

What's Inside



Oklahoma co-ops co-sponsor 2023 SKIE Awards
page 6



Cotton Electric employees bring new life to classic vehicles
page 11



Prioritize heart health with a balanced eating plan
page 15

The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”

VOLUME 66

February 13, 2023

NUMBER 6

New outage reporting will soon be available for members

Cotton Electric members will soon receive a text message welcoming them to the co-op's new two-way texting communication. This new system will allow members to report outages and receive updates through text messaging.

TextPower allows members to receive and send texts to Cotton Electric during outages. Members will be able to text “Out” to our office number, 580-875-3351, to report an outage.

“With everything we do, we want to serve our members the best we can,” said Jennifer Meason, Cotton Electric CEO. “Responses to our recent member survey indicated that 45% of responding members prefer text communication, and we appreciate their feedback. As part of our efforts to improve communication, we are excited to offer another option for our membership to notify us when their power is out and receive updates during outage situations.”

Members who have their current mobile numbers listed on their Cotton Electric account will be automatically opted in to receive outage text updates. The cell phone numbers tied to their meter accounts have been linked to the outage software. The software analyzes the database during an outage and sends texts to affected members. To make sure the co-op has up-to-date contact information, members can make changes through SmartHub or by calling the Member Services department.

For members who want to opt out of the texting system, text “Quit” at any time to discontinue outage text updates. New members will be opted in automatically but will have the same ability to opt out if desired.

If Cotton Electric verifies an outage in your area, members who stay opted in will receive a text message stating the co-op's awareness of an outage situation. If an estimated time of restoration is determined, it will be sent through another text.

When reporting outages, members who have multiple accounts will be asked to verify which account number is without power by responding with the letter that corresponds to the correct account number listed. If the correct account is not listed, text “Other.” If members have more than 10 accounts with Cotton Electric, they will need to report their outage through SmartHub or by calling 580-875-3351.

It's important that members know the meter that each account number is connected to. For example, a member may have meters serving a home, barn or a fence charger in a different location. It's vital for our Dispatchers to know the exact account without power so line crews can respond quickly and efficiently.

Members will receive a text when the outage has been restored. However, if your power is still out after you

Continued on page 7

(pictured to the right) An example of how members will be able to report outages through Cotton Electric's new two-way texting communication.



Make sure Cotton Electric has your cell phone on file



Log on to the SmartHub app and save your updated contact information



Visit the SmartHub website and update your cell phone number in your profile



Call our office at 580-875-3351 during business hours to speak to a member service representative



Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after February 1, 2023, is \$0.01509 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$19.62 on the February bill.

January 2023 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	76	34	55	16	72	43	58
2	74	40	57	17	69	39	54
3	56	30	43	18	65	43	54
4	54	26	40	19	57	30	44
5	59	23	41	20	62	26	44
6	69	32	51	21	61	40	51
7	54	33	44	22	51	26	39
8	58	25	42	23	52	21	37
9	69	26	48	24	43	33	38
10	80	28	54	25	49	30	40
11	78	37	58	26	52	26	39
12	57	30	44	27	58	23	41
13	56	23	40	28	65	34	50
14	65	26	46	29	47	23	35
15	64	36	50	30	24	19	22
				31	29	20	25

Source: srh.noaa.gov/oum/
Average Daily High: 59 Average Daily Low: 30

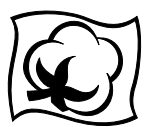
Did You Know?

Cotton Electric office will be closed Monday, Feb. 20 for Presidents' 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 March 13, 2023.

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.



COTTON
ELECTRIC CO-OP

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.

From the CEO

Members provide co-op feedback with annual survey

As a member of a democratically-controlled electric cooperative, you have a voice in decisions that are made at Cotton Electric. Our purpose is to improve your quality of life by delivering electricity to your homes and businesses at affordable rates and working with you to use power efficiently.

We value your comments and suggestions and encourage feedback. From time to time, we conduct a random survey of the membership to see how we're doing and get your input.

A survey was conducted last December. Cotton Electric's members rated us with an American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) score of 86, which is 14 points above the 2022 Energy Utilities Industry Averages for investor-owned utilities and 13 points above the average for municipal utilities. Our CAPS (Consumer Attitude and Performance Score) rating is 90.

The ACSI® is the only national cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction in the United States. Each year, the ACSI

uses data from interviews with roughly 300,000 customers as inputs to an econometric model for analyzing customer satisfaction with more than 400 companies in 46 industries and 10 economic sectors. The average Touchstone Energy cooperative score for the fourth quarter of 2022 was 84.

CAPS is a cooperative performance model developed by our member research firm, Inside Information. It is an industry specific benchmarking tool used to gauge performance in service areas deemed most important to members: Trustworthiness, well-managed business, and care for members.

Every department here at Cotton Electric Cooperative strives to serve our members with quality and competence. Your survey responses tell us we are doing a good job with those efforts. 90% of those surveyed say Cotton Electric provides reliable electric service, and 89% think Cotton Electric restores power quickly after an outage. 91% say our employees are friendly and courteous, and 89% say we have knowledgeable staff who communicate effectively.

As far as communication, the top three methods of communication preferred were The Current, co-op email and text messaging. We're happy to announce



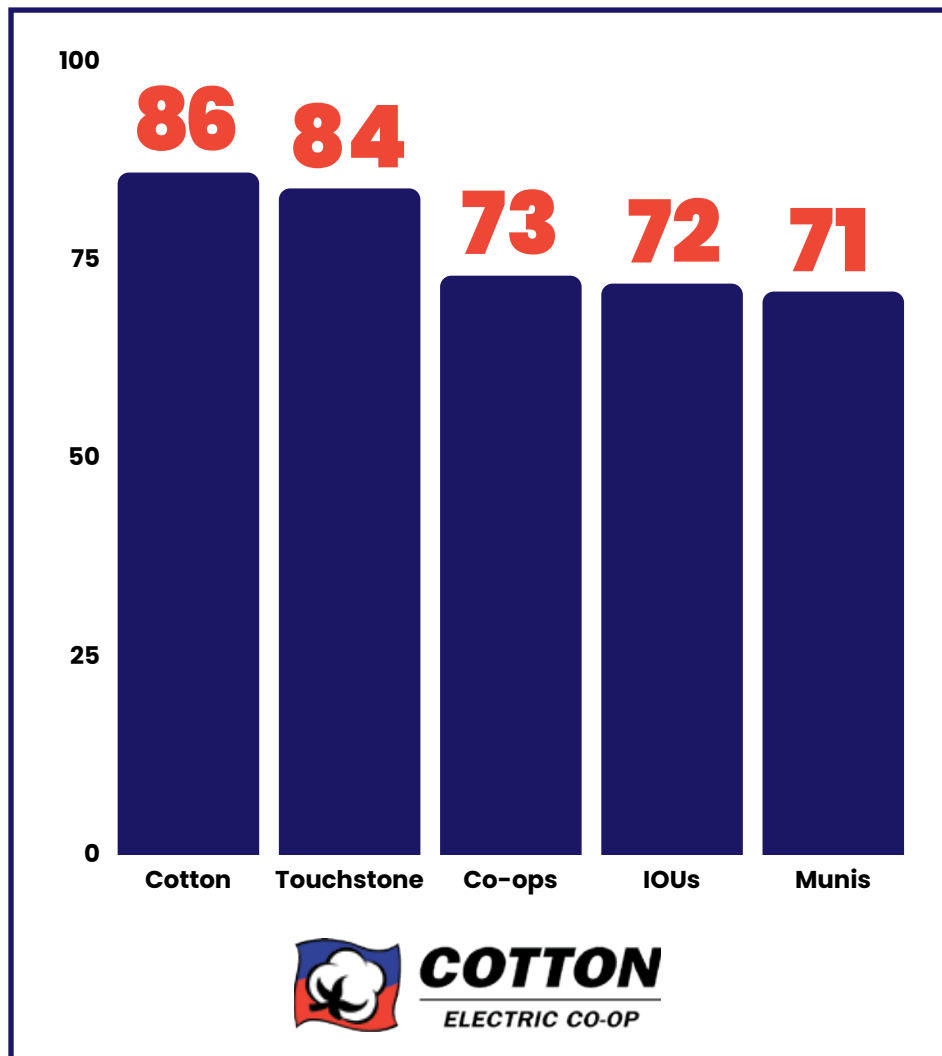
Jennifer Meason, CEO

that members will soon be able to use text messaging during an outage (see pages one and seven for more information).

There was division among the respondents on the topics of renewable energy and electric vehicles. We will continue to serve in the role of trusted energy advisor and are available to answer your questions and provide guidance when evaluating proposals.

With increasing power costs, many of those surveyed would like more information about programs to control bills. We encourage you to visit our Energy Efficiency page at www.cottonelectric.com/energy-efficiency to learn ways to save. You can also call our Energy Efficiency Coordinator Heath Morgan at 580-875-3351 to review your bills or schedule a free home energy evaluation.

We appreciate everyone who participated in the survey. There is always room for improvement and we will use your feedback as we evaluate our current programs and make adjustments for the future.



From: Cotton Electric Cooperative
To: Our members

Members first
We appreciate you!
You rock!
Here to serve you

COTTON ELECTRIC CO-OP

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Do you have a home office? Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life.

Another way to save in the home office is to use energy efficient lamps for task lighting. Small lamps use less energy than whole-room lighting.

Source: Energy.gov

December 2022 Operating Stats

	2022	2021
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$7,858,883	\$6,476,612
Cost of Purchased Power	5,836,687	4,516,015
Taxes	140,478	118,300
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,490	1,215
Average Farm and Residential Bill	205	165
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,659	1,257
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	19,325	19,101
Miles Energized	5,392	5,221
Density Per Mile	3.58	3.66
New Service Connects YTD	562	478
Services Retired	141	149

Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

March	
Ad Sales	Feb. 24
Classified	Feb. 24
Publish	March 13
April	
Ad Sales	March 21
Classified	March 21
Publish	April 10

The Current

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By Cotton Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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Energy Efficiency

The 2023 HVAC efficiency changes and their impact on members

In 1992, the Department of Energy (DOE) introduced the first minimum efficiency requirements for central air-conditioning and heat pump equipment. The establishment of these standards came as part of The National Appliance Energy Conservation Act of 1987. The original standard required a seasonal energy-efficiency ratio (SEER) of no less than a 10 SEER.

SEER is a measurement of a system's cooling capacity compared to the amount of electrical energy it uses. The higher the SEER rating, the more efficient the system is. The minimum standards were later updated in 2006 and again in 2015.

The new standards for 2023 went into effect January 1, 2023. The national SEER requirement for any heat pump system was raised from 14 SEER

to 15 SEER. Air conditioning standards increased as well, but are based on the cooling capacity or tonnage of the unit. Any unit over 45,000 Btus must meet the same 15 SEER standard. Any unit under 45,000 Btus only has to achieve a 14.5 SEER rating.

In addition to the increase in minimum efficiency, the industry will also adopt a new SEER2 standard. SEER2 is still measuring the efficiency of the system by comparing cooling capability to the electrical energy consumed during the process, but the new testing standards will be more reflective of real-world scenarios. These new testing standards, know as M1, are designed to better represent external testing conditions seen in actual equipment installations. The original SEER testing conditions did not account for the influence of ductwork and external

static pressure on these systems. Static pressure refers to the resistance of airflow created by system components and duct work systems.

What does all of this mean to our members?

While this change may not have an immediate impact on you, it is a good idea to know what to expect. With the efficiency increase, members should anticipate an increase in pricing as well. Keep in mind that improved performance will also result in lower energy usage, and can save you more money over time.

Another possible challenge to keep in mind will be the initial availability of these systems due to stocking and manufacturing delays. As the dealers do begin to stock the new systems and parts, older replacement parts may become harder to find.

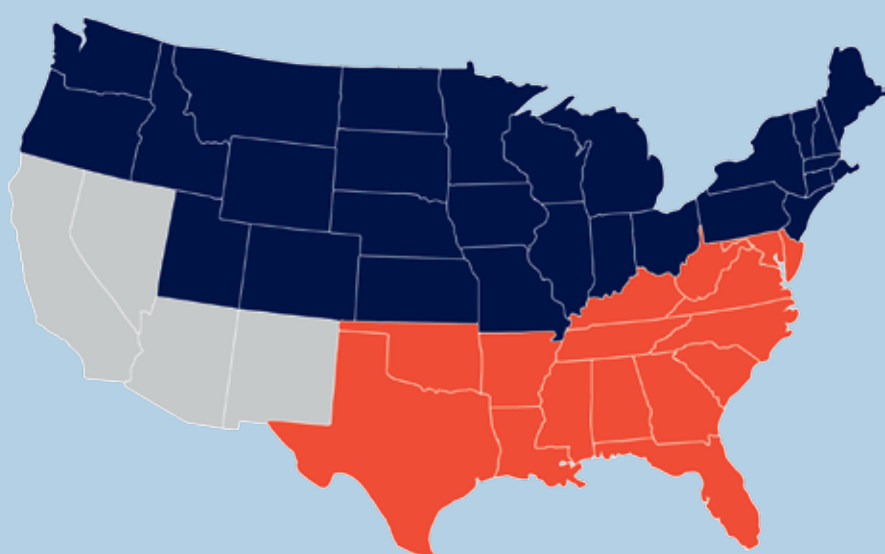


Heath Morgan,
Energy Efficiency
Coordinator

Your Cooperative continues to promote going beyond this updated minimum efficiency standard. The 2023 updates to Cotton Electric's Energy Efficiency Rebate Program were covered in last month's issue of The Current. Those updated standards and increases in rebates are also available at www.cottonelectric.com/rebate-program.

2023 Minimum Efficiency Change

NATIONAL HEAT PUMPS 15 SEER 8.8 HSPF



- AC - 14 SEER
- <45KBtu = 15 SEER & 12.2 EER
- >45KBtu = 14.5 SEER & 11.7 EER
- <45KBtu = 15 SEER
- >45KBtu = 14.5 SEER

STAY TOASTY AND WARM WHILE

TURNING DOWN THE THERMOSTAT



When the winter winds blow, it is tempting to adjust the thermostat up a few degrees to stay toasty and warm. However, turning to other (FREE!) ways to help keep you warm could help reduce your energy bills.



Each degree you reduce your thermostat saves 1% on your heating bill. No one home during the day? Adjust your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting to save up to 10% annually.

Source: Department of Energy

Here are ways to help you stay warm when it is cold outside:



- Bundle up by wearing layers and heavy socks
- Get your body moving and stay active
- Use blankets while sitting still
- Caulk windows and door frames that leak air
- Replace or update old or ineffective door seals
- Make sure your home's heating system is working properly
- Keep your furnace clean and change the filter monthly
- Let the sun shine in during the day and close window coverings at night
- Reduce how long you use ventilation fans (they transfer warm air outside)
- Keep a fireplace damper closed when not in use
- Humidify your home to make the air feel warmer

If you use a portable space heater, use it safely and for short amounts of time. Using one for extended periods can cause your energy bill to spike since it draws a lot of power.

Learn more at: SafeElectricity.org



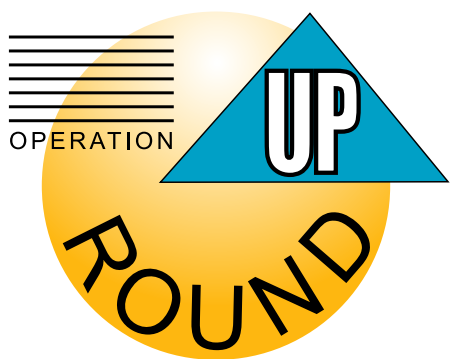
BUILT by our community.
SHAPED by our community.
LED by our community.

WE'RE PROUD TO POWER YOUR LIFE.



COTTON
ELECTRIC CO-OP

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation

Operation Round Up encourages applicants

Operation Round Up exists because of the generosity of Cotton Electric's members and is designed to provide financial assistance to worthwhile individuals and organizations.

For those interested in seeking funds for local individuals or organizations, below is a portion of the CECF grant application guidelines.

Grant Application Guidelines:

- The Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (the "Foundation") provides funds for charitable purposes within the service area of Cotton Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CEC).
- Grant applications are reviewed quarterly. Applications are to be received in the CEC offices by the close of business 14 days before the quarterly meeting of the Foundation board of directors.
- Grants to any group, organization, charity or similar organization will not exceed \$10,000 and grants to individuals will not exceed \$2,500.

Requirement for school applications

All applications for grants benefiting schools require the signature of the school superintendent.

This includes applications submitted by booster clubs, parent-teacher organizations and other school-related groups, teachers and principals. This requirement was established to ensure coordinated communication on projects that fit a school district's priorities.

Application Instructions:

- Please complete all sections of the application. If an item is not applicable to your organization, please make note in the space provided.
- If you are exempt from income tax, please attach verification such as a

copy of letter 501(c)3 from the Internal Revenue Service or an explanation of why your organization is considered to be exempt.

- Please include a recent financial statement. If your organization completes an annual audit, please attach a copy with your application. If your organization does not complete an annual audit, please attach a copy of your treasurer's report and bank statements to verify your source of funding, funds available, etc.
- Please be specific when describing how the funds will be used if approved and attach price estimates if available.

Categories of Assistance:

1. Communities
 - Programs, projects and organizations that are important components of a community's overall quality of life, with emphasis on public safety, health care, self-sufficiency, and basic human needs.
2. Education and Youth
 - Programs and projects designed to combat critical social problems affecting youth, particularly children and teens at risk.
 - Programs and projects that promote youth wellness.
 - Programs and projects that work to provide supplemental materials and equipment for schools.
 - Programs and projects to enhance school facilities.
3. Seniors
 - Programs and projects to support organizations and the facilities serving senior citizens.
4. Volunteer Fire Departments
 - Programs and projects to enhance volunteer fire department facilities and vehicles.
 - Equipment and gear purchases and upgrades.

5. Individuals
 - An individual or family in need of assistance may request a grant. Examples of need conditions may include the consequences of a disaster, catastrophic illness, or permanent disability.
 - Individual applications must include a letter of referral from a sponsoring group such as a church, civic organization or other group wanting to raise funds for the individual.

The Foundation will not consider requests for general operating funds, capital campaigns or support for salaries. The Foundation prefers requests for program needs.

The Foundation will not consider requests for the benefit of an individual or family unit unless the application includes a letter from a sponsoring group. Grants will be issued to the sponsoring group.

Applicant Eligibility:

Contributions will generally be made only to not-for-profit organizations that have been granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service and to civic-based entities.

1. The organization must contribute to the community's health and/or welfare.
2. The organization's services must be non-discriminatory in nature.
3. Activities affiliated with a religious organization with a secular community designation are eligible for the Foundation's consideration of support. A secular designation is defined as an organization separate from the church or religious organization that provides services to people regardless of their religious beliefs and does not propagate a belief in a specific faith. (Example: A food bank that is a separate 501(c)(3) organization from a

church and provides food and meals to anyone who qualifies for services, regardless of religious belief.)

Evaluation Factors:

1. The following factors will be considered in the evaluation of all funding requests:
 - Potential benefit to residents of the CEC service area and the entire community.
 - Prior contribution level of Foundation or community support for the program or project or the organization requesting the funds.
 - Fiscal and administrative capability of the organization to deliver a quality service or program.
 - Results that are predictable and can be evaluated.
2. The Foundation's Board of Directors shall evaluate all funding requests and determine whether to issue a grant for all or a portion of the funds requested.


Project Timing:

Request for funding should state whether the funds are intended for ongoing operations or for a specific project that will terminate at some point in the future. Whenever possible, requests for funding should be for projects that will be completed within 12 months following the Foundation's approval of the grant application.

For a complete overview of CECF grant application guidelines, please visit www.cottonelectric.com/grant-applications.

The deadline for second-quarter grant applications is Tuesday, Feb. 14. Applications may be submitted via email to zyoung@cottonelectric.com, online at www.cottonelectric.com/grant-applications or mailed to 226 N. Broadway Walters, OK 73572.


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Duncan, OK 73533
580.251.6600



CHICKASHA

210 Mary Bailey Drive
Chickasha, OK 73018
405.222.9222

Vegetation Management crew continues to help maintain quality power

Cotton Electric Cooperative strives to provide the best service to its members. One way this goal is achieved is through the co-op's Vegetation Management (VM) program.

The VM program is a proactive effort to ensure and maintain quality power delivery. Aggressive and preventive vegetation management is valuable to members from a service and an economic perspective. Keeping vegetation away from power lines is also a matter of safety.

Vegetation Management Foreman Joe Moore oversees Cotton Electric's VM crew as they clear vegetation and prevent re-growth on more than 5,000 miles of Cotton Electric lines to improve and maintain power quality.

Employees make every effort to contact land and homeowners in person as they move into an area. If members are not home, an effort will be made to contact owners by phone and, in some cases, a bright-colored door hanger will be left at the house or tied to a gate post. Updated member contact information helps crews with this process. Give the co-op a call at 580-875-3351 to make sure we have the correct contact information on record.

After trees are cleared, crews will return to the area at regularly scheduled intervals to apply an USDA

certified herbicide that will prevent tree growth without causing harm to grasses. Spraying is done only during growing season, which begins in mid-May. Herbicide spraying is done only on days when the weather is right for safe application.

"Spraying keeps crews from returning to the same area again and again to trim regrown vegetation," Moore said. "This saves the co-op man-hours and, in turn, saves members money."

Cotton Electric's VM crew is continually looking for land and home owners in need of free, untreated wood chips. Since the wood chips are untreated, it is not recommended to use them next to a structure.

Landowners looking for material to help with erosion problems may want to contact Cotton Electric, too. With the co-op's skid steer, the VM crew can deliver stumps and other debris too large to chip or mulch.

Chips and large debris will be delivered to members nearest the day's work location who can be reached by phone. There is no guarantee a member will receive wood chips at any particular time.

To have your name added to the list of members willing to take wood chips, call our offices at 580-875-3351 or email info@cottonelectric.com.



Vegetation management crews working near Duncan. Photo by Carli Eubank.



Dillon Newby, vegetation management worker, feeds branch through chipper. Photo by Carli Eubank.

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Don't let fear drive investment decisions



In the past year, we've seen some big swings in the financial markets. This volatility may make you feel as if you have little control over your investment success. But the truth is, you do have more control than you might think — as long as you don't let fear guide your decisions.

Investment-related fear can manifest itself in a few different ways:

- *Fear of loss* — Some investors may emphasize avoiding losses more than achieving gains. Consequently, they might build portfolios they consider very low in risk, possibly containing a high percentage of certificates of deposit (CDs) and U.S. Treasury securities. Yet, a highly conservative approach carries its own risk — the risk of not achieving enough growth to stay ahead of inflation, much less meet long-term goals such as a comfortable retirement. To reach these goals, you'll want to construct a diversified portfolio containing different types of assets and investments — each of which may perform differently at different times. Your objective shouldn't be to avoid all risk — which is impossible — but to create an investment strategy that accommodates your personal risk tolerance and time horizon.
- *Fear of missing out* — You're probably familiar with the term "herd mentality" — the idea that people will follow the lead of others for fear of missing out on something. This behavior is responsible for fads or the sudden emergence of "hot" products, and it's also relevant to investing. In fact, herd mentality may contribute to sharp jumps in the financial markets as investors drive up prices by buying stocks to avoid being left behind. And the same may be true in reverse — when the market starts dropping, skittish investors may accelerate the decline by selling stocks so they, too, can get out before it's too late. Buying or selling investments should be considered as needed to help advance your long-term financial strategy — not in response to what others are doing.
- *Fear of the unknown* — Some investors fall victim to "familiarity bias" — the tendency to invest only in what they know, such as local or domestic companies. But this behavior can lead to under-diversified portfolios. If your portfolio is dominated by just a few investments, and these investments are fairly similar to each other, you could experience some losses when the inevitable market downturn occurs. To help reduce the impact of market volatility, it's a good idea to spread your investment dollars across large and small companies in a range of industries and geographical regions. And that's just on the equities side — it's also wise to consider further diversifying your portfolio by owning bonds and government securities. (Keep in mind, though, that diversification can't guarantee profits or protect against all losses.)
- *Fear of admitting failure* — Some individuals don't like to admit when they've been wrong about something, and they may continue the same failed activities, hoping for eventual success. This behavior can be costly in the investment arena. Sometimes, a particular investment, or even an investment strategy, just doesn't work out, but an investor is determined to stick with it — even if it ultimately means considerable financial loss. Don't let his happen to you — if it becomes apparent you need to change your investment approach, move on to something better.

Fear can hold us back in many walks of life — but don't let it keep you from making appropriate investment moves.

Edward Jones, Member SIPC



Edward Jones
 MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

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Essay competition open until March 31

Applications for the 2023 Energy Camp are available online for all incoming and current eighth-graders attending schools within the Cotton Electric Cooperative service territory. The deadline for entries is March 31.

Put on by Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives, Energy Camp is a hands-on, immersive camp experience that will be held May 30 through June 2 at Canyon Camp in Red Rock Canyon, southeast of Hinton.

Four campers will join other students from Oklahoma cooperatives for an all-expense paid, first-hand experience learning about cooperative principles, running for leadership positions, and climbing a pole just like electric linemen do.

The competition is divided into three rounds. The first round is the essay contest, where contestants submit an essay between 50 and 100 words to the co-op about why the entrant would like to attend Energy Camp.

Writers of the top 15 essays move to the second round for a live video interview between students and independent judges.

Finally, the final four contestants will be selected to attend the 2023 Energy Camp.

More information about the contest can be found online. To enter, visit www.cottonelectric.com/energycamp. For more information or questions, contact the Marketing department at 580-875-3351 or email zyoung@cottonelectric.com.

APPLY NOW!

www.cottonelectric.com/energycamp



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Oklahoma cooperatives co-sponsor 2023 SKIE Awards

Cotton Electric is excited to promote the 2023 SKIE (Supporting K20 Innovative Educators) awards, sponsored by Oklahoma Electric Cooperatives and the K20 Center for Community and Education Renewal.

We know there are teachers in our community who go above and beyond for their students. The SKIE awards celebrate educators or teams of educators across the state who have demonstrated the ability to link student learning with the innovative use of technology and the K20 IDEALS. Oklahoma educators who have forward-thinking ideas and techniques for their classroom could win \$1,000 thanks to your nomination.

To make a nomination, visit www.k20center.ou.edu/skie/. Deadline is March 10.



2023 SKIE AWARDS
Supporting K20 Innovative Educators
OKLAHOMA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



COTTON
ELECTRIC CO-OP
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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www.cottonelectric.com

UNCOMFORTABLE?

Does your home have any of these symptoms?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Rooms that get too hot or too cold? <input type="checkbox"/> High utility bills? <input type="checkbox"/> Thermostat wars with your spouse? <input type="checkbox"/> High humidity in summer? <input type="checkbox"/> House just never seems comfortable? <input type="checkbox"/> There doesn't seem to be enough airflow? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Dust buildup within 2 days of dusting? <input type="checkbox"/> Problems with your system since it's been installed? <input type="checkbox"/> Anyone with allergies or asthma? <input type="checkbox"/> AC starts and stops frequently or runs all the time, and house is still not cool?
--	---

Have been told by other contractors that the problem cannot be fixed?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, we can help!

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Continued from page 1

receive a restoration message, text "Out" to let Cotton Electric know you are still without power.

If assistance is needed when navigating the TextPower system, text "Help" to receive more information, call our office number previously listed, or visit the Outage Center page on our website.

Many of Cotton Electric's employees have collaborated over this project and are excited to share a new, efficient communication tool with our members.

"Our goal is to provide an efficient option for our members to report outages

and improve communication during these situations," said Mike Ottinger, Cotton Electric vice president of operations. "We want members to have the ability to contact us in the ways that best suit them and their needs."

Members still have the option to call in an outage, along with the SmartHub app or website. With four active lines of communication working together, Cotton Electric continues to keep our members informed while restoring power efficiently and safely.

For more information, visit www.cottonelectric.com/poweroutages or call us at 580-875-3351.

What to do if you encounter a downed power line

While typically not an everyday occurrence, overhead power lines or other electrical equipment can become damaged due to weather, car accidents or animal interference, for example.

If you were in an accident involving a downed overhead power line, would you get out of the car and run? If you saw a downed line across a road, would you approach it or try to move it?

Any of these actions can cause serious injury or electrocution (death). Downed lines and other damaged equipment can energize the ground, nearby people and objects. Never go near a downed power line or try to move it with an object. Electricity can jump from a wire or object to you to find the quickest path to ground.

The safest place to be after an accident involving a downed power line is inside a vehicle. Unless your vehicle is on fire, here is what you should do:

1. Stay inside your vehicle or cab.
2. Call 9-1-1 and report that there are downed or damaged power lines.

3. Try to remain calm.
4. Wait for utility crews to arrive to deenergize the power.
5. Do not get out until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.

If you must get out of the vehicle because it is on fire, cross your arms over your chest and make a clean, solid jump out, then hop with your feet together as far away as you can. If you are unable to make solid hops, shuffle with your feet close together.

When you exit, do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time. You could become electricity's path to ground from touch potential (touching something energized and the ground at the same time).

Hopping helps avoid step potential (placing each foot at a different voltage). When electricity escapes into the ground, it is compared to ripples in a pond, with each ripple representing a different voltage.

To learn more about electrical safety, visit www.cottonelectric.com/safety.



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Don't Become Electricity's PATH TO GROUND

When electric utility equipment becomes damaged, the ground and objects can become energized.

If you are in a situation where there could be downed power lines or a damaged pole, guy wire or padmount transformer (green box), **know what to do to save your life and the lives of others:**

CAR ACCIDENT

Stay inside your vehicle or cab since the ground or objects could be energized.

Call 9-1-1 and report that there are downed or damaged power lines or a dislodged green box.

Wait for the utility crew to arrive to deenergize the power.

Do not exit until someone from the utility says it is safe to do so.

ONLY EXIT IF THE VEHICLE IS ON FIRE

Cross your arms over your chest and **make a clean jump out.**

Do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.

Make solid hops with your feet together as far away as you can.

Do not return to the vehicle.

IF YOU ARE A BYSTANDER

Do not approach the scene to try and help.

Stay at least 50 feet away and do not lean on or touch anything, including fences or guardrails.

Learn more at: SafeElectricity.org

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Don't be up in the air about safety: metallic balloons

Having red and silver heart-shaped metallic balloons delivered to a loved one on Valentine's Day is a sweet gesture. These shiny and colorful balloons brighten any celebration, but they must be handled and disposed of properly to avoid safety hazards and damage to electrical systems.

Many safety experts recommend metallic over latex balloons because they are less of a choking hazard. However, using metallic balloons improperly can pose other safety hazards. Fortunately, with a few simple precautions, metallic balloons can be used without any problems.

Metallic balloons are filled with helium and are made of a type of nylon with a thin external metal coating. The metal coating has the ability to conduct electricity. If re-

leased, metallic balloons can come into contact with overhead power lines or electrical substations and can cause power outages.

Cotton Electric and Safe Electricity offer the following tips to help you make sure metallic balloons are used and disposed of safely:

- Always tie balloons down or use a weight.
- It is safest to keep your metallic balloons inside. Some parks have banned metallic balloons on their property, so be aware of these warnings.
- If you see a metallic balloon in contact with a power line, never attempt to disconnect it yourself. Instead, notify the electrical or utility company immediately.
- Never tie a metallic ribbon on a balloon. Also, never tie a metallic balloon to a child's

arm. These both can pose substantial electrical threats.

After your celebrations have come to an end, always deflate and poke holes in metallic balloons so they cannot become airborne after disposal.

Balloons are not biodegradable, so they should be recycled rather than released into the environment or sent to a landfill. Before placing the balloon in your recycling bin, make sure to puncture it

so that it cannot become airborne if released.

For more information on electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org or www.cottonelectric.com/safety.

Source: SafeElectricity





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Essentials for a healthy heart

February is American Heart Month

(Family Features) Cardiovascular disease is the No. 1 cause of death in the United States and globally. Studies throughout the past two decades indicate more than 80% of all cardiovascular events may be prevented by a healthy lifestyle and management of risk factors.

To help Americans measure their cardiovascular health and make meaningful lifestyle changes, the American Heart Association introduced Life's Essential 8, a checklist that explains eight habits and health measures that affect heart and brain health and overall well-being.

The checklist incorporates knowledge gained from more than 2,400 scientific papers on cardiovascular health published since it was originally introduced as Life's Simple 7 more than a decade ago. It has been expanded to apply to anyone age 2 and older, and now includes sleep as the eighth cardiovascular health component, reflecting findings that healthy sleep is es-

sential for optimal heart and brain health.

"The idea of optimal cardiovascular health is important because it gives people positive goals to work toward at any stage of life," said Donald M. Lloyd-Jones, M.D., Sc.M., EAHA, president of the American Heart Association and chair of the department of preventive medicine at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. "We felt it was the right time to conduct a comprehensive review of the latest research to refine the existing metrics and consider any new metrics that add value to assessing cardiovascular health for all people."

Start making positive changes to improve your heart and brain health with these eight essential steps:

Eat better

The checklist offers a simple questionnaire to assess your eating pattern. A heart-healthy diet encompasses a high intake of fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes; whole

grains and fat-free and low-fat dairy; lean protein; and low intake of sodium, red and processed meats and sweetened foods and drinks. Eat whole foods and rely on healthy non-tropical oils (like olive and canola) for cooking.

Get active

For most adults, the target level of moderate physical activity (such as walking) is 150 minutes or more per week or 75 minutes per week of vigorous-intensity physical activity. Kids ages 6 and older need 1 hour or more of play and structured activities per day.

Quit tobacco and nicotine

Nicotine makes your heart rate and blood pressure skyrocket while carbon monoxide and tobacco rob your heart, brain and arteries of oxygen. There are about 4,000 chemical components found in cigarettes; at least 250 of them are harmful to your health. Reducing your health risk means eliminating expo-



sure to any form of nicotine, including cigarettes, e-cigarettes and vaping devices, as well as limiting your exposure to secondhand smoke.

Get adequate sleep

Getting a good night's sleep is vital to cardiovascular health. Measured by average hours of sleep per night, the optimal level is 7-9 hours daily for adults. Ideal daily sleep ranges for children are 10-16 hours per 24 hours for ages 5 and younger; 9-12 hours for ages 6-12; and 8-10 hours for ages 13-18.

Maintain a healthy body weight

Although the measure of body mass index (BMI) is not a perfect metric, it is easily calculated and widely available; therefore, BMI remains a reasonable gauge to assess weight categories that may lead to health problems. A BMI of 18.5-24.9 is associated with the highest levels of cardiovascular health.

Manage cholesterol levels

Non-HDL ("bad") cholesterol, rather than total chole-

sterol, is a reasonable predictor of cardiovascular risk. Non-HDL cholesterol can be measured without fasting, which means it can be assessed at any time of day and reliably calculated.

Manage blood glucose

When there is not enough insulin or the body does not use insulin efficiently, blood glucose levels accumulate in the bloodstream. Hemoglobin A1c readings measure your long-term blood glucose control. A normal A1c is below 5.7%; between 5.7%-6.4% indicates pre-diabetes.

Understand blood pressure readings

An optimal blood pressure is less than 120/80 mm Hg while hypertension is defined as a 130-139 mm Hg systolic pressure (the top number is a reading) or 80-89 mm Hg diastolic pressure (bottom number).

For more ideas to achieve optimal cardiovascular health, or to assess your health and lifestyle risks, visit www.heart.org/lifes8.

Source: American Heart Association



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Medicare is notorious for its infamous "Donut Hole" phase of coverage, which leaves many with large out-of-pocket prescription costs.

Initial coverage begins on January 1, and members are responsible for co-pays for prescriptions until they reach \$4,430. Once this point is reached, a member is left to cover 25% of the cost of their prescriptions, otherwise known as the "Donut Hole". This phase continues until a member reaches \$7,050 in out-of-pocket costs.

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Co-op Life

Cotton Electric employees bring new life to classic vehicles

When you turn the key, senses are heightened by the roar of the engine, the smell of fresh air, the static pitch of the stereo, and the passing view of small-town street signs. Most people only see the final look of fixed-up vehicles, but what's hidden under the hood are the hours that many Cotton Electric employees worked to bring classic vehicles to life again.

Cotton Electric Warehouse Manager Justin King taught himself how to work on vehicles when he was young. Growing up riding in Suburban vehicles, King jumped at the opportunity to buy a 1989 Chevy Suburban he is currently restoring.

Some skills that are helpful during restoration projects are patience and problem solving.

"When you start working on a car, you have to figure out what problems exist, how to fix them, and imagine things you want to do over time," King said. "This project takes time, but it's a desire of mine to fix and create something new again with my own hands."

King's interest in restoring machinery is inspired by the memories attached. Traveling in Suburban vehicles as a kid motivates him to finish his current project, so King and his family can create memories on the road in a Suburban like he did.

Larry Williams, a Cotton Electric staking technician, worked on restoration projects for about 20 years, including a 1968 Camaro, a 1971 Chevrolet pickup and more. Out of all the vehicles he has restored, his favorite is the first one he worked on that he still owns: a 1972 Chevrolet pickup.

A lot of challenges and victories happen in between the time when Williams takes the vehicle apart and then pieces it back together.

"It's common to run into issues while gathering or fixing parts, but

most of the time you know someone who has come across the same issue and is able to help you figure it out," Williams said. "No restoration job is ever the same, but it's such a good feeling when you take a step back and see it completed for the first time."

Cotton Electric IT Technician Monty McDaniel is currently restoring a Camaro, but his favorite restoration was a 1952 8N Ford tractor that has been used by his family for several generations.

A lot of McDaniel's childhood memories involve riding the tractor with his grandpa, including how to drive it at a young age. Years later, McDaniel decided to restore the family's piece of equipment to prevent it from sitting and rotting.

At first, his goal was just to get the tractor running again, but the more McDaniel worked on it, the more he wanted to bring it back to the way it looked when he was a kid.

After six years of rewiring, sanding and repainting, McDaniel revived the tractor back to its familiar bright red and light gray exterior. McDaniel remembers all of his childhood memories whenever he glances at the photo of his grandpa that he printed under the lid of the equipment. McDaniel uses that tractor to this day.

"I dedicated the restoration in memory of my grandpa," McDaniel said. "He was my childhood hero, and this project was definitely a labor of love."

Joe Stuckey, Cotton Electric accountant, has been interested in cars for as long as he can remember. Growing up, he always wanted to ride in his dad's 1940 Ford pickup. Stuckey enjoyed building model cars as a kid, and he eventually began to work on cars with his dad and brother.

"It's definitely been a fun hobby to do as a family," Stuckey said. "Working alongside my dad taught me everything I know about fixing cars."

Completing a project can be a long, slow process, but Stuckey doesn't mind

his time spent at his family's shop in Duncan. Whether it's building an engine, searching for original parts, or driving around town, working on cars is a way for him to relax.

Cars have been a huge part of Stuckey's life, including many years ago when he and his wife took wedding photos with his favorite car restoration: a 1968 orange Camaro.

"Working on cars is a hobby I've always done since I was a kid," Stuckey said, "and it's something I will probably always do."

Between repairing machinery on his family's farm and helping a local mechanic during high school lunch breaks, Cotton Electric Apprentice Meter Technician Assistant Josh Belcher has many years of experience working with cars.

Belcher has worked on about 150 automobiles over time, but the first vehicle of his to fix was his great grandpa's truck handed down to him when he was a teenager.

"My first pickup taught me a lot about keeping a car running, and it eventually turned into a hobby for me," Belcher said. "I have a good time messing with cars and getting them to where they can run again."

Belcher recently moved into his auto shop in Walters, creating a space for him to work on cars while meeting others in the community. People passing by frequently admire the cars through the big storefront windows, and Belcher always extends a welcome along with a soda while they look at the vehicles. Belcher added that he enjoys sharing his knowledge of restoring cars with those who are interested in learning.

"I really like getting to meet people and see them enjoy the cars when they come to the shop," Belcher said. "If I can help others or involve anyone who is interested in learning more about restoring cars, those are lessons and experiences I always enjoy sharing."



(above) Before and after photos of a 1968 Camaro Joe Stuckey restored. Photos courtesy of Joe Stuckey.

Justin King is currently restoring a 1989 Chevrolet Suburban. Photo by Carli Eubank.



Josh Belcher restores cars in his auto shop in Walters. Photo by Carli Eubank.



Pictured is one of Larry Williams' restoration projects. Photo courtesy of Larry Williams.



Pictured is the tractor that Monty McDaniel restored in memory of his grandpa. Photo courtesy of Monty McDaniel.

Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the February issue, please submit information by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com by Feb. 24. Only events occurring after March 6 will be published in the next issue.

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

Grief group meeting in Duncan

The Heritage Oaks Church of The Nazarene will be hosting a "Grief and Bereavement" group starting at the beginning of January. The focus of the group, led by Phil and Nancy Evans, is to offer a safe place for those who have gone through the passing of a loved one to share their feelings, to create an environment where it is conducive to find friendship with others going through the grief process, and to bring healing and hope to those who have struggled with loss.

Starting Jan. 3, the group will meet each Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Heritage Oaks Church of The Nazarene, 4595 W. Beech, Duncan. For additional information, please contact the church at 580-255-2869 or Pastor Jon at 580-730-9431.

Annual Easter pageant sign up

Volunteers needed for the Holy City of the Wichita's 98th Annual Prince of Peace Easter pageant.

The casting call is 2 p.m., Feb 12. Sign-up begins in the chapel, followed by the first rehearsal. Subsequent rehearsals are Sunday afternoons starting at 2 p.m.

All ages are welcome and no acting experience necessary to participate. Costumes are provided.

There is no cost to join. Good walking shoes and a jacket are suggested, as this is an outdoor event.

The Holy City Easter Pageant is the longest outdoor passion play in the United States. Visit Holy City of the Wichitas' Facebook page for questions or more information.

Stephens County Coin Show

Attend the Stephens County Coin Show in Duncan to browse through row upon row of coins to buy, sell and trade. Find out what your treasured coins are worth or hunt down the elusive coin you've been searching to find.

This coin show features antique coins and more from all over the United States. The show is from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 17, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 18, at the Stephens County Fairgrounds, 2002 S. 13 St. in Duncan. For more information, call 580-467-0168 or 580-475-4570.

Ultimate Calf Roping

Watch as the best of the best ropers compete and show off their skills to lasso and tie at Ultimate Calf Roping. See all the fast-paced action and cheer on your favorite riders Feb. 25 and 26 at the Stephens County Fair & Expo Center, 2002 S. 13 St. in Duncan. For questions or more information, visit ucroping.com or call 580-225-3231.

Local theater set to perform "9 to 5: The Musical"

Duncan Little Theatre is scheduled for their production of the nostalgic comedy, "9 to 5: The Musical." Show dates are Feb. 24-26 and March 3-4 at the Simmons Center, 800 Chisholm Trail Parkway in Duncan. Performances will be at 7:30 each night with a 2 p.m. matinee on March 26. "9 to 5" is rated PG13 and some material may not be appropriate for children under 13. For more information or questions visit www.duncanlittletheatre.com

Food pantry open once monthly

Walters Community Food Pantry is open from 8 a.m. 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. For information, call Roger Noland at 580-591-6826.

Blessings Boutique open monthly

Marlow First United Methodist Church opens its Blessings Boutique from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every first and third Tuesday of the month. Clothing donation drop-off days are Tuesdays, or donors can call the church at 580-658-2765 to make other arrangements.

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PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Cotton Electric member Belinda Yearby's yellow Labrador, Luke, loving farmlife near the Empire area.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. The theme for March is A Day in the Life! 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.

Is dark chocolate really healthy?

Dark chocolate, when compared to white or milk chocolate, is a healthier option. While large quantities of dark chocolate have been shown to slightly reduce blood pressure, the amount consumed to make a difference resulted in adding a significant amount of calories to the diet, which must be accounted for or else the blood pressure benefits could be negated.

Still, if one must have chocolate, dark chocolate is your best chance at adding a nutritional-edge to your diet.

What is the bright side of dark chocolate?

Dark chocolate is filled with antioxidants that help prevent damage to cells and tissues in the body.

It is also a great source of several minerals, including magnesium, manganese, iron, and copper.

Dark chocolate also contains dietary fiber, which is often in short supply in the American diet.

What is the dark side of dark chocolate?

There is a reason why it tastes so good – calories from fat and sugar. Dark chocolate can contribute a significant amount of fat and calories to your diet.

The studies that indicated dark chocolate helps lower blood pressure had study participants eat a 100g bar of dark chocolate, which provided around 500 extra calories a day. Study participants were asked to decrease



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food For THOUGHT

their other intake of food to balance out the extra calories and avoid gaining weight. This study is not practical for most people.

To give you a visual for intake, a Hershey's Special Dark chocolate bar weighs 48g, so study participants ate two per day. You may think you could eat that much chocolate every day but could you decrease your intake of other foods to avoid gaining weight?

A better way to apply this knowledge of the healthier side of dark chocolate is to opt for dark chocolate versus other desserts when you are craving something sweet. Shoot for concentrations of over 70 percent cocoa. And drink your milk separately – researchers believe that milk may prevent the antioxidants in cocoa from doing their job.



Dark chocolate is filled with antioxidants that help prevent damage to cells and tissues in the body. It is also a great source of magnesium, manganese, iron and copper.

Cherries add flavor to favorite desserts

Cherries are an unsung fruit. Though often overlooked, tart cherries are growing in popularity as more scientific evidence links cherries to various health benefits.

In addition to containing 19 times more vitamin A than blueberries or strawberries, cherries are full of antioxidants and have been used as an anti-inflammatory.

The Cherry Marketing Institute, an organization funded by American tart cherry growers and processors, says cherries may also provide individuals heart-healthy benefits and could reduce post-exercise muscle and joint pain.



While cherries are nutritious when eaten alone, they also make for delicious additions to various recipes, including dishes that range from sweet to savory. Cherries are quite common-place in many popular desserts, especially when paired with chocolate.



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Valentine's recipe you'll love to share

(Family Features) If the way to your loved one's heart is through the stomach, there's no better way to start off this Valentine's Day than with a home-made breakfast prepared with love.

Whether you're whipping up a breakfast for a spouse with a sophisticated palate or trying to tempt the taste buds of your littlest loves, explore these ideas to get inspired.

• Red is the color of love, so build your menu around fresh strawberries or raspberries, which pair perfectly with French toast or crepes, and can even dress up a simple cereal.

• For a more sensible menu, opt for a fruity berry smoothie or a parfait

layered with fresh fruit, low-fat yogurt and granola. Add a hint of loving indulgence by sprinkling dark chocolate shavings on top.

• Show your affection with a plate of these colorful Cocoa-Kissed Red Velvet Pancakes featuring rich 100 percent cocoa, buttermilk and fresh berries. Heart-shaped cookie cutters lend a special touch to these fluffy, flavorful pancakes. Add sweet garnishes like powdered sugar and berries for a sensational way to say "I love you."

Find more recipes you'll love to share with your nearest and dearest this Valentine's Day at Culinary.net.



Cocoa-Kissed Red Velvet Pancakes

Recipe courtesy of Nestlé

Servings: 10 pancakes

- 1 c. all-purpose flour
- 1/4 c. granulated sugar
- 3 tbsp. Nestlé Toll House Baking Cocoa
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 large egg
- 1 c. reduced-fat buttermilk or low-fat milk
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 1 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 tsp. red food coloring
- heart-shaped pancake cutters or cookie cutters (optional)
- butter, for garnish (optional)
- powdered sugar, for garnish (optional)
- maple syrup, for garnish (optional)
- fresh berries, for garnish (optional)

In large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking cocoa, baking powder, baking soda and salt; stir well.

In separate large bowl, whisk together egg, buttermilk, unsalted butter, vanilla extract and food coloring. Add to flour mixture; stir to combine. Allow mixture to sit 5 minutes.

Heat nonstick skillet or griddle over medium heat. Brush with oil or butter. Add about 1/4 cup batter to skillet.

let. Cook about 2 minutes, or until bubbles start to form on top. Flip and cook 1-2 minutes, or until bottom is lightly browned. Serve immediately with butter, powdered sugar, syrup and berries, if desired.

Tip: If using pancake or cookie cutters, be sure to coat with oil so pancakes don't stick. Place cutters in skillet and pour batter into cutters. Remove cutters before flipping.

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Prioritize heart health with a balanced eating plan

(Family Features) No matter your motivations, it's never too late or too early to start focusing on your heart health, and taking steps now can make a big difference. Small changes, like following a healthier eating plan, can help you start down a path toward improved heart health.

One step you can take is following the DASH eating plan, which is a flexible and balanced way of eating that stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension and was developed by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Requiring no special foods, DASH provides daily and weekly

nutritional goals to help lower two major risk factors for heart disease: high blood pressure and high LDL (bad) cholesterol.

Being more physically active, managing stress, getting quality sleep and not smoking combined with DASH can put you on a path toward a healthy heart for life.

Encouraging others to join you on your heart-health journey can also be rewarding. Research shows social support and personal networks make it more likely you'll stick to healthy habits like eating healthy.

Sharing heart-healthy recipes with family and friends is an added bonus, and these

DASH-friendly meals can help you take the guesswork out of putting nutritious dinners on the table. Greek-Style Flank Steaks with Tangy Yogurt Sauce offer the bold flavors of the Mediterranean while Teriyaki-Glazed Salmon with Stir-Fried Vegetables is as easy to make as it is colorful.

For a complementary combination of pork and sweet fruit flavor, these Baked Pork Chops with Apple Cranberry Sauce are perfect to serve alongside brown rice or steamed broccoli.

Learn more about heart health and find DASH-friendly recipes at nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH.

Greek-Style Flank Steak with Tangy Yogurt Sauce

Recipe courtesy of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

- | | |
|---|---|
| Marinade: | Yogurt Sauce: |
| 1/4 c. lemon juice | 1 c. cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped |
| 1 tbsp. olive oil | 1 c. nonfat plain yogurt |
| 2 tsp. fresh oregano, rinsed, dried and chopped | 2 tbsp. lemon juice |
| 1 tbsp. garlic, minced (2-3 cloves) | 1 tbsp. fresh dill, rinsed, dried and chopped |
| 1 beef flank steak (12 oz.) | 1 tbsp. garlic, minced (2-3 cloves) |
| | 1/2 tsp. salt |

To make marinade: In large bowl, combine lemon juice, olive oil, oregano and garlic.

Lay steak in flat container with sides and pour marinade over steak. Marinate at least 20 minutes, or up to 24 hours, turning several times.

To make yogurt sauce: Combine cucumber, yogurt, lemon juice, dill, garlic and salt. Set yogurt sauce aside at least 15 minutes to blend flavors. Sauce can be prepared up to 1 hour in advance and refrigerated.

Preheat broiler to high with rack 3 inches from heat source.

Broil steak about 10 minutes on each side to minimum internal temperature of 145 F. Let cool 5 minutes before carving.

Slice thinly across grain into 12 slices.



Serve three slices with 1/2 cup yogurt sauce.

Tip: Serve in sandwich with pita bread, lettuce and tomato.

Teriyaki-Glazed Salmon with Stir-Fried Vegetables

Recipe courtesy of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

- | | |
|--|---|
| Salmon: | Vegetables: |
| 2 tbsp. light teriyaki sauce | 1 bag (12 oz.) frozen vegetables stir-fry |
| 1/4 c. mirin or sweet rice wine | 1/2 tbsp. peanut oil or vegetable oil |
| 2 tbsp. rice vinegar | 1/2 tbsp. garlic, minced (about 1 clove) |
| 2 tbsp. scallions, rinsed and minced | 1 tbsp. ginger, minced |
| 1 1/2 tbsp. ginger, minced | 1 tbsp. scallions, rinsed and minced |
| 12 oz. salmon fillets, cut into four portions (3 oz. each) | 1 tbsp. light soy sauce |

Preheat oven to 350 F.

To prepare salmon: Mix teriyaki sauce, mirin, rice vinegar, scallions and ginger well. Pour over salmon and marinate 10-15 minutes.

Remove salmon from marinade.

Place salmon on baking sheet. Bake 10-15 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with fork in thickest part and reaches minimum internal temperature of 145 F.

To prepare vegetables:

Thaw frozen vegetables in microwave or place bag in bowl of hot water about 10 minutes. In large wok or saute pan, heat oil. Add garlic, ginger and scallions; cook gently, but do not brown, 30-60 seconds.

Add vegetables and continue stir-frying 2-3 minutes, or until heated through. Add soy sauce.

Serve one piece of salmon with 1 cup vegetables.



Baked Pork Chops with Apple Cranberry Sauce

Recipe courtesy of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

- | | |
|---|---|
| Pork Chops: | Sauce: |
| 4 boneless pork chops (about 3 ounces each) | 1/4 c. low-sodium chicken broth |
| 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper | 1 medium apple, peeled and grated (about 1 cup) |
| 1 medium orange, rinsed and zested | 1/2 cinnamon stick |
| 1/2 tbsp. olive oil | 1 bay leaf |
| | 1/2 c. dried cranberries |
| | 1/2 c. 100% orange juice |

Preheat oven to 350 F.

To prepare pork chops: Season pork chops with pepper and orange zest.

In large saute pan, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add pork chops and cook until browned on one side, about 2 minutes. Turn and brown 2 minutes. Remove pork chops from pan, place on non-stick baking sheet and bake 10 minutes to minimum internal temperature of 160 F.

To make sauce: Add chicken broth to saute pan and stir to loosen brown bits from pork chops. Set aside.

In small saucepan over medium heat, cook grated apples, cinnamon stick and bay leaf until apples begin to soften.

Add cranberries, orange juice and reserved broth.

Bring to boil then lower heat to gentle simmer. Simmer 10 minutes, or until cranberries are plump and apples are tender. Remove cinnamon stick.

Peel orange and cut into eight sections.

Serve one pork chop with 1/4 cup sauce and two orange segments.



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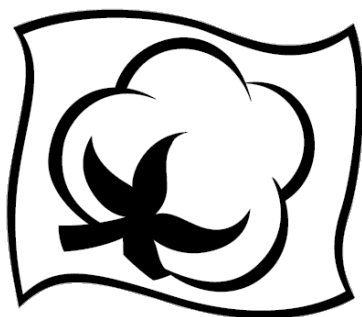
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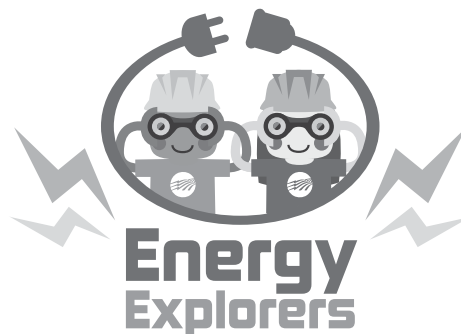
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1. Never place extension **rdsoc** under rugs or carpet.

2. Make sure electrical cords are not **yrafde** or broken.

3. Smoke **maalsr** should be tested every month.

4. Place electrical cords in areas where you won't **itpr** on them.

5. Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away from space **shetear**.

6. Electricity and **rwtea** never mix.

Answer Key: 1) cords 2) frayed 3) alarms 4) trip 5) heaters 6) water

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- 2618 Martin Lane: Farmhouse-Urban-Comfortable. Included with privacy and balcony. All Fresh, clean, new appliances (range/vent hood, refrigerator, dishwasher) Master Bedroom with balcony (2 closets) Move in ready. 2 bed, 1&1/2 bath, Lrm, KCHN, Dining room, connecting hallway, open staircase, utility rooms, privacy fenced patio w/tree. Includes home warranty (all has been replaced, repaired and serviced.) \$79,900.

- Mystery home in Walters: Asking for a craftsman with vision, Cash only property. Huge potential to restore and create. \$44,000 or make an offer of good conscience.

- Coming soon: Property with 2acres, fresh brick home, manicured landscape. Outbuildings, 3 bed, bath and 1/2, 2 living areas, (all fresh and painted) privacy fenced back yard, covered patio, double carport with entry side door to home also. State of the art greenhouse heated concrete floor, water filtration system, and more. The owners are selling also a renewed mma license that can be purchased from them - not part of the real estate.

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Parting Shot



The runner-up to this month's Pets photo contest was Cotton Electric member Cooper Huffstutler's labrador retriever, Odie.

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