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country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Co-op Membership is Sweet

22 Ways to Benefit from Your Co-op in 2022

East Central Electric Cooperative was built by our membership, belongs to our membership, and continues to be led by our membership. The mission of the co-op is serving our members and communities. Listed here are 22 ways we plan to fulfill our mission in 2022.

1. Reliable Power

Reliable power is our primary function and responsibility. If you flip a switch and the lights don't come on, it's a problem. You need to be able to trust that your electric provider is working on a solution.

East Central is in the process of implementing a strategic plan laid out by our member-elected Board of Trustees to improve the resiliency of our grid. The construction of two new substations in recent years ensures our grid is growing to accommodate the growth in our membership. Meanwhile, we are reducing our response times to outages by initiating secure and innovative technologies.

2. Capital Credit

As a cooperative, we are owned by the people we serve, not shareholders. We strive to operate at cost, so that any profit we might make is passed back to you. Your share of the net profit each year is called Capital Credit, and it is allocated

to you based on your usage each year by the ECE Board of Trustees. Whenever the Board votes to retire capital credits, you will receive a check for a portion of your ownership in the co-op.

3. Your Vote Matters

Each year ECE holds an Annual Meeting of members. Members have the opportunity to elect their neighbors to serve on the Board of Trustees, vote on bylaw changes, and participate in fun activities and prize drawings. Every member is eligible to participate and every vote matters in shaping the future of the cooperative.

4. Make A Difference and Receive Support

With an average monthly contribution of just 48 cents, many of our members voluntarily round up their electric bill each month to support local charitable organizations, civic groups, youth programs, community services, and needy families. Over \$2 million has been granted since the Operation Roundup program began in 2006. Decisions about who will receive funds are made by a board of ECE members. Applications to receive grants can be found at www.ecoec.com.

5. Flexible Payment Arrangements

ECE bills members based on the amount of power they use each month. In the bitter cold of winter or excruciating summer heat, higher-than-average bills can be an unwelcome shock. In an effort to respond to the varied needs of our members, ECE offers several alternatives to the wait-and-see model, like leveled and pre-paid billing.

6. Post-Secondary Scholarships

High school seniors who are the dependents of ECE members and attending school within the ECE service territory are eligible to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship through Operation Roundup. Only one student per school district can receive the award. Scholarship applications are due by March 1, 2022. Visit www.ecoec.com for more information.

7. ecoLINK Broadband

Affordable, high speed fiber internet through ecoLINK eliminates the constraints of geography, allowing people and businesses in isolated areas to compete with their big-city counterparts. Learn more at www.ecolink.coop.

Co-op Benefits, Continued on Page 3

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.

notes from the chair



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

The Co-op Way: Knowing our Values

I recently had the opportunity to speak to a young group of 4-H members. Here are some of the ideas I shared with them.

I believe most people are about as happy as they make up their minds to be. People are attracted to those that have positive attitudes, have genuine laughs and have fun. Be an inspiration to others. 'Thank you' and 'I appreciate you' are good things to say. Attitudes are contagious, good or bad, so make it good. Get acquainted with Jesus. He is waiting for you to extend your hand. Knowing Jesus will change your life and all that know you. You will be a better person.

Family and friends add strength to you. Take a speech class. Communication is one key to success. If you encounter a difficulty with someone, work it out, don't let it continue unsolved. My Dad taught me it's just like having a flat tire. If you repair the flat soon, the tire can continue on for a long time; run it flat a while and you cannot repair it so well.

Be part of a group that becomes more than you can be by yourself. That is the co-op way, your co-op is part of a statewide, region wide, and national co-op world. The buying strength is huge. When one co-op suffers a disaster, weather related or fire, other co-ops join forces to aid those affected and need help. Our members benefit from the strength of our co-op and the other co-ops sharing efforts to rebuild damaged lines when needed. It's a good world to be a part of.

Elmer had faithfully served as janitor at the local high school for many years. Today he would have been titled custodian or even building engineer, but he was the janitor. The local schoolboard became focused on promoting high

school education, so they wrote and passed a policy that stated any and all employees of this school system must have a high school diploma. After researching every school employee, only Elmer lacked a high school diploma. The principal called Elmer to the office and said that although he had perfect attendance, had a spotless reputation, they had to sever his employment. They had a policy, you know.

Elmer went home and shared their situation with his wife Emma. As they talked and prayed that night, they decided Elmer should visit with Mr. Cardwell, their banker, the next day to apprise him of their situation. Emma said she would make a batch of fudge to take to Mr. Cardwell to show their appreciation for what the bank had done for them and hoped would continue to help if needed.

The day after meeting with Mr. Cardwell, Elmer got a call requesting more fudge. His wife wanted to share their fudge with her friends in her social club.

News of the delicious fudge spread quickly and friends of friends needed some here, there, everywhere.

Elmer and Emma had to hire help to answer telephones, place orders and receive materials, buy delivery vehicles, office space, shipping help...you get the picture. Eventually Milton S. Hershey heard about Emma's fudge and sent staff to buy Elmer and Emma's recipe. A deal was eventually struck to buy all their business and the recipe for \$10,000,000.

When the crew arrived with payment and a contract to sign, Elmer said he would need Mr. Cardwell at the bank to read the contract to be sure his employees were protected. He said as long as they got to work on time and did the work they were employed to do, that they would have a job. He said, "I cannot read or write--I never got a formal education." The Hershey rep said, "Man, think where you would have been with a high school education." Elmer said "I would have been janitor at the local high school!"

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

The Co-op Model versus the 100-year Storm

You can read the two-part narrative about the events of February 2021 and how the co-op is continuing to recover from the storm in the November and December 2021 Country Living or online at www.ecoec.com.



Temperatures:
40° below
normal with
multiple days
sub-zero from
Feb. 10 - 19
as reported by NOAA



Total Polar
Vortex Damage:
\$20.8 Billion
as reported by NOAA



Cost per meter:
\$3 per month
for 12 months

8. Efficiency Rebates

Research before you buy. We offer rebates on certain energy efficient systems for your home like heat pumps, water heaters, thermostats, and more. Visit www.ecoec.com for a full list of available rebates.

9. Electric Safety Devices

Electrical safety, fire protection, and intruder deterrence are all possible with devices we provide our members at East Central Electric. We have GenerLinks to safely connect a generator to your home. Our surge suppressors can help protect your appliances during a lightning storm. And our security lights can help you keep an eye on your property.

10. SmartHub

SmartHub is a web and mobile app that allows you to take control of all aspects of your account. Pay your bill, manage your usage and contact us with service issues quickly and easily online or on your mobile device. SmartHub also allows you to receive alerts when there is scheduled maintenance in your area. Visit www.ecoec.com to sign up and download the app.

11. Emergency Communications

When there are large-scale outage events, you can count on more than the diligence of our linemen. Our communications team will be working to keep you informed across our social media channels, website, SmartHub, and more. Follow us and stay connected to have access to information when disaster strikes.

12. Safety Education

Educating the community about electrical safety is vitally important. We offer in-person electrical safety demonstrations for schools and emergency service organizations as well as electrical safety curriculum for all age groups. Visit www.ecoec.com for more information.



13. Youth Tour

Each summer ECE partners with the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC) to take a handful of 11th grade co-op members on an all-expense paid trip to Washington D.C. to tour landmarks, meet representatives, and learn about active citizenship and leadership. This year the Youth Tour Leadership Conference will take place June 17-23. Applications are open now through February 1. Visit www.ecoec.com to learn more and apply.

14. Energy Camp

ECE also partners with OAEC each summer to provide a weeklong summer camp experience introducing 8th graders to team building, leadership skills, and electrical safety. This year Energy Camp will take place May 31 - June 3. Applications are open until February 1. Visit www.ecoec.com to learn more and apply.

15. Co-op Connections

Your membership with ECE gives you access to incredible discounts on everyday expenses through Co-op Connections. Learn more at www.connections.coop.

16. A Real Person Answers the Phone

At East Central, our members always come first. When you call in a real, local person is on the other end of that call, striving to ensure your needs are met. If you ever have a problem with East Central, we want to hear from you and do what is in our power to set things right.

17. 83 Years of Experience

East Central has been serving our local communities with reliable power and best-in-class professional service since 1938.

18. Constant Improvement

ECE is constantly updating our grid and implementing

new technologies to provide reliable electricity as efficiently, and at the most affordable cost possible.

19. Community Involvement

East Central employees live in the communities we serve. Several of our employees are also members of the Cooperative. Our employees are encouraged to be actively engaged in the life of their hometown.

20. Economic Development Programs

ECE is an active partner providing information and resources to encourage the economic development of the communities in our service territory. Visit www.ecoec.com to learn about how we are helping build the communities we serve.

21. Clear Values

ECE adheres to 7 Cooperative Principles that guide what we do every day. You can see how we put our Cooperative Principles into action at www.ecoec.com.

22. Adaptable to Your Needs

Our members first philosophy means we are deeply concerned about the needs of our members. We encourage our members to reach out and express their concerns and ideas for how to improve the Cooperative. Your Cooperative.





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.

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS
\$2,081,606.43

APPLICATIONS REVIEWED
1,261

APPLICATIONS GRANTED
865

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED
\$284,500

AVERAGE MEMBER CONTRIBUTION
48¢



Black-Eyed Pea Salad

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 can black-eyed peas | Dressing |
| 1 can whole corn | 1/4 c. vinegar |
| 1 small green bell pepper | 1/4 c. oil |
| 1 small red bell pepper | 1/4 c. sugar |
| 1 small onion | 1/2 tsp. salt and black pepper |

DIRECTIONS

Drain cans. Chop peppers and onions. Mix salad ingredients in a bowl and set aside. In another bowl mix dressing ingredients. Pour over salad. Stir and mix well. Cover and let sit in refrigerator for 2 hours before serving. Serves 6-8.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Putting away those holiday decorations? Be sure to inspect cords, separate and label indoor and outdoor decorations, and store them in a dry location, safely out of reach of children and pets to help ensure they stay safe for use next year.

SOURCE: ELECTRICAL SAFETY FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

SOURCE: ECE 80TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK



East Central ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Office hours:
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Power Outage Hot line
(918) 756-0833

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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.