Painting the heart of the town page 14



A mission for nutrition page 18



"The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957"

VOLUME 67

September 11, 2023

NUMBER 1

OFFICIAL NOTICE

84th Annual Meeting set for Sept. 26 in Duncan

The Current Staff

Mark your calendars for the 2023 Cotton Electric Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Night to be held Tuesday, Sept. 26 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds, 2002 S. 13th St., in Duncan. Cotton Electric employees are looking forward to once again meeting face-to-face with members of the coop for an evening of good food and fellowship.

Registration will begin at 5:30 p.m., and members will need to cut out and bring their official registration slips to be able to attend the meeting – found at the top right corner of this page.

We'll treat you to a barbecue dinner with all the fixin's. There will be time to stroll around the venue and visit many points of interest. Cotton Electric employees will have booths set up for members to gather information about our vegetation management program, home energy evaluations and how to report a power outage, just to name a few. Members can also stop by the co-op's Chevy Bolt to learn more about electric vehicles.

Co-op Connections partners will be in attendance for members to meet, including the Chisholm Trail

Heritage Center, Scentsy and Stephens County Humane Society. Co-op Connection cards and more information about the program's business partners will be available, as well.

Be sure to take advantage of this opportunity to put a face with the voice on the telephone, tell us your experience as a co-op member or learn more about what the co-op does for its membership. The co-op's Board of Trustees, composed of members representing nine districts, will also be in attendance.

We have lots of goodies planned for the kids' area, including cotton candy, bounce houses and a gift.

There will be adult gifts, too. Each registered member will get a gift ticket to exchange for one gift bag containing a limited-edition Cotton Electric hat and another surprise.

The business meeting portion begins at 7 p.m. on the dot when Board president Shan Files calls the meeting to order. Other board members will present reports before CEO Jennifer Meason shares with the membership an overview of updates and other cooperative business from the previous year.

Once the business meeting is adjourned, prize

ONLY CONNECTED MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR PRIZES, AND MEMBERS MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN. 2023 ANNUAL MEETING OF COTTON ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE THIS REGISTRATION CARD ENTITLES THE HOLDER TO ONE GIFT TICKET PER MEMBERSHIP **OFFICIAL REGISTRATION CARD** PLEASE PRESENT THIS CARD AT REGISTRATION. REGISTRATION BEGINS AT 5:30 P.M STEPHENS COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS IN DUNCAN WHAT: WHEN: WHERE:

BE SURE TO LEAVE NAME LABEL ATTACHED

drawings will be held. Registered members will have a chance to win a variety of prizes, from energy bill credits to everyday household items and technology.

Cotton Electric employees have been working hard and looking forward to putting together this year's Annual Meeting and the opportunity to interact with our members. For questions or more information about this year's event, call us at 580-875-3351. We hope to see you there.



WHAT: ANNUAL MEETING AND

MEMBER APPRECIATION NIGHT

WHEN: **SEPT. 26, 2023**

STEPHENS COUNTY WHERE:

FAIRGROUNDS, DUNCAN

5:30 P.M. **REGISTRATION OPENS**

BBQ DINNER

7:00 P.M. BUSINESS MEETING

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!



Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after Sept. 1, 2023, is \$0.01549 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$20.13 on the September bill.

August 2023 Temperature Extremes									
Day	High	Low	Avg.	Day	High	Low	Av		
1	108	71	90	16	100	61	8		
2	107	73	90	17	111	67	89		
3	108	74	91	18	109	73	9		
4	108	73	91	19	110	68	89		
5	101	74	88	20	110	70	9		
6	106	74	90	21	109	74	92		
7	99	76	88	22	107	75	9		
8	98	72	85	23	104	74	89		
9	106	76	91	24	106	72	89		
10	102	72	87	25	109	77	9.		
11	111	73	92	26	107	72	9		
12	109	74	92	27	95	76	8		
13	108	75	92	28	95	68	82		
14	90	67	79	29	97	63	80		
15	93	62	78	30	98	65	82		
Source: srh.noaa.gov/oun/				31	100	63	Ω'		

Average Daily High: 104 Average Daily Low: 72

Did You Know?

Peak demand tracking period ends every year on Sept. 9. Thank you to all Cotton Electric members who did their part this summer to help us Beat the Peak!

Current should arrive in mailboxes on Oct. 16, 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 The next issue of The a line at Cotton Electric Current, 226 N. 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 communities we serve.

From the CEO

The power is in your hands

cooperatives different local members. than other types of utilities. This month, I thought I'd tell you of out the year, we schedule opporfew of the things I shared.

Because we're a co-op, we operate a little differently than other utilities. Cotton Electric Cooperative's decisions are made locally, by the nine trustees who also live right here in our local communities.

Everyone who pays to receive electricity from the co-op is a member. When you pay your electric bill each month, your money stays here – to pay for the electricity used, or to make improvements to our local system to strengthen service reliability. The money you pay the co-op doesn't line the pockets of shareholders five states away.

ecently, someone asked We're a co-op, and we exist to me what makes electric provide a service to you, our

> You may notice that throughtunities for you to attend co-op events, like our recent district meetings and the upcoming annual meeting, so we can hear from you. We conduct an annual survey to gather your feedback on co-op programs and services so that we can plan and adjust for the future.

Our success lies in your satisfaction, which is why we offer these opportunities to engage and listen to what you have to

Because you're part of an electric cooperative, you can count on our team to maintain local jobs, at-cost electricity and firstclass service, no matter what

the economy-and supply chain issues-throw at us.

Cotton Electric is striving to keep our costs as low as possible so we can keep more money in your pocket. We want to help you maximize the value you can get from our services and offerings. For example, we can help you save on energy bills through our free energy evaluation program and efficiency rebates.

If you want to report your outages via text message and receive important information such as power restoration updates, please give us a call so we can update the phone numbers on your account. You can also stay in the know with The Current and social media.

Please know that you—the members of Cotton Electric Cooperative - are at the heart



Jennifer Meason, CEO

of everything we do. Co-ops adhere to seven guiding cooperative principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, and service.

We exist to serve you and provide the quality, reliable, friendly service you expect and deserve. While we've grown over the years, we're still driven by the same guiding principles to serve our community.

We hope to see at the 2023 Annual Meeting on Sept. 26 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds in Duncan. The power is in your hands.





ANNUAL MEETING AND MEMBER APPRECIATION NIGHT SEPT. 26, 2023

STEPHENS COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS, DUNCAN

REGISTRATION OPENS AT 5:30 P.M. BUSINESS MEETING BEGINS AT 7 P.M.





Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a tune-up for your heating system? Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment.

Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills.

Source: Energy.gov

July 2023 Operating Stats

	<u>2023</u>	<u>2022</u>
Total Amount Billed/Accrued	\$7,741,003	\$8,933,822
Cost of Purchased Power	5,133,271	6,571,644
Taxes	133,495	160,557
Total Operating Expense Per Mile	1,315	1,621
Average Farm and Residential Bill	197	236
Average Farm and Residential kWh	1,726	1,874
Total Meters Billed (farm, residential)	19,511	19,269
Miles Energized	5,262	5,234
Density Per Mile	3.71	3.68
New Service Connects YTD	257	280
Services Retired	115	72

Upcoming

Deadlines for

The Current

October

Ad Sales Sept. 29 Classified Sept. 29 **Publish** Oct. 16

November

Ad Sales Oct. 27 Classified Oct. 27 Publish Nov. 13

The Current

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

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Energy Efficiency

Enhancing energy efficiency: Benefits of home energy monitoring systems

n recent years there has been a growing emphasis on energy efficiency and sustainability in the residential market. Homeowners are increasingly interested in understanding their energy consumption and finding ways to reduce their usage along with their utility bills. One solution that has gained traction is the use of home energy monitoring systems. These systems can provide homeowners with real-time insights into their energy usage, helping them make informed decisions about their Key Features and Benefits consumption habits. We will dive into the concept, features, benefits, and the role they can play in promoting energy efficiency.

are devices normally paired with software applications designed to track and display a home's energy usage in real time. These systems are typically installed at the home's main electrical panel, or in some cases integrated into the home's circuitry. They are then used to capture data from various appliances or circuits within the home. This data is then presented to the homeowner through a user-friendly mobile or desk-

1. Real-Time Monitoring:

Homeowners can track their energy usage in real time, meaning they can see how much energy is being used at

Residential home energy monitors any given moment. This can benefit the homeowner by providing insight on how their changes in consumption habits affect their usage.

2. Appliance-Level Monitoring:

Once these systems have a chance to learn more about your home, through user-interaction, your monitoring system can pinpoint usage down to a specific appliance. Armed with this information, homeowners can prioritize upgrades, replacements, or even identify servicing needs.

3. Energy Usage Insights:

These systems often offer visualization and analytics that show energy consumption trends over time. By comparing data across days, weeks, or months, homeowners can identify seasonal patterns, set energy consumption goals, and track their progress.

4. Alerts and Notifications:

Some monitors can be set to send alerts to homeowners when their energy usage exceeds a preset threshold. This can prompt immediate action from the homeowner and avoid energy waste. These alerts can be used in conjunction with your usage data to identify unusual patterns that might indicate faulty appliances or systems in the home.

5. Cost Estimations:

these devices are not revenue grade meters. They are designed to give estimations based on input data, but are not tested to same accuracy standards as your utility meter. They will, however, give you cost estimations for how much each energy consumer in your feature can help members understand the financial implications of their energy consumption habits, or highlight holds.

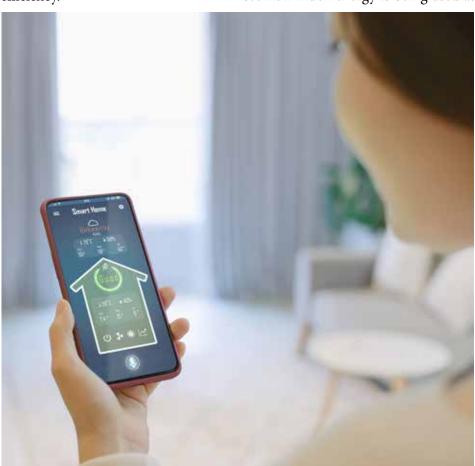


Heath Morgan, **Energy Efficiency** Coordinator

improvements that have been made to the home's efficiency.

When looking into one of these home monitoring systems, there are a few things you will want to keep in mind. The initial set-up cost will include the cost of the device, cost of installation in most cases, and possibly a recurring cost for access to the application software. These devices will take a fair amount of user engagement over the first few months to be accurate. Most will prompt the user through the phone app to confirm appliances that are in use. Once the system knows these devices, it will move on to identifying the next. The better information you put in, the better your output data will be.

Residential home energy monitors It is important to remember that empower homeowners to take control of their energy consumption. By providing real-time data, usage insights, and appliance-level monitoring, these systems are instrumental in helping members make informed choices that not only result in energy savings but also can reduce their monthly utility home is costing you each month. This bills. As the technologies continue to advance, energy monitors are likely to become a vital part of modern house-



Installing a home energy monitoring system is an evolving tool for homeowners to understand their energy consumption. Photo courtesy of Canva.

Heating Degree Day and Cooling Degree Day Calendar

AUGUST

HDD CDD YEAR

> 2023 503

0(2022) 605

2021 709

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







Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation

Little change adds up to huge community impact

CECF reaches \$1.5 million milestone in grants awarded

By Carli Eubank

Setting aside a few coins each month doesn't seem like it could make a huge difference. But when Cotton Electric members participating in Operation Round Up (ORU) pull together, that amount of change overflows into our local communities – improving their quality of life. Thanks to you, our generous members, the Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) hit a milestone of awarded grants totaling more than \$1.5 million.

Beginning in April 2004, Cotton Electric created ORU, a voluntary program of rounding up power bills to the nearest dollar. Individual amounts rounded up on monthly bills can be as little as zero or as much as 99 cents. The maximum annual contribution through rounding up would be \$11.88. On average, individual contributions are about 50 cents each month and about \$6 each year.

Over a span of 19 years, the CECF have awarded 616 grants for a total of \$1,508,452.13. Recipients of CECF grants include local schools, volunteer fire departments, youth programs, public safety and services, non-profit

and community organizations, seniors, and individuals who have applied for ORU grants.

The funds are pooled and administered by the CECF board of directors who meet quarterly to consider grant applications from individuals and organizations in the area. The board consists of Jennifer Meason, the coop'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.

CECF has achieved many goals over the years, including the \$1 million milestone in 2017 and now the \$1.5 million mark in 2023. However, the true mission of this program is helping improve the quality of life in our surrounding communities. We could not have made those impacts without members choosing to participate in ORU, and we look forward to continuing our mission.

For more information about ORU or CECF, visit our website at www. cottonelectric.com/operation-round-up or call our offices at 580-875-3351.





A Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) grant was awarded to Big Pasture Public Schools for facility upgrades. Pictured left to right: Nora Curry, Big Pasture Public Schools superintendent; Hunter Quickle, Big Pasture Public Schools high school principal; Carli Eubank, Cotton Electric communications specialist; and Shane Bowers, Cotton Electric vice president of administration.







Five easy ways to exercise your civic duty

America's electric cooperatives, including Cotton Electric, understand the value of building relationships with elected officials at all levels of government. There are many important policy issues that directly impact electric utilities and ultimately, you, the consumer-members we proudly serve. Strengthening our relationships with elected leaders positions us to advocate for our local community.

While Cotton Electric is a locally-owned cooperative, we're part of a larger network of electric co-ops. Through our non-partisan grassroots program known as "Coops Vote," we're working to enhance the political strength of electric co-ops and boost voter turnout. There's power in numbers, and when we all show up at the polls, we can voice the issues that matter most to our community.

National Voter Registration Day is September 19, and midterm elections are right around the corner. If you're looking to get involved or simply make sure you're ready to vote, here are five easy ways you can exercise your civic duty.

- 1. Don't assume your voter registration status is up-to-date. Visit www.vote.coop, click "Election Resources" to verify your status.
- 2. Get informed. In addition to ensuring your registration is upto-date, learning about local policy issues and candidates is one of the best ways you can prepare to vote.
- 3. Get active on social media. Follow @ coopsvote on Facebook,

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

WWW.VOTE.COOP

Twitter and Instagram and let others know you're a #coopvoter and #VoteReady; encourage your friends and family to do the same.

4. Help others prepare to vote. Work a National Voter Registration Day event, volunteer to be a poll worker during midterm elections or offer to drive others to their polling places.

5. Vote! It's the easiest-and most important-way you can exercise your civic duty.

Voting is a form of personal empowerment that gives you the opportunity to voice your opinion on the issues that matter most to you. Make a plan to vote and help others in our community get #VoteReady.

On September 19, Cotton Electric will be giving away hats at the cooperative's Community Center to members who register to vote.

We encourage everyone, regardless of political beliefs, to vote, stand up for our local community and make a collective impact.

Stay safe while cheering on your favorite team

There's nothing like spending a warm day outside enjoying your favorite sports activity, whether it's on the golf course, football field, baseball diamond, or out on a fishing boat, to name a few. When the weather is right for outdoor sports, it can also be perfect conditions for a thunderstorm to roll in, with the potential for lightning. About 30 people are killed by lightning each year, according to the National Weather Service. Two-thirds of those fatalities are associated with outdoor recreational activities. Cotton Electric Cooperative and Safe Electricity wants you to be safe this season with the following tips to protect you while observing or participating in outdoor sports.

- Organized sports activities should have a designated official that will watch for approaching dark clouds and any lightning in the area. Designated officials and anyone participating in outdoor sports should have a lightning safety plan with tips on: when the activity should be stopped, where people should go for safety, and when activities can resume.
- Stop outdoor activity if you see lightning. Lightning can strike up to 10 to 15 miles away from the storm. Follow the simple phrase: When Thunder Roars Go Indoors."
- No place outside is safe during a storm, including, dugouts, sheds, or rain shelters. If you don't have access to a sturdy building, a hard-topped metal vehicle with the windows rolled up would provide good protection from the elements.

Because electrical charges can linger in clouds even if the storm has passed, weather experts recommend you wait 30 minutes since you last heard thunder before resuming any outdoor activity. If it is an organized sports activity the designated official should make the call on when to return to the field.

Whether it is an organized sports activity, a round of golf with friends, or a game of basketball in the driveway, plan to make your outdoor sports safe this season and don't let lightning strike you out.

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Own a business? Consider these retirement plans

If you own a small business or are selfemployed, you've always got plenty to do, but you can't forget about the days when you'll be less busy that is, when you're retired. How can you prepare for that time of your life?

One key step is establishing a retirement plan for your business or yourself. And thanks to the



2022 SECURE 2.0 Act, you can now receive tax credits for opening and administering a 401(k), SEP-IRA or SIMPLE IRA. These aren't the only plans available for small businesses or sole proprietors, but they are among the most popular. Let's look at each of them:

• 401(k) - A401(k)offers several key benefits: First, any earnings growth is tax deferred, and your contributions can be tax deductible. (Taxes are due upon withdrawal, and withdrawals prior to age 59½ may be subject to a 10% penalty.)

If you choose a Roth 401(k), your contributions aren't deductible, but your earnings and withdrawals will be tax free, provided you meet certain conditions. And a 401(k) offers a variety of investment options. If you have workers, you'll need to consider whether to offer matching contributions, which are tax deductible to you, up to the limit of 25% of compensation paid to eligible employees.

But even if you're self-employed, with no employees other than your spouse, you can establish what's known as a "solo" or "owner-only" 401(k). In 2023, you can put in up to \$22,500 as an employee, plus a catch-up contribution

of \$7,500 if you're 50 or older, for a total of \$30,000. establish and administer. Plus, you can contribute an additional 25% of earned income as an employer, up to an overall employee and employer maximum of \$66,000 (or \$73,500 if you're 50 or older).

• SEP-IRA – An SEP-IRA may be attractive to you if you're selfemployed or if you own a business but have few or no employees. That's because you must contribute an equal percentage of your own compensation to every eligible employee. In 2023, you can contribute up to \$66,000 or 25% of your income, whichever is less.

• SIMPLE IRA – A

SIMPLE IRA is easy to As with an SEP-IRA, earnings in a SIMPLÉ IRA can grow on a taxdeferred basis. If you have employees, they aren't required to contribute to this In 2023, you can put in up plan — but you are. You must match up to 3% of employees' contributions or provide 2% of their annual salaries, although you do have some flexibility. If your business goes through a rough patch, you can temporarily decrease SIMPLE IRA contributions to 1% for up to two years out of the previous five. Your contributions to your employees' accounts are tax deductible, but in in

terms of building resources for your own retirement, a SIMPLE IRA may be less appealing because of its contribution limits, which are relatively low compared to a 401(k) or SEP IRA. to \$15,500, or \$19,000 if you're 50 or older.

You should consult with your tax advisor to determine which retirement plan is right for you. Your financial advisor can also help you explore your options. And the sooner you put a plan to work, the better.

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

September Is National Preparedness Month

September marks the start of National Preparedness Month across the country. Knowing how to prepare for natural disasters, power outages, and a variety of other risks and emergencies can make a real difference and potentially save your life. It's also just as important as knowing how to prepare as it is knowing what to do during and immediately after an emergency.

One of the best ways to stay one step ahead of storms, power outages, and other emergencies is to plan ahead with an emergency preparedness kit. Assembling and maintaining an emergency kit before a disaster strikes is one of the easiest steps someone can take to reduce many of the risks associated with severe weather. In addition to having an emergency kit, it is also important to know what kind of disasters are most likely to occur where you live and add

or remove items accordingly.

The exact contents of your emergency kit may vary according to the dangers and weather most relevant to your region, but Ready.gov recommends that every emergency kit contain these basic items:

- Water, one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days, for drinking and sanitation
- Food, at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and a NOAA weather radio with tone alert and extra batteries for both
- Flashlight and extra bat-
- First aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air and plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation

- Wrench or pliers to turn is compromised.
- Manual can opener for
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger

Considering the risks that disasters present, Safe Electricity shares tips on how you and your loved ones can be prepared for incoming severe weather and stay out of harm's

- Take all weather warnings seriously and develop a plan of action with your family.
- Develop and practice action plans for different emergencies that could happen in your area. Acknowledge what to do if separated. Consider the needs of your family, including medical precautions.
- Identify someone who lives out of town whom you and your family can check in with during an emergency if communication in your area

- To ease the strain in an emergency, collect important documents and keep them in a safe and accessible place.
- In order to communicate safely, make sure that you are familiar with how those in your area are notified during an emergency.
- Follow relevant social media channels, such as local news centers or utilities. These pages often provide updates on weather conditions or power outages.
- To prepare for the inevitable, assemble an emergency kit. This should include non-perishable food, water, a flashlight with fresh batteries, a first aid kit, and essential medications. Always follow all recommended evacuation routes and make sure that you lock and secure all windows before leaving the home.
- If you are using a portable generator, be sure that the main circuit breaker is OFF and locked out prior to starting the generator. This will prevent power lines from back-feeding electricity into the utility system and help protect utility line workers from possible electrocution. Learn more about safely operating a portable generator on page 7.

Should a severe storm or flooding occur, also keep these tips in mind:

- Do not step into a flooded basement or room if the water is covering electrical outlets, appliances, or cords.
- Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box or touch an electrical appliance if you are wet or in standing

water. Call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter.

- If an electrical appliance has been in contact with water, have a professional check it out before it is used. It may need to be repaired or replaced.
- If the smell of gas is apparent or if there is a suspected leak in your house, leave immediately and call your gas
- If power lines are on the ground, treat them as energized and stay far away from them and warn others to stay away. Whether it is a hurricane, flood, tornado, or earthquake, stay clear of fallen power lines and flooded areas that could hide hazards. Remember, electricity passes easily through water. Contact the local electric utility if you see downed power lines because the lines could still be live.
- If driving, never get out of the car if there is a downed power line, and never drive over one.
- There are many hazards that remain in the aftermath of a storm. Make sure that children are closely supervised when they are outdoors following a storm. Utilities crews, police, and others may not have been able to get to the area yet to make it safe.

Remember that when you prepare, you will be able to act with greater know-how and confidence. Whether you are facing a power outage, tornado, flooding, or any other emergency situation, being prepared can help keep you and your family safe.





What to know before firing up a portable generator

Firing up one fuel-powered portable generator produces as much carbon monoxide (CO) as hundreds of combustion-engine cars, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commis-

Using a portable generator in a home, garage or too close to an enclosed area is like starting a parking lot full of cars and letting the CO poison seep into that area. The devastating result is almost immediate: The CO from one generator can kill in min-

CO facts

CO is colorless and odorless. Poisoning can happen so quickly that exposed persons may become unconscious before recognizing any symp-

Each year in the U.S.:

- Approximately 85 individuals die least 20 feet away from your home. from CO poisoning.
- Most deaths (81%) occur in residential locations.

Safety tips

A portable generator is usually gas-powered. A generator should have more output than the wattage of the electronics plugged into it. This way, the generator will be able to create the extra electricity it takes for the initial power surge. Make sure there is nothing plugged into the generator when turning it on.

Besides portable generators, there are also standby generators. The standby versions are attached directly to the house and are typically powered by natural gas or propane. These generators start automatically when the power goes out.

It is vital that members call their cooperative when they've installed a generator at any location. Reporting your generator helps prevent feeding power back into the power grid and endangering electric line crews and others when working during an outage or maintaining the lines. Standby generators should have a transfer safety switch installed by a professional. Never plug a portable generator directly into a home outlet or electrical system for the same reason.

To use a portable generator safely:

- Always use a portable generator at
- Never operate one inside a home, on a porch or near windows and doors.
- Apply the 20-foot distance rule to other locations, such as a shed, cabin, camper or trailer.
- When shopping for a generator, look for one that gives off reduced
- Also look for one that shuts off automatically when high levels of CO are present.
- Keep your generator well maintained and follow all manufacturer's instructions.



- Operate it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot pool underneath.
- Ensure CO detectors are installed on every level of your home and near or in bedrooms.
- Test CO alarms in your home

monthly; also track their age. They need to be replaced every seven years.

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

Source: SafeElectricity.com

Need to make a payment by phone? Call our automated system at

1-855-730-8711

Have your Cotton Electric account number and credit card or banking account numbers ready before making the call.



401 School Rd. - Temple, OK (855) 212-5809

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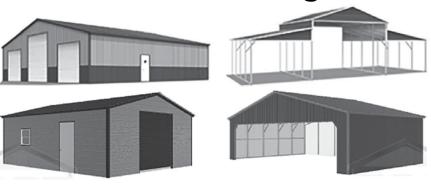
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www.connec-Visit tions.coop. or www.cottonelectric.com under the Member Services tab to discover how you can be part of this free, money saving opportunity.

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We want to hear from you

Putting our members first and "providing excellent member service" is part of our mission at Cotton Electric Cooperative. The co-op values any questions or feedback received from our membership, and one of the ways you, our members, can help us improve is by voluntarily participating in our annual survey.

Cotton Electric employees have worked with Inside Information and their expertise with member relations to create a survey that will provide insight on how the co-op can better our membership. Results from the surveys will help determine Cotton Electric's American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) and Cooperative Attitude and Performance Score (CAPStone). Once we have received and discussed the results, they will be shared with our membership in a few months.

Over the next few weeks, postcards and emails from Inside Information will be sent to randomly selected members, inviting them to participate in the survey online. Selected members are not required to take the survey, but we encourage any feedback that allows the cooperative to discuss how we can serve our members better.

For questions or more information about the upcoming survey, call our office at 580-875-3351.

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Keep your furry friends safe around electricity

You do all you can to keep your pets healthy: You take them to the veterinarian for checkups, feed them well and ensure they are up to date on vaccinations. After all, for many people, pets are part of the family.

Two-thirds (67 percent) of U.S. households, or about 85 million families, own at least one pet, according to the 2019-2020 National Pet Owners Survey. The survey was conducted by the American Pet Products Association, and the numbers are up 11 percent from 1988.

There is something else you can do for your pets, and that is to keep them safe around electricity. Cotton Electric and Safe Electricity offer these tips:

• Puppies and other pets love to chew on electrical cords. Keep cords

You do all you can to keep your pets out of sight or hidden with a cord cover. Provide teething or play alter-

- Watch your pet around dangling or sagging cords, including phone or tablet charging cables. Unplug charging cables once your devices are charged. Not only do they draw a small amount of energy when not in use, but the dangling cords are just crying to be chewed.
- Watch where you place lamps and other plugged-in items. Lamps can be a fire hazard if they are knocked over, especially if they have halogen bulbs.
- Do not leave your pet alone around items that get hot: curling irons and straighteners, an outdoor grill, a portable heater and other electric appliances, including cooktops.



Pet proofing your home is one way to protect pets around electricity. Photo courtesy of Metro Creative.

Pet proof your home much like you would for a baby or toddler. If you suspect your pet has been shocked or burned, take it to the vet right away. Owners may not realize a pet has been shocked until a few hours later when

Pet proof your home much like you it has trouble breathing. Other symptould for a baby or toddler. If you toms include ulcers in the mouth and lesions on the tongue and gums.

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



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6 tips for hosting a game day gathering

Bats and helmets, sticks and pucks, a goal and a ball – whether your favorite sport takes place on a field or a pitch, the ice or the hardwood, true fans get a kick out of hosting their fellow supporters to watch the home team play. The next time the good guys or gals take on their fiercest rivals, turn your house into a full-blown suite for a watch party that's sure to bring home

A little game planning goes a long way, which is why the entertaining experts at Newman's Own recommend these tips to throw a trophy-worthy watch party.

Send Invites Ahead of Time

Most sporting events are scheduled well in advance, giving you plenty of time to plan for game day. While waiting until the last minute can lead to an overwhelmed host and underwhelming menu, sharing invitations pared. Consider adding the time you'd like fellow fans to arrive as well as the first pitch, kickoff or tipoff time.

Opt for Easy Eats

Tensions are already running high with the stress of a rivalry game, so skip complications in the kitchen and turn to on-hand, easy-to-make game day grub. For example, pizza is a popular choice with multiple toppings available so there's something for everyone, regardless of who they're rooting for. Test the TV

Whether you're a cable subscriber or cord cutter, ensure you'll have access to the right channel or streaming platform on game day. Test your setup for a good connection, proper picture quality and crisp sound so you can avoid technical difficulties when the game is on the line.

Add Championship-Level Decor

Show off your team's colors with

decor that makes a statement. Weather-permitting, set the stage with an outdoor flag donning the logo or mascot so neighbors and visitors feel your team spirit. Wear your jersey with pride, show off meaningful memorabilia and set out team-themed plates and napkins.

Maximize Seating

Part of a positive game day experience is ensuring comfort for the crowd, meaning you'll want to maximize seating options without squeezing everyone in too tightly. Projecting attendance so you know exactly how much seating you'll need is key to keeping everyone comfortable. Avoid "standing room only" areas by bringing in added chairs or stools, or consider turning on an extra TV in a separate room for a little more space.

Keep Everyone Engaged

While it might be challenging for



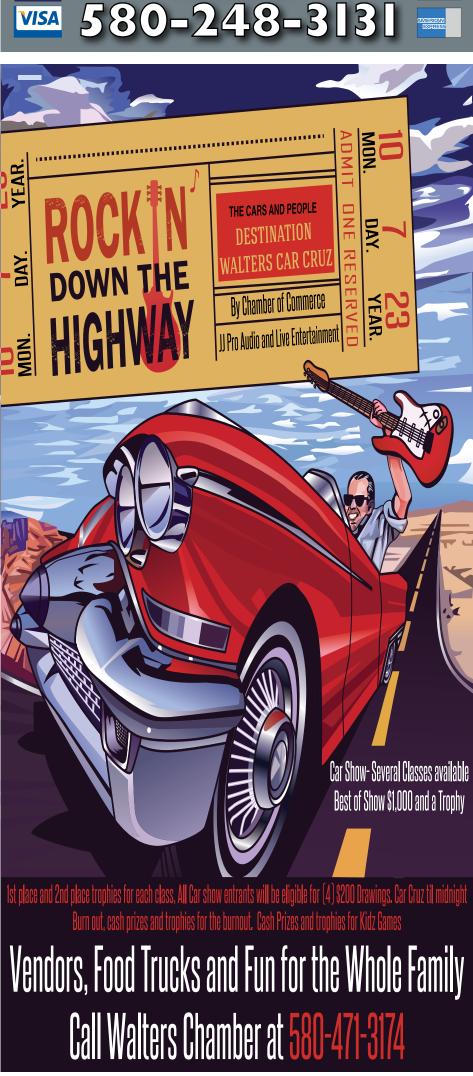
diehard fans to acknowledge, there may be some partygoers who are less inclined to tune in on every play. Make your gathering a fun experience for all, regardless of their interest level in the game, by setting up designated spaces for those who prefer socialization. If you're expecting kids to be in attendance, provide ways for them to stay entertained like board games in the basement or bats, balls and gloves outside.

Find more winning solutions for game day watch parties at newmansown.com/product.









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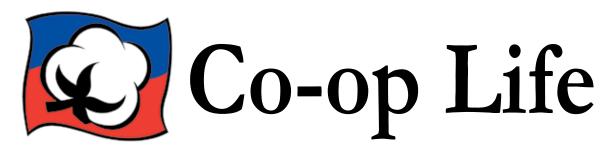






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If you would like your community event listed in the October issue, please submit information by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com by Sept. 29. Only events occuring after Oct. 16 will be published in the next issue.

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

2023 International Festival

Lawton's annual International Festival is a free event to promote greater awareness and appreciation of Lawton's diverse heritage. This family-oriented extravaganza is full of fun, food, children's games and activities, demonstration artists, retailers, concerts and multicultural experiences that make the Lawton Fort Sill Community so unique. This three-day event is from Sept. 23-25 at Elmer Thomas Park, 3rd and NW Ferris Ave., Lawton. For questions or more information, call 580-581-3470.

Bark in the Park

The Stephens County Humane Society is pleased to announce the return of Bark in the Park. Festivities will be pet and family friendly, featuring a number of pet-related contests, including Best Costume, Best Bark, Owner-Look-A-Like, Best Trick and more. The entry fee per contest is \$5. Additional highlights will include pet photos, concessions, demonstrations, pet-related vendors, and a Wag Walk pledge drive. The first 100 people to stroll through craft fair grab treats from food true. Vendors will be selling has re-purposed furniture, I barbecue sauce and much work show and make for memories with the entire event is set to begin at no 14 on the Sonrise Camput 19792 NW Cache Road.

register will receive a Bark in the Park goodie bag. Pre-registration is \$20 and day-of registration is \$25. This event is aimed at raising public awareness and generating funds for the Stephens County Humane Society, a non-profit organization. The event is from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sept. 23 at Fuqua Park in Duncan. For more information, call Patti Whitaker at 580 641-0667 or visit www.stephenscounty-shelter.com.

Kicking off the fall season

Enjoy the crisp fall air with your family at the Festival of the Wichitas while enjoying one-of-a-kind artwork, games on the lawn, vendors from across the state, Indian tacos, fair eats and live music. Throughout the day guests will enjoy free hayrides, a petting zoo, a pumpkin patch, face painting, a hay bale decorating contest and more. Watch as the little ones play in the corn pit and bounce houses, then stroll through craft fair booths and grab treats from food trucks on-site. Vendors will be selling handmade art, re-purposed furniture, local honey, barbecue sauce and much more. Be sure to stay for the grand finale firework show and make fabulous fall memories with the entire family. The event is set to begin at noon on Oct. 14 on the Sonrise Campus in Cache,

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Cotton Electric member Greg Brown snaps a photo of his grand-kids before they head to school. Drake Brown is a Marlow Outlaw and Brynlee Brown is a Bray-Doyle Donkey.

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





Painting the heart of the town

By Carli Eubank

An unwavering sense of pride runs through the streets of small towns across Oklahoma. Hidden within these towns are deep roots that paved the way to what we see in communities today: Historical events, school championships, important figures, new innovations, and local talent, just to name a few. It may be challenging to fully preserve the history and evolution of towns, but several artists work to create eye-catching murals that can help capture the spirit of rural communities across Cotton Electric's service territory in southwest Oklahoma.

Raised in Walters, Dr. Bob Palmer has painted murals that can be spotted across southwest Oklahoma, includ-

ing the more than 4,000 murals he's painted throughout the United States and overseas.

Growing up, Palmer always had an interest in art and creativity that led him to graduating with an Art degree from the University of Oklahoma. In the early 70s, Palmer returned to his hometown to start an art program at Walters Public School that he taught for two years.

Over the next decade, Palmer would be introduced to new opportunities for his career as an artist: He and his wife moved to Johnson City, TN, while he pursued a master's degree in Photography and Painting, he created Palmer Studios, and began the journey of painting across the world.

The mural at Walters High School gym was a collaboration between Dr. Bob Palmer and the school's art students. Photo courtesy of Murals by Palmer.



Palmer's mural in Waurika is a depiction of the Chisholm Trail that runs through the area. Photo by Carli Eubank.

While working towards his master's degree, Palmer and his wife lived in the campus dorms. One day they saw the four blank walls in the building's lobby that they saw almost every day, but this time, with a new perspective. With the help of others in the building, they began to transform that room into a seascape. Palmer would go on to paint murals at the Gaylord Opryland in Tennessee and downtown Johnson City.

In the early 80s, Palmer and his wife decided to settle back in Oklahoma to be closer to family, and he began teaching at the University of Central Oklahoma. During his almost 30-year teaching career, Palmer created and taught a hands-on mural program, providing students opportunities to paint murals in downtown Edmond.

"That's where painting murals really took off," Palmer said. "When I started teaching at the college level, I wanted to give students a first-hand experience on how to make a living as an artist because that's been my experience."

Palmer jokingly added how his students are now his competitors.

For a period of time, Palmer often drove through Waurika and always noticed the blank, chipped wall of one of the downtown buildings. Years later, Palmer was able to brush the first stroke of paint across the brick. The Chisholm Trail that runs through Waurika, as well as Oklahoma's rich history of oil, farming and ranching were Palmer's inspiration for his design, all captured in front of a mixed sunset sky of red, blues and oranges.

"I usually paint the town's history because it helps people who are just passing through to know a little bit about the town," Palmer said. "With murals, you don't have to have a billboard or a lot of words; just at a first glance, murals can tell you a lot about the town."

Palmer's artwork can also be seen around Walters. One of his former students, Beca Potter, who was teachtime, reached out to him asking if he would return to Walters to collaborate with her students on a mural. Over the next few days the painting crew met at the Walters High School gymnasium and created a monochromatic display of blues and whites that captures the school's history and spirit.

"Murals are a way to bring a come-together spirit for a town and give the people a sense of pride," Palmer said.

Another mural Palmer worked on with local Walters students was a memorial painting at the intersection of Broadway St. and Colorado Ave. More of Palmer's murals can be seen across the co-op's service territory, including Temple and several in Duncan.

"Everything I do is really a gift to me from God, and I like being able to share that gift with others," Palmer said. "I've always thought small towns need good art because a lot of times they get overlooked, but I think they have a story to tell and that's what I am trying to do with each mural."

When you drive east on Main Street in Comanche, a familiar logo of a beverage enjoyed by many will grab your attention. The Dr. Pepper mural was originally painted in the mid-to-late 1950s, and also the mural stood as an advertisement for locals to come into the grocery store and buy themselves a bottle of the well-known soda.

"There is a strong historic significance with Dr. Pepper in this town because the very first Dr. Pepper bottling plant in Oklahoma was here in Comanche," said Chuck Ralls, the city manager of Comanche. "We have 'Dr. Pepper Road' because that's where the old bottling plant was before moving downtown, and if you're lucky, there are still Dr. Pepper bottles to be found throughout the community."

Over the years, the mural began to deteriorate and fade into the red and brown brick building that was built pre-statehood. One of the recent owners of the building wanted to protect the history of the building and what it meant to the community. So around ing the high school's art program at the 2018, she coordinated with Dr. Pep-



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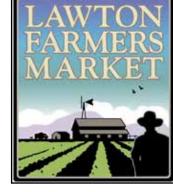
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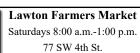
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per and arranged for one of their artists to restore the mural. Now, people travel from all over to snap a picture in front of the bold maroon painting.

"It's not just a mural to us," Ralls said, "it's a significant part of our culture."

To see a glimpse of the history of Comanche, Ralls encourages downloading the TimeFrame app to experience an augmented reality tour of the town.

Kayla Kohout's artwork can be seen across many towns in southwest Oklahoma, including Geronimo, Temple, Waurika and more. One of her most recent projects was a mural that has added a pop of color at the swimming pool at Youth Park in Walters. As the supervisor for the Walters Cotton County Enhanced 911 Center and a mom of four, Kohout views painting as a therapeutic release.

"For as long as I can remember, I have always enjoyed creating," Kohout said. "There is this uncertain excitement I seek every time my brush meets the paint."

When presented the opportunity to paint the town's municipal pool, the only guidance Kohout was given was to create a design with lots of color and tropical elements that both adults and children could enjoy. When she got off work, Kohout would head to the pool and work on the mural, little-by-little. Three nights later, she reflected on the project, happy with the end result.

The mixture of bright pink flamingos and other hidden birds with vibrant orange and purple flora pop against the aqua background, creating a fun, tropical atmosphere at the swimming pool.

"As someone who grew up in Walters and swam in that pool many times, it was bitter sweet to now be part of such a fun project," Kohout said. "I love to see growth and change in the community and what better way than with some color."

In the west side of Cotton Electric's service territory, members can find



Kayla Kohout's mural is a burst of vibrant tropical birds and flowers at the Youth Park swimming pool in Walters. Photo by Carli Eubank.

two murals in Chattanooga that document significant events and individuals of the town's history.

Located at the Chattanooga Elementary Annex is a portrait of Jack Abernathy and President Teddy Roosevelt. According to www.chattyok.com., this mural is to remember when Roosevelt visited Chattanooga in the early 1900s to meet Jack "Catch-em-Alive" Abernathy, who Roosevelt later appointed as U.S. Marshal.

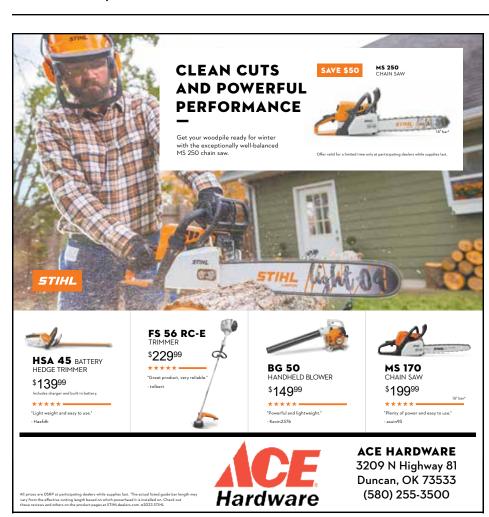
Goodknight Park in downtown Chattanooga is the location of the town's second mural that preserves the memory of the park's founder, George W. Goodknight. The mural of Goodknight shows the cattle trail that was made by an ancestor of his, Charles Goodknight. According to www. chattyok.gov, Goodknight was born and raised in Chattanooga, where he worked cattle his entire life and owned and operated Goodknight Feed Lot.

For more information about the artists, members can view all of Palmer's artwork at www.muralsbypalmer.com and see Kohout's artwork by following her on Facebook at Boho Art.





(above) The original Dr. Pepper mural before it was repainted. Photo courtesy of Chuck Ralls. (below) The mural after restoration. Photo by Carli Eubank.









Increase in protein decreases fall risk



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD



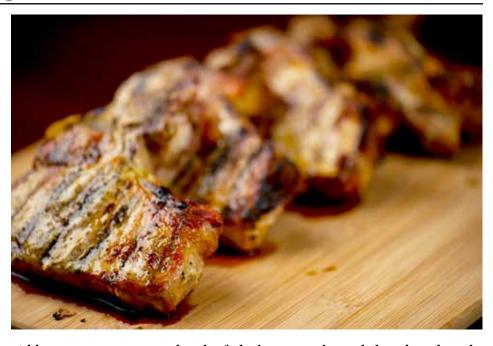
Hip fractures in older adults are costly - financially and physically. Experts estimate hip fracture patients spend \$40,000 on recovery in the first year after a hip fracture. Physically, hip fractures increase risk of dying prematurely and decrease in quality of life. Full recovery can take 6 to 9 months and often requires surgery and extensive rehabilitation. Given these consequences of hip fracture, researchers continue increased risk for hip fracture. One po-fiable. tential variable is nutrient intake.

Bone health and fall risk are impacted by the intake of protein, calcium,

proteins are excellent sources of these nutrients. Dietary changes to manage other chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes can result in decreased intake of these important nutrients and can potentially increase fall and fracture risk. It is important to understand how dietary changes, including intake restrictions to lose weight, impact nutrients of concern as we age.

Webster and colleagues published their findings on risk of hip fracture in meat-eaters versus pescatarians (eat fish but no other meat) and vegetarians/vegans in the journal BMC Medicine in July of 2023. They examined dietary intake and hip fractures in men and women from England, Scotland, and Wales who participated in the UK Biobank study from 2006-2010. Their findings revealed that Vegetarians/ Vegans had a higher risk of hip fracture than participants who ate meat (beef, chicken, pork, lamb, game) and participants who ate fish but no other meat (pescatarians). While their study to the body of literature that identifies to explore what places an individual at hip fracture risk factors that are modi-

hip fracture and diet, it is important



Adding protein sources, such as beef, chicken, or pork, can help reduce the risk of injury from a fall. Photo courtesy of Metro Creative.

If that is not possible, it is important weight-bearing activities as they have to find ways to consume adequate protein, calcium, Vitamin D, and Vital B12 through fortified foods or supplements. If you are choosing a vegetarian/vegan lifestyle to help manage or reduce the risk of chronic diseases like heart disease or diabetes, I encourage you to consider incorporating fish into cannot prove causality, it lends weight your diet. You should also check in with a Registered Dietitian to establish necessary intake levels of these nutrients and creative ways to achieve intake your primary care physician, ask about Based on this study and others on if you have any dietary restrictions.

In addition to diet, it is important that older adults consider including to remain as physically active as possivitamin D, and vitamin B12. Animal animal sources of protein in their diet. ble as you age, focusing specifically on can combat bone loss.

been shown to improve bone health. Pay attention to your medications as some can increase your risk of falling either independently or in combination with other medications. Avoid excessive alcohol intake, stop smoking, and eliminate things in your environment that could cause a fall. Keep up with your annual check ups for vision and general health. At every visit with tests to measure bone density and if osteoporosis is a concern, comply with medication and lifestyle changes that











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A heart-healthy, whole-grain breakfast

(Family Features) A balanced breakfast can go a long way toward setting you up for success each day and on a path to healthier eating overall. In fact, you can level up the nutritional value of "the most important meal of the day" by gaining a better understanding of whole grains and their importance as part of heart-healthy diets.

Whole grains – like the sorghum flour used to provide the mild, nutty flavor in these Raspberry Streusel Muffins – are rich sources of dietary fiber, may improve blood cholesterol levels and provide nutrients that help the body form new cells, regulate the thyroid and maintain a healthy immune system. These flavorful muffins and other heart-healthy recipes that use whole grain sorghum as a key ingredient can be part of an overall healthy diet as recommended by the American Heart Association's Healthy for Good initiative, supported by the Sorghum Checkoff.

To find more heart-healthy recipe inspiration, visit Heart.org/healthyforgood.

Raspberry streusel muffins

Muffins:

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 1/2 cups whole grain sorghum flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 cup low-fat buttermilk
- 1/3 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 3 large egg whites
- 1/4 cup canola or corn oil
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup fresh or frozen unsweetened raspberries, thawed

Streusel:

- 2 tablespoons whole grain sorghum flour
- 2 tablespoons light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons uncooked quick-cooking rolled oats
- 2 tablespoons chopped pecans
- 2 tablespoons light tub margarine
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon



To make muffins: Preheat oven to 400 F. Lightly spray 12-cup muffin pan with nonstick cooking spray. In large bowl, stir sorghum flour, cinnamon and baking soda.

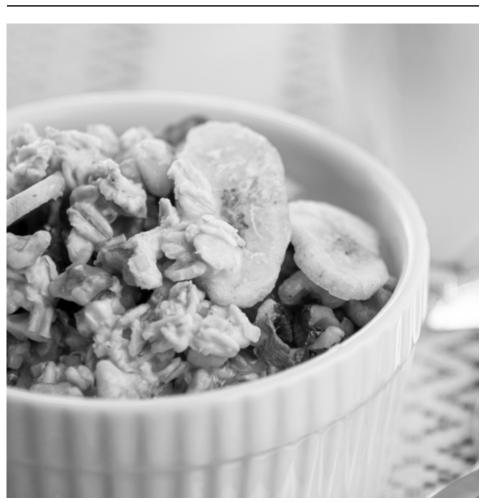
In medium bowl, whisk buttermilk, brown sugar, egg whites, oil, lemon zest and vanilla. Stir into flour mixture until batter is just moistened and no flour is visible without overmixing. Spoon batter into muffin cups. Top each muffin with raspberries.

To make streusel: In small bowl, stir sorghum flour, brown sugar, oats, pecans, margarine and cinnamon to reach texture of coarse crumbs. Sprinkle over muffins, gently pushing into batter. Bake 16 minutes, or until wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. The USDA recommends cooking egg dishes to 160 F.

Transfer pan to cooling rack. Let stand 5 minutes. Carefully transfer muffins to rack. Let cool completely, about 20 minutes.

On-the-go breakfast options

(Family Features) If you're in need of a quick breakfast, consider starting your day with one of these tasty breakfast ideas. This ontrend Acai Bowl with Whole-Wheat Toast provides a flavorful serving of fresh fruits while Overnight Oats can be made the night before for a grab-and-go solution as you head out the door in the morning. Find more breakfast recipes at Culinary.net.





Acai bowl with whole-wheat toast

- 1 frozen acai smoothie pack (100 milligrams)
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 1 medium frozen banana, sliced1 cup fresh or frozen mixed berries
- 2 slices whole-wheat bread
- fresh blueberries
- granola coconut flakes
- Under warm water, thaw frozen acai smoothie pack about 5 seconds.
- In blender, combine acai, milk, banana and mixed berries. Blend until smooth.
- Toast bread slices to desired doneness.

Pour acai mixture into bowl and garnish with blueberries, granola and coconut flakes before serving. Serve with toast.

Overnight oats

- 1/3 cup old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1/2 cup low-fat milk
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons mixed dried fruit
- 1 tablespoon walnuts, chopped 1 tablespoon honey

In bowl or jar, combine oats, milk and vanilla extract. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Before serving, stir in dried fruit, walnuts and honey.

A mission for nutrition

(Family Features) Setting out on a mission to eat healthier starts with creating goals and working to achieve them with those you love. To help make nutritious eating more manageable, call together your family and work with one another to create a menu everyone can enjoy while staying on track.

Connecting an array of recipes that all can agree on starts with versatile ingredients like dairy. Gathering at the table with your loved ones while enjoying delicious, nutritious recipes featuring yogurt, cheese and milk can nourish both body and soul.

For example, the key dairy ingredients in these recipes from Milk Means More provide essential nutrients for a healthy diet. The cheese varieties in Feta Roasted Salmon and Tomatoes and 15-Minute Weeknight Pasta provide vitamin B12 for healthy brain and nerve cell development and are a good source of calcium and protein, which are important for building and maintaining healthy bones. Meanwhile, the homemade yogurt sauce served alongside these Grilled Chicken Gyros provides protein and zinc.

To find more nutritious meal ideas to fuel your family's health goals, visit MilkMeans-More.org.



Feta roasted salmon and tomatoes

Nonstick cooking spray

- 3 cups halved cherry tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano or dried dill weed
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper, divided
- 1 1/2 pounds salmon or halibut fillets, cut into four serving-size pieces
 - 1 cup (4 ounces) crumbled feta cheese

Preheat oven to 425 F. Line 18-by-13-by-1-inch baking pan with foil. Lightly spray foil with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside.

In medium bowl, toss tomatoes, olive oil, garlic, oregano or dill weed, salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper.

Place fish pieces, skin side down, on one side of prepared pan. Sprinkle with remaining pepper. Lightly press feta cheese on top of fish. Pour tomato mixture on other side of prepared pan. Bake, uncovered, 12-15 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with fork.

Place salmon on serving plates. Spoon tomato mixture over top.



Grilled chicken gyros

Chicken:

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
 - 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lem-
- on juice 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts

Yogurt Sauce:

- 1 1/2 cups plain, whole-milk yogurt 1 1/2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1/2 cup diced cucumber
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper
- 3-4 small loaves whole-wheat pita bread, halved lengthwise
- 1 cup thinly sliced tomatoes
- 1/2 cup thinly sliced red onion

To make chicken: Place melted butter, dill, oregano, garlic, lemon juice, salt and pepper in gallon-size zip-top freezer bag. Seal bag and shake con-

tents to combine. Add chicken. Seal bag, pressing air out of bag. Shake chicken to coat with marinade. Refrigerate chicken in marinade 30 minutes. To make yogurt sauce: Stir yogurt,

lemon juice, diced cucumber, dill, garlic, salt and pepper. Cover sauce and refrigerate.

Heat grill to medium heat.

Grill chicken over direct heat, about 10 minutes per side, until cooked through. Transfer chicken to cutting board and rest 10 minutes. Thinly slice chicken across grain.

Serve chicken on pita bread with tomatoes, red onion and yogurt sauce.

15-minute weeknight pasta

6 quarts water

- 16 ounces linguine or penne pasta
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter 1/2 cup thinly sliced onion
- 1 cup thinly sliced carrots
- 1 cup thinly sliced sweet bell pepper 1/2 cup grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper 2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced
- 1 cup reserved pasta water
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- 1/2 cup smoked provolone cheese, shredded

1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley (optional)

Parmesan cheese (optional)

Bring water to rolling boil and prepare pasta according to package directions for al dente texture, reserving 1 cup pasta water.

In large skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Stir in onions, carrots and sweet bell peppers. Saute vegetables about 5 minutes, or until they brighten in color and begin to soften. Add tomatoes, salt, pepper and garlic. Cook and stir 1 minute to allow tomatoes to release juices.

Pour reserved pasta water into skillet, stirring well. Bring sauce to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 3 minutes. Taste sauce and adjust seasonings, as desired.

Transfer drained pasta to skillet along with lemon zest and smoked provolone cheese, tossing well to coat. Serve immediately with fresh parsley and Parmesan cheese, if desired.



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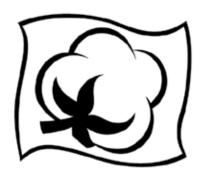
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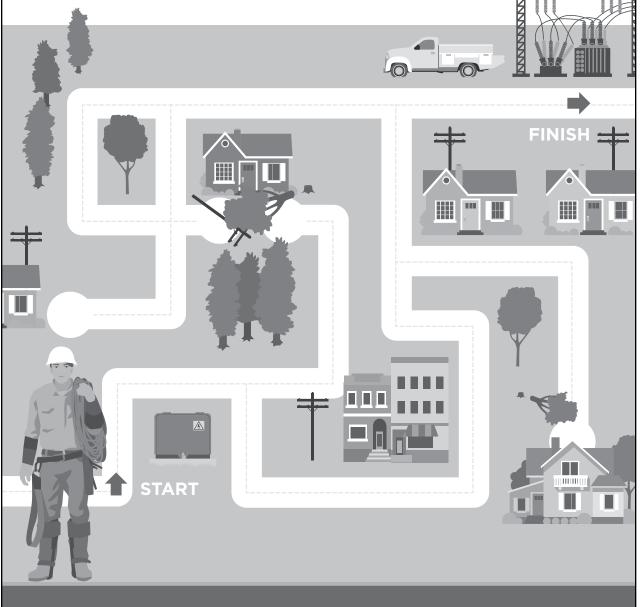
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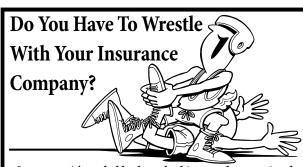
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ACROSS

- Outsourcing (abbr.)
- 4. Post
- 8. German city on edge of Black Forest
- 10. "___, but goodie"
- 11. Spiced stew
- 12. Passionately
- 13. Monetary units
- 15. Group of living organisms
- 16. Organic compound derived from ammonia
- 17. High honors
- 5-year-olds' 18. classes
- 21. Swiss river
- 22. Old woman
- 23. Cash machine
- 24. A way to soak 25. Hair product
- 26. Deride
- 27. "The Blonde Bombshell"
- 34. Cause to become insane
- 35. Bluish greens
- 36. Supported with money
- 37. Type of equa-
- 38. Court officials
- 39. Indian god
- 40. Rids
- 41. Leak slowly 6. Horror comic on foot

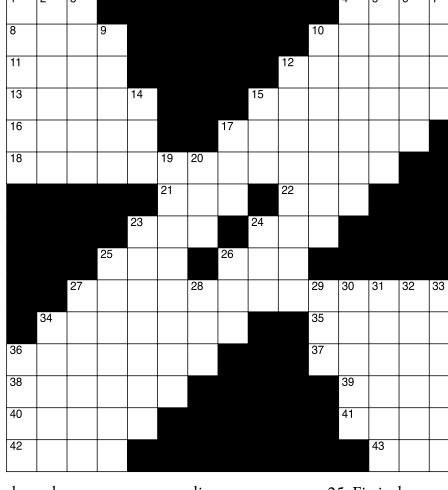
- 13 16 18 27 38
 - through
 - 42. Units of ionizing radiation
 - 43. Midway be- cle tween south and southeast

DOWN

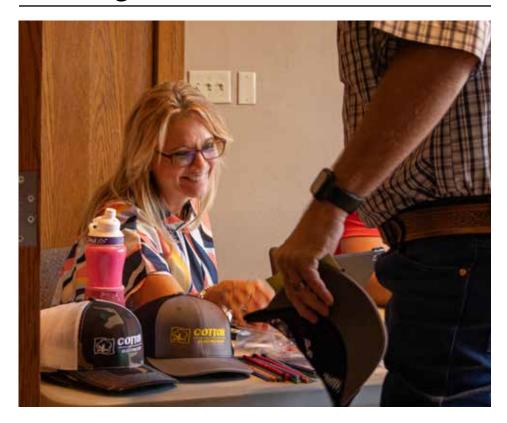
- 1. Native of Slova-
- 2. Deli meat
- 3. Fibrous sub- North American fish stance in fungi
- 4. Cutting
- 5. Vedder and Van Halen

- novelist
- 7. Rulers of Tunis
- 9. Shaped like a cir-
- 10. Make a pig of oneself
- 12. Aphorism 14. Witness
- 15. Single Lens Re-
- flex
- 17. Freshwater
- 19. Nautical ropes
- 20. Leg (slang) 23. Pokes holes in
- 24. Moved quickly

- 25. Fix-it shops
- 26. Type of bread
- 27. Repaired
- 28. Synthetic diamond (abbr.)
- 29. Type of drug (abbr.)
- 30. German city along the Rhine
- 31. Animal disease
- 32. Martini necessities
- 33. Get away from
- 34. Village in Mali
- 36. Djibouti franc



Parting Shot



Cotton Electric Director of Member Services Tonya Daniel welcomes members at the District 2 Meeting. Photo by Carli Eubank.



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