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country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Save Money and Energy with Co-op Rebates



Air Source and Mini-Split Heat Pumps



Marathon Electric Water Heaters



Home Energy Audit Weatherization



Room Air Conditioning Units

East Central Electric Cooperative was built by our membership, belongs to our membership, and continues to be led by our membership. One of the ways that we have responded to the needs of our co-op members over the last 85 years has been through our participation in the Take Control and Save initiative.

Through this program, co-op members get rewarded three times over for making a purchase that improves the energy efficiency of their home.

First, you can qualify for a rebate on the purchase of select EnergyStar rated equipment. Items like heat pumps, water heaters, and home EV charging stations can potentially qualify.

Second, the EnergyStar rated equipment you've invested in will use less energy, lowering your electric bill.

And third, every effort co-op members make toward reducing the energy use in their homes benefits every other co-op member, by keeping the demand and cost of electricity low.

A complete list of rebates offered by East Central Electric Cooperative, including the qualifications to receive the rebate can be found at www.ecoec.com/rebates.

We encourage members to read the qualifications before they make their purchase and look for the blue EnergyStar label on all appliances.

Co-op members who have questions or want additional information about any of our energy efficiency rebates are encouraged to call the co-op at 918-756-0833.

Ground Source Heat Pumps



Level 2 EV Charging Stations



Heat Pump Water Heaters



Advanced Programmable Thermostats



To learn more about your elected trustees, or to view a district map, please visit ecoec.com. To contact your trustee, please call 918-756-0833.

notes from the chair



by Lowell Hobbs, President, East Central Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees

Spring Brings Busy Time

Springtime at the Co-op brings busy times. In March, Touchstone Energy, ECE, and other electric co-ops across the state help sponsor the 4-H and FFA Oklahoma Youth Expo in Oklahoma City. It's an excellent time for some of us to relive our youthful days in the livestock show arena. Some of the legislators are called on to show some of the young exhibitors' animals and are judged on their ability to present the animal to the judge for the top prize. Of course, the real judging has already been completed so this seems, sometimes, like a popularity show for the old dudes.

The Okmulgee County Spring Livestock Show is complete and the steer carcass sale sponsored by the Okmulgee County Cattlemen's Association is finished for the year. Success of the sale will be announced at our annual banquet.

In April we will attend the annual meeting of the Oklahoma Association of Electric Co-ops followed soon after by our ECE strategic planning meeting. This is an important meeting for our Co-op as we strategize how to continue to provide our members with affordable, dependable, and reliable electric power. The cost of our material (supplies) has increased approximately 75%. We have not had a rate increase since 2015. We have several options to explore and plan a small, if any, cost increase. ECE has the lowest availability charge to our members of any of the 6 co-ops that border us. The nearest cost to ours is \$10.66 higher and the highest is \$35.00, so we have been successful so far in keeping our bills low.

Our Operation Round-up Board recently approved 17 of 18 applications for \$40,453.36. Since the beginning of this program the Operation Round-up Board has awarded an amazing \$2,279,814.14 of our members' voluntary contributions that average about 44 cents per month.

May includes the Okmulgee County Cattlemen's Tour and the KAMO & AECE annual meetings. June 22 will be district meeting time for District 1, Larry Harvey, District 3, Max Shoemake, and District 6, Jim Hall, all on the same night to be held at Co-op Headquarters. Hope to see you there.

I went to work at Muskogee Seed Company as a field salesman and soon was promoted to assistant store manager as well. Before long I was elevated to store manager. An elderly lady had purchased a motor driven push lawnmower and had brought it back in numerous times due to problems she was having with it. The staff was overjoyed that on my first day as manager she showed up with her problem mower. After directing her to me, they were all smiles as they watched. After she told me of her issues with the lawnmower, I told her we could fix it. (I knew if it could be fixed we could do it or we could replace it.) Turns out it had adjustable heights on each wheel and the front ones were loose. I agreed to take it home for her and demonstrate that it would work. I took Dennis with me and instructed him to mow her lawn with it until she was satisfied it would work properly. As she and I visited, she related to me that her husband had died recently and she had to ask neighbors, people walking by, the mail carrier, and anyone



We're Proud to Power Your Life

Every April, we recognize East Central Electric Cooperative's lineworkers and employees for their courage and commitment to powering everyday life.

that came by her place to help her load the mower each time she brought it back to the store. She paused in her speech and said, "I know what killed my husband!" I asked her "what do you think?" "That damned lawnmower," she replied as the tears rolled!

Lowell Hobbs represents ECE District 2. To reach him, please call his cellphone at 918-695-5289.

How to Spot a Utility Scam

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams. The alarming part is that fraudsters are constantly updating their tactics.

Imposter scams are the number one type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone or text.

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment so you don't have time to think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at 918-756-0833. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, www.ecoec.com. If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact us or use SmartHub

to check the status of your account. Remember, East Central Electric will never attempt to demand immediate payment after just one notice.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a social security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email or by text, do not click any links. Instead, delete it, and if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, East Central Electric will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.

Be wary of call or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a



utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem. When we perform work on our members' property or come into your home, our employees are professionals and will always identify themselves.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.

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Quarterly Update



Operation Roundup funds support local charitable organizations, civic groups, youth programs, community services, and needy families. For more information on this voluntary bill roundup program, please visit us online at www.ecoec.com.

**TOTAL GRANTED
\$2,279,810.14**

APPLICATIONS REVIEWED
1,363

APPLICATIONS GRANTED
962

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED
\$304,500

AVERAGE MEMBER CONTRIBUTION
48¢



Norma's Broccoli Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 2 bunches of broccoli
- 1 head of cauliflower
- 8 strips of bacon (cooked and crumbled)
- 1 med. red onion
- 1 C. shredded cheddar

Salad Dressing:

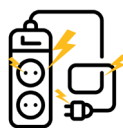
- 1 C. Miracle Whip
- 1/4 C. sugar
- 2 T. apple cider vinegar
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Chop broccoli and cauliflower. Place in large mixing bowl. Add bacon, onion and cheese to mixture. In separate bowl, mix salad dressing ingredients together. Toss dressing with veggies and refrigerate for at least two hours. Delicious!

SOURCE: SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

SOURCE: ECE 80TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK



**ELECTRICAL SAFETY
TIP OF THE MONTH**

Smoke alarms in your home should be tested once a month. A loud siren should sound while the button is pressed. If the sound is weak or nonexistent, replace your batteries.



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Monday-Friday, 8 am - 4:30 pm.

Power Outage Hot-line
(918) 756-0833

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Pay using our drive-thru window Monday - Friday from 8 am to 4:45 pm.

Pay via automatic draft of your checking or savings account. Sign up online or download the ebill form at www.ecoec.com, or set up online payments through your bank. No convenience fee.