



country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

The Future Co-op Workforce

In the 84-year history of East Central Electric Cooperative, we have never been closer to the challenges and opportunities we faced in our founding decade.

East Central Electric is experiencing rapid growth in the number of members we serve and we're building a fiber network to reach all of them. We're investing in a workforce that will face challenges and adapt to new technologies that we cannot yet conceive.

"As a co-op, our approach to workforce development is shaped by our seven Cooperative Principles," ECE General Manager Tim Smith said. "Primarily by our fifth principle: Education, Training, and Information."

The co-op's multi-faceted approach to promoting education, training, and information begins in elementary school through the use of youth programs that introduce local children to electrical safety.

"We are an active partner in education for the 44 school districts in our service territory," ECE Manager of Member Relations Katherine Russell said. "By engaging students in the classroom and growing with them, we give a face to the power of the co-op business model and the many types of careers available at electric cooperatives."

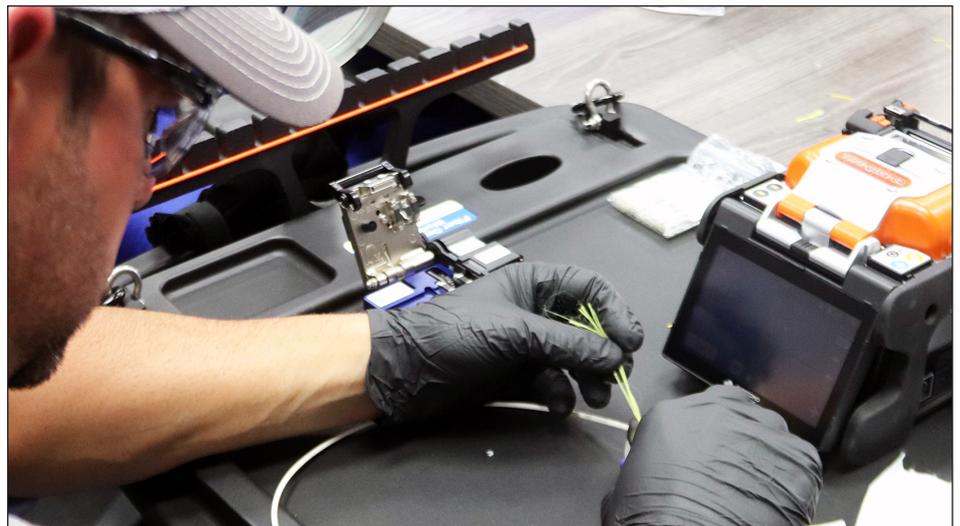
East Central's partnerships in education extend beyond public school to our local trade schools and universities.

"East Central Electric Cooperative and ecoLINK have a long history of partnership with Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology, from serving on advisory committees and providing local scholarships, to hiring graduates," said ECE Director of Broadband Operations Jeremy Hendrickson.

This year the co-op's working relationships with Wes Watkins Technology Center in Wetumka

and OSUIT in Okmulgee led to the creation of a new Advanced Fiber Technician training program at both schools that will give students another pathway toward a rewarding career, whether they come to East Central or go to one of the many other telecom companies in the state.

We strongly believe that empowering our communities with the education, training, and information they will need for future careers is critical, not only to the future workforce of the cooperative, but also to the quality of life of the members we serve.



One of our ecoLINK fiber technicians inspects and prepares the glass fibers that make up our internet infrastructure to be spliced together.

At ECE We...

For National Co-op Month in October we asked our employees what makes our co-op special. Here were some of their answers.



Our Operator Holly Brians said, "At ECE we listen to our members and provide the best care possible!"



Our Accounting Supervisor Tionna Jones said, "At ECE we have concern for our community."



Linemen Lael LeBlanc and Michael Muller said, "At ECE we keep the lights on."



One of our ecoLINK Subscriber Support Representatives Jana Fowler said, "At ECE we are pretty fly for WIFI guys!"



Our IT Support Tech Shane Cowell said, "At ECE we use the best technology to keep the lights on."



Our Billing Supervisor Karen Starr said, "At ECE we follow through to make sure members' concerns are met!"



Linemen Brad Duncan and Quinn Rogers said, "At ECE we are on call 24/7 to serve our members."

SOMETHING TO BE THANKFUL FOR

East Central Electric Cooperative has a web page dedicated to helping members stay safe and save money during cold winter months. Use the QR Code here or visit

www.ecoec.com/winter-savings-and-safety

to read more.



Two Co-op Linemen Graduate with Journeyman Certification

Two East Central Electric linemen recently completed the four years of study and hands-on training required to receive their journeyman certification.

Lee Davis was hired as an Apprentice Lineman in 2018, shortly after completing two years of high-voltage training at OSUIT in Okmulgee as well as two internships.

“I always wanted to come to East Central since I started school,” Davis said. “I grew up hearing the name. It was close to home. I knew some of the guys who worked here. And my Grandpa was a member.”

Weston Hill was hired on at East Central in 2020 as a 3rd year linemen apprentice after having worked in linework for six other companies.

Hill attended high-voltage school at OSUIT because, “I knew there would always be demand for linemen. It’s not a career that will phase out.”

“I was doing this kind of work for years, but I never had a certificate, it was just me working,” Hill said. He was excited to have the opportunity to come to work for the co-op because of the benefits and the pathway to professional certification.

The previous experience gave him a leg up in fast-tracking the apprenticeship program, but it also meant he had to complete four years of schooling in under two years.

“I completed all the exams for years 1, 2, and 3 in the first year and then wrapped up year 4 over a few months,” Hill said, adding that studying for the almost 40 exams was complicated by a crying 18-month-old daughter at home and another baby on the way.

The Journeyman certification is a nationally recognized title and accreditation that signals professionalism and mastery in the field.

Davis said, “It feels rewarding to have that responsibility for yourself and the work you do. It feels good to be trusted to know what you’re doing.”

ECE Manager of Engineering and Operations Jerome Roberts said, “ECE has produced several outstanding linemen throughout the years, we are proud to have Weston and Lee as a part of that tradition. Congratulations on reaching this milestone in your careers!”

Both Hill and Davis strongly encourage young men and women who are interested in working outdoors, or in a career where every day has a different challenge, to consider a future in linework.

For anyone who takes them up on the recommendation, Hill had this advice: “Wear your rubber gloves, and don’t be afraid to ask a lot of questions, because that’s how you learn.”



LEFT TO RIGHT: ECE Manager of Engineering and Operations Jerome Roberts, Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperative (OAEC) Senior Safety and Loss Control Specialist Wade Hurt, ECE Journeyman Lineman Lee Davis, OAEC Director of Safety and Loss Control Derec Janaway, and ECE General Superintendent Pete Hogan.



LEFT TO RIGHT: ECE Manager of Engineering and Operations Jerome Roberts, OAEC Senior Safety and Loss Control Specialist Wade Hurt, ECE Journeyman Lineman Weston Hill, OAEC Director of Safety and Loss Control Derec Janaway, and ECE General Superintendent Pete Hogan.

THIS HOLIDAY
CONNECT MORE

Serve a connected holiday for all your guests.

Upgrade for **FREE!**

ec  **LINK**
powered by  East Central Oklahoma Electric Cooperative



100 Mbps \$55
250 Mbps \$75
1 Gbps \$85



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
1,328

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED
\$304,500

APPLICATIONS GRANTED
926

AVERAGE MEMBER CONTRIBUTION
48¢

TOTAL GRANTED
\$2,202,912.78



Homemade Cranberry Sauce

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 2 bags (12 oz. each) fresh cranberries | 3/4 C. sugar |
| 1 C. orange juice | 1/2 tsp. ginger |
| 1 C. apricot preserves | 1/4 lb. dried apricots, finely diced |

DIRECTIONS

Stir all ingredients together in a large, heavy pan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring until berries pop and sauce starts to thicken - about 8 minutes. Pour into serving dish. Cool to room temperature, cover and chill. Serves 20.

SOURCE: ECE 80TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK

Submit your recipes for the 85th anniversary cookbook to kharrison@ecoec.com.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Do you start decorating for Christmas the day after Thanksgiving? No judgment, we do too. Just be sure to inspect all lighted decorations before use and discard any that are damaged or worn to avoid shock and fire hazards.

SOURCE: SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG



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

Max Shoemake, District 3

Michael Vernon, District 4

Jay Emerson, District 5

Tim Smith
General Manager

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Pay online using SmartHub.

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 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.