What's Inside



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Creating sweet memories: from fields to communities



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"The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957"

VOLUME 66 June 12, 2023 NUMBER 10

Another great year for a special co-op tradition

By Carli Eubank

The days are filled with cheers, sweat, smiles and excitement. Competitors line up on the track, ready for their race to start. Electric co-op volunteers wait anxiously at the finish line to congratulate the athletes and hand them their place cards. A wide range of emotions are experienced at these competitions each May when athletes, families and volunteers come together for Special Olympics Oklahoma.

One of the biggest traditions of Oklahoma's electric cooperatives is volunteering at Special Olympics Oklahoma with the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC). More than 150 co-op employees exemplified co-op principles of Cooperation Among Cooperatives and Concern for Community and volunteered for this year's events. Among those volunteers were two from Cotton Electric Cooperative: Kyle Graham, member service representative, and TJ James, journeyman lineman.

Volunteering at Special Olympics was something that James always thought about doing and this year was his first year to help with the event. One of his biggest takeaways happened before the games even started.

"The Opening Ceremonies was an amazing experience because you get to see how excited the participants were to be competing in the games," James said.

During the ceremony, athletes representing each region are introduced, awards are presented, and the torch gets lit. Then, with much excitement, the competitions begin.

Continued on page 5



Cotton Electric Member Service Representative Kyle Graham and Journeyman Lineman TJ James congratulate an athlete at the finish line. Photo courtesy of OAEC.

Farris appointed to Cotton Electric Board of Trustees

Dell Farris has been appointed trustee for District 9 in the Cotton Electric service territory. He fills a seat formerly held by Ronnie Bohot since 2009 until his passing in February 2023. Farris will fill out the remainder of Bohot's term, due to expire in 2025.

The business and affairs of Cotton Electric are managed by a board of nine trustees representing geographical districts with similar densities of service. District 9 is situated on the northwest side of Jefferson County and southern Stephens County, with a few meters also in Cotton County. Approximately 700 miles of Cotton Electric line serve 1,601 members in District 9.



Dell Farris

Farris is a native of Oklahoma, originally from Addington. He graduated from Waurika High School in 2006 and furthered his education at Oklahoma State University where he graduated with

a Bachelor in Agricultural Economics and Minor in Finance. He now lives southwest of Comanche, where he and Caitlin, his wife of 3 years, raise their 18-monthold daughter, Caroline.

Farris is currently a vice president and loan officer with American Nation Bank in Comanche. When he's not working at the bank, he enjoys farming and ranching with his family. They run stocker cattle, have cow-calf pairs and grow wheat. He also attends First Baptist Church in Walters and is currently a Board of Director for the Stephens County Farm Bureau. In recent years, he has been active in the Oklahoma Farm Bureau

Young Farmers and Ranchers program, Comanche Chamber of Commerce and the Stephens County Livestock Growers Association.

Before being appointed to the Board of Trustees, Farris knew of Cotton Electric as his source of electricity, receiving updates from the monthly newspaper, and that the co-op was a big employer for several good people in the area.

Farris is looking forward to the different experiences as a newly appointed trustee will bring. He also mentions the great amount of encouragement he's received recently.

"I am looking forward to the opportunity to serve and give back to my community, while learning new things and being a representative for the members of District 9," Farris said. "I am excited in meeting and getting to know the people of Cotton Electric."

Throughout the process of becoming a Trustee, Farris extends his gratitude to those around him.

"I would like to thank everyone for their openness and encouragement, and for their welcoming spirit and support," Farris said. "I look forward to this opportunity, and I greatly appreciate it and you all."

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after June 1, 2023, is \$0.01176 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$15.29 on the June bill.

May 2023 Temperature Extremes High Low Avg. Day High Low A

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Av		
1	73	45	59	16	78	60	69		
2	81	45	63	17	82	56	69		
3	71	53	62	18	81	64	73		
4	77	56	67	19	84	59	72		
5	95	60	78	20	76	54	65		
6	93	56	75	21	77	53	65		
7	87	60	74	22	81	50	66		
8	87	58	73	23	84	60	72		
9	89	67	78	24	84	63	74		
10	83	65	74	25	78	66	72		
11	82	64	73	26	79	62	71		
12	92	66	79	27	83	62	73		
13	79	63	71	28	80	64	72		
14	79	66	73	29	86	63	75		
15	77	65	71	30	88	64	76		
Source:	srh.noaa.	gov/oun/		31	88	65	77		
Αve	Average Daily High: 82 Average Daily Low: 60								

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed July 4 for Independence 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 July 17, 2023.

Contact Us

offic- Do you have a story uly 4 idea for The Current or Day. do you need to place an ill be 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.



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

Preparing to serve you better

to you is, and will always be, top priority for Cotton Electric Cooperative. These days, power reliability seems to be making news now more than ever.

As the energy industry continues to transition and more segments of the economy are becoming electrified, such as vehicles, machinery and even lawn equipment, additional pressures are being placed on our nation's electric grid. With summer storm season upon us, I thought it would be a good time to tell you about a few measures we're taking to ensure you continue receiving the reliable power you depend on and deserve.

Let me be the first to say I love trees and the charm they add to our communities, and I know

roviding reliable power you do too. While trees provide shade and add beauty to our area, you may be surprised to learn that overgrown vegetation can account for a large number of power outages.

> That's why we strive to keep the co-op's power lines clear in right-of-way (ROW) areas. A ROW area is the land a co-op uses to construct, maintain. replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. This ROW enables Cotton Electric to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder distribution power lines. The overall goal of our vegetation management strategy is to provide reliable power to our members through clear cutting, trimming and herbicide application to areas where trees can come in contact with lines.

By clearing trees and brush, there are fewer service interruptions and in the event of an outage, line crews are able to work more quickly and safely in an improved environment to restore your power. In order to maintain cleared areas, we return to apply a carefully chosen herbicide spray which will eliminate any regrowth and maintain the cleared area.

Although it may seem counterintuitive, we also maintain power reliability through planned, controlled outages. By carefully cutting power to one part of our local area for a few hours, Cotton Electric crews can perform system repairs and upgrades, which ultimately improve electric service. Please make sure we have your correct contact information on file



Jennifer Meason, CEO

to receive notifications when planned outages are scheduled.

Vegetation management and system upgrades are essential tools in ensuring power reliability and minimizing the risk of outages. We are continually assessing the system and working on projects to improve service quality. I encourage you to follow us on social media so you can learn about the latest co-op updates. Also, please give me a call with any questions or concerns you might have. I can be reached at 580-875-3351.







Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Looking for additional ways to save energy this summer? Your laundry room is a great place to start. Wash clothes with cold water, which can cut one load's energy use by more than half. Your washing machine will use the same amount of energy no matter the size of the clothes load, so fill it up when you can. When drying clothes, separate the heavier cottons. Loads will dry faster and more evenly if you separate heavier cottons like linens and towels from your lightweight clothing.

Source: Energy.gov

April 2023 Operating Stats

	2022	2022
	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$5,448,149	\$5,815,796
Cost of Purchased Power	3,832,647	4,329,948
Taxes	119,837	130,578
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,076	1,145
Average Farm and Residential Bill	116	121
Average Farm and Residential kWh	874	867
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	19,377	19,183
Miles Energized	5,258	5,227
Density Per Mile	3.69	3.67
New Service Connects YTD	141	145
Services Retired	46	37

Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

July Ad Sales Deadline June 30 Classified Deadline June 30

Publish Date

August Ad Sales Deadline July Classified Deadline July 28 Publish Date Aug. 14

The Current

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Jennifer MeasonCEO Shane Bowers......Vice President Zach Young Director Carli Eubank......Communications Specialist

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Energy Efficiency

Emerging home energy technology

bills, at a time where we are plugging in even more devices throughout our homes. Energy savings technology is 2. Smart Vents: constantly evolving, and new home energy savings devices are being developed regularly. There are several emerging home energy savings devices that aim to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption. Here are a few examples:

1. Smart Thermostats:

Smart thermostats are one of the most popular energy tech devices in homes. Although they have been around a while, their technology continues to improve. Features like from simple programmable tools, to intuitive and constantly learning devices.

omeowners are always The new era of smart thermostats can off when a room is unoccupied, and looking for ways to save learn patterns in your daily routine to even integrate with motion sensors or money on their energy auto adjust the scheduling to be more light sensors to optimize energy usage. efficient.

adaptability of smart thermostats to the next level. Smart vents along with their wireless remote room thermostats, or pucks, provide the user with room level temperature control. They use room temperature data to open and close based on the room's occupant needs. They are compatible with many smart thermostats and voice as-

3. Smart Lighting:

LED lighting combined with smart geofencing have changed these devices controls allows for efficient lighting management. Smart lighting can automatically adjust brightness, turn lights

4. Advanced Power Strips:

These power strips reduce standby These integrated vents are taking the power consumption by automatically cutting power to devices that are not in use or in stand-by mode. They also include designated outlets for essential devices that need continuous power.

5. Energy-Efficient Appliances:

The market offers an increasing number of energy-efficient appliances, including refrigerators, washing machines, dishwashers, and more. Advancements in motor and compressor technologies has allowed for better performance in these appliances while consuming less energy. Appliances like heat-pump dryers can reduce consumption by at least 28% according to the Department of Energy, and up to 60% according to some manufacturers.

6. Innovations in Water Heat-

Much like other appliances, water heaters have advanced considerably in their efficiency. Heat pump water heaters can be 4 times as efficient as their traditional resistance counterparts. They utilize a compressor and heat pump technology to heat water. There are some installation requirements for these units, and something you should speak to a licensed contractor about. Even traditional resistance water heaters have come a long way. "Smart" models allow users to control temperature settings remotely, or set and adjust on how you can save, visit www.cotschedules from their phone. Features like leak detection and auto shutoff



Heath Morgan, **Energy Efficiency** Coordinator

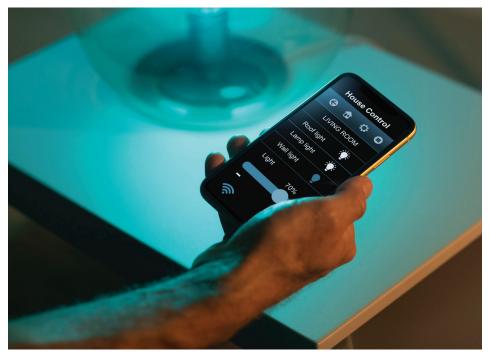
valves also help owners to protect their homes from catastrophic water dam-

7. Energy Monitoring Systems:

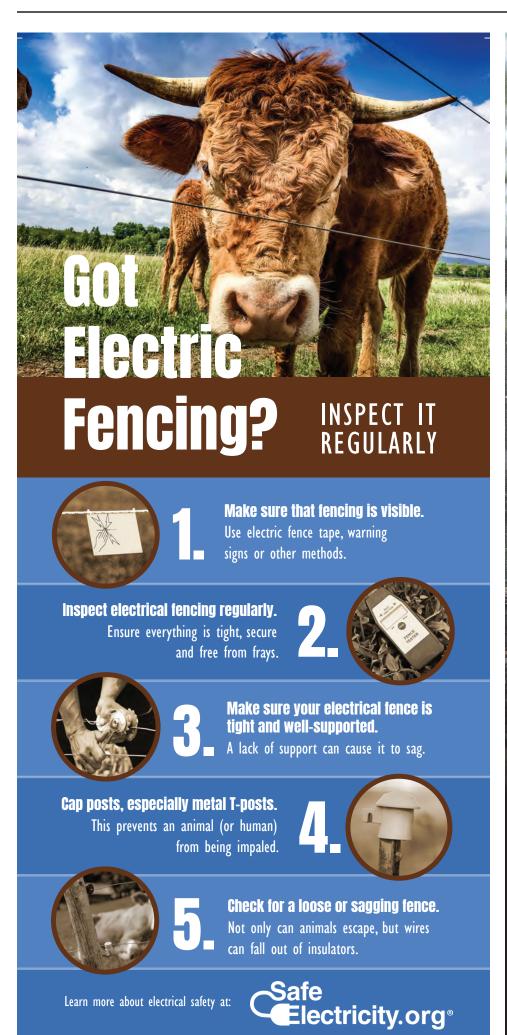
These devices track and display real-time energy consumption of appliances and other systems in your home. Most monitors can be purchased and installed relatively cheap. They do require some input from the homeowner. The more input you provide, the more accurate your data will be. The associated apps allow you to see what systems are using the most energy in your home. The daily and monthly summaries are a great way to track how improvements or changes in your habits have affected your energy consump-

These are just some of the technologies available to consumers today. There are many options to suit every homeowner's needs and budget. Home energy technology is constantly evolving, and new devices are emerging all

For questions or more information tonelectric.com/energy-efficiency or call our offices at 580-875-3351.



Most smart thermostats give you the ease of controlling your home's temperature from your smart phone.







Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation



A recent Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) grant was awarded to the Stephens County Honor Guard to help purchase new uniforms for their members. Pictured left to right: Cotton Electric Director of Marketing and Communications Zach Young, Stephens County Honor Guard Vice-Commander Steve Condit, Treasurer Dan Mitchell, Commander Jerry McAdory, and member Kirk Werner.

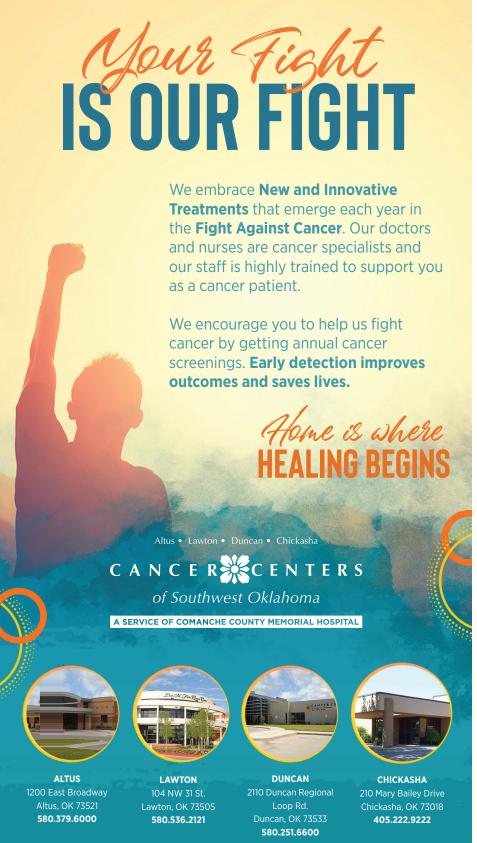


Duncan Community Residence was awarded a CECF grant to purchase new windows. Pictured left to right: (front row) Melanie Wilkins, board vice president; Renee Brooks, DCR administrator; Debbie Kirk, office manager; David Moore, board member; Zach Young, Cotton Electric Director of Marketing and Communications; (middle and back row) residents of Duncan Community Residence.



AmVets Post 11 received a CECF grant to purchase office supplies and repairs. Pictured left to right: Carli Eubank, Cotton Electric communications specialist; Carlos Arriaga, public relations officer; Dan Davis, post commander and a service officer. Other AmVets Post 11 officers not pictured include: Ken Youngblood, first vice-president and finance; Jerry McAdory, second vice-president; Gayla Laufenberg, adjutant and a service officer; John Wostal, assistant finance; David McAllister, judge advocate and a chaplain; Paul Parrish, provost marshall; Jon Everett, a service officer; and Bob Cox, a chaplain.







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Continued from page 1

Athletes train and compete yearround to qualify for the state games. Walking, running, wheelchair races, softball and bean bag toss are just a few of the competitive events. Electric coop employees volunteer at the track and field events, helping athletes line up before the races, cheer them on, record their times, meet them at the finish line or direct them to the awards ceremony.

2022 was the first year Graham volunteered at the Special Olympics, and the genuine comradery between the volunteers and the athletes was one of the reasons he volunteered again.

"One thing I've really enjoyed the past two years of volunteering is being able to play a small part in giving the athletes a chance to compete," Graham said. "Win or lose, majority of the athletes were just happy to be there, so being able to provide that opportunity to them is something volunteers are fortunate to do."

A moment that stood out to James was a softball team cheering in the

stands for each athlete "like their life depended on it," even though none of them knew any of the athletes competing. He later found out that the team raises money throughout the year to support Special Olympics.

"I'm very blessed to work for a company who wants to contribute to this event and give employees the opportunity to be part of such a phenomenal experience," James said.

Graham recommends volunteering for Special Olympics to anyone who has the ability to do so because the organization serves a community that otherwise wouldn't have the same opportunities.

"Watching the athletes compete, handing them their place cards and seeing how happy it makes them is something I relish," Graham said. "Giving or receiving a high five, shout of excitement or hug are what this event is all about."

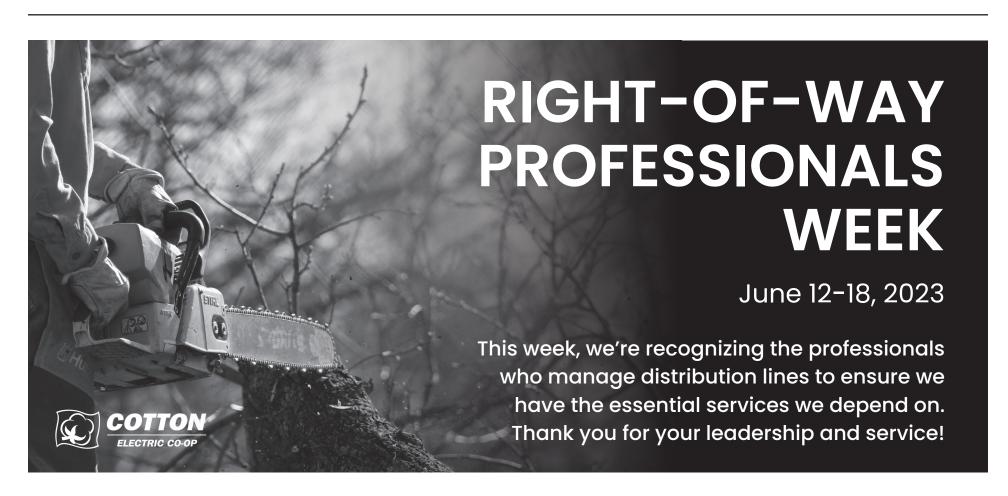
Members can get involved with Special Olympics Oklahoma, too. Learn how by visiting www.sook.org under the Get Involved tab.



Cotton Electric Journeyman Lineman TJ James cheers on an athlete crossing the finish line. Photo courtesy by OAEC.



Cotton Electric Member Service Representative Kyle Graham gives an athlete a place card at the end of the race. Photo courtesy by OAEC.





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Stay safe while spending time outdoors this summer

As temperatures increase and sunny days abound, it is easy to be footloose and fancy free. As you spend more time outdoors, keep these safety tips in mind to have a great summer.

Pools and hot tubs

Before opening your pool or hot tub for the season, ensure there is ground fault circuit interrupter protection on underwater lighting circuits, as well as for lighting around pools, hot tubs and spas. Have your pool's electrical system inspected. Faulty wiring can cause swimmers to experience electric shock drowning.

Boating/Swimming

When boating or swimming, know that faulty wiring can cause the water to become energized. Never go swimming near boats plugged into shore power or docks with an electrical source. Energized water can cause electric shock drowning.

Outdoor activities

According to the National Lightning Safety Council, approximately 440 people are struck and killed by lightning each year.* Nearly two-thirds of the deaths occurred while enjoying outdoor leisure activities - 33% of the fatalities occurred during water-related activities such as boating, spending time on the beach and swimming, while 14% happened during sporting activities such as fishing, soccer and running.

During a storm

When angry clouds roll in, take them seriously. Have a weather app installed on your phone to inform you of weather alerts. Lightning can occur up to 10 miles away from the heart of the storm, so if you hear thunder, take cover. A watch means that conditions are likely for severe weather to develop; a warning means take action.

When playing

When flying drones, remote-controlled planes, toys or kites, fly them in a wide-open area free from overhead power lines. If a toy or object gets stuck in an overhead power line, do not try to remove it. Instead, call your electric utility and a crew will address the issue safely.

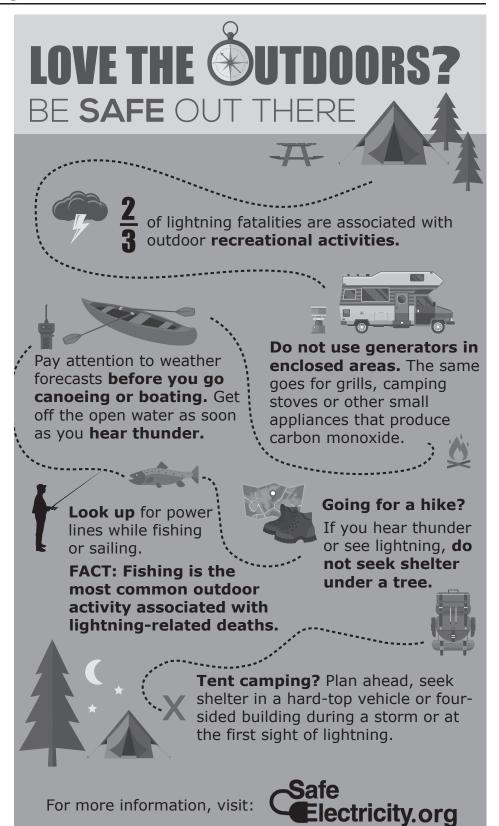
Ensure that overhead power lines do not run through or over a tree before your child starts to climb. Select trees that are in a wide-open space without overhead power lines nearby.

If kids are playing with a ball and it goes inside a substation fence, teach them to never touch or climb the fence to attempt to retrieve it or any other item. Instead, call your electric utility to safely take care of it. The same precaution applies to a pet or animal inside the fenced area of a substation.

For additional outdoor electrical safety tips, visit www.CottonElectric. com or www.SafeElectricity.org.

*Analysis of lightning-related deaths in the U.S., 2006–2021

Source: SafeElectricity



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- There doesn't seem to be enough airflow?
- □ Dust buildup within 2 days of dusting?
- Problems with your system since it's been
- Anyone with allergies or asthma?
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- □ Have been told by other contractors that the problem cannot be fixed?

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Special needs trust could ease families' stress

If you have a family member with special needs, you might face emotional and physical issues, but you also may be concerned about maximizing the financial support your loved one requires. Consequently, you may want to consider establishing a special needs

This type of trust can help maintain the financial



security and lifestyle of an individual with special needs. Furthermore, a special needs trust can allow the trust's beneficiary to receive financial support for supplemental needs without losing public benefits, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid.

Here's how it works: You, as the trust's grantor, establish the trust and name a trustee who is responsible for managing the trust. You can fund the trust with gifts throughout your lifetime or from other sources, such as inheritances or court settlements. But another popular funding mechanism is life insurance, which the trust can purchase on the life of one or both parents of a special-needs child. And as

long as the trust is also named the beneficiary of the policy, government benefits will be

In a special needs trust, the role of trustee is important. A trustee must manage the funds within the trust and ensure those funds are used only to supplement SSI and Medicaid, the government programs that typically pay for food, housing and medicine. Instead, a special needs trust can be used for most other expenses, including transportation and travel, education, entertainment, professional

services and personal items. You could serve as trustee yourself or choose a relative or a trusted friend. Ideally, you

want someone who's familiar

with your wishes and the needs of your family member with disabilities and who is also competent at managing finances and staying current on possible areas of concern

SSI and Medicaid regulations. As an alternative, you could hire a professional trust company to manage your company has expertise in asset management and government regulations and can provide you with strict recordkeeping of all the financial transactions associated with your trust. If you go this route, you'll want to compare different trust companies' costs and services. For such a personal matter as administering a trust for your special-needs family member, you'll want to be sure you're

comfortable with whatever company you select.

Also, you'll want to be familiar with some of the regarding special needs trusts. For one thing, because the trustee totally controls when and how funds are distributed, special needs trust. This type of beneficiaries can get frustrated if their requests for money are denied. Additionally, while third-party special needs trusts are funded by someone other than the beneficiary, first-party special needs trusts are funded by the beneficiary's own assets — and future of your loved one with for these first-party special needs trusts, the trust must typically pay back Medicaid for money it has spent on the beneficiary's behalf after the

death of the beneficiary. This repayment could deplete the trust, depriving secondary beneficiaries of any assets they might otherwise receive. Third-party special needs trusts do not require Medicaid repayment.

Consult with a legal professional before establishing a special needs trust to ensure this arrangement is appropriate for your family's situation. But if it is, and if it's managed properly, it can relieve you of some of the stress you may feel over the special needs.

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Kelsey Avants

1110 N. 10th Street | Duncan, OK 73533 | 580-255-4408 kelsey.avants@edwardjones.com | www.edwardjones.com Edward Jones MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Energy Trails volunteers recognized at State Capitol

By Carli Eubank

Last month, nearly 40 electric cooperative linemen were honored at the State Capitol for their efforts toward completing five international electrification projects, sponsored by Oklahoma's electric cooperatives. The recognized guests received a citation signed by Governor Stitt and lawmakers.

Among those recognized were Cotton Electric Safety and Loss Control Coordinator Jarrod Hooper. He has volunteered for two projects with Energy Trails and will return again this year as the project's crew leader. Cotton Electric CEO Jennifer Meason was also in attendance. She is a member of the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperative's International Committee, and in the past, has served as a member of the Energy Trails Foundation Board of Directors. Meason was part of the speaker panel who shared about their experiences with the international projects during the luncheon hosted by Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC). She shared about her trip to Guatemala with the Energy Trails Inauguration Team in 2018.

"It was a life-changing experience that opened my eyes to the daily struggles and strife so many people face around the world. It wasn't that long ago that our own area faced those same obstacles and why members began forming cooperatives in the 1930s," Meason said. "It was exhaustive work for the people of Guatemala to meet the barest of needs. It was a blessing to see how they interacted with our linemen and to witness the excitement on their faces when their homes were electrified. We knew that, in the days to come, many of their tasks would be made easier and their safety and quality of life would improve."

After enjoying a meal and fellowship, volunteer linemen and guests made their way to the State Capitol. It wasn't until the day before that Hooper knew he would be one of the few volunteers recognized on the floor, standing alongside past Energy Trails project leaders Damon Lester, Derec Janaway and Mike Wolfe.

"I was glad to have my wife with me that day, and together we got to see the large group of support of everyone connected to these projects and hear their own experiences," Hooper said.

Bringing light to communities is the history and mission of electric cooperatives that continues to be exemplified - now across the world.

"It was nice to be recognized on that level for completing five projects," Hooper said, "and I really hope to see these projects continue to be carried out for a long time."

One of Meason's biggest takeaways of that day is the hearts of service that Anna Politano, Chris Myers, OAEC staff and the project volunteers have. She mentions how honored she is to assist with the process and how proud she is of everyone involved and the legacy they are creating within the industry.

"Everyone who participates in these projects comes back a different person," Meason said. "We're giving the gift of electricity, but they are giving us the gift of perspective and appreciation for our history."

Oklahoma's electric cooperatives established a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, The Oklahoma Energy Trails Foundation, in support of continuing international electrification projects. To make a donation or for more information, visit www.oaec.coop/co-op-difference/energy-trails/.



A large group were present to support and recognize nearly 40 volunteer linemen for their time and efforts to complete five Energy Trail projects. Photo courtesy of OAEC.



Cotton Electric Safety and Loss Coordinator Jarrod Hooper (second from right) was one of the few Energy Trails volunteers who were recognzied on the State Capitol floor. Photo courtesy of OAEC.



Cotton Electric CEO Jennifer Meason (third from left) spoke about her experiences traveling to Guatemala in 2018 with the Energy Trails Inauguration Team. Photo courtesy of OAEC.











Staying safe on the farm and ranch this harvest season, all year long

and raise livestock that they have a potentially dangerous occupation. However, due to the nature of the job, and because of long days and tiring work, here are some reminders about electrical dangers on the farm or ranch.

Overhead power lines

If you make contact with a power line, guy wire, power pole, electrical box or any other electrical equipment, do not get out of your cab or truck. Stay put and call 9-1-1 to dispatch the local utility to de-energize the power. If you must get out due to smoke or fire, make a solid jump out without touching any part of the tractor or vehicle, and hop away as far as you can, keeping both feet together as you hop. Another option (after you make a clean exit) is to shuffle or waddle away while keeping your feet together and on the ground.

Once you are out, never try to re-enter the cab or truck.

Remember: If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line or other utility equipment, do not get out of the cab. Stray power could energize your equipment and the ground. Call 9-1-1 and wait for us to arrive and cut the power so that you can safely exit your tractor or vehicle.

Determine proper clearance

Contact us to measure power line heights; do not do this yourself. Once you know the heights, you can determine appropriate equipment, implements and extension clearances. Keep in mind that due to wear, age and even weather conditions, power lines can change height. Please contact us with any concerns. It's good to know power line clearance, but always have a spotter.

We don't have to remind those who work the land Call us before moving or adding a grain

The National Electrical Safety Code addresses grain bins and their proximity to power lines with very specific requirements. The requirements are in place to help keep farmers safe by decreasing the chances of farming equipment and machinery coming in contact with power lines. If you are planning on building a new grain bin or remodeling around an area that already has one, contact Cotton Electric at 580-875-3351. We can help with specific code requirements. The taller a grain bin, the farther it must be placed from a power line.

Always dig safely

Whether you are installing new fence posts or using large tillage tools, call 811 before you dig to have underground utilities marked. Even if you think you know where buried gas, power and other lines are, don't rely on your memory. Get all utilities marked so that you know for sure. Utility locators dispatched by 811 do not mark private lines.

Use standby generators with care

If you have a standby generator to provide essential power during an outage, be sure to correctly use the transfer switch. Once you properly engage the switch, it stops your farm's generated power from entering utility lines, aka backfeeding, which can electrocute lineworkers who are working to restore

For more information about electrical safety, visit CottonElectric.com or SafeElectricity.org.

General safety

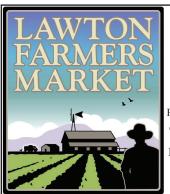
• Check and maintain equipment, especially electric cables and hydraulic hoses that have cracks or show other signs of wear.



Have a safe harvest season by staying aware of possible electrical hazards.

- Always have someone nearby when entering grain bins or other high-risk areas.
- Check all buildings and grounds for fire hazards
- and hazardous materials. Assess how any chemicals are stored and make
- sure children and animals can't access them. • Make a list of chemicals for firefighters in case a
- fire breaks out on your farm or ranch. • Establish a safety boundary around gas and fuel
- Don't skimp on safety: wear eye and ear protec-
- tion, gloves, and face masks and respirators when
- Shield all PTO-powered machinery and keep others away.
- Outfit tractors and trucks with fire extinguish-
- Never exit a tractor or truck without placing it in park or engaging the emergency brakes.
- Discuss safety concerns with children and explain safe operating procedures. You can never start too young, and they watch what you do.

General safety tips source: Hobby Farms



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Marlow Kwik Lube

\$5 off full service oil changes



Local mechanic shop stays geared up for the community

By Carli Eubank

Vehicles are a huge part of life's moments – both big and small ones. Whether it's taking kids to school or road tripping across the country with friends, vehicles are depended on to get its passengers to their destination safely. Cotton Electric member David Ladwig and his crew at Marlow Kwik in Marlow. Lube understand how essential their work is and do their best to take care of the vehicle and the people in its seats.

Marlow Kwik Lube has been in business for 20 years, but Ladwig didn't own the business until November 2021. They are one of the newest additions to Cotton Electric's Co-op Connections program, becoming a business partner in 2022. Their discount is \$5 off full-service oil changes to Cotton Electric members who have their Co-op Connections card.

Ladwig grew up working on cars at his father's mechanic shop but never imagined that he would be following his father's footsteps for his career. But after taking a leap of faith and stepping away from his previous job, Ladwig and his family decided to open business on the south curve of Highway 81

"The focus for my family and my business is to let people know we try to invest in the community, do right by everybody and help those we can along the way," Ladwig said. "God has really blessed us with that opportunity here."

The Marlow Kwik Lube crew offers oil changes, sells and repairs tires, does light mechanical work and more, but their main service remains being there for the community. One of the ways people can see Ladwig's connection to community is the building's new mu-



The Marlow Kwik Lube team (pictured left to right): Justin Reynolds, David Ladwig, Kenny Mandrell and Talynn Reynolds. Photo by Carli Eubank.

ral of a blue, classic pick-up in-front of \$5 off their oil change, and any first flag.

"I reached out to the Marlow art department for this project because I wanted to further that relationship and let others know we care about the kids in this community," Ladwig said. "Plus, it allows those students to create something that will be around for a long time."

Being a Co-op Connections partner is another way that Ladwig tries to reach out to the community.

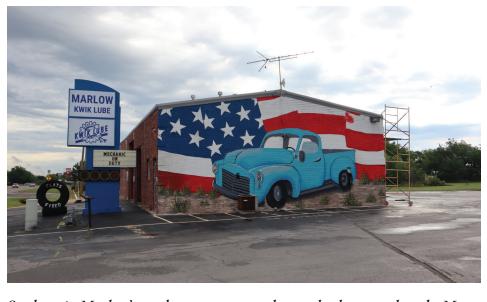
"We try to open people's eyes to the advantage of this program through our window stickers and Facebook page because it's a great way for us to help others out by saving them a few dollars when they come in for an oil change," Ladwig said.

Marlow Kwik Lube offers other discounts, including Ladies Day every Tuesday where any female can get portunity.

red and white stripes of the American responders or veterans receive a discount, as well.

> "I truly believe that God never blesses anybody for them to keep it all to themselves, so I want to take opportunities when I can to bless others and be a light," Ladwig said. "I'm grateful to have really good employees, and we all share the same thought process of working in excellence, being friendly and taking care of people."

> Don't have your Co-op Connections card? No problem! They are available to all members and can be downloaded in the app, printed online, or picked up at Cotton Electric offices in Walters or Duncan. You can also visit www.connections.coop.com or www. cottonelectric.com under the Member Services tab to discover how you can be part of this free, money-saving op-



Students in Marlow's art department recently completely a mural on the Marlow Kwik Lube building. Photo by Carli Eubank.



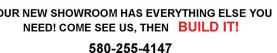
















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Billingsley Ford Lincoln Mercury

of Duncan, Inc 10% discount on all service department repairs, up to a \$40 discount. No parts or body shop repairs included.

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location in Central Plaza.

50% off open stock products.

Debbie's Little Books 10% off of regular purchase price of personalized books.

Cosmetic Specialty Labs, Inc.

Edwards Family Vision

10% off of complete glasses.

Horse Sense Graphics

15% off orders over \$100.

Infinity Computer Systems 10% off all labor.

Johnson & Johnson **Locksmith and Door**

10% off of all services. Card must be present at time of service and prior to any ordering of parts.

Ligon's Garden Center

10% off your purchase.

Linda and Sarah's Carpets

Free vacuum cleaner with purchase of \$2,000 on Stainmaster carpets.

Marlow Kwik Lube

\$5 off full service oil changes.

Medicine Park Aquarium & **Natural Sciences Center**

10% off admission or annual passes.

Nita's Flowers 10% discount.

Pink Rebel Clothing Co.

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Rick Wylie Construction 5% discount on 8x10 & 6x8

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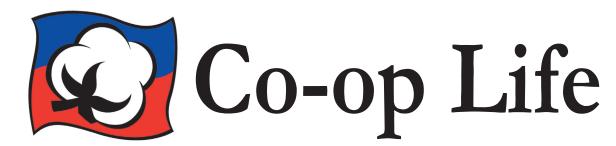
Schedule an assessment and \$40 will be deducted from the cost.

The Salt Cellar

15% off non-sale items, excluding boxed cards and gift cards.

Wichita Furniture 10% off new purchases.





Creating sweet memories: from fields to communities

By Carli Eubank

you're buzzing from one place to another or like you're swarmed with thoughts and to-do lists. Even in those chaotic seasons sweet moments are mixed in. People often experience these seasons, but for Cotton Electric member Travis Adkins, he has a different ers from all across the country. perspective as a beekeeper and the owner of BeeWise LLC.

Adkins got involved with beekeeping about 10 years ago, but his interest in that work goes back to when he was growing up in Stillwater. His granddad ran a truck garden, raising vegetables for market and watching this as a kid inspired Adkins to follow his granddad's footsteps.

"I always wanted to have a garden when I got older and had a place of my own," Adkins said. "After I settled in Duncan and got married, we started our garden but it struggled in the beginning."

couraged him to get into beekeeping, but it didn't seem like the right time for Adkins to invest. Until one day, he came tree. Adkins called one of his this is probably a good time spring season arrives again. for Adkins to begin beekeepnew adventure.

through the winter, I ordered ent jobs to be done." two more colonies for the the garden was doing, we were sold and expanded our colo-

Adkins dove into research Sometimes life feels like about beekeeping and visited with some influential friends who have helped him along the way since he started. He is also involved in multiple organizations, including the Southwest Oklahoma Beekeepers Association, where he's networked with beekeep-

> Adkins has colonies of Italian bees scattered across different locations, including Duncan, Marlow, Waurika, Lawton and more. These plots follow the nectar flow, which usually lasts from the end of April until harvest time in July. During this season, Adkins checks on the colonies every week or couple of weeks to manage space for the bees.

> "If bees don't have enough space they will want to swarm, resulting in losing half of the hive population that are needed to produce a honey crop," Adkins said.

During the winter season, Some friends at church en- Adkins condenses his colonies down to just a couple of locations, allowing him to manage them easier. Once he makes sure the bees have enough home to a swarm of bees on a treatment and resources before the cold temperatures friends who was a beekeeper arrive, they don't require as who made the comment that much maintenance until the

"Bees work at their own ing. Once they gathered the schedule, and you have to be hive and placed them by the available at their schedule," garden, the crops did much Adkins said. "It is time conbetter, and Adkins began a suming and a lot of quick changes of directions come selves." "After I got that hive of bees with phone calls about differ-

Maintaining his colonies garden," Adkins said. "Once isn't Adkins' only avenue of my family and I saw how well beekeeping. He also assists with bee removals, pollinator contracts and selling products Stephens County OSU Exten-

After completing a bee removal, Adkins adds the colony to an existing apiary where he provides a new hive, frames and resources for the bees to get a jumpstart in the new environment.

"Bees are hardwired for sustainability, so they will do whatever it takes to survive," Adkins said.

As the business built up over the years, Adkins and his wife began selling products sourced from their colonies. Products include a variety of beekeeping supplies, honey products, skincare products and more. Members can find Bee Wise products at local establishments, such as the Quick Mart in Waurika, Thompson Pharmacy in Comanche, Marlow Food Market in Marlow, Ridley Meat Market in Duncan and Viridian Coffee locations in southwest Oklahoma. For a complete list of products and store locations, visit www.beewisellc.com.

A lot of thought went into deciding the name of Adkins' business, and the result of the whimsical logo and name is a play on words with multiple meanings.

"It's an encouragement for others to be wise in their choices throughout life," Adkins said. "It's also a reminder for me as I'm conducting business and working to be an example as I'm going through life and part of that is being wise in how we conduct our-

One of the biggest challenges Adkins and other beekeepers face is the loss of habitat for bees and other pollinators.

Brenda Gandy-Jones at sion explained how members

pollinators in their own backyard by providing them resources from everyday household items.

"One way to help pollinators is to provide a water source," Gandy-Jones said. "They love fruit, like a banana peel, and letting those foods ferment in some water can help attract pollinators."

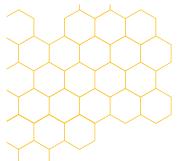
If members are interested in more ways to help the pollinator population, Gandy-Jones encourages those to visit the Okies for Monarchs website at www.okiesformonarchs.org. OSU Extension offices can also provide fact sheets on popular nectar and pollen plants, landscaping options and more.

Even though there are different elements, challenges business, BeeWise, LLC.

can help increase habitats for and time commitments that come with beekeeping, Adkins enjoys how it provides some reflective solitude, time to gather his thoughts and consider things without a lot of distraction.

> "I work on technical things most of the time, and beekeeping provides solitude and time to be by yourself," Adkins said. "I've really enjoyed it because it's not complicated and it's therapeutic."

For more information about pollinators, landscaping, beekeeping and more, visit the OSU Extension website at www.extension.okstate. edu/ or stop by your local Extension office. Members can also visit www.beewisellc.com to learn more about Adkins'



Bee fun facts



It takes about 7-8 pounds of honey to produce one pound of wax



A colony is typically made up of 3-15% of drones (male bees)



Italian bees are one of the most common subspecies in southwest Oklahoma



The Southwest Oklahoma Beekeepers Association meets at the Stephens County Fairgrounds in Duncan monthly



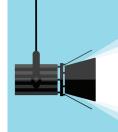
Cotton Electric member Travis Adkins looks for the queen bee from the new hive. Photo by Carli Eubank.



Adkins checks on his colonies at one of his plot locations near Waurika Lake. Photo by Carli Eubank.



Hairy Vetch is one of southwest Oklahoma's most common nectar and pollen plants. Photo courtesy of Canva.



Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the July issue, please submit information by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to The Current @ CottonElectric.com by June 30. Only events occuring after July 17 will be published in the next issue.

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

Cycling through SWOK

Tour of the Wichitas offers beautiful cycling routes through some of the most enchanting scenery in Southwest Oklahoma. Registration fees range from \$35 to \$50. The event is set to begin at 8 a.m. on June 17 at Fort Sill in Lawton. For more information or to register, visit www.tourofthewichitas.com/2023-tour-of-the-wichitas.

Bray Community Fireworks

The annual Bray Community Fireworks show is set for 2023. There will be activities for families to enjoy, including vendors, bounce houses, food trucks and more. Vendors set-up time is at 4 p.m. Live entertainment will take the stage with Anthony Spencer at 5 p.m. and Oklahoma Outlaws at 6:30 p.m. The fireworks show will begin at dusk. Handicap parking will be available in front of the Community Building. Supporters of the firework show can stop by The Bray Store and donate to have a "firecracker" displayed on the store wall with their name. Funds raised through the raffle will benefit the winner of the drawing and half of the proceeds will go toward the 2024 fireworks show. For more information about the event or vendor spots, email braycommunityfireworks@gmail.com.

Annual Freedom Festival

Attend the annual Lawton-Fort Sill Freedom Festival at Elmer Thomas Park for a day full of Independence Day fun. This family-friendly event will feature one of the largest fireworks displays in Oklahoma along with many other fun activities, including face painting, pony rides, the bounce house and more activities. Food and drink vendors will also be available. Stick around until nightfall with the event's finale of a massive fireworks display choreographed to music. No personal fireworks, alcohol or pets. Service animals only. The event is June 30 through July 1 at Elmer Thomas Park, Third and NW Ferris Avenue, Lawton. For more information, visit www.lawtonok.gov or call 580-581-3470.

Local old-fashioned celebration

Head to Marlow for the annual Old-Fashioned Independence Day Celebration. The festivities kick off with a parade on Main Street, complete with floats, horses, antique automobiles and tractors, Shriner clowns and more. The parade leads into family-friendly activities at Redbud Park, such as arts and crafts, game booths, rides, various food vendors and historic re-enactments. Stick around until 9:30 p.m. for one of the biggest fireworks displays in southern Oklahoma. The day begins with the parade set to start at 9 a.m. on July 4 on Main Street in Marlow. For more information, visit www.cityofmarlow.com or call 580-658-2212.

Heroes celebrated in Lawton

Make your way to Lawton for the Heroes of America Fireworks Show and tribute to all military and first-responders. Celebrate Independence Day with live entertainment, food and drink vendors, children's activities and more. Parking and admission are free. Festivities are set for July 4 at the Apache Event Field, 2315 E. Gore Blvd., Lawton. For more information, call 580-248-5905.

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, OK 73572. 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.

Grief group meeting in Duncan

The Heritage Oaks Church of The Nazarene is hosting a "Grief and Bereavement" group. 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. The group meets each Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Heritage Oaks Church of The Nazarene, 4595 W. Beech, Duncan. For questions or more information, contact the church at 580-255-2869 or Pastor Jon at 580-730-9431.

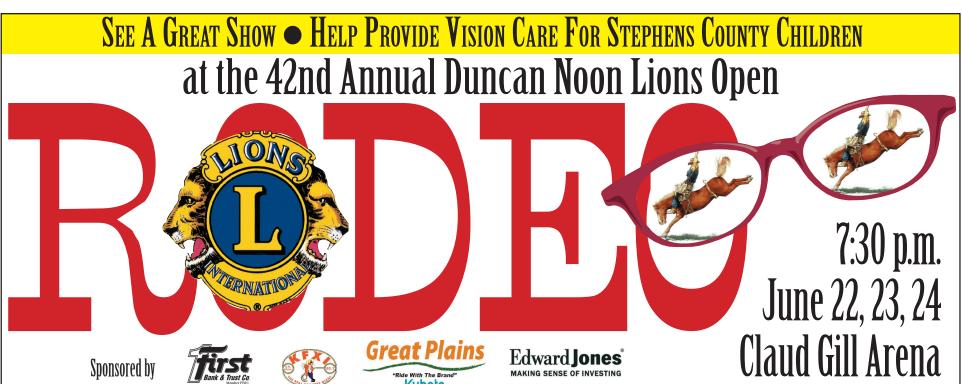
PHOTO MONTH



Oaklee Fischer embraces the "Rural America" life as she runs through a field of golden wheat in Chattanooga. Photo courtesy of Cotton Electric member Tiffany Logue.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. The theme for July is Agriculture! 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.





The egg of the future could be less allergenic



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

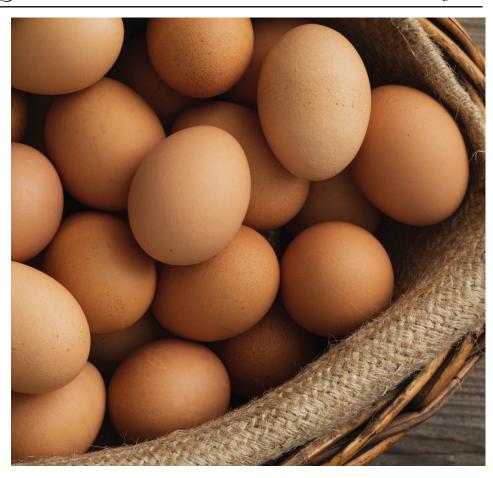
Food **Y** For /

Scientists from multiple universities in Japan have collaborated to produce chicken eggs that do not contain ovomucoid (OVM), the protein in egg whites that most often causes an allergic response. Their study, which also examined the safety of these eggs, was published in Food and Chemical Toxicology in March 2023. Ezaki and colleagues hypothesized that these "OVM knockout eggs" could be consumed by individuals allergic to eggs and could be used to produce vaccines that can be administered to patients who have egg allergies.

Egg allergy is the second most common allergen among children. Although many outgrow the allergy, it is estimated that 1% of adults are allergic to eggs. Egg and egg components are widely used in food manufacturing and the manufacturing of certain vaccines. Currently the only way to handle an egg allergy is to completely avoid eggs, foods made with eggs and egg components, and non-food items made with egg components (certain medications and vaccines and even craft supplies).

Eggs are nutrient dense. For just 70 calories one egg provides six grams of protein and is a good or excellent source of 8 vitamins/minerals. Scrambled eggs are soft and easy to self-feed for children. Outside of times of supply chain constraints, eggs are an affordable source of high-quality nutrition.

While many children outgrow their egg allergy, completely eliminating egg and egg components from the diet is challenging and can be expensive depending on where you live and the availability of egg-free products. Avoiding whole eggs and homemade food with egg as an ingredient is just the tip of the iceberg. Eggs and egg components are often listed under completely different names on ingredient labels.



Scientist have worked together to create eggs that don't contain ovomucoid, which can cause allergic responses.

The "OVM knockout eggs" pro- tion. They propose that patients with duced in this study did not contain detectable amounts of the most common eggs when used in cooked foods. protein in eggs that trigger an allergic genic but people who are highly sensitive to OVM could still have a reac- allergies.

an egg allergy may be able to eat these

"OVM knockout eggs" won't be on response. The researchers concluded store shelves any time soon, but it is that initial testing indicates that the exciting to learn about the potential "OVM knockout eggs" are less aller- impact of scientific advancements like gene-editing for individuals with food









A Sweet and Tangy Summer Classic

(Family Features) While lemon is a traditional summer flavor, you can add a little extra to your gatherings – from picnics and brunches – with this classic dessert. Quick and easy to make, these Lemon Bars feature a soft crust and a tangy, sweet filling topped with powdered sugar.

Find more recipes perfect for summer at Culinary.net.

Lemon Bars

Recipe adapted from Better Homes and Gardens

Nonstick cooking spray

2 cups, plus 3 tablespoons, all-purpose flour, divided

1/2 cup powdered sugar, plus additional, for topping

2 tablespoons cornstarch

1/4 teaspoon salt

3/4 cup butter

4 eggs, lightly beaten

1 1/2 cups granulated sugar

1 teaspoon lemon zest

3/4 cup lemon juice

1/4 cup light cream, half-and-half or milk

Heat oven to 350° F.

Line 9-by-13-inch baking pan with foil; allow overhang. Grease foil with non-stick cooking spray; set aside.

In large bowl, whisk 2 cups flour, 1/2 cup powdered sugar, cornstarch and salt. Using pastry blender, cut in butter until mixture resembles crumbs. Press mixture into bottom of baking pan. Bake 18-20 minutes.

To make filling: In medium bowl, whisk eggs, sugar, remaining flour, lemon zest, lemon juice and light cream.

Pour filling over hot crust. Bake 15-20 minutes.

Cool completely on wire rack.

Grasp foil overhang and lift from pan. Cut into bars. Sprinkle powdered sugar over bars before serving.



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Summer Sous

(Culinary.net) It's time to kick off summer with a bang. With exciting summer events like baseball, sunbathing and barbecues filling social calendars, comes a whole new array of fresh, sunny day snacks just waiting to be devoured.

If you're in the mood for something sweet with a hint of spice, try this Citrus, Mango and Pineapple Salsa. It features fresh, fruity flavors from the pineapple, mango, lemon and lime plus a surprising bite of jalapeno. It's the perfect balance of sweet and zesty.

This light, warm weather appetizer is perfect for pool parties or dining al fresco. A fresh twist on traditional salsa, this recipe will have people lining up for a second scoop to help beat the heat.

Enjoy it with tortilla chips or as a topping on your favorite tacos to add a little sweetness to a traditionally savory meal.

For more fresh summertime recipes, visit Culinary.net.

Citrus, Mango and Pineapple Salsa

Recipe adapted from becomingness.com

- 1 1/4 cup fresh pineapple, diced
- 1 1/4 cup fresh mango, diced
- 2 tomatoes
- red onion, diced 1/2
- jalapeno, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon coriander
- tablespoons lime juice
- tablespoon lemon juice

sea salt, to taste

fresh cracked pepper, to taste tortilla chips, for serving

In large bowl, combine pineapple, mango, tomato, onion, jalapeno, coriander, lime juice, lemon juice and salt and pepper, to taste. With rubber spatula, mix all ingredients together.

Taste and season with additional salt and pepper, if desired. Serve with tortilla chips.





Marinas are not meant to be swimming areas because docks and boats can carry sources of electricity. If this electricity seeps into the water due to faulty wiring, the water becomes energized.

If you are exposed to water that is charged with electrical current, you can be shocked and even drown — this is known as electric shock drowning. There are also other dangers of swimming near

DANGERS of swimming at a marina include:

- 1. Electric shock drowning.
- Carbon monoxide poisoning from boat exhaust.
- 3. Contaminated water from a storm or spill.
- 4. Impact from a boat or its propellers.



Ensure marinas have ground fault circuit interrupters installed and that they are tested often. Keep your boat's electrical system well-maintained and have it inspected regularly.

Learn more at:

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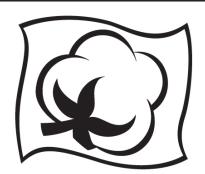


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SWIMMING POOL SAFETY WORD SEARCH



Water and electricity never mix. Always practice safety when you're near or in the swimming pool this summer. Read the following safety tips, then find and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle below.

Never bring electrical **devices** near a swimming pool. **Electrical** devices that come in contact with **water** can cause electric shock.

When possible, use **battery**-operated devices when **outdoors** near a swimming pool.

Outdoor electrical **outlets** should be **dry** or covered.

If you hear thunder, immediately exit the swimming **pool**. Thunderstorms and lightning may be near.

C	Υ	Р	G	V	Q	В	Χ	S	Ε	D	R	Ν	L	Υ	
I	R	0	J	R	Н	S	R	L	J	M	R	I	J	F	
1	Ε	0	Χ	М	W	0	Ε	V	Τ	W	G	Υ	L	Α	
Μ	Τ	L	Τ	J	0	C	Μ	Н	0	Н	Μ	Н	K	Н	
٧	Т	Р	Α	D	Τ	Μ	C	K	Т	Z	G	Ε	U	Q	
Ε	Α	Υ	Т	R	Р	0	Z	Ν	Ε	J	K	Υ	M	В	
Н	В	U	-1	Р	Т	Ε	1	D	Q	K	C	X	Q	Μ	
Ζ	0	C	L	F	W	Ν	W	W	C	Ν	K	J	Ν	S	
R	Α	1	Т	В	G	G	S	D	R	T	Н	Τ	-1	K	
L	Ε	1	Т	K	J	K	N	Н	Χ	Z	C	В	Υ	J	
L	K	Т	Α	Z	Χ	Т	Υ	Н	Ε	Q	D	Р	R	R	
Ν	Χ	M	Α	Χ	Μ	Q	S	Ε	C	- 1	V	Ε	D	F	
Z	0	Υ	D	W	0	U	Т	L	Ε	Т	S	U	٧	Ļ	
Χ	N	Р	Υ	C	Υ	0	Н	0	Р	J	L	R	C	Q	
Z	M	J	Υ	L	Χ	R	L	В	Ε	Ν	В	Н	C	K	





1	7	9				2		5
			1	9		8	4	
8		6						7
	6	8		1			9	3
		5	7		9			
7						4		
	1		4		5			
	5	2		8				4
			9	7			2	

Level: Beginner

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!









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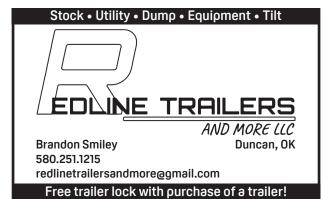


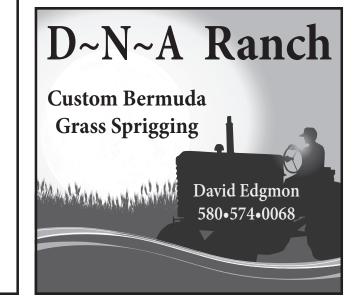
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Parting Shot



Cotton Electric member Ryan Schlabs snaps a photo of wheat harvest happening on his friend's property called "The West Farm." Photo courtesy of Ryan Schlabs.

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