



Newest substation near Elgin features new-fangled poles

Installation deals with increased demand from Country Aire Estates

By Karen Kaley

Folks living in Country Aire Estates have probably noticed a lot of utility activity lately. That’s because a lot of development activity over the past decade or so has turned pastures and wheat fields northwest of Elgin into an addition filled with spacious total electric homes.

The added demand for power at Country Aire has been served by the nearest substation, known as Paradise, nearly 10 miles away. The demand was a bit challenging, but the sub was handling it.

Growth in the area is widespread and overlaps the service area boundary between Cotton and Caddo electric cooperatives. Caddo was also challenged in serving some of the new demands for power.

About two years ago, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (W FEC) determined that it was time to build a new substation. Located north of Elgin and a little more than a mile from Country Aire, it would be shared by the two distribution cooperatives.

W FEC is a generation and transmission cooperative that serves 22 member cooperatives supplying power to two-thirds of the state of Oklahoma, including Cotton Electric and Caddo Electric. The Elgin sub is one of 26 W FEC subs in Cotton’s service area.

The Elgin substation is built and ready to “heat up.” During a recent tour of the site, Mike Ottinger, vice

president of operations and engineering for Cotton, noted it is laid out with ease of maintenance in mind.

“Some of the sub’s components are very large and heavy. If they need maintenance or replacement, the vehicles and equipment needed to do the work would be large, but there is plenty of room to maneuver.”

Also large and heavy is the power load that will come out of the sub toward Country Aire. For the first mile or so, two sets of three-phase line, a double circuit, will head west before splitting to the south and west.

This would mean very heavy-gauge wire and sturdy poles. Cotton’s purchasing agent, Brian Lipscomb, saw this as an opportunity to try ductile iron poles.

Lipscomb and Ottinger point to damage in the 2010 ice storm when discussing the reasons for choosing the iron poles for that crucial first mile out of the sub. Wooden poles coming out of the Paradise sub “snapped like toothpicks” and it took nearly a month to get the sub back online.

Lipscomb said the technology behind the iron poles is similar to that of cast iron water and sewer pipes. The oldest known instance of this durable product was installed 350 years ago in Versailles, France.

Lipscomb said the iron poles are lighter than wooden poles but outweigh them in benefits.

See Ductile, Page 2



Mike Ottinger, vice president of operations and engineering, inspects a stack of ductile iron poles. The first of their kind on the Cotton Electric system, the poles will support a double circuit for the first mile or so out of the new Elgin substation.

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after Jan. 1, 2015, is \$0.00782 per kWh.

On a member’s average bill of 1500 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$11.73 on the power bill for January.

December 2014 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	31	23	27	16	51	33	42
2	42	20	31	17	42	36	39
3	49	34	42	18	45	39	42
4	59	44	52	19	46	41	44
5	66	48	57	20	45	42	44
6	53	44	49	21	51	44	48
7	50	44	47	22	60	37	49
8	60	36	48	23	53	39	46
9	65	33	49	24	50	34	42
10	62	38	50	25	59	32	46
11	60	51	56	26	63	39	51
12	58	49	54	27	39	17	28
13	67	53	60	28	43	15	29
14	71	50	61	29	52	29	41
15	58	42	50	30	38	18	28

Source: srh.noaa.gov/oun/
Average Daily High: 52 Average Daily Low: 36

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed Feb. 16 for the Presidents Day holiday. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The February issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on Feb. 17, 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

Voluntary and Open Membership

Principles still apply to electric co-ops

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

When electric co-op members look at the seven co-op principles, many may question if they really live up to the first principle: Voluntary and open membership. It is a fair question. There is a two-part answer.

First, it is important to remember that when Cotton Electric Cooperative was first being formed back in 1938, every potential member had the option to refuse service. While it may be hard to believe today, there are numerous stories from electric co-ops throughout the country where the farmer said, “No thanks. We are doing fine with kerosene.”

Of course, over time they changed their minds and eventually became members of the co-op.

Due to the incredible cost of offering electric service, the vast majority of people and businesses have only one choice if they want to connect to “the grid” and receive electricity. While that may change in the future because of rooftop solar or other generation sources, the best option for most peo-

ple for safe, reliable and affordable power is from your electric co-op.

Today, electric co-ops focus on the second part of the principle, “Open Membership.” All residents and businesses in the Cotton Electric service territory are welcome to receive the power it provides.

Co-ops continually strive to ensure that your membership has value to you not just through the service of electricity but by being an active part of your community.

Co-ops offer and welcome your participation in the governance of the organization through a democratically elected board of directors. As a locally owned and controlled utility, co-ops are in a better position to understand the needs of members and can be quicker to react to help ensure the membership receives the best service possible.

Members are welcome to suggest improvements to the co-op’s operations and, unlike large investor-owned utilities often with millions of customers, you can be assured your ideas will actually be read by a real person in real time.

All co-ops, whether it is your credit union, farm co-op, telephone co-op or any other of the 29,000 co-ops that exist in the U.S. today, live by these seven co-op principles:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members’ Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

By using all of these principles integrated together, Cotton Electric is able to serve your needs every day.

Learn About Co-ops

It's a Matter of PRINCIPLE

The Rochdale Principles

Co-ops deliver electricity, sell produce, provide loans, and arrange for housing, health care, and more. But despite these differences, they all have one thing in common—seven cooperative principles:

- Voluntary and Open Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Members' Economic Participation
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Training, Information
- Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- Concern for Community

Learn more at www.go.coop.

Cooperative Enterprises Build a Better World

A message from America's Electric Cooperatives



Marvin Scherler

Scherler, 46-year Cotton trustee, passes away

Longtime Cotton Electric trustee Marvin Scherler passed away Dec. 23, 2014. He was 84.

A lifelong resident of Cotton County, Scherler had been served by Cotton Electric nearly all his life. In turn, he served the co-op with unflagging energy for 46 years, joining the board of trustees in the mid-1960s.

Born and raised in the Ahpeatone community, Scherler also built his home and livelihood in the area west of Walters.

Scherler dedicated his efforts to ensuring rural areas had access to water, farm credit and electricity. In a memorial written by a granddaughter, Scherler was described as “a connector of people and ideas, who

continually sought to improve his community. He was a firm believer in the cooperative business concept as a means to influence change, and said that being involved made him a better farmer. People who knew him best described him as a ‘gifted leader, totally honest, and a dedicated, sincere Christian.’ ”

Scherler’s service went beyond Cotton County to state and national levels. He served on numerous boards, including the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives, Cotton County Farmers Union, Oklahoma Rural Water Association, Walters Co-op Elevator and Cotton County Rural Water Board. As one of the founding fathers of the National Rural Water Asso-

ciation, he worked hard to provide water to rural communities both locally and nationally.

Scherler was honored with many awards for his service, the National Rural Water Association Man of the Year, Progressive Farmer Man of the Year, Cotton County Conservationist of the Year, and Oklahoma Water Association Man of the Year. He will be inducted into the OAEC Rural Electric Hall of Fame in April.

The farmer and rancher is survived by his wife of 66 years, Trecyl; a daughter and son-in-law and two sons and daughters-in-law; a sister; 15 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.



Ductile iron poles in place to harden 1st mile out of sub

Continued from Page One

Ductile iron is not brittle and will stand up to a wooden pole’s biggest enemy: Nature. In addition to withstanding ice and wind, the iron poles will not rot and are impervious to insects and woodpeckers.

According to manufacturer’s literature, the poles are corrosion resistant and easily installed. The poles are composed of recycled materials and can be recycled at the end of a long service life.

The iron poles will be outfitted with fiberglass cross arms to further minimize the effects of nature. The poles serve as their own ground, thus eliminating the target of copper thieves.

All of those positives should combine to serve the membership around the new substation more efficiently. The true test will come if another natural disaster hits the area. Ottinger and Lipscomb feel pretty confident the poles will not come down.

In the meantime, plans are moving forward for another new substation, this one in the Randlett area. The aging substation serving Indiahoma will be replaced, too.

Cotton Electric members will probably see a few more of the iron poles go up in those areas. After a few years, though, they will take on a coppery appearance and blend in with the scenery, just like wooden poles

The first of nearly 50 poles made of ductile iron is installed at the corner where the double circuit will split. One circuit of primary line will continue west while the other heads south.

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month



They’re out of sight, but don’t forget about your air ducts. Taking care of them can save money and energy. Check ducts for air leaks. Take care of minor sealing jobs with heat-approved tape, especially in attics and in vented crawl spaces. Call the pros for major ductwork repairs.

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.

November 2014 Operating Stats			
	2014	2013	
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$5,945,803	\$5,232,421	
Cost of Purchased Power	4,401,273	3,812,497	
Taxes	106,782	91,868	
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,138	1,035	
Average Farm and Residential Bill	149	140	
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,240	1,253	
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,282	18,081	
Miles Energized	5,150	5,130	
Density Per Mile	3.55	3.52	
New Service Connects YTD	330	236	
Services Retired	142	174	

TheCurrent

Published Monthly at Walters, Oklahoma

By Cotton Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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“Cotton Electric Current” (USPS #134-020)

is published monthly by: Cotton Electric Co-op,

226 North Broadway, Walters, OK 73572

Periodicals Postage paid at

Wichita Falls, Texas 76307-9998

Postmaster Send #3579

To The Cotton Current

226 North Broadway

Walters, OK 73572

Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the February issue, please submit information by Feb. 2 by calling 580-875-4259 or send an email to info@cottonelectric.com.

Magic Lantern screens classics

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

The Feb. 13 offering will be “The Philadelphia Story,” the tale of a smug aristocratic woman enduring gossip magazine reporters and her ex-husband as her second wedding nears. The 1940 film, directed by George Cukor, features Katherine Hepburn, Cary Grant and James Stewart in starring roles.

The April 17 offering will be “Back to the Future.”

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.

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 Ephron comedy

Proving that a great show is always in fashion, Lawton Community Theatre presents “Love, Loss, and What I Wore.” Writers Nora and Delia Ephron use our love of clothing and accessories to create an evening of funny and often poignant stories.

Performances are set for Jan. 22-25, 2015, at John Denney Playhouse, 1316 NW Bell Avenue.

For information, visit LCT-OK.org.

Trail Dance returns for 10th year

The 2015 Trail Dance Film Festival takes place at the Simmons Center, 800 Chisholm Trail Parkway, Duncan, with secondary venues at the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway.

Exhibition of films for the general audience begins Jan. 23 and continues throughout the following day, leading up to the Golden Drover Awards Show. The ceremony will recognize the films that stood out to festival judges. There is also an opportunity for members of the audience to vote on their favorites.

Tickets for the Trail Dance Film Festival can be purchased at the Simmons Center or at the event. Admission to the awards show is free.

For information, call Anthony Foreman, 580-467-8519, or visit TrailDanceFilmFestival.com.

LPO presents Jazz Sampler

Lawton Philharmonic Orchestra presents Mo Egeston’s Jazz Sampler: A Journey through Swing, Soul and Groove featuring Elizabeth McQueen. Performance is set for 7 p.m. Jan. 31 at Cameron University Theatre.

This concert features a sampling of the styles that have shaped each artist’s unique approach to writing and performing, using jazz standards as a starting point but also referencing influences of soul, country, rock, hip-hop and electronic music.

For information or to purchase tickets, visit LawtonPhil.com.

CTAC offers Cirque Zuma Zuma

Chisholm Trail Arts Council Presents “Cirque Zuma Zuma” at 7 p.m. Feb 2 in the Simmons Center.

Many describe Cirque Zuma Zuma as an African-style Cirque du Soleil; such is the standard of the performers and the quality of the show’s live musical score. The performance features an array of talents mixed with some of the best-loved skills associated with African variety arts.

Tickets are available at the box office or by visiting ChisholmTrailArts.com.

Wolf tells his side of the story

Lawton Arts and Humanities Council and the City of Lawton will present “The Real Story of Little Red Riding Hood” at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 6 in McMahon Memorial Auditorium in Lawton.

In a twist on the classic tale, the story is told from the Wolf’s point of view. In this hilarious musical, the friendly and sympathetic Wolf is understandably upset. He has been maligned for generations, and he is out to set the record straight. Toe-tapping tunes, chase scenes and audience participation make this a sidesplitting tale that will show there are always two sides to every story.

For more information or to buy tickets, call 580-581-3472.

Quilt guild sets show, raffle

Wichita Mountains Quilt Guild will hold its Out of the Box quilt show Feb. 13-14 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Lawton.

Aside from hundreds of quilts on display, there will be a raffle for a featherweight sewing machine and a quilt. Guest speakers and workshops will be offered, also.

For workshop information and ticket prices, visit WMQG.net.

Horse Fair returns Feb. 13-15

The annual Oklahoma Horse Fair will be Feb. 13-15 at the Stephens County Fair & Expo Center.

This three-day celebration of horses features a horse, pony and mule sale, Western trade show, a ranch rodeo, ranch bronc riding and a colt starting challenge. A schedule and details about the events can be found at OK-HorseFair.com.

For additional information, call Gary Lohman, 405-344-7298.

‘Mockingbird’ auditions begin

Auditions for Lawton Community Theatre’s presentation of “To Kill A Mockingbird” are set for 7 p.m. Feb. 16 and 17 at John Denney Playhouse, 1316 NW Bell Avenue in Lawton. Auditioners should arrive early to fill out paperwork.

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.

Performances are set for April 1-12 and 16-19. For information, visit LCT-OK.org or call 580-355-1600.

Photo of the Month



This shot of Easton Wyatt Strong on the occasion of his first BIRTHDAY, was taken by Lawton photographer Sheila Ferris. Easton is the son of Cotton Electric members Ashley and Larry Strong of Central High.

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

DLT plans ‘Sound of Music’

Duncan Little Theatre presents “Sound of Music,” the story of the Von Trapp family and the governess/nun who became a part of their lives. Love, adventure, and memorable songs will delight any theatergoer of any age.

Performances are set for 7:30 p.m. Feb. 20, 21, 27 and 28 in the Simmons Center in Duncan. A matinee will be at 2 p.m. Feb. 22.

Tickets are available at the door. For information, see duncanlittletheatre.com or call 580-252-8331.

Rehearsals begin for Passion Play

Rehearsals for the annual performance of “The Prince of Peace” will be at 2 p.m. for six weeks prior to the pageant performances on March 28

and April 4 in the Holy City of the Wichitas.

This 90th performance of the birth, life, death and Resurrection of Jesus in is need of volunteers for many roles. No acting skills are necessary.

For information, call pageant director Alan Corrales, 918-978-0316, or send him an email at alan.corrales@cox.net.

Food pantry open twice monthly

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

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

For information, call 580-591-6826.

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2014 GoGoGeo Challenge concludes

The 2014 GoGoGeo Challenge concluded recently with the top prize-winners being recognized during an awards luncheon hosted at the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives in Oklahoma City. Sponsors, along with cooperative representatives, were on hand for the event and offered their comments regarding the 10-month GoGoGeo Challenge.

The GoGoGeo Challenge was created by Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, and sponsored by Bosch, ClimateMaster and the International Ground Source Heat Pump Association (IGSHPA). The 2014 Challenge had a goal of providing geothermal information to a wide range of audiences through a brief survey at numerous events throughout the state, such as cooperative annual meetings and county and state fairs.

When taking the Challenge, homeowners were asked a series of questions regarding their home. A cooperative or industry representative then entered this information into a software program designed to estimate the possible savings of retrofitting a home with geothermal technology. A brief savings summary, in addition to any tax credits and other incentives offered by each respective electric cooperative, was then provided to the participant.

Upon completing the survey, participants were then eligible to enter a sweepstakes drawing for three grand prizes sponsored by the House of Kawasaki. A Yukon cooler/locker was also given away in a drawing at each regional venue in which the survey was given.

Cotton Electric member James Midgley of Lawton took home the grand prize, a Kawasaki Teryx™ 750 FI 4x4 utility terrain vehicle.

In presenting the awards, Mark Faulkenberry, senior manager - mem-



Cotton Electric's Bryce Hooper, left, manager of marketing and economic development, and Jennifer Meason, vice president of marketing, were on hand to congratulate James Midgely of Lawton, a Cotton Electric member who won a Kawasaki Teryx™ 750 FI 4x4 utility terrain vehicle, the grand prize in the 2014 GoGoGeo Challenge created by Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.

ber relations, at Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (W FEC), noted that an increase in awareness of the benefits of geothermal technology would likely lead to additional installations. The costs associated with heating and cooling a home make up the largest portion of an electric bill, Faulkenberry said, noting in particular the savings that would be possible with geothermal technology.

“Geothermal lowers power consumption, which in turn, lowers the overall cost of power for the homeowner. It also offers a long-term solution for power providers such as W FEC, as less electricity is used, helping delay any immediate need

for the addition of costly generation plants. Everyone wins,” Faulkenberry said.

Titian Burris of ClimateMaster, pointed out that education is key – on a really broad scale.

“This type of promotion has the potential to change the entire industry,” he added. “We have tried this type of program with other utilities, but it didn’t have the success of the one with Western Farmers,” Burris noted.

Bob Ingersoll, IGSHPA director, also addressed the audience regarding the GoGoGeo Challenge and the awareness it has created with geothermal technology. IGSHPA is a member-driven organization established

to advance ground source heat pump (GSHP) technology on local, state, national and international levels.

As for the prizewinners, who all have heat pumps in their homes, the contest did increase their awareness of the potential savings of geothermal technology, with the possibility of a future installation.

As for Midgley, who knew very little about geothermal before taking this survey at Cotton Electric Cooperative’s annual meeting, the Challenge provided him valuable insight into the use of this technology. He noted that he might possibly consider a geothermal installation in the future, based on the potential savings.



ROSE
Kisses Chocolates Wine
andlelight Dinner His Hers Boy
usband Wife Crush Secret Admirer Card Bu
uffed Animal Red Heart Together Forever
welry Valentine Romance
mored Honey S
ub Cupid Poem Presents
an Lovebirds Sentiment
Flowers Roses Bour
art Hugs Kisses
andlelight
hand V

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CECF announces fourth-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 a 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 December to review 18 grant applications. Grants totaling \$23,975 will be distributed to 10 of the applicants. Fourth-quarter grants include:

- Bray-Doyle Academic Booster Club will purchase educational equipment with a \$2,000 CECF grant.
- Central High School will use a

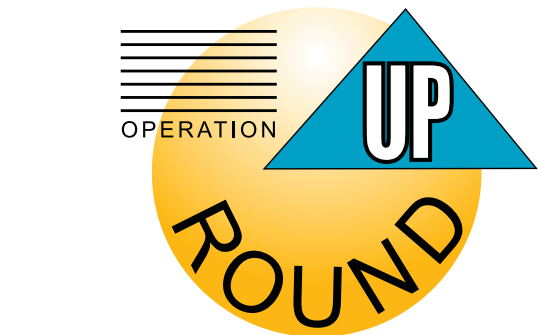
- \$2,000 CECF grant to purchase iPads
- Town of Chattanooga will purchase a programmable school crossing sign with at \$2,500 CECF grant.
- Comanche High School will install an AED purchased with a \$1,150 CECF grant.
- Marie Detty New Directions will help shelter clients obtain personal legal documents with a \$1,680 grant.
- Medicine Park Police Department will purchase a dash cam with a \$5,000 CECF grant.
- Rockin’ T Cure for Kids will use \$5,000 to aid families dealing with catastrophic illness or injury.

- Smart Start of Stephens County will use \$800 in CECF funds to purchase books for Head Start students.
- Teen Court will purchase audio/visual equipment with a \$1,345 grant.
- LaSill Optimist will use a \$2500 CECF grant to help a family struggling with overwhelming medical expenses.

CECF has awarded or pledged grants totaling \$809,838.47 since the foundation was established in 2004.

Applications for fourth-quarter grants are due by March 11. Downloadable applications are available at CottonElectric.com.

Looking over community donations are New Directions Director Kerrie Mathews, left, Laticia Kippers, case manager, and Ms. Smith, food services, health and safety.



Victims can turn lives in New Directions

By Karen Kaley

You are not alone.

You may be in a frightening personal situation. You may feel helpless and trapped by circumstances. You may believe what a toxic person is telling you, that you can’t survive without them, or that no one will help you because no one cares.

That simply isn’t true.

If you do not feel safe because you are a victim of domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking, here is the number to call: 580-357-2500.

Call any time, any day. The voice on the other end will be an advocate associated with New Directions, a program administered by Marie Detty Youth and Family Service Center of Lawton.

The advocate will listen first. Tell that listener your story, tell him or her how you feel, what you need. In turn, the compassionate advocate can help you sort out the jumble and think about solutions.

That phone call can be a simple one-time discussion

or it can be the first step on a path to change, a path to safety, a path to a new life.

That path may lead to the New Directions shelter for women and children. This is more than a safe place to sleep, it is a wealth of resources available to any person needing help in coping with or ending domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking.

“Please know that we are here,” said Kerrie Mathews, director of New Directions. “We are here even if you don’t want shelter. You don’t even have to tell us who you are.

“We can help make a safety plan that works within any situation.”

Mathews described the support New Directions has from other organizations and the community as amazing.

“Sometimes people don’t realize what all we can help with.”

Some clients may leave their situation with nothing more than their children and what they are wearing. A victim may have absolutely no



How you can help

New Directions welcomes any donations of cash and goods to help fill clients’ needs. Director Kerrie Mathews said the shelter keeps a needs list of items that help people rebuild their lives.

She said, “Often, they come to us with nothing. We try to supply them with as much as possible to get a new start.”

The list includes pots, pans, furniture, personal toiletries, clothing, paper goods, bath and bed linens, cleaning supplies and non-perishable foods.

Donations can be dropped at the New Directions main office, 317 C Avenue, Lawton.

resources, but New Directions has many and all services are free. Beyond shelter, New Directions offers assistance with counseling, court advocacy, housing and transportation.

“The focus in on empowerment and assistance in reaching goals,” Mathews said.

One detail is documents of identification. A person fleeing an abusive situation may not have them for a variety of reasons. A driver’s license may have been destroyed by an abuser as a form of power and control. A birth certificate

or Social Security card may be left behind in the rush to escape.

There is often a \$15 or \$20 fee involved in replacing these documents. That seems like a small amount but it is a huge obstacle for someone who needs a job to earn money to pay fees, but can’t get a job without legal identification.

Grants issued to New Directions for helping clients are very specific about how funds can be used and none of them covers document fees. Late last year, Mathews learned

of another grant resource that would consider helping with this small but important need – Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF).

Mathews filled out the CECF grant application found online at CottonElectric.com. She requested \$1,680, which would cover the cost of obtaining the necessary documents for at least four clients a month for a year.

The application was approved unanimously by the five CECF board members in mid-December. Funds for this and the nine other grants issued in the 2014 fourth quarter came from Operation Round Up, in which Cotton Electric members voluntarily have power bills rounded up to the nearest dollar.

In southwest Oklahoma, victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking are not alone. Thousands of Cotton Electric members have contributed what amounts to spare change in order to help begin the process of rebuilding lives.

Kids in College? Fill Out That FAFSA

We’ve just begun the new year, but the next academic year is still months away. Nonetheless, if you have a child who will be attending college in the fall, it’s not too soon to start thinking about what might be a vital component of paying for his or her higher education: financial aid.

Specifically, to help ensure that your child doesn’t miss out on federal and state student grants, work-study and loans for the 2015-2016 school year, you’ll want to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible. (You can start the application process by visiting www.fafsa.ed.gov.)

Even if you have a fair amount of financial assets, you should probably fill out a FAFSA. In the first place, all parents receive an “asset protection allowance,” based on the age of the older parent. For two-parent families, this allowance

generally shelters between \$25,000 and \$50,000 in assets from FAFSA considerations; for single parents, the range is typically between \$6,000 and \$10,000. The allowance may be higher for parents 65 and older. Furthermore, in determining your expected family contribution, FAFSA won’t look at your pension plan, your IRA or your 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement account.

Those of your assets held outside retirement plans — the balances in your checking and savings accounts, CDs, investment real estate, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and so on — will be counted in the FAFSA calculations, but as a parent, you will only be expected to contribute up to 5.64 percent of these assets, as opposed to assets held in your child’s name, which are usually assessed at 20 percent.

You may want to pay special attention to one particular asset — the 529 plan. A 529 plan is a popular college savings vehicle, and for a pretty good reason: The investment dollars you place in a 529 plan can grow tax-deferred, and withdrawals are free of federal and state taxes, provided the money is only used for higher education expenses. (The earnings portion of withdrawals used for other purposes may be fully taxable, and might incur a 10% penalty, as well.) Plus, your 529 plan contributions may be deductible on your state taxes. Like your other non-retirement assets, a 529 plan will be assessed at up to 5.64 percent for FAFSA purposes. Some families, seeking to totally keep their 529 plan assets out of aid calculations, ask the grandparents to own the account. This could be a problem, though, because while the grandparents’

529 plan won’t be reported as an asset on FAFSA, withdrawals from the plan will be treated as untaxed income to the beneficiary (i.e., the grandchild) on the next year’s FAFSA — and that can have a big impact on financial aid, a much bigger impact, in fact, than if the 529 plan was listed as a parental asset.

Consequently, you might want to ask the grandparent to award ownership of the 529 plan to you. However, some state plans don’t allow this change, so the grandparent might have to transfer the money to a different state’s plan before giving up ownership.

In any case, be aware of these issues when you tackle the FAFSA. And don’t delay in filling it out. Colleges have a closing date for accepting financial aid applications — and that’s one deadline you won’t want to miss.

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Emergency heat setting can be costly

Editor's note: Trent Marlett has been distracted this month. He and his wife, Kendi, welcomed their first child, Cheslee Paige, to the family on Dec. 29. We're giving him a break and repeating this award-winning column. Good information if you missed it the first time around.

By Trent Marlett

I wanted to shed some light on a costly misunderstanding when it comes to operating our thermostats in heating mode. The last several weeks have been a very high energy use time for most of us. My most recent power bill was the highest it's ever been. In most cases, the reason is the very cold December. There may be another reason for members who don't know what a little button on the thermostat really does. On almost all thermostats, there are three options or modes to select for heating and cooling. Most are labeled Cool, Heat, Off, and EM Heat or E Heat. So what does that EM or E Heat mean? Well, it

\$imple Savings

stands for emergency heat and selecting that setting means very high energy use. All electric heating equipment has heat strips in the air handler. These heat strips most always use 5,000 watts each and, depending on the size of your heating equipment, there could be as much as 25,000 watts worth of heating strips. When we switch our thermostats to EM Heat, we are using every heat strip available in the air handler and disabling the normal, more efficient, heating mode of operation. When a unit is in the Heat mode, the thermostat and air handler have different stages. Depending on how cold it is outside and whether the heating equipment can satisfy the temperature setting, the thermostat will determine what stage and how many

heat strips to use. Sometimes it will need only one heat strip to raise temperature of the house enough to satisfy the thermostat setting. Sometimes, it will need everything it has. But the thermostat will decide that. Switching over to EM Heat mode bypasses the more efficient Heat mode and uses all heat strips in the unit every time it comes on. I have been called to homes with very high energy use and the first thing I looked at was the thermostat. Sure enough, the mode was set on EM Heat. I asked the member to switch the thermostat to Heat and we have watched a meter showing consumption of 20,000 watts drop down to 5,000 watts right before our eyes. A common misunderstanding is that we should switch over to

EM Heat when the temperature outside gets below freezing. This is not true. It is fine to let the thermostat decide if the unit can achieve the desired temperature in the house by using one or every heat strip available. Freezing rain or ice accumulating on the outdoor unit are the only conditions to manually switch to EM Heat. This prevents the outdoor fan or motor from being damaged by trying to work when it is freezing up. Keep in mind what EM Heat mode really means. Remember this simple tip to save a lot of energy when it comes to heating your home.

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Did you know?

Space heaters are responsible for 32% of house fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

- * Place your space heater on a level, non-flammable surface.
- * Make sure your space heater has an auto shutoff function.
- * Never pair your space heater with an extension cord.
- * Never leave a space heater unattended when in use.
- * Purchase space heaters that are cool to the touch.



Five tips for space heater safety

By April Lollar, APR, CCC

As temperatures drop this winter, many will look for supplemental heating sources for their homes. Space heaters can be a good alternative for those who want to warm one area of their home without turning up the thermostat on the central heating system. However, space heaters are also responsible for 32 percent of house fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association. If you are planning to use a space heater in your home this winter, review these tips from Cotton Electric Cooperative to keep you, your family and your property safe.

Materials – What are the components of your space heater made of? Parts like metal grating can be hot to the touch and may burn anyone who gets too close. Make sure you purchase a heater that is cool to the touch and has guards over the coils just in case little fingers get too close.

Placement - While it can be tempting to place a small heater on a shelf so it is not in the way of pets and children, it is safest to leave the heater on a level floor on a nonflammable surface. Keeping the space heater on the floor can keep it from falling over, preventing fire hazards. Also, remember that space heaters and bathrooms are not a good combination, unless the heater is designed for bathroom use. Moisture can damage the heater.

The most important rule about space heater place-

ment is the three-foot rule. Whether you are using the heater in the bedroom, living room or kitchen, space heaters should always be kept three feet away from flammable materials and out of the way of children and pets.

Special Features – Does your space heater have an auto shutoff function if tipped over? Auto shut-off can be a lifesaver. If you currently own a space heater without auto shutoff, consider purchasing a heater with this important safety feature.

Cords – You should never use an extension cord when plugging in a space heater as it can cause overheating. The space heater should be plugged directly into a wall outlet, and should be the only thing plugged in to the wall outlet. Also make sure cords aren’t in a high-traffic area so they are not a tripping hazard.

Use – Never leave a heater unattended while in use. If you are leaving your home or going to bed, make sure to unplug the heater.

Following these tips and making sure to follow the manufacturer’s instructions can keep you safe this winter.

April Lollar writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the NRECA, the Arlington, Va.-based service organization for the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

ACROSS

1. Contradicted

7. The Donald’s Marla

13. Mediterranean sandstorm

14. Shoulder adornment

16. Earth crust’s 5th element

17. Rainbow prize

19. NCIS star’s initials

20. Mischa __, violinist

22. Constitution Hall org.

23. More dried-up

25. First on moon

26. Braid

28. 11% of Guinea population

29. Sea eagle

30. Scottish variant of “to”

31. A border for a picture

33. Belonging to a thing

34. On top

36. Automobile hood (Brit.)

38. Skewered Thai dish

40. Clamors

41. Eggs cooked until just set

43. Flat

44. 13th Hebrew letter

45. Short poking stroke

47. Japanese classical theater

48. 007’s creator

51. Romanian Mures river city

53. Music term for silence

55. A crane

56. Ringworm

58. Romanian money

59. True frog

60. Integrated circuit

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61. “Highway Patrol’s” Crawford

64. Point midway between S and E

65. On a whim

67. Protagonist

69. Quantity with only magnitude

70. Oversights

10. Heavy tranquilizers (slang)

11. Raised railroad track

12. School session

13. Picture

15. Stabs

18. Supervises flying

21. Early American militiaman

24. Downfall

26. Cooking vessel

27. Check

30. In a way, manipulated

32. Sacred book of Judaism

35. Chum

37. Negating word

38. Relating to the body

39. W. hemisphere

continents

42. Make lacework

43. Witty remark

46. More hairless

47. Relating to a nerve

49. Originates

50. Consumer advocate Ralph

52. Actress Winger

54. Center for Excellence in Education (abbr.)

55. Japanese brews

57. Fleshy seed covering

59. Canadian law enforcers

62. So. Am. wood sorrel

63. Actress Lupino

66. Personal computer

68. Do over prefix

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One moves on and two move up: Brian Lipscomb, left, retired as Cotton Electric’s purchasing agent at the beginning of the year. Justin King, right, steps up from warehouse supervisor to purchasing agent, and Ty Logan, center, assumes the duties of warehouse supervisor.

Lipscomb leaving co-op changed for the better

By Karen Kaley

Just before retiring on Jan. 2, Brian Lipscomb completed the purchase of 48 ductile iron poles to carry the first mile or so of line out of the new Elgin substation. They are the first poles of the kind to be installed on the Cotton Electric system.

Lipscomb guessed those 48 poles were the last of about 100,000 he has purchased on behalf of the co-op over his 32-year career. There isn’t an exact count, but estimates on the number of poles supporting Cotton’s 5,150-mile system range from 100,000 to 120,000.

Time and experience mean Lipscomb has had an impact all over the system. It is evident not only in numbers, but in comments from co-workers. Many times over the last few months, the comment, “Well, you’ll have to ask Wimpy about that ...” has been followed by a thoughtful pause as the speaker remembered Lipscomb would be leaving soon.

Brian Lipscomb was just out of high school in November 1982 when he traded work on the family farm for driving a forklift in the warehouse at Cotton headquarters in Walters. In those early days, the good-natured fellow’s fondness for hamburgers was noted, thus earning him the nickname, Wimpy.

Along the way, Lipscomb also earned the confidence and respect of his co-workers. Through the years, he pulled the various items together for numerous large and small jobs that keep Cotton Electric going and growing. He developed a knack for seeing the big picture, how all the tiny components pull together for a big accomplishment. He learned to anticipate special needs in certain situations.

Supplies for all of Cotton Electric funnel through the warehouse. That would be supplies to stock the pole yard, meter and transformer shop, garage, five smaller warehouses, two business offices, several construction and contract crews and all the vehicles and other materials needed to update, maintain and expand on some 18,300 meters and 5,150 miles of energized line.

Lipscomb got so good at bringing all of those things together that he was named purchasing agent in 2002.

Things have changed quite a bit in the time Lipscomb has spent in the warehouse. Computers have made a significant difference.

“We’ve got some systems in place that make it easier to hand over to the next person.”

He spoke of a computer-generated pick list that he and fellow Cotton employee Jeff Hart spent many hours fine-tuning.

“Newer employees don’t know any different, but it’s pretty important. We put a lot of time and effort into making this job easier for those who come later.”

Lipscomb has seen a lot of improvements over the years, and one he counts as very significant has little to do with technology and quite a lot to do with something as simple as concrete.

“It was a major deal for us, getting concrete in the warehouse yard five or six years ago.

“You can’t imagine what it was like trying to run a forklift over the gravel, dodging holes and water. Trucks would pull in on hot days and the dust just rolled in with them. Windy days were really bad.”

He chuckled and said, “We were like kids in a candy store when we got that new concrete.”



Employee Spotlight

Brian Lipscomb

Small and large changes for the better meant Brian “Wimpy” Lipscomb was leaving Cotton on a positive note. He was feeling a bit philosophic a few days before he was to switch from Cotton Electric employee to Cotton Electric retiree.

“I have a thousand reasons for retiring now,” he said. “None of them are bad. I’m leaving with a smile.”





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What to do when the lights go out



Electric service is one of your most dependable purchases.

Power interruptions are usually infrequent and brief, but there are times, due to weather and acts of nature, when your service will be interrupted.

When the power is off:

1. Check the fuses or circuit breakers in your service box panel. If necessary, replace any fuses or reset the circuit breakers. Remember to check the primary cartridge fuses in the fuse box or main circuit breaker.
2. If you have no power at all, check with nearby neighbors to see if they are without power. This will help determine if the trouble is caused by the transformer serving you or if there is a line outage.

3. If you have not found the trouble, call Cotton Electric Co-operative. Be sure to give your name, location and account/service number.

A description of what you heard or saw that might be associated with the outage will help.

For all service outages, or if you are experiencing any other electrical problems, call 580-875-3351 (Walters local calling area) or 1-800-522-3520.

A local dispatcher is on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you have other questions regarding what to do when the power goes off, please call us. As your member-owned electric co-op, we are always happy to help you.

What to do during a long-term outage

When severe weather causes power outages, employees of Cotton Electric Cooperative begin working immediately to restore service as quickly as possible. Primary lines serving hundreds of customers are serviced first, and then the secondary lines serving just a few customers are serviced. Medical facilities and individuals on life-support systems are given top priority.

When your lights go out, look outside and see if your neighbors are also in the dark. If they're not, check your fuse box or circuit breaker to see if you can locate the problem.

If the outage has affected your neighbors, call Cotton Electric at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

Outages that occur in severe weather, or that last for an extended period of time, can place a heavy burden on the system at the moment power is restored.

To prevent an overload on the system and possibly another outage, take these steps:

- Turn off every inside light except one.
- Turn down your thermostat.
- In cold weather, close windows and drapes to save heat. Pick one room on the warm side of the house (preferably one

with a fireplace). Close the door to the rest of the house and use blankets to insulate your windows.

If the outage lasts more than 60 minutes, turn off your electric water heater.

Make sure your kitchen range is off, both the surface and the oven. Never use it for heat.

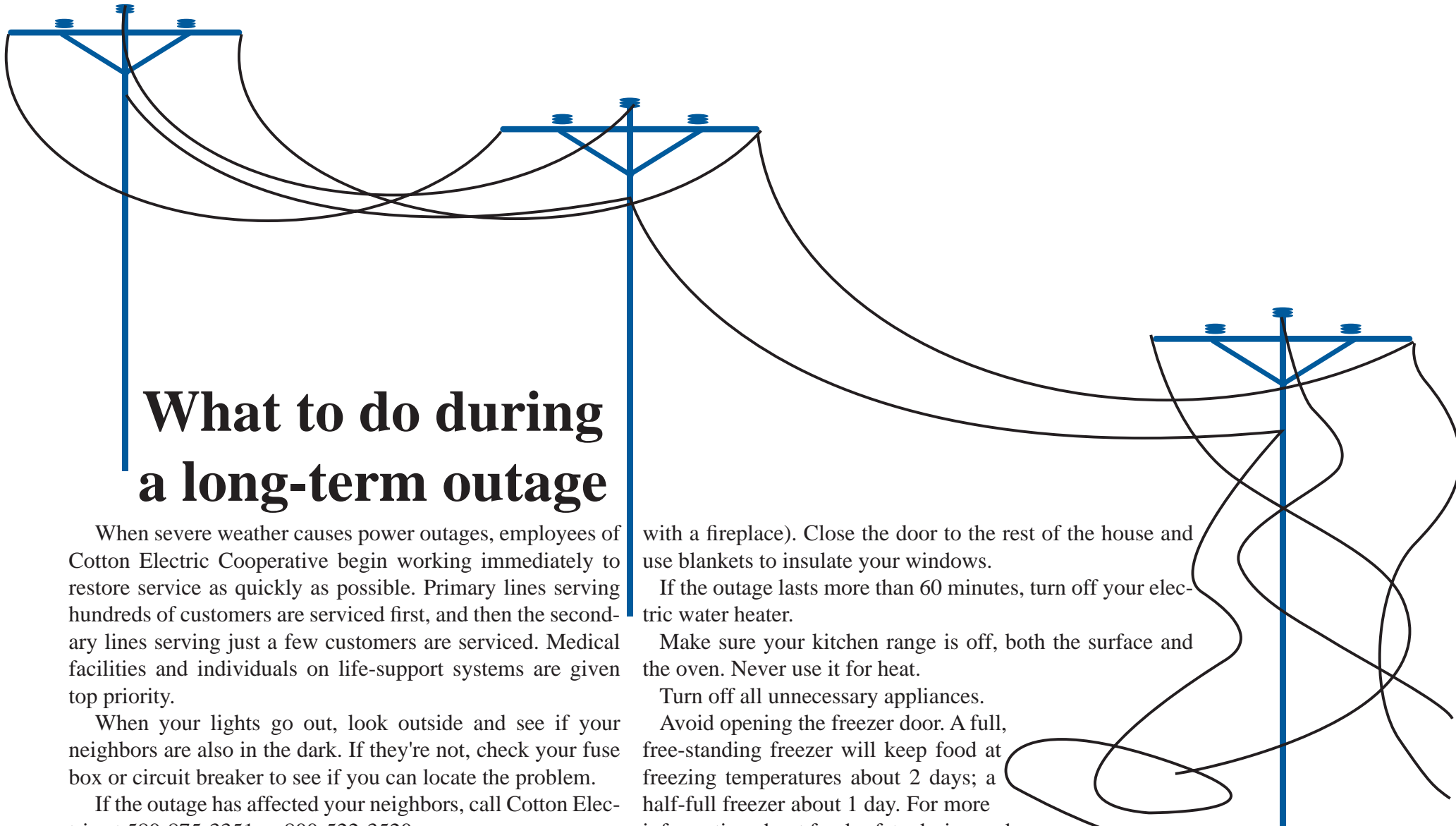
Turn off all unnecessary appliances.

Avoid opening the freezer door. A full, free-standing freezer will keep food at freezing temperatures about 2 days; a half-full freezer about 1 day. For more information about food safety during and after a power outage, call the USDA Food Safety Hotline at 1-888-674-6854.

If you see a downed power line, **STAY AWAY!!** And call Cotton Electric at once!

Leave your porch light on so Cotton Electric workers will know when your power has been restored.

When power comes back on, slowly switch your appliances and lights back on and gradually return your thermostat to its normal setting.



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Simple twist on after school snacks

(Family Features) We all know it’s important to start the day off with a healthy breakfast. As a parent, you also have lunch covered for your hungry student, whether it’s packed in a brown bag or eaten in the cafeteria. But after a busy day of learning, young tummies often need a wholesome after-school snack to tide them over until dinner.

Keeping a stash of kid-friendly snacks handy is a sure-fire way to keep snack time manageable, while making sure kids don’t have a full afternoon meal, which would spoil their appetite for dinner.

Instead of potato chips or cookies, try crunchy veggies paired with a flavorful dip. As an added (and educational) bonus, invite kids to help make snacks ahead of time, assigning them age-appropriate tasks like measuring and mixing.

Ranch Pimento Cheese Celery Logs

Makes: 30 filled celery logs
Prep Time: 15-20 minutes

- 8 ounces shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon Hidden Valley® Original Ranch



Salad Dressing & Seasoning Mix

- 1 (4-ounce) jar pimentos, drained
- 30 (2-inch) celery logs, cut from about 1 bunch of celery

Place cheese, mayonnaise, seasoning mix and pimentos in bowl of food processor. Pulse a few times until well combined but still chunky, taking care not to over mix. Alternatively, you can mix by hand, but it won’t be quite as spreadable.

Divide cheese mixture among celery logs (about 2 teaspoons per log), mounding it into cavity. Serve cold.

Cook up some energy savings

Whether you are roasting a ham in the oven, sautéing vegetables on the stovetop, or reheating leftovers in the microwave, you can cook up some savings by applying some energy efficiency tips in your kitchen.

•Keep your appliances clean. When food spills and burns on a burner pan, it becomes blackened. As a result, it does not reflect heat as well and reduces its heating efficiency.

•Likewise, make sure your microwave is clean. Spills, drips, and splatters absorb heat energy just as much as the food you are warming up. Remember, microwave when it is practical and convenient. Microwaves cook more quickly and use less energy than stovetops or ovens.

•Resist the urge to peek in the oven. The heated air in the oven is an important part of the cooking process. Each time warm air escapes, the temperature decreases, and your oven uses more energy to raise the temperature back up.

•When it comes to cooking efficiently, don’t forget to consider the type of cookware you use. On the stovetop, use pans that match the size of the burner for greater efficiency. The smaller the pan size compared to the burner, the more heat that is wasted.

•Also, check the condition of your cookware. If a pan is warped, according to U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), it could use 50 percent more energy to boil water than a pan with a completely flat bottom. The flatter bottomed the cookware, the more contact with the heating element. Also, remember to use lids when bringing contents of your pan to boil. It will heat faster.

•Copper is a great conductor of heat, so try using copper-bottomed pans. Similarly, use glass or ceramic dishes inside the oven. They will cook the food at a faster rate than metal ones.



Copper is a great conductor of heat, so try using copper-bottomed pans.

In fact, DOE says you will be able to turn the temperature down 25 degrees and the meal will cook just as quickly.

•Make use of residual heat by turning the heat off just a few minutes early when cooking on the stovetop or in the oven by letting the residual heat finish the cooking process.

•For small snacks, use a toaster oven instead of your larger kitchen oven. A smaller space to heat results in more energy saved.

•Cooking with steam is also an efficient option. On the stovetop, the food to be cooked can be placed in a basket suspended above a small amount of simmering liquid in a pot. With the lid on, the hot steam circulates throughout the pot and quickly cooks the food.

•Slow cookers are also a good option if you are making soups or stews. Although using a slow cooker may take hours to cook, it uses less energy.

For more tips on how to be more energy efficient, visit EnergyEdCouncil.org.

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Warm up with comfort meals from the pantry

(Family Features) There’s nothing quite like heart-warming comfort food to beat winter’s chill. And there’s no need for a trek to the supermarket or to resort to the takeout menu drawer. Some of the best and most flavorful ingredients are already in your pantry. That’s right...the canned foods in your pantry.

Canned foods not only mean less preparation and year-round availability of your favorite produce, like tomatoes and green beans, they also help make healthy and delicious homemade meals a reality, more often. Like home canning, the canning process locks in foods’ natural goodness and nutrients so they’re available to you any time of year, and all winter long.

Thai Chicken Curry

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes
Servings: 4

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 medium red onion, sliced
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon minced ginger
- 1 tablespoon red curry paste
- 1 (13.5-ounce) can Goya coconut milk
- 1 (10-ounce) can Hormel Premium chicken breast, drained and flaked
- 1 (8-ounce) can Allens cut green beans, drained
- 1 (16-ounce) can sweet potatoes, drained and cut into 1-inch chunks
- Chopped cilantro for garnish



In 3-quart saucepan over medium heat, in hot oil, cook red onion, garlic and ginger until softened, about 5 minutes.


Add red curry paste; cook 1 minute.

Add coconut milk, chicken, green beans and sweet potatoes. Over high heat, heat to boiling. Simmer, uncovered, 10 minutes to blend flavors, stirring occasionally. Garnish with chopped cilantro.

Best of all, canned foods help make the big, bold flavors in dishes like Thai Chicken Curry and Shepherd’s Pie easy and delicious – perfect for a chilly day.

For more seasonal recipes and to learn how you and your family can get cooking with canned foods this season and year round, visit www.CansGetYouCooking.com.

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Shepherd’s Pie

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes
Servings: 6

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can Red Gold stewed tomatoes
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 (15-ounce) can S&W peas and carrots, drained
- 1 (15-ounce) can Del Monte sliced new potatoes, drained
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted

In 12-inch skillet over medium heat, in hot oil, cook onion and garlic 5 minutes or until softened, stirring occasionally. Remove to plate.

In same skillet over medium-high, cook ground beef until well browned on all sides, stirring frequently. Add flour; cook 1 minute. Add stewed tomatoes and thyme. Over high heat, heat to boiling; reduce heat to low. Simmer uncovered 10 minutes to blend flavors, stirring occasionally. Stir in peas and carrots.

Preheat oven to 450°F. Spoon mixture into greased deep-dish pie plate or baking dish. Toss sliced potatoes with butter. Arrange potatoes in center of casserole, overlapping slightly. Bake 10-15 minutes or until potatoes are lightly golden.

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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

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Resolution revolution: Choose healthy lifestyle

On Dec. 16, 2014, The Daily Oklahoman published an editorial on the health outcomes of Oklahomans. One of the conclusions drawn is that things will not get better unless individuals take action, specifically “until more Oklahomans decide for themselves that it’s time to enjoy the fruits of a healthier lifestyle.” You can read the full editorial at newsok.com.

Setting New Year’s resolutions is a good way to get started, but you also have to actually do something to accomplish the resolution. This means resolutions need to be realistic and need to include some small steps that lead up to the accomplishment. As much as possible, make resolutions positive, specific, measurable, realistic and time-based.

From a nutrition perspective, two types of resolutions go farthest to improve individual health: eating more vegetables and fruits, and exercising.

If you eat more vegetables and more fruit, in theory you have less room for extra calories. There are other benefits to increasing vegetables and fruits such as more cancer-fighting antioxidants and phytochemicals and nutrients that improve your heart health.

Make a resolution around vegetables and fruit that starts where you are today. If you normally eat vegetables only for dinner, try adding another serving at lunch and as a snack, every day.

Don’t commit to becoming a vegetarian unless that is what you really want to do. Just focus on adding more to your current diet



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT

in place of foods with empty calories like desserts, sugar-sweetened beverages or 100-calorie snack packs that are something other than nuts.

If you find that adding a serving or two of vegetables and fruit is super easy, consider that resolution accomplished and set another goal for the rest of the year to get up to the recommended amount. You can find out how much vegetables and fruit you should eat by going to <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/fruitsvegetables/howmany.html> and using the fruit and vegetable calculator.

Healthier eating must be combined with exercise to achieve the full benefit. Exercise improves your body’s ability to use the nutrients you consume. It helps intensify the protective effects of a healthy diet against disease.

A recent study of non-elite male and female elderly published in the January 2015 online publication of the Journal of Physiology

suggests that exercise may actually help you age more slowly. In your youth, you may (or may not) have exercised to keep your figure; as you age, exercise becomes important to improve your quality of life and possibly how long you live.

Again, your exercise resolution should start where you are today. If you do not exercise outside of your normal daily activities of work or chores, choose something reasonable like going for a 15- or 30-minute walk two to three times a week.

This is not as much as you should be walking, but you have to start somewhere and have success so you can reach the recommendations of 150 minutes per week of cardio and two days a week of strength training. That can be your goal after you reach your first goal.

If you already eat the recommended amount of vegetables and fruits and get the recommended amount of exercise, consider helping those around you improve their health. If you have kids in school, join the school health committee. If you work in an office, encourage your workplace to become a Certified Healthy Oklahoma business. Support legislators who file bills to support improving the health of Oklahomans.

Help create an environment that helps improve the health of others.

Individuals choosing health in an environment that supports healthier choices will improve the health outcomes of Oklahoma.



A recent study of non-elite male and female elderly published in the January 2015 online publication of the Journal of Physiology suggests that exercise may actually help you age more slowly. In your youth, you may (or may not) have exercised to keep your figure; as you age, exercise becomes important to improve your quality of life and possibly how long you live.

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