

The Current

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

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NUMBER 9



Cotton Electric’s linemen gathered recently for a group photo. The top row of lineman helpers and apprentices includes, from left, Seth Johnson, Christian Soliz, Zack Smith, Michael Brown, Kyle Linthicum, Rance Payne and Dillon Wiygul.

Journeyman linemen include Larry Crowell, Terry Turner, Matt Winburn, Norman Condit, Scott Dennis, Brian Jones, Jarrod Hooper, Michelle Taylor, Chad Cowan, Bobby Shortt, Bren Melson, Evan Hays, Tyson Potter, Clint Ingram and

Ronnie Mansel. As always seems the case with large groups, not all linemen were available the day this photo was taken. Photos of Terry Foster and Bob Anderson are on the back page.

Got power? Thank a lineman!

By Karen Kaley

They pull on heavy rubber gloves, cold and unbending in the winter, hot and sweaty in the summer. A second set of leather gloves fits over the first to prevent punctures while making their hands even more bulky.

Then they go to work, pinching the thick thumb and forefinger together to thread a 1-inch nut onto a bolt, to operate a toggle switch that moves a truck’s basket into just the right spot, to grasp a tool that hammers, clamps or twists.

The nature of their job requires a lot of protective equipment every day for nearly every task: Hard hats, safety glasses, rubber sleeves, fall restraints, steel-toed boots and fire-retardant clothing. They pull it all on, no matter where or when. Their lives depend on it.

They go up as high as 60 feet in truck baskets or they strap on hooks to climb poles and work around power lines. They hoist transformers, use chain saws on tree branches, and operate heavy equipment.

Sometimes they stand on the ground and extend a fiberglass stick 20 feet into the air. A 2-inch prong at the end of the stick, as big around as a pencil, must line up with a 2-inch hole in a handle they pull in order to switch a device on or off.



Employee Spotlight

Cotton Electric linemen

They tramp around in undeveloped areas that may be swampy, or grown over with tall grass and weeds concealing trenches. They are exposed to the wild Oklahoma weather and unpredictable dogs, killer bees and crazy goats.

They climb back into mud-coated trucks and grab a battered clipboard. They fish out a pencil or favorite pen to make notes about the job just finished, noting location, equipment numbers and what was fixed, what needs more attention.

They share a camaraderie that is earned. They swagger and joke, coping with the fantastic danger they work around every day. At Cotton Electric, they have a remarkable safety record.

They leave holiday gatherings, children’s ball games and the warmth of their beds because it is never convenient when the power goes out. The family waits to open presents, to start the meal, to whisper a prayer of gratitude when their loved one returns, safe and sound.

They are linemen. They keep the lights on. And we appreciate them.

Cotton Electric’s 25 current linemen have varying degrees of experience

ranging from more than 40 years to only 40 days. They have a combined total of 320 years on the line.

The five newest are classified as lineman helpers. Michael Brown, Kyle Linthicum, Rance Payne, Christian Soliz and Dillon Wiygul will be eligible to enter the apprentice program after six months of service.

Jeremy Crabtree, Seth Johnson and Zack Smith are apprentices, about halfway through the four-year program.

Evan Hays has completed the apprentice study and field work and is a newly-minted journeyman lineman.

There are 16 other journeyman linemen with varying lengths of experience. Tyson Potter, Matt Winburn, Jarrod Hooper, Bobby Shortt and Chad Cowan are in the 10 years and under group. Clint Ingram, Scott Dennis, Bren Melson, Terry Turner and Ronnie Mansel have between 12 and 20 years under their tool belts.

Terry Foster has been with the co-op 22 years. The only female cooperative lineman in the state, Michelle Taylor, has been at it for 25 years. Bob Anderson hit the 30-year mark recently.

Larry Crowell and Brian Jones have

put in 34 years, and Norman Condit is the reigning long-timer among Cotton linemen with 41 years on the job.

It takes more than linemen to run a co-op. Another 63 employees – many of them former linemen – carry out a variety of other essential duties. (Editor’s note: We each think we have the best job. I am delighted that mine is to tell you about this great group of people.)

The National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA) recently designated the second Monday in April as National Lineman Appreciation Day. In 2015, that is April 13, but please remember that any day is a good day to thank a lineman. Offer them your patience and a hot drink on a cold night or a cold drink on a hot day.

NRECA’s resolution says a lot of things about building and maintaining electric infrastructure, getting power back on and making things safe. A Cotton Electric member wrote a note of thanks recently, saying things more from the heart:

(The team) “worked with amiable, respectful and professional attitudes. They explained and answered my questions cheerfully. They worked, never pausing, except to consult with each other, always with safety first. “They were wonderful!”

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after April 1, 2015, is \$0.00024 per kWh.

On a member’s average bill of 1500 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$0.36 on the April bill.

March 2015 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	36	28	32	16	78	40	59
2	38	30	34	17	63	50	57
3	59	37	48	18	65	51	58
4	49	24	37	19	58	50	54
5	43	18	26	20	57	47	52
6	56	18	37	21	63	45	54
7	66	23	45	22	66	48	57
8	62	42	52	23	76	42	59
9	50	47	49	24	82	50	66
10	63	41	52	25	86	46	66
11	74	34	54	26	64	42	53
12	73	38	56	27	62	41	52
13	69	42	56	28	79	37	58
14	71	51	61	29	82	51	67
15	69	40	55	30	78	40	59
				31	86	50	68

Source: srh.noaa.gov/oun/

Average Daily High: 65 Average Daily Low: 40

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric has sponsored a total of 149 high school juniors in the Rural Electric Youth Tour since 1964. The first two were Tom Flood and Sue Kellner. Find out who will be numbers 150-153 on Page 13.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on May 11, 2015.

Contact Us

Do you have a story idea for The Current or do you need to place an ad? If so, let us know.

We can be reached at 580-875-3351 or by email at info@cottonelectric.com.

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

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More news at cottonelectric.com

The value of electric cooperatives

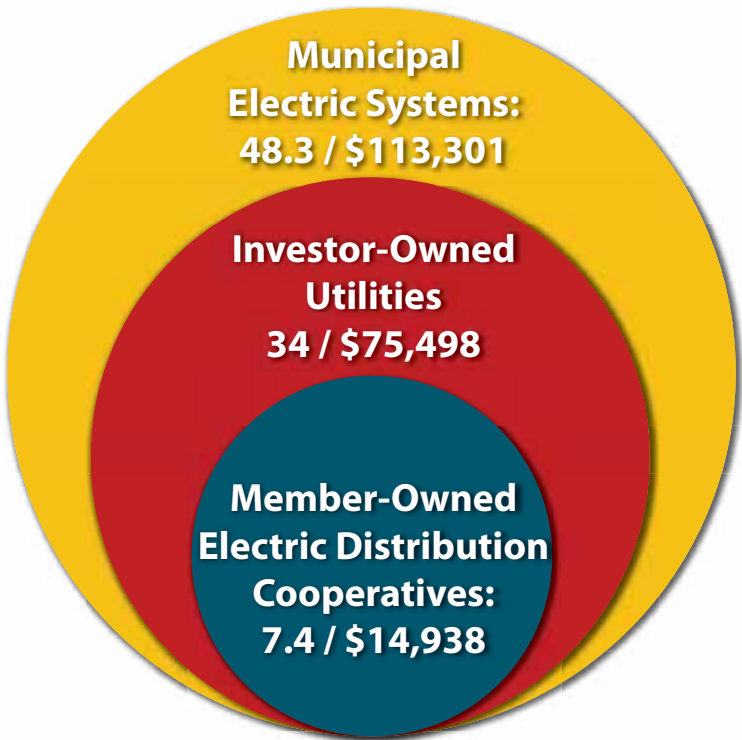
Why being a co-op member saves you money

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Revenue in Review

Because of higher population densities (more consumers served per mile of line), municipal electric systems and investor-owned utilities receive more revenue per mile of line than electric cooperatives.

Consumers served/revenue per mile of line for different utilities:



Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, September 2013

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

By Adam Schwartz

There are three main types of electricity providers in the U.S. Investor-owned utilities (IOUs) serve primarily densely populated areas. Municipal-owned utilities also serve densely populated cities from the very large, such as Los Angeles, to the very small like Robersonville, N.C. And of course, there are rural electric cooperatives like Cotton Electric Cooperative that serve less populated parts of the country.

In the utility business, population matters a lot. Since the costs to serve any given area are similar, the more customers that you have allows you to spread the costs among more people to keep rates lower. At least that is the theory.

The graphic at left shows the national averages of density and revenue per mile of electrical line for IOUs, municipal-owned utilities and electric co-ops. Municipal-owned utilities, which operate in cities and towns, have the greatest density – 48.3 customers per mile of line, generating an average of \$113,301 of revenue. IOUs follow with 34 customers per mile of line, while generating average revenues of \$75,498. Finally, electric co-ops average 7.4 members (not customers, but members) per mile of line, bringing in an average of \$14,938 of revenue per mile.

Cotton Electric Cooperative serves 4.30 members per mile, generating \$14,243 of revenue per mile.

If I were to give this data to any business school in the country and ask (based on this information) what the rates should be for each of the utilities, the answer would likely be that electric co-ops would have a rate 7.5 times greater than municipal-owned utilities and 5 times higher than IOUs – but that is not the case. Why not?

It has to do with the business model. IOUs are owned by outside investors that may or may not be users of the electric utility they own. These companies' stocks are traded on Wall Street, and those investors demand a return on their investment. This drives up the price that their customers pay. Many municipal systems charge rates that generate a "profit" for their cities to help pay for other services. Cotton Electric Cooperative operates on a not-for-profit basis. Of course, we are a business and must generate enough revenue to cover costs, the largest being the purchase of power. But we don't have to charge rates to pay outside stockholders.

Since our members are our owners, we can provide safe, reliable and affordable power to you. That is just another way your co-op brings you value.

Adam Schwartz is the founder of The Cooperative Way, a consulting firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and a member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op. You can email him at aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop.

New address or phone number? Updates needed for best service

Has your address changed recently, even though you haven't moved? With implementation of E-911, many rural homes have been assigned new addresses.

To ensure regular delivery of The Current, Cotton Electric needs that new address.

Do you have a new phone number?

In the event that we need to call you, a current phone number is very important and improves the efficiency of our outage reporting system.

Why would we contact you? We may need to call you regarding your account, a power outage, or to schedule an appointment.

If you have a new address or phone number, please complete the form below and return with your next payment or mail it to us at 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572. You may also call us at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520 to update your information.

Thank you for helping us improve service.

Name _____

Account # _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____

Email Address _____

Home Phone _____

Business Phone _____

Mobile Phone _____

Time for HVAC tune-ups, rebates

When was the last time you had your home's HVAC system tuned up? If it has been a few years, this is a good time to have an HVAC contractor inspect, service and clean it.

Typically, tune-ups on cooling systems that have been neglected for a few years can provide as much as 15 percent energy savings. Just as a tune-up for your car can improve gas mileage, a yearly tune-up of your cooling system can improve efficiency and comfort. Plus, an annual tune-up can increase the life of the system.

In conjunction with our Beat the Peak program, Cotton Electric is offering a rebate of up to \$50 per home (50 percent of the cost of your tune-up, excluding repairs, up to \$50) for members who get a tune-up for their HVAC system. In order to qualify, the following guidelines must be met:

1. Must be a Cotton Electric Cooperative member.
2. Rebate is not available for homes newer than one year.
3. A completed Rebate Application is required. Application forms are available at the Walters and Duncan offices, or by calling 580-875-3351. Ask for Mike Stephens or Trent Marlett.
4. Application must be signed and dated by the member and a licensed, bonded HVAC contractor.
5. Member must submit a dated, itemized invoice as proof of service completion from a qualified contractor. *Failure to provide required information will result in denial of rebate.*
6. Rebates are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until program funds have been depleted.
7. Rebate not valid on gas-fired furnaces.
8. Rebate limited to one tune-up per home annually.
9. HVAC tune-ups must be completed by June 20, 2014. Rebate applications must be received by June 30, 2014.

Give us a call at 580-875-3351 for details on our Pre-Cooling Season HVAC Tune-Up Rebates.

Tune-Up Checklist:

- Tune-ups must be performed by a qualified service professional and must include the following criteria:
- ✓ Check and correct unit's refrigerant pressure and tubing



- ✓ Check thermostat settings, wiring, and other electric parts and connections
- ✓ Inspect air filters
- ✓ Test AC and furnace starting capabilities
- ✓ Test safety controls
- ✓ Clean and adjust blower components
- ✓ Measure temperature difference
- ✓ Measure volts/amps on AC and furnace
- ✓ Lubricate all applicable parts
- ✓ Check temperature calibration and adjust, if needed
- ✓ Check AC evaporator coil, clean if necessary
- ✓ Clean AC condenser coil
- ✓ Clean AC condensate drains
- ✓ Check thermostat operation

The Current

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MISSION STATEMENT
Our mission is to be the leader in providing the most reliable and innovative electric system, with affordable rates, through the positive, enthusiastic and professional use of its resources and people.

February 2015 Operating Stats

	2015	2014
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$5,746,372	\$5,844,590
Cost of Purchased Power	4,181,455	4,545,258
Taxes	125,472	121,913
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,086	1,170
Average Farm and Residential Bill	159	165
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,485	1,733
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,263	18,102
Miles Energized	5,152	5,137
Density Per Mile	3.54	3.52
New Service Connects YTD	50	39
Services Retired	26	25

Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the May issue, please submit information by April 29, by calling 580-875-4255 or send an email to info@cottonelectric.com.

AARP offers tax prep 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 deduction 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. A final session will be from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 15.

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.

LCT presents Lee's 'Mockingbird'

Performances of Lawton Community Theatre's presentation of "To Kill A Mockingbird" are set for April 16-19 at John Denney Playhouse, 1316 NW Bell Avenue in Lawton.

Based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Harper Lee, the story is a timeless exploration of conscience. As lawyer Atticus Finch seeks truth against racial injustice with courage and compassion, his daughter, Scout, a young girl on the cusp of adulthood, brings new hope to a neighborhood in turmoil.

For information, visit LCT-OK.org or call 580-355-1600.

Car Cruise planned in Duncan

Cruising down Main Street in Duncan is just part of the fun planned for the sixth annual Cruisin' the Chisholm Trail Car Show set for April 17 and 18. Rain dates are April 24 and 25.

Tailgate parties and a burnout competition are set for Friday night beginning at 6 p.m.

Festivities continue Saturday with live music from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Car entry judging begins at 11 a.m., and trophies will be presented at 3 p.m.

For information, call Main Street Duncan at 580-252-8696.

Magic Lantern offers classic films

Magic Lantern Film Society of Cameron University screens DVD presentations of classic films each month in the CETES Conference Center, Room B.

The April 17 offering is the final screening for the 2014-15 season. "Back to the Future" tells of a teenager who travels 30 years back and has to set things right with his parents after unwittingly changing their history. The 1985 film directed by Robert Zemeckis features Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd and Crispin Glover in starring roles.

There is no admission charge, but donations are accepted. For information about the society, or to see a schedule and synopsis of films, visit Cameron.edu/magiclantern.

Walters arts festival is April 25

Cotton County Art Council will host its annual Arts and Crafts Festival

April 25 at the Comanche National Community Center east of Walters. Kaye Franklin of Graham, Texas, will serve as judge for the 2015 event.

Visitors can register for a Visa gift card door prize, purchase Indian tacos and finish up with one of the desserts offered by Walters Senior Citizens Center.

Information and entry forms are available on the Cotton County Art Council's Facebook page or by emailing calfinator@yahoo.com.

CTAC closes season with Pavlo

Chisholm Trail Arts Council presents guitarist Pavlo at 7:30 p.m. May 1 at the Simmons Center in Duncan. A musician since the tender age of 10, Pavlo plays classical to flamenco, but has found his true style is what he considers Mediterranean.

Pavlo will be providing a free educational outreach in the form of a matinee for schools. A guitar will be given away the night of the concert to a lucky winner.

For information, call 580-252-4160 or visit ChisholmTrailArts.com.

Arts For All set for May 8-10

For 40 years, the Arts For All Festival has been southwest Oklahoma's largest and most popular cultural event, drawing people from Oklahoma and Texas for a weekend filled with art, entertainment and tantalizing foods. The festival is a cooperative effort of businesses, civic organizations and hundreds of volunteers who support and encourage the arts. All profits are contributed to the participating arts organization of Arts For All Inc.

The 2015 Festival will be May 8 through 10 in Shepler Park, near downtown Lawton. The park is on Gore Boulevard between 4th and 5th Streets. All artists' booths are on grass among the trees.

For information, visit ArtsForAll-Festival.org.

'Addams Family' closes LCT season

Lawton Community Theatre closes the 2014-15 season with an original story of every father's nightmare set to music in "The Addams Family."

Wednesday Addams, the ultimate princess of darkness, has grown up and fallen in love with a sweet, smart young man from a respectable family. Everything will change for the whole family on the fateful night they host a dinner for Wednesday's "normal" boyfriend and his parents.

Performances are set for 8 p.m. June 5-7 and 11-14. Ticket information is available at www.LCT-OK.org.

Drought cancels swimming lessons

Duncan Chisholm Trail Kiwanis will NOT be offering swimming lessons during summer 2015. The club was forced to cancel the annual offering when the City of Duncan announced the public swimming pool in Fuqua Park will not be filled this year because of the ongoing severe drought.

A Kiwanis spokesperson said, "We are praying the rains will come and we hope to start the swim lessons again in June/July 2016."

Elgin alums gathering June 6

A come-and-go reception for Elgin High School alumni is scheduled for 2 to 5 p.m. June 6 at the Elgin High School cafeteria. Student Council members will be available to lead tours of the new buildings on campus.

A post card will be mailed to alumni who have current addresses on file with the committee. For information, call Wanda Bridges Donica at 580-549-6289 or Debby King Morgan at 405-306-5808. Information is also available or by emailing elginokalumni@gmail.com.

Photo of the Month

This month's photo was submitted by Natilee Benefield. "My mom and dad are the best. THANK YOU for supporting me in every crazy idea I have and encouraging me to do my best at it. I love you so much and thank you so much for everything." Natilee is the daughter of David and Cindy Benefield of Walters.



Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for May is FURRY FRIENDS. 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.

WMASC offers various activities

Wichita Mountains Area Senior Citizens offers a variety of activities and sponsors weekly and monthly events at the Legion Building near Medicine Park.

Potluck dinners, games and TV are offered every Monday from 5 to 10 p.m.

Yoga, crafts, quilting and dominoes are regular Tuesday features.

Thursdays include a senior dance with Ray Koehn singing.

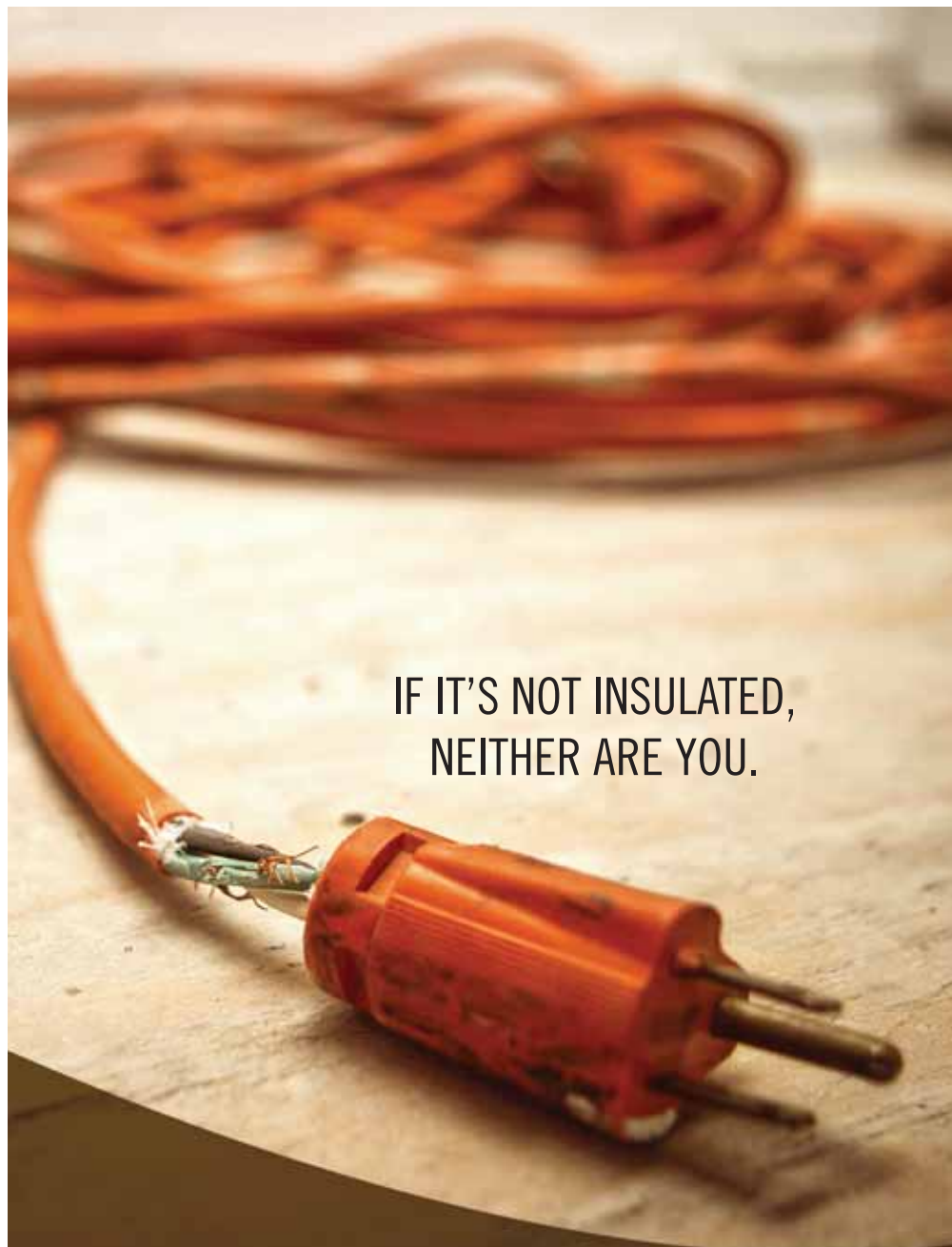
A dance is held each Friday. Doors open at 6 p.m., live music begins at 7. Hope Reformed Baptist Church

meets and holds services from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. each Sunday in the building

Cecil Gardner's famous homemade Indian tacos are featured at the Indian taco sale held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the second Saturday of each month. Drinks and desserts are included.

For information about these and other activities, visit WichitaMountainSeniors.org.

All activities are held in the Legion Building on Wildhorse Road near Medicine Park. From Interstate 44, take Exit 45 to Oklahoma Highway 49. Traveling east, bear right onto Wildhorse. The building is on the right.



IF IT'S NOT INSULATED,
NEITHER ARE YOU.

REPLACE, NEVER REPAIR
DAMAGED EXTENSION CORDS.

Helping members use electricity safely, that's the power of your co-op membership. Learn more from the experts themselves at TogetherWeSave.com.



COTTON
ELECTRIC CO-OP

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

\$imple Savings



Cotton Electric members could get a rebate of as much as \$50 after having a springtime tune-up on a home's HVAC unit.

Spring tune-up keeps HVAC in top form

By Trent Marlett

Spring is that wonderful time of the year when winter is gone and summer isn't quite here. Energy bills become very comfortable compared to those from the harsh winter we just experienced. It is time to just enjoy these couple months of nice weather.

One way to get the most out of this time of year is to take advantage of a rebate program Cotton Electric offers for a limited time. The 2015 Spring HVAC Tune-Up program is designed to help members get their heating and cooling systems ready for summer.

There never really is a good time for a heating and cooling system to quit on us, but we definitely don't want it breaking down in the heat of the summer. A spring tune-up can ensure a cooling system

will run the best it can when you need it most. "Don't fix it if it ain't broke" does not apply in this situation.

An HVAC system is too important to put off maintenance and repairs. The longer we wait, the harder – and often more expensive – it can be to fix problems. A tune-up by a qualified technician will identify any problems that need to be addressed before it's too late.

We use air conditioners to keep comfortable in our homes. Without an annual tune-up, our HVAC systems develop efficiency problems that make it harder to do so.

A tune-up will make sure your HVAC system is operating at peak efficiency. A system could consume as much as 15 percent less energy after a tune-up.

Like changing out the

oil in our vehicles, an annual system maintenance or tune-up can add years to the life of equipment. Systems that are poorly kept will not last nearly as long as systems that are regularly maintained.

Here's the best reason to take advantage

of the nice weather and get your HVAC system tuned up: Cotton Electric members could get a rebate of up to \$50, which usually accounts for at least half of the cost for the tune-up. For details, see the story on Page 2 or give us a call at 580-875-3351.

Heritage Village
 USDA Apartment Homes
 TDD 711
 406 W. Indiana - Walters, OK
(580) 215-4775
 1, 2 or 3 Bedroom, Central Heat & Air, Stove & Refrigerator, Washer/Dryer Hookups, Carpet & Mini Blinds & Laundry Facility On-Site. Rental Assistance is Available to Qualified Applicants. HUD Section 8 Accepted. This institution is an equal opportunity provider & employer.

USDA Geronimo Village
 Apartment Homes
 TDD 1-800-833-7741
 202 Chippewa - Geronimo, OK
(580) 351-1365
 1 or 2 Bedroom Apartments with carpet & mini blinds, central heat & air, laundry facility, washer/dryer hookups & ceiling fans. Playground on site. Rental Assistance Available to Qualified Applicants. This institution is an equal opportunity provider & employer.

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 SELLING 135+ HEAD AS 85 LOTS & guests INCLUDING...
 50 Purebred & Lim-Flex Fall Pairs - calves will split sale day
 25 Purebred & Lim-Flex Spring Calving Cows - many with calves at side sale day
 10 Purebred & Lim-Flex Show Heifer Prospects
 Fall Heifer calves are eligible for the TLA Shoot Out and Leading Ladies Futurity jackpot shows & many for the Magness Jackpot!
 plus Last Chance to purchase semen packages on LH ADVANTAGE

Limousin & Lim-Flex PRODUCTION SALE
 Saturday, May 2 ~ 1 p.m.
 At The Ranch
 Chattanooga, Oklahoma

LH ADVANTAGE
 Offering semen packages for a limited period: 20 units \$1,000 or 50 units \$2,000. Advantage is a high-performing individual who rose to the top in a group of 75 bulls on feed prior to gathering yearling performance and ultrasound data. This sound-footed, structurally correct, massive individual is extremely docile and easygoing. Advantage is a maternal brother to LH U Haul 135U, sire of the numerous champions, including the 2012 National Junior Show Champion Lim-Flex female and top-selling bulls across the country. Their productive dam, Duchess 7129R, is out of the breed matriarch EXLR 199H, who has six sons in AI service.

LCHA 031W
 BD: 2/28/09 - 50% Lim-Flex
 HOMO Black - HOMO Polled
 Sire: GPFF Blaque Rulon
 Dam: Falcon Harvest Moon 2015 (Angus) daughter
 CED: 9 BW: 1.3 WW: 65 YW: 102 MA: 19
 CEM: 6 SC: 0.1 CW: 32 REA: 0.40
 YG: -0.04 MARB: 0.27 \$MTI: 59
 Sells with a 9/2/14 double homo Rodemaster bull calf.

LCHA 129Y
 BD: 9/3/11 - Purebred
 HOMO Black - HOMO Polled
 Sire: DHVO Deuce 132R
 Dam: MAGS Shopper (EF Main Stay 541M)
 CED: 7 BW: 3.2 WW: 65 YW: 92 MA: 30
 CEM: 6 SC: 0.5 CW: 29 REA: 0.39
 YG: -0.06 MARB: -0.06 \$MTI: 47
 Sells with a 9/11/14 double homo MAGS Eagle heifer calf.

Write, call or email for catalog. Available online after April 10 at: www.hallchr.com

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CECF announces second-quarter grants

Pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters – set enough of them aside on a regular basis, and the coins add up to dollars. That’s how Operation Round Up works.

Most Cotton Electric members participate in ORU, in which power bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar. The amount rounded up can be as little as 1 cent and is never more than 99 cents. On average, each participating member contributes about \$6 each year.

The funds are pooled and administered by the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation, a board of directors that meets quarterly to consider grant applications. The board consists of Warren Langford, the co-op’s CEO; Tim McCary, president of the co-op’s board of trustees; and three representatives from the Cotton Electric service area: Carly Douglass, Danny Marlett and Carter Waid.

The board met in March to review 16 grant applications. Grants totaling \$23,400 will be distributed to 10 of the applicants. First-quarter grants include:

- Chisholm Trail Arts Council will fund a children’s art program with a \$1,000 CECF grant.
- Chisholm Trail Heritage Center will use a \$500 CECF grant for educational outreach.
- Devol VFD will add a \$3,000 CECF grant to a building addition project.
- Elgin Public Schools Early Childhood Center will use a \$2,500 CECF grant to purchase technology for classrooms.
- Great Plains Improvement Center will purchase mattresses for an emergency shelter using a \$3,000 CECF grant.



Download CECF grant applications at cottonelectric.com.

Deadline for second-quarter 2015 grant applications is June 3.

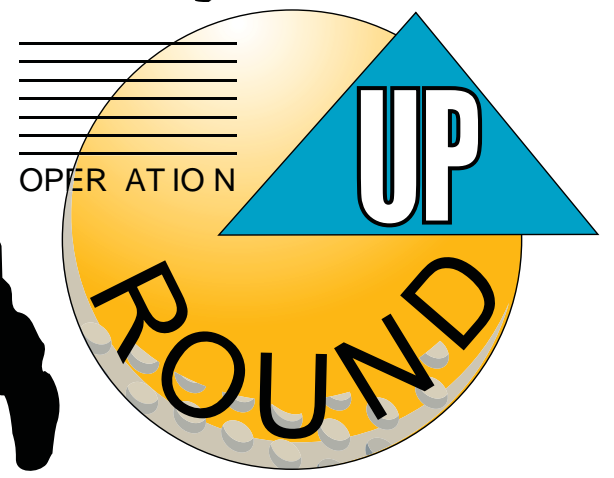
Operation Round Up is a voluntary program and members may opt out at any time by calling or sending a letter or email stating the account holder’s name, account number and the request to be removed.

- Indiahoma Public Schools will use a \$500 CECF grant to purchase incentives for Accelerated Reader participants.
- Simmons Center will add a \$2,000 CECF grant to funds raised for Centennial Park restoration.
- Velma-Alma Elementary PTO will purchase playground equipment with a \$5,000 CECF grant.
- Walters Community Food Pantry will use a \$900 CECF grant to purchase a freezer.
- Waurika Chamber of Commerce will add a \$3,000 CECF grant to funding for portal signage.

CECF has awarded or pledged grants totaling \$834,938.47 since the foundation was established in 2004.

Applications for second-quarter grants are due by June 3. Downloadable applications are available at CottonElectric.com.

7th Annual Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation Summer Classic



Summer golf tourney tees off on June 22

Registration of 4-man teams due June 8

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

The seventh annual Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) Summer Classic will be June 22 at The Territory Golf and Country Club in Duncan. The tournament is held to raise awareness of CECF and to generate funds for Operation Round Up (ORU).

ORU is primarily funded by Cotton Electric Cooperative members who “round up” their monthly bill to the nearest dollar. The funds are administered by CECF, which meets quarterly to consider grant applications. Since its inception in 2004, CECF has awarded nearly \$835,000 to volunteer fire departments, youth, senior citizen and

public safety organizations, schools, communities and individuals throughout the Cotton Electric service area.

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

Individual, team and door prizes will be awarded.

To enter, players’ names and handicap or average scores can be faxed to 580-875-3101. Deadline for entries and fee payment is Monday, June 8.

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

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



Bryce Hooper, left, director of marketing and economic development, presents a Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation grant to will help with education outreach at Chisholm Trail Heritage Center. Programs benefit people such as Cotton Electric member Gloria Sullivan and schoolchildren such as Temple Elementary second-grader Colton Sullivan. Philonda Heilaman and Edie Stewart are program instructors.

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How to Be an ‘Environmental’ Investor

Next week, we observe the 45th anniversary of Earth Day. Since its inception in 1970, Earth Day has inspired millions of people to take action to improve the environment. But the lessons of environmentalism can also be applied to other areas of life — such as investing. Specifically, as an investor, you may well want to follow the “three Rs”: reduce, reuse and recycle.

Let’s see how these environmental themes can be applied to your investment habits:

Reduce — Many of us probably own more things than we really need. In fact, if all the other people on Earth used as much “stuff” as we do in the United States, the planet would need to have three to five times more space just to hold and sustain everybody, according to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

So from an environmental standpoint, it might be smart for all of us to “streamline” our possessions. And the same could be true for our investments — it’s not always a case of “the more, the merrier.” It’s particularly important not to own too many of the same type of investments, because you could suffer a setback in a market downturn primarily affecting those assets.

Reuse — One way of being environmentally conscious is to repair, rather than replace, durable goods such as bicycles, washers, dryers, etc. After all, “new” is not always better. Many investors are also prone to tossing out the old and bringing in the new — and not always with the best results. For example, some investors switch their overall strategy every so often in attempts to capitalize on some trend they have heard about. But you’re almost certainly better off by stick-

ing with a long-term strategy that’s appropriate for your goals, risk tolerance and time horizon. Of course, within your strategy you can make adjustments as your circumstances change over time, but there’s probably no need to toss your entire approach overboard. As you invest, though, always be aware that the value of your investments will fluctuate, and there are no guarantees that you won’t lose value.

Recycle — Aluminum cans become airplane parts, old phone books are transformed into textbooks and plastic beverage containers may end up as the carpeting on your floors. It’s truly amazing how recycling can give new life to old, unwanted products. In a way, you can also “recycle” investments that no longer meet your needs, either because your circumstances have changed or because the

investments themselves have become fundamentally altered — as is the case when a company in which you invested has shifted its focus or taken its business in a new direction. Instead of just liquidating the investment and using the cash to buy, say, an ultra-high-definition television with all the bells and whistles, you could find a new use for the proceeds in your investment portfolio. To name one possibility, you could use the money to help save for a child’s college education. Or you might use it to help fill other gaps in your portfolio.

By following the “reduce, reuse and recycle” philosophy, you can help make the world a “greener” place to live. And by applying the same principles to the way you invest, you can create a healthier environment in which to pursue your important financial goals.

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For your convenience

New kiosk offers simple, secure payment options available 24/7/365 at Duncan business office

By Karen Kaley

Members visiting Cotton Electric's Duncan office in the past month have noticed a bit of construction activity just north of the drive-up window. The drive-through path has been reconfigured and something has been added to the northeast corner of the building.

Drivers can pull up to take a closer look and will find the new panel holds an automated payment kiosk at a height that should work for cars or trucks. This new device will take debit or credit cards, checks or cash payments on Cotton Electric accounts.

Similar to an ATM, the kiosk will be available to Cotton Electric members any time, any day or



Cotton Electric member Yonic Ramirez makes a payment using the new kiosk at the co-op's business office at 1101 West Oak Avenue in Duncan. Illustrations on Page 7 show some of the selections members can make at the kiosk.

night. Once a transaction is made, an account is updated immediately.

Using the device is also similar to an ATM, featuring a series of touch screens offering a variety of options.

A Cotton Electric account number is an absolute must when making a payment at the kiosk. There are a couple of ways to have that number handy.

The easiest method is to take a Cotton Electric power bill along. Bills mailed after April 6 will fea-

ture a new bar code. The kiosk scanner reads the code and automatically pulls up the account.

During business hours, members can ask Vickie, Stephanie or Laura, who staff the office, for a card with the account number. The size of a business card, they can be kept in a wallet or some other handy spot.

Members keying in the account number by hand will also be required to key in the first four letters of the account holder's last name or the organization before selecting payment method.

The payment selection screen offers choices of debit or credit cards, checks or cash. It will also offer payment methods that may have been saved during previous transactions. Saved methods become available if subsequent payments are made at the kiosk, online or via the SmartHub mobile app.

The second part of payment selection offers more choices: Pay the entire balance, another amount or look at account details. The account details window allows a member to look at billing and payment history and other information.

The kiosk features a slot to swipe a credit or debit card. There is an option to edit billing addresses when payment is made using a card held by someone other than the person for which the account is being paid.

More account numbers are necessary to pay with an electronic check. A numeric keypad is presented to input checking or savings account numbers and bank routing numbers.

The kiosk features a bill acceptor, a safe way for members to pay in cash. Currency should be fed in slowly to allow the device to "read" each bill.

The kiosk does not make change. All cash inserted is applied to the member account.

Each type of transaction ends with an offer to print a receipt.

Payments made at the kiosk are credited immediately. Before a member can get to the end of the new driveway, the account will be up to date.

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Payment kiosk windows provide many options



Login Screen

At the beginning of a kiosk transaction, members are prompted to enter an account number on the Login page. This step is skipped if the kiosk reads a bar code such as the one below on a Cotton Electric bill.



Account confirmation

The second part of a self-key kiosk transaction requires members to enter the first four characters of the last name of the account holder or organization before selecting a payment method.



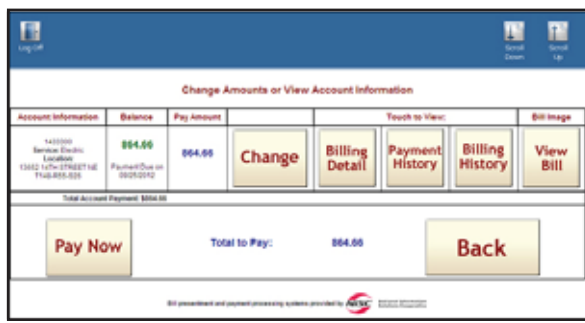
Payment selection

A member can choose to save credit/debit card or checking account information. The information will be available for all subsequent payments, whether at the kiosk online or via the SmartHub mobile app.



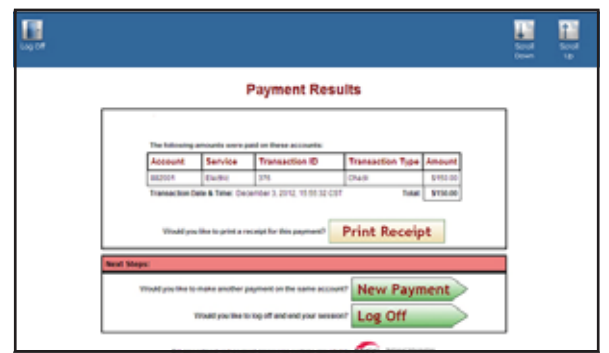
Payment amount choice

A member can choose to pay the entire balance of a bill, another amount or look at account details.



Account details

Select Change to enter a payment amount other than the balance due. Then select Pay Now to continue the transaction.



Payment results

All transactions will complete with an option to print a receipt. Members are encouraged to do so when paying with cash.



Check payment

A numeric keypad is presented to input checking or savings account numbers and bank routing numbers when members choose to pay by electronic check.



Cash payment

Press Select to begin a cash payment. Remember: The kiosk does not make change. All cash inserted is applied to the member account.



Bill acceptor

Currency should be fed in slowly to allow the device to "read" each bill. The amount will update after each bill is read.

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research collected from 811 "Call Before You Dig"

28 landscaping, groundskeeping, and tree trimming pros died on the job in 2013.

Exposure to electricity accounts for 7% of contractor deaths.

Safe Electricity.org

research collected from the Bureau of Labor Statistics

Tackle outdoor projects with safety in mind

A freshly mown lawn, colorful flowers, and a stone path can give your yard some serious curb appeal. Before making improvements to your yard by planting flowers, trimming bushes, or installing a new water feature, make sure you are doing so safely.

Preparing for the job is important for both homeowners and professionals. In a preliminary national census of fatal occupational injuries in 2013, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 28 deaths in 2013 in which the workers were professional contractors for landscaping, grounds keeping, and tree trimming. The census also noted that 7 percent of total contractor deaths in 2013 were due to exposure to electricity. This shows that even professional contracted workers are not immune to electrical accidents and that it is important to keep safety in mind.

Check the condition of cords before each use. Look for fraying or cracking along the entire length of the cord and for damage to the plug or sockets. Replace any damaged

extension cords or tools.

Be sure to only use extension cords rated for outdoor use, and remember to unplug them when not in use. Extension cords are designed for temporary use only.

When purchasing an extension cord or power tool, only buy prod-



Always look up before positioning a ladder.

ucts that have been certified by a recognized safety laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratory, ETL, or CSA.

If it is raining or the ground is wet, do not use electric power or yard tools. Always store power tools and extension cords in dry areas.

Replace any that get damaged by water.

To help prevent electric shock, make sure outdoor outlets are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).

Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines. Never trim trees near power lines — leave that to the professionals.

If you are planting a tree in your yard, select a planting location that will not interfere with utility lines. Tree branches can interfere with overhead power lines, and roots can do the same with underground utilities.

When a project requires any sort of digging, such as planting flowers or building fence, be sure to call 811 to have underground public utilities marked before you dig. Hitting an underground line can cause serious injury, disrupt service to you and your neighbors, and can be expensive to repair.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Annual 4-Person Golf Scramble

SPONSORED BY WALTERS EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

Saturday, May 17
 Registration-8:00-8:45 am
 Shotgun Start-9:00 am

Men's & Women's Teams
 \$120 Per Team
 (Includes Lunch & Cart)
TROPHIES & DOOR PRIZES
 Closest to Pin &
 Longest Drive Contest

Form teams by calling:
 Linda Ledford at 875-2041, Betty Minton at 875-2128, Janell Philpott at 875-2616, or register with Richard Glenn at golf course.

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Cotton Electric, WFECC contribute more than \$2.8M to area schools

There are many advantages to being a member of an electric cooperative, including the significant positive impact it can have on your community. Take taxes, for example.

It's hard to think of taxes in a positive way, but schools in the Cotton Electric Cooperative service area get a big boost each year from the gross receipts tax paid by its members. On a percentage basis, electric cooperatives contribute more tax dollars to local school districts than do other utilities.

In Oklahoma, a 2 percent gross receipts tax on revenue at both the wholesale and retail level is

levied upon electric cooperatives in lieu of ad valorem tax. All but 5 percent of that goes directly back to school districts in the areas they serve.

Investor-owned utilities pay ad valorem taxes instead of a gross receipts tax. Only 58 percent of this tax goes to school districts within which they own property. Municipal utilities contribute no tax money to public schools in Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Tax Commission oversees the apportionment of the gross receipts tax. The amount paid to each school is based upon the number of miles

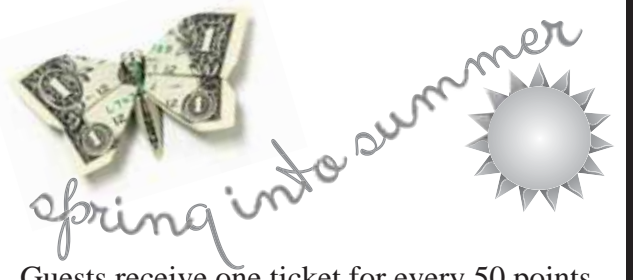
of power lines that Cotton Electric Cooperative and Western Farmers Electric Cooperative have in each school district.

WFECC, Oklahoma's largest locally owned power supply system, is a generation and transmission cooperative owned by 22 distribution cooperatives, including Cotton Electric.

In 2014, more than \$2.8 million was distributed among the 31 schools served by CEC and WFECC. The table below shows the miles of line serving each district and an estimation of amounts contributed through the 2014 gross receipts tax.

2014 Gross Receipts Tax by School Districts

District	Cotton & WFECC Taxes	Cotton miles of line	Frederick	Geronimo
Apache	38,671.92	4.51	66,210.29	9.07
Big Pasture	64,626.47	244.41	56,153.30	163.46
Bishop	304.08	1.15	49,932.75	188.84
Bray	98,684.37	134.37	54,960.30	113.24
Cache	126,666.52	292.89	72,062.45	146.42
Central	102,816.73	237.27	46,619.28	122.43
Chattanooga	219,258.05	335.30	61,649.12	233.15
Comanche	237,685.73	308.72	96,226.86	24.66
Davidson	25,470.98	33.45	145,825.04	149.83
Duncan	95,182.35	192.53	45,261.46	119.90
Elgin	139,553.84	310.13	70,982.12	165.07
Empire	93,030.30	238.27	65,066.65	234.47
Fletcher	58,682.23	26.90	18,340.05	69.36
Flower Mound	383.41	1.45	325,887.64	510.02
Fox	4,566.51	17.27	213,954.04	299.61
			111,859.49	234.76
			Totals:	2,806,574.33
				5,162.91



Guests receive one ticket for every 50 points earned on their Comanche Club Card **April 1, 2015-May 30, 2015.**

Every Friday and Saturday in April and May, one confirmed winner will be drawn approximately every 30 minutes to win a chance to reveal a prize from the game board for a spring and summer outdoor type prize or Comanche credit.

A winner can only claim one prize per evening. The drawing hopper will be emptied every Saturday after the promotion has ended.



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Participants that earn 50 points on their Comanche Card will receive a free spa set gift on **May 10, 2015**

From 12pm - 11pm.

- Limit is one gift per person.
- If the supplies should run out, all participants earning the 50 points in one day during the designated period will be able to redeem \$10.00 Comanche Credit.

Valid I.D. Required For All Promotions and Game Play



New members get up to \$100 Comanche Credit.
See Player's Club for Details.
Valid I.D. Required

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Every Tues. 12pm-6pm Guests who are 50+ years can receive \$5 Comanche Credit & a free meal after they earn 2 points on their C Club card.

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ACROSS

1. Hindu social class
6. Hassles
12. Pillsbury best seller
16. Midway between S and E
17. A President's 1st address
18. The 24th state
19. Atomic #18
20. Most abundant mineral in the body
21. Golf score
22. 14th Greek letter
23. 12th Greek letter
24. 4-stringed Chinese instrument
26. Order of the British Empire women
28. Watering places
30. Atomic #58
31. '___ death do us part
32. Radioactivity unit
34. Consumed food
35. Six (Spanish)
37. Hosts film festival
39. S.W. plateau
40. Made of fermented honey and water
41. Et-___
43. College army
44. Flower petals
45. Assist
47. An open metal dish
48. And, Latin
50. Supreme singer Diana
52. Gaelic name (morning)
54. Expresses pleasure
56. Overdose
57. Spanish be
59. A border for a picture
60. Doctor
61. Ancient Egyptian sun god
62. Lansing is the capital
63. Clothed

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|---|--|---|

Debbie's Little Books

10% discount on personalized books

Debbie Thomason has numerous titles to choose from at her website, DebbiesLittleBooks.com.



Get hooked on Debbie's Little Books

By Karen Kaley

"I just love these little books. They are so cool," Debbie Thomason said over and over.

Cool books? What makes a book cool?

Let's see, a good book has to have something that draws a reader to it. A truly special book would be one that is read more than once.

The book would have to have good character development. The story would have to make the reader relate to it as if he or she were part of the tale.

Yep. Debbie's Little Books do all that.

These are no ordinary books. You won't find them on the shelves of the local library.

Debbie's books, mainly for children, are personalized, meaning the people and places in the books are all familiar to those who own these keepsakes.

The stars of the books are your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, identified by full name and nicknames.

The adults are parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles of the protagonist, all identified with the terms of endearment specific to the family.

And kids love them.

Debbie's Little Books features more than 125 titles of varying reading levels. There are books aimed at girls, some at boys, some about holidays and some about super heroes. Some feature licensed characters, some have an ethnic flavor and some make great gag gifts for adults.

Some are about the day a child was born. This

book can include things like vital statistics, the name of the doctor and hospital, who came to visit and what it was like on the day the baby went home.

"Those books become treasured keepsakes," Debbie said. "They get put away with the baby mementos."

Debbie said she got hooked on the little books about 12 years ago when she was looking for something special for her granddaughter, Madison. She came across a magazine advertisement for personalized books offered through Create-A-Book.

A lifelong book lover, she took a chance and ordered several. She provided information such as the granddaughter's name and familiars such as Meme and Pop-pop instead of Grandma and Grandpa.

"I had no idea what I was going to get," she recalled. "I didn't know if it would be paperback or what quality to expect."

The one-of-a-kind books arrived and Debbie was not disappointed.

"When I got them, I just fell in love with them."

So much so that she became a licensed dealer for Create-A-Book.

"These are good quality books printed on heavy paper with hardback washable covers."

Debbie is especially enthusiastic about the little books because they promote reading.

"A child will sit still a little longer when they hear their name over and over on every page."

She said the books are so well-loved that she ad-

vises adults to buy a title they like, too, because they will be reading the book many times.

Debbie has a lot of advice about book selection and what type of personal information makes for a good story. After those interested look at the variety of titles on her website, DebbiesLittleBooks.com, she is happy to help customers with the ordering process when they call her at 580-492-4672.

Once an order is placed, a personalized book can be ready within a day or two. Debbie has the hard covers and color pages on hand. She uses a computer program to populate the custom information throughout the story. She prints and binds the book in her home.

Cost is dependent on the title and whether the book has to be delivered by mail. Debbie said most books cost less than \$20.

Cotton Electric members presenting a Co-op Connections Card can receive a 10 percent discount on the books.

Debbie offers gift certificates, too, which make excellent baby shower gifts. She also has special offers for groups wanting to use them as a fundraiser. She sees it as another way to spread the love of reading.

And, she has a special wish.

"I would love to have a book sponsor for a Head Start program. We could fix up a book for each student and include a 'Donated by' page."

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A pre-trip check is the best way to ensure that your vehicle is ready to get you to your destination.

Ready for a road trip?

Avoid breakdowns with a pre-trip vehicle check

(Family Features) If your upcoming travel plans include a road trip, the last thing you want is unexpected car trouble to leave you stranded at the side of the road. A pre-trip vehicle check is the best way to ensure that your car, van or RV is ready to get you to your destination.

“Taking steps to have auto repairs performed before long distance driving will not only give you peace of mind, but will also help avoid the inconvenience and potential safety hazards of breaking down when you’re miles from home,” said Rich White, executive director of the Car Care Council.

Protect your vehicle and your own safety by following these recommendations from the Car Care Council and complete a

thorough pre-trip checklist before hitting the road:

- Check the brake system and make sure the battery connection is clean, tight and corrosion-free.
- Check filters and fluids, including engine oil, power steering and brake and transmission, as well as windshield washer solvent and coolant. Dirty air filters can waste gas and cause the engine to lose power.
- Check hoses and belts that can become cracked, brittle, frayed, loose or show signs of excessive wear. These are critical to the proper functioning of the electrical system, air conditioning, power steering and the cooling system.
- Check the tires, including tire pressure and tread. Underinflated tires reduce a vehicle’s fuel econ-

omy and uneven wear indicates a need for wheel alignment. Tires should also be checked for bulges and bald spots.

- Check that the gas cap is not damaged, loose or missing to keep gas from spilling or evaporating.

You can also make sure your vehicle is road-trip-ready by taking better care of your vehicle throughout the year using tools such as the Car Care Council’s free personalized schedule and email reminder service, which can help you drive smart, save money and make informed decisions about your car.

To access this convenient service, or to order a copy of the council’s Car Care Guide, which is available electronically or as a booklet you can store in your glove box, visit www.carcare.org.

Save money at the pump with these tips

(Family Features) As gas prices continue to drop, motorists should take advantage of their savings at the pump and invest it back into their vehicles. By spending a little now to increase fuel efficiency, drivers can multiply fuel savings and save more money at the pump, according to the Car Care Council.

Here are a few simple steps for motorists to be car care aware to improve fuel efficiency and save money in the long run:

- Engine performance: Keep your car properly tuned to improve gas mileage by an average of four percent.
- Tire pressure: Keep tires properly inflated and improve gas mileage by up to 3.3 percent.
- Motor oil: Improve gas mileage by 1 to 2 percent



by using the grade of motor oil recommended by the manufacturer.

- Air filters: Replacing clogged air filters on older vehicles can improve fuel economy and will improve performance and acceleration on all vehicles.

- Gas cap: Damaged, loose or missing gas caps allow gas to vaporize into the air.

For more tips to increase savings and fuel efficiency for your vehicle, visit www.carcare.org.

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You can't always SEE the hidden dangers after the storm...

When venturing outside, stay away from downed power lines and be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Assume that any dangling wires you encounter are energized and dangerous.

If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, stay in your vehicle, warn others to stay away and contact emergency personnel or electric utility. For additional information on electrical safety, visit CottonElectric.com or SafeElectricity.org.

Don't get caught in springtime storms

When Steve Wald took his two sons and a neighbor friend to the pool on a hot summer day, he didn't realize that they would be caught in a storm and only seconds away from being involved in an accident with an overhead power line brought down by the force of that storm.

Steve and the boys were three blocks from home when the storm hit. With a flash of light, a power line came crashing to the ground along their path home.

"Getting caught in the storm really did turn out to be a risk, and if our timing was a little bit different..." Steve

reflects. He shudders to think of what could have happened that day.

Working with Safe Electricity's "Teach Learn Care TLC" program, Steve, his two boys, and their friend want others to learn about storm and downed line safety. A video with more information on their close encounter can be found at SafeElectricity.org.

- Safe Electricity urges you to:
- Check weather forecasts so you plan to stay inside when a storm threatens.
 - If you are outside, seek safe shelter in an enclosed building or vehicle.
 - If you see a downed power line,

stay far away, instruct others to do the same, and call 911 and the local utility immediately.

Don't get caught outside in a storm. Check weather forecasts and know the difference between weather related terms. Watch forecasts on the television, listen to the weather on the radio, or download an app for a mobile device to keep forecasts at hand.

If you have an outdoor activity or event scheduled, plan ahead so you are not caught outside in a storm. Have a backup inside location as a precaution in case a storm threatens.

If you are inside when a storm

strikes, stay inside. If you do get caught outside, find an enclosed building or a vehicle with a hard-top roof to take cover. There is no safe place outside during a storm.

When a storm strikes, it is possible for power lines to come down. "You may not see it. You may not hear it. But if you see a downed line, assume it's hot and stay very far away from it," Steve warns.

Don't take chances with your safety. Don't get caught in a storm. Learn more about storm safety and see the story of Steve, his two boys, and their friend at SafeElectricity.org.

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Area's brightest teens compete for Youth Tour slots

By Karen Kaley

One of the most enjoyable tasks for a few Cotton Electric employees usually takes place on a pleasant evening in spring. Ten sharp-dressed high school juniors, with parents and teachers in tow, drive in from across the service area for a banquet at the co-op headquarters in Walters.

The teens pose for pictures, try to get numbered tags to stick to their clothing and pick at a meal. The food is always great, but the young people are nervous.

They probably would not describe their task at the event as enjoyable. They will stand in front of the gathering to deliver an oral recitation of an essay written months earlier.

It will be worth it. It is the final round of Cotton Electric's annual Rural Electric Youth Tour contest.

This year, 73 essays on the topic "Life in rural southwest Oklahoma without Cotton Electric Cooperative" were submitted from students at seven schools. Written entries were pared down to the 25 best and their authors were invited to take part in the interview round of the competition.

From that group came the top 10 who delivered speeches on that pretty March evening. Listed by school, the finalists and their parents included:

Geronimo High School: Abby Wilcox, daughter of Amy Wilcox; Philip Benke, son of Terry Benke;

Lawton High School: Emily Banister, daughter of Tracy and Lisa Banister; Jessica Thompson, daughter of Lynda Thompson; Hanna Stanton, daughter of Angela and J.R. Stanton;

Marlow High School: Tyler Ellsworth, daughter of Jennifer Archer;

Powers Academy Homeschool: Amber Powers, daughter of Sidney and Wendy Powers of Loco;

Velma-Alma High School: David Bryant, son of Danny and Gayla Bryant;

Walters High School: Rachel Simon, daughter of Nick and Kelly Simon; and Alexis Skurnack, daughter of Dennis Skurnack.

There were three other special guests who would serve as judges for the evening. That tough task went to Dr. James Heflin, associate professor in the Department of Communication at Cameron University; Monica Neal, director of community development for the Chickasaw Nation; and Kyle Cabelka, assistant district attorney for Comanche County.

Contestants spoke of the daily back-breaking, tedious work of rural Oklahomans before the co-op was established in 1938. They told what they had learned about the Rural Electrification Administration and how C.W. Cox worked to organize the support of businessmen, community leaders and progressive farmers to bring electricity to southwest Oklahoma.

They pointed out that the cooperative is more than a power provider, citing genuine care for the community that might not be replaced if the co-op were to disappear. They concluded that life in rural southwest Oklahoma would not be the same without Cotton Electric to provide affordable quality power.

After the speeches were delivered, Jennifer Meason, vice president of marketing for the co-op, complimented the candidates on the great job they did on their speeches. "You will be good to go with your first college speech class."

CEO Warren Langford echoed the message, praising the accomplishment of collecting information on a topic that wouldn't be particularly interesting to a teenager. "You were given an assignment or volunteered to write about an electric cooperative. I'm sure you thought: Really?"

He said the essay contest process would be instructive and helpful. "Be-

ing able to communicate in writing is something that you will get better at all your life.

"Then you had to stand up and communicate orally. The more you do that, the better you get.

"These are skills you will use all your life."

While all gained something from participating, in the end, only four could be chosen to represent Cotton Electric on Youth Tour, an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. For a week in June, Amber Powers, Abby Wilcox, Hanna Stanton and Rachel Simon will join 1,500 students and follow itineraries filled with activities from the moment they arrive until they day they fly back home.

The students will have an opportunity to visit with Oklahoma's congressional delegation and 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.

Because four bright teens learned, wrote and spoke well about how cooperatives impact lives, they have earned a valuable educational opportunity. They represent one of Cotton Electric's many investments in the future of the communities it serves.



Finalists in Cotton Electric's 2015 Youth Tour essay contest include, front row from left, Emily Banister, Amber Powers, Tyler Ellsworth, Hanna Stanton and Jessica Thompson; and, back row, Philip Benke, Abby Wilcox, David Bryant, Rachel Simon and Alexis Skurnack.



Rachel Simon, left, Abby Wilcox, Amber Powers and Hanna Stanton will represent Cotton Electric in the Rural Electric Youth Tour 2015.

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Fast foods are not proper fuel for athletes

The International Journal of Sports Nutrition and Exercise Metabolism recently featured a study comparing the effect of fast food to popular sports drinks and bars on glycogen recovery (think "energy storage") in male athletes after strenuous activity. The study was published online in February 2015.

The intent of the study seems to be debunking the myth that foods marketed for sports recovery are best. To that argument, this study has merit.

However, the conclusion in the abstract that "fast food menu options" are good options for energy recovery is being misconstrued as an endorsement of fast food as a way to re-fuel after a strenuous workout.

This is not only misleading but also irresponsible as choosing healthy ways to fuel athletes is the best option for their current and future health.

It is important to distinguish who needs to deviate from a typical eating pattern in order to re-fuel after exercise. For individuals going on a walk or jog or short hike for fun or to stay

healthy, staying hydrated with water and not skipping meals are the most important things to do to keep your energy up.

If you are training for or competing in a marathon, participating in a sport that involves multiple strenuous practices a week in addition to a game, if you are trying to build muscle or "bulk up," then glycogen recovery and energy storage become important.

For teens and college athletes, you are fueling the activity as well as the nutritional needs for growth. For adults, you are mainly fueling the activity and increasing muscle mass and replacing energy reserves.

Both require increased calories and protein, and although fast food and "sports-food" can do the trick, they do not set you up for healthy habits after you stop training.

Fast food and foods marketed for sports recovery should be considered convenience foods, and therefore should represent a minor part of an athlete's diet. More often, athletes of all ages should strive for healthier ways to meet their calorie needs.

Think chocolate milk versus a sports drink. Think a peanut butter and banana sandwich instead of a fast food burger and fries. Actually, a hamburger can

be a decent choice - just nix the fries and opt for a healthier side.

Athletes need a diet based in the philosophy of healthy eating: Balanced in carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats. During certain periods, some nutrients are more important than others, but straying from a general healthy eating philosophy to recover from physical activity is a recipe for disaster in the future.

Because eating more calories without increasing exercise generally means gaining weight, athletes can find themselves packing on the pounds when they are not in training or have retired from the sport. If they were fueling in a healthy manner, avoiding unwanted weight gain when not training is easier, because they are used to eating healthy foods; they just need to eat less.

Let's face it, if you are used to eating sweets and fat and salt-filled foods, transitioning to fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, and whole grains will be more difficult. Unhealthy eating leads to dire health consequences like obesity, high blood pressure and

high cholesterol, and athletes are not immune.

If you are signed up for post-sports snacks, trying to fuel your teenage athlete, or are trying to fuel your own participation in strenuous physical activity, choose foods that set you up for current and future healthy eating habits.



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

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Southwest Salsa Bowl

- Materials:**
1 round, seedless watermelon
Dry erase marker
Utility knife or carving knife
Ice cream scoop or other large spoon
Fire and Ice Salsa
Chips, jalapenos, cilantro and lime, for garnish

1. Choose round seedless watermelon.
2. Wash watermelon and pat dry.
3. Use dry erase marker to trace design around middle of watermelon.
4. Use utility knife to carve design (copy design in photo).
5. Split watermelon in half, and use scoop to carve out flesh.
6. Choose flat area of rind on other watermelon half to trace and carve out lizard design (copy from image in photo).
7. Fill bowl with salsa.
8. Garnish with lizard, chips, jalapenos, cilantro and lime.



Fire and Ice Salsa

- Servings: 3 cups
3 cups seeded and chopped watermelon
1/2 cup green peppers
2 tablespoons lime juice
1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
1 tablespoon green onion
1-2 tablespoons jalapeno peppers

Combine ingredients; mix well and cover. Refrigerate 1 hour or more.

More Cinco de Mayo recipes on Page 15

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HOUSEHOLD:
Livingroom couch and loveseat; end tables; shelves; antique dresser; dining table w/ 6 chairs; dining table w/ 4 chairs; full size bed; dresser; recliner; queen size bed w/ matching dresser; matching 12 place set of Correll ware with accessories; assorted glassware; stainless steel cookware; baking pans; antique glass; pictures; refridgerators; deep freeze; bed spreads; handmade quilts; assorted quilt scraps; crochet doilies; sheets; blankets; pillows; handmade bedding set; curtains; tv's; lamps; grandfather clock; washer and dryer.

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Sweet ideas for CINCO DE MAYO celebrations

FAMILY FEATURES

Cinco de Mayo is the perfect opportunity to indulge in Mexican-inspired dishes, dips and drinks. This year, put a tangy twist on your festive favorites with a refreshing new flavor.

Watermelon is a versatile fruit with a flavor profile that pairs perfectly with many of the ingredients in traditional Mexican dishes. Sweet and juicy watermelon is a great way to cut the heat of spicier foods, and its texture lends an unexpected, satisfying crunch in dips such as chunky salsas.

Whether you're hosting a Cinco de Mayo-themed party or simply looking forward to an inspired meal at home, get an early jump on summer and let watermelon be your star ingredient.

For more recipes featuring low-calorie, no-fat watermelon, visit www.watermelon.org.

Fiesta-Worthy Facts

Impress guests at your Cinco de Mayo celebration with these mouthwatering morsels:

- Although about 200–300 varieties of watermelon are grown in the United States and Mexico, there are about 50 varieties that are most popular.
- The five best-known types of watermelon include: seeded, seedless, mini, yellow and orange.
- Watermelon is the most-consumed melon in the United States, followed by cantaloupe and honeydew.
- Early explorers used watermelons as canteens.
- Watermelon is 92 percent water, which makes it a good option for hydrating your body.

More Cinco de Mayo recipes on Page 14



Baja Fish Tacos with Watermelon Guacamole

Servings: 12–16 tacos

- 2 medium avocados, peeled and chopped
- 2 tablespoons lime juice
- 2 teaspoons diced jalapeno pepper (or to taste)
- 1/3 cup chopped cilantro
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 1 can (4 ounces) diced green chilies, drained
- 2 1/2 cups diced watermelon, divided
- Salt, to taste
- Cooking spray
- 1 1/2 pounds cod
- Chili powder
- 12–16 corn tortillas
- 3–4 cups commercial coleslaw mix (shredded cabbage and carrots)
- 1/2–1 cup commercial salsa

For guacamole, mash avocados to mix of smooth and chunky in medium bowl. Add lime, jalapeno, cilantro, garlic and chilies and mix thoroughly. Add 1 1/2

cups diced watermelon and salt (if desired) and toss. Cover and refrigerate to let flavors blend.

Heat oven to 350°F. Spray cookie sheet with cooking spray.

Place cod on sheet and sprinkle with chili powder and salt. Bake for 12–20 minutes (depending on thickness of fish) or until cooked through. Remove from oven and cut into pieces.

Heat tortillas on grill or griddle. Top each with few pieces of fish, 1/4 cup coleslaw mix, heaping spoonful of guacamole, tablespoon of salsa and few pieces of remaining diced watermelon.

Watermelon Cilantro Salsa Tropical

Servings: 8–12

- 2 cups chopped seedless watermelon
- 1 cup chopped fresh pineapple
- 1 cup chopped fresh mango
- 4 limes (juice only)
- 1 cup trimmed and chopped scallions
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Toss all ingredients in mixing bowl and season with salt and pepper just before serving.



Early Detection Saves Lives!

FREE Lung Screening For High Risk Individuals

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

- Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women worldwide.
- Nearly 160,000 Americans die of lung cancer each year.

Based on findings of the National Lung Screening Trial (NLST), we know that CT lung screening can save lives of people at high risk for developing lung cancer.

Low-dose CT (LDCT) lung screening is quick and easy and results in a minimal amount of radiation exposure. The Cancer Centers of Southwest Oklahoma is determined to raise awareness and improve access to this testing for all people at high risk. Therefore, Cancer Centers of Southwest Oklahoma and Jackson County Memorial Hospital are now offering in conjunction **FREE LDCT lung screening** to individuals who meet the established high-risk criteria.



QUALIFICATION CRITERIA

You may qualify for a free LDCT lung screening if you fall into one of these categories:

Category 1

- You are between 55 and 74 years of age
- You are currently a smoker or have quit in the last 15 years
- You have a 30+ pack-year* history of smoking

Category 2

- You are between 50 and 74 years old
- You have a 20+ pack-year* history of smoking
- You have one additional lung cancer risk factor (not to include secondhand smoke exposure)

*pack-years are calculated by multiplying the number of packs a day you smoke by the number of years you have smoked.

Example: 2 packs a day for 15 years = 30 pack-years

**Call to schedule a screening
1-877-231-4440 to see if you qualify.**

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www.cancercentersswok.com

Attention Golfers!

Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation will host its **7th Annual Summer Golf Classic** on June 22 at The Territory Golf & Country Club in Duncan.

We are now taking team entries. Hole sponsorships are still available. Proceeds from the event will go to Operation Round Up.

To sign up your team, call Bryce Hooper at 580-875-3351.

First 30 teams accepted. Teams must be signed up and paid by June 8.

Entry fees are \$600 per team.
cottonelectric.com

Pasta salad makes quick, healthy dinner

(Family Features) Now is the time for diners to transition palates to lighter and healthier meals, especially those packed with fresh, satisfying ingredients.

Whether serving dinner at home or heading out to a picnic, Lemony Peas and Pasta Salad is a snap to make, with few steps and minimal preparation time. It's also packed with colorful fresh vegetables that are back in season once again.

Start by preparing the pasta according to package directions. Dreamfields penne rigate is premium pasta made from durum wheat semolina that has the taste and texture of traditional pasta

but with a healthy twist. A one-cup cooked serving provides five grams of fiber and seven grams of protein.

While the pasta is in its final minutes of cooking, add two of nature's wonderful gifts: fresh sugar snap peas and green peas.

A dressing of lemon zest and juice whisked into olive oil adds just the right amount of zip when tossed with the drained pasta and peas.

Then, add in crisp young greens such as arugula or spinach – the two can be blended, if desired. Once you've added a few shavings of Parmesan cheese on top, it's ready to serve.

Have a taste for fresh herbs with your pasta salad? You can choose anything from chopped mint to chives to parsley, or pick your own favorite to sprinkle on top.

For the best flavor and texture, be sure to prepare the pasta salad on the same day as it is served.

This recipe yields enough for the whole family – including vegetarians – to enjoy. It's an easy way to make life just a little bit healthier.

Dreamfields can be found in the pasta aisle of supermarkets nationwide – just look for the black box. For more information and pasta salad recipes, visit www.dreamfieldsfoods.com.



Lemony Peas & Pasta Salad

Prep time: 20 minutes
Cook time: 10 minutes
Servings: 6-8

- 1 box Dreamfields Penne Rigate
- 2 cups sugar snap peas
- 2 cups fresh or frozen green peas
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons lemon zest, plus extra for garnish
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 cups baby greens (arugula, spinach or blend)
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh herbs (optional)
- Parmesan cheese, shaved

Cook pasta according to package directions, adding sugar snap and green peas during last 3 minutes of cooking; drain. Rinse with cold water; drain again. Place in large bowl.

Meanwhile, combine lemon juice, zest and salt in small bowl. Whisk in oil. Toss with pasta and peas. Gently toss in greens and herbs, if using. Garnish with shaved Parmesan and additional zest, if desired.

Note: For herbs, use one or a combination of chopped mint, thyme, chives, basil, parsley or other favorites.

Nutrition information (1/6 of recipe): 328 calories; 8 g total fat (1 g saturated fat); 12 g protein; 56 g total carbohydrate; 9 g total dietary fiber; 0 mg cholesterol; 218 mg sodium.

Find out how the little changes add up to big savings at TogetherWeSave.com.

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