

OCTOBER 2025

country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Increased Costs Drive Rate Adjustment Decision



10.1%

Increase in Fleet Costs

2023 Average Bucket Truck

\$188,900

2025 Average Bucket Truck

\$207,900

11.4%

Increase in
Purchased Power

2022 Purchased
Power

\$40,696,336

2024 Purchased
Power

\$45,331,313



34%

Increase in Copper
Wire Cost

2023 Wire per Foot

\$1.65

2025 Wire per Foot

\$2.21

8.4%

Increase in Right-of-
Way Expense

2023 Right-of-
Way Expense

\$4,000,000

2025 Right-of-
Way Expense

\$4,337,000



14.2%

Increase in Transformer Cost

2023 Average Transformer

\$1,888

2025 Average Transformer

\$2,156

Monthly Electric Bill Increase
for all rate classes.

\$10

notes from the chair

Scary Moments

By Lowell Hobbs, President, East Central Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees

We had a tremendous meeting with the Associated Electric Co-op. They always have presentations that will stir your mind with what's coming in the future. Artificial Intelligence was the most scary to me. Have you ever wondered how it works to ask your phone a question and immediately it will type you an answer! They can also now test your health electronically with probably more exact health conditions. They also said before long we probably won't be able to turn them off, and we will be subservient to the AI. Something for you to ponder.

Our annual meeting went well. We had a quorum but no contested director positions and no bylaws to amend. Thank you for re-electing Dwight and Mike. Also, I was re-elected Chairman the next day. Thanks for that honor!

My Dad always had a place in his heart for people in need. On one particular trip into town, he encountered a soon-to-be freshman boy hitchhiking away from Cleveland.

My Mother was junior high English teacher in Cleveland schools and was a good scout for my Dad's Vo-Ag-FFA programs. Troy was the hitchhiking boy, and one that Mother had advised my Dad he should draw into his class.

Troy's dad had the police jail him because Troy had gone to a picture show in spite of his Dad's orders to not go. So, Daddy loaded Troy into his pickup and brought him home "to help us plant wheat and help care for our cows and pigs." I would be in the 7th grade and Troy the 9th grade when school started in the fall. We had leased a C-Model Allis Chalmers tractor to prepare for wheat planting. The tractor and my bicycle had no brakes.

The folks were going into town for a while and sent me to the back of our 80 acres to fetch Troy and fill the tractor with gas while they were home. I took a rope, about 12-15' long, and when I got to Troy I hooked the bicycle to the tractor for the uphill pull.

After we filled the tank and the folks left, Troy said "I'll ride the bicycle back down to the field and you pull me with the tractor." This was pretty neat until we went down the steep hill. The bicycle outran the tractor coasting. Troy attempted to pass on the right running over the rope, then the tractor rear tire ran over the rope and yanked him and the bicycle into the side of the rear tire. Troy was thrown to the ground, luckily parallel to the tractor, and knocked him out cold. I finally got the tractor stopped near the bottom of the hill. I ran back to Troy, got him untangled from the rope and the bicycle, drug him over under a tree and shook him till he came to. No broken bones, the rope broke, and he had rear wheel tread marks down his side and across his shoulder. We never told anyone what had happened.

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

Lowell Hobbs, District 2
President

Larry Harvey, District 1
Vice President

Dwight Luther, District 7
Secretary / Treasurer

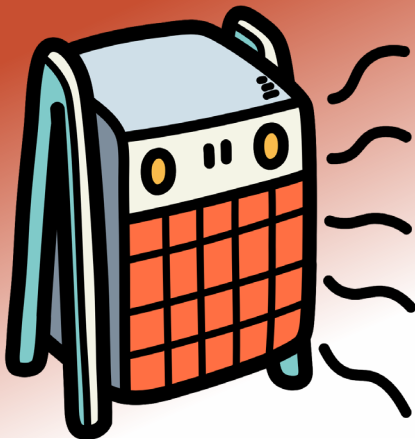
Jim Hall, District 6
Assistant Sec. / Treasurer

Max Shoemake, District 3

Michael Vernnon, District 4

Jay Emerson, District 5

To learn more about your elected trustees, or to view a district map, please visit ecoec.com. To contact your trustee, please call 918-756-0833.



The Truth About Space Heaters

- The energy cost for a typical space heater is about 17.4 cents per hour, which doesn't sound like much until you run it continuously for a month, and then **\$125 of your electric bill** is spent powering one little space heater.
- According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, space heaters are involved in **1,700 house fires** every year, resulting in 160 injuries and 70 fatalities.

If you need a space heater, use it sparingly, with energy use and electrical safety top of mind. **Don't become a statistic.**

Board: Minimizing Member Impact in Rate Adjustments

On August 22, East Central Electric Cooperative's member-elected Board of Trustees voted unanimously to increase the service availability charge on all rate classes by \$10 per month.

This change to the cooperative's rate tariff is in effect as of October 1, 2025.

The Board of Trustees stated that the increase was a hard but necessary decision to make after exhausting efforts to control costs and keep industry-wide increases from impacting the members' wallets.

Dwight Luther, who has represented co-op members in Creek County on the board since 2004, said, "It is always a hard decision for me on a rate increase, recognizing that any increase in electric rates effects the members. That's why the board works hard to control expenses, seek efficiencies, and only adjust rates when necessary to sustain reliable service."

East Central Electric Cooperative's membership and distribution grid have steadily grown in size over the last decade. However, the revenue typically associated with growth has not kept pace with the rising costs of physically building the infrastructure.

As seen in the Cooperative's audited 2024 Annual Report, more than 75 percent of the co-op's expenses are fixed or otherwise outside of control. Yet the way utilities historically structure rates, based on kilowatt-hours sold instead of the physical costs to provide service, means that the income used to pay those bills is highly variable, and often reliant on the weather.

The service availability charge, which for residential members has been a flat \$25 a month included in the "Energy Charge" line on the bill, will go up to \$35 a month. Based on the co-op's most recent cost-of-service study, this increase will cover the minimum required to supply the poles, wire, transformers, and meters used to power members' homes and businesses.

Board Member Mike Vernon, who has served the rural Muskogee area since 2015 stated, "During my time on the board at East Central, the decision to increase our service availability charge has been deferred at least twice, as we believed it was not the right time for our members. However, we are now at a point where we have no viable alternatives."

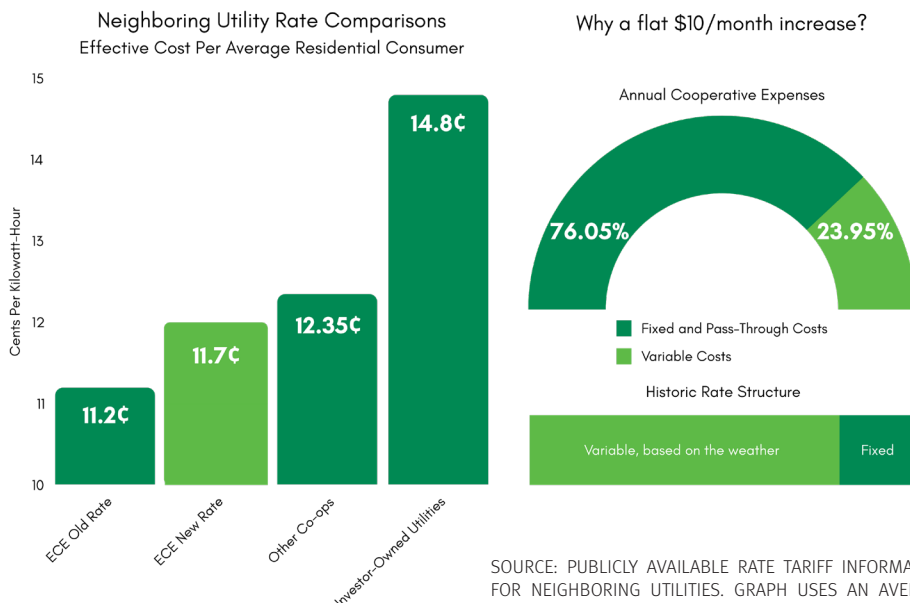
"Despite this adjustment, our rates remain competitive with other cooperatives in our region," Vernon said, noting that even with this increase, the price paid by East Central Electric members remain below average among neighboring Oklahoma utilities.

"It is always a hard decision for me on a rate increase, recognizing that any increase in electric rates effects the members. That's why the board works hard to control expenses, seek efficiencies and only adjust rates when necessary to sustain reliable service."

- DWIGHT LUTHER

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- MIKE VERNON



**OPERATION**

TOTAL GRANTED
\$2,874,534.34

AWARDED LAST QUARTER
\$41,207.27

APPLICATIONS REVIEWED
1,624

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED
\$352,500

APPLICATIONS GRANTED
1,160

AVERAGE MEMBER
 CONTRIBUTION
48¢

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.



Pumpkin Bars

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 4 eggs, beaten | 2 tsp. cinnamon |
| 1 C. oil | 1 tsp. soda |
| 2 C. sugar | 1 tsp. baking powder |
| 1 C. pumpkin | 2 C. flour |
| 1/2 tsp. salt | 1/2 C. nuts |

DIRECTIONS

Mix together well. Pour into greased pan and bake at 350°.

SOURCE: ECE 85TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Space heaters use a lot of electricity to produce a little heat output, so they should be used sparingly, with energy use and electrical safety top of mind. Always turn off space heaters whenever you leave the room or before you go to sleep.

SOURCE: SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

ecoLINK NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



LINK Lightwave

MEET LINK

He's big. He's bold.
 He brings legendary fiber service with cooperative values.



Fun Facts About LINK:

- *His best friend just happens to be Willie Wiredhand*
- *Special Skill: Can splice fiber faster than you can say "broadband."*
- *Motto: "Get LINKed. Stay Legendary."*



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