



2 Notes From The Chair



3 Winter Brings High Bills



4 Slow Cook Chicken Fajitas

country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



The wall of faces at the Holocaust Museum holds photos of the many Jewish families and communities killed during Hitler's reign. PHOTO/OAEC.

TOP STORY

Youth Tour '20

Co-op trip teaches profound moments in U.S. history.

Touring Washington D.C. with a bus full of high school students guarantees plenty of lighthearted moments. But the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour also includes times for serious contemplation.

"The students who participate really come away inspired by what they've experienced on their trip. Seeing the war memorials and standing where



U.S. Congressman Mark Wayne Mullin chats with Youth Tour winners on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. PHOTO/OAEC.

Youth Tour entries due February 3, 2020.
Find entry forms and contest guidelines at www.ecoec.com.



great moments in history have taken place leaves quite an impression," said Katherine Russell, member services representative at East Central Electric Cooperative (ECE).

Russell coordinates the co-op's annual Youth Tour essay contest for high school juniors. This year, six winners will travel to Washington D.C. June 19-25 as part of the 2020 Youth Tour.

ECE winners travel with other high school winners from Oklahoma. The experience is touted as inspiring

and life changing for participants. Students form friendships that last a lifetime. Most return to their communities with a greater appreciation for the role of leadership, service, and citizen participation in the U.S. governing process.

Interested teens are encouraged to enter by February 3, 2020. Entry forms, essay guidelines, and resource materials are available at www.ecoec.com, or contact Katherine Russell at 918-756-0833 for more details. ☺

To learn more about your elected trustees, or to view a district map, please visit www.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 "Yes" Attitude

It has been reported that in most organizations, 80 percent of the work is done by 20 percent of the people. Often you can see it happening. On the other hand, don't discount the other members of your team. All have their place and responsibility. Maybe only to show up so others won't feel lonely.

Those who rise to leadership roles are those who possess a 'yes' attitude. *Yes, we can do this. Yes, we can fix it. Yes, I can help.*

The 'yes' personality does a lot for an organization. Naysayers tend to hinder the progress of the whole effort. Remember, a good positive attitude will make your life and the lives of those around you better. Try it. I assure you it will work.

We are often afforded the luxury of opinion without the discomfort of thought!

Our East Central Electric team that has brought reliable, affordable electricity to you for more than 80 years is on the threshold of opening new opportunities for all of us: High speed internet to each home that wants it.

We missed our first 'turn on' date by a few weeks, but we want to be sure all systems are correct at the start. By the time you read this we should have the first homes on and using this important tool. The others will follow quickly and steadily. Don't despair, our team is coming soon to your home. 🍷

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

How Your Co-op Works

Your electric co-op functions like a team. From the general manager to employees, trustees, and member-owners, every individual has a role to play.

1. Co-op members elect trustees for the co-op board, vote on co-op bylaws, and provide feedback to the general manager (GM) staff and trustees.



2. Board defines expectations, policies and strategic goals for the GM based on membership needs.

3. GM incorporates board expectations into co-op plans.



4. GM delegates duties to staff who help carry out plan.



5. Staff develops and oversee programs to accomplish co-op goals.

6. GM collects data from staff on their progress.



7. GM shares results with board.



8. Board reviews policies and updates them as needed.



Getting Up To Speed

East Central Electric linemen listen and learn during a special two-day fiber training program. Taught by technicians skilled in fiber-optic cable installation and repair, the program helped linemen understand the unique aspects of handling and hanging fiber cable. While fiber is more durable than power lines, it functions differently and requires new and different equipment and devices. The fiber going up along ECE power lines will allow co-op members to enjoy internet speeds comparable to town and city residents. Available through ECE's subsidiary ecoLINK, the program includes the option for telephone service.

To learn more about our ecoLINK fiber and telephone service, please visit www.ecoec.com or call **918-756-0833**.

 ENERGY WISE

Brace yourself:

Plunging Temps Add \$\$ To Your Bill

The chilly weather and shorter days of winter find most co-op members using more electricity than normal. Please keep that in mind when you open your electricity bill this month.

"When it's cold outside, most people find themselves raising their thermostat to keep their home warm," said Micah White, energy use adviser for East Central Electric Cooperative (ECE). "Some people use space heaters for extra heat and that can cause bills to go up significantly."

The seasonal increase isn't unusual, he adds, but it can catch some members by surprise.

Why The Spike?

To understand usage spikes, it's helpful to remember your household activities during the last month.

For example, in December many people find themselves cooking more often, hosting family gatherings, and entertaining overnight guests. Having kids at home for Christmas means more TV and computer time, more loads of laundry, and more lights on throughout the house.

Another problem can arise if the thermostat is flipped to the emergency setting by mistake, or a cold snap causes emergency heat tapes to get stuck in the "on" position.

"These things add a lot of kilowatts to your electricity bill. The problem is by the time the bill arrives in January, most of us have forgotten all of our previous activity the month before," he added.



To prevent seasonal bill surprises and help you get a grip on winter electricity use, ECE offers several tools.

■ SmartHub Usage Monitoring

Use SmartHub usage charts to keep an eye on your daily energy use. Sign up for SmartHub usage alerts and ECE will notify you via text or email of unusually high electricity use.

■ Home Energy Audits

Schedule a free home energy audit and get a thorough inspection of your home that includes a blower door test. You'll know precisely where your home is losing energy, plus we can help you prioritize repairs based on the most affordable solutions for you.

■ Average Monthly Billing

Avoid the high bills that come with extreme seasonal temperatures by opting for average payments. This plan averages your usage over the past year so your bill is more predictable.

■ Prepaid Billing

Enjoy more control over your bill with our pay-as-you-go plan. Members who use prepaid billing never worry about due dates, late fees and disconnect notices.

For more information on ECE's energy saving services or billing programs, please call **918-756-0833**, or visit **www.ecoec.com**.



ECE's Amy Nix holds an armful of awards won in the statewide communications competition hosted by the Electric Cooperatives of Oklahoma. The co-op's Country Living newsletter, employee newsletter, annual report, social media and marketing campaigns all received awards. PHOTO/OAEC.

Effective February 1

Look For Your Co-op Newsletter Inside Oklahoma Living

East Central Electric Cooperative is changing the way it delivers its monthly newsletter *Country Living*. Beginning February 1, you will find *Country Living* stapled inside the statewide electric co-op magazine *Oklahoma Living*.

The magazine is published monthly for Oklahoma's electric co-op members. Co-ops that use the magazine as a delivery vehicle for their local publications save money on postage. That savings prompted the co-op's decision to change the delivery method.

Oklahoma Living and your newsletter should arrive the first week of every month.

Missing your copy of *Country Living*? Find the issue you're looking for in our newsletter archives at **www.ecoec.com**.

operation round-up

MONTHLY 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.

Applications reviewed.....	1,105
Applications granted.....	756
Applications denied.....	330
Applications tabled.....	26
Scholarships awarded.....	\$245,000
Total Disbursements.....	\$1,856,686.00
Average member contribution.....	48¢



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Using a space heater? Be sure it's located at least three feet from anything flammable, including papers, clothing, curtains, and rugs. Never place your heater on tables, cabinets or furniture that can overheat and start a fire.

SOURCE: ELECTRICAL SAFETY FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

RECIPES



Easy Slow Cooker Chicken Fajitas

INGREDIENTS

- 4 (6 oz) chicken breasts
- 1 (15.25 oz) can whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 (15 oz) can black beans, drained
- 1 (8 oz) jar salsa

DIRECTIONS

Place chicken, corn, beans, salsa, and taco seasoning in a slow cooker.

Cook on low until chicken is tender and flavors have combined, about eight hours.

Shred chicken meat using two forks. Serve with tortillas, cornbread or tortilla chips.

Source: allrecipes.com



East Central
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

PO Box 1178
2001 S. Wood Drive
Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447-1178

(918) 756-0833
www.ecoec.com



OFFICE HOURS:

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

POWER OUTAGE HOT LINE

(918) 756-0833

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Lowell Hobbs, District 2
President

Larry Harvey, District 1
Vice President

Dwight Luther, District 7
Secretary Treasurer

Jim Hall, District 6
Asst. Sec. Treasurer

Ed Kloeckler, District 5
Michael Vernnon, District 4

Max Shoemake, District 3

Tim Smith
General Manager

PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Pay online at www.ecoec.com using SmartHub, or download the app.
- Pay by phone using VISA, Mastercard or Discover at **866-999-4584**. Available 24 hours a day. Convenience fee associated with payments.
- Pay with cash or credit/debit card at participating Moneygram or Pay Site locations. Convenience fee associated with payments.
- Pay using our drive-through window or lobby, Monday - Friday, 8 am to 4:30 pm.
- Pay via automatic draft of your checking or savings account. Sign up online or download the ebill form for easy automatic payments at www.ecoec.com.