

# country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



## 2 Notes from the Chair

## 3 2025 Youth Program Deadlines

## 4 Pork Chops & Mushroom Gravy

## Winter Electric Bills Q&A

### 1. Why do some electric bills go up in the winter?

The number one answer is genuinely the weather. Heating our homes, outbuildings, and our water makes up a combined 42% of our annual electric bill. Even the most energy efficient systems have to work hard to keep us comfortable. Many gas and propane heating systems also use electricity to distribute heat around the home.

### 3. What can I do to lower my bill?

The most impactful way to lower our electric bill during the winter is to manage our thermostat settings. For every one degree increase in the set-point of our homes, there is a 3-5% increase in energy use.

Regularly changing HVAC air filters, finding and sealing air leaks, and having duct work checked for leaks can all be done on a budget to keep your home toasty.

Setting the water heater thermostat no higher than 120°F keeps the water hot without making the machine work too hard.

And it's worth noting that small electric space heaters may seem like an affordable alternative, but they can cost more than \$100/month to operate. Limiting their use to temporary spot heating when you are awake and in the room can save you money and prevent potential fire hazards.

### 2. What is the power cost adjustment and why is it so much?

The power cost adjustment (PCA) is a pass-through cost based on the wholesale cost of fuel. The PCA is set monthly by our wholesale power suppliers and changes based on the cost of fuel used to generate electricity.

Wholesale power suppliers generate electricity from many sources including hydroelectric dams, solar and wind farms, coal-powered steam generators, and steam generators powered by oil and natural gas. When the cost to generate power goes up, as it typically does in the winter months when demand outweighs supply, so does the PCA.

More information about the details of your electric bill and East Central's rates and pricing structure can be found on our website under, "My Account."

### 4. How can I get help making ends meet this winter?

The Cooperative spirit is about members helping members when times get hard. If you find yourself struggling to pay your electric bill by the due date, give East Central Electric Cooperative a call for judgment-free support. Our helpful service representatives will discuss various payment arrangements and assistance programs that are available to you.

### Clip & Save Outage Reminders



Call the Co-op at 918-756-0833 or Report Your Outage Via SmartHub



Have Your Account Number On Hand Write it Here: \_\_\_\_\_



In some cases, the co-op may need to enter your property to repair our power lines and equipment. Please unlock gates and secure your pets.



Always assume any downed or damaged equipment is live and dangerous, even if you don't see sparking. Stay at least 40 feet back and call us immediately.



For outages impacting more than 200 people, we will post information and updates on Facebook. Follow us @eastcentralelectriccooperative





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To learn more about your elected trustees, or to view a district map, please visit [ecoec.com](http://ecoec.com). To contact your trustee, please call 918-756-0833.

Our new CEO, Dwayne Elam, was there for our December Board meeting. By the time you read this Tim will be gone from ECE, and Dwayne will be sitting in the ECE office. I truly believe good things will continue at ECE.

Dwayne’s job will be easier because we have a great staff and dedicated and efficient employees. All seem to work together for the benefit of our members. Our directors work well together always striving to help our members have a better quality of life.

The number of grow houses continue to decline each month. We have gone more than two years without a lost time accident. In the coming months, we will review our strategic plan and set goals for the future. Starting in February we will be meeting at the State Capitol interacting with our legislators.

When Donna and I married we bought a house near the south end of the ranch on 330 Road. Lots of traffic with a large mudhole in the middle of the road just south of our house. A big truck had recently dodged the mudhole and went through our pasture fence then back through the fence and left without letting us know.

About two weeks later I was awakened about 11:30 p.m. with the sound of big trucks. I jumped up, slipped on some clothes, and jumped in my pickup to check it out. I had a small dog ‘Sugar’, an excellent cow dog and always anxious to go with me. She could get in the cab easy enough, so she went with me. She would lay in the floor unless invited to the seat which

was rare. There were three tank trucks with their valves open dumping their load down the road. I was positive it was salt water, and I didn’t like it put on the road for the salt to accumulate on our vehicles each time we went down the road. I was determined to get the name off the truck door so I could tell the owner of my concern. Passing them in the dust with the watery mix coating my windshield was not possible, so I followed them to Highway 16 which was four and a half miles. I planned to pass them once I got to the highway, but vision was poor and speed was fast so I passed expecting to turn at Highway 52 and turn my lights on them as they passed. The truck that went toward Morris had no sign on it, and the other two were going way too fast.

I followed down the highway and through country roads somewhere in the Mounds area. The two trucks turned into a truck yard and I went on by, turned around and came back. The two drivers stopped me and asked why I was following. I told them of my concerns regarding the salt water. They assured me it was fresh water they discharged. On the way home I thought I would go by the location they said so I could confirm their story the next day. I thought if I went then their tracks would show up plain enough before the daytime traffic wiped them out.

As I turned the corner just north of our house there was a car sitting next to our neighbor Jim’s garden. This was strange at 1 a.m., and I had noticed Jim’s garden tiller left in his garden for a few days. Tracks where the trucks

had entered the road were not plain so I started on home. I soon met the car that was by Jim’s garden, trunk lid open and something sticking out of it. Jim’s tiller, I thought, so I turned around and gave chase. I was hoping the local police officer was sitting at the south end of town where he sometimes did. The car with four boys and Jim’s tiller turned north about four blocks short of Main Street. I thought, “how do I find the police?” Speeding would get some attention. I went from the south end to north end very fast, and lucky for me the police were at the north end. I quickly told him my mission just as the car crossed the highway headed to Coweta. He took after them and I followed, caught up with them about 3/4 mile up the highway. They stopped. He ordered them out on the ground, handed me his pistol and instructed me to shoot the first one to run. MAN!! I didn’t want to get that involved; I had never even owned a pistol, but they stayed put while he got on his radio to summon some police help. At the police station I wrote down the serial number of Jim’s tiller and stopped by his house about 2:30 a.m., awakened him and shared what he needed to know.

It was almost 3 a.m. as I pulled in at home. Donna was on the driveway. When Sugar got out of the pickup, her eyes were as big as a big dog’s eyes! Donna asked “Where have you been?”

I replied, “Have I got a story to tell you!”

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

## High School Juniors Experience Washington D.C.



Apply today for an all-expense-paid leadership trip to our nation's capitol. Learn more about Youth Tour and apply by March 1 at [ecoec.com/youth-tour](http://ecoec.com/youth-tour).



## Eighth Graders Experience Energy Camp

Apply today for an all-expense-paid summer camp for 8th graders, May 27 - 30, 2025. Have a blast and make new friends during this high-voltage adventure. Become an energy expert and experience the life of a lineworker.

Discover your passions through leadership development sessions. Enjoy other summer camp activities like swimming, hiking, water games and more. And get prepared to tackle your future with career success workshops.

Energy Camp is four days of fun and learning, sponsored by your local electric cooperative.

Learn more about Energy Camp and apply by March 1 at [ecoec.com/energy-camp](http://ecoec.com/energy-camp).



## High School Seniors

\$1,000 Scholarship for College, University, or Technical School

East Central Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up Board will be awarding \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors in our service area. All seniors who are dependents of a co-op member who is enrolled in Operation Round Up are eligible to apply.

The Operation Round Up Board is aiming to support hardworking

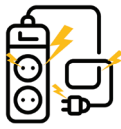
students who possess the qualities of honor, integrity, thrift, and good moral character.

### Application Requirements:

- Dependent of a co-op member who participates in Operation Round Up
- Minimum GPA 2.7

- Two reference letters
- Official sealed transcript for high school and any concurrent education
- Application and attachments postmarked by March 1

Download the application at [ecoec.com/scholarships](http://ecoec.com/scholarships).



## ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Heating equipment accounts for 13% of home fires. Place a space heater on a hard, flat surface and make sure clothing, papers, and other combustible items are at least 3 feet away from the heater. Do not use a space heater if the cord is damaged or frayed.

SOURCE: SAFELECTRICITY.ORG



## Pork Chops & Mushroom Gravy

### INGREDIENTS

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 4 boneless pork chops          | 1 can Golden Mushroom Soup |
| 2 C. sliced fresh mushrooms    | 2 T. butter                |
| 1 C. thinly sliced fresh onion | 2 T. canola oil            |
|                                | 1/2 can water              |

### DIRECTIONS

Saute onion and mushrooms in butter until cooked. Remove from skillet. Add oil to pan and flour pork chops and brown on each side in pan. Add soup and water along with the mushrooms and onions. Let simmer about 10 minutes. Serve over rice. Serves 4.

SOURCE: ECE 85TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK

Preparing for Storm Season?

## DON'T FORGET TO READY YOUR CAR

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit onboard. Kits should be checked twice a year and expired items should be replaced regularly. Emergency supply kits should include:



- Snowbrush
- Shovel
- Windshield washer fluid
- Cat litter for traction



- Warm clothing
- Blankets
- Drinking water
- Nonperishable foods



- Properly inflated spare tire
- Wheel wrench & tripod jack
- Jumper cables
- Fire extinguisher



- Reflective triangles
- Reflective vest
- Brightly colored cloth (to tie on side mirror)



- First-aid kit
- Flashlight and batteries
- Compass
- Car charger for cell phone

Safe  
Electricity.org®

Source: NSC



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