

country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Rural Infrastructure, Remarkable Innovation

Since co-op members banded together to put up the first poles over 80 years ago, the process to restore power has been relatively unchanged.

For example, a member calls the co-op amid a 2 a.m. thunderstorm to report an outage. Our linemen hop in their trucks to drive alongside many miles of line until they find the problem. They assess the cause, needs, and safety concerns of the situation before driving

to the nearest breaker to ensure all the equipment is deenergized. Then they return and set about the work of replacing a broken pole and reattaching all the equipment. Five or six hours and a few dozen miles later, they manually turn everything back on, and head to the next outage call in the queue.

Improvements have been made in the intervening decades. We have reduced outages times to our 2021 average of 3.6

hours per member per year and put in safeguards to save lineworkers' lives.

Today, following the leadership of our member-elected Board of Trustees, we continue to make strides toward a more safe, reliable, and affordable grid.

Innovation, Continued on Page 3

Steps to Restoration:



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

A Letter to Legislators

I offer to you a copy of my letter to two of our state legislators after spending a week in Oklahoma City reaching an agreement on a legislative issue. Most of our Board and several staff members were involved. Three members of the House of Representatives supported us from the very start to the final vote. Scott Fetgatter, Randy Randleman, and Bob Ed Culver were early and constant supporters. The final votes on our efforts produced only one no vote.

To: Trey Caldwell and Ryan Martinez,

Thank you for your service to the State of Oklahoma, the premier state in the Union. I further believe East Central Electric is the best co-op in the State and am proud to represent East Central and be a part of our recent visit with you. Even though we gave up some things I did not agree with, we can and will live with it.

As you are aware, rural electricity came about with the help of federal funds (that was mentioned several times in our visit) to help provide electricity to rural families that privately owned and investor-owned companies did not consider profitable

ventures. These federal funds came as interest bearing loans, not grants. East Central and other co-ops have worked for almost 90 years building a better quality of life for our members. In so doing, we have accumulated and paid large amounts of debt that our members pay to enjoy the benefits of electricity.

Came along HB 3835 seeking to provide those privately-held and investor-owned companies the use of our members' facilities at little or no cost, under their rules! Two fellows (we will refer to them as 'A' & 'B') each bought a nice tract of land in a planned subdivision. 'A' started with the home owners association and planned his home and amenities early on. As the homeowners' plans advanced, 'A' participate for plans for his lot and driveway. 'B' was not interested at this point later, as the area prospered he decided to build. 'A's driveway was along the property line so 'B' decided he could use 'A's driveway as his own. 'A' said he would concur but 'B' would be expected to pay his share of the cost at today's levels. 'B' said no, only a fraction of original cost. So 'B' sued

'A' intending to force 'A' into sharing his driveway. — Sound familiar?

Companies that desire to attach to structures owned by other entities should be willing to pay a fair price for that privilege in an agreed upon contract.

East Central provides and erects poles, provides and maintains easements, and rushes to repair and rebuild when disaster strikes. We currently have pole attachment contracts with others that have negotiated without HB 3835.

In regard to tax money, don't lose sight of the fact that your offices, in one of the most elegant buildings in Oklahoma, your salary, staff, expenses, etc., are all compliments of our tax dollars. You serve where most others choose not to and electric co-ops serve where originally others chose not to, but now want to privately benefit from our members' struggles.

Recently money was available at the federal level that the large investor-owned companies turned down because it was for broadband service to rural areas. East Central and other co-ops raced to the event and secured some of the funds to start our broadband service. We are nearing completion of our member build out and are offering to serve non-member areas in our footprint that agree to participate at cost.

I trust we will continue to work together to enhance the quality of life for all Oklahomans with much emphasis on our rural families.

Sincerely, Lowell Hobbs

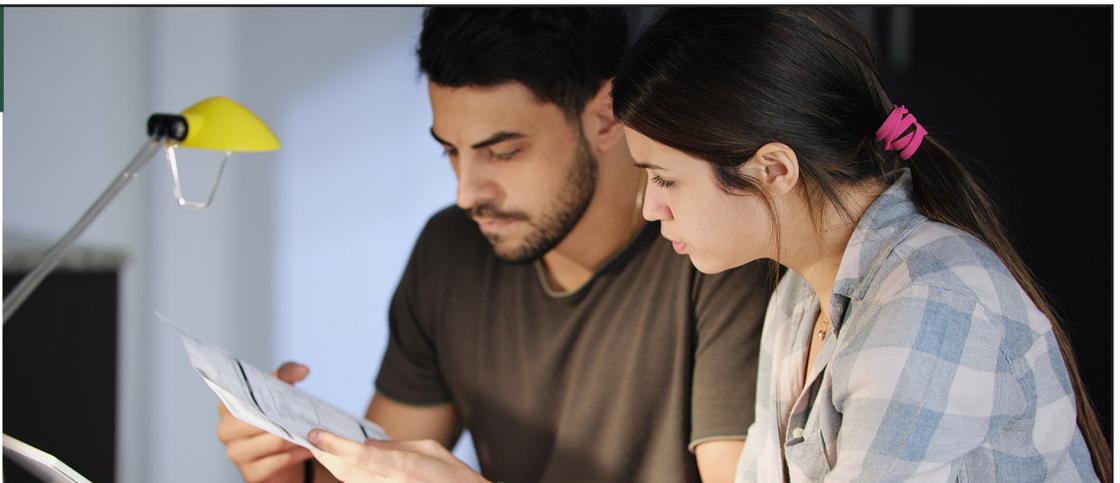
Lowell Hobbs represents ECE District 2. To reach him, please call his cellphone at 918-695-5289.

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Innovation, Cont.

What is SCADA?

As we physically connect fiber Internet to our poles, we are using rapidly evolving technologies to enhance our supervisory control and data acquisition system (SCADA) within our electric grid.

The biggest benefit of this upgrade is the added safety of our crews and contractors. Additional benefits include improved outage response times, increased visibility of the reality in the field, enhanced communication, greater control over our network, and cost-savings for our member-owners.

How does it work?

Currently our grid has fiber-integrated breakers at the beginning of each main line running out of the substation. This allows dispatchers in the office, communicating with lineworkers in the field, to remotely turn large sections of line off, on, or set them to a safety setting where any contact with the live line automatically shuts off the flow of electricity.

However, shutting off electricity at this point can disconnect over 400 members on over 80 miles of line, for a problem that may only impact 10 members. To keep power on for as many members as possible, our lineworkers manually operate breakers at crucial intersections along the lines, adding time to the restoration effort.



The fiber network is allowing us to extend the SCADA system to breakers in the field.

Eventually our office will be able to see real-time data on the health of ECE's entire electrical and fiber optic system. All 6,297 miles of line will report back to our dispatchers, taking the guess work out of the response time equation.

How does it benefit members?

Improved safety features on our grid as well as safety trained and cautious employees, has led to the cooperative surpassing two years without a lost-time accident.

As we continue to make improvements, the ability to have a bird's eye view of the health of the grid and pinpoint outage locations will further improve outage response times.

"New technology helps us serve you better, and operating more efficiently helps minimize costs," East Central Electric General Manager Tim Smith said.

What is the timeline?

The full integration of our grid with the updated SCADA technology will take several years to complete. In the meantime, we continue to rely on members using SmartHub or calling into our office to report power outages.

Digging into an Outdoor Project?



Before you dig, dial **811** or visit www.call811.com to protect underground utilities. Careless digging poses a threat to people, pipelines, and underground facilities. Contact **811** first and help keep your community safe.





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.

APPLICATIONS REVIEWED
1,268

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED
\$284,500

APPLICATIONS GRANTED
882

AVERAGE MEMBER CONTRIBUTION
48¢

TOTAL GRANTED
\$2,133,661.57



Beer Bread

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 3 C. self rising flour (add 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder and 1/2 tsp. salt to a cup of regular four as a substitute) | 1 tsp. baking powder |
| 1 C. sugar | 1 (12 oz.) can warm beer |
| | 2 medium eggs |
| | 1 Tbsp. butter, melted |

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients except butter and mix well. Pour into 2 greased loaf pans. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes. Melt butter and pour 1/2 Tbsp. over each loaf.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Every downed power line is potentially energized and dangerous until utility crews arrive on the scene to ensure power has been cut off. If you are involved with a car accident into a power pole, it is almost always safest to stay inside your vehicle.

SOURCE: SAFE ELECTRICITY

SOURCE: ECE 80TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK



East Central ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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Monday-Friday, 8 am - 4:30 pm.

Power Outage Hot line
(918) 756-0833

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