During trustee meetings, Doolin carries out his primary duty as attorney for the board.

“When the co-op needs legal guidance or research, the board generally turns to me,” he said.

He has worked alongside five co-op managers during his tenure, each having a different style that suited the times. It’s his opinion the co-op board has chosen managers well.

“There was no bad guidance from any of them.”

Early in his service to the co-op, Doolin was encouraged to attend legal seminars run by Bill Crisp, who Doolin described as “the absolute godfather of proper co-op attorney ethics and solutions.”

These annual sessions helped Doolin get a sense of how co-ops work from a legal perspective. He learned a lot about the genesis of rural electric programs during the 1930s and points out that co-ops owe a lot to “Congressional godfather Sam Rayburn



Bill Doolin and his wife, Linda, at Cotton’s annual meeting.

of Texas, who really championed the rural electric cause and brought it to fruition.”

The Lawton resident is not a co-op member, but Doolin is probably more knowledgeable about the co-op’s history and intricacies than most. He pointed out Cotton Electric has more miles of power line than the combined cities of Muskogee and Lawton.

He said power rates in Oklahoma are among the lowest in the nation. Doolin said that even though there is a difference between Cotton’s rates and the state’s investor-owned utilities (IOUs), the co-op’s rates are lower than other co-ops and lower than a number of IOUs in the U.S.

Doolin pointed out that rural electric cooperatives are

good for the communities they serve beyond keeping the lights on.

“Co-ops increase the median income of rural communities. Their economic function contributes to the well-being of communities.

“They offer good pay for an honest day’s work.”

Doolin’s work for the co-op is in addition to his solo civil practice, which he is scaling back.

“From 1971 to the present, I have put in my time. So I’m going to phase back to just giving advice.”

However, he plans to remain just as active with the co-op.

“Over all, it’s been quite a ride in the co-op business and I intend to stay for as long as they will let me.”

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Charitable Giving Pays Off ... for Everyone

Americans are pretty generous — in fact, 83% of us donated money to charitable organizations last year, according to a Gallup survey. And now that we’re entering the holiday season, charitable giving well may be on your mind. Your key motivation for making charitable gifts, of course, is to help those organizations whose work is meaningful to you. However, by supporting these groups, you can also make life less “taxing” for yourself.

Specifically, by making charitable contributions, you may be able to receive some valuable tax breaks. To claim a deduction, though, you need to itemize your taxes, and you need to make sure that the organization you’re supporting is qualified, from a tax-deductibility standpoint. If you’re unsure whether a group is qualified, just ask to see its letter from the IRS. (Many organizations now post these

letters on their websites.)

Here’s how the charitable tax deduction works: If you give \$200 to a qualified charity, and you’re in the 25% tax bracket, you can deduct \$200, with a tax benefit of \$50, when you file your 2014 taxes. Consequently, the net “cost” of your donation is just \$150 (\$200 minus the \$50 tax savings).

Of course, you are not confined to making cash gifts. In fact, if you donate certain types of noncash assets, you may be able to increase your tax benefits. Suppose you give \$1,000 worth of stock in ABC Company to a charitable group. If you’re in the 25% bracket, you’ll be able to deduct \$250 when you file your taxes. And by donating the ABC stock, you can avoid paying the capital gains taxes that would be due if you had eventually sold the stock yourself.

Keep in mind that if you want to deduct your contributions for the 2014 tax year, you’ll need to make your gifts by Dec. 31. One more reminder: Retain your paperwork. If you made gifts totaling over \$250 to any single charity — or noncash contributions of any items worth over \$500 — the IRS requires written acknowledgments for your contributions.

If you want to take a longer-term approach to charitable giving, while incorporating your gifts in planning for your estate, you might want to consider establishing a charitable remainder trust. Under this arrangement, you’d place some assets, such as stocks or real estate, into a trust, which could then use these assets to pay you a lifetime income stream. When you establish the trust, you may be able to receive an immediate tax deduction based on the charitable group’s

“remainder interest” — the amount the charity is likely to ultimately receive. (This figure is determined by an IRS formula.) Upon your death, the trust would relinquish the remaining assets to the charitable organization you’ve named. This type of trust can be complex, so to create one, you’ll need to work with your tax and legal advisors.

While the tax benefits associated with charitable giving are significant, they should not, ultimately, drive your gifting decisions. You should also consider the effect your gift will have on the other areas of your estate considerations — so make sure you communicate your plans to your family members.

In any case, though, be as generous as you can this holiday season and in the years to come. Your generosity will be a rewarding experience — for everyone.

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**Johnson & Johnson
Locksmith & Door Co., Inc.**
10% discount on services.
Mention card before parts are ordered



New service line, location, name same security experts

By Karen Kaley

It's been more than three years since Johnson & Johnson Locksmith was featured as the Co-op Connections partner in The Current. A lot has happened since April 2011 – new location, new name, new service line – and it's time for an update.

In the past couple of years, owners Anthony and Chearlene Johnson moved the shop across the street and down two blocks to its location at 1913 NW Cache Road in Lawton. Anthony stands in the middle of the expanded showroom and calls it his dream facility. "This place encompasses everything we do. It has a beautiful large showroom serving as a nice waiting area for our customers. There's plenty of room in the technicians' work areas, and we had no trouble filling up extra room in the back."

He gives credit for the showroom's handsome appearance to Chearlene, who now serves the business as a chief operating officer, overseeing human resources and bookkeeping.

She also carries the very important role of Nana, keeping an eye on grandkids after school. The new location includes a space just for them.

With the move came the name change, which serves two purposes. Johnson and Johnson Locksmith and Door Co., Inc. adds the new product line and smooths the way for future changes.

The business has always offered security doors, but through the years, potential customers would ask about automated doors, too. "We identified a need in southwest Oklahoma," Anthony said, "so we got the training, expanded the service we offer and added Door to our name."

"We offer no-touch doors, the type that slide or swing, and can be handicap-operated. We provide installation, service and repair."

That's in addition to a wide variety of security devices that includes keys of all colors and sizes, locks, reinforced doors, keypads, surveillance cameras, safes, padlocks, key tags, deadbolts and stun guns.

The other part of the name change has to do with incorporation, a business move which, among other things, will help with the gradual transfer of operations to the Johnsons' son, Anthony. The father and son are also known as "Big Ant" and "Little Ant" when clarity is needed.



Gun safes and security gadgets are among the many items found in the showroom at Johnson & Johnson Locksmith & Door Co., Inc. at 1913 NW Cache in Lawton. Anthony Johnson said the new location is his dream facility.

This is truly a family business. In addition to Little Ant as senior technician, brother-in-law, Earl Glover IV is shop manager and road technician. Gary Culhane, locksmith and all-around technician.

Another son, Aundre', manages the shop's digital presence on Facebook and Twitter where they offer security tips for homes and businesses. They also have a website: <http://jjlocksmithok.com>.

Security tips are an important part of what the experts at Johnson and Johnson Locksmith and Door offer. "We offer professional, honest advice on security. Because of that, we have return customers."

As an example, Big Ant said, "Take a picture of your keys. If you lose a key we can make a new one from the photo, as long as it's not a high-security key."

That tip also carries a caution: Don't leave your keys laying around for someone else to take a picture.

He said they don't charge for those bits of advice. Another free service involves releasing small children from locked cars, which Anthony said happens at least once a week.

"When we get a call like that, we drop what we're doing and go, even if we have to close the shop."

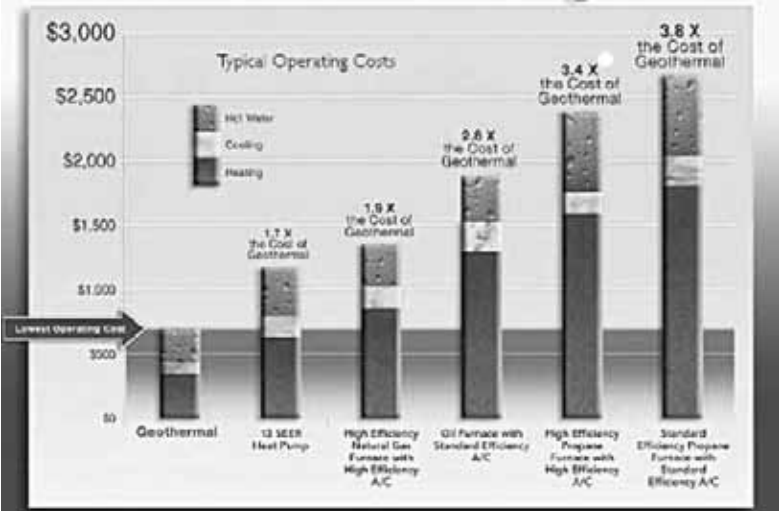
"Most times, the mom is panicked. First thing they do when doors open, is grab the child, hug them and cry."

"That's reward enough, the satisfaction of seeing that embracing moment. I can't charge for that."

To reach Johnson and Johnson Locksmith and Door, the numbers to remember are easy: 355-KEYS, 353-KEYS or 355-DOOR.

Cotton Electric members should mention their Co-op Connections card when they first contact Johnson and Johnson Locksmith to get a 10 percent discount on all services. Please mention the card before any parts are ordered.

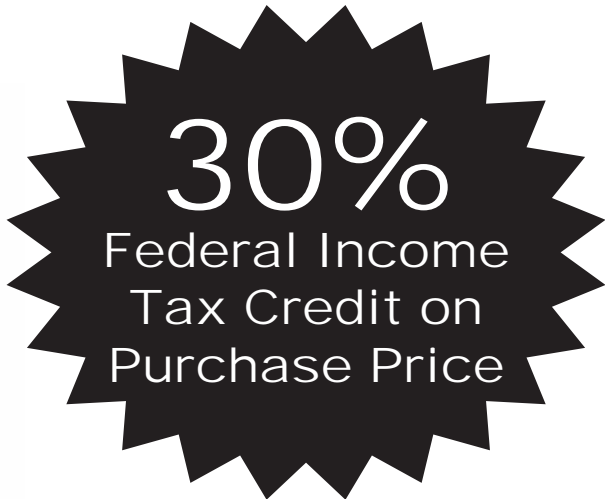
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CECF service fulfills a passion

By Karen Kaley

As with many adventures in volunteerism, it all started with a question: Would you like to help?

Carly Douglass got that call nearly eight years ago from Cotton Electric Trustee Charles Spencer. Today, she is the senior-most volunteer on the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) board of directors.

The board consists of five individuals: Cotton Electric’s CEO, sitting president of the board of trustees and three directors, each representing three of the co-op’s nine districts. The current makeup of the CECF board is CEO Warren Langford, Board President Tim McCary and Directors Danny Marlett, Douglass and Carter Waid. The directors are volunteers, serving as CECF president, vice president and secretary/treasurer, respectively.

Douglass said that is a good mix. “Having five on the board means there are four other voices when we look at applications.”

When she agreed to serve on the CECF board, Douglass was like many other Cotton Electric members: She participated in Operation Round Up and didn’t think much about her monthly contribution.

She was surprised to discover the power of a few cents from her membership combined with a few cents from many, many other members. “I didn’t realize how much the members contribute every quarter.”

In October 2014, slightly more than 13,000 Cotton Electric members had their power bills



Carly Douglass has served on the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation board since March 2007.

rounded up to the nearest dollar. A contribution was as little as zero and as large as 99 cents with the average being about 50 cents. In total: \$6,367.41.

When the CECF board meets again in mid-December, it will consider grant applications received by Dec. 3. The funds they will have to distribute will include the accumulated September, October and November contributions along with donations from other sources.

“It is a tremendous amount that helps a lot of people,” Douglass said.

While contributing to ORU is simple, the task of the CECF board takes a bit of work. Cotton Electric staff prepares and delivers packets to each board member a week in advance. This gives them time to read through and consider each application.

Douglass said she looks at them one by one, and “if the requestor is in my district, I call them and ask more questions about the need.”

When the board gathers, each application is discussed thoroughly and with care.

“We want to be good stewards of the members’ money and make decisions the members will agree with,” Douglass said.

“We try to spread the funds out as much as we can. We look for breadth of impact, how many members a grant will help or how big a difference it will make in an individual’s life.

“We have made grants for many types of reasons to many types of organizations: structural, feeding, volunteer fire departments, hospitals ...

“The grants that mean the most to me,” Douglass said, “are those going to individuals. I am so glad CECF can help people with handicaps, providing a means for some things able-bodied people take for granted.”

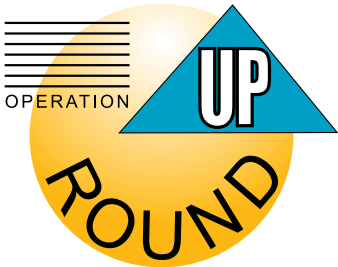
She continued, “I’m also proud of the contributions to volunteer fire departments. The key word there is volunteer.

“They help so many people. And, who knows? I may be the next one who needs them.”

The retired administrative assistant also volunteers at the Soldier’s Closet on Fort Sill and at Crossroads Baptist Church. But, she said, “CECF is my favorite volunteer activity. It’s my passion to help people.”

She offered praise for Cotton Electric members, for their part in making ORU and CECF a success and had a final message:

“If you need help, let us know. Please apply and let us consider your application.”



Download CECF grant applications at CottonElectric.com. Deadline for fourth-quarter 2014 grant applications is Dec. 3.

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

Decade of giving touches many lives

Contineud from Page One

Food pantries and senior centers have sturdy cold storage and carts and dollies to move and sort cases of food.

Schools have used ORU funds to buy books and electronic tablets, to pour sidewalks and set up learning labs. Lighting is more efficient and research materials are enhanced.

Volunteer fire departments have purchased air tanks, radios, Jaws of Life and bunker gear with ORU funds. Trucks have been updated and outfitted with new hoses and nozzles.

Youth from Velma to Chattanooga and many points in between have better playgrounds and adequate school supplies. Teens have materials to help with decision-making and ways to celebrate reaching goals.

Public safety has been enhanced with the installation of numerous automated external defibrillators in the area, ambulances outfitted with equipment and call centers supported.

“CECF has touched so many lives and improved the quality of life for our members,” Meason said.

Contributions to the fund are tiny, less than a dollar a month. Meason said the impact is worth every penny.

“Seeing the smile on a recipient’s face is priceless.”

It has all been possible because of support and participation of Cotton’s members. The opt-out program is automatic for every member unless he or she requests otherwise, and very few have. In October, more than 13,000 Cotton Electric members had their power bills rounded up to the nearest dollar.

When the CECF board meets again in December, it will have several grant applications to consider. Distributions are likely to push the 10-year total over the \$800,000 mark.

“I can’t wait to see the day we reach over a million,” Meason said.

At the current rate of generosity, she won’t have to wait long.

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- ☐ There doesn’t seem to be enough airflow?
- ☐ Dust buildup within 2 days of dusting?
- ☐ Problems with your system since it’s been installed?
- ☐ Anyone with allergies or asthma?
- ☐ AC starts and stops frequently or runs all the time, and house is still not cool?

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

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Cotton Electric seeks addresses for returned capital credit checks

Capital credit checks amounting to \$300,000 were issued recently to people and businesses listed here.

A refund of capital credits demonstrates how a not-for-profit electric cooperative works. Annually, money over and above the cost of operations and other necessary expenses and reserves is declared margins. When the board of trustees determines that a portion of those margins can be refunded, members who contributed to those margins receive a share.

A share of the capital credits was allocated among active and inactive members and a check was mailed to the latest known valid address for the member. Checks addressed to members listed here were returned to the cooperative because of incorrect or insufficient addresses.

Cotton Electric Cooperative needs help finding the people listed here. If you see a name on the list that you recognize and if you have information about a current address, please call 580-875-3351 or e-mail info@cottonelectric.com.

TO CLAIM A CAPITAL CREDIT CHECK, WE REQUIRE A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER TO VERIFY THE MEMBER'S IDENTITY.

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| Ainsworth, Crystal | Cofer, Jimmy D | Gilbert, Wayne P | Justman, Melissa K | McGill, Calvin J | Richardson, Debbie | Terry, Floyd A |
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| Allen, Cathy A | Collings, Doy E | Gipson, Billie J | Keeter, Lonnie B | McLain, Donald | Richardson, Paris | Thomas, Charles |
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| Ambrose, M | Conne, Belinda K | Goodrich, Jerry | Keune, Larry K | McVay, Johnny c | Roberts, Curtis S | Thompson, Charley |
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| Burton, J | Elroy, Melissa R | Hornsey, Patrick T | Massey, J | Peck, J D | Sparrow, James | Wheeler, Myron C |
| Buzbee, Helen | Endicott, Scott | Howard, Joseph M | Matlock, Donald | Penick, Cara M | Spears, Heather | Whisehunt, Sue |
| C | England, Charles M | Howard, R V | Matthews, Charles | Pennington, James L | Speir, Vernon | White, Colin |
| Cain, Chris | England, Ervaline | Hudson, Browning | McAnally, Jimmy A | Pennington, Ralph | Spence, Loyd | White, Mike |
| Caldwell, Dorothy | Evans, Tim T | Hughes, James D | McCann, Nathan | Pennington, Raun | Spicer, Robert | Whitman, Leroy |
| Calhoun, Clarence | Everett, Jerry W | Humphrey, Joseph H | McClenney, Olen | Pepper, Teresa P | Spivey-Ellis, Edith | Whitten, Jeremiah |
| Cannon, Patricia | F | Hutchins, Daneil W | McConnell, Don | Perez, Craig | Stamps, Bill | Whittington, Hoyt |
| Capps, Jennifer | Fanning, Odell | Hutton, Coy D | McCord, Andrew | Perkins, Brenda | Stanley, Bob S | Wiedeman, Billy J |
| Carlile, Gary G | Fields, Eric W | Hyman, Emerson | McCormack, Larry J | Perrotta, James | Stapp, Jewell B | Wiggins, Donna L |
| Carolus, Kenneth | Fisher, Alex | I | McDonald, Beverly J | Peters, James S | Steeple, Randy R | Williams, Geraldine I |
| Carpenter, O L | Fisher, Mark A | Ingram, Doris | | Petsch, John | Stehley, William | Willis, E S |
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| Chaperon, Gregory | Foster, Stuart H | James, Ella | | Pointer, Aldon R | Stoll, Scott A | Wiygul, Elaine R |
| Chavez, Robert | Foster, Lee | James, Lyndon | | Pool, Dodge | Stover, Lahoma J | Wofford, William P |
| Chellis, William C | Fowler, John A | Jenkins, Charles J | | Pool, Edsel | Stover, Pamela D | Wolfe, Janet |
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| Chitwood, Greg A | Frye, Jeff A | Johnson, Kingsley | | Pruitt, Joe D | Suson, Paula | Worsham, Terry L |
| Church, Allen G | Fulfs, Vera | Johnson, Tamatha | | Pruitt, John D | Swanson, Lisa D | Wright, Jamie |
| Chumley, Kevin R | G | Johnston, Nancy P | | Q | Sweeney, Gary | Wright, Tina J |
| Claborn, Jessica | Gahl, Paul M | Jones, Bennie E | | Querner, Angie | Sweetin, Patsy S | Y |
| Cline, Andy R | Gaither, R | Jones, Joann | | R | Sweetman, Helen F | Yates, Virgle L |
| Cline, Ted | Gardner, George T | Jones, Justin C | | Rakes, Ricky A | Swindell, Sherry M | Z |
| Cobb, Kenneth | Gatlin, Terry S | Jones, Lisa | | Rebarchik, Robert A | T | Zea, John |
| | Gay, Wendell A | | | Red Elk, Walter D | Tahdooanippa, Clarice | Zielinger, Harry G |
| | Gibson, Stephen | | | Reece, Eva | Talbott, Coy | Ziegenfuss, Roger G |
| | | | | Repp, Matt | Taliaferro, D'ann | |
| | | | | Ressell, C B | Taylor, Daniel | |
| | | | | Reynolds, Bertha | Taylor, Garrett | |
| | | | | Rezac, Nancy | | |

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TO CLAIM A CAPITAL CREDIT CHECK, WE REQUIRE A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER TO VERIFY THE MEMBER'S IDENTITY.



\$imple Savings

Interactive tour finds ways to save energy

By Trent Marlett

One of the things I do for Cotton Electric members is help them better manage energy use and save money. I can perform an energy audit on a member's house, going through and finding ways to increase efficiency or problem areas that need to be upgraded or improved.

Cotton Electric is a part of Touchstone Energy, which offers another tool. It allows a member to be his or her own energy auditor and find ways to save and make improvements instead of having me poke around the home.

Touchstone Energy has a website, TogetherWe-Save.com. On the homepage, there is a place to click called "Energy Savings Home Tour." The link opens a page that guides you on a room by room tour through your home.

In each room, you can click on different problem areas and find ways to address them in order to use energy more efficiently. Tips are offered for entertainment centers in the living room, bedrooms, the attic, and the utility closet where water heaters and furnaces can be found.

The tour even offers ways to save by doing proper landscaping around the house.

The Energy Savings Home Tour has another benefit. The Watch & Learn tab offers two dozen videos featuring advice on ways to improve your home to save energy.

This is a very beneficial website that allows you to interact with many different functions, all empowering you to find ways to save and best practices on implementing learned improvements throughout your home.

All information at the website is free and is just another service Cotton Electric offers its members to help manage energy use. It is very informative and I learned a lot from clicking around this interactive website.

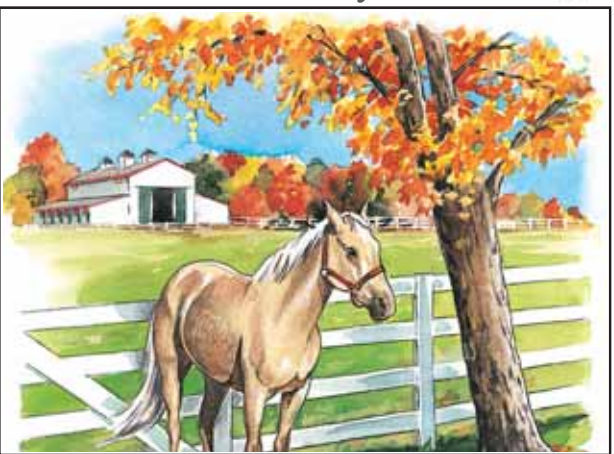
The full web address is <http://energysavings.togetherwesave.com/add-up-your-savings>. I recommend visiting the site and seeing everything it offers.

If you need help getting there or have any questions, feel free to give me a call at 580-875-3351.

May the blessings of


Thanksgiving

bring you warmth & peace
this holiday season.



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Cotton Electric wins communication awards

Each year, marketing department employees in electric cooperatives throughout the state take another look at the work they've done. They select the best examples of their communication pieces and submit them for comparison and competition with their peers.

The 2014 newsletter contest sponsored by Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives solicited entries from Oklahoma cooperatives in several categories. Cotton Electric learned of honors in three categories during a recent awards banquet.

An Award of Merit was presented for the website, CottonElectric.com. The site was redesigned early in the year by Jennifer Meason, vice president of marketing and subsidiary services.

An Award of Excellence was presented for a column written by Trent Marlett. Published in January 2014, the column defined the emergency heat setting on a thermostat and explained why it should rarely be used.

An Award of Excellence was also presented for the July 2014 issue of The Current for best overall content in the large cooperative division. The issue featured recaps of Youth Tour, articles about legislative impact, farm safety, retiring employees and charitable foundation grant recipients and golf tournament results.



The Current
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative Publication
"The Current - Inspiring Our Members Since 1977"

Area teens experience nation's capital during week-long Youth Tour

Hard to select just one "must see" in Washington, D.C.

The July 2014 issue of The Current and Cotton Electric's website were award winners in the OAEC contest.



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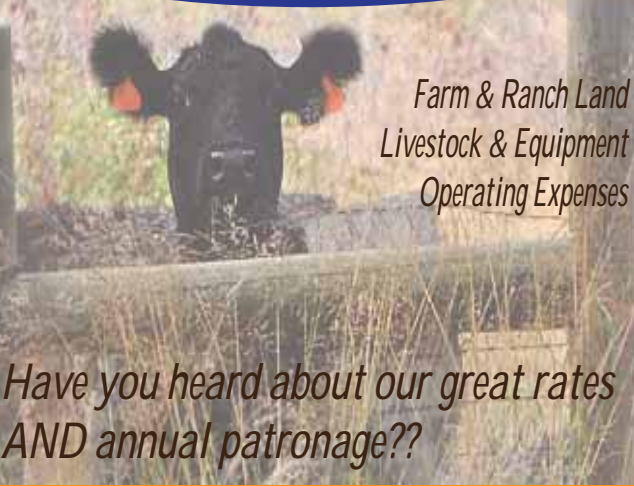
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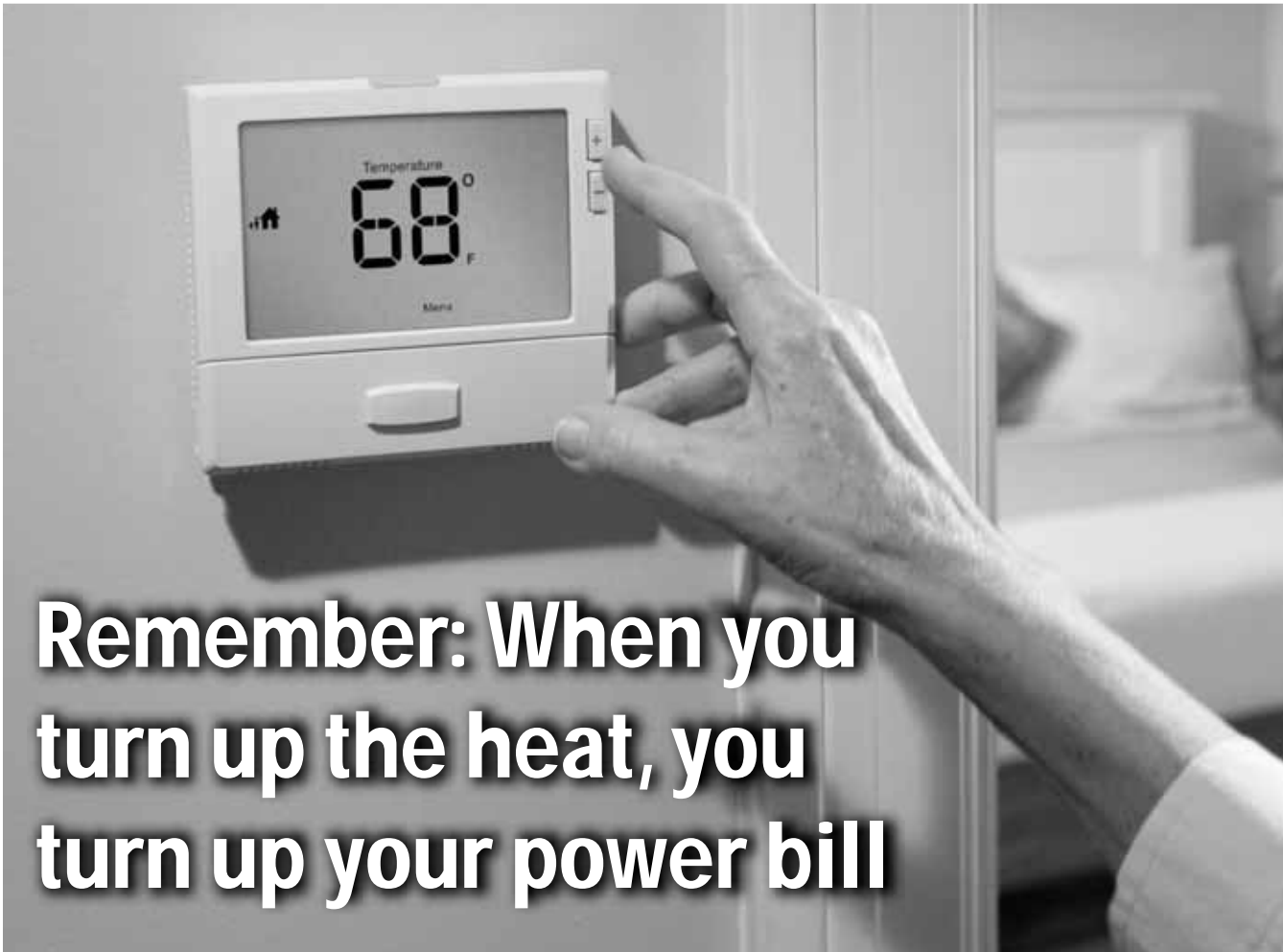
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Remember: When you turn up the heat, you turn up your power bill

Lower temperatures can lead to higher winter use

By Amber Bentley

Between holiday houseguests and shorter, colder days, electric bills tend to climb in the winter. Read on for ways to save energy when the temperature drops.

Lower your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower): If you decrease the temperature by just one degree, you can save up to 5 percent on heating costs. Consider a programmable thermostat that you can set to lower the temperature when away from home and increase before you come back.

Adjust blinds and curtains: Keep them open to let in sunlight during the day, and close at night to keep heat inside and protect from drafts.

Reduce hot water temperatures: Heating water accounts for 12 percent of the average home's energy use. Set your water heater's thermostat to 120 degrees or lower—that's usually sufficient for a household's hot-water needs. Also, if you've had your water heater for more than 12 years, you might want to consider replacing it with a more energy-efficient model.

Seal and insulate: This is the best way to keep heat in and air out. Areas

that may need sealing include corners, cracks, door frames, and windows.

Consider replacing old appliances, doors, and windows with ENERGY STAR-rated models: You can save about 15 percent of your normal energy use with these appliances and get better insulation on doors and windows for the price you pay. ENERGY STAR-rated items meet special efficiency standards set by the federal government.

Free your vents: HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems will have to work twice as hard if vents are blocked by rugs, furniture, or doors. Keep vents clear for proper air flow.

Keep food cool: Don't make your fridge work too hard. A temperature

set between 34 and 37 degrees Fahrenheit is usually sufficient.

A special holiday tip: Use LED lights to decorate. They're up to 75 percent more energy efficient than traditional incandescent lights and last much longer—but check for an ENERGY-STAR rating before you buy. Cheaper LEDs tend not to last as long or be as durable.

Visit TogetherWeSave.com or Cotton Electric.com for more ways to save.

Amber Bentley writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

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Eighth-graders sure to fall for Energy Camp

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 will be 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 2015 Youth Power Energy Camp held May 26-29 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 will be distributed to area English teachers soon. Students should ask for contest rules and entry forms, or contact Trent Marlett at Cotton Electric Cooperative at 580-875-3351 or by email at info@cottonelectric.com

The deadline for entry is Jan. 16, 2015.



Six-year-old Kadence is mighty proud of this pumpkin that she planted and grew using seeds from her 2013 jack-o-lantern. Kadence is the daughter of Cotton Electric members Brad and Kendahl Williams and lives near – where else? – Pumpkin Center.

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- You are between 50 and 74 years old
- You have a 20+ pack-year* history of smoking
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*pack-years are calculated by multiplying the number of packs a day you smoke by the number of years you have smoked.

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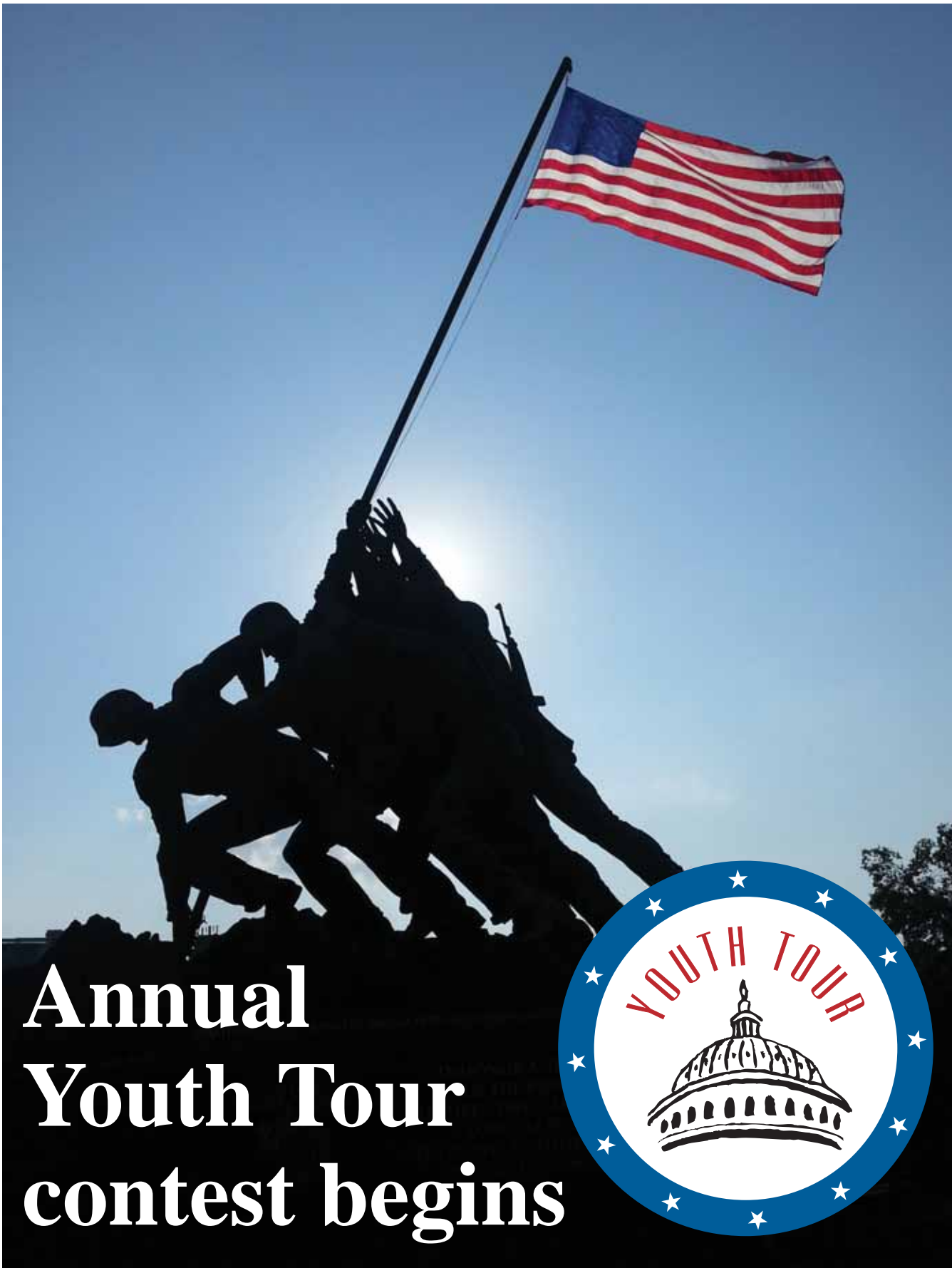
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Annual Youth Tour contest begins



The annual Rural Electric Youth Tour kicks off in November with a preliminary essay contest. This year’s topic, “Life in rural southwest Oklahoma without Cotton Electric Cooperative,” will be the key focus for all submissions.

Each year, students in Cotton Electric’s service territory are eligible to compete in the preliminary rounds of the competition. 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 the Cotton Electric headquarters.

Writers of the top 25 essays move to the second round, which includes a personal interview with the student. The question-and-answer meeting is conducted at the cooperative headquarters in Walters.

The top 10 of those finalists advance to the banquet, where they and their parents will be guests of Cotton Electric. The finalists will be required to recite their essay in a speech-type format. As they speak before judges and banquet guests, the final four winners will be determined.

The banquet is held in the spring, with the date and location to be announced.

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

The students will have an opportunity to learn about government, the cooperative form of business, and the business of rural electrification. The students will become more familiar with the historical and political environment

of the nation’s capital through visits to monuments, government offices and cooperative organizations.

Trent Marlett, contest coordinator for Cotton Electric, said Youth Tour is a week of hands-on learning for students.

“Youth Tour gives high school students an opportunity to learn firsthand what it is like to be involved in politics, community development and today’s social issues,” Marlett said.

Information packets with contest rules and regulations, entry forms, cooperative information and basic details of the contest will be distributed to area English teachers.

The deadline to submit an essay is Jan. 16, 2015.

In addition to the information included in the packets, 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 help

develop creative writing skills that are important for all high school students, especially those planning to attend college,” Marlett said.




For more information regarding the essay contest, call Marlett at 580-875-3351 or email info@cottonelectric.com.

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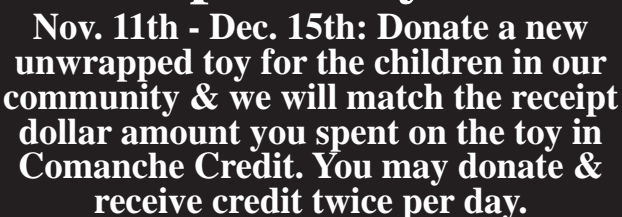
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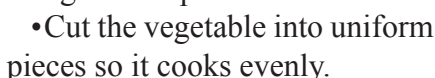
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Roasting also has the added benefit of being easy. Just toss the vegetable chunks in olive oil and your seasoning of choice, or none at all, and stick them in the oven.



Many people who struggle to like vegetables have found roasting to be a very palatable way to prepare them. As with any new cooking technique, it may take a test or two to get vegetable roasting down just right, but it can definitely transform your vegetable-eating experience.

In large skillet, stir fry green pepper and onion in oil for 3-4 minutes or until tender. Drain pineapple and reserve juice in a 2-cup measuring cup; set pineapple aside. Add enough water to pineapple juice to measure 1 1/3 cups. Stir in the vinegar, soy and ketchup. In bowl, combine cornstarch and sugar. Stir in pineapple juice mixture. Gradually add to skillet. Bring to boil; cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Add pineapple; reduce heat and let simmer uncovered for 4-5 minutes or until heated through. Add cooked chicken and serve. Serves: 4.

Stuff each chili with Cheddar cheese sticks. Arrange in single layer in greased 7x11 casserole dish. Combine remaining ingredients in a bowl; mix well. Pour over chilies. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until set and golden. Cool about 5 minutes before serving. Serves: 6-8.

39. Keyboard instruments
42. Governments
43. Fashion designer Jacobs
44. Carrier's invention
46. Cruise
47. Art ____ style of design
48. From a distance
49. Rock singer Turner
50. Churn
51. Hotels
52. Genetic info carrier
53. Irritate
54. Also on the option key
55. Steeped beverage
56. Indicates position

4-H Cook Off yields plenty of winners



The 31st annual Stephens County Cook Off was held the first Monday in November. Participants included 64 4-H'ers and Cloverbuds. The young cooks prepared recipes for judging on taste and appearance. Awards were presented to the top three in each category. First-place winners received a monogrammed apron and second- and third-place winners received kitchen items. Cloverbud participants received a

certificate and mini-whisk. 4-H members submitted recipes in 14 categories and the top eight are chosen for the final competition. Cloverbuds bring one of their favorite recipes to the final competition. All awards are sponsored by Stephens County Farm Bureau Women. Here are some of the top recipes from the 2014 competition. More will be published in December.



Candied Bacon

Bars & Candy
Lathan Allen, Comanche

Candied Bacon

3 T. Griffin's original syrup 1/2 c. brown sugar
1/2 t. black pepper 1 lb. sliced bacon

Mix together syrup, brown sugar and pepper in a small bowl. Place foil on the bottom of a baking sheet. Place bacon on a cooling rack and set over baking sheet. With a basting brush, spread half the mixture on the bacon. Bake in a preheated 400-degree oven for 20 minutes. Turn bacon, brush with remaining syrup mixture and continue to bake 20-25 minutes or until crisp. Remove bacon from rack while it is hot or bacon will stick. Bacon will continue to crisp once out of oven. Break slices in 1/2 and serve warm or at room temperature. Serves: 12-14.

Dips:
Colton Johnson, Comanche

Pizza Fondue

1/2 lb. Italian sausage
1 c. chopped onion
2 jars meatless pizza sauce
4 oz. thinly sliced ham
1 pkg. sliced pepperoni
1/4 t. red pepper flakes
1 lb. Mozzarella cheese, cut into 3/4-inch cubes
1 loaf Italian or French bread, cut into 1-inch cubes
Cook sausage and onion in a large skillet until sausage is browned. Drain off fat. Transfer sausage mixture to slow cooker, stir in pasta sauce, ham, pepperoni and pepper flakes. Cover and cook on low 3 to 4 hours.. Serve sauce with cheese cubes, bread cubes and fondue forks. Serves: 20-25.

Breads
Chris White, Central High

Sweet Chocolate Bread

3 1/4-oz. pkgs. active dry yeast
2 T. vegetable oil
1 1/2 c. milk, warmed to 105-115 degrees
2 T. confectioners' sugar
4 3/4 to 5 c. all-purpose flour
1 T. unsweetened cocoa powder
1/2 c. (1 stick) butter, softened
1/2 t. vanilla extract
1/2 C. honey
12 oz. milk chocolate, melted
1/2 t. salt
1 egg
1 1/2 c. sliced almonds
1/2 c. sliced almonds

Combine yeast and milk in a large bowl, stirring to dissolve. Add 4 3/4 cups flour, butter, honey and salt. Stir, adding more flour if necessary, until soft dough forms. Knead on a lightly floured surface until smooth and elastic, 6-10 minutes. Cover the dough in the bowl with plastic and let rise until double in size, approximately 30 minutes. For the filling, finely grind 1 1/2 cups almonds in a food processor. Add the vegetable oil, confectioners' sugar, cocoa powder and vanilla. Process until smooth and add the melted chocolate. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface, adding more flour if needed until smooth, not sticky.

Divide in half and roll into 12x15 inch rectangles. Spread filling on rectangle to within 1/2 inch of the edge. Roll up loosely and place seam side down on prepared baking sheet. Using scissors, cut each roll into 1/2 inch-wide slices. Pull slices away from center, alternating sides. Cover with dish towel and let rise for 25 minutes. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. For topping, whisk egg with 1 tablespoon water. Brush it on the loaves and sprinkle with 1/2 cup sliced almonds. Bake until golden brown, approximately 15-20 minutes. Cool 2 minutes then transfer to wire rack.



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