

# country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## *Special Update*

### Co-ops Work With Members On High Bills Following February Storm



#### Your Fair Share

ECE will issue capital credit allocation statements to members in May. This statement is not a bill—it's your share of ECE financial margins.

Please watch for your statement in the mail. It includes pertinent information on the process used to retire, or return, this money to you.

Remember the winter storm in February? That polar vortex set records and sent electricity use through the roof. Some East Central Electric (ECE) members have seen the effect on their bill; others will notice it this month due to their billing cycle. Prepare yourself: It will be significantly higher than normal.

"This was a historic weather event, and the demand for electricity across the state proves this," said Tim Smith, ECE general manager. "A combination of factors came together that caused high usage for our members, and high generating costs for our power suppliers."

The co-op is offering flexible payment options to members to lessen the financial impact. ECE will also help members find relief through various assistance agencies.

While the storm's impact on long-term power prices has yet to be determined, the exceptionally high natural gas prices during the storm sent wholesale generation prices soaring.

"Once our power suppliers determine the full impact of these extreme fuel costs, we will have a better idea of the long-term effect on East Central Electric and our membership," said Smith.

In February 2021, Oklahoma and many other states experienced record-low temperatures. According to Oklahoma Mesonet, the state experienced below-freezing temperatures for nearly 12 consecutive days, with the lowest temperature recorded at -22 degrees with wind chills as low as -36 degrees.

Industry experts say heating systems in Oklahoma are not designed to run in the extremely frigid temperatures experienced during the winter storm. With units made to run efficiently at 30 to 40 degrees, the February cold caused heating systems of all sorts to run at full capacity. In some cases, heating systems consumed two to three times the normal amount of electricity to provide heat.

As a result, the demand for electricity peaked across the region. In some

cases, the power supply was not sufficient to meet the dramatic demand.

The Southwest Power Pool (SPP), a regional transmission organization that ensures supplies of power to 14 states, called for energy emergency alerts levels 2 and 3 for the first time in history. One of ECE's wholesale power suppliers that is part of the SPP called for temporary coordinated interruptions of service from their electric cooperatives to prevent serious damage to the grid.

This affected ECE members in the Henryetta area, who experienced brief power interruptions. The co-op had little advance notice of the interruptions, and even less time to notify members.

"We are sorry the situation called for such drastic measures, but we appreciate our members' understanding," said Smith.

For information on billing options or to make payment arrangements, please call 918-756-0833, or visit [www.ecoec.com](http://www.ecoec.com).

To learn more about your elected trustees, or to view a district map, please visit [www.ecoec.com](http://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

**Goodbyes and Talking Dogs**

On February 15, 2021, we learned of the sudden death of one of our own. Ed Kloeckler, trustee of East Central Electric's District 5, died unexpectedly while feeding cows with his son John. Ed served over 25 years as board member from the Checotah area. Ed was steadfast in his beliefs and did not waiver. He surely will be missed.

At our recent board meeting we decided that rather than appoint a replacement for District 5, we would leave the position open until the annual meeting. Anyone interested in running for a board seat in District 2 or District 5 is encouraged to contact the cooperative on, or after, the ECE

**“Anyone interested in running for a board seat in District 2 and 5 is encouraged to contact the cooperative on, or after, the ECE District Meeting scheduled June 8, 2021.”**

District Meeting scheduled June 8, 2021. This year, the meetings will be held virtually. Notices will be mailed to all members in those districts with details about the meeting. You will have the opportunity to vote for a board member from these two districts at ECE's Annual Meeting on July 22, 2021.

There has been much concern from some of our members over high usage. Co-op staff are addressing those member concerns. Some meters are being checked, manufacturing representatives have been called in, plus various other research to solve the issues. If you have questions,

please call the office at 918-756-0833 and communicate with ECE staff. We are trying diligently to respond to any issues you may have.

By the time you read this, your board will have had two days of strategic planning. This involves reviewing the past—what works and what needs improving—and projecting for the future so we can have reliable and affordable energy. ecoLINK, our high speed internet service, allows

us to better monitor our lines and equipment, while providing revenue to stabilize our costs.

Many things are happening at your co-op, and I urge you to stay informed.

My mother and dad were quite competitive and each had a dog they claimed as their own.

Barney would accompany Mother wherever she went, mainly to her large garden. He would lay nearby in the shade waiting to accompany her to the house. Benji would go with Daddy in the pickup, and truly was a very smart dog.

Daddy came in one day and said, "Benji can talk!"

"I know it," Mother said.

"How did you know?," Daddy asked.

"Barney told me he could," she replied. 🐾

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



ED KLOECKLER

January 27, 1941 - February 15, 2021

**ECE Loses Leader**

The employees and members of East Central Electric Cooperative (ECE) lost a trusted leader and board member this winter. Ed Kloeckler died February 15, 2021 after suffering a massive heart attack.

Kloeckler, longtime rancher and resident of the Checotah area, represented members in ECE District 5. He began serving on the co-op board in 1995. He earned his Credentialed Cooperative Director certification through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and was a vital member of the co-op team.

"His experience and knowledge of our co-op made him an extremely valuable member of our board. We will miss him," said Tim Smith, ECE general manager.

Prior to serving on the ECE board, Kloeckler served on the boards of the Rural Water District and the McIntosh County Soil Conservation Service, and was active in other rural organizations.

Kloeckler is survived by his wife, Betty, of the home; son John Kloeckler; and daughter Kelly Thornton (husband Steven Thornton); and two grandchildren.

**\$1.9** million  
in local aid  
since 2006!

## *Building Your Community*

# Rounding Up The Benefits

## Operation Roundup Builds Stronger Communities

**F**ifteen years of giving adds up, one penny at a time. That's the beauty of programs such as East Central Electric's Operation Roundup.

Started by the co-op in 2006, the voluntary program encourages members to round up their electric bill to the next whole dollar. The difference—on average around 47 cents per member—goes into a trust established to provide aid for local communities, organizations, and needy individuals. No member gives more than a few cents every month, but the effect over time is remarkable.

Since its inception, Operation Roundup has distributed more than \$1.9 million in aid to nonprofit groups, civic organizations, rural fire departments, senior citizens centers, food banks, handicapped services, homeless shelters, and more.

Roundup programs such as ECE's exist across the country and raise millions of dollars for rural communities.

"As nonprofit, charitable organizations, these roundup programs help fill a niche that is often left by cash-strapped social and medical services," said Lylah Sparks, program administrator.

Roundup funds address a variety of local needs that range from community beautification projects to purchasing wheelchairs for elderly citizens, and safety equipment for firefighters. The majority of funds go to charitable organizations. Roundup funds are not used to pay utility bills or fund political campaigns.

Operation Roundup is guided by an independent board of trustees who meet quarterly to review grant applications and approve disbursements. ECE trustees and staff are prohibited from serving.

Applicants may apply for grants by filling out the application form at [www.ecoec.com](http://www.ecoec.com), or call ECE at 918-756-0833 to request an application. ☎



## Youth Programs Go Virtual

The pandemic set the brakes on a number of summer youth programs, but it won't cancel your co-op's youth opportunities. This year, the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and YouthPower Energy Camp will be virtual, with valuable prizes for winners in lieu of travel and site-seeing.

### ★ A Different Kind of Youth Tour

Before the pandemic, Electric Cooperative Youth Tour hosted students on a week-long tour of Washington, DC. This year, ECE's six Youth Tour winners will participate in a virtual Youth Tour Leadership Conference. The conference June 22-25 is designed to inspire participants with sessions on personal leadership, cooperatives, career readiness, and community development.

ECE will select six high school juniors from the area to participate. Each winner receives a \$2,000 college scholarship. Apply online at [www.ecoec.com](http://www.ecoec.com). **Deadline: April 15.**

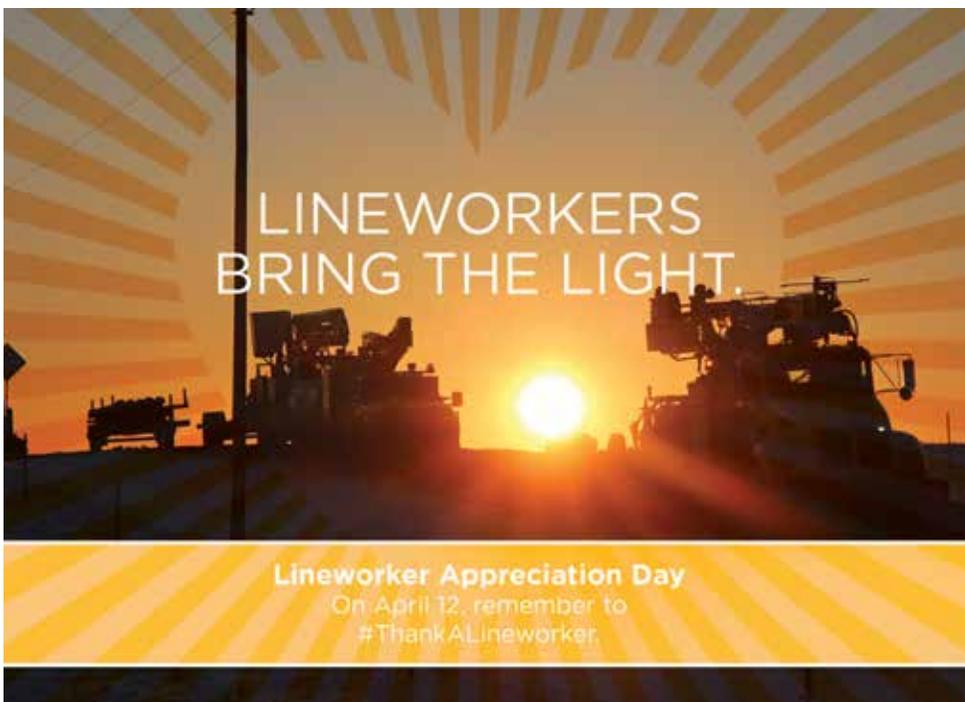
6 high school juniors win a  
**\$2,000** scholarship!

### ★ Virtual Camp For Eighth Graders

YouthPower Energy Camp is typically held at Canyon Camp near Hinton. For Covid safety reasons, the camp went virtual last year with great success. This year, campers will once again gather online for a full day of speakers and activities focused on building leadership skills and understanding of cooperatives and co-op principles. Camp is scheduled June 1-4.

ECE will select six eighth grade students to attend Energy Camp. Each camper will receive a Chromebook. Apply online at [www.ecoec.com](http://www.ecoec.com). **Deadline: April 15.**

6 winners take home a  
**Chromebook!**



# operation roundup

## 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](http://www.ecoec.com).

Applications reviewed.....	1,196
Applications granted.....	815
Applications denied.....	357
Applications tabled.....	12
Scholarships awarded.....	\$265,500
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Total Disbursements.....	\$1,977,438.96
Average member contribution.....	48¢



## ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

If your spring plans include some major digging, remember to call 8-1-1 at least three days before you plan to begin. Careless digging poses a threat to people, pipelines and underground facilities.

SOURCE: CALL811.COM

## RECIPES



### April Fools' Cake

#### INGREDIENTS

1 jar (14 oz) pizza sauce	¾ cup whole milk
½ lb bulk Italian sausage, cooked and crumbled	2 large eggs
1 pkg (8 ounces) sliced pepperoni	2 tablespoons butter, melted
3 cups biscuit/baking mix	1 teaspoon garlic salt
	5 to 6 slices mozzarella cheese

#### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375°. In a bowl, combine the pizza sauce, sausage and pepperoni; set aside. In another bowl, combine the biscuit mix, milk, eggs, butter and garlic salt. Spread half of the batter on the bottom and up the sides of a greased 10-in. fluted tube pan. Spoon meat mixture over batter; cover with remaining batter.

Bake for 35-40 minutes or until browned and a toothpick comes out clean. Invert onto a baking sheet. Arrange cheese over cake. Return to the oven for 5 minutes or until cheese is melted. Using two large metal spatulas, transfer cake to a serving platter; serve immediately.

Source: Taste of Home



**East Central**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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OFFICE HOURS:

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

POWER OUTAGE HOT LINE

(918) 756-0833

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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*General Manager*

#### PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Pay online at [www.ecoec.com](http://www.ecoec.com) using SmartHub, or download the app.
- Pay by phone using VISA, Mastercard or Discover at **866-999-4584**. Available 24/7. *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-thru/night drop 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](http://www.ecoec.com), or set up online payments through your bank. *No convenience fee.*