

The Current

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Co-ops see their future in young faces

By Karen Kaley

Look at those fresh smiling faces. What do you see?

Electric cooperatives see an investment in their future. We see the principles and mission of the cooperative in action. We see the continued success of Cotton Electric Cooperative and others like it.

We also see some sharp young individuals and the promise of a bright future for southwest Oklahoma. We see Daisy Cossio, Colton Kern, Mathew Meaders and Haley Smith.

Each wrote and presented an essay discussing “The Power of the Cooperative Model.” The quality of their work earned them an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.

They joined 66 other Oklahoma high school juniors, who joined others from across the United States for the annual Rural Electric Youth Tour. In all, some 1,700 students were learning firsthand

about our government, our nation and our electric cooperatives.

Coordinated by Stacy Howeth and Nicole Withey of Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives and chaperoned by nine co-op volunteers, the Oklahoma group packed as many activities as possible into a six-day trip.

There were learning moments: They visited Fort McHenry National Park where they helped unroll a full-sized replica of the Star-Spangled Banner and learned the history of both the flag and the song it inspired. They walked the grounds of Mount Vernon, just as the father of our country did 200 years ago.

There were high energy moments: They joined an enthusiastic gathering of Youth Tourists to hear speakers encouraging them to face the challenges of the future with confidence. They cruised the Potomac for hours while dancing and forming new friendships with youth

from other states.

There were somber moments: They saw rows and rows and rows of graves in Arlington National Cemetery and silently watched the changing of the Guards of Honor at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. They peered at wreckage from the World Trade Center at the Newseum and took in the chilling mementos displayed at the Holocaust Museum.

There were moments of spectacle: They watched the U.S. Marines perform a sunset parade beneath the Iwo Jima Memorial. They visited the famous monuments of Lincoln, Jefferson, Roosevelt, King and others, beautifully lit for an evening tour.

There were photo ops at the White House and Capitol. There were chances to speak with Oklahoma legislators. There was plenty of time to explore the Smithsonian Museums.

There was pride in the beautiful city

that serves as the capital of our nation.

And, upon reflection, there was realization that the cooperative had given a powerful gift.

“I probably would never have had the opportunity to see the amazing city that is Washington, D.C.,” Daisy Cossio said. “The bonds made here are unforgettable and strong ... this was an amazing experience.”

“OK Youth Tour was the trip of a lifetime,” Mathew Meaders said. “I learned so much about our nation’s history ... I hope more students get the opportunity.”

Haley Smith said she was “grateful for the opportunity to meet people and form friendships that will last a lifetime.” She said the trip gave her an insight into the way our government operates.

Connor Kern spoke of the privilege of the experience, saying it “has truly opened my eyes and made me respect the power of a co-op.”

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after July 1, 2017, is \$0.01444 per kWh.

On a member’s average bill of 1500 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$21.66 on the July bill.

June 2017 Temperature Extremes							
Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	86	64	75	16	98	73	86
2	73	66	70	17	96	76	86
3	81	67	74	18	80	72	76
4	82	64	73	19	92	69	81
5	89	68	79	20	94	67	81
6	93	67	80	21	94	66	80
7	86	64	75	22	95	63	79
8	85	60	73	23	100	70	85
9	82	67	75	24	86	65	76
10	89	69	79	25	86	64	75
11	90	71	81	26	87	68	78
12	91	71	81	27	93	68	81
13	91	74	83	28	92	71	82
14	94	75	85	29	96	72	84
15	96	72	84	30	93	67	80

Source: srh.noaa.gov/oun/

Average Daily High: 90 Average Daily Low: 68

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric members in Districts 2, 6 and 8 will have an opportunity to meet and elect representatives this year. Times, dates and places of District Meetings will in the August issue of The Current.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on Aug. 14, 2017.

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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From the CEO

Rural communities have a voice in D.C.

Given the incessant news out of Washington about Congressional conflict, it may seem our elected leaders face a bewildering swirl of issues that distract them from the concerns of rural Americans.

That’s why America’s electric co-operatives urged members to get out and vote in the last election and are now focused on advancing the interests of rural communities in our nation’s capital. We’ve asked for a seat at the table — a request that’s been met with some success.

Early this year, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), our national service organization in Washington, led a group of more than 40 organizations in sending a letter to President Trump asking him to make rural issues a top priority of his administration.

“As you witnessed first-hand



Jennifer Meason, CEO

during the campaign, the issues facing rural America are no less significant than those facing urban parts of the country, but can be more easily overlooked because America’s small towns and rural areas make up just 15 percent of the nation’s population,” the groups wrote.

To address this concern, the organizations urged the president to designate a senior member of the White House staff to take point on rural issues or establish an office of rural policy within the Executive Office of the President.

In response to this and other electric cooperative outreach efforts, the president in late April signed an executive order establishing an interagency Rural America Task Force to examine the issues facing rural America and identify actions needed to address them.

NRECA CEO Jim Matheson

called the creation of the task force “a key step as we seek to develop rural communities economically. That includes implementing new energy technologies to meet tomorrow’s energy needs, while also deploying broadband and other services to enhance daily lives throughout rural America.”

Electric cooperatives also have been weighing in on another big topic in Washington: the need to improve the nation’s aging infrastructure. Co-ops have told policymakers that they must look beyond merely repairing roads and bridges if a federal infrastructure initiative is going to meet the needs of rural communities. High on co-ops’ list of priorities is closing the rural-urban digital divide by expanding rural access to high-speed internet service, which Matheson calls “a key ingredient for a healthy 21st century economy, particularly in rural areas.”

Given this imperative, co-ops

were very pleased when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) appointed Matheson to serve on a newly created Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee. The mission of the panel, which held its inaugural meeting in April, is to advise and make recommendations to the FCC on how to accelerate the deployment of broadband by reducing and removing regulatory barriers to infrastructure investment. Matheson will work to ensure that rural needs are addressed.

This isn’t to say that everything in Washington will go co-ops’ way. The federal government is a massive bureaucracy with many interests vying for attention. But there’s one thing you can count on: Electric cooperatives will fight to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill and within the many federal agencies that impact the quality of life in rural communities. They’ll always strive to get a seat at the table.

Appreciating electricity a penny at a time

By Curtis Condon, editor of Ruralite magazine in Hillsboro, OR

I’m old enough to remember when penny candy actually cost a penny. For a nickel, you could buy enough candy to rot your teeth out, as my mother used to say.

But what does a penny buy these days? Not much. The government can’t even make a penny for a penny anymore. According to the U.S. Mint, it now costs 1.5 cents to produce one.

About the only thing of value you can still get for a penny is electricity. You might call it “penny electricity.”

No, I’m not kidding. Think about it.

To make the math easier, let’s say the average rate for a kilowatt-hour of electricity is 10 cents. That is 60 minutes of 1,000 watts of electricity for a dime, so a penny of electricity equates to 100 watts. It’s enough to power a 9-watt LED light-

bulb—the equivalent of a 60-watt incandescent bulb—for 11 hours, all for only a penny.

Where else can you get that kind of value?

How many eggs will a penny buy? How much milk, bread, coffee, medicine or gasoline?

Gas has come down from its stratospheric levels of several years ago, but there is still no comparison to the value of electricity. For example, if a gallon of gas costs \$2.50 and your car gets 25 miles to the gallon, you can drive 176 yards—about two blocks— on a penny’s worth of gas.

I will take 11 hours of lighting for a penny over a two-block drive any day.

The value is just as evident when powering things other than lighting. Take, for instance, your smartphone. Using the same 10 cents per kWh price, penny electricity allows you to fully charge your iPhone more than 18 times for a penny. You

can charge it once every day of the year for about 20 cents total.

Not impressed? Well, how about these other examples of what you can do with just a penny’s worth of electricity: power a 1,000-watt microwave on high for 6 minutes; run a 200-watt desktop computer for 30 minutes; watch 2.5 hours of your favorite shows on a 40-watt, 32-inch, LED television or 1.3 hours on a 75-watt, 75-inch mega TV.

The examples are endless. We are fortunate electricity is such an excellent value because we have a huge appetite for it. We tend to forget that.

Electricity is not expensive. It’s that we use it for so many different things: lighting, heating, cooking, cooling, refrigeration, cleaning, washing, pumping, entertainment, communications—even transportation these days.

Few corners of our lives are left untouched by electricity.

Unfortunately, we don’t always appreciate it. When our monthly electric bill comes, we open it and may complain about the cost. It’s a knee-jerk reaction ingrained in us as consumers. We don’t stop to think about the value we received for the money.

Early in my career, I had the pleasure to interview an elderly woman who vividly remembered the day electricity came to her farm. Her name escapes me, but I do remember she proudly showed me the worn, dog-eared membership certificate the co-op issued to her husband.

“You young people will never know what it was like to have electricity for the very first time,” she said. “It was glorious. Nowadays, you take it for granted.”

Her farm was energized in 1940. She said the price of electricity at the time was slightly less than a penny a kilowatt-hour—true penny electricity.

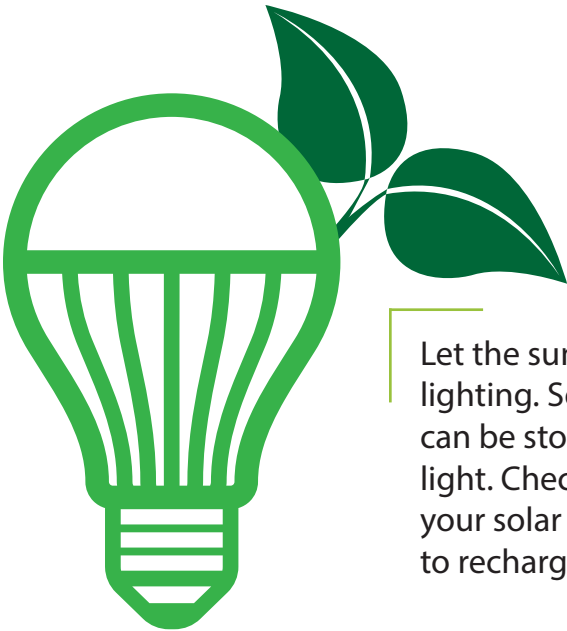
A lot has changed since then.

Wages and the cost of living today are a far cry from 1940, when the average annual wage was less than \$150 a month and the average cost of a house was \$3,920.

But one thing that hasn’t changed is the value of electricity. In 77 years, its price has risen much slower than the rate of inflation.

A penny in 1940 had as much buying power as 17 cents today, which means the residential price of electricity—which now averages 12 cents a kWh nationally and less than 10 cents in the Pacific Northwest—is actually a better deal today than it was in 1940.

So to my way of thinking, the value of electricity is like the by-gone days of penny candy, and it’s OK to indulge yourself a little. But, unlike penny candy, penny electricity won’t rot your teeth out.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Let the sun work for you! Consider solar lights for outdoor lighting. Solar cells convert sunlight into electricity that can be stored in a battery and tapped at night to make light. Check manufacturers’ instructions to make sure your solar lights are situated to receive sufficient sunlight to recharge during the day.


Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy



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

May 2017 Operating Stats			
	2017	2016	
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$5,000,601	\$4,852,179	
Cost of Purchased Power	3,284,977	3,297,402	
Taxes	84,493	84,872	
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	947	950	
Average Farm and Residential Bill	128	120	
Average Farm and Residential kWh	968	940	
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	18,294	18,195	
Miles Energized	5,166	5,155	
Density Per Mile	3.54	3.53	
New Service Connects YTD	109	72	
Services Retired	56	42	

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2017 Youth Tour essay topic: The Power of the Cooperative Model

Cotton Electric hears and meets members' needs



Mathew Meaders
Lawton High School

Editor's note: Four area high school juniors recently won a trip to Washington, D.C., in Cotton Electric's annual Youth Tour essay contest. Each of the essays will appear in The Current.

In 1976, my grandmother and my grandfather moved to a rural farm just outside of Duncan. My grandfather, who died in 2003, and my grandmother could have told hundreds of stories of how Cotton Electric Cooperative served them, and served them well. But the story that sticks out in my mind is one I lived through.

You may remember that in 2009, an ice storm slammed into southwest Oklahoma and left an incredible number of homes without power, including my grandmother's farm and my house. As for me, I had the warmth of my family members, as well as tons of blankets and thick, itchy, woolen socks. My grandmother, however, was stranded alone, a 45-minute drive from us on good roads, but with all the ice we couldn't reach her at all. But she had one thing I didn't have. She had another family, the Cotton Electric Co-op family.

You see, Cotton Electric is more than a mere utility company. With the power of its cooperative model and its seven guiding principles, Cotton Electric goes the extra mile for its members, even if those miles are ice-packed. What Cotton Electric did for my grandmoth-

er that winter is what it does for all its members: treat them like family.

In those cold hours scrunched up under my warm blankets, I could still feel the chill invading my home like an alien force. I remember wondering how my poor grandmother was faring. It was so frustrating. We couldn't get to her physically, couldn't even reach out to her by phone because all of the phones in our house were dead as doormats. We learned from the radio that most roads had at least two feet of snow and some had up to four feet.

I finally fell asleep; and when I woke up the next morning, there was some sunlight outside; but, most important, the house lights were on, too. Our electricity was back on. We tried to call my grandma, and to our surprise she answered.

It turned out that during the night, a Cotton Electric crew had come to her rescue. The crew was so efficient and quick that she actually was worried sick about us back in the city. It was then I realized that being a member who gets treated like family is what makes the cooperative model so unique — people matter more than money, especially when those people are in need.

It's pretty simply, really. Cotton Electric practices what it preaches. Take, for example, a recent edition of The Current, Cotton Electric's newspaper. CEO Jennifer Meason addressed the co-op's concern for its members.

She said, "Serving members well requires balance ... the Cotton Electric board and employees strive to find the right balance as we invest cooperative resources to improve service for the membership."

When she says "service" she means more than electrical service — she means listening to and meeting members' needs in a communal way. This level of service simply does not exist in a conventional utility company. It's only possible through the power of the cooperative model.

As if speaking about my grandmother's experience, Jennifer Meason also stated, "With winter season upon us, our operations staff has a constant eye on weather ... ice predictions are increasingly accurate. This has been a great benefit for Cotton Electric as we are able to mobilize crews in advance of the storm."

This kind and caring attitude expressed by the chief executive trickles down and benefits the entire co-op. Employees of Cotton Electric always have an eye to protecting the members and keeping them safe. My grandmother will never forget the goodwill and concern that turned her lonely worries into a sense of safety and belonging.

All in all, the power of the cooperative model has allowed Cotton Electric to care for and unite the community, while treating its members like family. My grandmother is a part of this family, and, you know what? I envy her.

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Match Short-, Long-Term Goals With Right Investments

Not all investments are created equal. Some are better suited for short-term goals, while others can help you build resources for objectives far in the future. As an investor, then, one of your biggest challenges will be to match your short- and long-term goals with the appropriate investment vehicles. How should you proceed?

For starters, identify your short- and long-term goals. Your shorter-term goals will change throughout your life. When you are starting out in your career, for example, you might aspire to purchase a home in the next three to five years. Later on, though, your biggest short-term objective might be to save enough money for a long tour of Europe — without racking up credit card debt.

As for long-term goals, your biggest one likely will be to enjoy a comfortable retirement. But you may well have other

long-term plans, too, such as sending your kids to college in 10 or 15 years.

After you have a clear sense of your short- and long-term goals, you can choose the right investments to help you meet them. Let's start with the shorter-term ones. When you're saving for a down payment on a home or for an expensive European vacation, you want to make sure that a certain amount of money will be available to you at a certain time. Consequently, you may want to avoid stocks or stock-based vehicles, which will constantly fluctuate in price, because you don't want the value of your investment to be down at the moment you need the money. Instead, for short-term goals, you may want to consider a fixed-income vehicle, such as a bond, which is designed to provide regular interest payments and return your full principal upon the bond's maturity (providing the issuer

doesn't default, which, with investment-grade bonds, is generally unlikely).

For longer-term goals, such as college for your kids and a comfortable retirement for yourself, it's a different story. To achieve these goals — and especially for retirement — you generally need to accumulate as much as you can. As a result, you need investments with growth potential, which means you will need to consider stocks and stock-based instruments. As mentioned above, stocks will always fluctuate in value, and they may be worth more or less than your original investment when sold. However, building a portfolio with an investment mix that's appropriate for your risk tolerance, and that contains a reasonable amount of growth-oriented vehicles, can potentially help you overcome short-term volatility and continue making progress toward your long-term goals.

Plus, you have some attractive long-term options available. With a 529 college savings plan, you can save for college and possibly achieve tax benefits, too. And by contributing regularly to your IRA and 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored plan, you can defer taxes while spreading your dollars among a wide range of investments. But there's one thing all long-term investments have in common: You need patience and discipline to stick with them.

So, there you have some ideas on short- and long-term investing. Keeping this distinction in mind when you invest can help boost your confidence that you're making appropriate moves for all your goals.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

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Community Spotlight

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

shirt goes to the first 500 entries. A \$5 late fee will be assessed on entries after July 23.

For information and registration forms, visit thedehydrator.org.

National Day of Cowboy is July 22

Yeehaw! The National Day of the Cowboy is Saturday, July 22. Explore the wonder of the Old West during the 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. celebration inside the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway, Duncan.

Admission is free on this special day filled with plenty of family activities, music and special guests. The Heritage Center's exhibits are full of surprises, including the 4-D experience theater, the animatronic Jesse Chisholm Campfire theater and much more.

This year's event will highlight the 150th anniversary of the Chisholm Trail. Special guests Cowboys at Heart Band and two Oklahoma children's book authors: Stella Dutton, "Pinto the Chisholm Pony" and Kelly Poland, "Oklahoma Prairie Tales."

For information, visit OnTheChisholmTrail.com or call 580-252-6692.

CTHC hosts Michael Lasser Trio

As part of the yearlong celebration of the Chisholm Trail's 150th anniversary, the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center will host a Broadway-style revue of songs about the West. The Michael Lasser Trio will offer narrations and performances at 2:30 p.m. July 23 at the Simmons Center in Duncan.

The trio will discuss the history behind songs such as "I'm Going Back to Oklahoma," a 1912 classic by Van Alstyne and Williams; or "Surrey With the Fringe on Top," written by Rodgers and Hammerstein in 1943.

Tickets are available at the Heritage Center, 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway. For information, call 580-252-6692 or send an email to info@onthechisholm-trail.com.

Farmers Market open twice weekly

Lawton Farmers Market is open from 7:30 a.m. to noon on Saturdays from April through October at the Comanche County Fairgrounds, 920 SW Sheridan Road. They open on Wednesdays during peak growing seasons.

In addition to local seasonal produce, expect to see specialty foods such as jams, jellies, salsas, baked goods, wine, freshly roasted coffee beans, as well as hand-made soap, herbs, plants, eggs, beef and an assortment of handcrafted items and food concessionaires.

For information, visit Lawton Farmers Market on Facebook.

Dehydrator Bike ride set for July 30

The 28th annual Dehydrator is a bicycle ride with varied mile routes. Riders leave at 7 a.m. July 29 from the Simmons Center in Duncan.

Entry fees are \$30 per person, \$45 per tandem team, non-refundable. A free T-

Old Settlers Picnic begins Aug. 2

The Old Settlers Annual Picnic will be at Humphrey Park in Velma. Festivities kick off with a ranch rodeo at 7:30 p.m. Aug. 2. Activities will continue through Aug. 5.

A rodeo will be held at 7:30 each night. Team roping slack begins at 9 a.m. Aug. 3 and 4, and steer tripping is at 1 p.m. Aug. 4. The final day begins with a parade at 11 a.m., rodeo at 1 p.m.

Admission is free to all events, including the dance featuring a live band Friday and Saturday nights.

For information, call Chad Cowan at 580-444-3726.

Fiesta in Fuqua is Aug. 5

Fiesta in Fuqua is a free, fun-filled day in the park for school-aged children featuring opportunities to exercise and be immunized. Cotton Electric's popular Energy Bike will be among the featured activities.

After completing activities, kids receive a package of school supplies.

Fun begins at 8 a.m. and runs through 11:30 on Aug. 5 at the park on U.S. Highway 81 in Duncan. All children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Those wishing to receive immunizations must have shot records with them.

For information, call New Life Church at 580-736-4455.

Lawton Rangers Rodeo runs Aug. 9-12

More than 400 top cowboys and cowgirls are expected to compete in the Lawton Rangers Rodeo set for Aug. 9-12 at L.O. Ranch Arena, 2004 SE 60th Street in Lawton. Featured events include barrel racing, tie-down roping, team roping, steer wrestling, bareback and saddle bronc riding and bull riding.

Gates open at 6:30 p.m. each night and Grand Entry begins at 7:30. Admission is \$5 a carload on Wednesday, for as many as can be safely loaded in a vehicle. Reduced price admission on Thursday and Friday and full price admission on Saturday. Tickets can be purchased online at EZTicketLive.com. Other information at LawtonRangers.com.

Walk to End Alzheimer's is Aug. 26

Come join us at the Walk to End Alzheimer's of Southwest Oklahoma and smash our fundraising goal of \$50,000. We're almost halfway there!

The party starts at 7:30 a.m. Aug. 26 in Elmer Thomas Park. The 1.5-mile Walk begins at 9.

Registration is open for teams and people who wish to join a team or walk as an individual. To sign up online, go to www.swokwalk.org.

For information, call Paula Huckabaa at 580-699-2877 or send an email to swokwalk@alz.org.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Kim Kunze said she made a new friend during a recent CAMPING TRIP at Lake Thunderbird. She said the little fellow and his friends would come around during meals and even enjoyed some S'mores. Kim is a Cotton Electric member and lives east of Lawton.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for August is ME AND MY PET. 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.

CTHC explores cowboy tech

Ever wonder how chuck wagons carry all that equipment? Or why a cowboy uses certain tools? Answers can be found at "Technology of the West: Cowboy Tools of the Trade," a special exhibition running through Aug. 15 at Chisholm Trail Heritage Center in Duncan.

This exhibit explores the development of chuck wagons and the essential role they played on the cattle trail. Invented in 1866 by Charles Goodnight, the chuck wagon was built to serve as a working, moving kitchen and gathering spot for the nightly cowboy camp.

The chuck wagon is just one of many tools discussed during this summer exhibit celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Chisholm Trail.

Located just north of the Simmons Center at 1000 Chisholm Trail Parkway in Duncan, the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Cotton Electric members can present a Co-op Connections Card to get \$1 off the admission price, per card per visit.

More Community Spotlight on Page 6



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Students representing Cotton Electric at Youth Power Energy Camp included, from left, Braeden Jones, Kanyn Allen, Nalia Volz-Tavai, Kinley Rendon, Bailor Harris and David Leveille.

Area eighth-graders get energized by Youth Power Energy Camp

By Karen Kaley

Six lucky eighth-graders from across the service area represented Cotton Electric Cooperative at Youth Power Energy Camp May 30 through June 2.

Students selected to represent Cotton Electric at this year’s camp included Kanyn Allen, Kinley Rendon and Bailor Harris, all students at Comanche Middle School; and Braeden Jones, David Leveille and Nalia Volz-Tavai, all students at Geronimo.

Youth Power Energy Camp is designed to help students develop their leadership skills, have summertime fun and, at the same time, learn about one of rural America’s most important industries – rural electrification.

While at camp, the delegates attended sessions on leadership, electric safety and potential careers available at rural electric cooperatives. The campers elected directors, which included Kinley Rendon and Bailor Harris, to represent their districts during camp. The elected Board of Directors interviewed and ‘hired’ a manager and operated a coke and candy cooperative.

Teens from all over Oklahoma spent four days at Canyon Camp near Red Rock Canyon east of Hinton. At Energy Camp, which is sponsored by Oklahoma’s electric cooperatives, students learned first-hand the world of electric co-ops through demonstrations by electric crews. Campers had opportunities to climb a pole and

ride in a bucket truck. Other activities included nature hikes, games and other outings.

“We had a terrific time at the 2017 camp,” said Stacy Howeth, OAEC Member Services Director and camp director. “The kids were very respectful and seemed to really appreciate the opportunity to attend this year’s camp.”

Comments from Cotton’s representatives confirmed the appreciation:

Kinley Rendon: “I loved getting to be on the board of directors and I loved my district.”

Bailor Harris: “I had a good time and really had fun.”

Braeden Jones: “I understand what a co-op actually is now. There’s a lot more to a co-op than what I thought.”

Nalia Volz-Tavai: “Learning about electricity was a great experience! I hope you keep this program going.”

Kanyn Allen: “This camp is a great way to learn about co-ops and energy. Also, it has beautiful scenery.”

David Leveille: “It was a great time. I met a lot of new people ... possibly lifelong friends.”

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VFDs get checks

Some 140 fire departments from all over the state helped battle the Northwest Oklahoma Complex fires that devastated much of the Oklahoma Panhandle in March. Recently, American Farmers and Ranchers Insurance presented \$1,500 checks to each department involved in fighting those fires. Local fire departments

received checks during a dinner and meeting sponsored by Rochell Insurance Agency of Comanche. Departments represented include: Loco, Velma, Empire, Meridian, Comanche and Corum. Also pictured are representatives from Rochell Insurance and Yogi Cole from the Oklahoma State Insurance Commissioner's Office.

Community Spotlight

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 Roger Noland at 580-591-6826.

Final summer car cruise is Aug. 18

Cruising down Main Street in Duncan is a time-honored tradition that has continued during Summer 2017. The Aug. 18 cruise will celebrate "Summer's Last Blast."

For information about the cruises, call Main Street Duncan at 580-252-8696 or visit the Main Street Duncan website or follow Main Street Duncan on Facebook and Twitter.

'Vibrant Violin' opens LPO season

Opener for Lawton Philharmonic, "The Vibrant Violin," is one of three "Stop and Smell the Music" performances planned for the 2017-18 season.

Lawton favorite and Philadelphia Orchestra Concertmaster David Kim returns to play one of his favorites, The

Bruch Violin Concerto. Mozart's mystical overture to The Magic Flute and Schumann's picturesque "Rhenish" Symphony complete the program.

Performance begins at 8 p.m. Aug. 26 in McMahon Memorial Auditorium, 801 NW Ferris Avenue, Lawton.

Tickets may be purchased by calling 580-531-5043 or visiting LawtonPhil.com.

WMASCC offers weekly activities

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

Potluck dinners, games and TV are offered every Monday from 6 to 10 p.m. Games, quilting, yoga and Tai Chi are offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

A dance is held each Friday. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., dancing begins at 7.

For information about other activities, visit WichitaMountainSeniors.org.

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

Duncan Chapter of Blind meets monthly

Duncan Chapter of the Blind meets at 1:30 p.m. on the third Saturday of each month at New Hope Baptist Church, 200 S. 42nd Street. This is an opportunity for those who are visually impaired or blind and their caregivers to learn about the availability of services and equipment such as white cane training and large lighted magnifiers. The group also provides information about free access to an extensive library of audio books.

For information about the group or to arrange free transportation to the monthly meeting, call Jerri Gay at 580-252-6404.

Cattle Trails Wheat, Stocker Cattle Conference is Aug. 1 in Lawton

Oklahoma and Texas are famous for their cattle heritage, a large part of which is the cattle trails.

Cattle drives in the late 1800s moved millions of head of cattle from central and south Texas, through western Oklahoma, to the railheads in Kansas and in some cases as far north as Montana. Two of the more famous cattle trails were the Chisholm Trail and the Great Western Trail.

The Chisholm Trail started in central Texas and crossed the Red River northwest of Nacogdoches, Texas. It moved up through central Oklahoma near the towns of Waurika, Duncan and Oklahoma City, ending at the railheads in Kansas.

The Great Western Trail began near Bandera, Texas, and moved cattle through central Texas passing east of Abilene. The trail crossed into Oklahoma at the historic

Doan's Crossing near Vernon, Texas, and proceeded through western Oklahoma to its conclusion near Dodge City, Kansas.

The land area between these two cattle trails still record cattle movements. Today, it is either in the mode of cow-calf operations or stocker cattle movements. This area is also the home of the Cattle Trails Wheat and Stocker Cattle Conference.

The Conference is a joint effort between Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The annual conference includes up-to-date information on topics that will influence profits.

In effect, the conference assists wheat and stocker cattle producers from southern Oklahoma

and north Texas in driving their operations to profits.

The conference alternates between Oklahoma and Texas each year. In 2017, the conference will be held Aug. 1 at the Comanche County Fairgrounds Annex, 920 South Sheridan in Lawton.

Registration is \$25 per participant. This will include a noon meal, break refreshments, and materials of the topics discussed. Pre-registration is encouraged for an accurate meal count.

Owners and operators interested in attending should contact the local County Extension office. Information is also available by calling 580-255-0546 or sending an email to marty.new@okstate.edu.

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2nd Annual Chisholm Trail Ram Prairie ProRodeo Circuit 2017 Domino Tournament Fund Raiser

WHEN: August 12, 2017
WHERE: Stephens County Fair and Expo Center
DIRECTIONS: 2002 South 13th, Duncan, Oklahoma. South end of town.

ENTRY FEE: \$5.00 Per Player
REGISTRATION TIME: 8:00 am - 9:30 am
PLAY BEGINS: 10:00 am

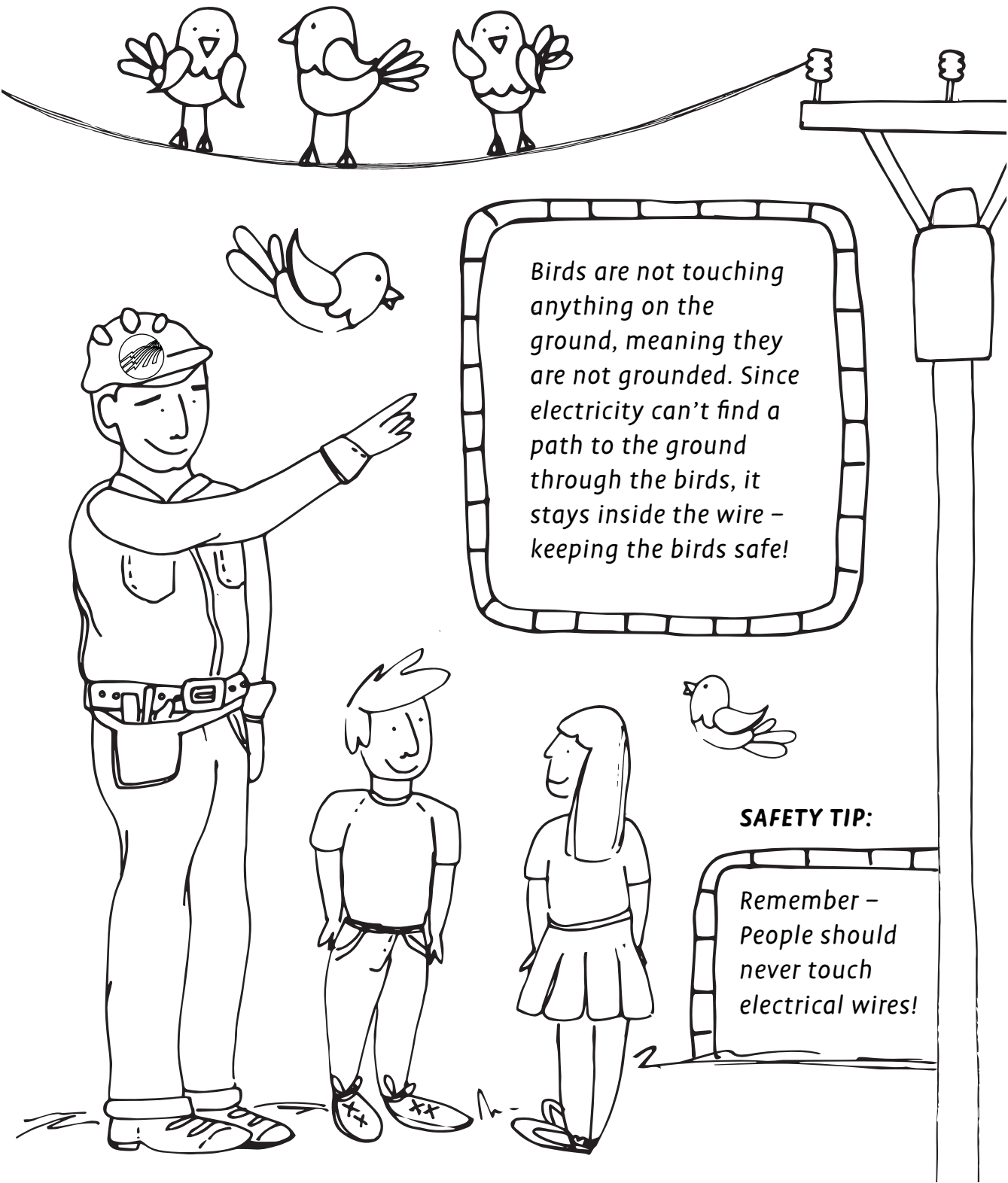
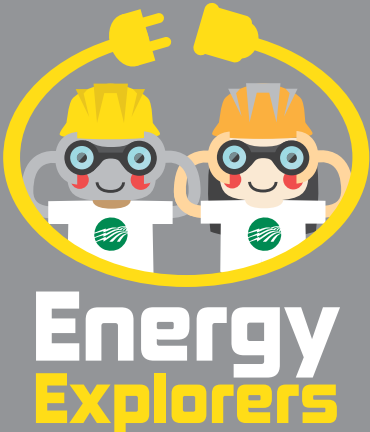
1st Place - Trophies + \$300 Prize (Split)
2nd Place - \$200 Prize (Split)
There will be a Consolation Tournament.

The Chisholm Trail Ram Prairie ProRodeo Circuit Committee fundraisers support expenses for our October PRCA District Finals as well as the Stephens County Youth Shelter and DRH Cancer Center.
For additional information, contact Garry & Cathy Jackson @ 580-467-6076 or 580-512-7859

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ACROSS
1. Type of ion
5. __ N' Bake
10. At all times
14. __ Triad: fictional cult
15. Spiked revolving disk
16. Swiss river
17. Bleat
18. Finnish lake
19. Spanish cubist Juan
20. Consumer
22. No seats available
23. Arrive
24. Upstate NY city
27. Team's best pitcher
30. Follows sigma
31. Consume
32. Congressman
35. Spider's territory
37. Conclusion
38. Female parent
39. Instruments
40. __-bo: exercise
41. Jewish spiritual leader
42. Oil cartel
43. In support of
44. More creepy
45. Color of blood
46. ' __ death do us part
47. Radio finder (abbr.)
48. Promotions
49. Songs
52. Tony winner Daisy
55. Not just "play"
56. Affected with rabies
60. Formal group of like-minded people
61. Hold valuables
63. Male admirer
64. Actress Lucy
65. Prevents the fermentation of
66. Furniture
67. Long, winding ridge
68. Cover with drops
69. Major European river

DOWN
1. Greek goddess of youth
2. Early kingdom in Syria
3. Fortifying ditch
4. Walk into
5. Island state __ Lanka
6. Japan's most populous island
7. Mindful of
8. Fuel
9. NY Giants' Manning
10. Very willing
11. Linear unit
12. Guitarist Clapton
13. Semitic letter
21. Habitual repetitions
23. Soak
25. Taxi
26. Small amount
27. A theatrical performer
28. 2-door car
29. __ and flowed
32. Arabic female name
33. Implant within
34. Groups of two
36. College athletic conference
37. Body part
38. Disfigure
40. Accept
41. Allude to
43. Type of tree
44. Doctor of Education
46. Pearl Jam's first album
47. Flower cluster
49. Heavy cavalry sword
50. Arabian Peninsula desert
51. Marten
52. Type of sound
53. Expression of grief
54. Liberian tribal people
57. Wizards' shooting guard Bradley
58. Metrical foot
59. Mislead knowingly
61. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
62. Midway between south and southwest

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The team of Ross Hutson, Jeff Jones, Jeff Elroy and Brent Bostick, representing City Mart Energy, placed first with a score of 56 in the Championship Flight in the 2017 CECF Summer Classic.

First place in A Flight went to the team of Gerard Parker, Dennis Landham, Jeff Simpson and Austin Partida. Representing Generac and Smith-Dressler, the team scored a 64 in the 2017 CECF Summer Classic.

The team of Scott Tabah, Tommy Taylor, Sean Cowen and Cory Smith, representing Comanche Nation Entertainment, was second in the Championship Flight of the 2017 CECF Summer Classic with a score of 56.

The First Farmers Bank team composed of Houston Scott, Kyle Waid, Carter Waid and Dan Middleton placed second in the A Flight of the 2017 CECF Summer Classic with a score of 65.

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Golf tourney draws 24 teams

A warm and breezy morning and early afternoon made for a pleasant outing when 95 golfers turned out for the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation Summer Classic on June 12 at The Territory Golf and Country Club in Duncan.

The ninth year for the event drew 24 teams that were divided into two flights. Scorecard playoffs determined placings in a three-way tie at the top of the Championship Flight.

The team of Ross Hutson, Jeff Elroy, Brent Bostick and Jeff Jones, representing City Mart Energy, placed first with a score of 56 in the Championship Flight. The team boosted the result of the fundraising event by donating winnings back to Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation.

The team of Scott Tahah, Tommy Taylor, Sean Cowen and Cory Smith, representing Comanche Nation Entertainment, was second in the flight, also with a score of 56.

Third place was awarded to the team of Allen Pellerin, Dan Payton, Craig Weissman and John Beckett, representing Wells Fargo Advisors and also scoring a 56.

First place in “A” Flight went to the team of Austin Partida, Jeff Simpson, Dennis Landham and Gerard Parker. Representing Generac and Smith-Dressler, the team scored a 64.

A scorecard playoff determined the next two placings in “A” Flight. Both teams shot a 65. Second place was awarded to the First Farmers Bank team composed of Carter Waid, Dan Middleton, Kyle Waid and Houston Scott. The team of Ron Hubble, Mike Villareal, Tommy Batecherer and Bryan Hubble, representing Utility Sales Agents of Oklahoma, filled the third-place slot.

Closest to pin awards went to

Dan Payton on the fourth hole; Ross Hutson, eighth hole; Tommy Batecherer, 13th hole; and Mike Zaccardo, 17th hole.

Scott Watson won the men’s longest drive on Number 18.

“We would like to express our appreciation to the players who took time to support this great cause and to the hole sponsors and contributors who continue to help make the tournament a success,” said Bryce Hooper, vice president of marketing and subsidiary services for Cotton Electric.

“We would also like to thank Russ Davies and his staff at The Territory for having the course in excellent shape and always going out of their way to take care of our tournament participants,” Hooper said.

Proceeds are expected to exceed \$11,000. Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation will distribute proceeds to organizations and individuals in need.

ROW update

Vegetation control efforts will continue through growing season

Cotton Electric’s Right-of-Way program is a proactive effort to ensure quality power delivery. Aggressive and preventive vegetation management is a good value to the co-op’s members from a service and an economic perspective. Keeping trees away from power lines is also a matter of safety.

Scott Crew, vegetation management coordinator for Cotton Electric, oversees an in-house crew and several contract crews in the year-round effort to clear trees and prevent regrowth.

He said all tree-clearing crews make every effort to contact land and home owners in person as they move into an area. In some cases, they will leave bright-colored door hangers either at the house or tied to a gate post.

“Please call the number on the hanger or call me at 580-875-4224. Plan to leave a message,” he said, noting that he is likely to be out on the job.

After trees are cleared, crews return to the area at regularly scheduled intervals to apply a specially formulated herbicide that will prevent tree growth while protecting grasses. Warm weather has encouraged the growing season, and spraying to control new tree growth will continue through mid-September, weather permitting.

During the remainder of the summer, clearing crews are working in these areas:

NRS of Vinita is completing work on lines extending from the Geronimo substation. Their next focus will be lines extending from the Hulen substation.

NRS has another crew working on lines extending from the Comanche substation. The lines are in Stephens, Jefferson and Cotton counties and the project could last well into the summer.

Family Tree Service is working with Cotton’s engineering department to clear trees for future construction projects.

Cotton’s vegetation management crews will work with district linemen on ROW clearing throughout the service area.

Scott Crew said his crews are always looking for land and home owners in need of free untreated wood chips. Because these chips are untreated, it is not recommended to use them next to a structure.

Chips will be delivered to members nearest the day’s work location. Work crews will deliver wood chips only to members they can reach by phone and whose location is nearest the day’s work. There is no guarantee a member will receive wood chips at any particular time.

Leave a message at 580-875-4224 to have your name added to the list of members willing to take wood chips.

Second-quarter CECF grants announced

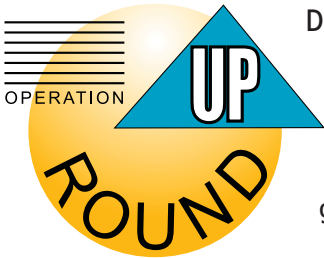
Pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters – set enough of them aside on a regular basis, and the coins add up to dollars. That’s how Operation Round Up works.

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

The funds are pooled and administered by the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation, a board of directors that meets quarterly to consider grant applications. The board consists of Jennifer Meason, the co-op’s CEO; Ronnie Bohot, 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 June to review 11 grant applications. Grants totaling \$15,681.00 will be distributed to six of the applicants. Second-quarter grants include:

- Cameron University Foundation: A \$5,000 CECF grant will support a STEM enrichment activity for middle-school girls.



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

- Chisholm Trail Heritage Center Association: A \$500 CECF grant will support educational outreach to students within a 100-mile radius of the Duncan facility.
- Empire Elementary School: A \$4,181 CECF grant will replace front stage curtains in the cafeteria.
- Horace Mann and Plato elementary schools: A \$500 CECF grant will provide counseling materials for K-5 students.
- Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma: A \$2,500 CECF grant will provide support food for school children in the Cotton Electric service area.
- Temple Volunteer Fire Department: A \$3,000 CECF grant will purchase a pump for a brush truck.

Download CECF grant applications at cottonelectric.com.

Deadline for third-quarter 2017 grant applications is Aug. 23.

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Cotton Electric Co-op members get extra relief by presenting their Co-op Connections Card when getting prescriptions filled at participating pharmacies.

In June 2017, members used their cards at pharmacies in the CEC service area when filling 84 prescriptions not covered by insurance. A total of \$2,601.80 was discounted for an average savings of \$30.97 per use.

The total savings since the program's inception in April 2008 has been \$629,667.

The card is free to all members and can be obtained by calling 580-875-3351.

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*Annual Percentage Yield is effective March 2017 and is subject to change without notice. Minimum to open account is \$100. Rate Tiers as follows: 2.00% APY applies to balances of \$0.00 to \$25,000; 1.00% APY to balances of \$25,000.01 to \$50,000 and 0.10% APY to balance over \$50,000 if qualifications are met each cycle. If qualifications are not met 0.10% APY applies to all balances. Rates may change after the account is opened. Fees may reduce earnings. Statement cycle requirements of 12 debit card transactions, one recurring direct deposit or electronic payment and statements are required to qualify for APY; Statement cycle requirement of 12 debit card transaction is required to qualify for ATM fee refunds up to \$12. Cash reward will be paid on the last day of the statement cycle upon meeting requirement of opening a new consumer savings, money market or loan account with us. Certain restrictions may apply. Contact us for full details.



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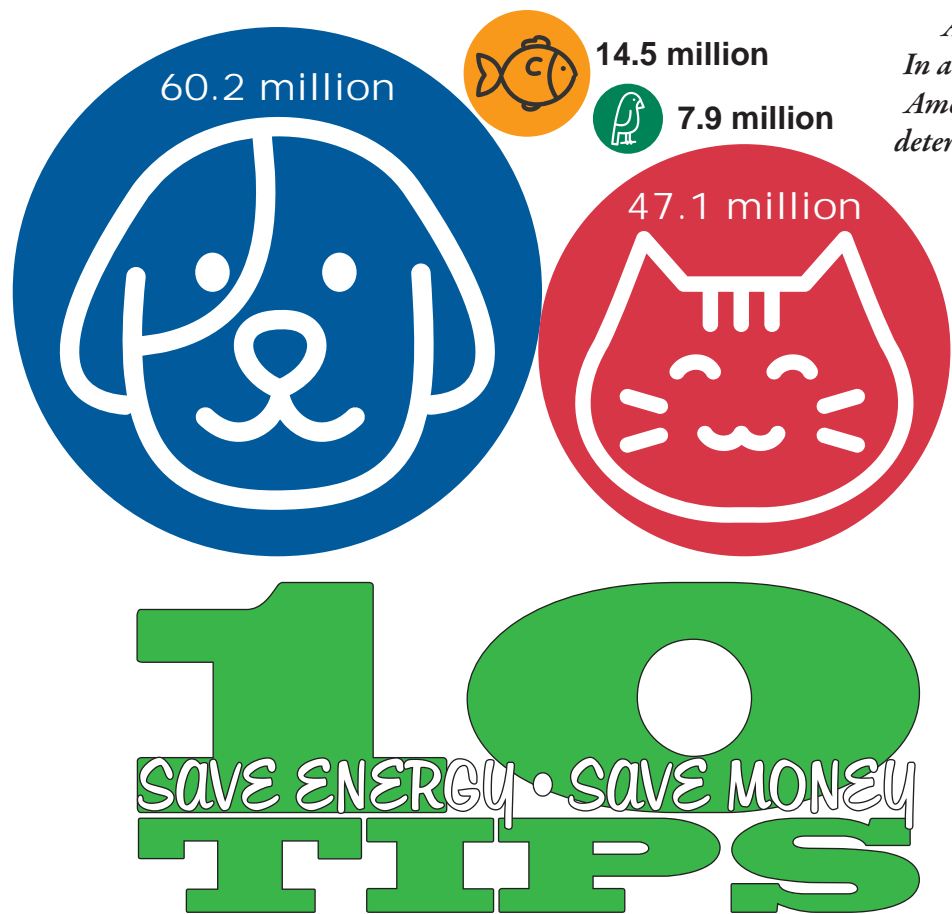
Check with experts to determine the optimum temperature. There isn't much wiggle room, but make sure the temperature is properly adjusted. Shifting down a degree or two can make a significant differ-

Heat can be retained in a fish tank in much the same way as it is in a home – with insulation. Heat loss can be minimized through the use of polystyrene insulation behind and underneath the aquarium, and on the inside of outer walls.

Although these items need to run non-stop, correctly sizing a filter for the fish tank can save energy use and cost. Choose energy-efficient equipment to yield substantial savings in the long and sometimes even short run.

*Sources: Central Florida
Aquarium Society and algone.com*

Americans have millions of pets. In a recent survey of pet owners, the American Pet Products Association determined 60.2 million households include one or more dogs, 47.1 million have cats, and 14.5 million keep fish. There are birds in 7.9 million homes.



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3. Drain 1-2 gallons from bottom of water heater each year to reduce sediment build up.
4. Fix dripping faucets.
5. Install heat traps on hot and cold water lines when it's time to replace your water heater
6. Insulate exposed hot water lines
7. Limit showers to 5-7 minutes
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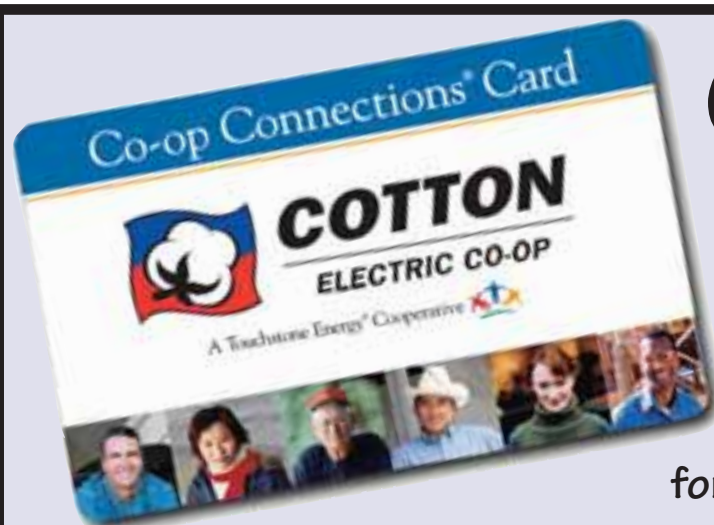
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for an average savings of \$30.85 per use. The card is free to all members and can be obtained by calling 580-875-3351.

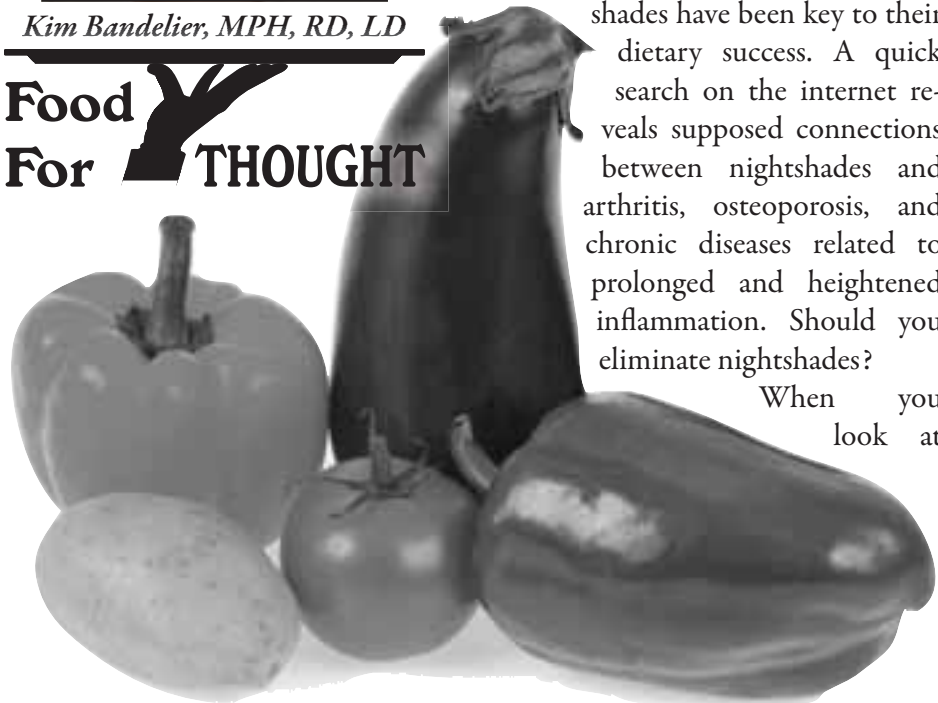
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Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT



Are nightshades a nightmare for health?

Nightshades are a class of flowering plants, most of which are not edible. Edible nightshades common in a Western diet include eggplant, potatoes (except sweet potatoes), tomatoes, and peppers both sweet and spicy, as well as seasonings made from peppers. Celebrities including Gwyneth Paltrow, Kate Moss, and Tom Brady and Gisele Bundchen claim eliminating nightshades have been key to their dietary success. A quick search on the internet reveals supposed connections between nightshades and arthritis, osteoporosis, and chronic diseases related to prolonged and heightened inflammation. Should you eliminate nightshades?

When you look at scientific studies, the only ones that allude to a negative relationship between nightshades and health are a few case studies – individual accounts of a situation where eliminating nightshades, along with eliminating other foods, helped alleviate an ailment. Research has failed to conclude that nightshades are harmful or require elimination from the diet.

So why all the concern?

Nightshades contain a chemical compound called solanine, an alkaloid that in very large doses can be toxic. The amounts in foods, including nightshades, are very small, and it is poorly absorbed and rapidly eliminated from the body.

Solanine is also found in blueberries, okra, huckleberries, artichokes, sugar beets, apples and cherries – not exactly a list of foods that kill. More importantly, these fruits and vegetables contain many compounds that keep us healthy.

Could you as an individual benefit from eliminating nightshades from your diet? Only if you demonstrate that consuming a specific nightshade causes gastrointestinal distress.

For example, many people experience gas or stomach discomfort after eating bell peppers. Some people have demonstrated an allergic reaction to potatoes, tomatoes, and peppers. As we age, foods we used to be able to eat with no side effects may begin causing digestion issues.

Monitoring your symptoms and measuring your response to eliminating the food and then reintroducing the food is the only way to tell if you should avoid a nightshade or any other food. There are other fruits and vegetables you can consume that will provide the same nutritional benefits without the side effects you experience.

Seek medical advice from qualified health professionals, not celebrities or self-proclaimed gurus without credentials. Qualified health professionals can help you safely evaluate your entire medical history and environmental factors such as food and exercise and recommend science-based strategies to improve your health.

Be wary of individual accounts of eliminating certain foods or classes of foods. Just because it worked for them doesn't mean it will work for you.

Healthy summer treats make for smart, happy kids

(Family Features) Parents know raising healthy and successful children means more than encouraging learning and praising positive behavior. It also means instilling smart habits from the earliest years to create lifelong practices that promote overall health and good nutrition.

If getting your kids on board seems like a daunting challenge, try these tips from the fresh produce experts at ALDI for bringing more fruit, veggies and other healthy foods to your family's table without busting your budget:

One smart cookie. For "cookies" you can feel good about giving your kids, cut an apple to create round slices then slather the slices with their favorite nut butter (peanut, almond or cashew) and top with raisins, yogurt bites or chocolate chips.

Fresh and fruity. Swap sugary drinks for fresh, fruit-infused water. Let kids pick their favorite flavor combinations each evening and refrigerate water to infuse overnight so it's ready to enjoy the following day.

Icy sweet treats. Make your own frozen pops using ingredients like fresh fruit, yogurt or milk. Use store-

bought molds or substitute small paper cups covered with plastic wrap. Just poke sticks through the plastic to hold them in place until the mixture freezes.

Hands-on helpers. Getting kids in on the action is a great way to encourage healthier eating habits. After all, if they helped make it, it has to be good. Once all the ingredients have been sliced and diced, a recipe like these Grilled Balsamic Vegetable Pops is easy for kids to assemble. Just ask them to thread the skewers in their favorite color and flavor combinations.

It takes a village. Learning about the benefits of healthy eating can be fun, especially when you take advantage of programs in your community, such as those offered by libraries, community centers and schools. Through partnerships like the one ALDI has with Action for Healthy Kids, families and schools have increased access to nutrition education and physical activity tools that make living and eating healthy fun.

Find more tips to encourage the youngest eaters in your family to enjoy the nutritious bounties of summer at aldi.us.



Grilled Balsamic Vegetable Pops

- 4 wooden skewers
- 1 zucchini, cut into rounds
- 1 yellow pepper, chopped
- 4 mushrooms, halved
- 4 cherry tomatoes
- 1 ear sweet corn, cut into rounds
- 2 tablespoons Carlini Pure Olive Oil
- 1 teaspoon Stonemill Iodized Salt
- 1 teaspoon Stonemill Ground Black Pepper
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

Soak wooden skewers in water for 10 minutes before grilling. Heat grill to medium-high (400-425 F.) Pierce vegetables with skewers and drizzle with oil. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, and place on hot grill. Turn frequently to prevent burning. Vegetables should be golden and tender after 10-15 minutes. Remove from heat and drizzle with balsamic vinegar.

Recipe courtesy of Chef Alyssa, ALDI Test Kitchen

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Savory Summer Grilling

Experiment with new methods, condiments, toppings

(Family Features) There’s not much that tastes better during the summer than a meal hot off the grill. If you’re in the mood for a delicious backyard dish, try adding versatility to your grilling game with a few simple tips.

Try a new cooking method. If your usual preparation involves a basic flame, you may be surprised by all the different flavors you can evoke just by changing the method. Whether you’re using gas or charcoal, switch from standard grilling to smoking over indirect heat. You can also use seasoned wood chips with most grilling methods to build a different flavor profile.

Look for non-traditional ways to use your favorite proteins. Instead of the traditional steak or chicken on

a kabob, you can create a whole new flavor experience using smoked sausage. For example, Eckrich offers a variety of smoked sausage flavors in traditional ropes and bun-length links, all with just the right blend of seasonings for a rich, savory taste.

Explore new condiments and toppings. Ketchup, mustard and relish may be staples at the condiment station, but there’s no reason you can’t add a little something extra. Grilled onions, mushrooms and peppers are all simple and delicious ways to add flavor. Or try something entirely new, like this sweet, tangy marmalade made with bacon and onions.

Find more summer grilling ideas at Eckrich.com.



Smoked Sausage Links with Bacon and Onion Marmalade

Prep time: 10 minutes
Total time: 1 hour, 10 minutes
Servings: 6

2-3 strips bacon
1 tablespoon mustard seeds
1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
1 1/2 pounds (about 6 onions) Vidalia onions, diced
1/2 cup light brown sugar
1/4 cup cane syrup
1 package Eckrich Smoked Sausage Links (bun-length)
6 hot dog buns

Heat oven to 350 F.
Line baking sheet with parchment paper and lay strips of bacon flat. Cook until crispy, about 20-25 minutes. Chop

bacon into small pieces and set aside.

In dry pot over medium heat, toast mustard seeds until slightly browned.

Add bacon, vinegar, onions, brown sugar and cane syrup to pot. Cover, stirring occasionally to prevent burning. Cook about 20 minutes at medium-high heat. Remove pot cover and reduce to medium heat. Cook until liquid is reduced and onions are dark in color, about 50 minutes.

Oil grill and bring to medium heat. Grill sausage 12 minutes, or until heated through.

Place smoked sausage in hot dog bun and cover evenly with marmalade.

Note: Marmalade can be made in advance for easier dinner preparation and can be kept up to 2 weeks in a refrigerator or 3 months in a freezer.

Classified Ad Policy

Cotton Electric Cooperative offers many special services to its members. Among them are the classified ads in The Current. Members are entitled to two free classified ads *per membership account* per month, regardless of the number of meters on the account.

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