What's Inside



Top 5 announced in 2023 essay competition page 7



Piecing together memories with every stitch page 11



Cheesy Chicken Tortellini Bake page 14



A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperative K

"The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957"

VOLUME 66

March 13, 2023

NUMBER 7

Co-op offers rebate program to members

Spring is here, and now is the perfect time to start prepping for summer. From April 1 through June 20, Cotton Electric is offering to help members offset the cost of getting air conditioning units ready for high summer temperatures.

Through the HVAC Tune-Up Rebate program, the co-op will provide a rebate of 50% the cost of your spring tune-up service, excluding repairs and not to exceed \$50. New in 2023, the co-op will now extend the rebate to include 50% the cost of annual maintenance contracts on heat pump systems, excluding repairs and not to exceed \$75. The goal of this incentive program is to ensure the largest power-consuming appliance in members' homes is ready to operate at peak performance when needed most.

When was the last time you had your home's HVAC system serviced?

Heating and air conditioning systems are typically the largest purchase for homeowners, led only by home and vehicle purchases. Like with a vehicle, lack of maintenance can have a huge impact on the efficiency and life of HVAC systems. Many car owners would not even consider skipping the scheduled maintenance of their vehicle; the same type of thinking should be applied to air conditioning service.

There are two schools of thought when it comes to maintaining these systems: Reactive and preventative. Reactive practices are marked by forgoing regular maintenance and running equipment until parts fail. Preventative practices involve periodic maintenance as recommended by manufacturers. There are numerous studies showing the effects that poor maintenance procedures have on HVAC systems. A majority of studies show a 5% loss of efficiency over the course of one year. This loss in efficiency can be attributed to a reduction of air flow through indoor and outdoor coils. As dirt attaches to coils, airflow is limited. Units not properly serviced, even for just a few years, can have up to 40% loss of efficiency throughout its life.

Lack of maintenance can affect more than just the efficiency of the unit. Restricted airflow can raise operating amperage of motors and compressors, resulting in a shortened operating life span. You wouldn't drive your car with a flat tire, would you? Continuing to drive with a flat tire would result in further damage. The same is true for your air conditioning system. Running components at higher amps than they are designed for will decrease the life of that component.

It may be difficult to see if your unit has a weak start capacitor or is low on refrigerant; this is why we recommend involving a professional contractor. Scheduled tune-ups allow professionals an opportunity to perform recommended cleanings and test specific components and refrigerant levels that keep your system operating properly.

Applications will be available at www.CottonElectric.com/rebate-program, through your contractor or at one of Cotton Electric's office locations.



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Continued on page 5

Local seniors attending 2023 Leadership Summit



Kenzie McCracken

High school seniors Kenzie McCracken and Emma Nunley will represent Cotton Electric Cooperative at the 2023 Leadership Summit on



Emma Nunley

March 13 at the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds. McCracken and Nunley were selected from those who participated in the 2022 Youth Tour essay contest. Each student at Leadership Summit will take home a \$500 college scholarship.

McCracken attends Central High School where she is involved in FFA and currently serves as the chapter President. She enjoys showing pigs and spending her free time with friends. After high school, she plans to go to college to study Embryology.

Nunley attends Sterling High School and is active in fastpitch and slowpitch softball, basketball, track, FFA and Student Council. Outside of school, she enjoys spending time with her family, friends and youth group at church. She plans on attending Cameron University to receive a bachelor's degree in Allied Health Sciences while playing collegiate basketball, before being accepted into a doctorate's program to become a physical therapist.

During the event, Mc-Cracken, Nunley and other attendees from Oklahoma electric cooperatives will be presented activities that are designed to encourage students to become leaders of their schools and communities. They will also hear from speakers, Rhett Laubach and Kelly Barnes, focusing on how to make the most of the service and growth opportunities today and in the future.

McCracken and Nunley are looking forward to learning how to become a better leader and meeting new friends at the 2023 Leadership Summit.



Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after March 1, 2023, is \$0.00981 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$12.75 on the March bill.

February 2023 Temperature Extremes

Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg.
1	32	20	26	16	43	27	35
2	48	26	37	17	49	19	34
3	52	27	40	18	49	24	37
4	63	27	45	19	65	34	50
5	66	27	47	20	73	53	63
6	77	32	55	21	84	46	65
7	56	41	49	22	76	50	63
8	44	33	39	23	52	25	39
9	55	27	41	24	33	28	31
10	47	27	37	25	43	31	37
11	54	23	39	26	72	42	57
12	67	24	46	27	73	42	58
13	62	34	48	28	79	32	56
14	69	48	59				
15	76	35	56				
Source.	srh.noaa.	gov/oun/					

Average Daily High: 59 Average Daily Low: 32

Did You Know?

2023 Energy Camp applications are due March 31. More information and applications can be found at www. cottonelectric.com/EnergyCamp.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on April 10, 2023.

Contact Us

Do you have a story idea for The Current or do you need to place an ad? If so, let us know.

We can be reached at 580-875-3351 or by email at TheCurrent@ cottonelectric.com.

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



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

Things I learned from our dear friend Ronnie

otton Electric Cooperative Trustee Ron-I nie Bohot passed away last month after a valiant fight against pancreatic cancer. He was an exceptional person and one of a kind. He had a great sense of humor, was humble and kind. We are blessed to have known him and learn from him over the past 14 years he served on the CEC board.

In honor of Ronnie, I thought I would share a few lessons I've learned from him over the years.

1. Faith and Family

Ronnie was a man of faith. He selflessly served as a deacon and a church bus driver for many years. He would often share stories and tales from the church bus route. He was a believer who put God first, followed closely by his dedication to his family.

2. Service

Ronnie had a heart for service and dedication to the people of southwest Oklahoma. In addi-

tion to his service on the CEC board, he also served as a volunteer fire fighter for many years as well as a board member for Jefferson County Rural Water. Whenever we discussed policy changes or issues affecting the electric industry, Ronnie's concern was always how those would impact our members and what we could do to improve their quality of life. He loved his community and the members he represented.

3. Patriotism

Ronnie was a patriot who often spoke in his annual meeting speeches about how blessed we are to be Americans. He always thanked our veterans for their service and reminded us of the sacrifices they made so that we can be free.

4. Be yourself

Ronnie was always true to himself and his convictions. You knew that when you asked Ronnie a question, he was going



Ronnie Bohot interacting with members at Cotton Electric's Annual Meeting.

was born November 27, 1959, in Waurika, Oklahoma to C.E. Tiner and Bobbie Floretta (Holman) Bohot. He passed from this life Tuesday, February 14, 2023, at his home in Hastings at the age of 63. He and Belinda was a farmer and rancher in Hastings. He was a member of the First Baptist Church in Waurika where he was a deacon, drove the church van for over 25 years. Ronnie

Ronnie Elgin Bohot served on several boards and was involved in many community activities. Ronnie was a family man who loved the Lord and his family. He loved his children and grandchildren. They were his pride and joy.

Cotton Electric mem-Duncan were married at bers in District 9 chose the Holy City Chapel in to retain Bohot as their Stephanie and Bryce the Wichita Mountains representative on the Bohot and wife Kassie, on July 29, 1978. Ronnie cooperative's Board of brother - Ricky Bohot Trustees ever since his appointment in 2009. Bohot held many roles and responsibilities with Duncan and wife Rita, 8 the co-op over the years: Sunday school teacher, Cotton Electric Board and most importantly President from 2015 to 2018, National Rural Association of Electric



Jennifer Meason, CEO

to give you a thoughtful and honest answer. He was a downto-earth guy who provided great counsel.

5. Live each day to the fullest

When Ronnie was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, he remained positive and saw this as an opportunity to minister to the new people he met. He reminded us that none of us know how many days we have left on this earth and we should live each one to the fullest.

Ronnie will be deeply missed but his legacy will continue to live on through his wife Belinda, sons, grandchildren and a multitude of friends.

Well done, Ronnie.

Delegate Cooperatives for Cotton Electric from 2014 to 2017, and National Information Solutions Cooperative Delegate for Cotton Electric from 2010 to 2012.

He is survived by his wife of 44 years - Belinda of the home, children -Trent Bohot and wife



Ronnie Bohot

and wife Amanda, sister - Sue Bohot Bridges, brother-in-law Rickey grandchildren - Maysun, Sawyer, Hayes, Gavin, Brycenn, J-boy, Brooks, and Bray, and numerous nieces and nephews.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures. Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home when the windows are open to recycle indoor air. Natural light and clean air are energy savers, and they enhance overall health and productivity.

Source: Energy.gov

January 2023 Operating Stats

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$7,601,407	\$7,990,356
Cost of Purchased Power	5,167,429	5,577,431
Taxes	157,543	126,217
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,275	1,362
Average Farm and Residential Bill	197	220
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,562	1,830
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	19,174	19,110
Miles Energized	5,395	5,221
Density Per Mile	3.55	3.66
New Service Connects YTD	36	30
Services Retired	9	5

Upcoming **Deadlines for** The Current

April

Ad Sales March 21 Classified March 21 Publish April 10

May

Ad Sales April 21 Classified April 21 Publish May 8 The Current

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

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Energy Efficiency

Current News

Spring brings more energy efficiency tips

tric's Spring Tune-up rebate program plish this task. should just be the start of your spring preparations for summer. The following are other recommendations to help improve your home's energy efficiency during this year's spring cleaning.

1. Examine major appliances

While you have your refrigerators, freezers, washer, and dryer pulled out to sweep behind, take the extra time to address each one.

a) For your refrigerators and freezers, you should clean the door seals with a 2. Check your ceiling fans mild detergent and lubricate the contact surface as necessary. For deformed seals, first try to heat the rubber up with a hair dryer and reform it, if possible.

to normal, or if your seal is cracked, it the side of your fan, you can reverse is most likely time to replace it. Be sure that direction to counter-clockwise, to clean the condenser coils on your which will circulate the cool air during refrigerator. Reference your appliance the summer months.

Taking advantage of Cotton Elec- owner's manual for the steps to accom- 3. Check for air movement

b) Thoroughly clean your dryer's lint screen in soapy water, and allow to air dry completely before reinstalling. This is also a great time to clean out your dryer's exhaust duct and vent.

c) Cleaning your washing machine's tub and gaskets with white vinegar or hydrogen peroxide can help to remove dirt and soap build up. You can use the same process on the soap dispenser 4. LED upgrades compartments as well.

As you dust off the blades of you ceiling fans, be sure that you check the rotation. Ceiling fans are designed to operate clockwise during the winter months, forcing warm air down from If you are unable to get the seal back the ceiling. By flipping the switch on

While you have the duster out, be sure to pay attention to areas around doors, windows, or other penetrations through your wall or ceilings for cobwebs. These cobwebs are a good indicator of air movement. Look for cracks or gaps in these areas where air sealing may help to keep your conditioned air inside the home this summer.

Be sure to keep an eye out for older inefficient light bulbs. LED replacements normally use one-fifth of the energy to provide equivalent lighting. LED replacements also produce less heat in the process, helping you home stay cooler this summer. Don't forget about your outside lighting, as well.

5. Inspect doors and windows

This is a good practice to perform at least twice a year. Shifting soil and temperatures can be responsible for mer to keep the heat out.



Heath Morgan, **Energy Efficiency** Coordinator

new gaps around those doors and windows. Now is a great time to seal those air leaks. Be sure to consider the application when purchasing your sealant. Spray foam specifically designed for use around doors and windows, can help address larger gaps. High-quality exterior caulking is designed to withstand normal shifting and temperature changes. Make sure blinds are in good working condition, and be sure to keep them closed during the day this sum-

Energy Efficiency Tips to Prep Your Home for Spring



Examine major appliances



Check ceiling fans



Check for air movement

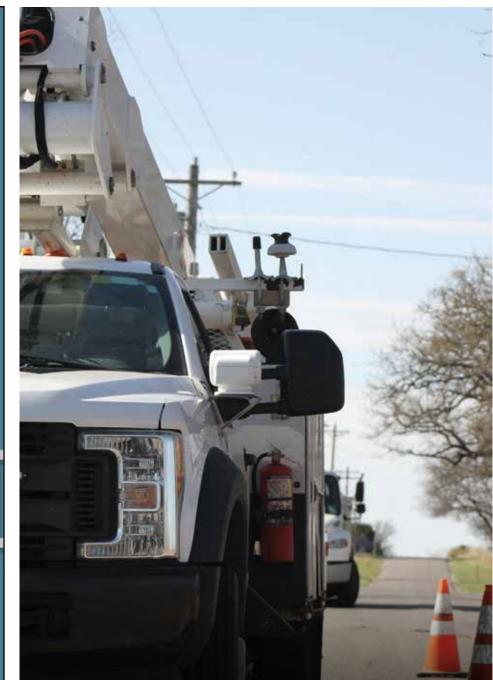


LED updades

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Inspect doors and windows







Clean up with care

Once the storm has passed, it is tempting to go straight into yard clean-up mode. However, take time for safety.

Do not go outside if there is a power outage. There could be a downed power line, which could cause electrocution. Sometimes, downed lines can be covered by branches, storm debris, water, snow or ice.

Keep these additional safety tips in mind:

- Do not trim trees/branches within 10 feet of a power line.
- · Read all instructions and be familiar with equipment you intend to use.
- Do not use a chainsaw for the first time during cleanup.
- Follow all safety recommendations when using power tools.
- Carry a ladder horizontally instead of vertically.
- Look for overhead power lines before carrying a ladder.
- Always look up for overhead power lines before removing debris from gutters.
- Take your time. Rushing can result in serious injury.
- Wear proper shoes and clothing when using ladders and power tools.
- Call your electric utility to report branches in power lines; never try to remove them yourself.



Remember, wait until an outage is restored before going outside to assess the damage.

afe Electricity.org*

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Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation

CECF announces first quarter grant recipients

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

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

The funds are pooled and administered by the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF), a board of directors who meets quarterly to consider grant applications from individuals and organizations in the area. The board consists of Jennifer Meason, the co-op's CEO; Shan Files, president of the co-op's board of trustees; and three representatives from the Cotton Electric service area: Cindy Zelbst, Danny Marlett, Carter Waid.

The board met in February to review several grant applications. Grants totaling \$23,024.56 will be distributed to 8 of the applicants. First-quarter grant recipients include: Chisholm Trail Kiwanis Club of Duncan, Comanche Fire Department, Gabriel's House Inc., Grandfield Senior

Citizen Center, Indiahoma Public Schools, Teen Court Inc., Velma-Alma FFA, and Will Rogers Pre-K Center.

Current Kews

Second-quarter applications are due April 11, 2023. The board of directors for CECF will meet again in April to review applications for the quarter.

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

Grants Awarded

Chisholm Trail Kiwanis Club of Duncan \$2,121.25 for an AED **Comanche Fire Department** \$2,500 for SCBA tanks Gabriel's House, Inc. \$380.97 for Smart TV at Empire location **Grandfield Senior Citizens Center** \$3,545 for commercial refrigerator **Indiahoma Public Schools** \$5,796.85 for commercial mixer Teen Court, Inc. \$2,975 for refurbished color copier Velma-Alma FFA \$5,228 for 10-ton pipe bender and pipe die Will Rogers Pre-K Center \$477.49 for calming area items



begins 8 am

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Continued from page 1

Beginning April 1, Cotton Electric is offering a rebate of up to \$50 per home (50% of the cost of your spring tune-up, excluding repairs, up to \$50) or up to \$75 per home (50% of the cost of your annual maintenance contract, excluding repairs, up to \$75) for members who get a tune-up for their HVAC system.

In order to qualify, the following guidelines must be met:

• Must be a Cotton Electric Cooperative member. Residence must be within Cotton Electric's service territory.

• Rebate is not available for new construction.

• A completed Rebate Application is required. Application forms can be downloaded at CottonElectric.com and are available at the Walters and Duncan offices or by calling 580-875-3351.

• Application must be signed and dated by both the member and a licensed and bonded HVAC contractor.

• Member must submit a dated, itemized invoice as proof of service completion from a qualified contractor. A copy of the annual contract must be submitted showing at least two scheduled maintenance checks, if applicable. Failure to provide required information will result in denial of rebate.

• Rebates are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis until program funds have been depleted.

• Rebate not valid on gas-fired furnaces.

• Rebate limited to one tune-up per home annually.

• HVAC tune-ups must be completed by June 20, 2023. Rebate applications must be received by June 30, 2023.

Current 🕊

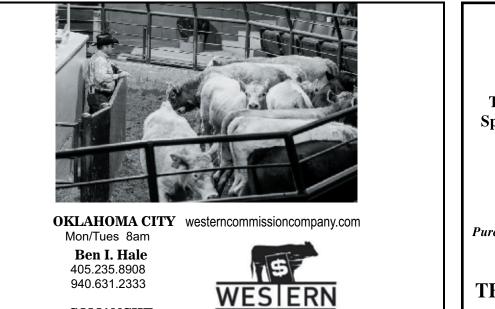
News

- Check and correct unit's refrigerant pressure and tubing
- Check thermostat settings, wiring and other electric parts and connections
- Inspect air filters
- Test AC and furnace starting capabilities
- Test safety controls
- Clean and adjust blower components
- Measure temperature difference
- Measure volts/amps on AC and furnace

Tune-ups must be performed by a qualified service professional and must include the following criteria:

- Lubricate all applicable parts
- Check temperature calibration and adjust, if needed
- Check AC evaporator coil and clean, if necessary
- Clean AC condenser coil
- Clean AC condensate drains
- Check thermostat operation





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Should investors 'go it alone'?

f you're going to enjoy a L comfortable retirement. you should know, among other things, how much money you'll need. And you may have a much better at retirement than "do-itchance of knowing this if you get some professional help.

Consider these findings from a 2021 study by Dalbar, a financial services market research firm:



• Investors who worked with a financial advisor were three times more likely to estimate what they would have saved yourself" investors.

• More than two-thirds of investors with a financial advisor were satisfied with the amount they would have saved at retirement, compared to about 27% of the do-it-yourselfers.

How do financial professionals help their clients in these ways?

First, consider the issue of determining how much money will be needed for retirement. It's not always easy for individuals to estimate this amount. But financial professionals can help clients like you arrive at this figure by exploring your hopes and goals. How long do you plan to work? What kind of lifestyle do you anticipate enjoying in retirement? Where would vou like to live? How much would you like to travel? Are you open to pursuing earned income opportunities, such as consulting or working part time?

Next comes the other key question: How much money will be available for retirement? This big question leads to many others: How much do you need to save and invest each year until you retire? About what sort of investment return will you need to

kelsey.avants@edwardjones.com | www.edwardjones.com

reach your retirement income goals? What level of risk are you willing to take to achieve that return? What is the role of other income sources such as Social Security or any pensions you might have?

Having a financial professional help you gain a clear idea of your retirement your long-term strategy. income picture can certainly be reassuring. But there may be other reasons why "going it alone" as an investor might not be desirable.

For example, when the financial markets are down, as was the case for much of 2022, some investors make decisions based on short-term volatility, such as selling investments to

"cut their losses," even if these same investments still have solid business fundamentals and good prospects for growth. But if you work with a financial professional, you might decide to stick with these investments, especially if they're still appropriate for Other times, of course, the advice may be different but it will always be advice based on your goals, needs and time horizon.

Furthermore, if you're investing on your own, you may always be measuring your results against the major market indexes, such as the S&P 500 or the Dow Jones Industrial Average. But in reality, your portfolio should contain a wide range of investments, some of which aren't contained in these indexes, so you might not be assessing your performance appropriately. A financial professional can help you develop your own, more meaningful benchmarks that can show the progress you're actually making toward your goals.

In some areas of life, going it alone can be exciting - but when it comes to investing for your future, you may benefit from some company on the journey.

Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Edward **Jones** MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

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Do I need security software?

When you bought a new computer years ago, you often had to install additional security software on your computer to help ensure it was secure against cyber attackers. However, most of today's computers and devices have numerous security features already built into them, such as automatic-updating, firewalls, disk encryption, and file protection. In addition, Microsoft provides on Windows computers security functionality called Microsoft Defender, which includes additional features such as anti-virus. In many ways today's systems by default are much more secure. In fact, you are most likely now the greatest weakness. This is why cyber attackers continually target people, attempting to trick you into doing things you should not do, such as give up your passwords, click on links, or

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open email attachments that install malware on your computers or share your credit card information.

Which tools should I consider?

If you want to take some additional steps to secure your systems, there are some additional security programs you can consider.

Password Manager:

Passwords can be complex and overwhelming, especially having to remember potentially hundreds of different passwords. A Password Manager is a secure vault that protects and stores all your passwords for you so you have to only remember one master password. In addition, they can log you into websites, generate passwords for you, and help validate certain websites. Virtual Private Net-

work (VPN):

VPNs primarily focus on protecting your privacy by encrypting your connection to the Internet and hiding your source location.

Security Suites:

These are packages of security software that provide a collection of additional security features above and beyond what your operating system already provides. For example, filtering for dangerous websites, parental controls, and often a VPN. Each suite has different features, so research the one that you feel is best if you need one.

Selecting a Security Vendor

If you need to purchase additional security tools or software, there are many different vendors from which to choose. Which one should you choose? Quite often different vendors are more similar in the features they offer than they are different. The key is to use *Cyber attackers will target* a solution from a trusted vendor. You don't want to accidentally purchase and install something distributed by cyber criminals that is infected with malware.

Purchase tools from only well-known vendors that you have heard of and trust. Never purchase a tool from a company you know nothing about, that is brand new, or has no comments or lots of negative comments. You want to be sure that the solution you are purchasing is legitimate and actively updated and maintained. You may even want to consider in what country the vendor is based. There are numerous online sites that have reviews of trusted vendors showcasing the differences in features and costs of their security software.

Be careful of free tools. While excellent, free security tools do exist, there can also be some concerns. These tools may be limited in features, difficult to use, or not updated frequently. In some cases, free tools may be developed by cyber attackers and then infected with malware. Remember, while

these security tools are helpful, start first with your computer's builtin security features, to include enabling automatic updating. Today's operating systems are very secure by default. Finally, you are your own best defense. Be cautious with any odd or suspicious phone calls, emails, or text messages. No security software in the world can protect you from someone trying to trick or fool you into something you should not do.

Source: Sans.org





Cyber attackers will target people instead of security softwares.

Top 5 announced in 2023 essay competition

Over 60 high school juniors from across southwest Oklahoma submitted essays to compete in Cotton Electric Cooperative's 2023 Youth Tour competition. The topic was "Cotton Electric Cooperative operates on the Seven Cooperative Principles. Which three of these resonate most with you, and why?"

Of those entries, the best 15 essays moved on to the next round where they were recently interviewed by independent judges via Zoom. The question-and-answer live video call determined the final five students who will participate in the last round of the competition.

Listed by school, the top five finalists are:

• Cache High School: Eli Hutson, Mason Meza and Remington Fiore

• Marlow High School: Owen Long and Travis Phillips.

Current News

For the third and final round of the competition, students will be required to submit a recorded oral presentation of their essay mid-February. The two finalists will be announced the beginning of March, after earning their spot for the all-expense-paid trip on the 2023 Youth Tour.

During Youth Tour, students from electric cooperatives across the country will gather together in Washington D.C., for a week in June. Students will have the opportunity to learn about the cooperative business model, visit monuments, visit with Oklahoma's congressional delegation, and experience much more that our nation's capital offers.

2023 YOUTH TOUR TOP 5 FINALISTS





Eli Hutson



Remington Fiore Cache High School



Owen Long

Marlow High School

CONGRATULATIONS!



Mason Meza **Cache High School**



Travis Phillips Marlow High School



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Play it safe around power lines

Digging holes, climbing trees, flying kites — outdoor play often creates beautiful childhood memories. Before hitting the great outdoors, discuss electrical safety with your children.

Flying fun

While flying kites, model airplanes, remote-control flying toys and drones, stay in large, open areas (such as parks or fields), far away from power lines. If an item gets caught in a power line, teach children to never try to retrieve it. Instead, an adult should call their electric utility for help.

General outdoor safety tips

Other important safety guidelines for kids and adults alike include:

• Never throw objects at power lines.

• Stay far away from downed, damaged or low-hanging power lines. An adult should call 9-1-1 to report a downed or damaged line.

• Be cautious after a severe storm that caused a power outage. Downed power lines could be hidden under water, snow or storm debris. Wait to go outside until power is restored.

• Do not climb, sit or play on padmount transformers (green boxes).

• Do not climb trees that have overhead power lines near or running through them.

Poolside

When spending time by the pool, look overhead when using pool skimmers or other long objects to be sure you are not getting close to an overhead power line.

If you are swimming and feel a tingling sensation, do not stay in the pool. There could be an electric current from damaged electrical equipment.

Also, never play in a flooded street or ditch; a downed power line could be hidden by the water and fallen debris.

Prevention is key

Electric shock and injuries are often preventable. Empower your family with electrical safety knowledge to avoid preventable electric injuries.

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

Source: SafeElectricity.com

OUTDOOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FORKDS

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."

NEVER ENTER the fenced area around a substation to retrieve an item or pet.







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Event Hours

Saturday & Sunday • 8am - 5pm

March 23, 24 & 25 2023 **Cameron University** McMahon Centennial Complex, McCasland Ballroom

Safe Electricity.org®

501 SW University Dr., Lawton, OK Conference Registration is \$50 or Visitor Admission is \$5 a day at the door. Registration is open to the public call 580 483-6864. We accept debit/credit cards.

Friday March 24th at 9 am - Special Presentation Comanche Eagle Center - Sia, founder and director Waha Thuweeka William Voelker will present Yahpahchony a captive produced Golden Eagle third Generation hatched at Sia in 2016.

nche Chief

Thru out the event

Sam DeVenney will have

on display his collection of

old Historical Photographs.

featured artist will showcase

his original artwork as well

play traditional flute music.

traditional flute music and

display his artwork.

Myron Beeson will perform

Tim Nevaquaya as the

Thursday **Presentations:**

9-10 am - Eleanor McDaniel Family History and Sanapia **Comanche Medicine Woman** and Eagle Doctor 10-11 am - Jackie Atauvich, Arletta McKee, Karen Samis and Eleanor McDaniel -**Comanche Hymns** 11-12 Noon - Tim Nevaquaya - The Traditional Native American Flute 12 - 1 pm Lunch Break 1-2 pm - Sam DeVenney -Old Photographs and **Comanche History** 2-3 pm - Sam DeVenney -**Comanche Language** 3-4 pm - Cindy Famero, NASA Director - Sweat Lodge & Eleanor McDaniel -Native American Church

Women's Sweat Lodge -Inipi Ceremony will be conducted by Cindy Famero Thursday evening from 6-8 pm in Cache, OK. **Contact Cindy for details** at 580 360-8081.

Friday

10 -11:30 am - Fashion Show Native American Apparel by Jamey Myers Hunter of J Hunter Co. LLC

12:00 Noon - 6 pm All Gourd Dance Program MC - Eugene Blackbear HM - Tim Swagerty HL - Shiann Blue Famero HS - Paige Burgess Drum - All Nations Singers ADs - Larney Silverhorn & **Chris Cable** Saturday

Moccasin Making Class 9 am to 4 pm \$150 per participant All Supplies Included to Register call Eleanor McDaniel at 580 483-6864 Accept Debit/Credit Cards

Art Market

March 23, 24 & 25 Vendor Fee \$75 for all three days or \$50 per day and a donated item. Vendors must bring their own tables Call Eleanor McDaniel at 580 483-6864.

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Know what's below: Steps for safe digging

Spring is just around the corner, and there's never been a better time to get outside and enjoy the fresh air. Perhaps you're making plans for a new garden or a lawn makeover. However you're planning to revamp your backyard oasis, remember to keep safety in mind for all projects–especially those that require digging near underground utility lines.

Most of us never think about the electric, gas, water and other utility lines buried below the ground, but hitting one of these lines while digging is not the reminder you'll want-trust us! Cotton Electric Cooperative reminds all members who are planning a digging project to call 811 at least three business days before you start. Or you can submit a request online by visiting www. call811.com/811-In-Your-State. Here's how the process works:

After you call 811 or submit your request online, all affected utilities will be notified of your intent to dig. It may take the utilities a few days to get to your request, so please be patient. The affected utilities will send someone out to mark the buried lines with paint or flags. Before you break ground, confirm that all the utilities have responded to your request. If you placed your request by phone, use the process explained by your 811 call center representative. If you submitted your request online, refer to your 811 center ticket to confirm everything.

By taking this important step before you break ground on your project, you can help protect not only yourself but also our community. Disrupting an underground utility line can interrupt service, cause injuries and cost money to repair, so remember to call 811 first and know what's below.

Essay competition closes at end of month

March 31 is the deadline to submit essays for the 2023 Energy Camp competition. The contest is open to all incoming and current eighth-graders attending schools within Cotton Electric's service territory. The final four campers will be selected to attend an all-expense-paid trip to Energy Camp, held at Canyon Camp in Red Rock Canyon, southeast of Hinton. The camp will be held May 30 to June 2. The final campers will join other students from Oklahoma electric cooperatives for first-hand experiences learning about cooperative principles, running for leadership positions and climbing a pole just like electric linemen do.

Contestants must submit an essay between 50-100 words explaining why the entrant would like to attend the 2023 Energy Camp. Writers of the top 15 essays move to the second round for a live video interview between students and independent judges. The final four students will be selected to attend this year's Energy Camp. Contest deadlines and guidelines can be found online.

To enter the contest, visit the www.cottonelectric.com/energycamp, or contact the Marketing department at 580-875-3351. We can also be reached by email at zyoung@cottonelectric.com.

5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Careless digging poses a threat to people, pipelines and underground facilities. Always call 8-1-1 first. Here are five easy steps for safe digging

1. NOTIFY Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before your work begins. The operator will notify the utilities affected by your project.

2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for affected utilities to respond to your request. They will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.

3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded to your request by comparing the marks to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.

4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. The markers are your guide for the duration of your project.

5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project location.

Source: call811.cam







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Piecing together memories with every stitch

By Carli Eubank

Quilts come in all sorts of different colors, sizes and patterns with many months spent sewing and quilting the pieces together. National Quilting Month is recognized in March, and for some Cotton Electric members, quilting is a hobby they enjoy doing all year.

Cotton Electric member Mandy Martine-Ralston and her mother, Beverly Martine own a quilting shop, named Quilt N Bee. Originally located in Lawton, their bright, contemporary storefront moved to Cache in July of 2008. They have a strong online presence, but they enjoy to seeing customers walk through the door.

Different than quilting warehouse stores, Quilt N Bee is described as an inspiration cluster shop where they have quilt samples hung up around the store and fabric for customers to choose.

Another unique aspect of the family's business is their Block of the employees cut and prepare portions of a quilt that the quilter will complete at any period of time.

"A lot of times quilters are hesitant to pick their own fabrics and colors because they're afraid all the pieces will clash when it's all sewn together," Mandy said. "Employees pick a pattern and fabric for a project, then box it up for customers to pick up and work on."

Beverly enjoys seeing customers experiment and immerse themselves in a quilting project. She explained that one of the lessons that quilting can teach someone is focusing on the project with a clear headspace.

"People don't create things that can be touched or held as much anymore," Beverly said. "I think if people became more interested in learning hand crafts or other crafting specialties, they would find joy in what they're creating." mother The and daughter duo have sewed and quilted for

Month program where most of their life and offer their time and talent to others through hosting classes almost every Saturday at their shop. Providing a start-to-finish learning experience, classes range from quilting, sewing, and many other technique topics.

> They also host classes for kids over the summer and during Thanksgiving and Christmas school breaks.

Whether it's offering quilting classes or volunteering their space and materials, Mandy and Beverly care for the community.

During the holiday season, they donate pillowcases to local foster kids, schools and tribes. Last year, they donated about 800 pillowcases. They also auction off quilts every November and donate all of the proceeds to the local animal shelter.

"The number one goal in our hearts is community," Mandy said. "We want to give back to our community while teaching them and helping them broaden their crafting."

Cotton Electric member Mary Ramsey spends her time quilting in her home near Lake Humphrey in Duncan.

Ramsey comes from a family of sewers, learning from her mother and grandmother. She has sewed for over 50 years, but later became interested in quilting in 2017 and joined the Stitching Memories quilting guild. She invites anyone who's interested to join the group on the third Monday of every month at 10 a.m. at the Church of Christ on Beech in Duncan.

"There's a lot of hours that go into each quilt, but it's therapy for me and then the feeling of self-satisfaction when it's finished," Ramsey said.

Ramsey enjoys bringing new life and purpose to family heirlooms and materials that have a great, personal meaning to her. Within each stitch that she threads into her quilts, there is a story filled with kindness and memories.

One of Ramsey's quilts earned her the President's Choice award at a local quilt show. The colorful quilt scattered with heart-shaped designs means a lot to her because it has buttons from her mother's clothing sewn into the fabric of the quilt.

Ramsey made quilts that include a few of her grandma's pillowcases that she cross-stitched and embroidered many years ago. Ramsey also made a quilt for her grandson that showcases all of his football and wrestling t-shirts from when he competed in high school.

"I save all of these different pieces and try to incorporate them into a quilt because it's a way to look back on the memories without having to store or throw things away," Ramsey said.

Out of the many quilts that Ramsey has created, there is one that she cherishes the most.

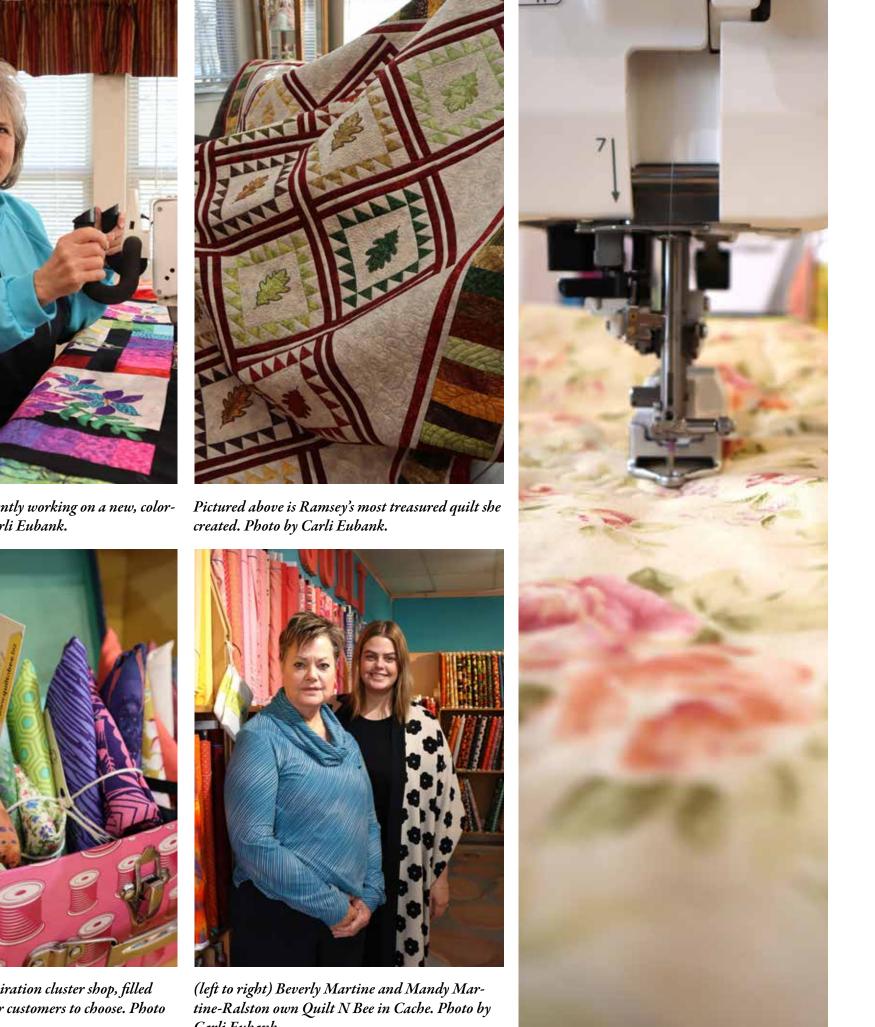
"I have made quilts for many people, but one day, the Lord asked me to make a quilt that I would really love and then give it away," Ramsey said.

She went to work stitching together warm, autumn colors of reds, oranges, greens and yellows and created a quilt that was very hard for her to let go of. Later, the piece was raffled off at church. The lady who won the quilt walked up to Ramsey and shared that the Lord told her that if she won the quilt, she should return it back to Ramsey.

"I was blown away," Ramsey said. "This quilt will always be a treasure of mine because of what God did and the way it all transpired."

Ramsey shared that she has all the quilts that she needs, and now, she enjoys creating and giving away quilts while keeping the thought in mind of how it might bless someone.

Finished quilts may look different from one another, but the work and thought that went into each stitch comes from people with the same passion of creating something meant to be shared with others.





Mary Ramsey is currently working on a new, colorful quilt. Photo by Carli Eubank.





Quilt N Bee is an inspiration cluster shop, filled with colorful fabric for customers to choose. Photo by Carli Eubank.



Carli Eubank.



If you would like your community event listed in the April issue, please submit information by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com by March 21. Only events occuring after April 10 will be published in the next issue.

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

Music festival in Medicine Park

Celebrate the coming of spring amid cobblestone-lined streets at the Park-Stomp Music Festival. This annual Medicine Park event features great music for the whole family including bluegrass, country, rockabilly, punk and rock. Bring your lawn chairs and blankets to gather around the main stage or browse the booths of arts and crafts. All of the town's art galleries, stores and restaurants will be open for the event, and food vendors will be available. The event is March 17-19 at Town Center Mainstage in Medicine Park. For more information, visit www.medicinepark.com/festivals or call 580-529-2825.

Cultural studies event at CU

Attend the Native American Cultural Studies Conference to learn more about the Comanche Nation and hear from multiple presenters throughout the three-day event. Conference registration is \$50 or visitor admission is \$5 a day at the door. The conference begins at 9 a.m. March 23-25 at Cameron University's McMahon Centennial Complex, in the McCasland Ballroom, 501 SW University Drive, Lawton. For questions, more information or to register for the event, call 580-483-6864.

Auto swap meet in Duncan

Duncan's annual Automotive Swap

Passion Play at the Holy City

Join thousands of visitors from across Oklahoma to see the 98th Prince of Peace Easter Pageant. Witness the story of Jesus Christ portrayed in pantomime while readers broadcast the script on FM radio to crowds of visitors. Attendance is free, but donations are appreciated. Bring lawn chairs and dress accordingly since it is an outdoor event. This event begins at dusk April 1 and April 8 at the Holy City of the Wichitas, 262 Holy City Road, Cache. For more information, call 580-429-3361.

Grief group meeting in Duncan

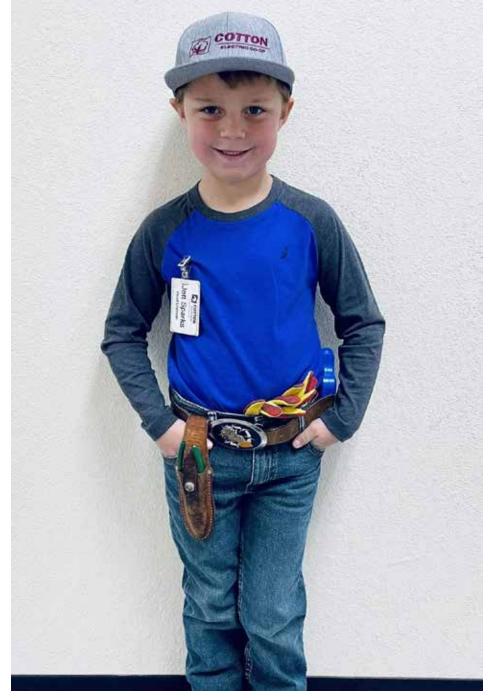
The Heritage Oaks Church of The Nazarene will be hosting a "Grief and Bereavement" group starting at the beginning of January. The focus of the group, led by Phil and Nancy Evans, is to offer a safe place for those who have gone through the passing of a loved one, to share their feelings, to create an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

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

Food pantry open once monthly

Walters Community Food Pantry is open from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month. The pantry is in the old City Hall, 131 1/2 W. California Street. Pantry organizers try to provide a two-week supply of basic staples to anyone with identification and proof of Cotton County residency. Monetary donations may be sent to Food Pantry, c/o Paul Metcalfe, 211 E. Colorado St., Walters. For information, call Roger Noland at 580-591-6826.

ΡΗΟΤΟ OF THE MONTH



For "Thank Goodness it's Oklahoma Day" at school, students could dress up as anything that reminds them of Oklahoma. For Jett, that is a Cotton Electric lineman. He's the newphew of Cotton Electric Apprentice Lineman TJ Birdwell. Looks like the cooperative may have a future lineman!

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. The theme for April is Flowers! Entries can be emailed to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com or mailed to The Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters,

Meet takes place March 23-25 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds, 2002 S. 13th in Duncan.

This is an indoor and outdoor swap meet for avid muscle car and antique car enthusiasts. Located in the heart of southwest Oklahoma, the Swap Meet includes auto-related vendors, and onsite camping facilities and concessions are available.

Enjoy browsing through everything from boats and motorcycles to trucks and tractors, as well as auto-related memorabilia. For more information. call 580-467-2471.

Blessings Boutique open monthly

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











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Fuel for the future



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD



March is National Nutrition Month. The theme this year is "Fuel for the Future," focusing on food choices and how they impact the environment. This is a highly political theme, pitting different facets of agriculture against each other. In my opinion, sustainability is already a part of the US Dietary Guidelines for Americans. We just struggle to follow it.

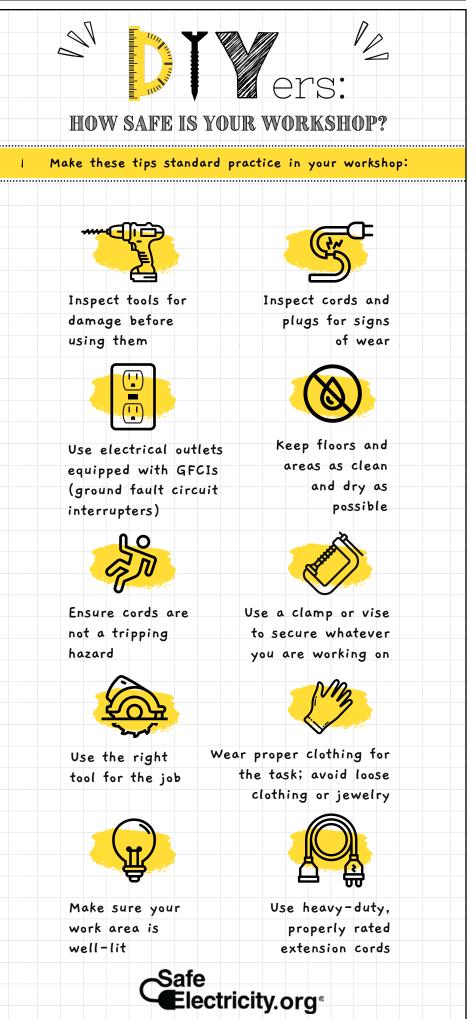
The US Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage 4 basic (but not necessarily simple) steps: 1) Follow a healthy dietary pattern at every life stage; 2) Choose nutrient-dense foods that reflect personal preference, culture, and budget; 3) Stay within calorie limits by choosing nutrient-dense foods; 4) Limit foods higher in added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium and limit alcoholic beverages. If we adhere to these guidelines, we are meeting the tenants of the "food and sustainability" movement which include eating a more plant-based diet, limiting protein intake, choosing foods that are grown closer to home, and choosing foods with less packaging.

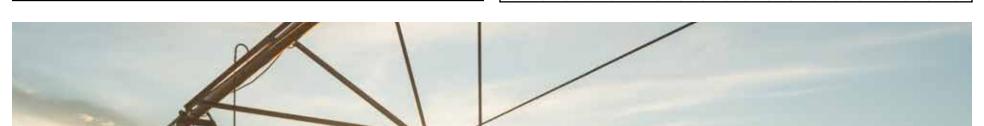
The infighting is unnecessary and myplate.gov for idea distracts us from making dietary sources to help you fu changes that will improve overall be kind to the planet.

health. In 2019, less than 15% of US adults met the recommended intake of fruits and vegetables. The intake of processed foods among US adults has increased from 53.5% of calories in 2001 to 57% of calories in 2018. Some sources claim meat and dairy intake is increasing at an "alarming rate", but when you look into the data, nuts and eggs are included as "meat" and fish and seafood are excluded. There are positive health benefits to meat, dairy, nuts, seafood and fish. This muddying of the data hides the fact that animal sources of protein and plant sources of protein can and should be incorporated into a healthy and sustainable diet.

What is clear is that overweight and obesity and the consequences of excess weight (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, asthma, sleep apnea, joint problems) are on the rise in children and adults. Effectively preventing and treating overweight/obesity and associated conditions is essential to individual health and the health of our economy. Working daily to implement the current US Dietary Guidelines will actually achieve the tenants of the sustainability movement, resulting in eating more fruits and vegetables (not processed, plant-based meat and dairy alternatives which negatively impact the environment from a packaging and processing perspective), eating adequate protein from a variety of sources (choose local if your budget allows), and decrease food waste by meal planning and cooking at home.

Happy National Nutrition Month! How are you going to "Fuel for the Future"? Check out the website www. myplate.gov for ideas, tools, and resources to help you fuel your body and be kind to the planet.



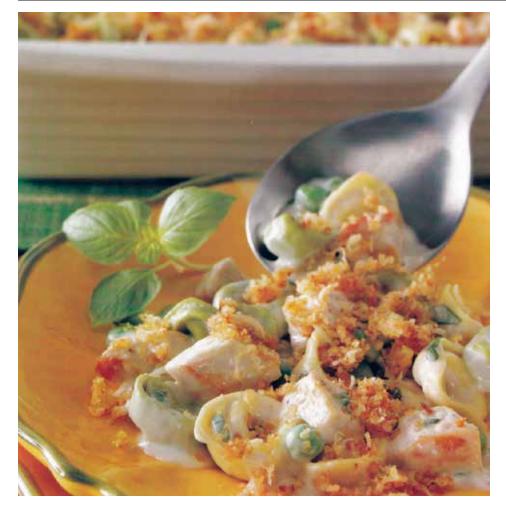


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Dive into dairy with cheesy dinner creation

There's no denying the appeal of dairy in home cooking. Dairy helps make foods silky, creamy and more satisfying. Cheeses in particular can make meals more rich and more flavorful, so much so that they can be truly addictive.

Layering cheesy goodness can set any meal apart. That's just what hap-

AWTON SEPTIC

pens with "Cheesy Chicken Tortellini Bake" from "The Pampered Chef" Stoneware Inspirations" (The Pampered Chef" Ltd.) by The Pampered Chef" Test Kitchens. Freshly cooked chicken and homemade tortellini can be used for this comforting casserole, but cubed, pre-cooked chicken and refrigerated tortellini also works.

Cheesy Chicken Tortellini Bake

Pasta mixture 1/2 cup chopped onion 1 teaspoon olive oil 1 garlic clove, pressed 1 jar (16 ounces) white Alfredo pasta sauce 2 packages (9 ounces each) refriger-

ated cheese-filled regular or spinach tortellini

 $1 \frac{1}{2}$ cups cubed cooked chicken 1 cup milk

1 cup water

1 cup frozen peas

1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

2 tablespoons snipped fresh basil leaves or 1 teaspoon dried basil leaves

Crumb topping

1 ounce grated fresh Parmesan cheese

2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted

1 cup fresh bread crumbs

Preheat oven to 400 F. For pasta mixture, chop onion. In a 4-quart casserole, heat oil over medium-high heat; add onion and garlic pressed with a garlic press. Cook and stir 2 to 3 minutes or until onion is tender. Stir in pasta sauce, tortellini, chicken, milk, water, peas, and black pepper. Heat until mixture just comes to a boil: remove from heat. Stir basil into pasta mixture.

Meanwhile, for crumb topping, grate Parmesan cheese. Place butter in a small microwave-safe dish, microwave on high 30-45 seconds or until melted. Stir in bread crumbs and cheese; mix well.

Spoon pasta mixture into a baking dish; sprinkle with crumb topping. Bake 15-20 minutes or until edges are bubbly and topping is golden brown.

Tip: Alfredo sauce in a jar can be found in the pasta sauce section of the supermarket. Do not substitute refrigerated Alfredo sauce; it may separate and curdle during baking.



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How to host a college hoops watch party



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

(Family Features) It's tournament time, and that's the perfect reason to gather with your fellow fans and watch both the top-seeded teams and Cinderella stories shoot their way to the top.

Get ready to host this season's most memorable college basketball watch party with these tips:

Show Your Colors

Get your house game ready and show your team spirit by decorating in the colors of the team you will be cheering to victory. Since the tournament spans multiple rounds, you do not need to go all out; just grab some simple decorations like streamers, balloons and disposable tablecloths to add some energy. If you will have guests cheering on both sides of the court, mix and match your decor and let guests pick their plate and cup color to root for their favorite team.

Break Out the Brackets

The entire tournament hinges on brackets, so be sure your guests have a chance to fill out their own bracket to predict the winning teams. You can find printable versions online and make copies for everyone. For a little extra fun, have everyone chip in a set amount to play, and the person who predicts the most winning teams wins the pot.

Take a Seat

When the game is underway, gathering everyone around the screen can get crowded. Make sure everyone is comfortable by offering additional seating. You can use stools, chairs from other rooms and even folding chairs or camping chairs if you need to create more space. If you need to resort to floor space for seating, make it extra comfy with some pillows or blankets for padding.

Multiply the Screen Time

Chances are high your guests will scatter throughout your home, spilling out of the living room into your kitchen and dining spaces, or maybe even out-

doors. Set up extra screens to show the game in multiple rooms, whether that's extra TVs, monitors or laptops. That way, even if someone steps away from the main screen, he or she won't miss any of the excitement.

Make Snacks a Slam Dunk

Every party needs a menu, but you can keep it simple for a watch party. Guests typically want quick bites they can grab during timeouts and commercial breaks, so stick to finger foods and appetizers guests can self-serve quickly. Wings are a party staple, and chips and dip are always a hit. Be sure to offer some indulgent options, as well as foods for those who have special dietary needs. You can also make your food game easier by asking everyone to bring a dish to share instead of taking it all on yourself.

Find more entertaining tips and advice at eLivingtoday.com.



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The person responsible for coordinating this organization's nondiscrimination compliance efforts is Shane Bowers, Vice President of Administration.

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

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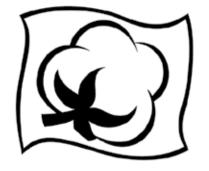
At Bartling, we're always on your side and we'll do everything we can to expedite any claim you make in a timely manner. We're also proud to say that we offer the finest coverage for your health, your home, automobile and commercial property.

Put the strength of a solid performer behind you. Call us now for a free, no obligation, price quote assessment of your current insurance needs.





Explorer



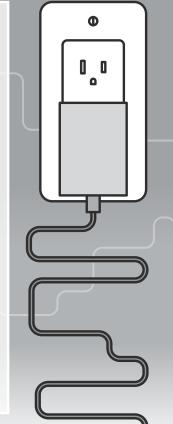
COTTON ELECTRIC CO-OP

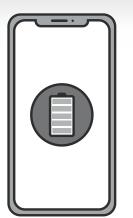
ELECTRONICS EFFICIENCY ORD SEARCH

Did you know there are ways you can reduce your electronics energy use?

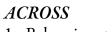
Read the energy-saving tips below, then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle.

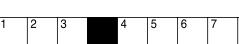
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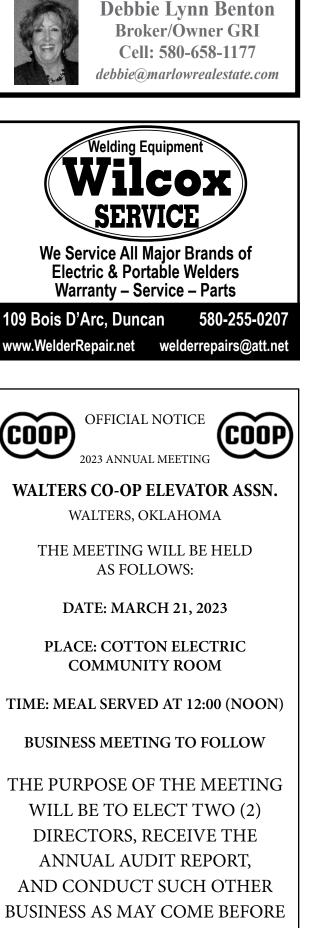
- Use a power strip with an on/off switch when powering multiple electronics to easily manage energy use.
- For devices that require **batteries**, use rechargeable ones, which are more cost-effective and environmentally friendly.
- Unplug electronic products that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone chargers.
- Use the sleep or **power** management mode on your computer to save on energy costs.





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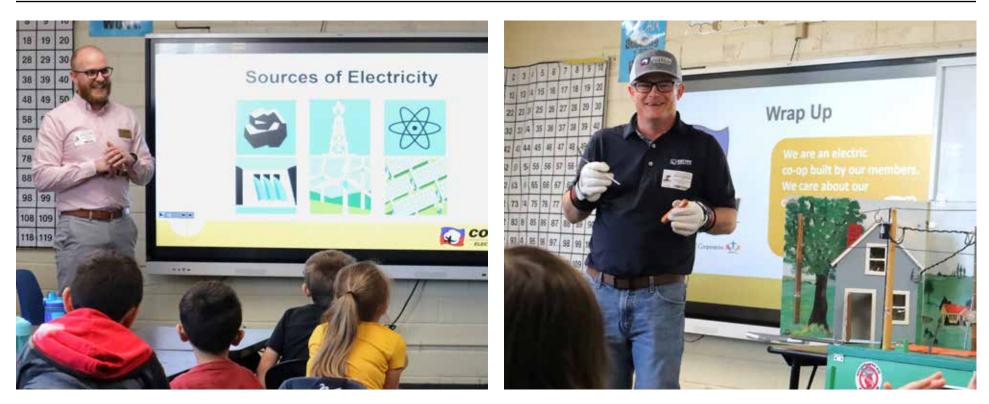




1. Belonging to a			10				44							
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12. U.S. State														
(abbr.)	24					25		26			27			
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					31. Supportive ma-			-	56. College dorm					
52. Painful chest 4. Popular movie			terial worker											
condition alien				32						57. Se				

THE MEMBERSHIP.

Parting Shots



(pictured above) Cotton Electric Director of Marketing and Communication Zach Young and Energy Efficiency Coordinator Heath Morgan gave a presentation about electricity basics and safety to first-graders at Mark Twain Elementary School in Duncan. Are you interested in Cotton Electric presenting to your school or group? Call the Marketing Department at 580-875-3351.

