

# country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



**2** *Notes from the Chair*

**3** *Nondiscrimination Statement*

**4** *Crockpot BBQ Chicken*

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## Welcome Dwayne Elam as New CEO

Amidst energy regulation and national reliability concerns, East Central Electric Cooperative secures industry veteran Dwayne Elam as its new CEO.

Elam brings 18 years of experience in utility management and implementation as both the Wagoner City Administrator and Director of Utilities/Public Works for the Wagoner Public Works Authority. His previous experience also includes work in environmental health and safety.

Living in Oktaha, Elam is a third-generation Cooperative member and rancher.

“That family legacy had a big influence on me deciding to apply for this position,” Elam said. “I have witnessed the benefits of what East Central Electric membership has provided to my family over the years. Knowing how well this co-op operates, how efficient it is, and how responsive they are in dealing with ice storms and outages made me want to be a part of this co-op.”

Elam has held positions of authority on the boards of the Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma (MESO) and the Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA) as well as board service for the Oklahoma Municipal League, Oklahoma Homeland Security Regional Advisory Council, and the City Managers Association of Oklahoma.

Elam holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and



**LEFT TO RIGHT: Dwayne Elam, Kathleen Elam, Tammie Smith, and Tim Smith at the East Central Electric Cooperative Christmas party.**

Industrial Safety Technology from Northeastern State University.

The ECE Board conducted a nationwide search with the help of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Board President Lowell Hobbs stated that Elam quickly rose to the top from a large group of outstanding candidates.

“Elam has proven his ability to direct complex, multi-million-dollar projects, and has led large teams with a hands-on, ‘lead by example,’ mentality,” Hobbs said. “I truly believe Dwayne will continue to lead our co-op on the high level we have already achieved.”

Elam had a two-week transition period with the outgoing CEO in December before assuming full duties and responsibilities on January 1, 2025.

Outgoing CEO Tim Smith retired in January after 30 years in the electric

**Welcome, Continued on Page 3**



Lowell Hobbs, District 2  
President

Larry Harvey, District 1  
Vice President

Dwight Luther, District 7  
Secretary / Treasurer

Jim Hall, District 6  
Assistant Sec. / Treasurer

Max Shoemake, District 3

Michael Vernon, District 4

Jay Emerson, District 5  
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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.

I am pleased to advise you that the Board of Directors has secured a new CEO at East Central Electric. His name is Dwayne Elam, and he is a third generation ECE member. By the time you read this he will have already been on the job for a couple of weeks. Dwayne will start on Monday, December 16, 2024, and spend the next 2 weeks learning from Tim some of the things he will need to know. Not all, but some. Tim will continue as CEO in charge until January.

There were many applicants for the CEO position. Our search team from NRECA brought us 12 of the applications that she thought most nearly fit the traits we instructed her to seek. Dwayne quickly rose to the top, and after much study and interviewing he was the top choice.

I truly believe Dwayne will continue to lead our co-op on the high level we have achieved and even beyond. Thank you, members, for allowing me to be a part of this effort.

While looking back at how life has changed for the better during Tim's time at ECE, I took an even deeper look to the past when I was a kid. I remember going to town (Haskell) with my

Grandpa in a wagon and team of horses on Saturday night. The street was lined with wagons pulled by teams of horses or mules, tied to metal rings installed in the concrete curb along the street.

I have consulted with a couple of my friends in reviewing these things about Haskell. The population of Haskell in 1920 was 2,196, in 1940 it was 1,572, in 1950 it was 1,676, and 2023 the population was 1,690. So it has never been a metropolis; however, we did have 9 gas stations—called filling stations where the owner or his help would pump your gas, check your oil, clean windshields, and air your tires!

There were 7 grocery stores, 3 cafes + 2 drive in restaurants, 2 drug stores, 2 hardware stores, 1 dentist and 3 doctors that made house calls, 3 barber shops, 2 welding shops, 2 auto dealerships, 2 canneries, 2 cotton gins, 3 feed stores, 2 dry cleaners, 2 laundromats, 10 churches, a hotel, a theater, a sale barn, an auto salvage, a TV repair shop, and a frozen food locker (they had this large freezer room with individual huge drawers to keep your frozen stuff in). I paid \$2.00 a month for one drawer. I don't remember anyone having a deep freezer at home.

We also had an ice plant, newspaper, armory (used as a German prison camp during WW 2), 2 water towers, train depot, and a lumber yard. One of the feed stores was also a grain elevator. There was also a motel, a lot of brick streets, and the Haskell Lake.

We presently have 2 fast foods plus 1 pizza restaurant, a hot dog shop, and 2 of the best restaurants. We have 2 convenience stores, a grocery store, and a bank. Our hardware is combination lumber, feed, and hardware. We have 2 good tire stores, a Dollar Store and a post office. Our school facilities look impressive. I'm sure I have left someone out, but not intentionally.

It is my hometown and I am proud to say "I'm from Haskell."

For a long time we were called the Town of Haskell, but we had a "City Hall." In March of 2024 we changed from town to city manager form of government. Now our City Hall can be comfortable with its name.

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

# Welcome

Continued from Cover

cooperative industry. “We’ve built an amazing team and have incredible positive momentum, and I think Mr. Elam is the right person to build on that momentum,” Smith said.

With an extensive utility history, Elam is prepared for the challenges the industry will face in the coming decades.

“The energy demand on the electric grid continues to grow at a rapid pace with entities such as data centers, A.I. coming onboard, along with electric vehicle applications. The industry is moving more towards distributed generation, solar, wind, and alternate sources to help meet those demands in the future. The federal regulations and environmental challenges are forcing coal generation to continue to be put into retirement across the United States unfortunately,” Elam said. “There’s lots of challenges looking into the future and there’s a lot of opportunities. The more energy efficient applications that we are able to provide our members, the more effective we are going to be able to serve them.”

“I’m eager to get into the co-op world and get back to my roots in the rural communities,” Elam said. “I will be following in the footsteps of some industry giants who led this great co-op before me, and I look forward to working with a very well-informed, inspiring, and interactive board of directors here at ECE that are truly here to serve its members.”



**Dwayne and Kathleen Elam of Oktaha were introduced to employees at the East Central Electric Cooperative Christmas party December 6.**

## Important Dates 2025

**February 1** - Operation Round Up Application Deadline

**March 1** - Application Deadline for Youth Tour, Energy Camp, and College Scholarships

**May 1** - Operation Round Up Application Deadline

**June 19** - District Meetings, Board Districts 4 & 7

**July 24** - Annual Meeting

**August 1** - Operation Round Up Application Deadline

**November 1** - Operation Round Up Application Deadline



**Built by Hand, Backed by Heart**

## Nondiscrimination Statement

East Central Oklahoma Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ECOEC) is a Federal contractor and an Equal Opportunity Employer. ECOEC is subject to Executive Order 11246, which requires government contractors to take affirmative action to ensure that equal opportunity is provided in all aspects of their employment. In addition, we are subject to Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974, as amended by the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002, 38 U.S.C. 4212 (VEVRAA), which requires Government contractors to take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment protected veterans.

All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, merit, and business need.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all

programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Person with disabilities who require alternative means of communication (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) (link is external) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail:  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant  
Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)



Operation Round Up 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).

TOTAL GRANTED  
**\$2,674,988.53**

APPLICATIONS REVIEWED  
**1,588**

APPLICATIONS GRANTED  
**1,134**

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED  
**\$353,000**

AVERAGE MEMBER CONTRIBUTION  
**48¢**



## Crockpot BBQ Chicken

### INGREDIENTS

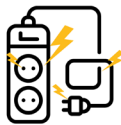
- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 4-6 chicken breasts (or a cut-up fryer) | 1/4 C. vinegar              |
| 1 (8 oz.) bottle barbecue sauce         | 1 tsp. red pepper flakes    |
|   | 1/4 C. brown sugar          |
|   | 1/2 to 1 tsp. garlic powder |

### DIRECTIONS

Place chicken in crock pot. Combine all ingredients to make the sauce. Pour the sauce over the chicken. Cook on low for 4 to 6 hours.

SOURCE: SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

SOURCE: ECE 85TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK



## ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Only authorized utility workers should be near a substation or inside its fence. If you see suspicious activity, a fire, or damaged equipment, call 9-1-1. Also report individuals in street clothes tampering with utility poles, meters, padmount transformers or other equipment.

## You Have Power Over Your Power

Our SmartHub app has tools that give you more information and control over the way your home uses energy.

### Bill Analysis

Details how this month's bill compares to last month's, or to the same bill period last year, and provides an explanation for the differences you may see.

### Energy Detail

Breaks down your electric bill based on the devices and appliances used.

### Notifications

Informs you of planned power outages, bill availability, and high usage alerts.

### Bill Projections

Sends an email half-way through the month with an estimate of what your bill could be if usage remains the same.



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