

The Current

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

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Cotton Electric Energy Efficiency Coordinator and Youth Tour chaperone Heath Morgan snaps a photo of Isabel Moore and Tyler Hertzler at the Martin Luther King, Jr. monument. Photo courtesy of Nicole Bode.

A journey from the classroom to the Capitol

By Carli Eubank

What started as an English class assignment turned into a unique and life-changing experience for two area high schoolers: Isabel Moore of Cache High School and Tyler Hertzler of Marlow High School. Moore and Hertzler were the winners of the 2022 Cotton Electric Youth Tour Essay Contest, made possible by the members of Cotton Electric.

Months after writing their winning essays, completing interviews and presenting speeches, Isabel and Tyler flew to Washington D.C. on June 18 for the 2022 Youth Tour. They returned home on June 23. Also representing Cotton Electric Cooperative was Energy Efficiency Coordinator Heath Morgan, who served as chaperone.

The trio, along with the other Oklahoma Youth Tour contest winners, walked over six miles each day touring many of our country's greatest monuments. These included the FDR Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, Washington Monument, and Lincoln Memorial to name a few.

Organized by the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC) since 1964, Youth Tour packs as much as sight-seeing, leadership building and fun as possible into the six-day trip.

For Moore, it was exciting to see places and sights in person that she had only seen in movies or read about in books. Some of her favorite places were Mount Vernon and the U.S. Capitol. Before coming to D.C., she looked

forward to seeing the Library of Congress. Youth Tour made that dream a reality, Moore said.

“You can't fathom how incredible all the architecture and details are in the monuments,” Moore said. “Each sight was absolutely beautiful and breathtaking.”

Hertzler checked many sights off his bucket list while on Youth Tour. When witnessing the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, he became overwhelmed with emotion.

“Watching the changing of the guard was one of the best things I have ever seen,” Hertzler said. “I wasn't watching a history video. I was able to watch the real thing before my eyes. I can't explain it.”

Touring Washington, D.C. was an incredible experience for Moore and Hertzler, but forming relationships with other Youth Tour winners from across Oklahoma made the adventures more memorable. The connections and friends Moore made, as well as forming a deep-

er understanding of our country were some of her biggest takeaways, she said.

“The whole trip was surreal,” Moore said. “It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I am really thankful.”

Youth Tour allows students to see and experience so many things that most people dream about seeing, along with deepening their American pride.



“I wasn't watching a history video. I was able to watch the real thing before my eyes. I can't explain it.” - Tyler Hertzler



“Youth Tour is a special experience that not everyone gets to do,” Hertzler said. “Words can't describe how amazing and impactful this trip was. It truly was one of the greatest things I've had the chance to do.”



Isabel Moore and Tyler Hertzler in front of the U.S. Capitol. Photo courtesy of Nicole Bode.



“It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and I am really thankful.” - Isabel Moore



Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after July 1, 2022, is \$0.02195 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$28.54 on the July bill.

June 2022 Temperature Extremes							
Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	85	63	74	16	98	71	85
2	77	60	69	17	99	68	84
3	79	64	72	18	97	75	86
4	85	63	74	19	97	74	86
5	91	70	81	20	100	73	87
6	91	73	82	21	100	74	87
7	88	71	80	22	100	70	85
8	99	68	84	23	102	73	88
9	88	67	78	24	104	77	91
10	94	67	81	25	105	69	87
11	101	74	88	26	93	72	83
12	103	69	86	27	91	67	79
13	100	69	86	28	89	66	78
14	97	76	87	29	93	60	77
15	98	77	88	30	99	59	79

Source: srh.noaa.gov/oun/
Average Daily High: 95 Average Daily Low: 70

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed Monday, September 5 for Labor Day. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on August 8, 2022.

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 TheCurrent@cottonelectric.com.

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

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More news at cottonelectric.com

From the CEO

Beat the Peak alerts this summer

June 20 marked the beginning of the summer peak period, the time of year when the demand for electricity tends to be very high. Prices are also at their highest during these hours, particularly between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Cotton Electric's peak demand during this period is a major factor that affects the overall price of power for our members. Another is the price of fuel, such as coal or natural gas, needed to generate power.

When weather and usage patterns indicate we're nearing peak demand, peak alerts are issued by our power supplier. We pass this information on to co-op members via social media, email and SmartHub Beat the Peak notices. These alerts are an



Jennifer Meason, CEO

opportunity for us to voluntarily do our part to lower demand and shift usage to avoid peak times, thus managing our power bill costs for today and for the future.

Many have asked, "why don't you just build more power plants?" Although our power supplier may need to build more generating capacity in the future, it is very expensive and increases costs for all members. Voluntary conservation measures can help postpone the need for new generating capacity by using the resources we currently have more efficiently.

Our goal is to provide members with information during these peak times so small adjustments can be made that provide savings to everyone.

I'm a member of Cotton Electric myself. On peak days, my family and I adjust the thermostat a few degrees higher so the air conditioning system doesn't run as much, postpone doing laundry until later in the evening, and set the timer on the dishwasher to either run at night or early in the morning. These are small things that are easy to do and when we do them collectively, it makes a difference.

We can also plan for the future by planting trees in spots that will shade our home during the hottest parts of summer days

(but far away from power lines), add insulation to the attic to stop the escape of conditioned air year-round, or consider reflective shingles if a roof replacement is coming up. Replacing worn weather-stripping and caulking around windows are other low-cost ways to improve energy efficiency. For more tips, see below.

As we have seen in past peak events, member participation in calls for energy conservation makes a difference that benefits us all. Please keep an eye out for Beat the Peak alerts on Cotton Electric social media sites (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) and make adjustments as your health and safety allows.

We appreciate all of you who are helping Beat the Peak!

Tips to BEAT THE PEAK

Laundry for Less
Full loads mean fewer cycles, and washers and dryers operated in the late evenings add less heat and humidity to the home. Energy can cost less outside of peak hours.

Intramural Competition
Online gaming with each active player using their own computer, gaming console and internet connection gets pricey. Play each other at home on one screen and save.

Cool off/Calm down
Turn off unnecessary lighting and electronics that generate heat, resist the urge to turn down the thermostat and remember, lower fan settings use less energy.

Countertop Convenience
Range or oven cooking can really warm up a kitchen. Microwaves, convection ovens, and toaster ovens use less energy than an oven.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know the combined use of large appliances like dishwashers, clothes dryers and washing machines account for the largest percentage of electricity use in the average U.S. home? Take small steps to save energy when using these appliances.

Only run full loads in the dishwasher, and thoroughly scrape food from dishes before loading. Dry towels and heavier cottons separate from lighter-weight clothing, and clean the lint screen after every use. Wash clothing in cold water to save energy used to heat water.

Source: Energy.gov

MISSION STATEMENT
Our mission is to safely deliver reliable and affordable power, provide excellent member service, and improve the quality of life in the communities we serve.

	2022	2021
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$7,131,290	\$5,150,795
Cost of Purchased Power	5,331,522	3,520,542
Taxes	116,114	99,008
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,327	968
Average Farm and Residential Bill	156	118
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,138	880
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	19,240	18,916
Miles Energized	5,229	5,211
Density Per Mile	3.68	3.63
New Service Connects YTD	193	184
Services Retired	52	73

The Current

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Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the August issue, please submit information by July 22 by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com. Only events occurring after Aug. 8 will be published in the next issue.

Editor's Note: We recommend checking for cancellations with local sources before attending any event.

CTAC presents art workshops

Bring your creative energy to Arts Explosion, a week-long series of summer arts workshops for all ages. The workshops are hosted by the Chisholm Trail Arts Council (CTAC).

Students will learn different art disciplines and mediums throughout the week, including pottery, sculpture, watercolor, story boarding and acrylic painting.

Children's classes are for students who have completed third, fourth or fifth grades. Classes for teens include students who have completed sixth grade or higher. Adult classes take place in the evening. A limited amount of scholarships are available for students who qualify. Online registration is available until July 12.

The 2022 Arts Explosion is an all-day event July 18-22 at the Stephens County Expo Center. For information and updates, visit www.chisholm-trailarts.com/programs or their Facebook page, or call 580-252-4160.

World's Largest Garage Sale

Hit the citywide Annual World's Largest Garage Sale in Duncan to rake in the bargains. Retail stores will have plenty of sales and good deals. This citywide event is July 15 and 16. For more information, visit www.visitduncan.org.

National Day of the Cowboy

Join the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center at their annual National Day of the Cowboy celebration. Free events include live music, special guests, basket weaving demonstrations and more. The celebration is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on July 23 at the Chisholm Trail Heritage Center, 2150 Chisholm Trail Pkwy. in Duncan. For more information, call 580-252-6692.

Chattanooga Youth Cheer Clinic

Incoming pre-k through 6th graders can show their spirit at the Chattanooga Youth Cheer Summer Clinic. Registration ends July 13 and there is a \$35 fee. The clinic is from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. July 27-29 at Chattanooga High School gym.

The Dehydrator rolls on

Bike through the hills of southwest Oklahoma at The Dehydrator bicycling event to benefit the Duncan High School band. This annual event, now in its 32nd year, has fun, non-competitive bike rides ranging from 10 to 80 miles through the Stephens County countryside. Food and drinks will be available for participants. The event will begin at 7 a.m. on July 30 at the Simmons Center, 800 Chisholm Trail Pkwy. in Duncan. For more information and to register, visit www.thedehydrator.org.

Rodeo time in Lawton

The 84th Annual Lawton Rangers Rodeo will take place Aug. 10-13 at LO Ranch Arena, 2004 SE 60th St. in Lawton. Wednesday, Aug. 10 is "carload night." Pack the whole family in the car and everyone gets in for \$5. Military Appreciation night is Friday, Aug. 12. To purchase tickets in ad-

vance, visit www.lawtonrangers.com.

Rush Springs annual festivities

Join the celebration at the annual Rush Springs Watermelon Festival and Rodeo. Taste the local crop of watermelon, ride carnival rides, compete in contests, enjoy live entertainment and more. The annual Rush Springs Rodeo will take place on Thursday and Friday, Aug. 11 and 12, with a parade following at 5 p.m. on Friday evening. This popular festival is on Saturday, Aug. 13. The festival will take place at Jeff Davis Park on Main Street, and the rodeo events will be at Rusty Acres Arena. For more information, call 580-476-3277.

Stroll through summer savings

Enjoy a day of shopping at the Duncan Main Street Summer Stroll. Local shops on Main Street will open their doors for everyone to see new fall seasonal offerings, in-store specials, live demonstrations and more. The events begin Aug. 5 through 6 during Oklahoma's tax-free weekend on Duncan's Main Street. For more information, visit www.mainstreetduncan.net.

Fairy-Tale Hangout

Have story time with your favorite character at the Lawton Parks and Recreation Department's Fairy-Tale Hangout. Participants will get to read stories and attend a craft session. This program takes place from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Mondays and Wednesdays at the Owens Multi-Purpose Center in Lawton. For more information, contact Aaliyah.Climes@lawtonok.gov or call 580-581-3483.

New name, same mission

The Oklahoma Parkinson's Association is now the Oklahoma Parkinson's Alliance. Same Mission. Same people. New name! Visit www.oklahomapa.org, to learn more about the name change. The Oklahoma Parkinson's Alliance continues to "inspire hope and transform lives" as the premier resource for Parkinson's disease support throughout Oklahoma.

Regular patient and care provider support groups in Lawton and Duncan, will not meet until September.

Our other programs will continue as scheduled. The LOUD Crowd® speech therapy program for Parkinson's patients at both Duncan Regional Hospital (DRH) and Southwestern Medical Center (SWMC) will meet every Tuesday and Wednesday, respectively. These programs are free and require no RSVP.

If interested in the SPEAK OUT! individual speech therapy program, please call DRH at 580-251-8460 or SWMC at 580-351-2469 to schedule an appointment.

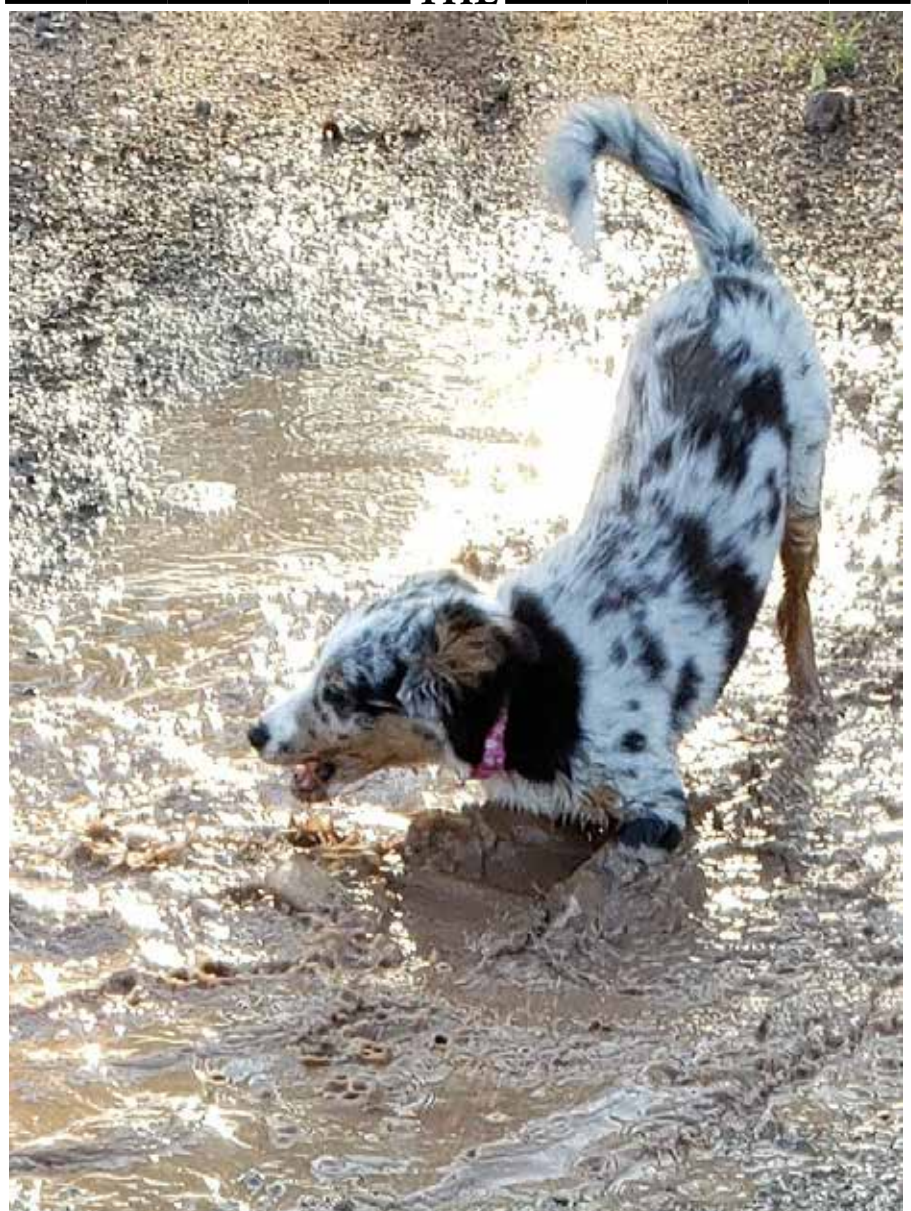
Spin Class for Parkinson's is held Monday and Wednesday at 1 p.m. and Rock Steady Boxing is conducted on Tuesdays and Fridays at 1:30 p.m. - both at the Lawton YMCA.

Please stay tuned for the upcoming Rock Steady Boxing at the Simmons Center in Duncan.

Food pantry open once monthly

Walters Community Food Pantry is open from 8 to 11 a.m. on the second Saturday 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 and proof of Cotton County residency. Monetary donations may be sent to Food Pantry, c/o Paul Metcalfe, 211 E. Colorado St., Walters, OK 73572.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Sophi, Cotton Electric members Paul and G.K. Doyle's dog, splashes in a puddle after a big rain.

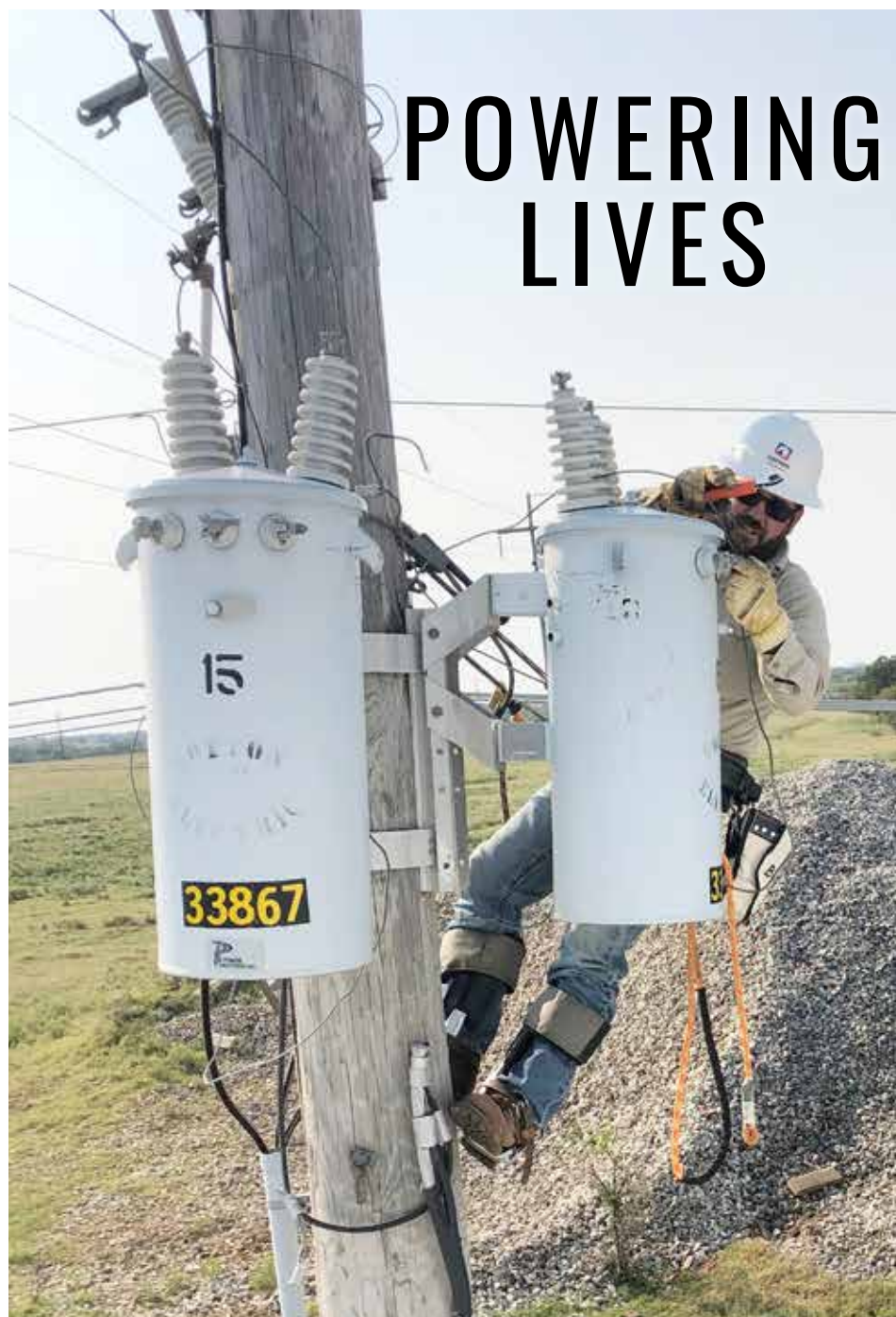
Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for August is SUNRISE, SUNSET. Entries can be emailed to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com or mailed to The Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572. Winners will receive a Cotton Electric prize package of CEC goodies.

Comanche Homecoming Powwow

Enjoy a weekend of American Indian activities as the rich traditions of the Comanche Tribe come alive at the 69th Annual Comanche Nation Homecoming Celebration. This homecoming has evolved as the longest continuous Comanche powwow since 1952. Events include traditional Native American dancers in full rega-

lia, intertribal dancing, drum groups, contests, and opportunities to honor Comanche veterans throughout the weekend. Food and craft vendors from across the country will also be available.

The event is July 15-17 at Sultan Park in Walters. For questions or more information, call 580-284-4271.



Not everyone starts their day at the same time, or in the same way. But no matter when or how, Cotton Electric Cooperative is there to help you power every moment of it.

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Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

August		September		October	
Ad Sales	July 22	Ad Sales	Aug. 19	Ad Sales	Sept. 23
Classified	July 27	Classified	Aug. 24	Classified	Sept. 28
Publish	Aug. 8	Publish	Sept. 6	Publish	Oct. 11

How to conserve energy without sacrificing comfort

Air conditioning is a welcome luxury during the dog days of summer. Few people can imagine getting through a hot summer afternoon without turning their A/C on, and that can make July and August some of the more costly months in regard to energy consumption.



Heath Morgan, Energy Efficiency Coordinator

Summer months may not seem well-suited to cutting energy consumption, but there are ways to conserve that don't require turning off the A/C.

• Reconsider the location of your thermostat. The Performance Building Institute, Inc. notes that thermostats are sensitive to heat. Thermostats located near heat-generating appliances

like lamps, televisions and computers may be fooled into thinking a home's interior is warmer than it actually is. That will keep a temperature-controlled A/C running longer and more frequently than is necessary. If necessary, move the thermostat to a part of the home where there are no electronics and appliances.

• Emphasize maintenance of the A/C unit. Even the most energy-efficient A/C unit will be forced to work harder, and consume extra energy, if it's not well-maintained. The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy notes that ENERGY STAR-certified HVAC equipment can yield annual energy savings of 10 to 30 percent. But such products must be maintained. Annual maintenance appointments with an HVAC technician can ensure the unit is clean and refrigerant levels are correct, helping it run as efficiently as possible.

• Embrace natural ways to keep a home's interior cool. Cranking the A/C is not the only way to maintain a comfortable temperature inside a home during the months of July and August. Closing curtains on especially warm days keeps the sun out and makes it easier to maintain comfortable temperatures inside without lowering the temperature on the thermostat. Avoiding the stove on hot nights and preparing cold meals or firing up the grill outside is another way to keep the house cool.

• Address insulation issues. Cracks around windows and doors affect the temperature inside the home, making it colder in winter and warmer in summer. Seal cracks around doors and windows to keep the cool air in during the summer. Keeping that air in should allow you to raise the temperature on your thermostat without compromising comfort.

Come the dog days of summer, conserving energy shouldn't need to come at the cost of comfort. Various strategies can help reduce energy consumption and keep air conditioners on.

To schedule an in-home energy evaluation, call 580-875-3351.



Transformers are no place for ads, flyers, or games

By Carli Eubank

They are everywhere: you see them on poles and on the ground - they are transformers, reducing and raising electric voltage safely and efficiently. They may seem like a harmless hang out spot or a place to post a flyer, but this piece of electric equipment could have hidden potential electrical hazards.

If a transformer seems to have damage, call Cotton Electric immediately. Most common damages to pad-mounted transformers are when they get hit with a vehicle, lawn mower or tractor. It may be tempting to move it back to its original position, but it's best to call the co-op in case any internal wiring became loose and energized the case,

said Jarrod Hooper, Cotton Electric safety and loss control coordinator.

Other potential hazards are rusting and deterioration over time and animals digging underneath the equipment and chewing on wiring. If members see any of these signs, call the co-op.

When maintenance is required overnight and a transformer has been damaged in the process, sometimes conditions require crews to come back the next day to safely transport it away, said Cody Pennington, Cotton Electric meter and transformer supervisor. If you see a damaged transformer sitting somewhere, do not go near it. Even if it doesn't seem energized, stay far away from it and report it to the co-op.

"Pad-mounted transformers are designed to be as safe as possible, but that doesn't mean there isn't some unseen issues going on inside the

transformer," said Pennington. "It's better to call and let us handle any issues instead of taking a risk with yourself or someone else."

With the weather consistently staying in triple digits, overloading transformers is another hazard. The more energy used in your home, the warmer the transformer can possibly get, Hooper said. Depending on how many houses are on one transformer, overloading one can lead to outages affecting more houses than just your own.

A sign that your transformer could be overloading is if the lights dim whenever your A/C turns on. This may not be true for every situation - other possible causes could be issues with wiring or breakers - but it's good to be aware, Pennington said.

It's important to teach kids to refrain from playing around pad-mounted transformers. The sun heats up the case to a

dangerous degree, along with the potential electrical hazards present.

When it comes to pole-mounted transformers, do not pull on guy lines connected to poles. If a pole has been hit or there are any signs of damage on the transformer, call the co-op, Hooper said.

When the co-op installs pad-mounted transformers, our engineering department can recommend aesthetically pleasing and cost-effective locations. Cotton Electric transformers come with a bright orange sticker explaining the dos and don'ts when around the equipment, including how far you should plant around it and allowing enough access for crews to safely preform maintenance, Pennington said.

If members have any concerns or questions about transformers, contact Cotton Electric at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.



Every pad-mounted transformer provided by Cotton Electric comes with an orange sticker explaining how to stay safe around the equipment. Photo by Carli Eubank.

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HOME PRICE REDUCED
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 919 Ave. D., Randlett, OK 120 x 140 Residential lots \$10,000
 1,592 sf 3 bed, 2 bath, corner lot 120 x 280 Residential lots \$15,000
 Blt 2007: 2 car garage, 1,000 sf shop All utilities available, new subdivision
 storm cellar, security system. east side of Walters near pool, tennis courts, Kidtopia, ball parks.

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CECF selects second quarter grant recipients

Even during tough economic times, it's important that Cotton Electric continues to support local communities. That's the philosophy behind Operation Round Up (ORU), a charitable program governed, funded and supported by Cotton Electric members like you.

Most Cotton Electric members participate in ORU, in which power bills are rounded up to the nearest dollar. The amount rounded up each month 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 (CECF), a board of directors that meets quarterly to consider grant applications. The board consists of Jennifer Meason, the co-op's CEO; Shan Files, president of the co-op's board of trustees; and three representatives from the Cotton Electric service area: Danny Marlett, Carter Waid and Cindy Zeltst.

The board met in June to review several grant applications. Grants totaling \$21,903 will

be distributed to 11 of the applicants. Second-quarter grant recipients are listed to the right.

The CECF board of directors meets quarterly to review and discuss applications from individuals and organizations in the area. Third-quarter applications are due August 9, 2022. The board of directors for CECF will meet again at the end of August to review applications for the quarter.

The maximum annual grant that can be approved is \$10,000 for organizations and \$2,500 for individuals.

Individual applications must include a letter of referral from a reputable service agency or non-profit organization.

Grant guidelines and applications can be downloaded at www.cottonelectric.com/grant-applications and can be submitted by email to pbhuckabaa@cottonelectric.com or by mail to 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572.



- Addington Baptist Church**
\$5,000 for playground fencing
- Chisholm Trail Heritage Center Association**
\$375 for creative writing program
- Community Presbyterian**
\$1,978 for refrigerators
- Douglass Community Center Org., Inc.**
\$2,349.96 for industrial fans for gym
- Duncan Area Literacy Council**
\$1,500 for children's books
- Duncan Community Residence, Inc.**
\$2,041.01 for replacement of insulation
- Geronimo Volunteer Fire Department**
\$3,161.04 for 4-gas monitor and thermal imaging cameras
- Giddy Up 'N Go**
\$1,247.99 for laptop, software and printer
- Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma**
\$2,500 for food for kids programs in CEC area
- United Way of Stephens County, Inc.**
\$750 for children's books
- Walters Public Schools**
\$1,000 for folding tables and chairs

OKDHS offers help with energy bills



The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally-funded program through Oklahoma

Department of Human Services (OKDHS). It provides payment assistance to approximately 131,000 Oklahoma low-income households

each year to help them meet the cost of home energy.

One program within LIHEAP is the Summer Cooling Program. This program provides assistance through one payment per year, per household, during summer months. Applications opened June 28 and will be accepted until all funds are used.

Eligibility requirements for LIHEAP are based on income, household size, available re-

sources and responsibility for payment of home energy cost. Everyone who resides under the same utility service address must apply together. If you or anyone in your home belong to a federally-recognized American Indian tribe, you may apply for energy assistance through OKDHS or with your tribe, but you cannot receive assistance from both during the same Federal Fiscal Year.

To qualify, you must

meet each of the following requirements:

- Be responsible for payment of home energy (households are not eligible for LIHEAP if the utility bill is paid directly to the provider by someone who does not reside at the residence).
- Be a U.S. citizen or legally admitted for permanent residence.
- Meet countable resource standards including cash, checking or savings accounts, certificates of deposits,

cryptocurrency, stocks, or bonds.

• Meet specific income guidelines that vary according to household size and fuel type.

When applying, have the most recent cooling bill information for their home and utility supplier, along with their ID, social security number and verification of income.

For more information and to apply, visit www.okdhslive.org or call 405-522-5050.

Those big moments in life?

They have a way of changing everything, including your need for life insurance. Together we can make sure you have the right coverage. **Let's chat.**

Jeff Baumann
125 N. Broadway | Walters, OK
580.875.3290

Dodge Pool
502 SW 11th St. | Lawton, OK
580.353.5173

Terri Sheffield
117 S. Main St. | Waurika, OK
580.228.2941

Annelise Carpenter
502 SW 11th St. | Lawton, OK
580.353.5173

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- FLASHLIGHT
- BATTERIES
- GENERAC WHOLE-HOME GENERATOR

- 22kW and 24kW Generac generator packages (8-10 week lead time)
- Automatic transfer switch, battery and equipment pad
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Staying safe in the summertime fun



Summertime is here. Days are filled with cannonballs into the pool and scenic routes to your next adventure. While making memories, safety needs to be a priority. Cotton Electric and Safe Electricity want members to stay safe while enjoying summer fun by following these electrical safety tips.

Camping Safety

Camping is an outdoor leisure activity many people take advantage of during the summer, but have you considered electric safety?

A situation in which an RV frame is electrically charged is often referred to as "hot skin." Improper wiring or connection, no grounding, reversed polarity, and loose or worn outlets are just some of the potential causes. If a hot skin hazard exists, simply opening the door or coming into contact with the hitch can cause shock, electrocution or other injuries.

To help prevent hot skin, your RV's electrical system needs to be regularly tested and main-

tained. A professional electrician can make sure the wiring in your RV is safe.

Perform a visual inspection of cords, plugs, and outlets. If there are cracked or frayed cords or broken or discolored plugs or outlets, do not use them. Have them replaced or repaired. Make sure RVs are equipped with fire extinguishers as well as permanently installed carbon-monoxide and fire detectors.

Always use electrical cords rated for the use they will get. Never use an indoor extension cord outdoors. Outdoor cords will be labeled "For Outdoor Use" and are often orange or green. Make sure the power demand of the appliances that will be used does not exceed the cord's rating. When plugging your RV into a campground power pedestal, use a heavy duty, four-wire cord with a grounding wire, not an extension cord.

Know the amperage your RV draws and the amperage available. If you try to draw more amperage than is avail-

able, you can cause serious damage to the electrical source and your RV. You could even start a fire. Also make sure you know where your electrical panel and major switches are.

Before using a campground hook-up, do a visual inspection of the area. If a campground hook-up appears to be damaged, request another spot. In addition, be sure to have the proper cord. Never plug more than one RV into a single hook-up. As with a generator, plug your RV in before turning on appliances.

Water Safety

If you own a pool or hot tub, you know there are several steps required to keep it maintained. One aspect that is often not top of mind is the electrical system, which can pose a significant or even deadly hazard.

Since pool and hot tub areas mean wet skin and wet surfaces, the chance of electrocution increases when electricity is present.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Com-

mission points out that electricity can be found in underwater lights, electric pool equipment (e.g., pumps, filters, vacuum), extension and power cords, electrical outlets or switches, electrical devices such as TVs and overhead power lines.

To keep everyone as safe as possible, have the electrical system inspected and upgraded to local and National Electrical Code by a licensed contractor. Also, do not set up a pool (temporary or permanent) where power lines are overhead or within 25 feet of any water source.

Electrical safety also includes:

- Making sure ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are installed:
 - o On underwater lighting circuits operating at 15 volts or more.
 - o On all electrical equipment, including 120- and 240-volt heaters close to the pool.
 - o On outdoor receptacles (outlets) within 20 feet of the water's edge.
- Testing permanently installed GFCIs month-

ly. Test those that are portable or connected to a cord before every use.

• Looking for signs of mold or other growth on the inside lenses of lights, which can indicate water leakage.

• Ensuring that the power switch and GFCI for underwater lights are clearly marked and accessible in an emergency.

• Labeling power switches for pool, hot tub and spa equipment, as well as lighting.

• Using battery-operated electronics whenever possible.

• Drying hands and feet while using electrical devices.

• Keeping long-handled tools and poles away from power lines, including power lines to your home.

• Holding pool skimmers and other long-handled tools close to the ground.

• Keeping electrical cords, wires and devices out of reach and at least 5 feet from the water.

• Unplugging a device that has fallen into the water before touching it. Even submersible

pumps designed to run under water may not be safe to use when someone is in the water.

Swimmers may feel a tingling sensation, experience muscle cramps or may not be able to move when experiencing an electrical shock. You may see panic behavior, complaints of odd sensations, or a motionless swimmer in the water. You might also see underwater lights that are not working properly.

If you think you are being shocked, move away from the source of the shock and get out of the water. If possible, exit without using a metal ladder; touching metal may increase the risk of shock.

If you think someone in the water is experiencing an electrical shock, immediately turn off all power. If power is not turned off, rescuers can also be shocked or electrocuted. After power is disconnected, call 9-1-1.

For more about electrical safety, visit www.cottonelectric.com or SafeElectricity.org. *Source: SafeElectricity.org*

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Southwest Oklahoma summer bucketlist



Summertime can be filled with adventures to new, far off places - from mountain ranges to sandy beaches.

Have you ever thought about all the hidden outdoor treasures that are closer than you think?

Cotton Electric's service territory in southwest Oklahoma is filled with fun adventures waiting to be explored by you and your loved ones.

Check off the bucketlist below to make the most of summer!

- Take a hike at Mt. Scott
- Explore a local farmer's market
- Take an evening drive with the windows down
- Pack a picnic

- Watch a movie at the drive-in
- Cook a meal over a campfire
- Perfect the art of stone skipping
- Paddleboard at Lake Elmer
- Wake up early to watch the sunrise
- Take a long-nap in a hammock outside
- Pick a wild-flower bouquet
- Visit the Museum of the Great Plains
- Make home-made pizzas
- Spend a lunch break at a park
- Reread your favorite book
- Play water balloon baseball
- Volunteer at a local animal shelter or organization
- Make home-made ice cream
- Plan a day trip to Medicine Park
- Plant a herb garden
- Camp at the Wichita Mountains
- Recreate a family recipe
- Chase lightning bugs
- Spend an entire day barefooted
- Dedicate a "No Internet Day"

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Co-op offers multiple payment options for members

Paying bills may not be your favorite responsibility, but Cotton Electric Cooperative offers a variety of ways to carry it out. Nearly every method requires your Cotton Electric account number, which can be found at the top left of your bill, just under your address. If you have multiple accounts, all numbers are required. We are sure there is a payment method that works best for you:

By mail

Use the return envelope that comes with a power bill. Enclose a check and the bottom portion of the bill. DO NOT SEND CASH.

In person

We accept cash, checks, money orders and credit cards at our headquarters, 226 N. Broadway in Walters, and at our Duncan office, 1101 W. Oak. Business hours at both offices are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, except holidays. Credit card payments can be made only by using devices in the lobbies at either office or the outside

kiosk at the Duncan office. Credit cards are not accepted for payment on commercial accounts.

By phone

Call 1-855-730-8711 to make a payment using a series of menu choices via the automated system. The system requires a Cotton Electric account number and credit/debit card or banking account numbers.

SmartHub electronic check / credit card

Members can sign up for online or mobile device account access and pay via electronic check or with Visa, MasterCard or Discover credit cards any time of day. Credit cards will not be accepted for payment on commercial accounts. First-time set-up requires a Cotton Electric account number. Members using traditional computers can visit www.cottonelectric.com and click the Pay Online button. The button is a link to our SmartHub payment log-in page. New users can select a link to sign up for access

to the self-service site. Members using smart phones or tablets can download the free SmartHub app at www.SmartHubApp.com. The app is available in versions compatible with Apple and Android devices. There is no additional charge for using electronic check or credit card payment methods.

Monthly bank draft

This method requires an Authorization Agreement for Automatic Debit form and a voided, unsigned check. The forms are available at either office or can be downloaded at the Payment Options page of our website. We can also mail the form to you. Once it is filled out and returned, it takes a few days to arrange for your checking account to be drafted 10 days after your billing date each month.

Moneygram

Moneygram transactions are handled at Walmart and CVS stores anywhere in the United States. There is a fee for this transaction that requires cash or a

debit card. Use billing code 7933.

Average Monthly Payment

Members needing help budgeting for electric bills may want to enroll in our Average Monthly Payment (AMP) plan. Qualifying members will have a 12-month billing history and the account should be in current status. This means that the current billing should not be past due, no unpaid balance should exist on the account and that previous credit history has been good. The average of the previous 12 months is reflected in a monthly bill. The amount of each month's bill will vary some due to fluctuations in fuel costs, variations in usage and rate changes. With AMP, instead of high and low bills as the seasons change, bill amounts will tend to flatten and be close to the same amount each month. Any of the payment methods listed above can be used when paying on accounts using the Average Month-



Cotton Electric Member Services Representative Laura Everett assists a member at the Duncan office drive-thru. Photo by Carli Eubank.

ly Payment plan. Please contact our Customer Service department at (580) 875-3351 to make sure that you qualify for this plan.

MyChoice

Cotton Electric Cooperative offers a payment method designed with busy members in mind. MyChoice is a prepay energy solution that gives you – our member – the power of choice. You pay for electricity how and when you choose, the same

way you buy groceries or gasoline. Purchasing electricity before you use it allows you to control your budget and pay how much you want, when you want. There are no security deposits or late fees. You will not receive a monthly statement. Your energy use and balance are calculated daily and you can track them by mobile device using the free SmartHub app or online at CottonElectric.com bill payment portal.

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Seasons of Change

By Carli Eubank

There is a time for everything: a time to sow, a time to prune, a time to wait, a time to harvest. Most people think of the previous as gardening terms, but they can also be a reflection of life. Like the waving, painted rows of textured petals, flower farmers personally grow through seasons of both bare and plentiful.

Emily Priest, Cotton Electric member and owner of Tulie Blooms in Lawton, is in the midst of cultivating a new season of life: flower farming. Although this is her first time growing professionally, Priest is no stranger to being surrounded by the abundance of nature. Growing up in Oregon, she saw both of her grandmothers grow berries for their communities. She also remembers her granddad stopping at one of the many roadside, honesty box flower stands to bring a bouquet home to his wife.

“I have always appreciated people who grow things themselves and are in touch with where things come from,” Priest said. “I aspire to be more like that.”

While living in a subdivision in Virginia with her husband, Priest found herself in a waiting season. She never had the time or space to begin a garden, but she always admired them. Her dream began to germinate through researching different designs and plants when she wanted to expand

the landscaping around their home. After many years of planning her garden, an unexpected move to Oklahoma into a new home with acreage granted her wish of growing a flower farm. Today, Priest reaps the beauty of a “slower lifestyle” while tending to more than 30 flower variations.

When thinking about a name for her company, Priest kept thinking about what her grandma would say about her life in rural Oregon, what she called “living way out in the tulies.” Priest loved the idea of referencing Oklahoma backroads and combined that with her grandma’s saying to create the Tulie Blooms brand.

Looking back on the memories made with her family in Oregon created Priest’s dream to have her own honesty box flower stand someday, she said.

“I love the excitement of seeing flowers bloom, and it’s a gift every time I get to bring a flower inside,” Priest said. “Arranging bouquets is one of my favorite parts of gardening.”

Priest shared there is a \$7 billion demand for the flower industry, yet 80% of flowers are imported into the United States. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the industry saw a rise in demand for flowers grown locally. Helping meet that demand, Priest sells her floral bounty to local florists in addition to hand delivering arrangements.

For Priest, gardening means more than producing a crop. Flowers allow her to bring a little joy to the community.

“I try to not get wrapped up on the success of it all because I believe everything has been a gift to me,” Priest said. “God has given me land to tend, and I hope the love and beauty from growing flowers is passed on to whomever receives them.”

In Bray, about 30 crow-fly miles northeast of Tulie Blooms, resides Cotton Electric member Becky Bearce and her flower farm, Cross B Blooms. Bearce’s enjoyment has always been rooted in working outside, whether it was maintaining the yard, planting container gardens or helping her husband farm their land.

Eventually, Bearce entered a new, but painful, season of life with her husband’s passing in 2019. During that difficult time, she found comfort and healing through working with her hands in the soil, she said. In 2020, Bearce endured the continuous season of growing through her pain by planting a vegetable garden. In the spring of 2021 she added cut flowers to her farm.

“The garden became therapeutic to me,” Bearce said. “I believe soil is good for the soul, and there are so many spiritual lessons to be learned in the garden.”

Cross B Blooms was created from a very special place for Bearce.

Cross B was the brand she and her husband shared during their ranching days.

“The brand is a good reminder that the Lord is over everything, and we are just part of it all,” Bearce said. “Naming the flower farm Cross B Blooms was a way for my husband to still be part of the garden.”

Bearce said it’s difficult to choose her favorite aspect of farming because the stages of the growing process are special in their own way and she’s learned to appreciate each one. An opportunity for Bearce was setting up pop-up flower shops on the sidewalk at downtown shops in Duncan and Marlow.

Planting the seeds, tending the seedlings, harvesting and selling, putting the ground to rest during the winter – each is a stage that comes with the turn of the seasons.

“It’s hard to not look at flowers and not be comforted,” Bearce said. “They bring so much joy to others, and they remind someone that you thought about them.”

Seasons may change for Priest and Bearce, but they each embrace qualities and experiences that root them in a deeper mission than just flower farming: to spread joy through each unique and vivid flower.

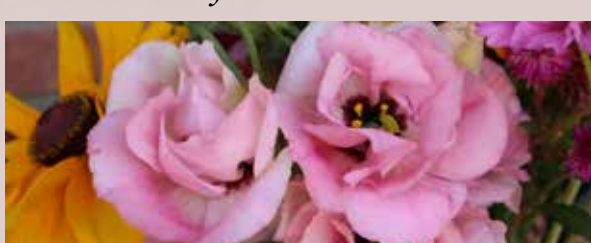
Want to keep up with Tulie Blooms and Cross B Blooms? Follow them on Instagram and Facebook! @Tulie Blooms @Cross B Blooms



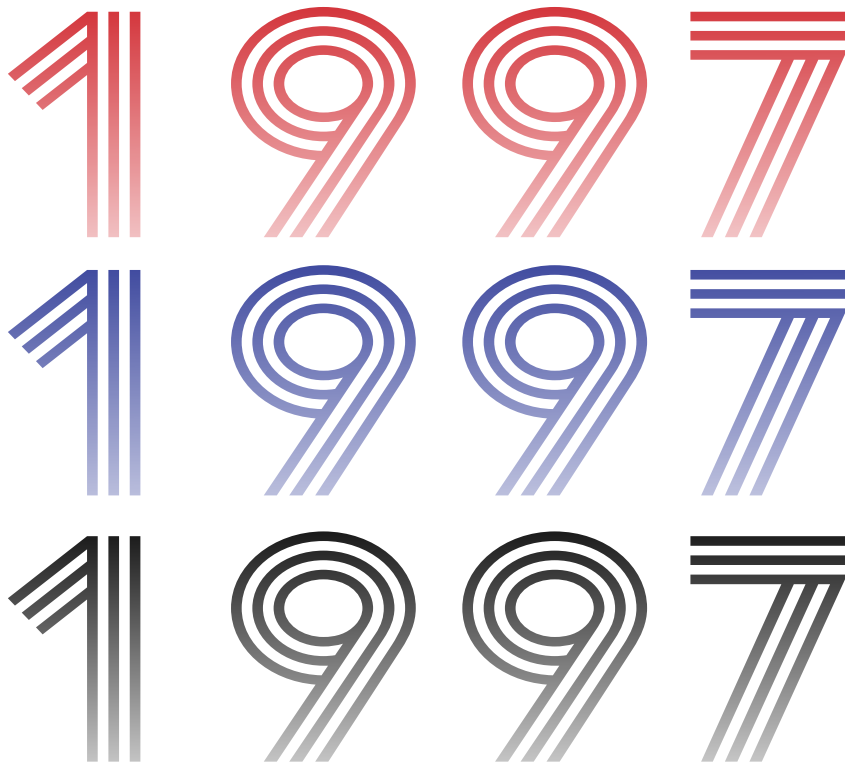
Becky Bearce, owner of Cross B Blooms, sets up her pop up shop on Main Street in Duncan. Photos below and to the right are from Cross B Blooms. Photos by Carli Eubank.



Emily Priest, owner of Tulie Blooms, harvests a fresh crop of flowers for bouquet orders. Photos above and to the left are from Tulie Blooms. Photos by Carli Eubank.



T H R O W B A C K



Let's look back 25 years ago and see what was cookin' in The Cuurent!

CHERRY DESSERT

1/4 lb. Graham crackers	Mix cracker crumbs	whipped cream.
1 stick oleo, melted	with oleo and vanilla.	Spread over the crust.
1/4 tsp. vanilla	Press in an 8-inch	Spoon cherry pie
1 can cherry pie filling	square pan.	filling over the cream
8 oz. pkg. cream cheese	Mix the cream cheese	cheese mixture.
1 c. powdered sugar	with the powdered	Chill until serving
1 carton whipped cream	sugar and fold into the	time.

The Savory Side of Watermelon

It's that time of year where the confluence of holiday tradition, seasonal eating, and soaring temperatures mean watermelon is on everyone's mind and plate. While traditionally enjoyed by itself due to its sweet deliciousness, watermelon is actually very versatile and is delicious in sweet and savory dishes. Regardless of how you like it, watermelon is definitely a good-for-you food, and given its abundance during this time of year, it's a good idea to explore some other ways to enjoy it.

First lets knock out the question of nutrition. Watermelon is a low calorie food. You have to eat two cups to even get close to 100 calories - isn't that better than an air-filled 100-calorie snack of wafer thin cookies or puffs of something? Watermelon is also a good source of water (shocking, right?), vi-

tamins A, B6, and C (good for the immune system, eyes, skin), potassium (good for your heart and muscles, helps you stay hydrated), and lycopene (an antioxidant which can help prevent chronic disease). All that power for very few calories makes watermelon an excellent weight management food too.

Unless you are buying pre-cut watermelon where you can control how much you buy, or you are hosting a large party, watermelon tends to produce a lot of leftovers. There are many ways to



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT

fruit leather.

While most people are familiar with watermelon's sweet side, many have

utilize leftover watermelon. Cut it into the size of ice cubes, freeze, and make watermelon ice cubes to chill your water later or throw in a smoothie or make a watermelon slush, sorbet, popsicle, or granita. You can dehydrate watermelon to make something similar to

never tried watermelon in a savory dish. Watermelon goes great with jalapenos, feta cheese, blue cheese, chicken salad, avocado, olives, prosciutto, goat cheese, cucumber, arugla, and tomatoes. Add a slice of watermelon to a burger or a sandwich. Grill slices of watermelon with lime juice and chili sauce as a basting sauce. The rinds (the white part between the red and the green) can be pickled and enjoyed alone or in dishes and appetizers. Watermelon adds beautiful color, subtle soothing flavor, and doesn't hurt your calorie budget.

For some truly unique watermelon recipes, visit the Watermelon Board (www.watermelon.org), Pinterest, or just do an internet search for watermelon recipes. Don't let any watermelon go to waste this summer.

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Oh-So-Berry Cobbler

- 2 cups strawberries, sliced
- 2 cups blackberries
- 2 cups blueberries
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons corn starch
- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 1/2 cups brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- Nonstick cooking spray
- Ice cream



Heat oven to 350 F. In large bowl, mix strawberries, blackberries and blueberries then add lemon juice and cornstarch; mix to combine. Refrigerate 20 minutes. In medium bowl,

whisk flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside. In bowl of stand mixer, beat butter, brown sugar and vanilla extract on medium speed until blended. Gradually add flour mixture until crumbles form.

Spray 9-by-13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray. Pour berries into bottom of dish. Top berries with crumbles. Bake 30-40 minutes, or until lightly browned. Serve with ice cream.



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Prepare yourself for a long retirement

We all want to live long lives. We all expect to live long lives. But are we financially prepared for this longevity?

Before we get to the issue of preparation, let's look at a couple of interesting findings from a 2022 survey by Age Wave and Edward Jones:

The surveyed retirees said, on average, they expect to live to 89, and they said the ideal length of retirement is 29 years.

When asked if they want to live to 100, nearly 70% of the respondents said "yes." The main reason for this desire for long life? To spend more years with their family and friends.

Of course, none of us can see into the future and know how long we'll be around. But with advances in medical care and a greater awareness of healthy lifestyles, these aspirations have a real basis in reality.

However, if you're going to enjoy a longer lifespan, and the extra years with your loved ones, you need to ensure your finances are also in good shape. How can you make this happen?

Here are some basic steps to follow:

- Save and invest early and often. This may be the oldest piece of financial advice, but it's still valid. The earlier you start saving and investing for your retirement, the greater your potential accumulation. Consider this: If you began saving just \$5,000 per year at age 25, and earned a hypothetical 6.5% annual rate of return, and didn't take any early withdrawals, you'd end up with \$935,000 by the time you reached 65. But if you waited until 35 to start saving and investing, and you earned the same hypothetical 6.5% return – again with no early withdrawals – you'd only end up with \$460,000. And if you didn't start saving until 45, you'd end up with just over \$200,000, again given the same 6.5% return.
- Be mindful of debt. You may not want to be burdened with certain debts when you enter retirement. So, while you're still working, try to reduce unwanted debts, particularly those that don't offer the financial benefits of tax-deductible interest payments. The lower your debt load, the more you can save and invest for the future.

• Keep reviewing your progress. It's important to monitor the progress you need to make toward achieving your goal of a comfortable retirement. Over the short term, your investment balances may fluctuate, especially in volatile financial markets such as we've seen in the early part of this year. But you'll get a clearer picture of your situation if you look at long-term results. For example, have your accounts grown over the past 10 years as much as you had planned? And going forward, do you think you're in good shape, or will you need to make some changes to your investment strategy? Keep in mind that, if you're 50 or older, you can make "catch-up" contributions to your IRA and 401(k) that allow you to exceed the regular limits. You may also want to adjust your investment mix as you near retirement to potentially lower your risk exposure.

Hopefully, you will enjoy many years of a healthy, happy retirement. And you can help support this vision by carefully considering your financial moves and making the ones that are right for you.

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Parting Shots



Some CEC crewmen and linemen attended Essential Climbing School at Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives. Pictured on the left is Skyler Smith and pictured on the right is Michael Edgmon and Ely King. Photo courtesy of Lance Shaw.

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