What's Inside

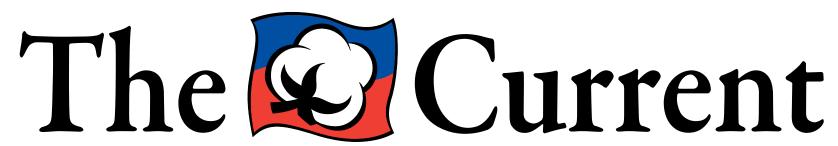




Creating experiences that go beyond pasture to plate Page 9



Street tacos from the slow cooker Page 11



A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



"The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957"

VOLUME 68 May 16, 2025 NUMBER 9

Safety is our priority

By Carli Eubank

At Cotton Electric, safety is the center of everything we do, and it's essential to following our mission of providing our members with safe and reliable power. While May is National Electrical Safety Month, our commitment to safety is a year-round priority across all departments to ensure safety while serving our members and keeping the lights on.

Protecting lineworkers

Lineworkers are exposed to many potential dangers daily, so it's crucial they follow every safety guideline while completing work orders or restoring outages. Our crews always work in pairs, and before taking any action, they pause to complete a job briefing. During this time, crews discuss the location, lines, potential hazards, purpose of the job and other conditions to help them prepare and focus on the task ahead. Afterward, they ground and stabilize the bucket truck before putting on personal protective equipment (PPE) and starting the job.

Ensuring proper PPE standards

Crews rely on their training, experience and PPE to keep them safe on the job, and the cooperative's subsidiary company, Cotton Electric Services, Inc. (CESI), plays a vital role to ensure their PPE is meeting safety standards. CESI employees test more than 20 rubber goods products, including primary protection, such as gloves and sleeves, and secondary protection, like line hoses, blankets, crossarm covers and much more.

When rubber goods products arrive, employees give an initial visual inspection to identify any cuts or other abnormalities. The equipment is then washed before going through an electrical test that applies the appropriate voltage. An alert will sound if the machine detects any failed equipment. After the electrical test, employees will do another inspection of the equipment to catch any defects that might have not been noticed previously.

CESI follows the guidelines set by the American Society for Testing and Materials, Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program and the North American Independent Laboratories for Protective Equipment Testing. More information fall. Photo by Carli Eubank. about CESI can be found at www.cottonservices.com.

Ongoing safety training

Cotton Electric crews also meet regularly to refresh their knowledge on important safety procedures. Some safety meeting topics include grounding practices, hot-line tools care and maintenance, hazard recognitions and pole top rescue. The annual pole top rescue is a drill that helps build muscle memory for crews completing the mayday procedure and rescuing a colleague from a bucket or pole. Crews may also attend safety education sessions provided by Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives.

Office employees are also dedicated to safety, completing and passing online monthly courses that cover a variety of safety topics.



Cotton Electric crews set up for the annual pole top rescue safety training last

Electrical safety presentations

In line with the co-op principle of Education, Training and Information, we strive to help keep our members and communities informed about electrical safety. One of the ways we do this is through presentations and demonstrations with our brand-new live-line trailer. Cotton Electric employees can educate groups on how to stay safe around electricity in different situations: indoors, outdoors, on the road, after a storm, near electrical equipment and more.

At Cotton Electric and CESI, the commitment to electrical safety extends beyond our employees to benefit the entire community. By prioritizing health and safety, we ensure that we can serve our members efficiently, keeping our communities safe and powered.



Cotton Electric employees give a safety presentation and demonstration to a local group of elementary students. Photo by Carli Eubank.



Cotton Electric Services, Inc. Lab Technician Caleb Ferguson inspects a glove. Photo by Zach Young.

Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after May 1, 2025, is \$0.01727 per kilowatt hours (kWh).

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kWh, this will amount to a charge of \$22.45 on the May bill.

April 202) Temperature Extremes									
Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Avg		
1	85	47	66	16	84	44	64		
2	76	49	63	17	89	62	76		
3	64	50	57	18	78	62	70		
4	65	50	58	19	65	50	58		
5	54	33	44	20	67	49	58		
6	55	33	44	21	83	44	64		
7	69	30	50	22	84	49	67		
8	76	36	56	23	79	62	71		
9	83	48	66	24	79	61	70		
10	86	52	69	25	77	62	70		
11	78	46	62	26	71	53	62		
12	86	44	65	27	79	60	70		
13	96	50	73	28	80	69	75		
14	77	59	68	29	73	61	67		
15	71	47	59	30	71	56	64		
Source: srh.noaa.gov/oun/									

Average Daily High: 76 Average Daily Low: 51

Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed Monday, May 26, to recognize Memorial Day. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

Current should arrive tric Current, 226 N. in mailboxes June 13, 2025.

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 The next issue of *The* a line at Cotton Elec-Broadway, Walters, OK 73572.



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

Advocating for Oklahoma electric cooperatives

tric co-op leaders from 48 states for the NRE-CA Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. The annual Legislative Conference provides opportunities for co-ops to bring key energy issues and priorities to the political forefront.

As we engaged with policymakers and agency officials, our discussions focused on enhancing grid reliability, addressing federal permitting and regulatory challenges and supporting our local communities. Here are a few of the highlights we shared with our members of Congress during our recent visit.

Enhancing grid reliability and addressing challenges

Electric cooperatives put people first by keeping the lights on at a price families and businesses can afford. We need smart energy policies that will help meet growing demand. Our vision for America's energy future hinges on three central priorities:

1. Supporting a diverse supply of energy resources to meet sky-

This April, I joined elec-rocketing energy demand, particularly in rural communities.

- 2. Improving the permitting processes and cutting costly, burdensome regulations to accelerate the deployment and maintenance of electric infrastructure.
- 3. Ensuring federal programs and resources that support electric cooperative projects are used efficiently and effectively as we invest to meet the needs of our communities.

Supporting rural communities

Electric cooperatives provide service to 42 million Americans in 48 states, serving 56% of the American landscape in some of the country's most rural, rugged and hard-to-reach areas. These characteristics make it more expensive for electric cooperatives to operate than the rest of the electric sector.

For these reasons, we spoke to the delegation about several federal programs that co-ops depend upon, such as the Rural Utilities Service Electric Loan Program and FEMA Public Assistance.

1. Co-ops rely on the USDA's Rural Utilities Service to finance construction on electric infrastructure. These loans are repaid with interest, making money for the federal government. The majority of funds lent to Cotton Electric Cooperative came from Rural Utilities Service loans.

2. Disaster relief funding is critical to restoring service after natural disasters. Since 2018, Oklahoma's electric cooperatives have incurred \$398,338,180 in total eligible damages from disasters. Over the past five years, Cotton Electric has experienced five natural disasters that qualified for FEMA reimbursement. FEMA reimbursements assist electric cooperatives not only with disaster restoration costs but also with reconductoring (replacing damaged electric lines) and mitigation projects. Without this assistance, recovery time and expense would increase dramatically for the members we serve.

We also discussed USDA and DOE Infrastructure programs, the Low Income Home Energy



Jennifer Meason, CEO

Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and defending against wildfire threats.

Thank you to the Oklahoma congressional delegation

I would like to express my thanks to our members of Congress and staff for meeting with us to discuss these important issues. We greatly appreciate their time and attention.

As electric co-op members, you can also participate in advocating for the needs of rural Oklahoma. I encourage you to join us through Voices for Cooperative Power at www.voicesforcooperativepower.com. You can find more information at www. cottonelectric.com/your-co-opyour-voice.

Together, we make a difference.



Oklahoma electric cooperative representatives, including Cotton Electric CEO Jennifer Meason and Cotton Electric COO Bryce Hooper, attend the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives.



Cotton Electric CEO Jennifer Meason advocates for electric cooperatives on key issues while she and other Oklahoma electric cooperative representatives meet with Senator Markwayne Mullin's staff. Photo courtesy of Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Routine maintenance is important to keep your refrigerator running efficiently. Lint and dirt should be cleaned from the refrigerator coils every six months to a year - and more often if there are pets in the home.

When coils are coated with lint, dust or pet hair, your refrigerator works harder than it's designed to, which can prevent the appliance from cooling properly and efficiently. The additional work can increase the energy costs of the refrigerator by as much as 35% and shorten the life of the appliance.

Source: www.energy.gov

March 2025 Operating Stats

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$6,425,360	\$5,922,940
Cost of Purchased Power	4,585,345	4,010,300
Taxes	143,062	118,906
Total Operating Expense per Mile	1,231	1,088
Average Farm and Residential Bill	142	130
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,110	1,020
Total Meters Billed (Farm, Residential	19,839	19,629
Miles Energized	5,283	5,270
Density per Mile	3.76	3.72
New Service Connects YTD	73	94
Services Retired	14	37

Upcoming Deadlines for

The Current

June

Ad Sales May 30 Classified May 30 Publish June 13

July

Ad Sales July 4 Classified July 4 Publish July 18

The Current

Published monthly at Walters, Oklahoma, by Cotton Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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

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Energy Efficiency

Smart ways to save energy this summer

Summer heat can strain both your comfort and your budget. As temperatures soar and energy demand peaks in the late afternoon and evening, it's time to take steps to help lower your energy consumption and stay cool without breaking the bank.

Boost your home's efficiency

Start investigating your home's energy efficiency by requesting a home energy evaluation from your local electric cooperative to identify where energy is being lost. Cotton Electric provides free energy efficiency evaluations for members to help them decide the most economical ways to improve their homes' efficiency. Then, take action to start reducing usage this summer.

Keep cool air in and hot air out with these tips:

• Seal air leaks around pipes, doors, caulk or weather stripping.

- Schedule an HVAC system inspection with a professional to maintain performance. Check www.cottonelectric.com/hvac-tune-rebate for rebates on energy-efficient replacements.
- clogged air filter makes your HVAC system work harder.
- Switch to LED bulbs for increased
- Install a smart or programmable thermostat for automatic temperature

Reduce energy costs with smart appliance use:

- Run dryers, washers and dishwashers early in the morning or late in the skin by circulating air around you. evening.
- Wash full loads of laundry in cold home for naturally cooler air.
- Clean the dryer's lint trap after ev- days to block excess heat. windows, cracks and openings with ery laundry load, and air-dry clothes when possible.

- Reduce heat-generating activities at home, like cooking during the hottest parts of the day or using heat-producing appliances.
- Use a microwave oven or counter-• Change your air filter regularly. A top appliance instead of a conventional range or oven. Better yet, take advantage of summer evenings and grill outside.

Take easy actions for big energy savings:

- Change ceiling fans to rotate counterclockwise to cool rooms, and turn ics that are not in use. them off when you leave the room. Ceiling fans don't actually cool the air; wraps and dips. they create a wind chill effect on your
- Close blinds and shades on sunny
- Increase your thermostat by 2 degrees or more when you're away.



Heath Morgan, **Energy Efficiency** Coordinator

- Turn off and disconnect electron-
- Prepare no-heat meals like salads,

Implementing some of these small changes to reduce energy use can help • Stay on the lowest floor of your make a big impact. This summer, you can keep cool, save money on your utility bill and help reduce energy demand.

> For more information, visit www. cottonelectric.com/energy-efficiency.



Heating Degree Day and Cooling Degree Day Calendar

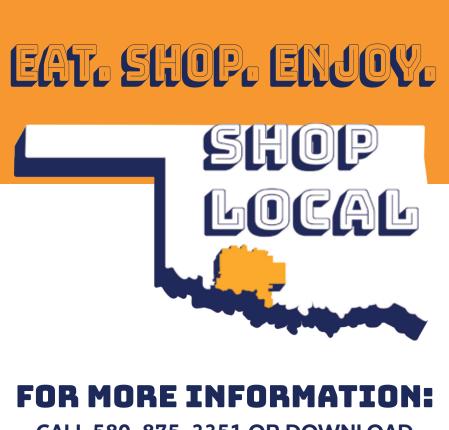
YEAR HDD CDD 2025 114 106 2024

2023

172

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.





CALL 580-875-3351 OR DOWNLOAD THE CO-OP CONNECTIONS APP.





Scan Me To View Co-op Connections Website! Or Visit connections.coop!



Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation

CECF encourages applicants

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

For those interested in seeking funds for local individuals or organizations, below is a portion of the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation(CECF) grant application guidelines.

Grant application guidelines

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

Requirement for school applications

Applications for grants benefiting schools require the signature of the school superintendent.

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

Application instructions

Please complete all sections of the application. If an item is not applicable to your organization, please make note in the space provided.

- If you are exempt from income tax, please attach verification such as a copy of letter 501(c)(3) from the Internal Revenue Service or an explanation of why your organization is considered to be exempt.
- Please include a recent financial statement. If your organization completes an annual audit, please attach a copy with your application. If your

organization does not complete an annual audit, please attach a copy of your treasurer's report and bank statements to verify your source of funding, funds available, etc.

 Please be specific when describing how the funds will be used if approved, and attach price estimates if available.

Categories of assistance

1. Communities

• Programs, projects and organizations that are important components of a community's overall quality of life, with emphasis on public safety, health care, self-sufficiency, and basic human needs.

2. Education and youth

- Programs and projects designed to combat critical social problems affecting youth, particularly children and teens at risk.
- Programs and projects that promote youth wellness.
- Programs and projects that work to provide supplemental materials and equipment for schools.
- Programs and projects to enhance school facilities.

3. Seniors

 Programs and projects to support organizations and the facilities serving senior citizens.

4. Volunteer fire departments

- Programs and projects to enhance volunteer fire department facilities and vehicles.
- Equipment and gear purchases and upgrades.

5. Individuals

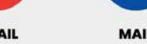
- An individual or family in need of assistance may request a grant. Examples of need conditions may include the consequences of a disaster, catastrophic illness, or permanent disability.
- Individual applications must include a letter of referral from a sponsoring group such as a church, civic organization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

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

HOW TO APPLY



zyoung@cottonelectric.com





226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572 www.cottonelectric.com/ grant-applications



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

Applicant eligibility

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

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

Evaluation factors

The following factors will be considered in the evaluation of all funding

- Potential benefit to residents of the Cotton Electric service area and the entire community.
- Prior contribution level of Foundation or community support for the program or project or the organization requesting the funds.
- Fiscal and administrative capability of the organization to deliver a quality service or program.
- Results that are predictable and can be evaluated.

The CECF Board of Directors shall evaluate all funding requests and determine whether to issue a grant for all or a portion of the funds requested.

Project timing

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

For a complete overview of CECF grant application guidelines, please www.cottonelectric.com/ grant-applications. Applications may be submitted via email to zyoung@ cottonelectric.com, online at www. cottonelectric.com/grant-applications or mailed to 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572.





580-704-2226



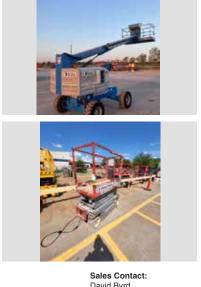
"Taking dreams and building realities"

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UNITED RENTALS (Store D62) Mon-Fri: 7:00AM-5:00PM Sat: CLOSED Sun: CLOSED







5 tips and tricks when using SmartHub

SmartHub is a tool available to all Cotton Electric members that is packed with features that can provide ease and accessibility for members. From viewing your energy usage to making a payment, SmartHub gives you plenty of ways for you to manage your account at your fingertips.

Monitor energy consumption

Everyone's usage is different, and the My Usage tab provides access to a variety of information about how your energy usage trends over time. Members can view detailed reports that compare month-tomonth power use or summaries of a year's worth of kWh use. Energy use thresholds can be set to notify members when they are using more energy than they would like, helping them keep bills as low as possible.

Another feature in My Usage is a comparison of daily energy consumption to average temperature. This is shown on a bar graph overlaid with high, low and/or average temperatures, illustrating the increase in electricity use during extremely hot or cold weather conditions.

Update account information

Ensuring account information and payment methods are updated and correct allows Cotton Electric employees to serve our members more efficiently and accurately during outages or when responding to account questions or other inquiries.

Many Cotton Electric members have new E911 addresses, cellphone numbers, or email addresses. SmartHub is a convenient way to update that information anytime.

Schedule payments and notifications

SmartHub accepts payments via electronic check or with Visa, MasterCard or Discover credit cards any time of day. Most payments will post to an account within 15 minutes. Credit cards will not be accepted for payment on commercial accounts.

Scheduling payments is a feature similar to bank draft, but is not automatic. Each month when a power bill arrives, a member can schedule a onetime payment to be made on a date of their choosing. Cotton Electric employees cannot see scheduled payments, so if you have scheduled a payment after the disconnect date, please call us to confirm if the date of payment is acceptable.

Cotton Electric members can also schedule reminder notifications to be sent when their paper bill has been mailed, or they can receive updates on cooperative business and events, such as youth program updates and Beat the Peak alerts.

Monitor account balance and review payment history

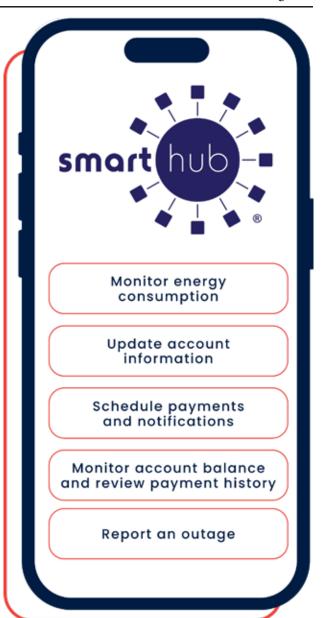
Members using our MyChoice prepay method can keep track of their balance and schedule alerts for low balances. Downloading the SmartHub app is not mandatory for members enrolled in MyChoice, but it is recommended.

With the Payment History feature, members can view their current bill or any of their previous ones to compare payments throughout the years. If members choose to go paperless with billing, previous bills can still be downloaded.

Report an outage

During large outages, co-op phone lines can get busy. Reporting a complete loss of power through SmartHub is a quick and easy way to help our crews restore power more efficiently and safely. Because it sends your account number with the report, it should not be used to report a neighbor's power outage. Use the Comments section to include a good callback number and related information about what was heard or seen before the power went out. Members can also follow outage restoration progress on the outage map.

Members can contact the co-op through SmartHub to ask nonemergency questions. However, if



you have a time sensitive issue, please give us a call. Specific information requires an account number, but SmartHub automatically includes that with the email.

Sign up today

Members can sign up or access their SmartHub account on a computer at www.cottonelectric.com/ smarthub or on a mobile device by downloading the app from the Apple store or Google Play. For more information, give us a call at 580-875-3351.













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Minerals in your water form scale deposits that build up inside your pipes, water heater, shower heads, and other water using equipment like cholesterol in your arteries. These deposits significantly decrease the efficiency of your plumbing systems. Drinking water and icemakers are also negatively affected, as are health quality of water and taste. Hard water is not safe for you, your family or your home.

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Local students set to attend Energy Camp this summer

Cotton Electric is pleased to announce Kenalee Ganote of Temple Public School and Austyn Lawler and Taegan Remington of Walters Public School as the winners of the 2025 Energy Camp contest. After advancing through an essay competition, Ganote, Lawler and Remington will represent the co-op at Red Rock Canyon in Hinton this summer.

During Energy Camp, students will have the chance to be a lineworker for a day, hear from motivational speakers, learn the science behind electricity and participate in team-building group activities.

Congratulations to Kenalee Ganote, Austyn Lawler and Taegan Remington.















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Financial moves for a prowing family

If you're adding a child Here are a few to consider: have some sources of sup- centers, religious institutions you may want to update your ance, but if you don't have Lto your family, it's an ex-



will bring many changes a new child, ranging from sick leave and vacation time cy fund. It's generally a good • Start your education plan- a marketplace plan at healthin your life, so you'll want relatively minor purchasshould you make as you cle with more space or even

taking time off work. Depend- and monthly budget. During the federal child tax credit, ing on where you live and your search, look at offer- and adoption-related credits You'll need to add your child

for these initial expenses and some areas, hard to find. Well

• Estimate expenses — and port if you take time off from and nonprofit organizations, Form W-4 to add a dependent insurance, see whether you citing time, and you have create a new budget. You work after the arrival of your some of which may offer — a move that may lower qualify for Medicaid or the much to anticipate. Of will likely have several new child. These options may in- low-cost child care programs. your tax withholding and in- Children's Health Insurance

course, this new addition expenses associated with clude paid time off — such as • Contribute to your emergen- crease your take-home pay. Program (CHIP), or look for

 paid family leave, short- idea to keep up to six months' ning. It's never too soon to care.gov. You might also need to be prepared — especial- es — car seat, stroller, crib, term disability insurance, and worth of living expenses in think about paying for costs to purchase additional life inly in terms of your finances. etc. — to potentially much some benefits from the Fam- a liquid, low-risk account to associated with your child's surance coverage. And with What financial moves larger costs, such as a vehi- ily Medical and Leave Act. pay for unexpected costs — education. You might want a growing family to support, · Determine how child and with a growing family, to consider a 529 education you might want to add diswelcome your new child? a new home. You'll need to care will be provided. Child these costs may well increase savings plan, which offers ability coverage to protect estimate what you can afford care can be expensive and, in as your child grows older. tax benefits and can be used your income against short-· Look at your tax situa- for college and many vo- or long-term disabilities. then work in to your budget before the arrival of your tion. You may want to consult cational programs, as well Bringing a new child into

the everyday additional costs child, start looking for child with a tax professional to de- as some K-12 costs. A fi- your life is certainly a joyous — food, clothing, uncovered care, so you can explore your termine whether you qualify nancial advisor can help occasion — and by being fimedical expenses and so on. options and start factoring in for credits or deductions, such you explore all available nancially prepared, you can · Look at options to support the costs to your cash flow as the dependent care credit, education savings options. make the whole experience • Check your insurance. even more enjoyable.

where you work, you might ings from local community (if you adopted a child). Also, to your existing health insur- Edward Jones, Member SIPC

Kelsey Avants

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





Respecting electricity's potential wrath

May is National Strawberry Month and National Barbecue Month and while both of those observances sound incredibly delicious, there are also more serious observances this month, including Electrical Safety Month.

Electricity can be extremely dangerous but is often out of sight, out of

While you can see, smell, or hear some electrical hazards — outlets that are warm to the touch or lights that constantly flicker, for example - many others are invisible and undetectable. Always respect electricity and the potential danger that comes with its distribution and use.

There are several precautions you can take both inside and outside your home when it comes to possible electrical dangers. When outside, always be aware of overhead power line locations and never come within 10 feet of a line — for example, while trimming trees or carrying a tall ladder or other far-reaching object. Also, if you see a downed power line near your home or in your travels, always assume it is energized and never go near one and report it to your cooperative's dispatch.

Cotton Electric and Safe Electricity offers these other electrical safety tips:

- Cell phones make strange bedfellows: Do not sleep or lounge in bed with a cell phone or other device that is charging: This can cause burns to your skin or it can cause the soft bedding materials to ignite.
- Do not use cheap chargers: Instead, use the original charging components that came with your cell phone or other electronics. When it comes time to replace them, spend a little extra to buy brand-specific chargers and cubes. Using cheaply made generic chargers with your electronics can cause injury (shock/burns) or even a fire since they may be defective.
- Charging devices and water don't mix: Do not use a plugged in (charging) cell phone near water. Take a break from your phone while bathing, swimming or sitting in a hot tub. Deaths have occurred when a pluggedin cell phone has fallen into water. Do not use plugged in items near water.
- Do not overload outlets or circuits: While it can be tempting to plug in several items in one outlet or on one circuit, drawing too much power can damage your electronics

or your home's wiring, or cause more serious problems such as a fire. If too much current is drawn, usually a circuit breaker would trip or fuses would blow, but this is never guaranteed.

- Use portable or space heaters with caution: Do not use portable heaters unattended or around small children or pets. Do not place flammable items near a space heater.
- Test your GFCI buttons once a month: Put a reminder in your phone or mark it on your calendar each month. GFCIs help prevent ground faults that can shock or injure you, but they can't do their job if they are not working properly.
- Do not ignore odd electrical symptoms in your home: If your lights flicker often, if your outlets are warm to the touch or appear discolored, or if you smell odors like something is overheating but can't determine where the odors are coming from, there may be problems with your home's electricals. There might also be a problem if your circuits or fuses need to be tripped or changed often. If you notice any of these symptoms or other unusual electrical oddities in your home, consult a qualified electrician.
- Make sure your home is protected with arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs): When there is an arc fault. it means that an electrical source in your home is malfunctioning. When that happens, an arc (intense heat or light) can be discharged. Because of that, AFCIs are required by National Electric Code since they help prevent home fires. Have a professional electrician assess your home to make sure AFCIs are installed, especially if your home is older.
- Include electrical sources when baby- or childproofing your home: There are many electrical components that toddlers and children can tamper with, such as exposed outlets, dangling cords, and accessible power strips or surge protectors. Be aware of potential electrical dangers throughout the home by getting down on the floor and seeing what is at eye level or within reach. Tamper-resistant outlets became required by the NEC (National Electric Code) in 2008; many homes built before then do not have them.

For more tips on electrical safety, visit www.cottonelectri.com/safety or www.safeelectricity.org.



580-255-0275 or 580-252-1331





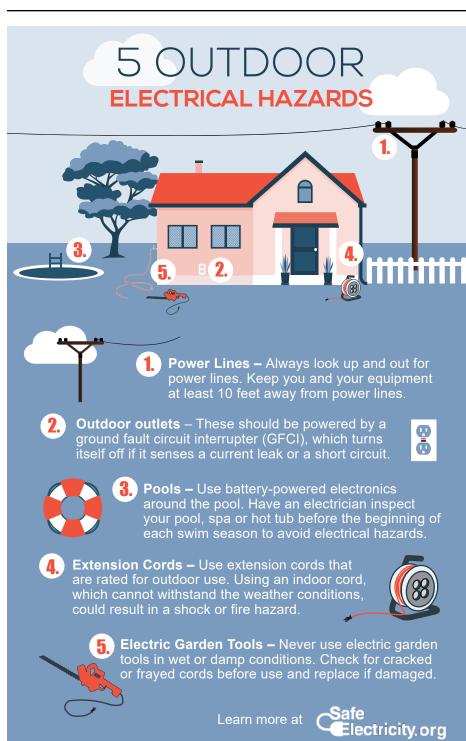


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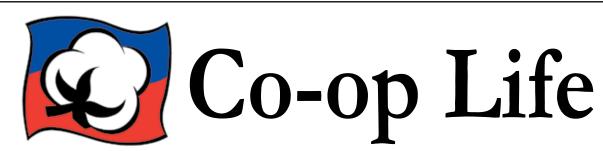


LiuGong 2030H 6,000 lb Lease to Own Starting @ \$488/mo 5 Year Powertrain Warranty



Lease to Own Starting @ \$2968/mo

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Creating experiences that go beyond pasture to plate

By Carli Eubank

Just off the highway between Duncan and Lawton, next to the brightly painted "Eat Beef" water tanks, is a local beef operation that invites the public into its lifestyle of raising quality beef and producing beef products. Cotton Electric members Stephen and Alex Morcom are the owners of County Line Mercantile, located in Central High.

First-generation cattle ranchers Stephen and Alex both work for different livestock nutrition companies and apply the knowledge acquired through education and experience as the cornerstone of their own beef operation. A few years after Stephen and Alex started their cattle operation, Alex's parents joined the business, and together they created Morcom Cattle Company.

After a few years of selling beef online and winning the Judges' Choice Award in 2023 and the People's Choice Award in 2024 at the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association beef competition, the Morcoms began discussing plans to open a retail space.

"We had this plot of land for years, and we thought this would be a great spot off of the highway to create a space for the public to stop by and browse our beef selections in person," Alex said.

County Line Mercantile offers a variety of products made or grown in Oklahoma, including meal kits, beef tallow, energy drinks and sourdough. Alex, who has always enjoyed baking, began experimenting with different flavors of sourdough to sell at their store.

On Saturday mornings, shoppers are welcomed into the store to either pick up their

sourdough loaves, select their cuts of beef or browse through the different available products. Regulars can also be found sitting at the table, enjoying a fresh cup of coffee and conversation with one another, while soaking in the unique shopping experience and surrounding grasslands landscape.

"When we built this store, we wanted to create an experience for everyone entering this space," Alex said. "We're very passionate about the beef industry and stay active in advocating and educating to others while being able to offer good-quality, nutritious beef to the community. People can feel good about eating our products, and it's a lot of fun for us to be able to share our passion with everyone."

On a quiet stretch of road just outside of Duncan is The Barn Whole Foods and Café, owned by Cotton Electric member Adenya Spivey. When you walk through the doors, you're greeted with the smell of the weekly special cooking, aisles of different foods and supplements, and a friendly smile from Spivey or one of her family members.

Spivey grew up in the Empire area where her passion for raising quality meat and other food products with her family was instilled in her. After graduating from college, she moved to Dallas to work as a certified manager accountant, but after several years, Spivey would return home to be near her family.

"My cousin was really battling lupus at the time, and I was dealing with a heart blockage," Spivey said. "We met with Lee Shavers, the formulator of Body Science, and he helped us change our diet and started us on

pure, clean supplements. Today, my cousin's lupus is in remission and my blockage is gone."

After a few more years working as an accountant in Duncan, Spivey often reflected on her and her family's health journey and began creating a space she hoped would help others along whatever health journeys they may be on.

Today, Spivey continues to raise quality whole foods, like beef and lamb, and now offers it for the public. A crowd favorite at the café is the homemade weekly specials, especially when Spivey and her family are serving her half-Angus and half-longhorn burgers with a side salad from their salad bar.

The Barn Whole Foods and Café also creates space for products to be sold from local businesses, such as Manuka and local honey, sourdough baked goods, supplements, wood cutting boards, makeup and more. This sense of inclusion has turned the shop into a gathering place, not just a market.

"Opening this business was not in my plan, but I'm a firm believer in that God gave us everything we need to survive, heal and stay well, and that's what I want to promote here."

For more information about County Line Mercantile and The Barn Whole Foods and Café, follow their Facebook pages or stop by and visit their stores in person.

Store hours for County Line Mercantile are 1 to 6 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays. The Barn Whole Foods and Café are open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursdays and Fridays.



The County Line Mercantile, located in Central High, sits off of Highway 7 between Duncan and Lawton. Photo courtesy of Alex Morcom.



(pictured left to right) Cotton Electric members Stephen Morcom and Alex Morcom are first-generation cattle producers of Morcom Cattle Company and owners of County Line Mercantile. Photo courtesy of Alex Morcom.



The Barn Whole Foods and Café serves homemade weekly specials and is located west of Duncan on Plato Road. Photo by Carli Eubank.



(pictured fourth from left) Cotton Electric member Adenya Spivey ownes and operates The Barn Whole Foods and Café alongside her family. Photo by Carli Eubank.



If you would like your community event listed in the June issue, please submit information by calling 580-875-3351 or sending an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com by May 30. Only events occurring after June 13 will be published in the next issue.

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

Summer in the Streets

The Cache Area Chamber invites everyone to a family-friendly party atmosphere at Summer in the Streets. There will be food, pop-up vendors and more fun activities. The event is set to begin at 11 a.m., May 17 at the downtown business district in Cache. For more information, visit www.cacheareachamber.com.

Tour de Meers

The annual Tour de Meers bike ride is one of the region's oldest and most successful bike rides in the small rural community of Meers. This event is an annual fundraiser for the Meers Volunteer Fire Department. Day-of registration is at 6 a.m., and the ride starts at 7:30 a.m. May 24 at the Meers Volunteer Fire Department. For more information, visit their Facebook page.

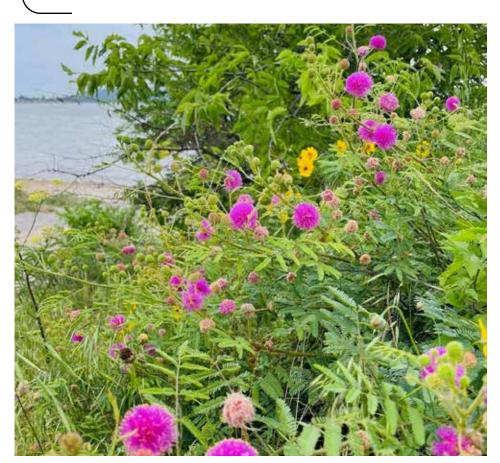
Food pantry open once monthly

Walters Community Food Pantry is open from 8 to 11 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month. The pantry is in the old City Hall, 131 1/2 W. California St. 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 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 580-658-2765 to make other arrangements.

PHOTO MONTH



Cotton Electric member Leigh Ann Womack snapped this photo of flowers starting to bloom at the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. The theme for June is Oklahoma Skies! 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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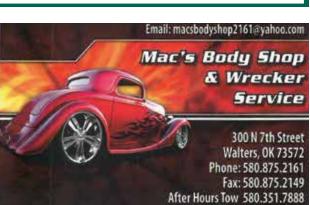
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May is Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

Food W

May is Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month. Osteoporosis is a progressive disease where bones weaken, increasing the risk of fracture. Contributing factors to the development of osteoporosis include age, genetics, hormonal changes, poor diet and lifestyle choices, medical conditions, body size and race. The lifetime risk of experiencing a fracture related to osteoporosis is 50% for women and 20% for men, after the age of 50. It is important to understand your

WIN SIMP

risk of injury.

osteoporosis, and these factors are not consumption are also lifestyle factors modifiable. It is important to understand how these factors relate to you and your risk of osteoporosis so you can be vigilant in addressing the modifiable risk factors of hormones, medical conditions, body size, and diet and lifestyle choices.

For hormones and medical conditions, it is important to address these at annual primary care visits and seek referrals to specialists if needed. You may not be able to prevent hormonal changes and medical conditions, but you can engage your medical team to lessen their negative effect on bone health.

Lifestyle factors that affect the development of osteoporosis include physical activity, smoking, and alcohol consumption. A combination of weight-bearing or weights), and balance training is es-150 minutes per week is recommended for older adults. The Bone Health and bone health. Dairy products are general-Osteoporosis Foundation offers a list ly good sources of protein and calcium, of BoneFit certified professionals spe- and in the U.S. they are fortified with cifically trained in exercises for bone vitamin D. health. You can find the closest BoneFit

Eliminating efit-find-a-professional/. Age, genetics and race impact risk of smoking and avoiding excessive alcohol with an impact on bone health.

> The research on nutrient intake and the impact on bone health continues to evolve. A recent review by Rizzoli and Chevalley, published in Current Osteoporosis Reports in 2024 provides an overview of the best available research on nutrient intake and osteoporosis pre-

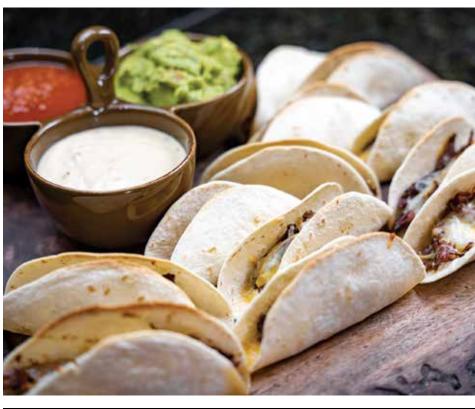
biochemical changes that impact bone health, including fiber, calcium, vitamin D, phytate/oxalate, sodium, magnesium, and protein. The authors conclude that calcium, vitamin D, and protein are key to reducing fracture risk. They specifically cite studies pointing to dairy product consumption as being protective of bone activity, resistance training (body weight health, and they encourage individuals who avoid dairy products to be hypersential to support bone health. A total of focused on calcium, vitamin D and protein intake to ensure adequate intake for

personal risk of osteoporosis and discuss certified professional by visiting www. protein should you consume? The rec-factors.

changes you can make now to lower your bonehealthandosteoporosis.org/bon- ommended dietary allowance (RDA) for calcium for men aged 19-70 is 1,000 mg per day and age 70+, 1,200 mg per day; for women, age 19-50 is 1,000 mg per day and age 50+, 1200 mg per day. The RDA for vitamin D is 15 mcg (600 IU) for men and women aged 19-70 and 20 mcg (800 IU) for men and women aged 70+. Work with your health care provider to assess possible deficiencies and doses to correct deficiencies.

> For protein, the dietary guidelines for There are many nutrients that impart Americans suggest older adults need to consume more than the generally recommended 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight per day due to decreased absorption efficiency. Fruits and vegetables are also important for bone health. Eating less than 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day is associated with higher hip fracture risk, potentially due to low fiber intakes affecting the ability of the gut microbiome to actually absorb minerals like calcium and magne-

> Don't let a fracture be your bone health wake-up call. Discuss your risk of osteoporosis with your primary care team and How much calcium, vitamin D and develop strategies for the modifiable risk











Street tacos from the slow cooker

(Family Features) If your idea of street tacos includes standing over a hot skillet, wipe that sweat off your brow and give these Savory Street Tacos a try. They put the slow cooker and oven to work for you, providing that delicious street taco taste without the hassle. For more ways to simplify cooking at home, visit Culinary.net.

Savory Street Tacos

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy" Servings: 4-6

Ingredients:

1 chuck roast (2-3 lbs) 1 package taco seasoning 1 can (10 oz) beef consommé 16-20 street taco tortillas 1 package (8 oz) shredded cheese 1/4 cup avocado oil salsa, for serving guacamole, for serving queso, for serving

Directions:

Cover chuck roast with taco seasoning then place in slow cooker. Pour crowds.

beef consommé over roast and cook on low 6 hours to braise.

Heat oven to 425 F.

Use fork to shred roast.

Brush outside of tortillas with avocado oil and fill with meat and shredded cheese. Place in casserole dish and bake 10-15 minutes until tacos reach desired crispiness.

Place on tray and serve with salsa, guacamole and queso.

Tip: Recipe can be doubled for large

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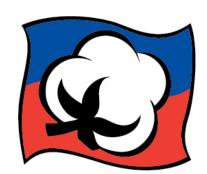
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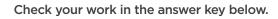


COTTON

ELECTRIC CO-OP

CAN YOU SPOT THE ELECTRICAL **AZARD?**

Electricity is essential for everyday life, but when combined with seemingly harmless items or elements, it can create a hazardous situation. View the grouped items below, then circle the two items that (when combined) create a potential electrical hazard.









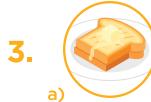








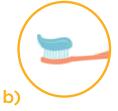
















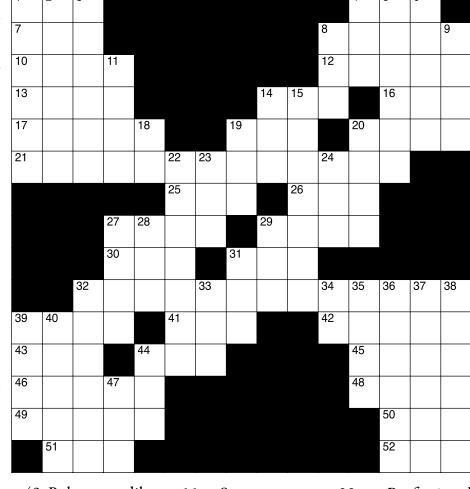




J. a&b 2. a&c 3. b&c 4. a&c 5. b&c Answer Key

ACROSS

- 1. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- 4. British thermal unit
- 7. Afflict
- 8. Refrain from harming
- 10. Galls
- 12. Leg bone
- 13. Rhine distribu-
- 14. Recipe measurement
 - 16. Chap
 - 17. Useful book
 - 19. Mountain Time 20. Snakelike fishes
- 21. Places where people live
- 25. US, Latin America, Canada belong to
- 26. Periodical
- 27. A type of sense 29. A way to get
- possession of 30. Everyone has bloc (abbr.)
- one 31. Body art
- 32. Mr. October
- 39. Abba ___, Israeli politician
- 41. Head movement 42. Jeweled head-
- dress
- 43. VCR button
- 44. A way to change
- color 45. Basketball move
- 46. Upright stone legged sheep slab
- 48. Forest-dwelling monkey



- 49. Pulsate steadily
- 50. Negative
- 51. Sino-Soviet
- 52. Unit of work

DOWN

- 1. Island
- 2. Pittsburgh ball- an player
- 3. Chemical compound
- 4. Indicates density
- of data (abbr.) 5. Mesas
- 6. Wild,
- long-
- 8. Engine additive
- "CSI" actor George

- 11. Stony waste matter
- 14. Thyroid-stimulating hormone
- 15. Pores in a leaf's epidermis
- 18. Digraph
- 19. Married wom-
- 20. Peripheral
- 22. Northern Italy city
- 23. Klutz
- 24. Type of tree 27. Witnessed
- 28. Popular breakfast food
- 29. __ Mahal
- 31. BoSox legend restaurant Williams

- Professional 32. drivers
- 33. Atom or mole-
- cule type 34. The Constitu-
- tion State 35. Chest to store
- clothes (Scottish)
- 36. Type of solution
- 37. Speaker
- 38. Specifying 39. Formerly (ar-
- chaic) 40. Wiseman and
- Krom are two
- 44. The bill in a

47. Tennis shot

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Parting Shot



Cotton Electric Cooperative gave a safety demonstration to a group of students from Marlow Elementary. Thank you to the Stephens County Conservation District for inviting us and hosting the event. Photo by Carli Eubank.

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