

NOVEMBER 2026

country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

BELIEVE in What Connects Us

This Thanksgiving, we're thinking about all that connects us.

We're thankful for family gathered around the table. For neighbors who check on one another. For the communities we call home. For the people who show up when someone needs a helping hand.

And we're thankful for something else:

The belief that we're better when we work together.

That belief is at the heart of East Central Electric Cooperative.

Long before there was ecoLINK, there was another need.

Electricity was changing the way people lived and worked, but many rural Oklahomans were being left behind. Traditional utilities weren't always willing to make the investment required to serve sparsely populated areas.

So local people came together and created a cooperative.

They believed their neighbors deserved the same opportunities as everyone else. They believed they could make a difference by working together

They believed in serving others.

Decades later, the world had changed, but the need looked surprisingly familiar.

This time, it wasn't electricity.

It was connection.

Reliable internet had become essential for school, work, healthcare, business and staying connected with the people we love. Yet many rural families still didn't have access to the kind of reliable broadband that much of the world had come to depend on.

COVID-19 made that divide impossible to ignore.

Students learned from home. Employees worked remotely. Businesses moved online. Families depended on technology to stay connected.

For ecoLINK subscriber Kimberly Workman and her husband, David Gourd, that need was personal. Living in a wooded area near Checotah with little to no cell service, staying connected was already difficult. When Kimberly's college classes moved online during her final semester, reliable internet became essential.

After connecting to ecoLINK, the couple could use Wi-Fi calling at home, giving family members a reliable way to reach them. And Kimberly was able to finish her college classes from home.

"I really don't think I would have made it through that last semester without it," Workman said.

Kimberly's story is one example of what connection can make possible.

It reminds us of something our cooperative has believed from the beginning: when we see a need in our community, we look for a way to help.

> "I really don't think I would have made it through that last semester without it."
>
> - KIMBERLY WORKMAN

Fiber could connect rural families and businesses to the world while also strengthening the electric system our members have depended on for generations.

So we built it.

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notes from the chair

Community First

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

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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.

With all the debate regarding Data Centers and AI, I decided to look up the definitions and the differences between data centers and AI facilities. Now I am confused as to the differences, but I am confused at a higher level! What I have learned is they are very controversial.

Answers appear to be what I call 'political.' Seldom get a real factual answer to your question. I do believe one built in your proximity will be a life change. I believe they will consume a huge amount of electricity. Their presence will be very noticeable. Their contribution to our life will long be questionable. I have heard President Trump is in favor of them.

Several years ago I was one of three county residents appointed by our County Commissioners as a County Zoning and Planning Board. A big company from, I believe Indiana, joined with a local ranch to build a large toxic waste facility that would be called Heritage Dillingham Waste Facility on land northeast of Okmulgee. Our 3-man board opposed the idea as did a large number of area residents. Senator Frank Shurden joined our thoughts and wrote a Senate bill of regulations for the plan. One line in the bill required that such a facility could not be located within 6 miles of the city limits. Someone in authority with the city proposed to de-annex the city airport (which was 2 miles long) from the existing city limits. Senator Shurden rewrote his bill to require an 8-mile space. Heritage-Dillingham dropped their efforts for the toxic waste facility. Incidentally they had begun inviting the firms that were producing the planned toxic material to build their facility on the same land so they would not have to transport the toxic waste by truck.

Later an idea was presented to use the old closed Square B refinery location south of town as a medical waste disposal using the old smoke stack for burning the medical waste. Our 3-man board nixed that plan too. We firmly believe we did our county and community a big favor.

After a lengthy and bitter divorce, I was living by myself in one of our older ranch houses. I was working long hours for Kerr-McGee Chemical Company and doing my ranch work after hours. Most of the time I would work the ranch things until I was exhausted then go to bed a couple of hours, up early and back to Kerr-McGee. My Dad called on the phone most every morning before 5 AM. On one particular night I had a chance to sleep in for an extra couple of hours, so at 12:30 am I called my Dad. His phone was in his office away from his bedroom, and after many rings and his fumbling the desk phone, he replied "Hello".

I said, "When you call sometimes I am so sleepy I cannot remember later in the day what we talked about, so I decided to call you while I was wide awake and could maybe remember what you said."

After a short pause he said "I don't have a damn thing to say to you!" and hung up.

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



BELIEVE

Continued from Cover

It wasn't easy. There was no playbook waiting on a shelf. Employees learned a new industry, developed new systems, solved new problems and connected homes and businesses, often while continuing the work of serving East Central members.

But they believed it was worth doing.

Because this was never just about building a fiber network.

It was about what that network could make possible.

Today, ecoLINK can mean a student completing schoolwork from home. A local business reaching customers beyond its hometown. A family staying connected with loved ones. A patient accessing healthcare. Someone building a career without leaving the community they love.

Sometimes it's much simpler.

It's everyone in the house being able to use the internet at the same time. A video call that doesn't freeze. Streaming the big game. Working from home. Having a connection you can count on.

That is what we mean when we say:

BELIEVE in What Connects Us.

We believe in the connection between neighbors and communities.

We believe in the connection between members and their cooperative.

We believe in the connection between the investments we make today and the opportunities they create for tomorrow.

And we believe reliable broadband can be another way your cooperative improves the quality of life for the people we serve.





Today, ecoLINK offers:

- **Fiber internet with speeds up to 2 Gbps**
- **Packages starting at $55 per month**
- **Free standard residential installation**
- **No contracts**
- **Local service and support**
- **The free ecoLINK+ app**
- **ProtectIQ network security**
- **Fiber phone service**

If you're an East Central member who hasn't experienced ecoLINK yet, we'd be grateful for the opportunity to connect you in one more way.

See what's available at your address. Get LINKed.

Scan to Get Legendary Internet & Phone Connection

This Thanksgiving, we're thankful for the people who believed in rural Oklahoma enough to build a cooperative in the first place.

We're thankful for the members who have carried that cooperative forward.

We're thankful for the people who believed in ecoLINK, built it, welcomed it and continue making it better.

And we're thankful for you.

Because the technology may change. The needs may change. The ways we serve may change.

But the reason hasn't.

We believe in working together to make life better for our neighbors.

We believe in the power of community.

And we believe that when we connect with one another, we can build something better than any of us could build alone.

That's what a cooperative has always been.

And that's something worth being thankful for.

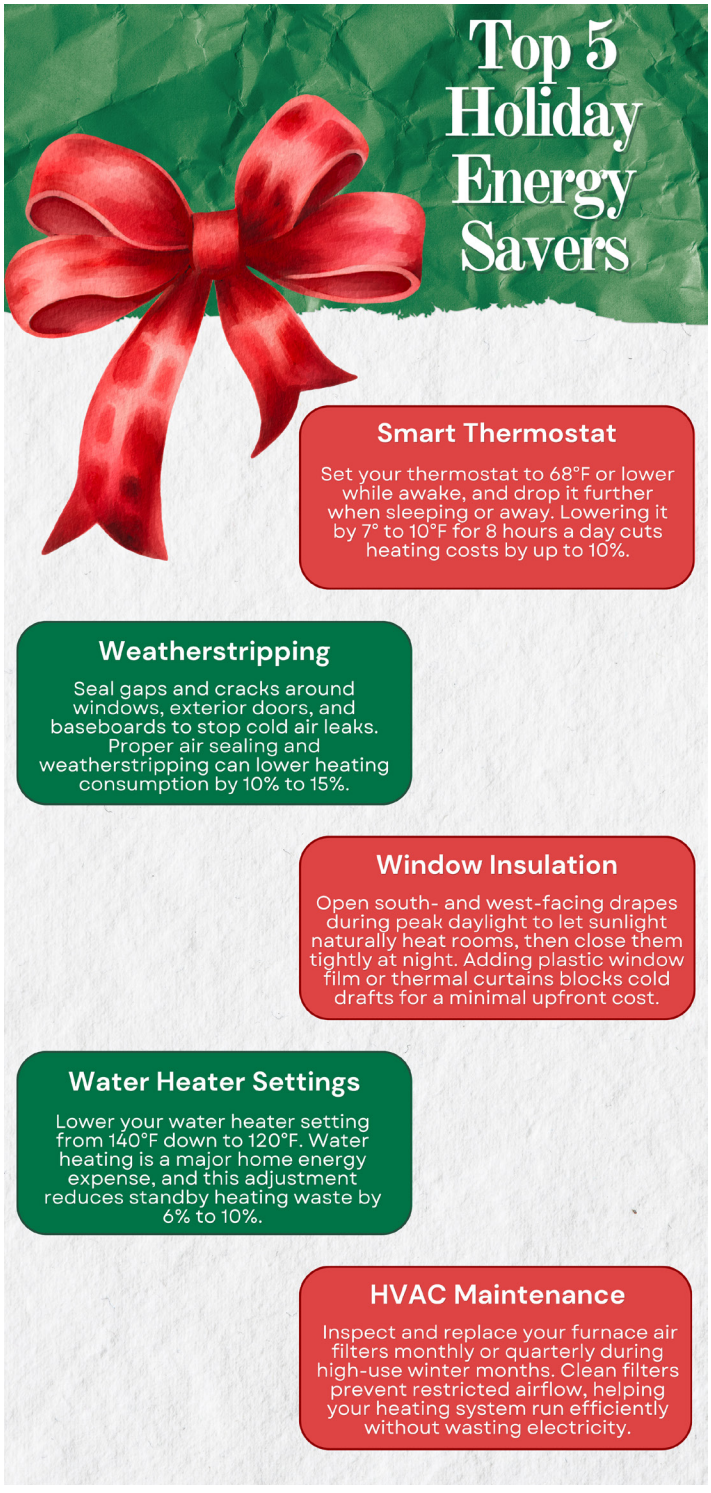
BELIEVE in What Connects Us.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Keep heating registers and vents clear of furniture, rugs, curtains and other items. This doesn't just reduce potential fire danger, but also improves airflow to keep your system from working harder than needed.

SOURCE: SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG





Cranberry Pumpkin Bread

INGREDIENTS

- 1 3/4 C. flour
- 1 C. sugar
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp. allspice
- 1 C. pumpkin
- 1/2 C. oil
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 C. fresh cranberries, coarsely chopped

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour a 8 1/2 x 4 1/2 x 2 x 2 1/2" loaf pan. Combine dry ingredients in a mixing bowl. Combine remaining ingredients except cranberries in a separate mixing bowl. Add to dry ingredient and stir. Stir in cranberries and spread evenly in loaf pan. Bake 1.5 hours or until a toothpick inserted into the center of bread comes out clean. Remove from pan and cool on a wire rack.

SOURCE: ECE 85TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK

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