

# The Current

A Publication of Cotton Electric Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

*“The Current - Informing Our Members Since 1957”*

VOLUME 65

February 14, 2022

NUMBER 6

## Co-op feels the love from member ratings

By Paula Huckabaa

We are the stewards of your cooperative, a responsibility we carry out with you in mind. Our goal is to improve your quality of life. We do that by delivering electricity to homes and businesses, by working to provide electricity at the most affordable rates, and by working with members to help them use less electricity as a way to manage their bills.

Members offer guidance through volunteer feedback when an interaction with the co-op goes well or not so well. From time to time, we check in with the membership more formally, conducting a random survey to see if we are meeting our goal and if we need to make any adjustments.

Results from our most recent survey indicate our efforts have not gone unnoticed. You responded quite positively to questions measuring your satisfaction with our service and other questions about our attitude and performance.

Cotton Electric members rated us with an ACSI (American Customer Satisfaction Index) score of 90. Our CAPS (Cooperative Attitude and Performance Score) rating is 93. Both numbers repeat last year's scores, and are considerably higher than ratings of others in the energy utility industry.

Cotton Electric has a history of scoring improvement on the ACSI. Ratings of 84 and 86 came back in surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019, respectively. Nationally, ACSI scores for cooperative energy utilities remained steady from 2020 to 2021 at 73.

Cotton Electric's ACSI score of 90 is also much higher than those of municipal energy utilities and investor-owned energy utilities. Both scored a 72 in 2020. However, in 2021 investor-owned energy utilities held steady at 72, but municipal energy utilities fell one point to 71.

Every department here at Cotton Electric strives to



serve our members with quality and competence. Your survey responses tell us we're doing a good job with those efforts. Ninety-three percent of those surveyed say Cotton Electric provides reliable electric service, and 92% think Cotton Electric restores power quickly after an outage. Ninety-five percent say our employees are friendly and courteous, and 94% say we have knowledgeable staff who communicate effectively.

Many of the survey respondents would like more information about programs to control bills. We encourage you to visit our Energy Efficiency page at [www.cottonelectric.com/energy-efficiency](http://www.cottonelectric.com/energy-efficiency) to learn ways to save. You can also call our Energy Efficiency Coordinator Heath Morgan at 580-875-3351 to review your bills or schedule a free home energy evaluation.

### — About the survey —

The 2021 survey took place in December. Postcards and emails were sent to randomly selected members, inviting them to participate in the survey online or by telephone, a new option this year.

Conducted by Inside Information of Smithville, Missouri, Cotton Electric has relied on their member research expertise to help with surveys since 2018.

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) is the only national

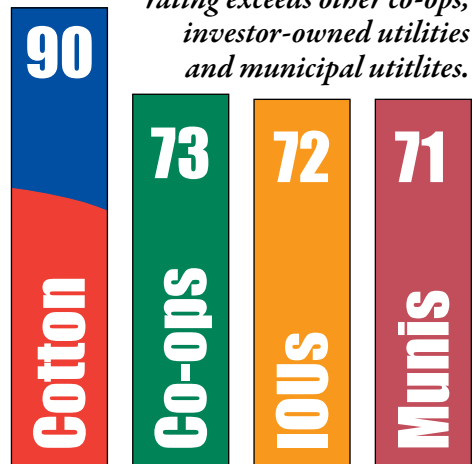
cross-industry measure of customer satisfaction in the United States. Each year, the ACSI uses data from interviews with roughly 300,000 customers as inputs to an econometric model for analyzing customer satisfaction with more than 400 companies in 46 industries and 10 economic sectors. ACSI data have proven to be strongly related to several essential indicators of micro and macroeconomic performance.

The ACSI publishes an annual Energy Utilities Index, which is an independent

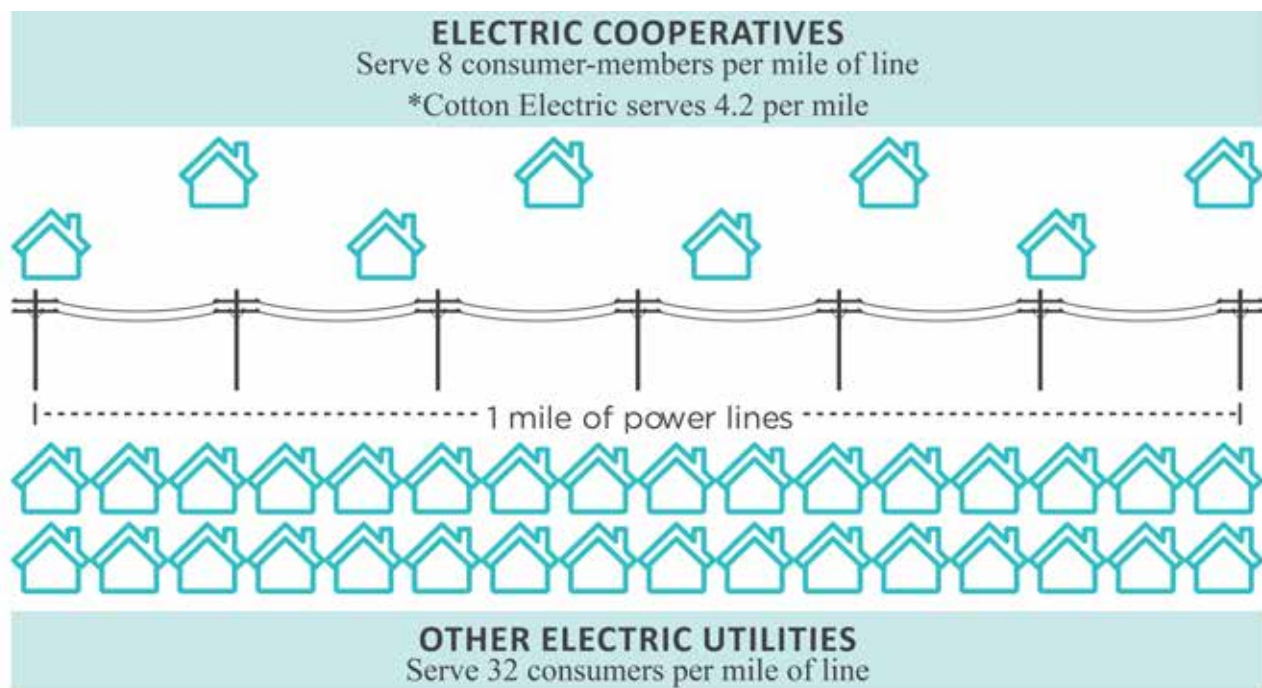
customer satisfaction measure of the U.S. top 30 investor-owned, municipal, and cooperative utilities.

The Cooperative Attitude and Performance Score or CAPStone, is a cooperative performance model developed by Inside Information. It is an industry specific benchmarking tool used to gauge performance in service areas deemed most important by cooperative members: Trustworthiness, well-managed, care about members.

*Cotton Electric's favorable 2021 rating exceeds other co-ops, investor-owned utilities and municipal utilities.*



## GOING THE EXTRA MILE



### Power Cost Adjustment Calculated

The power cost adjustment now being applied to bills mailed after February 1, 2022, is \$0.01406 per kWh.

On a member's average bill of 1,300 kilowatt hours (kWh), this will amount to a charge of \$18.28 on the February bill.

### January 2022 Temperature Extremes

| Day | High | Low | Avg. | Day | High | Low | Avg. |
|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|
| 1   | 55   | 15  | 36   | 16  | 53   | 16  | 35   |
| 2   | 38   | 15  | 27   | 17  | 63   | 20  | 42   |
| 3   | 54   | 17  | 36   | 18  | 74   | 25  | 50   |
| 4   | 65   | 30  | 48   | 19  | 45   | 23  | 34   |
| 5   | 51   | 30  | 41   | 20  | 29   | 14  | 22   |
| 6   | 31   | 17  | 24   | 21  | 40   | 7   | 24   |
| 7   | 42   | 14  | 28   | 22  | 51   | 12  | 32   |
| 8   | 74   | 40  | 57   | 23  | 63   | 20  | 42   |
| 9   | 51   | 32  | 42   | 24  | 67   | 20  | 44   |
| 10  | 55   | 19  | 37   | 25  | 51   | 28  | 40   |
| 11  | 61   | 18  | 40   | 26  | 37   | 25  | 31   |
| 12  | 64   | 25  | 45   | 27  | 41   | 17  | 29   |
| 13  | 76   | 27  | 52   | 28  | 54   | 22  | 38   |
| 14  | 72   | 32  | 52   | 29  | 68   | 18  | 43   |
| 15  | 42   | 29  | 36   | 30  | 68   | 19  | 44   |
|     |      |     |      | 31  | 73   | 29  | 51   |

Source: [srh.noaa.gov/oum/](http://srh.noaa.gov/oum/)  
Average Daily High: 55 Average Daily Low: 22

### Did You Know?

Cotton Electric offices will be closed Monday, Feb. 21 for Presidents' Day. Emergency calls will be answered at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520.

The next issue of The Current should arrive in mailboxes on Mar. 14, 2022.

### 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](mailto:TheCurrent@cottonelectric.com). You can also drop us a line at Cotton Electric Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572.

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More news at [cottonelectric.com](http://cottonelectric.com)

*From the CEO*

# Five reasons we love serving our members

February may be the shortest month, but it's packed with special observances like Presidents' Day and Valentine's Day, in addition to a host of unofficial "national" days you've probably never heard of like "National Banana Bread Day." But they all have something in common. They were created to draw attention to a particular issue or theme.

Valentine's Day may seem like an observance originally created by a greeting card company, but over time, it's become a widely celebrated day generating millions of dollars spent on flowers, candy and, of course, greeting cards professing our love.

But Valentine's Day isn't just for the lovebirds. It's also the perfect time to let our friends, family, co-workers and other special people in our lives know we care about them - with or without a store-bought greeting card.

So, in that vein, we've created our list of top five reasons why we love serving you, the members of Cotton Electric:



**Jennifer Meason, CEO**

**1. We love serving our members because without you, the co-op wouldn't exist.**

Our purpose is to provide you with reliable, responsible and safe electricity. Simply put, Cotton Electric exists to serve you. That's why we were formed in 1938—to bring power to our local area when for-profit utilities would not.

**2. You enable us to complete our mission by supporting our efforts to give back.**

A major part of our mission is to serve our community and look after the greater good. With your assistance, we're able to help the most vulnerable members of our community through programs like Oper-

ation Round Up, which helps support Senior Citizens Centers and local food pantries.

**3. Members of our co-op also serve on the board of directors.**

They provide guidance for setting co-op priorities and helping make big decisions. Because our board members live in the area, they're able to serve as the pulse of the larger community and identify immediate and long-term needs. The broader co-op membership provides helpful input through their vote on director elections and by weighing in on co-op and community issues.

**4. You help us get it right. Cotton Electric members are great about keeping us in the know.**

We do our best to avoid power outages, but Mother Nature can occasionally throw us a curveball; our members are quick to report any power disruptions and are patient as our crews work to safely restore power. We know outages are frustrating, and your support as we work through storms means so much to our employees. We also

appreciate your feedback on co-op programs and services and appreciate your participation in our annual Member Survey. Your opinions are critical for the co-op's success, and we thank you for that.

**5. You and other Cotton Electric members make up the community we serve - and for us, it's all about community.**

Our employees live and work here too, and care about our community the same way you do. We're invested and work to help it thrive. That's why Cotton Electric donates to local schools, organizations and charities. It's also why we invest in economic development, and why you'll see our employees volunteering at local schools and other charitable and community endeavors.

As a co-op, our mission is to enhance the quality of life in our community and look after its long-term interests. We love serving our members and our local community, and just like you, want to see it continue to thrive.

## CECF receives boost from online shoppers

**You shop, Amazon gives**

The Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation (CECF) is funded through members who opt to participate in Operation Round Up. Now everyone, including those who are not members of Cotton Electric, can help contribute to CECF through the AmazonSmile program.

When shopping on the Amazon, go to [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com). You'll be prompted to select a charitable organization. In the search box, type Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation as the charity of choice. Then, every time you shop Amazon from their [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com) page, .5% of eligible purchases will go to CECF.

The money donated comes from the AmazonSmile Foundation, a 501c3 private foundation. The AmazonSmile Foundation will distribute donations to CECF on a quarterly basis.

**Like CECF on Facebook**

Did you know Cotton Electric Charitable Foundation has a Facebook page? We do, and you can

find it at [www.facebook.com/CottonElectricCharitableFoundation](http://www.facebook.com/CottonElectricCharitableFoundation). Give us a like to stay up-to-date on grant application deadlines, the latest grant recipients and other details.

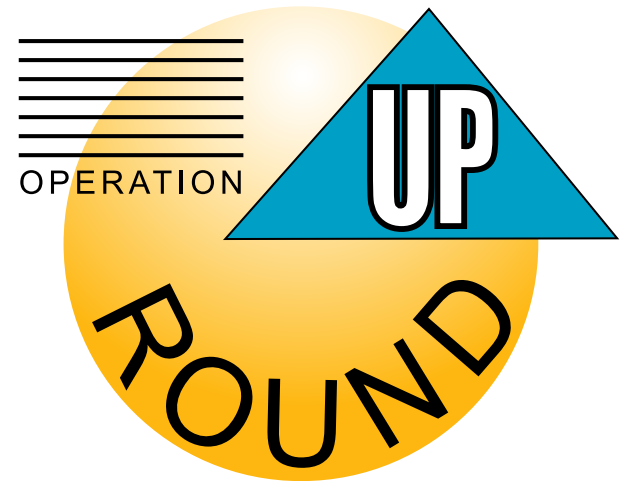
**CECF grant recipient photos wanted**

We enjoy our photos at The Current, and would like to share with our members how their contributions to Operation Round Up have made a difference in the community.

If your organization or school received a grant in 2021, snap a high-resolution picture showing how the grant dollars have been used. We will showcase your photos on the CECF Facebook page or in The Current. Email [TheCurrent@cottonelectric.com](mailto:TheCurrent@cottonelectric.com).

"Big check" photo opportunities for past grant recipients can be arranged by calling Shane Bowers at 580-875-3351.

Since its beginning in 2004, CECF has distributed \$1,369,071.33 to assist the needs of more than 200 organizations and individuals in our community.



Select CECF as charity of choice when shopping at [www.smile.amazon.com](http://www.smile.amazon.com)



### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through inefficient windows. Caulk and weatherstrip windows to seal air leaks. When running your home heating system, lock all operable windows to ensure the tightest seal possible.

Source: [Energy.gov](http://Energy.gov)

## The Current

Published Monthly at Walters, Oklahoma  
By Cotton Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Jennifer Meason .....CEO  
Bryce Hooper..... Vice President  
Paula Huckabaa.....Marketing & Communications

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**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.

|   | 2021        | 2020        |
|---|-------------|-------------|
| Total Amount Billed/Accrued             | \$6,476,612 | \$6,050,972 |
| Cost of Purchased Power                 | \$4,516,015 | \$3,929,949 |
| Taxes                                   | \$118,300   | \$98,512    |
| Total Operating Expense Per Mile        | \$1,215     | \$1,076     |
| Average Farm and Residential Bill       | \$165       | \$174       |
| Average Farm and Residential kWh        | 1,257       | 1,561       |
| Total Meters Billed (farm, residential) | 19,101      | 18,836      |
| Miles Energized                         | 5,221       | 5,209       |
| Density Per Mile                        | 3.66        | 3.62        |
| New Service Connects YTD                | 478         | 418         |
| Services Retired                        | 149         | 162         |

# Community Spotlight

If you would like your community event listed in the March issue, please submit information by March 2 by calling 580-875-3351 or send an email to [TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com](mailto:TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com). Events that occur before March 14 will not be published in the next issue.

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

## Quilt show comes to Lawton

The Wichita Mountains Quilt Guild is holding "Color Explosion" 10 a.m.-7 p.m., Feb. 18 and 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Feb. 19 at the Great Plains Coliseum Annex, 920 S. Sheridan Rd., Lawton. This promises to be the largest quilt show the guild has sponsored, with over 100 quilts on display.

## Annual Easter pageant sign up

Volunteers needed for the Holy City of the Wichita's 97th annual Easter pageant.

The casting call is 1:30 p.m., Feb. 20. Sign-up begins in the chapel, followed by the first rehearsal. Subsequent rehearsals are Sunday afternoons from 2pm - 5pm.

All ages are welcome and no acting experience necessary to participate. Costumes are provided.

There is no cost to join. Good walking shoes and a jacket are suggested, as this is an outdoor event.

The Holy City Easter Pageant is the longest outdoor passion play in the United States. Visit Holy City of the Wichitas' Facebook page for more information.

## Students perform "Toy Camp"

Lawton Community Theatre students will perform "Toy Camp" Feb. 24 at McMahon Auditorium.

"Toy Camp" brings audiences into the world of make-believe, a place where toys learn to be good at Toy Camp. Ted E. Bear, Princess Ann, Glow Toy and others have come to Toy Camp in hopes of graduating and earning their price tags so that they can be sold in toy stores.

Not graduating from Toy Camp means certain doom at the Toy Dump. During their week at camp, the toys learn lessons in paying attention as well as practicing, and overcoming, their fears and weaknesses. Each toy learns that confidence in yourself is the key to being loved by others, and that everyone is good at something.

This production is approximately one-hour in length and is suitable for the entire family. Tickets are \$5. Performance times at 10 a.m., 12:15 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Call 580-581-3472 for ticket purchasing.

## DLT presents Dr. Seuss classics

See beloved children's book characters come to life as Duncan Little Theatre (DLT) performs "Seussical: The Musical" at the Simmons Center, 800 Chisholm Trail Pkwy., Duncan.

Performances at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 25, Feb. 26, Mar. 4 and Mar. 5 and a matinee at 2 p.m. Feb. 27. Ticket prices and more information at [www.duncanlittletheatre.com](http://www.duncanlittletheatre.com).

## Gaming group meets in Duncan

Learn how to create characters and build worlds from a local Dungeons and Dragons group. This will repeat every other Saturday for as long as people are interested, starting Saturday at 10 a.m., Feb. 26, at the Duncan Public Library.

Those who are under 18 will need parental permission to sign up.

## Foundation offers support

The Parkinson's Foundation of Oklahoma offers various opportunities for patients and caregivers in Southwest Oklahoma.

Two monthly support groups are offered in Lawton. The Lawton Support Group meets at 6 p.m. on first Tuesdays at The Christian Center, 2405 SW Lee Blvd. For information contact Teri Andrade at 580-280-0114. The Central Lawton Support Group meets at 2 p.m. on second Thursdays at the Western Hills Church of Christ, 1108 NW 53rd Street.

The support group in Duncan meets at 3 p.m. on first Thursdays at The Christian Center, 720 E. Plato Road. For more information call Rob Rooker at 580-699-2204.

A caregiver support group is offered at 4 p.m. on second Wednesdays at Southwestern Medical Center in Lawton.

For information about these programs or additional support, visit [www.parkinsonoklahoma.com](http://www.parkinsonoklahoma.com).

## Local high school artists featured

Chisholm Trail Heritage Center will host its annual Youth Art Month Mar. 1-31. The 2022 national theme is "Art Connects Us."

The exhibition recognizes the artistic accomplishments of area students. Students from Duncan High School, FAME, Marlow, Elgin, and Tomlinson Middle school, as well as homeschooled students will have art on exhibit.

Entry to the exhibit will also be free. Other museum amenities such as our theaters and interactive gallery will require an admission fee.

For more information about the Youth Art Month exhibit, call 580-252-6692 or email [leah@onthechisholmtrail.com](mailto:leah@onthechisholmtrail.com).

## Free diabetes program offered

Diabetes Undone, a free, eight-week Type 2 diabetes program, is scheduled at the Walters Senior Citizens Center Thursdays, 4-6 p.m., Mar. 3-Apr. 21.

Attendees will learn how to form new habits and make better life choices, optimize nutrition, exercise and other lifestyle strategies to enable them to reclaim their health.

These same strategies can also combat heart disease, obesity, cancer, auto-immune disease, and other lifestyle-related health conditions.

Pre-registration is encouraged. Call 580-342-5123 to enroll in this free program, or visit the Walters Senior Citizens Center at 111 E. Colorado Ave. at 4:30 p.m. on Thurs., Feb. 24.

Free blood pressure and blood sugar screenings will be offered, and healthy food options will be provided for sampling throughout the program. Diabetes Undone is designed for all age groups.

It is estimated 88 million Americans are pre-diabetic and 34 million have diabetes, including more than 350,000 Oklahomans.

## Auto swap meet in Duncan

Duncan's annual Automotive Swap Meet for muscle and antique car enthusiast will be Mar. 24-26 at the Stephens County Fairgrounds and Expo Center, 2002 S. 13th.

Vendor categories include auto, boat, motorcycle and tractors. Call the Fairgrounds for more information at 580-255-3231.

## More Community Spotlight on Page 4

# PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Cotton Electric members Kyle and Taren Cabelka, and their two daughters, Harper and Lily, enjoyed a nice December day in the Great Smokey Mountains National Park.

Enter your "best shot" in our Photo of the Month contest. Theme for March is SKIES ABOVE. Entries can be emailed to [TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com](mailto:TheCurrent@CottonElectric.com) or mailed to The Current, 226 N. Broadway, Walters, OK 73572. Winners will receive a Cotton Electric prize package of CEC goodies.

## Game night benefits cancer patients

The Love You Well Foundation is hosting a bingo game night, 6:30 p.m., Feb. 25 at the Duncan Golf and Tennis Club. \$25 admission includes a book of 20 bingo games and additional books may be purchased for \$20.

A fun night out to beat the winter blahs, attendees are encouraged to dress in their best bling for a chance to win the best-dressed prize award. Attendees can enjoy a cash bar and con-

cession foods while playing.

Proceeds from the event help support the Love You Well Foundation, a compassionate self-care program supporting women undergoing cancer treatment in Stephens County.

Sponsorships for reserved tables are available starting at \$400. For presale tickets and to inquire about sponsorships, contact Jan at 580-467-0593 or visit [www.loveyouwell.org](http://www.loveyouwell.org).

## THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

**COTTON**  
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A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

At Cotton Electric, we're proud to be a part of it, bringing people together by providing energy for all the things you love.

## Upcoming Deadlines for The Current

| March             | April              | May                |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Ad Sales Feb. 25  | Ad Sales Mar. 25   | Ad Sales Apr. 22   |
| Classified Mar. 2 | Classified Mar. 30 | Classified Apr. 27 |
| Publish Mar. 14   | Publish April 11   | Publish May 9      |

# Community Spotlight

### Music fest stomps into Medicine Park

Parkstomp is a free, all-ages, music festival featuring Bluegrass styles in historic Medicine Park Mar. 18-20. Bluegrass bands and performers will perform at various venues throughout town. Shops and restaurants will be open as well as vendors selling food, t-shirts and trinkets.

Check out Medicine Park Events for more info at [www.medicinpark.com/festivals](http://www.medicinpark.com/festivals).

### CTAC calling for youth art entries

The Chisholm Trail Arts Council's CTAC Art Gallery will be taking student art entries to be featured in the Annual Youth Art Month Show in March. Deadline to submit student artwork is Feb 18th.

Cash prizes will be offered to for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place ribbons in each of the three age groups. Art will be on display Mar. 1-31.

Call CTAC for more details about artwork submissions and requirements at 580-252-4160.

### Free tax preparation in Duncan

The AARP Foundation Tax Aid Program is again

offering free tax preparation. The program is a volunteer-run, free tax-preparation and assistance service offered to low- and middle-income taxpayers with special attention to those ages 60 and older.

Taxes are prepared and electronically filed starting Feb. 1 - Apr. 15, 2022, at the Red River Technology Center, 3300 W Bois D'Arc Ave. in Duncan. Hours are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 8:30 - 11:30 a.m. Drop off service is available. Call 580-255-2903 ext. 322 for more information.

### Blessings Boutique open monthly

Marlow First United Methodist Church opens its Blessings Boutique from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every first and third Tuesday of the month.

Clothing donation drop-off days are Tuesdays, or donors can call the church at 580-658-2765 to make other arrangements.

### Food pantry open once monthly

Walters Community Food Pantry is open from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month. The pantry is in the old City Hall, 131 1/2 W. California Street.

Pantry organizers try to provide a two-week supply of basic staples to anyone with identification and proof of Cotton County residency.

Monetary donations may be sent to Food Pantry, c/o Paul Metcalfe, 211 E. Colorado St., Walters, OK 73572.

For information, call Roger Noland at 580-591-6826.

### Free Sunday occurs each month

A HOUSE FULL Resale hosts Free Sunday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., the first Sunday of each month, at 1821 W. Gore Blvd. in Lawton.

A variety of items will be available outside on racks and tables for free. Items include recyclables, clothing, kitchenware, books that would be great for projects or reuse.

Visitors are encouraged to bring at least one item to add to the tables. Items can also be donated for Hungry Hearts and LoveSick Ministries between 12:30 - 2 p.m.

Information can be found on A HOUSE FULL Resale's Facebook page.

# Five ways to save energy when working from home

Today, more Americans are working from home than ever before. More time spent at home means more electric energy used throughout the day.



Abby Berry

since many of these draw energy even when they're not being used.

### 3. Choose ENERGY STAR®-certified office equipment.

If you're looking to purchase new equipment for your workspace, look for the ENERGY STAR® label to ensure you're getting the most energy efficient features. Computers, monitors, imaging equipment and other office electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating include power management features to make saving energy easy, and most are designed to run cooler and last longer.



Look for the ENERGY STAR® label to ensure you're getting the most energy efficient features.

If you're punching the clock from home, there are small steps you can take to reduce your energy use and save on electric bills. Here are five easy ways to save energy when working from home.

### 1. Use a smart power strip.

Plugging in your most-used devices, like computers, monitors and routers, to a smart power strip ensures these devices aren't drawing power when they're not in use. Smart power strips also give you the option to select which devices should stay in "always on" mode.

### 4. Flip the switch and use natural light instead.

It's still chilly out there, so take advantage of natural light and additional warmth from the sun. When you're working during the day, open blinds, curtains and other window coverings to let natural light in—and don't forget to turn off the lights to reduce energy use!

### 2. Unplug your least-used equipment.

If your home office includes equipment like printers and scanners, you're probably not using these electronics every day. In this case, go ahead and unplug your least-used electronics and devices,

### 5. Lower the thermostat.

Home heating makes up a significant portion of your energy bills. Turn the thermostat down a couple degrees during the day to reduce energy use and save money.

The Department of Energy recommends setting the thermostat to 68 degrees or cooler during winter months. You're more likely to stay focused and alert when it's cooler in your home, so all the more reason to mind the thermostat.

Working from home doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bills, and whether you're working remotely or not, these practical tips can help everyone reduce their energy use.

Contact Cotton Electric at 580-875-3351 or 800-522-3520 if you have questions about your bills or want additional information about saving energy at home.

*Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.*

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\*Rebates Available in many OMPA Member cities \*Restrictions apply

# SmartHub convenient tool for co-op members

Life can be fast and hectic, but it doesn't always have to be complicated. Keeping up with your Cotton Electric account shouldn't be a complex task, and with the SmartHub app, it won't be.

Some members may have heard of SmartHub but are unfamiliar with its benefits. SmartHub can help members take control of their account so they can spend less time worrying about their electric bill and more time focusing on other responsibilities.

SmartHub has several features, including being able to pay a bill, view energy consumption, and contact Member Services.

Upon login, members have access to their billing history. They can view their current bill or previous ones to compare payments throughout the years. Members are also able to view their energy consumption. SmartHub shows how member's energy use is trending over time, allowing members to take steps toward lowering their bill.

Making payments through SmartHub is fast and easy. The first time a member submits a payment, he



or she is able to securely store payment information for future transactions, allowing for easy payment on future bills.

SmartHub alerts account holders of important co-op notices. Members are able to select how they wish to be notified; options include emails and text messaging. Energy use thresholds can be set that notify members when they are using more energy than

they would like and help them keep bills as low as possible.

Reporting a service issue is quick and easy from SmartHub. Co-op phone lines can get busy during large outages. Using SmartHub to report an outage foregoes waiting on the line to talk to our dispatcher and immediately alerts the co-op that a member is without power. Contacting the co-op's Member Services department can also be done through SmartHub should members have any questions they need answered.

Haven't used SmartHub yet? Access it through CottonElectric.com or by downloading the SmartHub app on your mobile device through the App Store or Google Play.

Plenty of things in life are complicated; don't let managing your Cotton Electric account be one of them.

Source: NISC Community

# LIHEAP offers assistance with home energy costs

By Paula Huckabaa

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally-funded program that provides energy payment assistance to approximately 131,000 Oklahoma low-income households each year to help them meet the cost of home energy.

One program under the LIHEAP umbrella is the Energy Crisis Assistance Program (ECAP). ECAP is a crisis program that is available for a limited time, beginning in mid-March to assist Oklahomans with a one-time payment for the minimum amount required to resolve the crisis. Applications will not be available until online enrollment opens.

If one of your household members has a medical condition that requires either main heating or cooling energy sources for life dependency, you may be eligible for life-threatening crisis assistance under ECAP. Each life-threatening crisis is evaluated on an individual basis in accordance with LIHEAP regulations, including the requirement of a doctor's statement and available funding.

Eligibility requirements for LIHEAP are based on income, household size, available resources and responsibility for payment of home energy cost. Everyone who resides under the same utility service address must apply together. If you or anyone residing in your home belong to a federally-recognized American Indian tribe, you may apply for energy assistance through OKDHS or with your tribe, but you cannot receive assistance from both during the same Federal Fiscal Year.

Apply online beginning mid-March at [www.okdhslive.org](http://www.okdhslive.org)



## ECAP eligibility:

- Households which have received a 72-hour cut-off notice at the time of application or an active cut-off order from their utility provider.
- Written notice from their utility provider for new service establishment or service restoration with minimum requirement security deposit, carryover debt or other fees.
- Written notice from their utility provider for refusing to deliver additional fuel without a minimum requirement payment.
- Verification from the utility provider that the household entered into a payment plan to prevent service cut off.
- Apply online at [OKDHSLive.org](http://OKDHSLive.org)

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# Masonic grants available to area senior citizens

By Paula Huckabaa

Applications are now open for Masonic grants through the Association of South Central Oklahoma Governments (ASCOG).

ASCOG was awarded more than \$70,000 for 2022 by the Masonic Charity Foundation of Oklahoma. This funding is available for any Oklahoman residing in Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Grady, Jefferson, McClain, Stephens and Tillman Counties who are 55 years of age or older.

“ASCOG is thrilled to be of service for the needs of our older Oklahomans and look forward to helping as many seniors as the funding allows. We are privileged to serve rural Oklahoma and applications are currently



available for distribution,” says Kristina Manriquez, Director of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) at ASCOG.

The program has been expanded this year to give additional dollar amounts for services and goods. Funding is available for:

- Hearing aids: \$1,000
- Dental work, including dentures: \$1,000

• Durable medical equipment: \$1,000. Includes lift chairs, wheelchairs, motorized scooters, diabetic mattresses, hospital beds and shower chairs.

- ADA porch ramp: \$1,000
- Limited home repairs: \$1,000
- Heaters, air conditioners and hot water tanks: \$500
- Kitchen/laundry appliances: \$750

- Emergency medications: \$300
- Utility assistance: \$250
- Eyeglasses and/or eye exam: \$250
- Food assistance: \$180

Those who received Masonic grants in 2020 or 2021 are not eligible. Grants are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Only one application per household will be accepted.

Applications may be downloaded from the AAA website at [www.ascog.org/supportive-services](http://www.ascog.org/supportive-services) or picked up at area senior nutrition sites.

For more information email [poll\\_ke@ascog.org](mailto:poll_ke@ascog.org) or [manr\\_kr@ascog.org](mailto:manr_kr@ascog.org), or call 580-736-7036.

# Proper precautions improve home workshop safety

Without taking proper precautions, the enjoyment of a do-it-yourself project can quickly turn into disaster. You may have all the latest power tools, hand tools, hardware and materials, but if you do not put safety first, you may end up with a trip to the hospital instead of a new set of shelves, upgraded lighting in the kitchen or a trendy ship-lap accent wall in the bedroom.

Here are some fundamental workshop and electrical safety tips to help keep things running smoothly.

## 1. Wear safety gear, glasses and gloves

The first rule of workshop safety is to dress appropriately. Avoid loose clothing that can get caught in power tools. Never wear dangling jewelry or scarves. Roll up your sleeves or choose ones that are tight against your skin. Closed-toe shoes are a must, and steel-toed boots are recommended.

Safety glasses are necessary 100% of the time. Gloves are fine for handling materials. Before you reach for a belt sander or scroll saw, however, take the gloves off to minimize the risk of them getting caught and so you get tactile feedback in case anything goes wrong.

## 2. Observe electrical safety

Before you start any DIY project, inspect all your power tools and their cords for loose plugs, exposed wires or worn insulation. Fires are one of the top dangers when working with electric gear, especially if you have combustible materials around, such as sawdust.

If you must use an extension cord, choose one long, heavy-duty (appropriately rated) cord and keep it untangled and out of the way to prevent tripping and yanking your tools off the workbench. When you are done working, unplug everything from the

extension cord and put it away.

## 3. Keep your workshop clean

Anything left on the floor is a tripping hazard, and you do not want to imagine what could happen if you trip while using a power tool. Anything cluttering up your worktable introduces obstacles that can get caught in a saw or drill mechanism or block your ability to move your project safely as you work on it. The byproducts of do-it-yourself work, such as sawdust, cast-off nails and screws, and rags or brushes with potentially combustible or hazardous fluids on them, increase the risk of fires and projectiles.

## 4. Keep tools in good condition

Besides inspecting the cords and plugs for electrical safety, everything works better in the workshop if you have clean, sharp and well-lubricated tools. A dull saw blade brings a much higher chance of injury than a sharp one. It is less likely to cut smoothly through the wood or other material and more likely to kick back and cut you. Dull saws, routers or drill bits also run the risk of breaking during use. Use appropriate lubrication, such as WD-40 or others specifically created for power tools.

## 5. Know your limits

If you have a lot of experience as a do-it-yourselfer, there are projects you can tackle from memory. However, approach anything new as if you are a beginner for maximum workshop safety. Read instructions. Look up reputable guide videos to refresh your skills or learn something new. Most importantly, recognize when you are in over your head and leave those non-DIY projects to the professionals.

For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

**DIYers: HOW SAFE IS YOUR WORKSHOP?**

Make these tips standard practice in your workshop:

- Inspect tools for damage before using them
- Inspect cords and plugs for signs of wear
- Use electrical outlets equipped with GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters)
- Keep floors and areas as clean and dry as possible
- Ensure cords are not a tripping hazard
- Use a clamp or vise to secure whatever you are working on
- Use the right tool for the job
- Wear proper clothing for the task; avoid loose clothing or jewelry
- Make sure your work area is well-lit
- Use heavy-duty, properly rated extension cords

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- Problems with your system since it's been installed?
- Anyone with allergies or asthma?
- AC starts and stops frequently or runs all the time, and house is still not cool?
- Have been told by other contractors that the problem cannot be fixed?

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# Don't fall for scammers using text messages

## What are messaging attacks?

Smishing (a portmanteau word combining SMS and phishing) are attacks that occur when cyber attackers use SMS, texting, or similar messaging technologies to trick you into taking an action you should not take.

Perhaps they fool you into providing your credit card details, get you to call a phone number to get your banking information, or convince you to fill out an online survey to harvest your personal information.

Just like in email phishing attacks, cyber criminals often play on your emotions to get you to act by creating a sense of urgency or curiosity, for example. However, what makes messaging attacks so dangerous is there is far less information and fewer clues in a text than there is in an email, making it much harder for you to detect that something is wrong.

A common scam is a message telling you that you won an iPhone, and you only need to click on a link and fill out a survey to claim it. In reality, there is no phone and the survey is designed to harvest your personal information.

Another example would be a message stating that a package could not be delivered with a link to a website where you are asked to provide information needed to complete delivery,

including your credit card details to cover "service charges."

In some cases, these sites may even ask you to install an unauthorized mobile app that infects and takes over your device.

Sometimes cyber criminals will even combine phone and messaging attacks.

For example, you may get an urgent text message from your bank asking if you authorized an odd payment. The message asks you to reply YES or NO to confirm the payment.

If you respond, the cybercriminal now knows you are willing to engage and will call you pretending to be the bank's fraud department.

They will then try to talk you out of your financial and credit card information, or even your bank account's login and password.

## Spotting and stopping messaging attacks

Here are some questions to ask yourself to spot the most common clues of a messaging attack:

- Does the message create a tremendous sense of urgency attempting to rush or pressure you into taking an action?
- Is the message taking you to websites that ask for your personal information, credit card, passwords, or other sensitive information they should not have access to?



tion, credit card, passwords, or other sensitive information they should not have access to?

- Does the message sound too good to be true? No, you did not really win a new iPhone for free.
- Does the linked website or service force you to pay using non-standard methods such as Bitcoin, gift cards or Western Union transfers
- Does the message ask you for the multi-factor authentication code that was sent to your phone or generated by your banking app?
- Does the message look like the equivalent of a "wrong number?" If so, do not respond to it or attempt to contact the sender; just delete it.

If you get a message from an official organization that alarms you, call the

organization back directly. Don't use the phone number included in the message, use a trusted phone number instead.

For example, if you get a text message from your bank saying there is a problem with your account or credit card, get a trusted phone number on your bank's website, a billing statement, or from the back of your bank or credit card.

Also remember that most government agencies, such as tax or law enforcement agencies, will never contact you via text message, they will only contact you by old fashioned mail.

When it comes to messaging attacks, you are your own best defense.

Source: [www.sans.org](http://www.sans.org)

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Throw away charger blocks and cords that are worn or damaged and **make sure they are not hot** when charging devices.

**NOT IN BED** Only charge devices on a **hard, flat, noncombustible surface** to allow for adequate ventilation.

**Do not touch** any electronic devices that are charging **when you are wet** or standing in water.

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## Estate Plans Let You Control Your Legacy

**W**hen you hear "estate planning," what do you think of? For many people, these words evoke images of immense wealth. But estate planning isn't just for the wealthy – it's for everyone. And it's about more than preserving wealth – it's about putting you in control of your own legacy. But how can you achieve this worthy goal?

You can start by identifying your estate planning objectives. Here are some of the most common ones:

- Controlling movement of assets to beneficiaries – During and after your lifetime, you will want to ensure your loved ones receive what you want them to have, and when. Through documents such as a will and a living trust, and techniques involving life insurance and using proper beneficiary designations, you – not the courts – will control the movement of your assets to the desired recipients.
- Naming someone to make decisions for you if you become incapacitated –

Naturally, you hope to stay in good physical and mental shape throughout your life and remain capable of making your own financial and health care decisions. But the future is not ours to see, so, to protect your interests and those of your loved ones, you may want to consider creating arrangements such as a power of attorney, health care directive and a living will. In this way, you'll still be able to control the key choices that may lie ahead.

- Providing for minor children or dependents – If you have young children or other dependents, you'll want to be sure they'll be looked after if you aren't around. In your estate plans,

you can name a guardian for them. You can also use various estate planning tools, such as life insurance, beneficiary designations and the establishment of a trust to provide the necessary financial resources for your loved ones.

- Supporting charitable organizations – Leaving something behind for your family is obviously an enormous part of your legacy – but it may also be important to you to provide support for charitable groups whose work you've admired. Of course, you can contribute to these organizations while you're alive, but through strategies such as donor-advised funds and charitable

remainder trusts, you can include these groups in your estate plans.

- Managing taxes efficiently – If you're likely to have a large estate, your heirs may need to be concerned with income and estate taxes. To help control these taxes, you can take a number of steps, such as making outright gifts to your family during your lifetime, establishing an irrevocable life insurance trust, creating a family limited partnership and making charitable donations.

All the estate-planning strategies and techniques mentioned here can be complex – so, to implement them, you'll need to work

with an estate planning attorney and a tax professional. You may also want to include your financial advisor, who can help ensure your estate planning objectives align with your important financial goals, such as living comfortably in retirement and providing for your children's or grandchildren's education.

By identifying your objectives and working with your professional team, you can create an effective estate plan – and help yourself maintain control of your legacy.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

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# Energy Camp applications open for eighth graders

Cotton Electric Cooperative has a summer opportunity available for eighth-graders whose parents or guardians are Cotton Electric members. Youth Power Energy Camp is a hands-on, immersive camp experience that will be held May 31-June 3 at Canyon Camp in Red Rock Canyon, southeast of Hinton.

Campers will learn first-hand what it's like to be an electric lineman when they climb poles and ride in bucket trucks, among many other activities.

"Energy Camp is a chance to meet new friends from across the state and make connections with cooperative professionals who care about your future," says Stacy Howeth, Energy Camp Director. "This camp offers education on cooperatives, electric safety, leadership development, career readiness, networking and much more."

"The learning aspect of the camp was set up so the kids really get involved and learn about electric co-ops together," says Heath Morgan, Energy Efficiency Coordinator for Cotton Electric. Morgan served as a camp counselor when camp was last held in-person in the summer of 2019.

Morgan adds, "It was great to see the kids interact with each other, make new friendships and enjoy all the camp has to offer. Even attending the camp as a counselor was a blast. I can only imagine what a fantastic personal experience it is for the kids."

This contest requires a short paragraph about why the entrant would like to attend the 2022 Youth Power Energy Camp. The registration deadline for entering is by close of business on April 1, 2022.

Eight semi-finalists will be selected to participate in a video interview in April. Four students will be selected to go to Energy Camp.

"Stacy and her team have really done a great job with their planning," says Morgan. "The flow to the camp was as close to perfect as I think you could get. They have activities set up in the beginning designed to get the kids to open up and start interacting with each other and learning about energy."



Camper Jess Gately learns to be a lineman for a day at the 2019 Youth Power Energy Camp.

Howeth encourages any interested student to apply, saying, "Energy Camp is a ton of fun. You will get to experience unique opportunities that you won't find at any other camp!"

Information packets with contest rules and regulations, entry forms, cooperative information and

basic details of the contest have been distributed to schools in Cotton Electric's service territory.

For information about the contest, visit the Youth Programs page of our website under the Members Services tab, or contact the Marketing department at 580-875-3351 or info@cottonelectric.com.



Cotton Electric energy efficiency coordinator Heath Morgan, front, poses with 2019 Youth Power Energy Camp students.



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**Location** - The Senior Center in Walters OK  
**Cost** - Seminar & Books free  
**Pre-Registration & Info event** - February 24 @ 4:30pm

For more information call - 580-342-5123



Baked Tomato Goat Cheese Dip

FAMILY FEATURES

Whipping up family favorites all winter long is a perfect activity to keep loved ones warm in the kitchen while avoiding the bitter chill outdoors. Delicious, heartwarming snacks offer a simple and savory way to bring everyone in from the cold while enjoying comforting flavors together.

Lean on beloved ingredients like go-to RAGÚ sauces when it's time to come together for quick bites. The possibilities are nearly endless with delicious recipes using classics like the RAGÚ Old World Style Traditional or RAGÚ Simply Traditional options.

Hearty flavors can take away the chill of winter in recipes like Snowman Pizza Bombs, Polenta Bites and Baked Tomato Goat Cheese Dip. Easy to make and fun to create together, these simple snacks are perfect for a cold afternoon spent together in the kitchen or watching a family-movie marathon.

Originally started by an Italian mother more than 80 years ago, RAGÚ sauce, known for its distinctive yellow cap, is the perfect have-on-hand pantry staple to help you create easy and delicious home cooking. As an invaluable resource and family favorite since 1937, RAGÚ sauces easily allow anyone, regardless of gender or culinary skillset, to “cook like a mother” and serve up delicious, homemade favorites. The brand’s rich heritage and array of sauce choices ensures that your next cold-weather day spent inside will be elevated with family-favorite snacks and easy and taste-tempting meals made with RAGÚ.

Find more recipes perfect for warming up this winter at Ragu.com.

## Fall in love with comforting classics

### Baked Tomato Goat Cheese Dip

Recipe courtesy of Marzia Aziz of “Little Spice Jar”

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

Servings: 4-6

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 cups RAGÚ Simply Traditional Sauce
- 3 cloves garlic, divided
- 1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped, divided
- 1/8-1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 log (10-10 1/2 ounces) goat cheese, softened at room temperature
- 2 teaspoons olive oil, plus additional for brushing, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh thyme
- kosher salt, divided
- pepper
- 1 large baguette, sliced on bias
- blistered tomatoes, for serving (optional)

Position one rack in upper third of oven and one in lower third. Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray small, round baking dish with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.

Add sauce to small bowl. Grate in two garlic cloves then add 1/8 cup basil and red pepper flakes. Stir to combine then pour sauce into baking dish.

Smash goat cheese log into ball. Place ball between two sheets plastic wrap. Using hands, flatten cheese into thick, round disc about 1 inch smaller in diameter than baking dish. Remove goat cheese from plastic wrap and place in center of sauce. Drizzle cheese with 2 teaspoons olive oil. Sprinkle with fresh thyme, kosher salt and pepper. Bake on lower rack, uncovered, 20-25 minutes, or until sauce is bubbly and cheese is warmed through.

Place baguette slices on baking sheet. Drizzle or brush with olive oil and sprinkle with kosher salt. Bake crostini on upper rack 10-12 minutes, flipping halfway through. When bread is done, remove from oven, cut last garlic clove in half and rub cut side on bread.

Top dip with remaining basil and blistered tomatoes, if desired, and serve with crostini.

Note: To make blistered tomatoes: Heat skillet over medium-high heat until almost smoking. Add 1 pint cherry tomatoes to dry skillet and let sit 1 minute. Lower heat to low, toss tomatoes with 2 teaspoons olive oil and cook 2-3 minutes, or until tomatoes are about to burst. Remove from heat; sprinkle with pinch of salt and pepper.



**Bradley J. Margo, MD**  
**Jeremy Woodson, MD**  
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Polenta Bites

**Polenta Bites**

- 1 tube (18 ounces) polenta
- 1 1/2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 jar (24 ounces) RAGÚ Chunky Tomato, Garlic and Onion Sauce
- 1 package (8 ounces) shredded mozzarella
- 2 sprigs, rosemary, destemmed and chopped
- 3 basil leaves, chopped
- 1 block (8 ounces) hard Parmesan cheese

Cut polenta into slices. In skillet, heat olive oil over medium-high heat; fry polenta slices 10-12 minutes on each side until crispy and golden brown. In saucepan over medium heat, warm sauce. Place polenta slices on tray and sprinkle with mozzarella. Place 1/2 teaspoon warm sauce on each slice then sprinkle with chopped rosemary and basil. Grate hard Parmesan onto each slice for topping.

**Snowman Pizza Bombs**

- 1 tube (11.8 ounces) pizza dough
- 1 jar (24 ounces) RAGÚ Old World Style Traditional Sauce
- 1 package (6 ounces) pepperoni slices
- 1 package (6 ounces) Canadian bacon slices
- 1 package (8 ounces) shredded cheddar cheese
- 4 tablespoons melted butter
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 1 package (8 ounces) mozzarella cheese slices

**Decorative vegetables (optional):**  
 multicolored sweet peppers  
 olives  
 spinach  
 mushrooms  
 cherry tomatoes

Preheat oven to 400 F.

Cut pizza dough into 12 squares. On each square, place 1/2 teaspoon sauce and evenly top with pepperoni, Canadian bacon and cheddar cheese.

Pinch corners of dough together to round into balls then place in muffin tins.

In small bowl, mix melted butter, garlic powder and Italian seasoning; brush generously over dough balls.

Bake 15-20 minutes until golden brown.

Remove from muffin tin and carefully shape dough balls into circles; place on baking sheet. Cover with mozzarella slices and bake until melted.

Create snowman faces by decorating each with peppers, olives, spinach, mushrooms and cherry tomatoes, if desired. Use remaining sauce for dipping.



Snowman Pizza Bombs

# AHA encourages heart-healthy dietary habits

February is American Heart Month. Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death in US adults regardless of gender, race, or ethnic group. There are many factors affecting heart health with nutrition being one of them.

In December of 2021, the American Heart Association (AHA) released their 2021 Dietary Guidance to Improve Cardiovascular Health. This served as an update to the 2006 AHA Lifestyle and Dietary Guidance. In addition to incorporating the most recent research, the guidance focuses on dietary patterns and habits versus individual nutrients.

The scientific update puts forward 10 evidence-based dietary guidelines to promote cardiovascular health. These are probably not a surprise: 1) Maintain a healthy body weight by balancing intake and output; 2) Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables; 3) Choose whole grains versus refined grains; 4)



Kim Bandelier, MPH, RD, LD

## Food For THOUGHT

Choose health protein sources (plant based, fish/seafood, lean animal protein, low-fat or fat free dairy); 5) Use liquid plant oils rather than tropical oils like coconut, palm, and palm kernel) or animal fats or partially hydro-

genated oils; 6) Choose minimally processed foods; 7) Minimize intake of foods and beverages with added sugar; 8) Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt; 9) Limit alcohol intake; 10) Practice this guidance regardless of eating at home or away from home. These dietary behaviors should be practiced across the lifespan as the foundation for cardiovascular health begins in the womb and is impacted through choices made during pregnancy, childhood, and adulthood.

New to these guidelines are the specific recommendation for plant-based fat sources, avoidance of tropical oils, and choosing minimally processed foods. Plant-based fat sources (plant oils like canola oil, olive oil, safflower oil, sunflower oil, corn oil, etc.) are higher in polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats that protect heart health. Tropical oils (coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils) are high in saturated fats and have been shown to in-

crease markers of poor cardiovascular health such as LDL cholesterol when used instead of plant-based oils.

The 2021 AHA guidelines cite the NOVA classification to help consumers evaluate foods against different levels of processing. Under the NOVA classification, minimally processed foods are foods in their natural state that have been subjected to processes that clean or remove undesirable parts, have been ground, dried, pasteurized, cooled, or frozen but have not had oils, fats, sugars, salt, or other substances added. Fresh, canned, and frozen foods which do not have anything added are included in this category.

For American Heart Month, take stock of your current dietary habits and those of your family members young and old. What changes could you make when eating at home or away that you can stick with to improve your heart health?

You have goals. We can help.



Reaching your goals for this year is possible - with the right help. Together, we'll create a financial plan to help you reach your goals and ensure that your decisions are moving you forward. **Let's connect today.**



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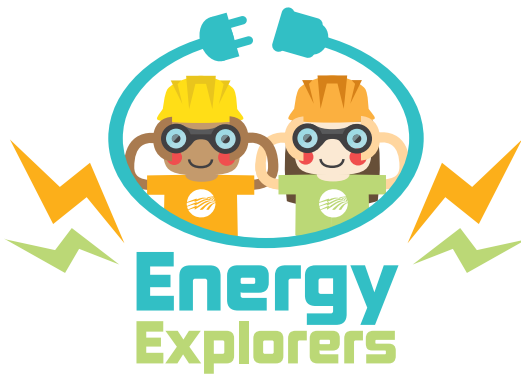
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|--|---------------------------|--|---|---|
| Turn water off while brushing your teeth | Use a reusable bag        | Pick up trash                            | Turn off lights when you leave a room     | Walk somewhere instead of riding in a car |
| Unplug unused phone chargers             | Collect items to recycle  | Use a smart power strip                  | Carpool with friends                      | Reuse a water bottle                      |
| Take a 5-minute shower                   | Use solar lights outdoors | FREE                                     | Unplug unused phone chargers              | Use a reusable bag                        |
| Carpool with friends                     | Pick up trash             | Turn off lights when you leave a room    | Take a 5-minute shower                    | Collect items to recycle                  |
| Reuse a water bottle                     | Use a smart power strip   | Turn water off while brushing your teeth | Walk somewhere instead of riding in a car | Use solar lights outdoors                 |



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

Level: Beginner

**Fun By The Numbers**

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

**Here's How It Works:**

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

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