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VOLUME 67

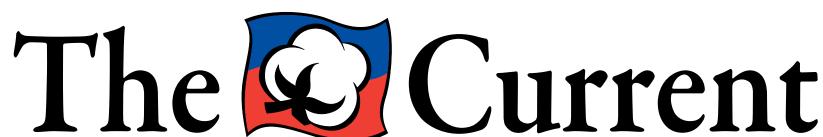
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A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

"The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957"

June 14, 2024

Cotton Electric Cooperative earns an ACSI® 2023 Customer Satisfaction Award

Cotton Electric is honored to have earned a 2023 Customer Satisfaction Award* from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI*) based on our member survey results. Members were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with us, how well we lived up to their expectations, and how well we measured up to their ideal co-op experience. While these were not the only questions in the survey, we included these specifically because they are the core components of the proprietary ACSI methodology.

Cotton Electric's ACSI score substantially outperforms the industry average score earned by publicly measured utilities reported in the 2023 ACSI

Cotton Electric is honored to have earned a 2023 Energy Utility Study. This Award is a testament to Cotton Electric's ongoing efforts to provide the best possible member experience.

The 2023 Customer Satisfaction Award affirms that Cotton Electric's hard work has been noticed by its members. Cotton Electric is grateful for its members and will continue to strive for excellence through constant dedication to improvement.

Award criteria are determined by the ACSI and are based on customers rating their satisfaction in a survey independent of the syndicated ACSI Energy Utility Study. For more about the ACSI, visit www.theacsi.org/badges. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC.



Co-op employees empower Oklahoma athletes at annual event

By Carli Eubank

Over the years, a bond has grown between Oklahoma's electric cooperatives and the Special Olympics Oklahoma (SOOK). Volunteers from Oklahoma's electric co-ops gather at the annual competition with a shared value of two cooperative principles: Cooperation Among Cooperatives and Concern for Community. Among the volunteers were three from Cotton Electric Cooperative: Member Service Representative Kyle Graham, Purchasing Agent Adam Metcalfe and Journeyman Lineman TJ James.

Graham and James have represented Cotton Electric at SOOK for the past few years. Each year, the competition brings new experiences, but the collective support and joy remains impactful.

"The co-op family was really great this year and working with everyone was phenomenal," James said. "SOOK is an amazing event to support, and the joy it brings the athletes is worth every bit of your time."

The number of volunteers with Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC) continues to grow each year, and this year a new record was set with more than 160 co-op employees.

"This event is built on the help of volunteers, and they can always use more with the growing number of athletes each year," Graham said. "I really enjoy the camaraderie between the co-op volunteers, athletes and their families, and more than anything, the environment the athletes create is one that would continue to draw anyone back on a yearly basis. There isn't an event you can attend as impactful as SOOK."

One of Graham's most memorable experiences at this year's SOOK was an hourlong conversation with one of the older athletes from Stillwater while wait-



Oklahoma electric cooperative volunteers wait for the SOOK opening ceremony to begin. Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives.



(Pictured left to right) Cotton Electric Member Service Representative Kyle Graham, Cotton Electric Purchasing Agent Adam Metcalfe, and Leisa James next to her husband, Cotton Electric Journeyman Lineman TJ James cheer on athletes at Special Olympics Oklahoma (SOOK). Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives.

ing on the opening ceremony. They visited about everything from bowling to WWE wrestling to OSU sports to monster trucks and how the athlete rode his bike to the arena from his apartment.

"It was one of the most interesting conversations I've ever had, but it made for one of my favorite experiences I've had at SOOK," Graham said. "It seems that each year I attend, I have a new experience that continues to draw me back, and I plan to continue going back each year I'm able to."

With the track and field events rained out on Thursday, co-op volunteers got to assist athletes participating in the indoor and motor skills events. The indoor morning events were particularly for younger athletes with more kid-oriented activities for them to participate in.

For the motor skills competition, volunteers paired up with an athlete who uses a wheelchair and their coach to guide and encourage them through events, such as picking up and moving blocks, throwing balls, rolling on mats from one end to the other and more. After the competition, volunteers awarded their athletes with medals and trophies.

Compared to the outside events, Graham shared how the motor skills events were a big change but provided more intimate experiences with volunteers and the athletes and their families.

"When I was assigned to the individual athlete at the indoor games, I got to meet and speak with the athlete's family and learn about them, as opposed to

Continued on Page 6

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after June 1, 2024, is \$0.01248 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$16.22 on the June bill.

May 2024 Temperature Extremes

	May	2024	Tem	peratu	ile Ex	treme	28
Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg
1	80	62	71	16	78	61	70
2	79	62	70	17	82	60	71
3	83	64	74	18	91	57	74
4	79	57	68	19	92	68	80
5	77	60	69	20	92	71	82
6	86	65	76	21	96	72	84
7	84	52	68	22	81	64	73
8	85	66	76	23	89	67	78
9	81	54	68	24	87	62	75
10	80	53	67	25	90	60	75
11	79	54	67	26	95	61	78
12	67	57	62	27	95	56	76
13	79	58	69	28	83	66	75
14	85	53	69	29	87	62	75
15	89	60	75	30	81	66	74
Source	: srh.noaa.	gov/oun/		31	83	64	74
Av	erage D	aily Hig	3h: 84	Averag	e Daily	Low: 6	1

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric Cooperative 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 July 12, 2024.

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



Mission Statement
Our mission is to safely deliver reliable and affordable power, provide excellent member service, and improve the quality of life in the communi-

ties we serve.

From the CEO

8 things you might not know about power restoration

he 2024 spring storm season has been extremely active for Oklahoma. On average, Oklahoma has 58 tornadoes in a full year. By the end of May, 95 have already been counted in our state, a few of which resulted in outages and damage within our service territory.

We often receive questions from our members about the power restoration process and how long it takes to get the lights back on. Given our reliance on electricity, we understand there's never a good time to be without it.

This month, I'd like to shed light on our outage restoration process to help you understand what may be happening behind the scenes. Here are eight things you might not know about restoration:

1. We need you

When your power goes out, it might be just at your home or small section of a neighborhood. There is a chance that no one has reported it, so we rely on you to let us know if your power is out. Outages can be reported by calling 580-875-3351, send-

The 2024 spring storm ing a text with the word "OUT" season has been exto the same number, or by using tremely active for SmartHub online or on the app.

2. It's a team effort

Every one of Cotton Electric's employees are working to get your power restored as soon as possible. Our member services representatives are taking calls, engineers and field staff are surveying damage, the warehouse team is gathering and distributing materials, vegetation management is clearing hazards, dispatchers are directing crews plus the communications team are keeping everyone informed of progress or potential dangers. When your power goes out, we all work together as quickly and safely as possible to get you back to normal.

3. We assess the situation first

Every outage is different. When responding to outages, we first need to see what happened and execute the restoration plan accordingly. Sometimes temporary repairs can be made to restore power until a construction crew is available.

4. Restoration is normally prioritized by the largest number

of members we can get back on in the shortest amount of time

Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues and critical services. Then we complete work that restores power to the largest number of people first.

5. Our employees face many dangers

Besides working around high-voltage electricity, crews are on alert for wild animals, weather elements, falling trees and fast-moving vehicles. Please note: If you ever drive past one of our crews, please do so slowly. Also, rest times for eating and sleeping are vital to their safety.

6. Sometimes blinks are a good thing

Power blinks, which are brief service interruptions, might be thought of as outages. Blinks are typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on the power line or protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can be caused by birds or small animals contacting an energized power line, tree branches touching a power line or lightning.

You may also experience a blink when the protective devic-



Jennifer Meason, CEO

es that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. These brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage. However, if you experience repeated disruptions, please give us a call so a crew can investigate.

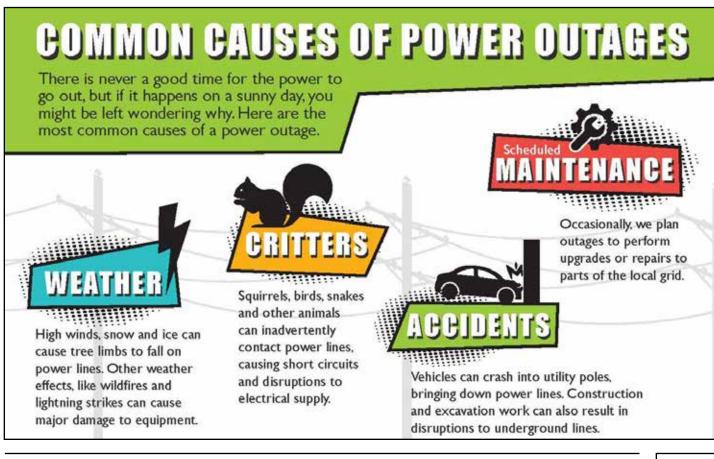
7. You need a backup plan

We do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life support purposes, you need to have a backup plan. When major storms hit our area, it may take several days to complete the restoration process.

8. Sometimes it's a waiting game

Our power supply comes from our generation and transmission cooperative, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC). If the outage is due to a power supply issue like damaged substation equipment or downed transmission structures, we must let WFEC do their repairs and be mindful of what they're going through to fix it. Our employees work closely with WFEC in these situations to coordinate restoration efforts.

We do our best to avoid power disruptions, but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know that your local Cotton Electric team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power to you - our neighbors, friends and family.





Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Tip of the Month

Did you know ceiling fans can help you save energy? Ceiling fans create a windchill effect on your skin to make you feel a few degrees cooler. Raise the thermostat a few degrees and turn on fans to reduce air conditioning costs.

Set fan blades to rotate counterclockwise during summer months and clockwise during winter months. Remember, ceiling fans cool people but don't actually lower the indoor temperature. Turn fans off when you leave the room.

Source: www.energy.gov

April 2024 Operating Stats

ı	. .	•	
I		<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
I	Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$5,519,287	\$5,448,149
I	Cost of Purchased Power	4,027,903	3,832,647
I	Taxes	113,804	119,837
I	Total Operating Expense per Mile	1,105	1,076
I	Average Farm and Residential Bill	112	116
I	Average Farm and Residential kWh	844	874
I	Total Meters Billed (Farm, Residentia	ıl) 19,645	19,377
I	Miles Energized	5,270	5,258
I	Density per Mile	3.73	3.69
I	New Service Connects YTD	125	141
١	Services Retired	47	46

Upcoming Deadlines for

The Current

July

Ad Sales June 28
Classified June 28
Publish July 12

August

Ad Sales July 26 Classified July 26 Publish August 9

The Current

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Energy Efficiency

Planning for efficiency while you're on vacation

can also be an opportunity to decrease your energy consumption and save nient. A connected thermostat can some on your energy bill. When you're away from home, there are several simple steps you can take to ensure that you are not wasting energy. By following these energy efficiency tips, you can enjoy your vacation, knowing that you are doing your part to conserve energy.

Adjust your thermostat

One of the easiest ways to save enerthermostat settings. In the summer, degrees Fahrenheit or higher to miniing. For trips taken during the winter, breaker to the appliance.

acations are a time for re- you can lower the temperature to 50- Unplug electronics laxation and enjoying time 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Programmable with your family, but they or Wi-Fi connected thermostats make ics and appliances around our homes this process very simple and conveallow you to monitor the temperature in your home, view run time of your system, and change the temperature setpoint through a mobile app. This means you can have your house begin cooling back down to your normal setpoint while you are traveling home.

Turn the water heater off

Your water heater continues to heat gy while you're away is to adjust your water, which can waste energy if left on Prepare your refrigerator normal settings while you're away on raise the temperature setpoint to 85 vacation. You can lower the thermostat setting to the lowest temperature mize the energy used for air condition- setting or simply turn off the circuit

Even when turned off, most electroncontinue to draw power. Commonly referred to as "energy vampires", devices like TVs, computers, game consoles, and chargers constantly consume power. Some of these loads may be small individually, but as we start to add up the number of these devices around the home, we end up with a significant amount of energy being wasted. Power strips make it easy to turn multiple devices off with a single switch.

Ensure you have cleared out any perishable food items that will go bad before your return. This is a great time to clean the door seals on your refrigerator and freezer doors. Inspect the seals



Heath Morgan, **Energy Efficiency** Coordinator

during this cleaning to make sure they are still in good shape and providing airtight seals. Be sure to fill empty shelf space with gallons or bottles of water. The cold items inside of the refrigerator help to maintain a steady temperature longer than empty air space.

Secure your home

Finally, be sure to take steps to secure your home while you are away. Make sure all windows and doors are securely locked. Avoid leaving lights on throughout your trip, but consider installing a few timers or smart switches to turn lights on at designated times. You may consider placing your mail delivery on hold if you plan on being gone longer than a few days.

It is a common misconception that not being home will significantly lower the energy consumption. As you can see from the suggestions above, that is not the case. Air conditioners, water heaters, and other electronics will continue to consume energy even if the home is empty. That is why we need to take specific steps to lower energy consumption when we plan on being away. We hope you enjoy vacations this summer, and that these tips help you recover from them financially a little faster.





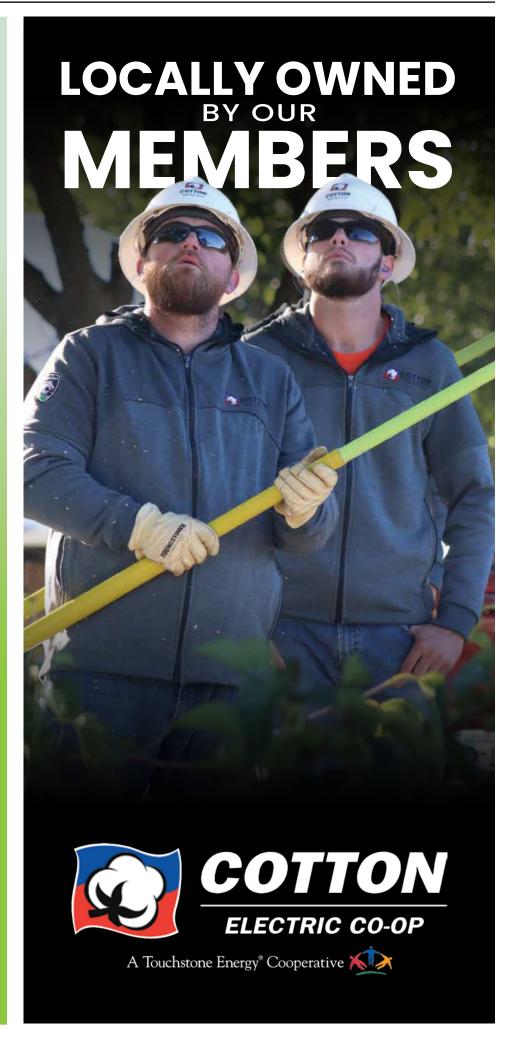
CDD HDD YEAR 2024 241

> 2023 193

2022 306

Degree days measure how cold or warm a location is by comparing the average of the high and low (mean) of the outdoor temperatures recorded in that location to the standard U.S. temperature, which is 65 F. The assumption is that we don't need heating or cooling to be comfortable when this is the outdoor temperature.







Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation

CECF FAQs

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHERE THE FUNDS GO?

A list of the funds awarded are featured in *The Current* or on our website at www.cottonelectric.com/grants-awarded.

HOW MUCH MONEY HAS BEEN DONATED AND DISTRIBUTED?

Since 2004, Cotton Electric members have contributed and more than \$1.5 million has been distributed to worthwhile individuals, families and organizations in our service territory who have applied for Operation Round Up grants.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CECF BOARD?

The CECF board is a non-paid board who administers the funds raised by Operation Round Up. They evaluate applications made to the program and make recommendations for issuing grants. They operate according to the CECF bylaws.

WHAT IF I CAN'T OR DON'T WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN OPERATION ROUND UP?

The Operation Round Up program is voluntary and you may opt-out at any time. If you wish to not participate in the program, you may call the co-op at 580-875-3351 or you may send a letter or e-mail stating your name, account number, and your request to be removed from the program. Your participation will end at that time.











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YOUR SUCCESS IS OUR SUCCESS!

Energy scams unmasked

Members and consumers with water, gas and electricity connections have long been targets for utility scams. But in today's digital world, every swipe and click increases the risk of potential scams.

Scammers are more sophisticated than ever, and they understand our increasing reliance on technology and have adapted their tactics to trick unsuspecting consumers through a variety of methods.

Cotton Electric wants to help you avoid energy scams, whether a financial loss or leak of your personal information.

Recent utility scams

Scammers typically disguise themselves – either physically or digitally – as utility employees or representatives to steal consumers' money or personal information. A common trick is to claim a consumer's bill is past due and threaten to disconnect service if payment isn't received immediately. Scammers approach consumers through a variety of means, including phone calls, text messages, emails and even in-person visits. However, the digital line of attack is increasingly more common.

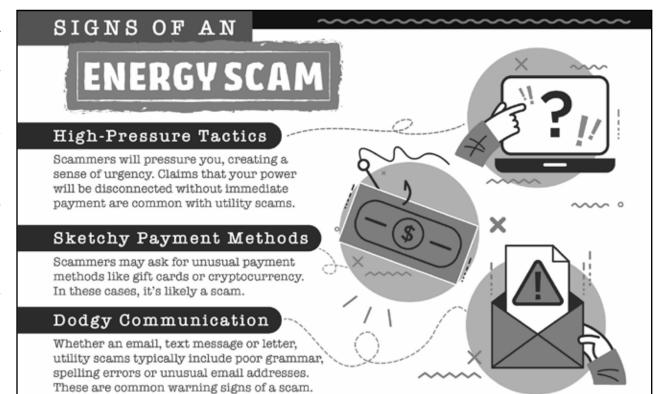
For example, new capabilities disguising caller ID or "spoofing" can make the phone number you see on caller ID appear to be from a trusted source. Spoofing makes it easier for scammers to deceive you because it's more difficult to immediately verify the call. Another recent scam uses fraudulent websites that are identical to a utility payment webpage – and what's worse, these pages are often promoted on search engines to trick consumers into clicking and making a payment.

Recent scams involve phone calls, text messages or emails claiming you overpaid your electric bill and will receive a cash or banking refund. Scammers may also call you saying you will receive a discounted rate when you sign up for service. These offers may seem too good to be true, and they are – they're likely scams aimed to steal your personal information.

Spotting a scam

Scammers often use high-pressure tactics to create a sense of urgency, like claiming your electricity or other services will be disconnected if a payment isn't made immediately.

Additionally, scammers may ask for unusual payment methods such as gift cards or cryptocurrency.



If someone is pushing for an unusual payment method, it's likely a scam.

Many digital scams, like emails or texts, include poor grammar, spelling errors and odd email addresses.

What Cotton Electric will (and won't) do

Cotton Electric will never demand an instant, immediate payment and threaten to disconnect your service without prior notices or warnings. We strive to resolve challenging situations and work with our members to avoid disconnects.

Cotton Electric emplopyees will never ask for your Social Security number, credit card information or banking details over the phone or through email. We offer several secure payment options, including in person and the SmartHub app.

If someone approaches your door impersonating a Cotton Electric employee, do not let them in. There may be situations where our employees need to fix a service issue on your property, but our energy efficiency coordinator is the only Cotton Electric employee allowed to go inside members' homes for a home energy efficiency evaluation.

Avoiding scams

Whether in person, over the phone or online, always be suspicious of an unknown individual claim-

ing to be a Cotton Electric employee requesting banking or other personal information. We will only send you text messages if you have opted in for important alerts like outage updates from TextPower.

If you're ever in doubt about a potential energy scam, give us a call at 580-875-3351 so we can assist. Cotton Electric wants to help protect you and our community against utility frauds, and by notifying us about potential scams, you can create the first line of defense. We encourage you to report any potential scams so we can spread the word and prevent others in our community from falling victim.











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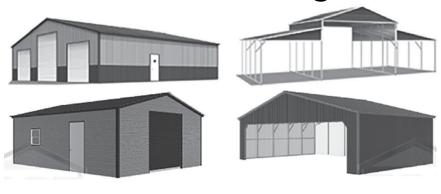


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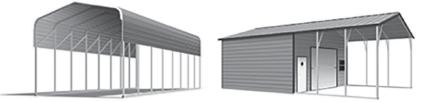
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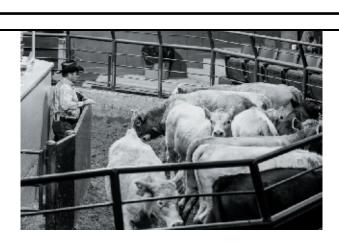


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Continued from Page 1

just handing the athlete a place card and getting ready for the next race," Graham said. "I got to learn about the activities and trainings the athletes do throughout the year, and that really stood out to me. The gentleman I was assigned to was a huge OSU fan from Stillwater, so we hit it off immediately."

Metcalfe's favorite part of the indoor competition was when he partnered up with an athlete and guided him through the different motor skills events. He really connected with the athlete because of how much he reminded Metcalfe of his younger brother. Metcalfe's younger brother has had cerebral palsy ever since he was a kid, and growing up, he would compete in SOOK. Even though this was his first year to volunteer with other co-op employees, none of it was new to Metcalfe.

"The competition and tasks might not have been as eye-opening for me as it was for a lot of other peo-

ple, but I probably appreciated it as much or more than anybody, and had a great time," Metcalfe said.

On Friday, athletes and volunteers returned outdoors for the track and field events.

"Sometimes the athletes were so focused on the stands full of people cheering them on that they forgot they were competing," Metcalfe said. "So, it was great to see their faces and encourage them as they crossed the finish line."

Athletes train and compete year-round to qualify for the state games. Walking, running, wheelchair races, softball and bean bag toss are just a few of the competitive events. Electric co-op employees volunteer at the track and field events, helping athletes line up before the races, cheering them on, recording their times, meeting them at the finish line or directing them to the stage where athletes collect their awards.

For co-op employees, their experiences are more than being a volunteer; they're another way to serve

our communities. Working side by side with athletes, volunteers witness their resilience, joy and determination.

"I knew how good of an event it was from being there with my brother, and I wanted to be part of it again," Metcalfe said. "Without volunteers, this event doesn't happen, and these days are really important to the athletes. The joy they have is not circumstantial, and it's infectious."

The ripple effects of volunteering at SOOK start at the events and trickle to surrounding communities. As volunteers return to their cooperatives, they carry with them a renewed sense of purpose and ap-

"Life is bigger than we are, and we have no idea what any individual with any kind of disability goes through on a daily basis," James said. "The simplest things we complain about is absolutely 10 times more difficult for them. This is an event for those athletes, and they absolutely deserve it."

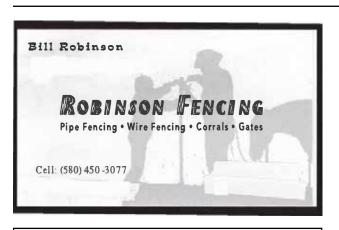


More than 160 Oklahoma electric cooperative employees volunteered at the 2024 Special Olympics Oklahoma. Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives.



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- Thermostat wars with your spouse?
- **High humidity in summer?**
- House just never seems comfortable? There doesn't seem to be enough airflow?
- High utility bills?
- □ Dust buildup within 2 days of dusting? □ Problems with your system since it's been

 - Anyone with allergies or asthma?
 - 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 <u>YES</u> to any of these questions, we can help!

Pippin Brothers has specialists that can pinpoint and correct these problems and, in many cases, you don't even have to replace your equipment, with the solution usually being easier and costing a lot less than you may think. There is no other contractor in Lawton more qualified than Pippin Brothers at diagnosing and correcting these annoying, inconvenient, unhealthy, comfort-compromising and energywasting concerns. Call us today and let us make your home Feel As Good As It Looks! After all, your home is your largest investment and you and your family deserve to be comfortable - don't you?



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Hi, most of you know me, but for those of you who don't, my name is David Edgmon. I am a native to Walters and wanted to announce that I'm running for District #1 County Commissioner. I would appreciate it if you would consider voting for me. I grew up farming with my dad and the rest of the family, worked for Goodyear for 33 years while continuing to farm. Since retiring from Goodyear, I have continued running my custom farming, sprigging and dirt work business. Now, I am eager to get busy working for our county. Again, I would appreciate your vote, and I would appreciate it if you would share this post and spread the word.

Most of all, I want to encourage all of you to get out and vote for the people you think will do the best jobs.

David Edgmon

Paid for by David Edgmon

Understanding capital credits

Capital credits for accounts active in 2023 have recently been allocated and listed on June power bills, but please note that credit to an individual account is not a refund, and the amount may not be applied to your power bill.

The concept of capital credits often emerges as a topic of curiosity and confusion. Unlike investor-owned utilities, electric cooperatives operate with a different financial structure, one that involves the distribution of margins back to their members.

The allocation process

Cotton Electric is a not-for-profit cooperative owned by its members, who follow the cooperative principle of Members' Economic Participation. Revenues in excess of the actual costs of providing electric service for the year are called margins. Members' portions of these margins are called patronage capital. Once allocated, capital credits are recorded in each member's account based on their proportional use of the cooperative's services during the period for which the credits are being allocated.

The retirement process

These margins are held in reserve for a period of time, with the capital being used primarily to construct new electric facilities, upgrade existing facilities, maintain the members' ownership and equity in the cooperative, reduce interest costs by lowering the amount of the borrowed capital, and maintain a reserve to protect against storms and emergencies.

Over time, as the cooperative's financial position allows, capital credits are retired or paid out to members. Retirements are usually announced separately and typically occur on a rotating basis.

Members are encouraged to keep Cotton Electric informed of any changes of address so they will receive a check if a retirement is made. Lists of names on returned checks are published in *The Current*, which can be found on the co-op's website, www.cottonelectric.com/previous-issues.

Additionally, Cotton Electric does not generate power but buys it from Western Farmers Electric

Cooperative (WFEC), a generation and transmission cooperative. Cotton Electric and other electric cooperatives in Oklahoma and New Mexico own WFEC. Just as Cotton Electric allocates its margins to members, WFEC allocates its margins to the electric cooperatives that own WFEC. When Cotton Electric receives margin allocations from WFEC, it allocates those margins to the co-op members. WFEC allocations are kept separate from the Cotton Electric margin allocations.

Benefits to members

Capital credit allocations offer several benefits to members of nonprofit electric cooperatives. First, they demonstrate the cooperative principle of Member Democratic Control. By receiving capital credits, members not only enjoy reliable electric service but also have a direct stake in the co-op's success. Additionally, capital credits can provide financial relief to members, as they represent a form of patronage refund or member dividend.

Benefits to the cooperative

For the cooperative itself, the practice of allocating capital credits helps financial stability and sustainability. By retaining margins to fund capital projects rather than relying solely on debt financing, co-ops can reduce their reliance on external sources of capital and maintain lower operating costs, ultimately benefiting members through more stable rates and improved service reliability. The allocation and retirement of capital credits also strengthen the cooperative's ties to its members, promoting a sense of community and shared responsibility.

Capital credit allocations are a fundamental aspect of not-for-profit electric cooperatives, representing the cooperative principles of member ownership and democratic control. By allocating margins back to members as capital credits, cooperatives not only demonstrate their commitment to serving their communities but also ensuring their long-term financial viability and sustainability.

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR CAPITAL CREDITS

Determine the total amount you were billed for electricity during the 2023 calendar year.





Multiply that amount by each capital credit factor in the category that applies to you.

If you don't know the total amount billed, contact Cotton Electric at 580-875-3351.



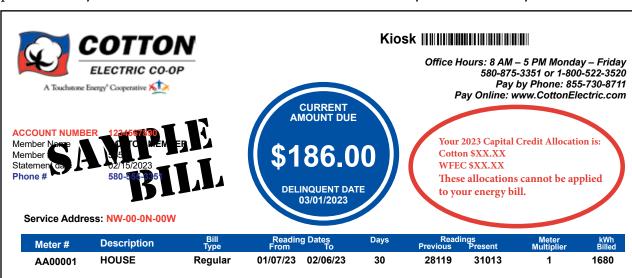
CAPITAL CREDIT FACTORS

General Service Small Commercial Large Commercial LPC/STC Irrigation 0.0678011902 0.0689953777 0.0465832430 0.0237391884 0.0827444831

Cotton

0.0515560307 0.0524640910 0.0354219019 0.0180512808 0.0629189119





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According to www.energystar.gov, a home with insufficient insulation and air leaks wastes more than 20% of the energy used to heat or cool the homethat's essentially throwing money out the door. Fortunately, most weatherization projects are easy to DIY and can be completed in a day.

The simplest and most cost-effective weatherization strategies is air sealing around windows and exterior doors.

If you have older windows, odds are you have air escaping through tiny cracks and gaps around the frame. If you can see any daylight around the frame or the windows rattle easily, you likely have air leaks. Also check for any small cracks around the frame that may not be visible with sunlight.

If you suspect you have leaky windows and plan to apply new caulk, be sure to remove the old caulk and clean the area well before application. Caulking materials vary in strength and properties, but you'll likely need a half-cartridge per window.

Silicone caulk is a popular choice and can also be used to seal joints between bathroom and kitchen fixtures.

Another weatherization project is installing weatherstripping around exterior doors. The most common types of weatherstripping options are V-channel, felt and foam tape. Most homeowners opt for felt or foam tape; both options are easy to install but will need to be replaced every couple years, depending on wear and tear. Weatherstripping should be installed around the top and sides of the door.

If you see daylight around the bottom of an exterior door, consider installing a door sweep in addition to weatherstripping. Door sweeps are available in aluminum, plastic, vinyl and felt options. Weatherstripping can also be in-

stalled around windows, typically to the sides of a double hung or sliding window, or around the window sash.

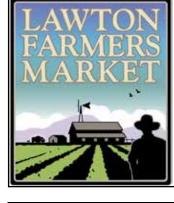
Another way to improve comfort in your home is adding insulation. While this is a more costly project



and requires a professional's help, it's an effective way to decrease heat flow, which impacts energy use in winter and summer months. Older homes may need additional insulation to either replace older materials or meet newer efficiency standards. Contact a qualified installation specialist if you suspect your home's insulation levels are inadequate.

The best way to identify air leaks in your home is a blower door test, which can be conducted by Cotton Electric's energy efficiency coordinator. A blower door test helps determine how airtight your home is and identify air leaks. Our free home energy efficiency evaluations are a benefit of your co-op membership, so we encourage you to take advantage of this helpful service.

In addition to saving energy, air sealing can help you avoid moisture control issues, improve indoor air quality and extend the life of your heating and cooling system.



Lawton Farmers Market Saturdays 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. 77 SW 4th St.

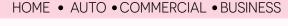
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or vendor inquiries please call: Cindy Nocton (580) 678-9472

LawtonFarmersMarket.com









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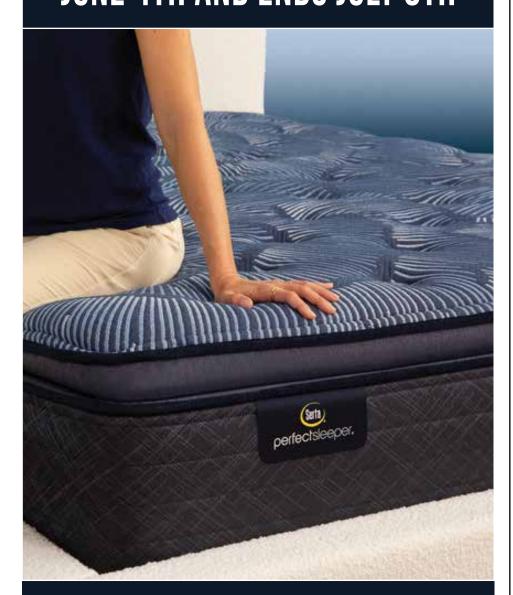




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Farm safety tips for harvest season

Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by American farmers. For many farmers across the state, harvest has either begun or preparations are ramping up for the busy season: a sprint of long days and short nights watching a golden cloud of wheat get swept up into the combine header. Along with farming being one of the most dangerous jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics/U.S. Department of Labor, the weight of exhaustion and pressure can increase the probability of accidents in the field.

Every year, tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages. These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery.

With harvest season sweeping across the plains of Oklahoma, Safe Electricity and Cotton Electric provide steps and precautions to help keep farmers safe from potential electrical hazards:

- Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines

- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines at all times, in all directions
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance
- Always lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance
- If a power line is sagging or low, call the utility provider right away
- If your equipment does hit a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait for utility crews to cut the power.
- Make sure irrigation systems do not direct water onto power lines
 - Be aware of underground wires before digging
- Show potential electrical hazards to workers and family

Electricity is essential to farming and ranching, and it must be respected when operating near it. We hope you never find yourself in a situation where farming equipment contacts power lines or poles, but if you do, we hope you'll remember these safety tips.













Nita Mitchell

To get started, call me at (580) 467-0824.



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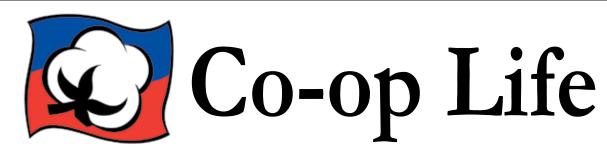
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History repeats itself: Pittman Homestead celebrates 100 years

By Carli Eubank

"A landmark on Highway 7, about half way between Lawton and Duncan is the two-story home of Marvin and Dorothy Pittman. The farm was drawn in the 1901 lottery of Comanche county lands and has been in the family ever since.

Marvin and Dorothy have lived in the house since 1960 although they have owned the farm since 1948. Built in 1924, the house has been part of much happiness and sorrows that come to families. For in the family of A.F. "Tuck" Pittman and his wife, Anna, were nine children and Marvin and Dorothy had a family of eight children."

Today, Victoria "Viki" Pittman is the third generation to live at the Pittman Homestead, and one of the eight children mentioned above from a previous article published in *The Current* in December 1985.

As you walk under the big shade tree, up the stained concrete steps and through the wooden door, you enter a room filled with treasures collected over the years. You feel the history of the house with each creak of the floor beneath your footstep.

Viki's grandfather, A.F. "Tuck" Pittman, drew the 160-acre plot in the 1901 lottery and later built the Homestead, or the "big house," in 1924, originally five bedrooms for a family of 11. Before Tuck constructed the big house, he built a dugout in one of the hills on the property.

Years later, Tuck would build and move into a small wooden-frame house with his wife and welcome seven of their nine children into the world. Their two youngest children are remembered by their names engraved on golden plaques that were added on the door of the same bedroom they were born in at the Homestead.

"[My father] knew what the weather was before he got out of bed," Viki said. "Either the roof was leaking from the rain, or his blanket would be covered in snow."

Since the day it was built, the Pittman Homestead and those who lived in it experienced many historic events over the century: weathering severe storms, tornadoes and the 2010 ice storm, looking for Sputnik to pass over the house, being recognized by the Centennial Farm and Ranch program and becoming one of Cotton Electric's first members to receive rural electricity in 1941. And over the years, Viki has collected her own memories at the Homestead. She went on to document her stories of growing up at the Homestead in her book titled *Tales of the Prairie*.

"One of my favorite memories growing up here was Christmas," Viki said. "On Christmas Eve, my siblings and I would all pile into the cab and bed of our old green beaten pickup and drive through the pasture under the dark sky, looking for Santa Claus to fly over the prairie. When we saw the floodlight at the house blink on and off, we knew that was Momma letting us know it was time to head back to the house."

Another distinct memory for Viki is growing up with horses and how much they were involved in their daily life. But none compare to her ornery, but love-



(Pictured left to right) Michael Coucke and Victoria "Viki" Pittman moved in to the Pittman Homestead in 2013. Photo by Carli Eubank.

able Paint horse, Buster. In her book, Viki shares one of her first memories with Buster when they rode up on a creek bank with trees covered with monarch butterflies. As they trotted along the bank, Viki remembers the butterflies landing on them and flapping their bright-orange wings, creating an illusion of "as if her and Buster could fly."

In 2002, Viki became the third owner of the Pittman Homestead and officially moved into the big house in 2013, after her husband retired.

"I always knew I wanted to come back to the Homestead," Viki said. "My favorite thing about living here again is looking out the same window I did as a kid and watching the cattle graze under the trees. It's so comforting."

The house has undergone many renovations, such as converting the attic to another bathroom, transforming the chicken coop into a guest house and remodeling the front library from a room that used to shelter travelers in the 1930s. Through all these updates, Viki wanted to maintain the originality of the house that holds so many of her dearest memories.

"Viki loved this place so much that if there was a way we could acquire it, we were going to do it," said Michael Coucke, Viki's husband. "We have lived in a lot of different states and traveled everywhere, and she's been a real trooper. I love seeing her enjoy this place that she deserves."

On June 1, the Pittmans gathered together to celebrate 100 years of the Pittman Homestead – a scene that holds many memories and a path for new ones to continue to be made.





(Above) The Pittman Homestead built in 1924. Photo courtesy of Tales of the Prairie. The Pittman Homestead 100 years later. Photo by Carli Eubank.

And the sign reads... "Pittman Since 1901"

A landmark on Highway 7, about half way between Lawton and Duncan is the two-story home of Marvin and Dorothy Pittman. The farm was drawn in the 1901 lottery of Comanche county lands and has been in the family ever since.

Marvin and Dorothy have lived in the house since 1960 although they have owned the farm since 1948. Built in 1924, the house has been part of much happiness and sorrows that come to families. For in the family of A.F. "Tuck" Pittman and his wife, Anna, were nine children and Marvin and Dorothy had a family of eight children.

Learning that Comanche and Kiowa lands in Oklahoma Territory were being opened to white settlement, A.F. "Tuck" Pittman left Alabama and was in the Lawton District in August, 1901 when about two million acres of Southwest Oklahoma were distributed in the lottery. Earlier, each Indian man, woman and child of the tribes in the area also received 160 acres.

Tuck drew his 160 acres in section 31-2 N-9 W and moved to the location to "prove up" his claim. The Homestead Act gave 160 acres of land free to adult citizens who would live on the claim for a stated amount of time – originally five years, later only three. They were also required to make certain improvements. Marvin's

abstract shows that his dad also paid the amount of \$1 per acre.

Tuck built a dugout into the side of a hill on Big Beaver. Another room was constructed of wood and was probably the "front room." "Just a few years ago, I filled in that dugout on the creek, never thinking it was such a part of our history. I wish I hadn't filled it in, but at that time people weren't so interested in family trees and history," Marvin explained.

Later Tuck and his wife, Anna, built a four room house down the fill from the large home that stands today. Seven of their children were born there. "I guess it was pretty crowded because when he built this place in 1924, he made sure there was plenty of room for a growing family," Marvin said. There were originally three bedrooms downstairs and three upstairs, with living room, dining room, kitchen and back porch. "He also included a small bathroom which wasn't plumbed into we got electricity to pump water," Marvin recalled. There was 2,800 square feet in all, plus a basement. Another couple of children were born after the big house was built.

"I'll always be grateful Dad had enough foresight to wire the house, because it would have been a real chore to wire behind these plastered walls," said Marvin. And in 1941, the Pittmans did get rural electricity. They were among the earliest members of Cotton Electric.

Electricity changed the lives of farm families. "The first thing mother and dad bought was a refrigerator. We had used an ice box and finally a kerosene refrigerator that would freeze one tray of ice if you weren't in too much of a hurry," Marvin said. "We heated with a big wood stove and cooked with wood when I was little. Dorothy and I planned to build on a big den with a fireplace, but I decided I had chopped all the wood I wanted to in my life. That's hard work," he said.

Marvin recalled that Nick Poire, an uncle, and Joe Watson helped build the big house. It was a big job in 1924 because there wasn't the equipment we have today. The 40-foot tall barn in back was originally at Ft. Sill barracks that Tick and the boys moved. It stood many years but finally an Oklahoma tornado took off the top

and the sides caved in.

Tuck raised wheat, alfalfa, cattle and "lots of hogs." When Tuck butchered a hog the meat would be parceled

out to neighbors because there was no way to keep it for very long. Neighbors reciprocated when the time came for them to butcher.

The family raised a lot of grain each year. "But, it seemed to me we just turned around and fed it to horses," recalls Marvin. "When you keep sixteen work horses, it takes just about all you can raise just to feed them."

"Dad raised cotton, too," recalls Marvin. "I started farming for myself in 1937 and that first year I put in a field of cotton. It was such a headache with pickers and everything else, I promised myself when I got that crop in I would never grow another row of cotton. And I haven't," he said.

Tuck Pittman died in 1943. His widow, Anna, lived on at the big house along until 1960 when she moved in to Lawton. Marvin and Dorothy had been married in 1941 and they purchased the farm from his mother in 1948. They lived in a home they built on the east side of the farm. They also farmed another quarter across the highway on the river bottom. "I don't think we ever had a complete crop failure in that bottom," Marvin recalled

Marvin and Dorothy had part of their family in that first home but finished raising them after they moved up on the hill. Children included Phillip, Joe, Steve, Viki, Nancy, David, Kathy and Timmy. Timmy was killed when he was only thirteen years old in an accident involving his motorcycle and a motor vehicle. This death left a big void in all their lives.

The other children have grown up to full and productive lives. They include a PHD, two in the Air Force and other in assorted fields. They have given their parents seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Marvin and Dorothy make about three trips a year to see the kids but home is still the farm on Highway 7. Marvin retired from construction and farming in 1981. He was mainly involved in farm and ranch and highway fencing. Dorothy was even included in some of those jobs.

Marvin is enjoying the game of golf and is active in Knights of Columbus and farm organizations. Dorothy is an artist with many lovely paintings hanging in their home that attest to her talent. She also enjoys quilting. "A great deal of his retirement is spent working on this house," says Dorothy. Marvin completed a distinctive

"A great deal of his retirement is spent working on this house," says Dorothy. Marvin completed a distinctive fence across the property and a sign above the drive-thru entrance gates reads "Pittman since 1901."

And instead of a den, he built a big deck outside the dining room where they can enjoy summer evenings.

And inside there are things Tuck and Anna Pittman never dreamed of. Ceiling fans, microwave, built-in oven and stove, floor furnace and wall heaters that keep the house warm and cozy. Wall-to-wall carpet covers those floors that used to be so cold to bare feet, and storm doors and windows that prevent cold air rushing down across that hill from singing around the frames.

These are all good things surely. "But, yet I wonder if our grandchildren will ever have the good times we did as kids," Marvin said. Horseback riding across the fields, weiner roasts down on Beaver, school socials and the Christmas tree where everyone took part – and many more memories of life on the farm come rushing back to remember.

Life wasn't easy for those kids. Life isn't easy for any kid. The thing that seemed to help them through the hard work and heartaches is simple faith. Faith in a little boy Jesus who was born the son of God among the animals in a manger on Christmas Day.



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 TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com by June 28. Only events occurring after July 12 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 a beautiful cycling ride through some of the most enchanting scenery in Southwest Oklahoma, including the Wichita Mountains, Fort Sill Museum and some of the base's most important historical properties. Preregistration is June 14, or you can register the morning of the event. Registration fees range from \$40 to \$50. The event is set to begin at 8 a.m. on Saturday, June 15 at Fort Sill MWR Patriot Club, 500 Upton Road, Fort Sill Army Post. For more information or to register, visit www.tourofthewichitas.com/2024tour-of-the-wichitas.

New feature at annual Freedom Festival in Lawton

Attend the 10th annual Lawton Fort Sill Freedom Festival at Elmer Thomas Park for a day full of Independence Day fun. This family-friendly event will feature fun activities, including derby car races, hotdog eating contest, bounce houses and more activities. Food and drink vendors will also be available. A new feature to the event is the drone show that will take place that Friday night. Stick around until nightfall that Saturday night with the event's finale of a massive fireworks display. No personal fireworks, alcohol or pets. Service animals only. The event is June 28 and 29 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 a full day of patriotic events during 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 and more. The parade leads into family-friendly activities such as music, game booths and food vendors at Redbud Park. 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 10 a.m. on July 4 on Main Street in Marlow. For more information, visit www.cityofmarlow. com, or call 580-658-2212.

Rockin' the Park

Join the fun at Rockin' the Park, a three-day music festival and Fourth of July celebration in Medicine Park. Food vendors will be available, along with great rock 'n' roll music from several bands. Be sure to catch a fireworks experience for the grand finale of this fun-filled event. The event is from July 5 to July 7 at downtown Medicine Park. For more information, visit www.medicinepark.com/festivals/, or call 580-458-2596.

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.

PHOTO MONTH



Cotton Electric member Kim Bitts snapped this photo during their calving season.

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

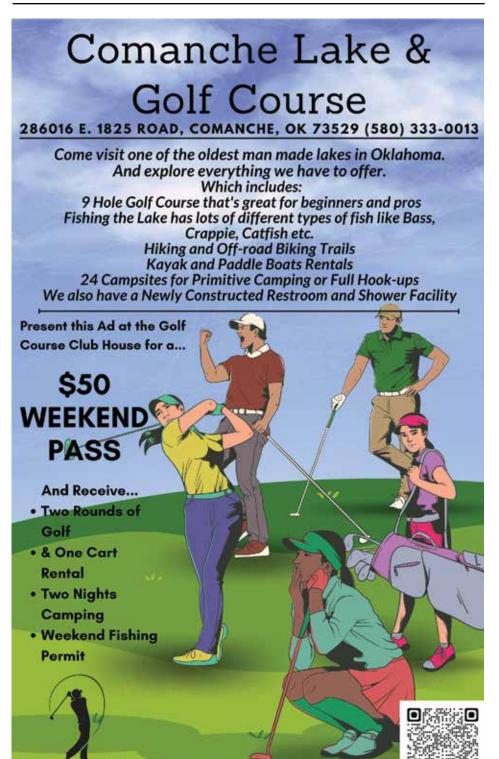


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Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food 2 For A

can be a dip, a spread, or a main entrée. It is easy to make at home but can also stores, and restaurants. For some it may be an acquired taste, but it is worth trying given its nutrient density.

of hummus, it is traditionally made from chickpeas and tahini. Chickpeas, also known as garbanzo beans, are the edible seeds of plants in the legume family. Taspices. Everything is thrown in a blender summer adventures.

to produce a creamy and versatile concoction.

As hummus has gained popularity in the U.S., the flavors of hummus have exploded. It is important to consider what is being added to hummus as ingredients like sugar (often added to chocolate hummus) can diminish nutritional value. Another variation is changing out chickpeas for other beans like edamame; this swap keeps the nutritional value in-

Traditional hummus made with chickpeas and tahini contains protein, fiber, carbohydrates, healthy fats, and many vitamins and minerals. When compared to dips and spreads made with mayonnaise, sour cream, or processed cheese, Hummus is a Middle Eastern dish that hummus offers more variety of nutrients per serving.

The only caution with hummus, and be found in grocery stores, convenience really any dip or spread, is calories. Beans, legumes, seeds, and nuts do contain a higher proportion of calories to protein when compared to other sources Although there is no official definition of protein. Portion sizes should be considered when incorporating hummus into a healthy eating pattern.

Hummus goes great with vegetables as a dip, as a spread on sandwiches, toast, or hini is made from ground sesame seeds. bagels, and on pizza and flatbreads. It is Basic hummus recipes add lemon juice, great for summer picnics and roadtrips, cumin, salt, garlic, olive oil, and other and for snacking during your favorite



Traditional hummus is packed with many vitamins and minerals, plus protein, fiber, carbohydrates, healthy fats and more. Photo courtesy of Metro Creative.



Share these **ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS** with children and teens to help keep them safe.

DO NOT climb or sit on green boxes or other electrical equipment.

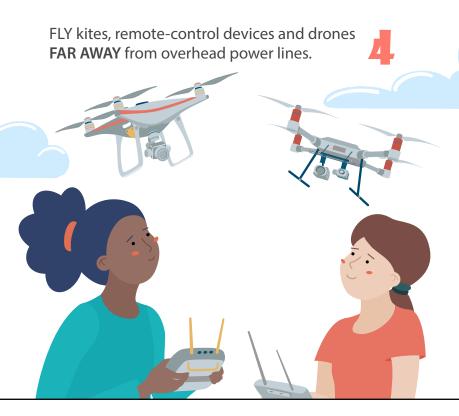




STAY AWAY from electrical equipment marked "keep out," "high voltage" or "danger."















Create a family-friendly grazing board

(Family Features) A beautifully designed charcuterie board may feel more like a grown-up treat, but with the right ingredients, delicious grazing boards can provide fun and nutrition for the whole family.

No matter what you call it, charcuterie boards, grazing boards and snack platters are all basically the same thing. The boards make a trendy addition to an entertaining menu, but a platter or kid-friendly board can be equally pleasing.

What you serve on a grazing board is entirely up to you. Most include a selection of meats and cheeses, and many incorporate nuts, crackers, dips and jams. Some also incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables. Creating your own board means there really are no rules; you can add just about anything you want.

To build a successful board, keep these tips in mind:

Choose ingredients and elements that don't require temperature control. The idea of a grazing board is that it sits out for a while. Avoid anything that needs refrigeration, heat or will lose its shape or flavor if it rests for an extended amount of time.

Select a surface large enough to hold a variety of food. It can be a simple cutting board or a cute platter. There's no specific size requirement but err on the side of bigger; spacing out your goodies can be more attractive and less messy.

Use high-quality ingredients to ensure every bite is delicious and nutritious. While shopping, remember to look for the Produce for Kids and Healthy Family Project logos next to favorite items in the produce department, as adding these flavorful fruits and veggies to your cart can help make a difference in your community.

Build your board around a theme to add an extra element of fun. Use mini cookie cutters to make fun, kid-friendly shapes out of cheese and meats. Be mindful of colors; a rainbow platter is vibrant and appealing, and colorful fruits and veggies offer a strong mix of nutrients.

Remember it doesn't have to be elaborate. Classic favorites are all you need. Even kid favorites like sections of mandarin oranges, carrot sticks and chocolate chips are fair game for a family-friendly board. Find more ideas for creating family-friendly treats at www.healthyfamilyproject.com.



Weekend breakfast grazing board

Recipe courtesy of Healthy Family Project's "Come Graze With Us" e-cookbook

Ingredients:

Hard-boiled eggs Cooked sausage links Mini frozen waffles, toasted Mini frozen pancakes, toasted Mini muffins Yogurt Fresh fruit Syrup

Directions:

On grazing board or platter, arrange eggs, sausage links, toasted waffles, toasted pancakes, muffins, yogurt, fruit, syrup and jelly.





Taco Tuesday board

Recipe courtesy of Healthy Family Project's "Come Graze With Us" e-cookbook

Ingredients:

Guacamole Salsa

Queso

Hard and soft taco

shells Ground turkey, sea-

soned and browned

Lettuce

Diced tomatoes Shredded cheese

Chopped onions Chopped peppers

Sour cream

Cilantro Lime wedges

Directions:

On grazing board or platter, arrange guacamole, salsa, queso, taco shells, ground turkey, lettuce, tomatoes, shredded cheese, onions, peppers, sour cream, cilantro and lime wedges.

A savory summer dessert perfect for sharing

(Family Features) Put simply break them out delicious desserts back on the menu all summer long with savory favorites that don't call for wasting sunny days in the kitchen. Single-serve solutions are perfect for sharing with guests, whether you're hosting a pool party or calling over loved ones for a backyard barbecue.

This Peanut Butter Cookie Banana Pudding can be prepped first thing in the morning and refrigerated until it's time for a treat. Portioned in 1/4-pint canning jars (or small, kid-proof cups to avoid a mess) for individual servings, you can

when the dessert bell dings and top them with whipped topping and extra cookies.

At 7 grams per serving, a nutrient-rich powerhouse like peanuts can put a better-for-you spin on summer sweets. They deliver the most protein of any nut and contain six essential – vitamin E, folate, riboflavin, thiamin, niacin and vitamin B6 – and seven essential minerals - phosphorus, iron, magnesium, potassium, zinc, copper and calcium.

Visit www.gapeanuts. com to find more protein-packed recipe ideas.

Peanut butter cookie banana pudding

Recipe courtesy of Peanut Butter Lovers on behalf of the Georgia Peanut Commission

Ingredients:

1 box (5.1 ounces) instant vanilla pudding

3 cups cold milk

1 package (16 ounces) peanut butter sandwich cookies, divided

12 canning jars (1/4)pint each)

2-3 bananas

frozen whipped topping, thawed

Directions:

In large measuring cup, whisk pudding mix and milk until thoroughly combined. Set aside to soft set, about 5 minutes.

Cut or break six cookies in half and set aside.

Pour remainder of pack-

age in 1-gallon bag, seal

it and use rolling pin to crush cookies.

Spoon layer of cookie crumbs in bottom of each jar, reserving some for topping. Top with layer of vanilla pudding. Cut one banana in half lengthwise and slice. Put layer of bananas on top of pudding. Top bananas with another layer of pudding. Repeat with remaining ingredients.

Refrigerate ready to serve. To serve, top with whipped topping and sprinkle with crushed cookies. Serve each with broken cookie

Note: Twelve 1/4-pint canning jars fit into disposable foil lasagna pan with clear lid for easy refrigeration and transportation.

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3 tips for fueling summer adventures

(Family Features) Summer is the time to get outside and remember the importance of outdoor activities that can be enjoyed as a family. Encouraging children at an early age to participate in outdoor exploration can help foster lifelong skills.

For example, research published in the "International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health" found associations between nature exposure and improved cognitive function, brain activity, blood pressure, mental health, physical activity and sleep. What's more, kids who play and take part in outdoor adventures learn skills like problem solving, according to the American Academy of Pediatricians.

However, for many families with little ones, this summer might be their first foray into activities like exploring playgrounds or enjoying backyard campouts.

Opportunities to be more active outdoors bring obvious benefits. With that in mind, it's important that families embark on these activities with the proper fuel.

All the energy kids burn playing outdoors and taking on new adventures can work up an appetite, making it an opportune time to introduce new foods. It might even be a little one's first time trying seasonal fruits and veggies that can help nourish family playtime.

"A healthy curiosity and freedom to explore are essential ingredients for successful adventures, but fueling all of that fun is equally important," said Sarah Smith-Simpson, PhD, principal food scientist at Gerber. "Kids need well-bal-anced nutrition from a variety of sources to fuel their summertime play."

Ensure your family is ready to make memories and enjoy the exciting adventures ahead with these tips from Smith-Simpson:

Get colorful with fruits and veggies

Serving a rainbow of colors with an assortment of fruits and veggies means nutrient-rich snacks that are equal parts flavorful and fun. One of the best parts about fruits is they're easily transportable to bring along for warm days exploring a nearby park. They're perfect for a quick snack on the go – just cut them according to your child's age and developmental stage to avoid hazards like choking then pack them in a small cooler to keep from spoiling. For preschool-age children, a variety of fresh produce can help them practice color recognition while enjoying favorite flavors. Stocking your refrigerator and pantry with apples, oranges, bananas, green and purple grapes, blueberries, blackberries and more allows children to explore a world of nutrition with bright colors that catch their attention.

Pack plenty and a variety of snacks

It's the time of year when infants and young children need extra fuel for playtime, making it important for parents to offer a variety of nutritious foods and flavors. A key part of inspiring exploration in young children begins with nutrient-rich snacks that help fuel their adventures. Introducing diverse foods can help expand palates and provides a wide range of nutrients to support the entire family.

When introducing foods into a child's diet, consistency is key. Experts say babies may need to try a new food up to 10 times before they like it. With a variety of Clean Label Project-certified snacks, Gerber offers solutions you can incorporate into little ones' diets and bring along for family fun. Some snacks to consider for ages 12 months and over are toddler pouches in Apple Mango Strawberry and Banana Blueberry. For babies in the crawling stage, consider Lil' Crunchies Mild Cheddar snacks.

Hydrate on the go

Avoid dehydration by ensuring you're bringing enough water for the entire family on all your summertime trips, whether they're around the block or across the country. Use refillable bottles for mom and dad, and for little ones, be sure to pack non-spill sippy cups for toddlers that help avoid messes. Fill a larger container with clean water from home you can use to refill everyone's cups, bottles and canteens to stay hydrated throughout the day.

Find more family-friendly resources, including recipe ideas, meal planning tips and guidance on age-appropriate food introductions, at www.gerber.com/parenttalk.

Photos courtesy of Shutterstock



Walk your way to better health

(Family Features) A walk is not just good for your body, it's also good for your soul. Physical activity, like walking, is one of the best ways to reduce stress and boost your mood. However, reports show walking rates are declining steadily in the United States.

On average, 1 out of every 4 U.S. adults sits for longer than eight hours each day, per research from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, which can have negative consequences on physical and mental health. Regular exercise improves mood, boosts energy and can even help you sleep better. Staying active is one of the best ways to keep your mind and body healthy.

Consider this advice from the American Heart Association, which has worked for decades to promote policies and strategies that make it easier for communities to get and stay active. One example is National Walking Day, established by the organization to encourage people to move more throughout the day so they can feel, think, sleep and live better.

Indeed, adding more movement can benefit your body and mind in numerous ways, such as:

Lowering disease risk. Getting the recommended amount of physical activity (at least 150 minutes of moderate, 75 minutes of vigorous or a combination of those activities per week) is linked to lower risk of diseases, stronger bones and muscles, im-

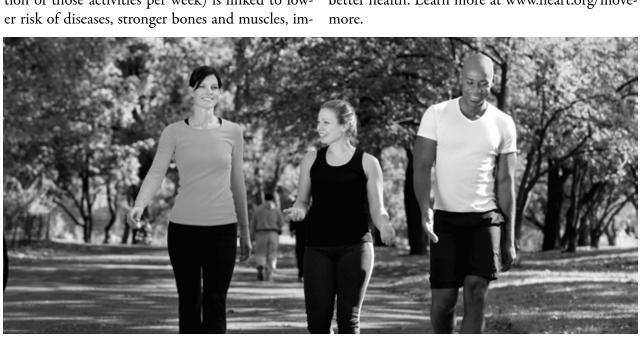
proved mental health and cognitive function and lower risk of depression, according to the U.S Department of Health and Human Services.

Increasing sunlight exposure. Outdoor exercise is an easy way to get moving and take in the sunlight, which can improve mood, boost immunity and help you get some vitamin D. Spending time outdoors is a no-cost option and has been shown to reduce stress, promote a sense of belonging and improve mood.

Improving cognitive and mental function. Physical activity keeps your mind sharp now and later. Studies show higher fitness levels are linked to better attention, learning, working memory and problem solving. What's more, a study published in the "British Journal of Sports Medicine" shows people who get the recommended amount of physical activity are less likely to develop depression.

Living longer. Healthy life expectancy can be positively impacted by increasing activity. According to research published in the "American Journal of Epidemiology," swapping just 30 minutes of sitting with low-intensity physical activity reduced risk of death by 17%.

Get moving to reduce your stress and step into better health. Learn more at www.heart.org/move-





Get inspired to get moving

A little creativity can go a long way to make your walk more fun. You might think of walking as a solo activity, but a companion makes it even more enjoyable. Ask colleagues, friends or family to join you.

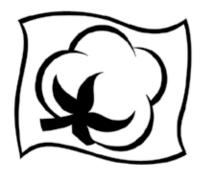
A walk is a perfect excuse to take a break from a long day at your desk. If you work remotely, take a conference call on the go or plan your walk as a reward for completing a project.

Use your walk as a guilt-free opportunity to listen to a new audiobook or create a walking soundtrack of your favorite upbeat music.

Mix up your scenery. Taking new routes keeps your walks interesting and helps prevent boredom from traveling the same predictable path.

If you need an extra nudge to get moving, a pet may help you get fit. Dog parents are more likely to reach their fitness goals than those without canine companions. In fact, according to the "Journal of Physical Activity & Health," dog parents are 34% more likely to fit in 150 minutes of walking a week than non-dog owners. Pets can also help lower stress, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar and boost your overall happiness and well-being.

Photos courtesy of Shutterstock



COTTON

ELECTRIC CO-OP

WATER SAFETY FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

Summer means fun in the sun and spending time in the water to cool off. But remember, electricity and water never mix! Read the safety tips below and fill in the blanks with the correct choice from the word bank.



Psst! Check your work in the answer key.

1. '	When possible, us you're near water	se sources like	operated or real a swimming po	rechargeabl ol.	e devices when	
2.	If you hear	while	e swimming, go i	nside until s	storms have pas	sed.
3.	Never bring water. Devices sh	dev lould be kep	rices near a swim ot at least 10 feet	ming pool o away from	or other body o water sources.	f
4.	All outdoor elect	rical outlets	should be cover	red and kep	t	
	Never handle ele other water activ		es if you are	fro	om swimming o	r
				V		
	thunder	wet	battery		electrical	
	thunder				electrical	

Answer Key: 1) battery 2) thunder 3) electrical 4) dry 5) wet

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

Level: Advanced

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!

PUBLIC AUCTION

Saturday, June 15, 2024 10:00 A.M. 431 West Plato Road Estate of Warren D. Crook Duncan, Oklahoma

Gary Criswell Auction Service & Real Estate, Inc. has been commissioned by the Estate of Warren D. Crook to offer at Public Auction his Personal Property situated at 431 West Plato Road in Duncan, Oklahoma. The 3 Bedroom Brick Home (1,931 Square Feet) has 2 Baths and Improvements including a Sheet Metal Barn (22' x 40') and a Storage Shed (12'x16'); All Situated on 24.38 Acres (Certified Survey-9/7/22). Currently Listed for Sale for \$350,000 (MLS 38404).

Household Furnishings: Ashley-Loveseat, Jackson Furniture Massage Recliner, Journey Health Lift Chair, Dining Table with Bench and 4 Chairs, Roll Top Desk (Seven Drawers), Poster Bedroom Suite King Size (4 pcs.), Sligh Grandfather Clock (nice), ACTION INDUSTRIES Recliner, Paul Bunyan Poster Bedroom Suite, Quilt Chest (wooden), MAYTAG Washer, MAYTAG Dryer, Kenmore Freezer, Polaroid Color Television and a Cabinet Entertainment Center with 2 Drawers.

Firearms and Safes: WINCHESTER-MODEL 1400- 12 Gauge Shot Gun, STEVENS-MODEL 940A 410 Gauge Shot Gun, LIBERTY Gun Safe (Centurion Deluxe), SENTRY Safe (small) and WORLD MONETARY EXCHANGE RESERVE Combination Safe.

TOYOTA TACOMA: 2019 TOYOTA TACOMA with Double Cab, 4x2, 2.7 Liter Engine, Automatic, Rear Backup Camera, All Power, Fabric Seats with a Bed Liner, Silver Sky Metal/Cement Gray, Mileage 7,975 (One Owner).

TOYOTA CAMRY: 2012 TOYOTA CAMRY SE, Engine Dual

VVT-I, Automatic, Moon Roof, All Power with Leather Seats, Color Black, Mileage 99,374 (Good Condition). **FORD F-350 4x2:** 1992 FORD F-350 4x2, Dually Super Cab with 7.3 Liter Diesel V8 Engine and O/D H/D Trand-

Cab with 7.3 Liter Diesel V8 Engine and O/D H/D Trandmision (Truck is not Running needs some Repairs). **COLEMAN Side-by-Side:** 2021 COLEMAN 4x4 UT 400 - HS 400 UTV-5 with dump bed; 13.2 Hours (New). **HONDA RANCHER 4 WHEELER:** 2006 HONDA RANCH-

ER - ES - Model TRX350TE with Good Rubber (nice). **FORD Tractor:** 1994 FORD Tractor - Diesel with Koyker Front End Loader and 4 Wheel Drive (Good Condition). **GRASSHOPPER G2 Lawnmower and Tools:** GRASS-HOPPER G2 Lawnmower (Diesel) with a SL 61 Mowing Deck, Large Branch Loppers, YARD MATE Rototiller, DR-TRIMMER MOWER and a CRAFTSMAN Lawn Edger. **Farm Equipment:** RHINO-Brush Hog - 6', CARONI - Finish Mower 6', Trailer Single Axle 12' with Metal Dump Bed, Trailer Dual Axle 16' with Wood Floor 77" x 16' and FENCING - 4' x100' (New) -14 Gauge (2 Rolls). **Miscellaneous:** Variety of Glassware and Collectibles.

16' and FENCING - 4'x100' (New) -14 Gauge (2 Rolls).

Miscellaneous: Variety of Glassware and Collectibles.

Auctioneer's Note: This is a Nice Public Auction with a 2019 TOYOTA TACOMA Pickup, 2012 TOYOTA CAMRY SE, 2021COLEMAN Side-by-Side (New), HONDA RANCHER 4 Wheeler and a FORD Tractor with Loader; A Variety of Household Furnishings, Lawn Equipment, Shop Tools and Hand Tools. The Vehicles, 4 Wheeler, Side-by-Side and Tractor with Front End Loader will be offered at Auction at High Noon. Please Plan to Attend this Public Auction. Please go to auctionzip.com, Enter Auctioneer ID #35817 to View Pictures.

Gary Criswell Auction Service & Real Estate, Inc. 580-255-8162 · 806 West Main · Duncan, OK · 580-467-2248 (Auctioneer/Broker/REALTOR) email: garymcriswell@gmail.com

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Parting Shot



Congratulations to our Photo of the Month runner-up! Former Cotton Electric member Robin Burns snapped this photo of Racie Burns. Racie is Cotton County Little Miss United States Agriculture. Photo courtesy of Robin Burns.

Is Your Water Safe?

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