

The Current

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Devices on poles are larger than they appear. The top and middle photos show suspended electronic and oil-circuit reclosers, respectively. Below, apparatus technician Zac Hoodenpyle stands next to the same equipment. Zac works with reclosers, transformers and more, as explained in the Employee Spotlight on Page 6.



Reclosers, fuses protect Cotton Electric system

By Karen Kaley

Driving around rural southwest Oklahoma, one can spy a lot of equipment suspended high above the road, out of harm’s way and, in most cases, beyond the reach of leafy tree branches. Heavy, wide-girthed poles support clusters of equipment and thinner poles hold a single device or a span of energized and neutral wire.

Cotton Electric’s electrical distribution system is 5,152 miles of line held up by more than 100,000 poles. Along the way are substations, three-phase and single-phase lines, regulators, oil-circuit and electronic reclosers, fuses, pad-mount and pole-mount transformers, insulators, regulators, capacitors and many other things most people couldn’t identify.

All those gadgets have different jobs but serve a single purpose: Bringing the Cotton Electric membership quality power.

In this first of an occasional Spotters Guide series, we take a look at some devices that protect the system: Reclosers and fuses.

Both protect lines and people from short circuits. For example, if a tree branch touches a line, electric current will flow through the tree, burning it and overheating the wire. Eventually, this will result in a fault that causes a protective device to operate and interrupt the power.

Circuit breakers “open” the circuit, cutting off the power. Because shorts often correct themselves in a few seconds – as the high current will usually burn the tree limb in our example away from the line – most modern circuit breakers have a mechanism that allows them to reclose a moment later, hence the name recloser.

When a recloser detects a fault, it will momentarily interrupt and restore service three times – which causes three power blinks – to try to clear a temporary problem. If the fault is still present, power will go off a fourth time and stay off. That’s when it’s time to call the co-op.

Cotton Electric uses two types of reclosers.

Traditional oil-circuit reclosers (OCRs) come in a variety of sizes to deal with amperage that de-

Spotters Guide

creases as power flows further from a substation. The devices are heavy canisters, not as big around as transformers. All but the smallest OCRs require heavy equipment to lift them into utility trucks and up to pole tops.

After two years in service, OCRs must be taken down and sent off for maintenance and testing.

Electronic reclosers are smaller and more versatile. A single device can be programmed to deal with high or low amperage wherever it is installed along the line. They are considerably smaller than OCRs, about the size and shape of a sewing machine, and can be lifted and loaded by hand.

After eight years in service, electronic reclosers are inspected in the field. Connections are cleaned and the battery charger is checked and replaced if needed.

Cotton Electric has about 600 reclosers on the system. About half are electronic reclosers and the plan is to gradually phase out the OCRs.

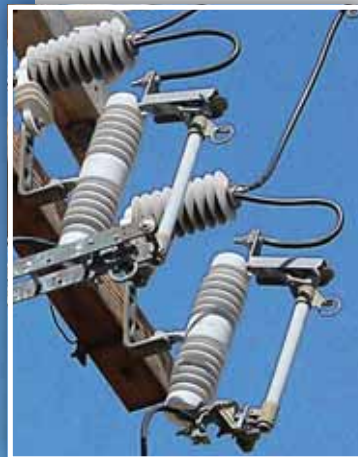
Reclosers may be a few miles apart. To reduce the number of members inconvenienced by some types of short circuits, fuses are positioned between the reclosers, strategically located with consideration for geography, number of members served and ease of access.

The device will “blow” or open when the system experiences stress. Usually, it will be a smaller short circuit than what will move along the line and trip the recloser. This can minimize the number of locations losing power.

In most cases, the fuse holder and element are held in place by a C-shaped frame. A fuse frame is about the size of an adult’s forearm.

When the fuse blows, the holder drops out of the frame to break the circuit. It hangs from the frame offering a visible cue that it has operated and the circuit is open.

In the daytime, it is easy to spot the blown fuse, but not so easy at night. However, many elements of the Cotton Electric system are on a computerized map. Line workers and dispatchers make use of this information to pinpoint trouble spots and get power restored as quickly as safety allows.



The fuse holder and element are held in place by a C-shaped frame. A fuse frame is about the size of an adult’s forearm.

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after March 1, 2015, is \$0.00283 per kWh.

On a member’s average bill of 1500 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$4.25 on the March bill.

February 2015 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	47	26	37	15	61	27	44
2	37	18	28	16	40	23	32
3	59	24	42	17	53	24	39
4	46	29	38	18	55	19	37
5	42	24	33	19	59	24	42
6	63	23	43	20	62	40	51
7	76	29	53	21	60	39	50
8	81	36	59	22	43	24	34
9	74	37	56	23	26	20	23
10	78	36	57	24	40	22	31
11	57	37	47	25	62	26	44
12	53	30	42	26	42	24	33
13	72	28	50	27	25	18	22
14	79	30	55	28	28	20	24

Source: srh.noaa.gov/oun/

Average Daily High: 54 Average Daily Low: 27

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric members can use SmartHub to monitor daily energy consumption. SmartHub is accessible at our website, CottonElectric.com, or via a free app for your smart phone.

The April issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on April 13, 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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Skin in the game

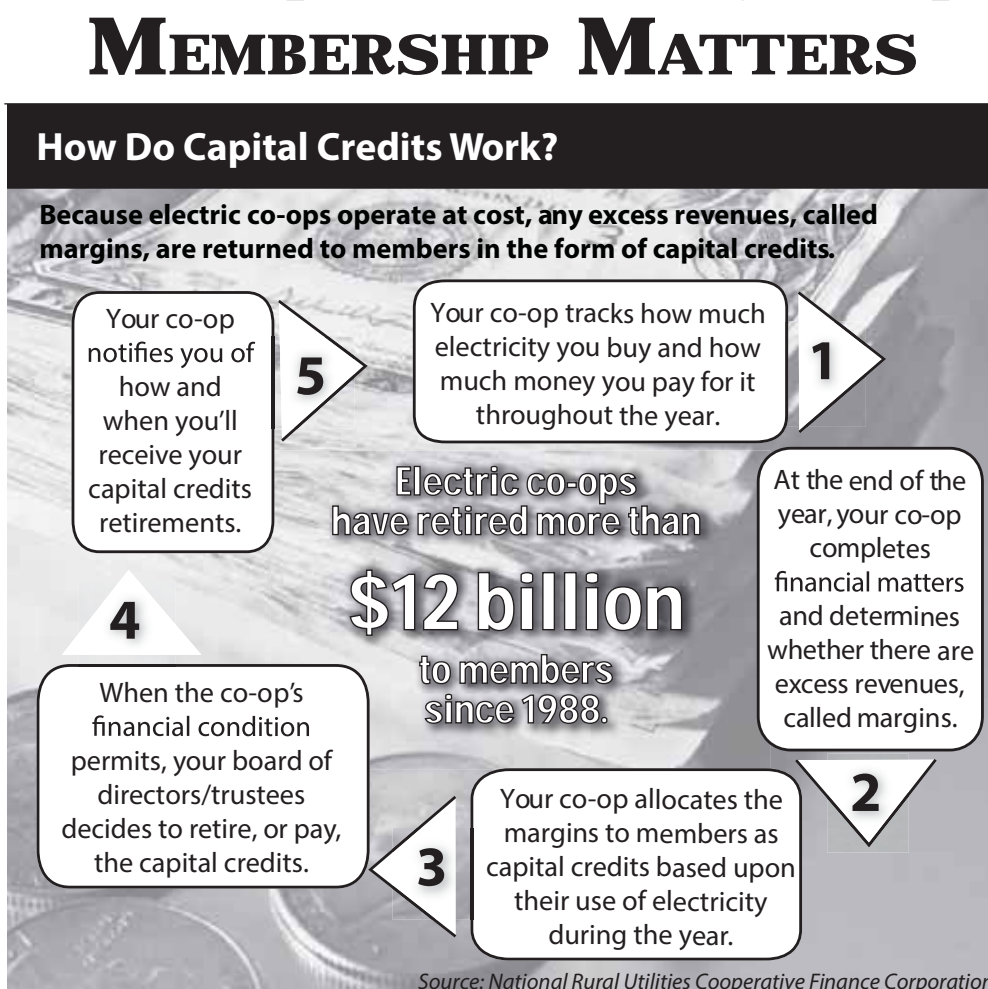
Members' Economic Participation is third of 7 cooperative principles

The following is from the International Cooperative Alliance summary of the third cooperative principle, Members' Economic Participation:

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

So what do those words mean? Let's take a closer look. When you joined Cotton Electric Cooperative, you paid a membership fee of \$5. That is your part of the equity or your share of ownership (*Members contribute equitably to the capital of their cooperative*). You also do something else every month that allows your co-op to keep the lights on – you pay your bill.

As a member, you have a say (*democratically control*) through your



board of trustees. The board sets the strategic direction of the cooperative, then the management and staff put that direction into action through the operations of the co-op.

At the end of the fiscal year, if your co-op has received more money than

it needed for the expenses, a portion is set aside for reserves (*members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: ... by setting up reserves*) which is like a savings account for the co-op. So if a storm or flood comes through, the co-op will

have the funds to do the needed repairs. The remaining amount is allocated to members based on how much electricity they used during the year (*benefiting members in proportion to their transactions*). This is the amount you will see as a capital credits check.

While the safe, reliable and affordable provision of electricity is most important, your co-op does many other things, too. We are active in economic development, community support and charitable giving through the Operation Round Up program (*and supporting other activities approved by the membership*).

Cotton Electric Cooperative is not some large power company headquartered in a far off state with stockholders from around the world. We are right here in southwest Oklahoma. We were formed by neighbors and friends who came together with the goal to improve the quality of our lives through electricity. Our goal is to continue to do that by improving the quality of your life with the same neighborly approach.

Our cooperative principles guide us, and through your economic participation (*aka "skin in the game"*) we make sure our focus is on you, the member-owner.

2015 Youth Tour finalists announced

High school juniors from 7 schools submitted a total of 73 essays in Cotton Electric Cooperative's 2015 Rural Electric Youth Tour contest.

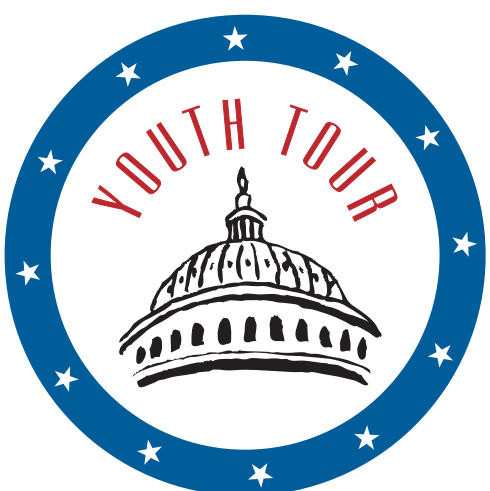
The entries were pared down to the 25 best essays on the topic "Life in rural southwest Oklahoma without Cotton Electric Cooperative" and their authors were invited to CEC headquarters in Walters for the interview round of the competition.

Following the question-and-answer sessions, the co-op named 10 finalists. They and their parents and teachers will be the guests of Cotton Electric for a banquet on March 24. During the event, the finalists will be required to recite their essay in an oral, speech-type format. As they speak before judges and banquet guests, the final four winners will be determined.

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

The students will have an opportunity to learn about government, the cooperative form of business and the business of rural electrification. The students will become more familiar with the historical and political environment of the nation's capital through visits to monuments, government offices and cooperative organizations.

Two runners-up in the essay contest will represent Cotton Electric at the Touchstone Energy Leadership



Youth Tour 2015 is June 12-18

Summit to be held in January 2016 in Oklahoma City.

Listed by school, the 10 finalists and their parents are:

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

Lawton High School: Emily Anne 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 Bailee Frazier, daughter of Kim and Richard Frazier.

Cotton Electric strives to maintain financial integrity

Cotton Electric Cooperative is dedicated to providing reliable and innovative electric service while maintaining the financial integrity of your cooperative. As part of this task, we have recently reviewed the results of a Rate Analysis and Cost of Service Study prepared by an independent consulting group.

Like any other company, the cost of doing business has increased, and Cotton Electric is not immune. In order to maintain the type of distribution system you require, we continue to make investments in right of way, pole replacement and technology. While all of these activities are essential, many are mandated and costs continue to escalate.

As a non-profit utility, our goal is to preserve the financial integrity of the Cooperative on a break-even basis while maintaining a reliable and innovative electric system. In order to remain fiscally stable while providing reliable service for our members, an overall rate increase of 3.67 percent is necessary. The rate

change will be effective April 1, 2015, and will be seen on billing mailed after May 1, 2015. The cooperative's last rate increase was five years ago, in 2010.

Cotton Electric's largest expense to deliver power to our members is a fixed cost that does not change based on energy consumption. In order to better reflect the actual cost of providing service to our members, the rate adjustment includes an increase in the customer charge component.

For members on the General Service rate, the customer charge will increase from \$21.50 to \$30, and the energy charge will have a slight increase from \$0.088923

per kWh to \$0.089500.

A residential member with an average consumption of 1,500 kWh per month can expect to see an increase of \$9.35 per month – about 31 cents per day – when the rate adjustment goes into effect.

The rate goes into effect on April 17 for members on the MyChoice pre-pay program. Those members should expect to see an increase to the Daily Bill Amount of about 30 cents.

The revised rates are printed on Page 17.

If you have any questions regarding the changes, please contact the cooperative at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The Current

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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.

January 2015 Operating Stats		
	2015	2014
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$6,680,614	\$6,090,718
Cost of Purchased Power	4,692,639	4,507,463
Taxes	131,808	131,189
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,200	1,186
Average Farm and Residential Bill	192	177
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,846	1,868
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,221	18,093
Miles Energized	5,152	5,137
Density Per Mile	3.54	3.52
New Service Connects YTD	13	24
Services Retired	9	14

Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the April issue, please submit information by April 1, by calling 580-875-4255 or send an email to info@cottonelectric.com.

Rain harvesting info available

A guest speaker from the City of Lawton Environmental Services Division will discuss rain water harvesting and rain barrel installation at 6 p.m. March 19. The presentation will be during the March meeting of the Lawton Farmers Market and Southwest Oklahoma Growers Association. The meeting is open to the public and will be held in the Prairie Building at the Comanche County Fairgrounds, 920 S. Sheridan Rd.

According to Cynthia Williams, environmental specialist, rain barrels have a broad application and they are a viable way to conserve water whether you are using them for residential, rural, garden, small farms or ranches. The Environmental Services Division also offers information and blueprints for building rain barrels.

For information, call Williams at 580-581-3478. For information about the Lawton Farmers Market or Southwest Oklahoma Growers Association, visit their Facebook page.

Opening day for the 2015 Lawton Farmers Market season is Saturday, April 4.

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.

MP hosts ParkStomp March 20-22

ParkStomp is three days of live bluegrass music in Medicine Park.

First acts perform at Park Tavern on March 20. Performance by The Match Sellers begins at 7 p.m. Dank follows at 9, and The Steamboat Bandits take the stage at 11.

Music on the main stage begins at noon March 21. Entertainers include Dank, The Steamboat Bandits, The Big Idea, Monzie Leo and the Big Sky, Chucky Waggs and the Company

of Rags and Foley's Van.

Final performances begin at noon March 22. Acts include Ozark Mountain Maybelles, Tyler Gregory, Calamity Cubes and Tyrannosaurus Chicken.

Visit MedicinePark.com for more information.

Fish fry set for Lenten Fridays

Fish, fries, slaw, beans, dessert and drinks are on the menu from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. every Friday from Feb. 20 through March 27 at the annual Lenten Fish Fry sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, Council 5168. All are welcome to dine at the Marlow Catholic Church at 4th & Comanche under the blue roof or take a great meal home.

Meals are \$9 for adults, and children under 12 eat free. All proceeds go to community projects serving children and those less fortunate.

CTAC offers 'Dueling Pianos'

"Two pianos, two players, one great time" is the tagline of the next presentation offered by Chisholm Trail Arts Council. Dueling Pianos, set for 7:30 p.m. March 27 in Scarlet Event Center, 1206 N. U.S. 81 Highway, features two sharp-witted, talented musicians with two grand pianos in a roomful of people.

The pianists have a repertoire ranging from classic rock to country, from R&B to show tunes. The audience plays a big role, too, calling out requests, singing along and bantering with performers.

Tickets can be purchased at ChisholmTrailArts.com or by calling 580-252-4160.

Home, garden show begins Mar. 27

Find practical home improvement ideas and visit professional home and garden service providers during Lawton Home Builders 51st annual Home and Garden Show.

Doors will be open from 5 to 8 p.m. March 27, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. March 28, and noon to 5 p.m. March 29 in the Great Plains Coliseum and Annex. Admission is free.

Passion play set for Saturdays

"The Prince of Peace" Passion play begins at 8:30 p.m. March 28 and April 4 at the Holy City of the Wichitas in the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge. The performance is expected to end around 10:45 p.m., and is broadcast on 88.5 FM.

Admission to the nation's longest-running Easter Passion play is free.

Heart to Heart Bazaar returns

Children outgrow clothes and equipment quickly. Replacements can be expensive. That's where the Heart to Heart Consignment Bazaar comes in. The spring sale will be April 2-4 at Stephens County fairgrounds.

The semi-annual event is a great place to buy and sell gently used items while supporting a cause. Consignors can find information about selling items at HannahsHearts.org.

A portion of sale proceeds goes to Hannahs Hearts, an organization established to help families with children in health crisis.

More Community Spotlight on Page 4

Photo of the Month



This photo of FAVORITE PEOPLE was submitted by Cotton Electric member Le Ann Fisher Sellers. This shot of Johnny and Joy Fisher, married 57 years, comes with a bittersweet story from Le Ann: "We were goofing around that night at Giuseppe's and I asked them to look at each other. It took me several shots to get the picture. Finally I snapped this picture. Little did I know it would be the last time we would eat at Giuseppe's with my parents. My mom died Jan. 30, 2013, and my Dad, died March 1, 2013, of a broken heart!"

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for April is THANK YOU. 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.

EVERY MEMBER HAS A VOICE. MAKE SURE YOURS IS HEARD.

Here's something worth shouting about. As an electric co-op member, you have a say in how the co-op is run and the decisions that are made. Isn't that nice to hear? Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at TogetherWeSave.com.

COTTON ELECTRIC CO-OP
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

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2013.....	\$1.41
INCREASE.....	18X

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1936.....	5¢
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Keeping energy affordable. Just another way it pays to be a co-op member. Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at TogetherWeSave.com.

COTTON ELECTRIC CO-OP
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85!

Co-op repeats high rating in fourth-quarter survey

At Cotton Electric, our goal is to improve the quality of life for our members. We do that by delivering electricity to homes and businesses, by working to provide electricity at the most affordable rates, and by working with members to help them use less electricity as a way to manage their bills.

From time to time, we check with our members to see if we are meeting our goal. Our members often volunteer feedback when they have good or bad experiences, but, in May 2014 and again in November 2014, we surveyed random members to get a more balanced assessment.

Results from the most recent survey indicate we are holding steady. Cotton Electric scored an 85 in both member surveys.

This score is much higher than the investor-owned utility average of 75, a number that also did not change. Cotton Electric also compares favorably to a group consisting of members of other Touchstone Energy co-ops, which recorded a score of 82, a point lower than the earlier survey.

In general, scores throughout the industry were a bit lower, while Cotton Electric remained

the same.

The survey was conducted by TSE Services, a partner of Touchstone Energy, and FGI Research. They made hundreds of calls until they collected enough data to provide a good idea of the membership's view of our service.

TSE Services asked four core questions designed by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) to provide a uniform and independent measure of consumer experience. The ACSI includes an Energy Utilities Index, which is an independent customer satisfaction measure of the top 30 investor-owned gas, electric or combination utilities in the United States.

Results for the four core questions on the Cotton Electric survey show that we exceed all benchmarks established by TSE Services. Responses indicating customer retention remained significantly higher than the benchmark.

The questions are designed to measure the current overall level of satisfaction; whether the co-op is meeting member expectations; whether the co-op is close to the ideal; and if members would choose the cooperative again if

allowed to choose among utilities.

Cotton Electric's high ACSI Energy Utilities Index rating and overall survey results indicate that we are doing a good job. However, there is still room for improvement. On a scale of 100, we still have 15 points left on the table. Our focus in the coming year will be on the areas you said are most important and improving the overall ACSI score.

You rated Cotton Electric highest in the areas of commitment to community, knowledgeable employees, and handling problems. You indicated that you want energy at the lowest possible cost and that we need to focus on helping you learn to manage energy use.

As we work on these goals, we will monitor our progress. The survey will be conducted again toward the middle of 2015. Your feedback is important to us and we appreciate your help in this project.

The board of trustees and employees of Cotton Electric are grateful for the support your responses indicate and know that our work is not done. We will continue to strive to improve in all areas of service.

Community Spotlight

LCT presents Lee's 'To Kill a Mockingbird'

Performances of Lawton Community Theatre's presentation of "To Kill A Mockingbird" are set for April 10-12 and 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.

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

Fundraiser benefits Christians Concerned

A dinner theater is planned for 6:30 p.m. April 10 at First United Methodist Church. Proceeds benefit Christians Concerned in Duncan. The United Way agency provides emergency assistance for those in need.

Tickets may be purchased at FUMC, First Christian Church, All Saint's Episcopal, St. Paul's UMC, First Baptist Church, First Presbyterian or at Christians Concerned, 702 Willow.

April car cruise planned in Duncan

The sixth annual Cruisin' the Chisholm Trail Car Show is 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 'Back to the Future'

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. The 1985 film features Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd and Crispin Glover in starring roles.

There is no admission charge, but donations are accepted. For information, visit Cameron.edu/magiclantern.

Arts, crafts festival set for April 25 in Walters

Cotton County Art Council will host its annual Arts and Crafts Festival April 25 at the Comanche National Community Center east of Walters.

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.

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Time for Some Financial "Spring Cleaning"

We've just about arrived at spring, the time when many people spruce up their homes, yards and other parts of their surroundings. This year, why not extend that practice a little further and give your financial and investment environment a good "spring cleaning"?

Here are a few suggestions for doing just that:

Reduce duplication. If you've ever worked to "de-clutter" your home, you may have discovered a lot of extraneous items. Did you really need three blenders? Did you have more remote control devices than you did televisions? As you look through your investment portfolio, you might also find some duplication, perhaps in the form of multiple stocks of companies in the same industry. You might want to consider whether you'd be better off by reducing this concentration

and using the proceeds to broaden your investment mix to create new potential for growth, income or a combination of both.

Repair your "roof." As part of your exterior spring-cleaning efforts, you might examine your roof to determine if you need to repair or replace any torn or missing shingles. After all, a strong roof is essential to protecting your home. And your financial foundation needs protection, too — so, review your life and disability insurance to ensure they are still adequate to meet your family's needs. You also might want to consult with a financial professional for ways of dealing with the potentially devastating costs of an extended nursing home stay or another type of long-term care.

Plant some "seeds." Spring is a good time for re-seeding parts of your lawn that may be bare. Once you've

planted the seeds, of course, you'll need to water and fertilize them to encourage growth. As you look over your financial landscape, you may also find areas that are somewhat barren. For example, you might be adequately funding your own retirement goals through your employer-sponsored retirement plan and other investments, but are you putting away enough money for your children's college education? If not, you might need to "plant some seeds" for potential growth by investing in a college savings account, such as a 529 plan. And you may need to continually "nourish" your plan by contributing money each year.

Update your "furnishings." When you bought and arranged your home's furnishings, they might have been perfectly suited for your needs. But now, many years later, your situation may be

quite different. Perhaps you've said goodbye to grown children who have struck out on their own, so you might want to make new uses for old rooms. And maybe your old "stuff" just isn't as comfortable as it was before, or the layout of your furniture isn't as efficient. Whatever the case, it may well be time to update your environment. The same thing can happen with your financial "house." To reflect changes in your family situation, employment, economic circumstances, retirement goals and other factors, you will need to periodically review your financial strategy and your investment portfolio, and make adjustments as needed.

Tidying up your living space may help improve your overall outlook on life. The same might be said of a financial spring cleaning — and you won't even need a mop.

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Lynn Bailey
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How do you know when a filter must be replaced? Check to see if air can get through. This dirty filter was left in place for six months — layers of dirt and hair prevent air from entering the home's HVAC system.

Source: NRECA

World's most expensive dirt is lurking in household ducts

Dust dollars off your energy bill by regularly changing air filters

By Trent Marlett

Hopefully, winter is coming to an end. Energy bills should start to lower. Nicer weather that spring brings means our heating system will no longer have to battle cold temperatures.

Around this time of year, a lot of us start getting in the "spring cleaning" mode where we want to deep clean and reorganize our homes. There is one piece of equipment that definitely does not need to be overlooked: the air filters for the central heating and cooling system.

Air filters prevent dust, pollen, pet hair/dander, and other allergens from circulating back into the air that conditions our homes. Not only do they improve the indoor air quality, but they help our HVAC systems run more efficiently and extend the life of the equipment.

Inside the indoor unit of an HVAC system, there is an evaporator coil. This is where refrigerant lines either cool off or heat up air, depending on the season.

Evaporator coils tend to sweat a little bit or have condensation because of the big temperature difference between the air and the coil. Any dirt,

hair, or debris that gets past an air filter will stick to the sweating evaporator coil.

The more buildup of dirt and grime, the more it inhibits the transfer of temperature from the coil to the air flowing across it.

Basically, if a coil is gunked up with dirt, the unit will have to run longer and the efficiency of the unit goes downhill fast.

A clogged filter will block normal airflow and cause the system to work harder and decrease system efficiency. Also, the dirt builds up on other parts of the indoor air handler unit and can shorten the lifespan of the system.

The Department of Energy states that routinely replacing or cleaning air filters can reduce the energy consumption of an HVAC system by 5 to 15 percent. This can amount to pretty significant savings since the HVAC is responsible for as much as 50 percent of a power bill.

So this spring, when cleaning is on our minds, make sure to replace or clean the air filters for your HVAC systems. They really need it after this long, cold winter where the filters and systems were working overtime.



Need help remembering how long a filter's been in place? When you replace a filter, write the date on the side. Check the filter once a month, and replace it at least every three months.

Source: NRECA



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Your home works hard for you. Consider giving it an energy checkup. Cotton Electric offers FREE energy audits. An energy auditor diagnoses where your house could be losing energy and where you can start saving money. Mike Stephens and Trent Marlett check for air leaks, inspect insulation, survey heating and cooling equipment and more. After making efficiency upgrades, you could save 5-30 percent on your energy bills.

Source: EnergySavers.gov

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At left, Zac Hoodenpyle begins the refurbishing process by opening up transformers. The parts inside, above, are immersed in a non-conductive oil.

Employee Spotlight
Zac Hoodenpyle

Hoodenpyle's area of expertise fits well in transformer shop

By Karen Kaley

Zac Hoodenpyle uses a shop rag to wipe away grime around the top rim of a well-weathered transformer. He ratchets open a gasket ring, pulls the lid off and peers inside.

"You can't see the parts very well in this one," he says. "I'll have to open another if you want a picture."

The parts inside a transformer are submerged in inert and non-conductive oil, similar to mineral oil. When new, the oil is clear.

"When oil is dark like that, it means the transformer has been on the load for a long time," Zac explains.

"Sometimes the oil is black and smells like rotten eggs. Those transformers never pass my inspection."

Transformers take up most of Zac's time as apparatus technician for Cotton Electric. Other employees call his part of the building the transformer shop, though Zac also works with reclosers, regulators and capacitors.

Mostly pole- and pad-mount transformers, though. There are about 25,000 of them on the co-op's sys-

tem and, well, there's only one Zac. Sure, he gets help from the other field and meter technicians in the meter and transformer department, but he is the only one whose full-time job is to stock, label and track the new and refurbish and troubleshoot the older versions of all the equipment listed above.

The equipment is spread out in three locations, some in the warehouse yard where the transformer shop is on the southwest corner, some in another yard across the street to the north, and some at a pole yard just under a mile west.

You can tell at a glance which is the newest and the oldest of the many types of canisters and cabinets Zac tends to. Some have no identifying stencils or decals while others are weather-beaten and covered with flaking labels.

To add a new transformer or recloser or any other item into the Cotton Electric inventory, Zac begins by transporting it from a storage yard to his shop. Then, he starts the paper trail.

"A new transformer involves a lot of paperwork. I fill out cards for each one, create a new co-op number and input the information to computer system," he said.

He uses stencils and stickers to add identifying information about the device, including that it belongs to Cotton Electric.

Older transformers may have been taken out of service for a variety of reasons. A number of things will send a transformer to the scrap metal pile such as water inside the canister, excessive rust, or failing ratio and core loss tests.

Zac will examine their condition inside and out and refurbish about 500 in the course of a year. He repairs attachments, tests components, replaces oil, washes and repaints them.

The devices are set out into the yard for line workers to collect as they are needed. Zac has to stay ahead of those supplies to make sure equipment in different voltages and classifications is ready if needed in a hurry.

That can sometimes be tricky.

Many linemen, whose districts are far enough away that they don't come to the centrally located headquarters daily, will stock up on all sorts of things when they are in town.

"They will wipe me out when they all come to Walters on safety meeting day," he said.

Zac said working with the various pieces of equipment fits well with his education. Always mechanically inclined, the Walters native went through the gunsmithing program at Murray State College in Tishomingo and earned a degree in applied science in 2000.

"Mechanical principles are the same from one device to another," he said.

"Theoretically, it all kinda works the same, what with the moving parts and timing of things."

Zac comes by the mechanical interest honestly. Research into the Hoodenpyle line reveals Danish ancestors knighted for their contributions in engineering in the 1300s.

"It's neat," Zac said, "because I love building stuff and engineering."

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

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

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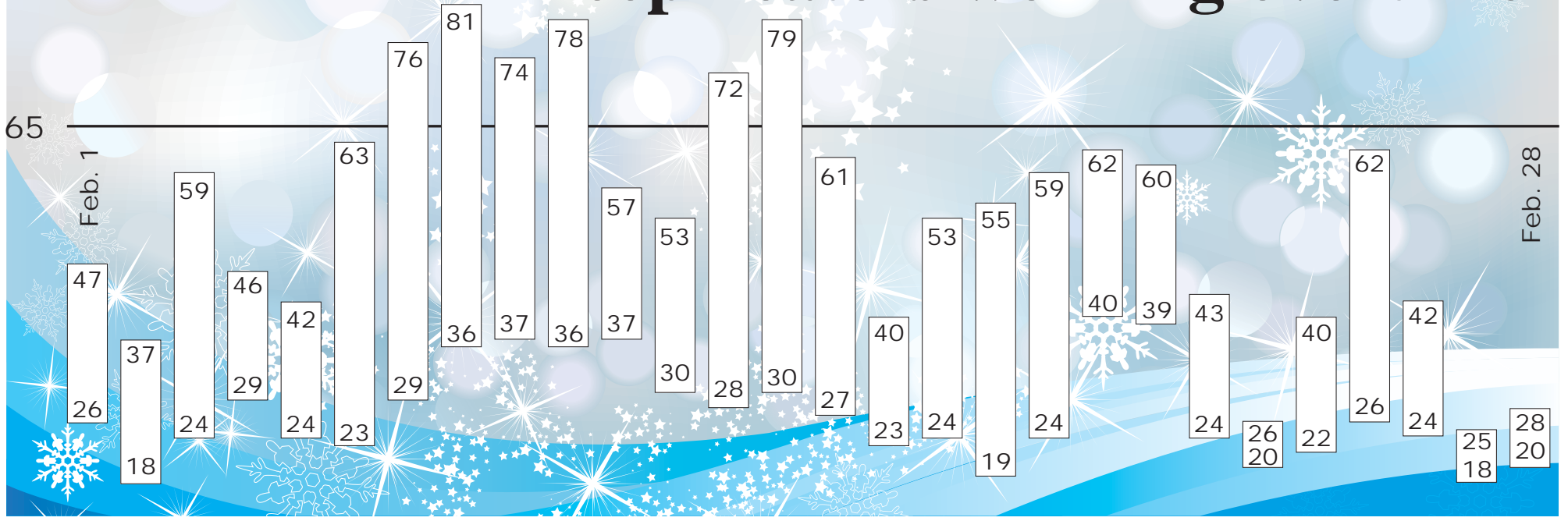
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February's low temperatures keep heaters working overtime



Source: www.srh.noaa.gov/oun/climate/get_f6.php?city=law

Even if thermostat is steady, energy use still fluctuates

By Karen Kaley

Boy, that groundhog sure wasn't kidding on February 2 when he predicted another six weeks of winter. You're probably reading this on a beautiful, warm spring day, the bitter cold of February all but forgotten until you read something else: your power bill.

The cost of comfort is always higher during the coldest and hottest times of the year. That's because heating and cooling are responsible for the largest part of a typical power bill.

Many Cotton Electric members follow the suggested guidelines at Energy.gov and set thermostats at 68 degrees in the winter and 78 degrees in the summer. If only we could control the temperature outside as well.

Even if you lower your thermostat to 60 degrees as you walk out the door to work in the morning, if it's 30, 40 or even 50 degrees outside, it's going to affect the ambient air in your home and trigger the heater to turn on.

The lower the temperature is outside, the longer the heating system will run. And every minute it runs, it is consuming energy.

With a 68-degree setting, a heater usually will begin to operate when the inside temperature hits 65 or below. As the outdoor temperature drops, the HVAC has more of a challenge.

To illustrate, the top chart shows the high and low temperatures of each day in February 2015 and how far away from 65 degrees most of those temperatures were.

The charts on the right show energy consumption at a Cotton Electric member's house compared to the average daily temperature. Note how the blue consumption bars rise at the points where the black temperature points are lower.

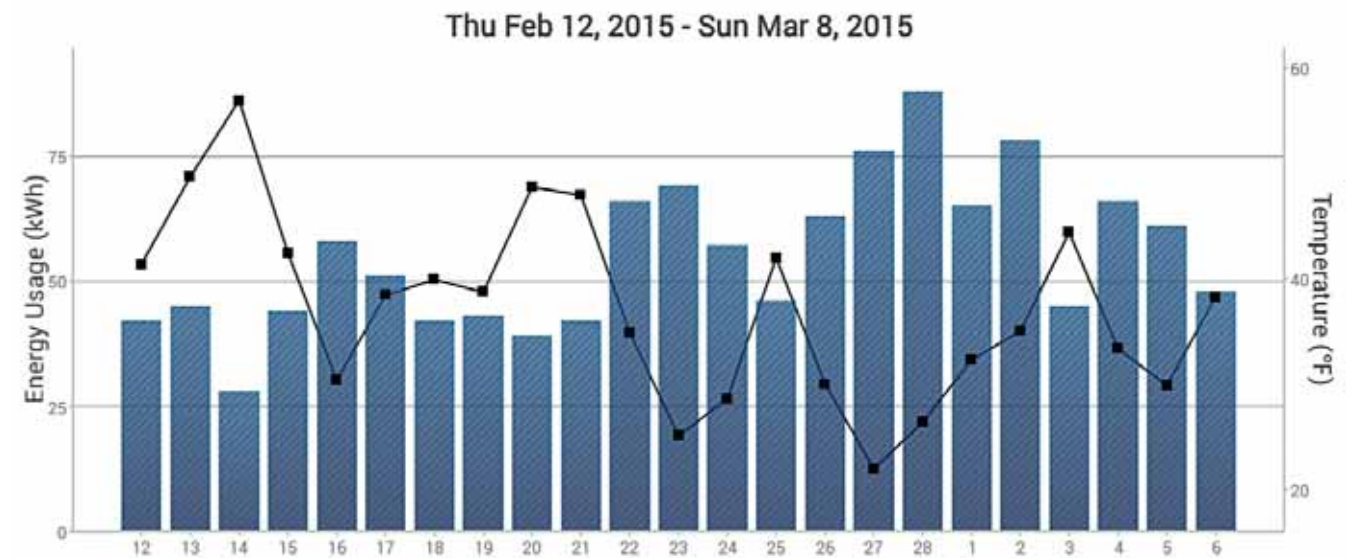
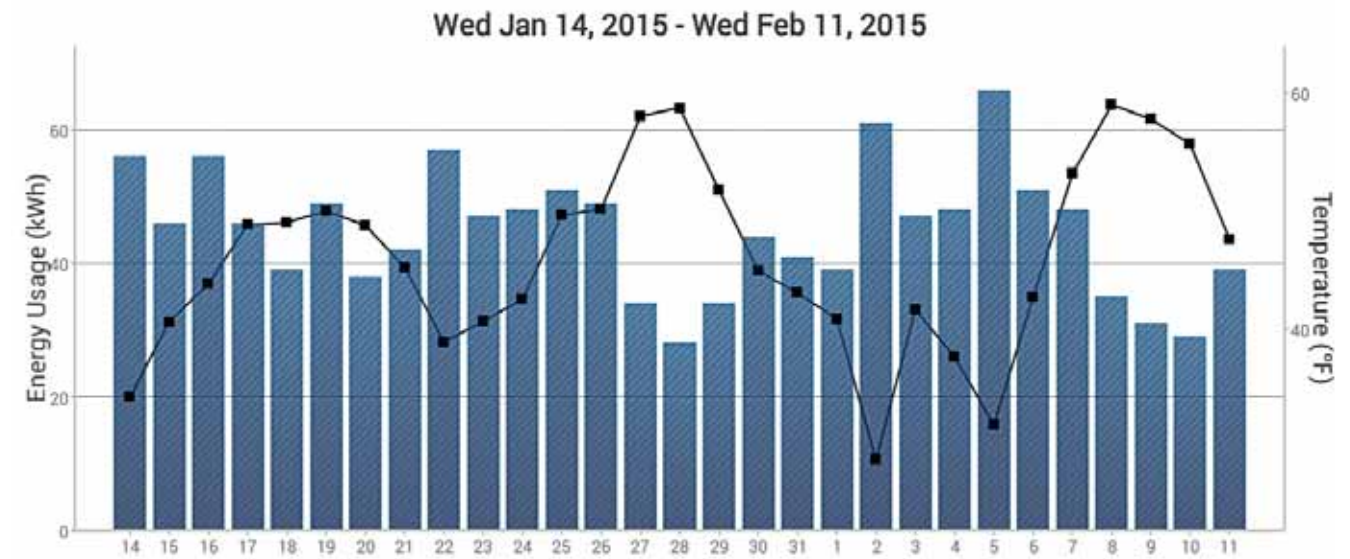
The temperature of the air inside your home is directly affected by the temperature outside your home. The main reason is air infiltration, the constant exchange of your home's conditioned air and outdoor air.

Houses breathe, some more than others. Your HVAC pushes conditioned air from ducts into your home. The winter wind pushes air against the house. The pushed air finds holes all throughout the structure, so warm air gets out and cold air gets in.

Plugging every hole isn't possible or practical, but there are a few things you can do to slow down the exchange and have more control over power consumption all year.

- Ensure attic insulation levels are sufficient and add more, if necessary.

- Ensure ductwork is adequately sealed at joints and intersections



with appropriate tape or mastic.

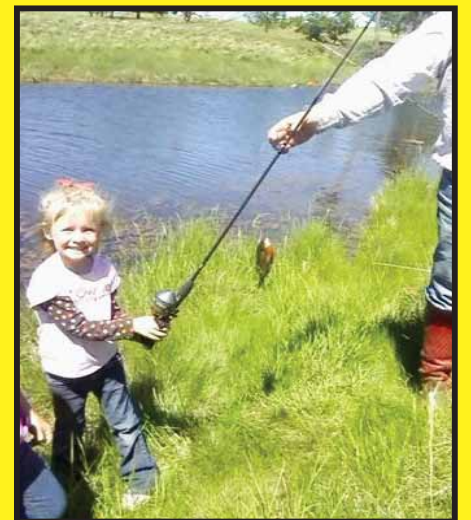
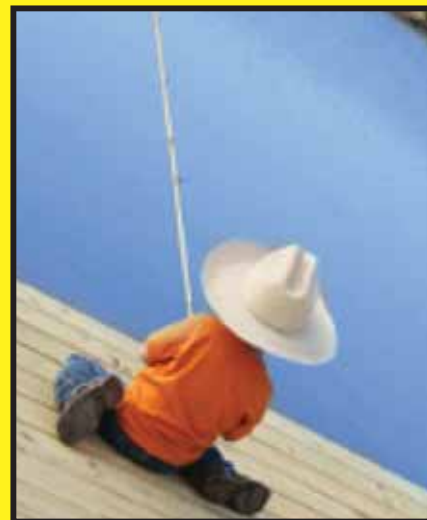
- Ensure the fireplace flue is closed when not in use. An open flue sucks heat out of the home.
- Use programmable thermostats to lower the home temperature when you're not at home, and set it no higher than 68 degrees when occupying the home.
- Check and/or change furnace filters monthly.
- Close drapes at night in the winter and during the daytime in the summer.

This last tip is an excellent springtime activity: Weatherize your home, including caulking around windows and sealing with weatherstripping around doors.

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There are many steps in the assessment and restoration process—clearing downed power lines; ensuring public health and safety facilities are operational; checking power stations and transformers; repairing transmission lines, substations, and distribution lines; and getting power restored to consumers within the various damaged areas.

Storm Safety Kit

- Drinking water & food
- Blankets, pillows, & clothing
- Basic first-aid supplies
- Prescriptions
- Basic toiletries
- Flashlights
- Battery-operated radio
- Battery-operated clock
- Extra supply of batteries
- Phone
- Cash and credit cards
- Emergency numbers
- Important documents (in a waterproof container)
- Toys, books, & games
- Baby supplies
- Pet supplies

Stay safe until we can restore power to you. We and our partner Safe Electricity recommend the following safety precautions:

- Stay far away and keep others away from downed power lines. Just because they are damaged does not mean they are dead!
- Never enter a flooded room if electrical outlets are submerged. The water could be energized.
- Do not turn power off if you must stand in water to do so.
- Before entering storm-damaged buildings, make sure electricity and gas are turned off.
- If you clean-up outdoors after a storm, do not use electric equipment when it is wet out.
- If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, stay away and keep others away. Contact emergency personnel or your utility company to address the downed power line.
- If your vehicle comes in contact with a downed power line, do not leave the car! Wait for utility professionals to make sure the power line is de-energized before exiting the car.

For more information, visit: SafeElectricity.org




Prepare or beware

Spring storm season blows in soon

Benjamin Franklin once said that, "By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail." When it comes to severe weather, this saying can certainly ring true. Whether it is thunder and lightning, high winds, tornadoes, hail, or flooding—making plans now can save lives later.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) safety website, ready.gov, there were more than 440 fatalities and nearly 2,800 injuries in 2013 that were weather-related. These numbers could be decreased if the proper precautions are taken.

You can begin your preparation by assembling necessary supplies for a potential power outage. Your emergency preparedness kit should include items such as water, food, flashlight, batteries, blankets, and a first aid kit. A full list of suggested items can be found at Safe-Electricity.org.

The National Weather Service recommends that you:

- Know the county you are located in and nearby towns and cities. Warnings are issued by county and reference major cities.
- Know the difference between a severe thunderstorm watch and warning. A watch means there is the possibility of storms, and a warning means a storm has been reported and you should take cover.

- Check the forecast and the hazardous weather outlook.
- Watch for signs of an approaching storm.
- Turn on a weather radio or an AM/FM radio for information if a storm is approaching.
- Stay inside if you know a storm is headed your way.

Make sure to plan ahead so you do not get caught outside in a storm. If you are inside when a storm hits, stay inside. Keep away from windows and go to the lowest level of your home. If you do get caught outdoors during a storm and are unable to take shelter in a building, try to take shelter in an enclosed vehicle with a hard-top roof—not an open-frame vehicle like a convertible.

Just because a storm has passed does not mean the danger is over. A variety of hazards are left behind. Never touch downed power lines or objects that could be in contact with those lines. Just because power lines are damaged doesn't mean that they are dead. Touching a downed line or anything it has fallen on, like a fence or a tree limb, could get you injured or even killed. Stay away, and instruct others to do the same. If you come across downed power lines, call 911 and your utility immediately.

Learn more at SafeElectricity.org.



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Schedule efficiency with thermostat program

By Tom Tate

Let's start with a little bit of history. Did you realize that the programmable thermostat is over 100 years old? Honeywell introduced the first programmable thermostat in 1906, naming it the Jewell. It was a simple, clock-powered product that allowed you to establish times for the temperature to go up and down.

The basic programmable thermostat offers four programming periods: wake, leave, return and sleep. You set the time of day and target temperature for each period according to the days of the week.

The lowest priced models will offer you a 5-2 day option. Here you set the four periods for the workweek (Monday through Friday) and the weekend (Saturday and Sunday).

The next model up will be a 5-1-1 day option. This allows different schedules for Saturday and Sunday.

And finally, you can buy a model that allows you to program each day of the week individually. It should be noted that programming each day of the week can quickly become tedious.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established recommendations for proper programming, and over the years, we have seen thermostats that come preprogrammed with their suggestions.

Remember the "tedious" comment? Purchasing a pre-programmed model solves that problem nicely. You can override this programming, but it makes for an easy set up.

So what does the EPA suggest? A heating maximum of 68 degrees Fahrenheit and a cooling minimum of 78 degrees Fahrenheit for those times when you



are home. They estimate you can save 1 percent on your energy bill for every degree of temperature change when away. On average, expect to save about 10 percent on your annual heating bill.

The size of the temperature change to use when away or asleep is another area of discussion.

One camp recommends keeping the range narrow on the theory that the home loses too much of its conditioning and the energy saved is lost as the systems work to get back to the proper temperature.

Another says systems run more efficiently when set at a rather modest temperature (cooler for heating and warmer for cooling) and left alone.

And the last is the EPA's opinion that a 10 to 15 degree change over an eight-hour period provides the best savings, a change from previous recommendations.

A caveat offered by the EPA is that you should not use a programmable thermostat for heat pumps. While fine in cooling mode, they make the heat pump inefficient in heating mode. Specifically de-

signed thermostats are available for heat pumps to overcome this issue. If you have a heat pump, we recommend one of these.

No discussion of programmable thermostats is complete without getting into their "smart" relatives.

This fairly new phenomenon really got traction with the introduction of the Nest. A smart thermostat can be programmed, but their true appeal lies in the ability to "set and forget" them, allowing their software to build a program around the way you live.

Their second major appeal is the ability to interact with them via the Web or your smart phone. While expensive, more choices are hitting the market, so if this is an intriguing idea, keep an eye out as prices are starting to drop.

Experimentation will help you determine the best solution for your home as each is different due to insulation, weather sealing, system efficiencies and how you operate you it. That being said, a programmable thermostat will definitely save you money.

Pick one of Jewell's descendants today, and start saving.

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ACROSS

- 1. Bangladesh capital
- 6. Ed Murrow's home
- 9. L. Lamas' mother Arlene
- 13. 9th Hindu month
- 14. Barbary sheep
- 15. Olive genus
- 16. Repast
- 17. Into the air
- 18. Droops
- 19. Land of Enchantment
- 21. Yes ____ Bob
- 22. Gross revenue
- 23. Scottish woolen cap
- 24. Initials of "Girls" star
- 25. WGBH or WNET
- 28. A. Hamilton
- 29. Skin lesions
- 31. Mures river city
- 33. Phone counselling volunteer
- 36. Restaurants
- 38. Deerfield, Il Christian Un.
- 39. Gland secretion
- 41. Trace the outline of
- 44. Give advice, explain
- 45. Male parents
- 46. One point N of due E
- 48. Radioactivity unit
- 49. Equally
- 51. "Rubber Ball" singer Bobby
- 52. 93562
- 54. Bird confinement status
- 56. Daniel Boone's state
- 60. Burn the surface of
- 61. Hillsides (Scot.)
- 62. Swiss river
- 63. Stir to anger
- 64. Political action committees
- 65. Ajitesh ____, Cricket player

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63					64			65			
66					67			68			

- 66. In bed
- 67. Miles per hour
- 68. Checkmating game
- 11. 1770-1831 German Philosopher
- 12. Emitted coherent radiation
- 14. Estranges
- 17. Wheel shafts
- 20. Take in solid food
- 21. Indian frocks
- 23. Hill (Celtic)
- 25. Singular of 64 across
- 26. Small nail
- 27. Strongboxes
- 29. White dessert wines
- 30. Curved cavalry sword
- 32. Dropped off a package
- 34. __ Farrow, actress
- 35. Class of comb jellies
- 37. Begat
- 40. __ student, learns healing
- 42. Born of
- 43. Very dark blacks
- 47. Midway between N and NE
- 49. Capital of Ghana
- 50. Indian term of respect
- 52. Impart knowledge
- 53. 4th Hindu month
- 55. Strong air current
- 56. Hunting device
- 57. One who is wise
- 58. Amounts of time
- 59. Soft-finned fishes
- 61. Beats per minute
- 65. Carrier's invention

DOWN

- 1. Musical "____ Yankees"
- 2. "CIA Diary" author Phil
- 3. Chew without swallowing, as of tobacco
- 4. Steadies
- 5. Article
- 6. Slang for lots of reptiles
- 7. True toad
- 8. Be in session
- 9. For measuring doses of radiation
- 10. Winged

Strung Out is stuffed full of inspiration. Shop owner Debra Jones says beading is a simple, relaxing hobby that will unlock any person's imagination.

Strung Out
10% discount on purchases of \$50 or more



Get creative and get

STRUNG OUT

By Karen Kaley

Debra Jones says she can tell people are a little confused as they drive past her business at 713 W. Walnut in Duncan. She watches them read aloud the words on her sign: Strung Out.

A moment of puzzlement is cleared up immediately if they continue to read: Design your own jewelry. Make it here.

If the passers-by happen to take advantage of the always-available parking and pay a visit, they will step into a riot of color and texture. If they spend some time, they will find a creative soul they may not have realized they possess.

Strung Out is stuffed full of inspiration. And, in Debra, they will find a mentor and encouraging friend.

"People think they are not creative or talented. I hear it every day," Debra said, "but it's not true."

Something is bound to catch the eye of anyone browsing through thousands of beads and strands covering the walls and countertops, neatly arranged by type and color. Sometimes, all it takes is an attractive bead, or a photo in a magazine, or colorful ar-

ticle of clothing to get things started.

"I have seen adults choose a bead, then put things with it and go from there. Before they leave, they've already looked at another bead and imagined another project," Debra said.

Most of the beads are of natural materials such as gemstones, crystals, bone and wood. There are metallic beads, plated, sterling or gold-filled. Some are colorful resin and there are even a few plastic beads. Debra said it is the largest selection for 100 miles and the nearest shop with similar variety is in Dallas.

Visitors should plan to spend some time at Strung Out.

"Picking out the beads is the hardest part, takes the longest," Debra said.

"A person may spend 45 minutes looking for beads and another 25 minutes stringing them up."

After selections are made, Strung Out has all equipment needed to produce necklaces, bracelets, anklets and earrings. Debra has special beading boards and looms for laying out the design and sells the wire or string, crimps and clasps that will finish a

hand-made one-of-a-kind work of art.

Cost varies according to the materials used. Strands and half-strands can run from a few dollars on up.

"Most strands range from \$6.95 to \$9.95," Debra said, "but I have a few that cost as much as \$100."

She can give an estimate of cost when all materials are gathered. Cotton Electric members can save 10 percent on purchases of \$50 or more by presenting a Co-op Connections card.

When the cost and design plan are right, the build begins. Debra will offer a bit of free advice and instruction, then step back to allow an idea to become a unique creation.

She said the creative process can be fun when shared. She has seen dads bring in kids to make something for mom, and bridal parties create jewelry for the wedding.

Sometimes it is a regular party. Call Debra at 580-252-2888 to book an after-hours private gathering for kids or adults.

"Kids are good at this," she said. "We can set out large tubs of beads and kids go crazy over them, dig in and pick out what they want."

"I have several pieces made up so parents can pick what they want kids to make. We set a price ahead of time so things don't go wild."

Kids' parties usually last about two hours.

Adult parties can last longer and are more unstructured. Individuals pay for what they create, so they are limited only by their own budget.

Debra said anyone can do the beadwork, there aren't many barriers. She has a magnifier for people who might have trouble threading the needle through a bead's hole, and said even people with not-so-steady hands have ended up quite proud of items they created.

"We can build whatever you can imagine," Debra said, "and people's imagination gets better over time."

"In the nine years I have been here, I have seen the beads used for so much more than just making jewelry. The possibilities are endless!"

"Come on in," she said, and fire up your imagination at Strung Out. The store is open from 10:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday.



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Hold on to your car

Tips for a safe, long-lasting vehicle

(Family Features) While driving a new vehicle off the lot may sound tempting, the financial commitment it brings is not an option for most families.

Instead, hanging on to your old set of wheels is the smarter choice for a number of reasons. Taking good care of your car not only improves safety and dependability, it can have a positive impact on your wallet.

“Hanging on to your current vehicle allows you to redirect money you would spend on a new car to pay off credit card debt, college loans and other bills, beef up savings or even take a road trip vacation,” said Rich White, executive director with the Car Care Council. “By simply budgeting the equivalent of just one new car payment, consumers could cover an entire year’s worth of basic maintenance.”

Even the cost of fixing a serious engine issue is a more sensible economic decision, added White. For the cost of an average down payment on a new car or truck, a vehicle can be repowered with a re-manufactured or rebuilt engine and gain years of reliable service.

“The bottom line is that a properly main-



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

tained vehicle is safer, more dependable, more fuel efficient, less polluting and more valuable,” White added.

The experts at the Car Care Council offer these 10 general tips for those looking to maintain the life of their vehicle:

1. Check all fluids, including engine oil, power steering, brake and transmission as well as windshield washer solvent and antifreeze or coolant.

2. Check hoses and belts to make sure they are not cracked, brittle, frayed, loose or showing signs of wear.

3. Check the battery and replace if necessary.

4. Check the brake system annually and have the brake linings, rotors and drums inspected at each oil change.

5. Inspect the exhaust system for leaks, damage and broken supports or hangers if there is an unusual noise.

6. Check engine per-

formance to make sure it is delivering the best balance of power and fuel economy and producing the lowest level of emissions.

7. Check the heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system as proper heating and cooling performance is critical for interior comfort and safety.

8. Inspect the steering and suspension system annually, including shock absorbers, struts and chassis parts, such as ball joints, tie rod ends and other related components.

9. Check the tires, including tire pressure and tread. Uneven wear indicates a need for wheel alignment. Tires should also be checked for bulges and bald spots.

10. Check the wipers and lighting so that you can see and be seen. Check that all interior and exterior lighting is working properly and replace worn wiper blades

so you can see clearly when driving during precipitation.

The next time you consider purchasing a new car, think about investing in the vehicle you already own for significant savings, as well as enhanced reliability and safety. For more tips to extend the life of your car, visit www.carcare.org.

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Additional Improvements include a Storm Shelter and an attached 2-car Carport (24'x35'), Sheet Metal Pole Barn (22'x28'), detached Sheet Metal Carport (20'x20') and a 12'x12' wooden Storage Building (nice).

Improvements also include: Sheet Metal Roof, fenced yard, Covered Front Porch (8'x24'). All situated on a nice lot of 1.855 Acres.

Directions: From the Intersection on Highway 53 and CoCo Road, go 2-1/2 Miles South to Beaver Point. Turn West at Beaver Point, 3rd House on the South Side.

Broker's Note: This is a nice Home. Well maintained, with a number of Improvements. Please call Auction Company to make an appointment to see this nice Home. See to appreciate!

\$62,500

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7 signs your brakes should be inspected

(Family Features) Preserve the life of your vehicle and enhance overall safety with routine brake inspections on your vehicle.

“When it comes to vehicle safety, the brake system is at the top of the list, so have your brakes checked by an auto service professional at least once a year,” said Rich White, executive director with the Car Care Council.

“Knowing the key warning signs that your brakes may need maintenance will go a long way toward keeping you and others safe on the road.”

The brake care experts at the Car Care Council recommend motorists watch for these signs:

1. Noise: Screeching, grinding or clicking noises when applying the brakes.
2. Pulling: Vehicle pulls to one side while braking.
3. Low pedal: Brake pedal nearly touches the floor before engaging.
4. Hard pedal: Must apply extreme



pressure to the pedal before brakes engage.

5. Grabbing: Brakes grab at the slightest touch to the pedal.

6. Vibration: Brake pedal vibrates or pulses, even under normal braking conditions.

7. Light: Brake light is illuminated on your vehicle’s dashboard.

Brakes are a normal wear item on any vehicle and they will eventually need to be replaced. Factors that can affect brake wear include driving habits, operating conditions, vehicle type and the quality of the brake lining material. Understanding these warning signs can help you and your family stay safe on the road.

For more ways to enhance the safety of your vehicle, visit www.carcare.org.

Dear Member of the Geronimo Community,

It has been my honor and privilege to serve on the Geronimo school board for over 23 years. As most of you are aware, there is a run-off in this year’s election. I would like to reaffirm my intentions and my commitment to the school in its entirety, as well as introduce myself to those of you who are new to the community. I am a dedicated and active school board member and would like to continue that service. However, I will need your help and vote on Tuesday, April 7, 2015.

My wife and I have lived in Geronimo for 32 years and we have all grown to love this town and school. My wife, Leigh Ann, and I have been married for nearly 35 years and have three daughters. Two of our daughters are grown and were graduates from Geronimo in 2004 and 2011. Our youngest daughter is currently attending 5th grade at Geronimo Elementary. We are pleased that our daughters have attended Geronimo Schools because their educations have served them well.

I enjoy being active within the community and getting to know the residents here. I’m an advocate of extracurricular activities for the children and I praise them for their efforts no matter what type of activity that it may be. As for me, I have coached little league softball over the years, been highly active with Geronimo 4-H and FFA programs, supported numerous sporting events for all athletes, served as a class parent, helped with numerous fundraisers, and also attended as many school functions and ceremonies as my schedule would allow.

I have been employed by the Lawton Public Schools for almost 24 years and I am also a state certified, licensed locksmith. I have recently been promoted as the Project Manager and Safety Coordinator for the LPS Maintenance division. My position oversees new construction projects and building maintenance, as well as coordinating with fire marshals and contractors to uphold safety concerns for each school within the system. My career experience has aided in my ability to understand the complexities of our state regulations and policies, which enables me to make sound judgments pertaining to our own school.

I have also gained valuable experience through our projects and issues that we have had in the past here at Geronimo. A few highlights include voting in the bonds for the development of our new high school gymnasium, construction of

a new roof for the elementary school, and improvements to the athletic and vocational facilities. I have found that active community member participation helps the school board to facilitate necessary improvements. That being said, I encourage all of you to let me hear your voice if a situation arises that you would like to see changed or improved. I am an open-minded person that would like to discuss issues as long as they are within the state’s policies and regulations.

In closing, I truly hope that I can count on your support and vote on April 7th. Serving the community is very important to me and I want nothing more than to continue Geronimo’s success as one of the leading schools in Comanche County.

Thank You,
Donald McCaig

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Next round of Dietary Guidelines may include surprises



Bite – or sip – into a healthy lifestyle



The 2015 Dietary Guidelines Scientific report makes some interesting conclusions about the morning elixir known as coffee.

March is National Nutrition Month. Although the 2015 theme is “Bite Into a Healthy Lifestyle,” perhaps they should substitute “sip” for “bite” in light of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Scientific report, which makes some interesting conclusions about the morning elixir known as coffee.

The U.S. Dietary Guidelines are updated every five years. Scientists from across the nation review the best available research to determine dietary guidelines.

The goal is to help prevent disease and promote healthy eating and physical activity. The scientific report is a prelude to the final guidelines that will be released later this year.

In the past, the dietary guidelines have not been concerned with coffee, but it looks like this year we may see a specific “shout-out” to a regular cup of joe.

The 2015 report makes two conclusions regarding moderate intake of coffee, defined as 3-5 cups a day or no more than 400



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For Thought

mg per day of caffeine.

The first is that moderate consumption of coffee is not associated with an increased risk of chronic disease. The committee rates the research around this conclusion as strong.

As well, there is some evidence that moderate consumption of coffee is associated with reduced risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart

disease, and certain cancers. The committee gave this conclusion a moderate rating.

The intent of these conclusions is not to boost coffee sales. The report even makes the point that individuals who do not currently drink coffee should not start drinking it for the health benefits.

The report could be seen as a resolution for the battle between coffee drinkers and non-coffee drinkers, although if you are the type of coffee drinker that doctors up your drink with added calories, you lose your claim to drinking a healthy beverage. Best to drink it black or with skim milk to avoid negating the health benefits.

Until the final dietary guidelines report is released, coffee drinkers can raise their mugs to health and “sip” into a healthy lifestyle this month. Given the strength of the research behind these conclusions, it would be surprising if the 2015 Dietary Guidelines do not include recommendations around coffee consumption.

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Cereal offers whole grains for whole day

(Family Features) Getting enough whole grains into your family's diet may seem like a whole lot of work, but one trick for getting more grains throughout the day is by using an ingredient family members of all ages will love – cereal.

Starting the day off right begins with eating a breakfast rich in whole grains. Cereals such as

Honey Bunches of Oats Whole Grain are packed with more than two-thirds of your day's whole grain and a touch of sweetness for a deliciously wholesome breakfast.

You can also use cereal in recipes for other meals and snacks to give your family extra servings of the whole grains they need with flavors they can enjoy

all day long. For example, meatballs made with crushed whole grain cereal make for a tasty dinner, and you can feel good about satisfying your sweet tooth with easy to make whole grain sweet and salty clusters.

For more creative recipes and ideas to help your family fit in more whole grains, visit www.postfoods.com.

Sweet and Salty No-Bake Clusters

Prep time: 15 minutes
Total time: 1 hour
Servings: 2 dozen clusters

- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons cocoa
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/4 cup milk
- 1 1/2 cups Honey Bunches of Oats Whole Grain Vanilla Bunches cereal
- 1/2 cup reduced-fat peanut butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/2 cup peanuts
- 1 cup pretzels

In heavy saucepan bring sugar, cocoa, butter and milk to a boil. Let boil for 1 minute then add cereal, peanut butter, vanilla, peanuts and pretzels.

Scoop 2 tablespoons of mixture at a time and drop on baking sheet coated with waxed paper. Place sheet in refrigerator until clusters are cooled and hardened. When ready, gently pull clusters off waxed paper. Store clusters in refrigerator.



Whole Grain Porcupine Meatballs

Prep time: 15 minutes
Total time: 1 hour 45 minutes
Servings: 8 (1 meatball each)

- 1 cup Honey Bunches of Oats Whole Grain Honey Crunch cereal
- 1 egg
- 2/3 cup milk
- 1 cup uncooked long grain white rice
- 1 can (3.8 ounces) sliced ripe olives, drained
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1 pound ground round beef, 90 percent lean
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) petite-diced tomatoes, undrained
- 2 cups water
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 beef bouillon cube
- 1 teaspoon dried marjoram



Heat oven to 350°F degrees.

In food processor, grind cereal into fine powder. In large bowl, whisk together egg and milk. Stir in ground cereal, rice, olives, salt, paprika, onion powder, garlic powder and pepper; stir to combine.

Crumble ground round into rice mixture. Stir or use hands to combine ingredients; mix well. Form beef mixture into 8 large equal-sized meatballs. Place meatballs in 2-quart baking dish; set aside.

In medium saucepan over medium-high heat, stir together to-

matoes, water, cornstarch, bouillon cube and marjoram. Bring to boil and stir for one minute. Remove from heat and pour over meatballs in pan. Cover baking dish with lid or aluminum foil and bake for 1 1/2 hours.

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PUBLIC AUCTION

Saturday, March 21, 2015 10:00AM
5660 Hummingbird Lane
Duncan, Oklahoma
(See Directions Below)

Gary Criswell Auction Service & Real Estate, Inc. has been commissioned by the Estate of Jacquelyn (Jackie) Ann Wallick to offer Public Auction the Real Property and Personal Property located at 5660 Hummingbird Lane, Duncan, Oklahoma.

Real Property consists of a 1 Bedroom, 1-1/2 Story, Frame Home (Approximately 1,325 Square Feet) with a large Family Room, Living Room, Kitchen with Dining Area and 3/4 Bath Downstairs. The Upstairs has a Loft (opened to the Downstairs Area) with a Bedroom and Full Bath with Central Heat and Air.

Additional Improvements include a large Storm Shelter, Sheet Metal Roof, Shake and Wood Siding, a number of Out Buildings and 3 Water Wells. All situated on 11.35 Acres. The Real Property is fenced and cross fenced and gated.

Personal Property includes an AERMOTOR (Chicago) Windmill-25' High, Household Furnishings, Variety of Antiques, Collectibles, Coin Collection, 1873 Trapdoor Springfield - 45.70 Caliber, Winchester 1894 Carbine, CVA 45 Caliber Rifle, 5 Handguns (old), Arrowhead Collection, Library File Cabinet, Showcase, 1992 FORD AEROSTAR Van, 1979 CHEVROLET CHEYENNE Pickup, ROCK-OLA 442 Juke Box, HIE EARTH STOVE, Fireplace Mantle with Mirror and a Brass Bed with Rails.

Consignment: 2005 Ford F-150 LARIAT, 5.4 TRITON, Quad Cab, All Power, Color: Brown, 1 Owner, Mileage: 129,292 (nice).

Consignment: 1993 FORD THUNDERBIRD Super Coupe, 3.8 Liter V6-Super Charger, 5-Speed, Floor Shift, JBL Audio System, 2 Door, Color: White, 1 Owner, Mileage: 87,627(clean).

Directions: In Duncan, Oklahoma, go East on Highway 7 to the end of Four Lane and follow Two Lane to top of the Hill. (Hummingbird Lane). Turn South on Hummingbird Lane, the Real Property is situated on the East side of the Road.

Terms of Sale: 10% Earnest Money on Home on the day of Sale. Balance due at Closing upon delivery of Title and Deed. Personal Property - Cash, Personal or Company Check accepted. Positive I.D. required. Buyers must provide Auction Company a copy of Sales Tax Permit to avoid Sales Tax.

Preview Real Property and Personal Property will be held Friday afternoon, March 20, 2015 from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Announcements made day of sale supersede all other advertisements. Please plan to attend this Public Auction.

Auctioneer's Note: This is a good Public Auction with a AERMOTOR Windmill and a variety of Antiques, Firearms, Jewelry and Collectibles. This is a Rustic Home (please see to appreciate) in a good location with a number of Improvements. Real Property will be offered "As-Is-Where-Is." Real Property will be offered at 10:00 am. Sharp! Vehicles and Firearms will be offered at 12:00 pm High Noon. The Estate of Jacquelyn Ann Wallick reserves the right to accept or reject the final bid. Stephens County Abstract will serve as the Closing Agent on the Real Property.

Gary Criswell Auction Service & Real Estate, Inc.
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Some restrictions may apply. Services where available. Savings applied in the form of bill credit to customer account. Promotion dates March 1 - 31, 2015.

Official Notice

2015 Annual Meeting
Walters Co-op Elevator Assn.
Walters, Oklahoma

Meeting will be held as follows:

- Date: March 27, 2015
- Place: Cotton Electric Community Center
- Time: Meal Served at 12:00 Noon
Business Meeting at 12:30 p.m.

The Purpose Of The Meeting Will Be To Elect (1) Director, Receive The Annual Audit Report and Conduct Such Other Business As May Come Before The Membership.
We Invite You To Attend Your Annual Meeting!

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Simplify family weeknight meals

(Family Features) Most families aspire to spend more time together around the dinner table, but between work and after-school activities, it's hard to find the time.

If you're finding it tough to get your family to the table each night, here are a few simple tips:

1. Keep the meals simple by choosing recipes with one star ingredient and easy preparation – like a pork tenderloin. Fresh pork cuts can be easily sliced into medallions or cubes to cook faster, while still maintaining juicy, de-

licious flavor, so you can have a dinner that's ready in less than 10 minutes.

2. While waiting for dinner to finish cooking, slice and chop any ingredients that can be stored to cut down on some of the prep work for the next night's meal.

3. Get the whole family involved and assign each member a task, such as setting the table or assembling a crisp green salad.

4. To save on time, choose meats that have done some of the work for you, such as Smithfield's Seasoned Pork line. Slow-marinated

in a variety of delicious seasonings, they're perfect for any night of the week, and will taste like you spent hours in the kitchen.

5. On weekends, take the extra time to double a recipe for you to serve during the week.

For a simple weeknight meal that's sure to get your family in their dinner seats, try a pre-seasoned pork dish such as Fresh Pork & Veggie Stir-Fry, or Fresh Pork & Apple Salad.

For more family-friendly and time-saving recipes, visit www.Smithfield.com.



Fresh Pork & Veggie Stir-Fry

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

- 1 pkg. Smithfield Teriyaki Seasoned Pork Tenderloin
- 4 cups assorted fresh vegetables (i.e. sugar snap peas, carrots, broccoli), cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1/2 cup teriyaki or stir-fry sauce
- 2 cups prepared rice or rice noodles

1. Cut tenderloin into thin strips or 1-inch cubes.
2. Heat large skillet over high heat; spray with nonstick cooking spray. Sauté pork strips for 2 to 3 minutes until browned. Add vegetables and stir-fry until tender-crisp (about 3 minutes).
3. Stir in teriyaki sauce; heat through. Serve stir-fry over rice or noodles.



Fresh Pork & Apple Salad

Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 5 minutes
Serves: 6

1 Smithfield Peppercorn & Garlic Seasoned Pork Tenderloin

1 (7-oz.) bag mixed salad greens

2 apples, thinly sliced
1 1/2 cups assorted fresh vegetables (e.g., red onions, sugar snap peas, radishes) cut into bite-sized pieces

1 cup nuts (e.g., cashews or almonds)

1. Cut tenderloin into thin strips or cubes.
2. Heat large skillet over high heat; spray with nonstick cooking spray. Sauté pork strips for 2 to 3 minutes until done and browned.
3. To make salad, layer salad greens, apples, vegetables, and sliced tenderloin in large bowl. Garnish with nuts. Serve with your favorite salad dressing.

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