

NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

DISTRICT MEETINGS
IMPORTANT INFO FOR 2020

BIDDING FAREWELL
TO OUR COOP RETIREES

JULY 2020



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Northeast Connection is published monthly to communicate with the members of Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative.

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Nick Sutton - Operations

VINITA HEADQUARTERS

27039 South 4440 Road, Vinita, OK 74301

GROVE OFFICE

212 South Main, Grove, OK 74344

BUSINESS HOURS

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Offices are closed Saturday, Sunday and holidays.

DISPATCHING AVAILABLE 24 HOURS AT

1.800.256.6405

If you experience an outage:

1. Check your switch or circuit breaker in the house and on the meter pole to be sure the trouble is not on your side of the service.
2. When contacting the cooperative to report an outage, use the name as it appears on your bill, and have both your pole number and account number ready.

Please direct all editorial inquiries to Public Relations at 800.256.6405 or email ask@noec.coop

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NOEC'S VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Nick Sutton
Manager of Operations

As Manager of Operations for your cooperative, it is my job to ensure that you, our members, have safe and reliable electric service. When we do our job well,

members don't even think about their power—it is simply there on demand. Achieving this goal, however, involves a diverse set of programs managed by your cooperative. One of the most important and most visible of these is the vegetation management program.

Vegetation management is unique among reliability programs because of its direct impact on members. To make your electrical system safe and reliable, Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative (NOEC) must maintain vegetation growth along its nearly 5,000 miles of lines in a seven-county area.

NOEC uses a systematic approach for vegetation management called "Integrated Vegetation Management" or IVM. Several different methods are used to implement IVM, depending on site conditions and objectives. Generally, these include manual clearing or trimming, mechanical clearing, and herbicide control methods.

NOEC's vegetation management program will become a much more coordinated, consistent, and professional program, driven by national standards. Our commitment to this effort will include a more focused communication effort, a continuous improvement plan based on our past successes, past failures, future needs, and increased one-on-one interactions with our members.

Even the very best program, however, will face resistance when its standards conflict with the wishes of an individual member. It is important to understand that regardless of the changes we make in our program, there will always be the potential for conflict when any given member objects to our work. No vegetation management program can be designed to completely eliminate the impact on each individual member.

In the end, however, NOEC has an obligation to all of its members to maintain safe and reliable electric service. Vegetation management is an important component of that work and it must continue. NOEC is continually working to improve its performance as an electric utility in the areas of reliability, fiscal responsibility, safety, member education and satisfaction. Our hope is that the changes we have made—and will make in the future—will help our members better understand our methods of vegetation control. ***960457***



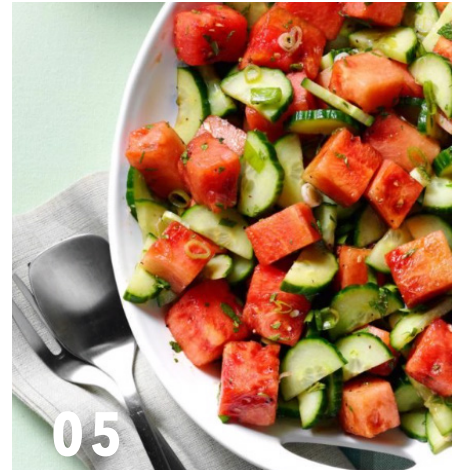
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RETIREE FAREWELL

\$100 IS HIDING!

Search the pages of NE Connection for a 6-digit account number with an asterisk on each side. For example: *XXXXXX*. Compare it to your account number, which appears on your monthly electric bill. If they match, contact the cooperative at 918.256.9332, by August 3, 2020, to claim a \$100 credit on your electric account.

Events are published as space allows and must be submitted at least 60 days in advance. Send information, including phone number for publication, to Northeast Connection Events Calendar, PO Box 948, Vinita 74301 or email to ask@noec.coop.

JULY 2020						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2 •	3 •	4 •
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Fireworks Display

July 2 | Wyandotte

Wyandotte Nation Pow Wow Grounds
918.678.2297

City of Grove July 3rd Celebration

July 3 | Grove

Wolf Creek Park Grand Lake
918.786.6107

Arts, Crafts, Music, & Cajun Festival

July 4 | Grove

Grove Civic Center
918.786.8896

Fourth of July Celebration

July 4 | Grove

Har-Ber Village on Grand Lake
918.786.6446

Duck Creek Fireworks

July 4 | Afton

Cherokee Yacht Club
918.786.2289

Spavinaw Independence Day 2020

July 4 | Spavinaw

The Point at Grand Lake RV Resort
918.589.2555

COOPERATIVE BIDS FAREWELL

LONGTIME EMPLOYEES COMBINED FOR 82 YEARS WORTH OF EXPERIENCE



Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative recently lost more than 80 years of combined work experience with the retirement of longtime employees, Dan Watt and Pam Foster.

When Watt retired from NOEC on April 17 of this year, he did so as the longest continuously-tenured employee in organization history.

Watt joined the cooperative on April 15, 1975, as a billing clerk under then supervisor Jerry Wyrick. He marked 45 years and two days of employment the day he called it a career.

Over the course of his four and a half decades of service, Watt has seen just about everything imaginable, including a headquarters re-location in 1976. There were also countless monumental weather events such as ice storms, tornadoes, and flooding.

The year 2007 stands alone in Watt's memory.

"We started and ended that year with major ice storms and had a flood in July," he recalls. "It was the worst year I remember for outages—at least from my perspective. The line workers may remember other outages as being worse for them."

Another memory that stands out for Watt are the various computer conversions.

"When I first started work, we had no computers at all," Watt said.

"I have been a part of every computer conversion for billing that we have had and each one has been more complex than the previous one. I can honestly say that I won't miss not being a part of the next conversion, whenever it comes."

Watt would spend the first five years of his career in billing before taking on what at first was a one-man show in the newly-formed computer services department. By March 1986, he was supervising a growing computer services team. When Wyrick retired in 2004, billing was added under Watt's supervision. The combined department was renamed "member and technical support."

Watt's last position change occurred in November 2011 when he became supervisor of billing after the technical support group was split back out into its own department.

Dan has been married to wife Becky for 34 years. The Watts live in Miami and have two grown children. Daughter Breanna Worstell and husband Ian reside in Joplin, Missouri. The Watts' son Joel is a senior at the University of Arkansas majoring in Chemical Engineering.

What Watt will miss most he says are the relationships he forged with co-workers.

"There are a great bunch of employees here now and have been in the past," he said. "Even though I don't (and didn't) see eye-to-eye with everyone all the time, I still say that the most enjoyable part of working here is working with my co-workers. You all support, encourage, and challenge me to be a better person, and I am extremely grateful for that."

He added: "To sum it up, I suppose you could say that I have enjoyed the majority of everything about working for the cooperative, which is why I stayed for this long."

Foster is calling it a career and exchanging her responsibilities as Human Resources/Benefits Administrator here at the cooperative for something she is sure to find even more rewarding. Foster worked the last day of her 37-year career here at NOEC on May 22 and plans on trading in her personnel files for more time spent with her grandchildren and volunteering.

"My new job will be fulfilling grandma duties," Foster confirmed with a smile. "I plan to volunteer at the church, The Salvation Army, BSF, CASA, and then do some substituting. My main objective is to be home early enough to fix hubby dinner. We plan to do some traveling once he retires in a couple of years."

Foster has actually worked two different stretches here at the cooperative. She was originally hired in September 1981.

"I started in the billing department with one of the original billing girls, Debbie Koesler. Some of the originals are still here," she said. "Ten-key skills were a must and you had to be fast and accurate in order to balance stubs and checks, and then payments had to be posted. One thing was absolute: you did not miss a multiplier."

Foster's cooperative career went on hiatus when an opportunity arose for her and husband Johnie Wayne to manage an Amoco station in Junction City, Kansas. That venture lasted nearly two years.

"We realized we missed home," she said. "An opportunity came open in the accounting department and I was rehired in October of 1987."

Foster said she has had a robust and satisfying career here at NOEC.

"I was fortunate to work with many wonderful people and in different departments," she said. "After billing, I worked as an engineering clerk, which helped me broaden my understanding of cooperative infrastructure. I enjoyed trips to the field to learn about the equipment, lines, etc. Then I went back to accounting. During my tenure with NOEC, I did accounts payable, accounts receivable, benefits/payroll, capital credits, general ledger, and relief cashier. I believe all of this experience helped prepare me to maintain books for the C-Band satellite division in 1989. In 1997 I became benefits administrator and payroll clerk and at the end of 1999 a new position came available, human resources/benefits administrator."

Foster credits the cooperative culture with helping her succeed at whatever task she was asked to perform.

"Having co-workers willing to share their wisdom, reason, creativity and skill helped me grow and I am forever grateful for them," she said. "I would encourage everyone to share their knowledge and learn from one another. Everyone has a gift that can be used to benefit the common good of the cooperative."

Pam and Johnie Wayne live in Miami and celebrated 39 years of marriage on May 29. They have two grown children, Brandon and Amanda, and four grandchildren. Brandon is married to Mika, and Amanda is married to Josh Henry.

"We have three grandsons: Hudson is seven years old, Sawyer is six, and Lane is three," Foster said. "We also have a beautiful granddaughter, Karson, who is four. Papa has taught them to call me granny grunt and they think it's the funniest thing ever."

Foster will leave her cooperative career with many fond memories. For her, it was less about the job and more about the people.

"I enjoyed all of the positions I held, but the best part was the privilege of getting to know each employee and the working relationships that were built over the years," she said. "Many of us played softball together, had our babies around the same time, and now are grandmas together. It was like family here."

It's easy to forget, but Foster also served as our cooperative credit union director for 25 years—she was re-elected unanimously by her fellow employees eight times—and as an OAEC statewide human resources officer for four years. Tasks performed in those capacity provide no additional income and can often be thankless, but Pam served tirelessly.

"A quote I learned at an HR conference many years ago is: 'People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.' That has always stuck with me and I believe our cooperative is made up of employees who care about one another and continue to serve one another."

Foster said the REC Day held at South Park in Vinita won't soon be forgotten.

"Those annual meetings were always interesting—more like challenging—depending on the weather," she chuckled.

And then there were the seemingly cataclysmic weather events.

"I will never forget the historic ice storm in December 2007," she said. "I can remember it being year-end and W2 season. Some of the office people worked their regular eight hours through the day and then took outage calls for another 4-8 hours before going home long enough to sleep, clean up and come back to work on un-driveable roads. I felt so sorry for the field employees. It was cold and the conditions were horrible."

As she closes what has been a rewarding chapter in her life and awaits the next, Foster offered these words of wisdom:

"Time is so precious. Once we give it, we can't get it back," she said. "Yes, we can always earn more money, but we can't make more time. So use it wisely."



DISTRICT MEETINGS

DISTRICTS 1, 3, AND 5 TO SELECT BOARD CANDIDATES

CHARLES A. WYRICK

DISTRICT 1 | JULY 20, 2020

First Christian Church
2424 N Main St
Miami, OK

Directions: Located across the street from Walmart, behind Charlie's Chicken.

BRIAN KELLY

DISTRICT 3 | JULY 21, 2020

Welch Civic Center
610 S Curtis
Welch, OK

Directions: Located 2 blocks east and 2 blocks south of Highway 10 & 2 intersection.

DANDY A. RISMAN

DISTRICT 5 | JULY 23, 2020

Ketchum High School
236 N Fulton St
Ketchum, OK

Directions: Located 1.5 blocks north of Highway 85 on Fulton/Cohea Lane.

REQUIREMENT TO REGISTER

At District Meetings

In accordance with Article I of Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative, Inc.'s, Bylaws, only eligible members may register and cast a vote at any member meeting. In order to register and vote you MUST be one of the following:

- **Primary on an individual account**
- **Primary or secondary on a joint account**
- **Named representative of a business or organization (present a letter from the governing body of the entity stating you are the representative for that entity)**

If you are not listed on the account, regardless of marital status, you will not be able to register to vote. We strongly encourage you to check your account. It is simple to add a person to make a joint account. Call member services at 800.256.6405.

The Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees is extending invitations to Cooperative members in Districts 1, 3, and 5 to attend their respective District Meetings this summer. As always, the invitation includes giveaways, along with the chance to win a \$250 electric credit.

Trustee Terms for Charles A. Wyrick, Brian Kelly, and Dandy A. Risman are expiring and Trustee elections are taking place in 2020 for three-year terms on the Cooperative Board of Trustees. The Board is also seeking a little help from members in Districts 1, 3, and 5 to conduct the yearly business of the Cooperative.

Members may register for District Meetings from 6-7 p.m. Those in line at this time will be given a card ensuring their opportunity to register.

The meeting will start as soon as is practical thereafter or when all members with cards have registered.

Please watch your mail for a postcard notification in the event it is necessary to cancel your district meeting.

NOTE: Currently, the Cooperative is planning to conduct the 2020 District Meetings in the same manner it has conducted District Meetings in the past. However, due to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic in the United States, there may be government-imposed restrictions or guidelines in place, limiting the size of gatherings such as the Cooperative's District Meetings, or it may otherwise be unsafe to gather for the District Meetings. If such restrictions or guidelines are in place at the time set for the District Meetings, or if it is otherwise unsafe to gather for the District Meetings due to COVID-19, then the Cooperative may take certain actions necessary to maintain the safety of the members, Cooperative employees, and the public, and/or to comply with any government imposed restrictions/guidelines regarding gatherings. These actions may include, but are not limited to: (1) postponing the District Meetings to a later date that is not less than thirty (30) nor more than ninety (90) days prior to the date of the Annual Meeting, in accordance with Section 4.06 of the Cooperative's Bylaws; (2) utilizing drive-thru registration and voting; (3) conducting the District Meetings utilizing live video technology (e.g., Facebook Live); or (4) if necessary, cancelling the District Meetings. The Cooperative will take all reasonable efforts to conduct the District Meetings, nominate Trustee candidates, and elect Trustees in accordance with the Cooperative's Bylaws, while maintaining the safety of the members, Cooperative employees, and the public, and complying with any government-imposed restrictions/guidelines regarding gatherings.



RECIPES

JULY IS NATIONAL PICNIC MONTH



JUDY CHAMBERLAIN | COLCORD

ORANGE-ADE

- 2 Pkgs Lemonade Kool-Aid
- 1/2 Pkg Orange Kool-Aid
- Water: Follow Pkg Instructions
- 2 1/2-3/4 Cups Sugar
- 1 Orange, Juiced
- 1 Lemon, Juiced

Mix ingredients together, chill thoroughly, and enjoy! About 20 servings.



KAY CALDWELL | GROVE

CUCUMBER WATERMELON SALAD

- 2 Cucumbers, Peeled & Cut
- 1 Watermelon, Cubed
- 3 Green Onions, Diced
- 1/2 Cup Honey
- 1/2 Cup Apple Cider Vin.

Mix ingredients together and chill; serve cold.



MAUREEN APPERSON | VINITA

CRUNCHY GRANOLA BAR

- 7 Cups Oats
- 1/2 Cup Vegetable Oil
- 1/2 TB Salt
- 3/4 Cup Honey
- 3/4 Cup Light Brown Sugar
- 1 TB Vanilla
- 2 TB Cinnamon
- 1 1/2 Cups Almonds

Mix together and spread mixture onto cookie sheet. Bake at 375° for 30 minutes. Allow to cool and cut into rectangles.

AIR INFILTRATION CAN BE A FORMIDABLE FOE

A leaky home allows bad air to enter and good air to leave. This can rob you of hundreds of energy dollars.

There are dozens of areas in your home that allow this unwanted air flow. Look for gaps at door thresholds, fireplace chimneys, attic entrances, whole-house fans, around windows, clothes dryer vents, sliding glass doors, bathroom exhaust fans, plumbing gaps under sinks, and recessed lights to name a few.

You can use a simple method to help find the places you think might be leaky. On a windy day, tear a narrow strip of tissue paper and tape it close to the areas under question. Make sure the ceiling fans are off, the refrigerator is not operating and the air conditioner/furnace is not blowing. The more the paper moves the more severe the leak.

A resource for ways to fix problems can be found at noec.coop under do-it-yourself energy audits.



SUMMER SAFETY

DANGER IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

"Awareness among boat owners and marina operators can help prevent electric shock drowning and other electrical injuries."



Unknowingly, many place themselves in harm's way by swimming near boats and docks. This innocent act can turn tragic when faulty wiring or the use of damaged cords and other devices causes the surrounding water to become energized from electricity leakage. Awareness among boat owners and marina operators can help prevent electric shock drowning and other electrical injuries.

- Have your dockside electrical system (pedestal) inspected and updated yearly by a qualified electrician. If you have a new one installed, hire a qualified electrician to be sure it meets all safety and code standards.
- Have "Marine Listed" Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) installed on the dock and test them monthly.
- Require boat owners to use only "Marine Listed" shore or marine power cords, plugs, receptacles, and extension cords that have been tested by Underwriters Laboratories (UL). They are specifically designed for use near water.
- Never use cords that are frayed or damaged or that have had the prongs removed or altered.