

country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



WHY do we TRIM TREES?

We love the simple things in life — a thriving garden, abundant wildlife, reliable electric power. Unfortunately, sometimes those simple pleasures come into conflict.

Trees and foliage overgrowth near the power lines have been responsible for anything from minor flickering power on windy days to large-scale outages during heavy storms, and even grass and forest fires. In some thankfully uncommon, but no less tragic cases, trees near power lines have also caused the electrocution of climbing children.

As part of our co-op's commitment to provide safe, reliable, and affordable power to our member-owners, we make significant investments each year in maintaining an unobstructed right-of-way.

In 2022, East Central Electric performed tree trimming and brush removal across 1,119 miles of electric line.

There are things individual co-op members can do to help ensure the safety and reliability of our electric infrastructure.

If you plan to plant trees this spring, take time to research the mature height of the tree and choose a location where your fully-grown tree won't interfere with your electric service.

Consulting a local arborist or tree nursery before you dig into your landscaping project can have the added benefit of helping you plan a garden that provides home-cooling benefits in the summer and a wind-break from harsh winter winds that can ultimately help lower your electric bill as well.

There are many great varieties of low-growing trees and shrubs that provide color, screening and shade. Consider the types of trees that co-exist well with power lines and the environment to avoid the need for trimming for line clearance.

When planning your garden, you should also call 811 to locate underground utilities. Not only will you save yourself from a nasty electric shock by not digging in the wrong spot, but you can also save yourself from future expensive headaches, like root systems growing into your water and sewer lines.

If you currently have trees on your property that are growing near power lines, contact the co-op. Never try to prune them yourself. For trees that are in our right-of-way, the co-op will send certified personnel to trim and spray. For overgrowth between your meter and your home, we can provide

Trees, Continued on Page 3

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

The Things You Do for Love

I have never appreciated cold weather and snow. In my young life my Dad never was bothered by cold weather. A light jacket and a cap was all I ever knew him to wear, regardless of the weather. I would have on my insulated underclothes, 2-3 pairs of pants, a couple of thermal undershirts and another 2 or 3 flannel shirts and all the coats I could put on. My cap had fold down ear flaps, then a string tied flap over the ears; a sock cap and earmuffs over all that. My dad always fussed at me because I couldn't hear him!

One of my responsibilities was to water the chickens, cut ice for the pigs, cows, and horses. I didn't like it then, and I don't like it now.

A few years ago I came upon our ECE crew repairing a downed line in the snow. I rolled my window down a little as I pulled up to them and exclaimed how lucky they were to have a job that was outside in all the finest elements. No cramped quarters inside and a desk, just the whole outdoors to enjoy! With rain and melting snow dripping from his hard hat, he looked at me as you might only imagine, turned, walked away, and never said a word!

At our most recent Board of Directors meeting we discussed again our plans to keep our cost at a minimum to provide you with reasonable, dependable electric power. ECE is healthy financially so we expect you will be pleased when you learn the rest of the story in the next few months. We are still on schedule to complete the broadband build out by mid year to all our members that want it.

I told you in a recent story about the birth of my first son. We arrived at the hospital and 2 hours later Lyndel was born. The doctor told us the second one would come faster so be prepared.

Twenty-one months later my wife alerted me it was time to go to the hospital. My mother was spending much of her summer in a little house about 1/4th mile up in the field. She had agreed to come to our house to babysit Lyndel while we were having our 2nd child.

“You’re going in the hospital, they’ll have me in jail!”

- LOWELL HOBBS

She was loaning her car to me for the trip, and it had rained in the night. I was afraid to drive up to her house for fear of getting stuck, so I took off afoot. As I neared her house in the early morning darkness, I was calling for her to wake up. She came out on the porch and asked me what's going on? I said you are coming down to care for Lyndel, we are headed to the hospital.

I ran the 1/4 mile both ways, out of breath, loaded up, and waited a couple minutes as Mother made her way into the house.

When I went through Bixby at 80 miles per hour, I wondered where the police were. About the time I had crossed the river bridge I saw him coming fast.

Highway 64 (Memorial) was just a 2 lane highway at the time and very little business. My plan was to go west on 131st Street to Sheridan and then north on Sheridan to 11th Street to Hillcrest Hospital. As I approached 131st street the policeman couldn't make the turn and slid through a parking lot on that corner. I continued on to Sheridan, turned my signal on to go right so he could see me. As I approached 121st Street I decided to stop and explain to him what my mission was.

I pulled across the intersection so if any traffic showed up I would have a clear path to continue on. As I was crossing the intersection he slid sideways through the intersection along side of me and partially down the embankment on the left side, stopping at the fence line.

I could barely see his head over the top of his car as I called out to my....”my wife is having a baby and we're headed to Hillcrest.” He stammered a few words then told me to go on he would radio for escort. As I proceeded on, he followed and turned his red lights on again! I thought he might start shooting so I started to pull over when he turned his lights off and motioned me on.

When I got to 11th Street a police car come from the east, motioned me to follow, and down the middle of the street we rushed. Soon a second police car met us, turned around behind me and all 3 of us were charging toward the hospital. The lead car drove into the emergency entrance and motioned me to follow.

My wife said, “Just take me down to Aunt Jean's, I'm out of the mood now!” I remarked, “You're going in the hospital, they'll have me in jail!” The attendants had a wheel chair, towels, and exclaimed, ‘where's the baby? We were told a baby was born in the car!’ Craig was born 5 hours later.

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

Trees

Continued from Cover

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 a list of appropriately certified utility clearance professionals in your area. While the temptation to save money and do it yourself can be strong, we want to remind you that coming into direct contact with electricity is a life-or-death scenario, and that federal law requires anyone working within

10 feet of electrical equipment to have the proper OSHA certifications.

As a co-op, we are also mindful of the fact that some of our member-owners operate apiaries, vineyards, orchards, and certified organic farms that may be affected by herbicide sprays. We maintain a list of these organizations and specifically avoid herbicide use in these areas. If you would like to be added to the list, please contact the co-op.

The safety of our members and our employees is our highest priority. Providing reliable power at an affordable price comes second.

We love the natural beauty of rural Oklahoma. We employ best-practices to protect it. But at the end of the day, the efforts we make to maintain our right-of-way are designed to save lives and keep the power flowing to our co-op members.

We Need Your Help to Stop Vandalism

Vandalism of electrical and fiber equipment results in costly damages to the co-op and our members. It is also dangerous, and can cost the vandal their life.

Within the last year, attacks on the electrical grid have made national news for causing prolonged and serious power outages. However, even when vandalism isn't motivated by domestic terrorism, copper theft and other acts of intentional destruction can cause serious problems close to home.

In 2022, East Central Electric Cooperative spent over \$25,000 rebuilding or cleaning up vandalized services. Such unexpected and unnecessary costs impact the amount of capital credits our Board of Trustees can return to co-op members each year.

East Central Electric Cooperative maintains over 6,000 miles of electric line. While we have security measures in place at critical



pieces of infrastructure, we can't monitor the whole grid 24/7.

We need your help to stop vandalism.

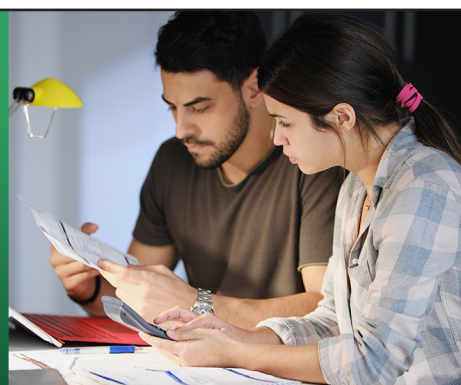
If you see anyone around electric facilities other than co-op personnel or contractors, call local law enforcement.

Not only could you save the individual's life and prevent widespread damage, if your tip leads to an arrest and conviction for copper theft, you may earn a reward of \$5,000.

ACP

Need help paying your internet bill?

ecLINK
powered by East Central Oklahoma Electric Cooperative



You might be eligible for the FCC's **AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM**

UP TO \$75/MONTH
 discount for households on qualifying Tribal lands (most of ECE's service area)

See if you Qualify and Apply

Call: 877-384-2575
 Visit: ACPBenefit.org



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
\$2,239,356.78

APPLICATIONS REVIEWED
1,345

APPLICATIONS GRANTED
945

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED
\$304,500

AVERAGE MEMBER CONTRIBUTION
48¢



Spinach Artichoke Dip

INGREDIENTS

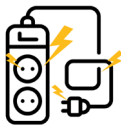
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|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2 (14 oz.) cans artichoke hearts | 1/4 tsp. pepper |
| 2 cloves garlic | 1 T. red wine vinegar |
| 1 small onion | 1 (8 oz.) cream cheese |
| 1 (10 oz.) pkg. frozen spinach | 1/2 C. feta cheese |
| 1/3 C. mayonnaise | 3/4 C. milk |
| | 3/4 C. grated parmesan |
| | 8 oz. sour cream |

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients and place in crockpot until heated through or put in baking dish and bake at 425° for 40 minutes or so, until slightly browned.

SOURCE: SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

SOURCE: ECE 80TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK



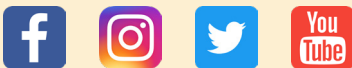
ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Teach kids to fly kites and remote control toys in open areas free from power lines and other equipment. If a toy lands in a substation or gets tangled in the lines, call us to retrieve it.



East Central ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Power Outage Hot-line
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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.