A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

MARKET

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THE MARKET AT 216 RANCH

DECEMBER 2020



Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperatives

NECONNECTION 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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- 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.
- 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.

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PROTECT YOUR DATA

Ricky Hignite Manager of Information Technology

Let me start by saying I hope you and your loved ones are safe and healthy this holiday season.

In these trying times it's a good idea to make sure you are keeping

your data backed up properly. What would you do if you woke up tomorrow and discovered all family pictures had been lost? Treasured photos of loved ones-children, grandchildren, and parents-all gone. What about important business or financial information? What if tomorrow your personal files simply vanished?

The next time you are working with email, family photos, tax returns, or even college work, take a moment. Stop and think. What would you do if you were to lose everything overnight? It is scary to think about. What's scarier is that it is more likely to happen now than at any point in the past. Not only do you have to worry about your computer crashing, you now have to worry about ransomware infecting your computer and locking you out of everything.

Now is a good time to take a moment and assess how you are protecting data from accidental deletion, hardware failure, or even service termination. You could lose your digital information in the blink of an eye should your computer fail, the cloud service that houses your data shuts down unexpectedly, or someone mistakenly deletes your files. Worse yet, what if someone were to encrypt your data, preventing you from accessing it on your own device?

Do yourself and your loved ones a favor and start backing up data securely and in different ways. The rule of thumb is it isn't backed up until it's in three different locations. Save data locally to something like an external or flash drive. Next, save that same data online with a reputable cloud backup provider that can protect against ransomware. Lastly, back data up locally and store the backup device somewhere offsite. Physically storing your backup offsite can protect you from a fire, tornado, burglary, and even malware.

Another piece of advice is to communicate with loved ones about how you are backing up data and how to access it if something were to happen to you.

I hope this helps someone out there keep their data more secure. Again, stay safe and happy holidays.

On the Cover: The Market at 216 Ranch's staff is ready to serve you: (from left) Mary Williams, Carly Harper, Sheena Williams, and Sandy Nelson.

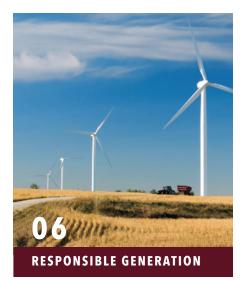
"We have the best team." -The Market at 216 Ranch owner Randy Williams







FEATURE RECIPE





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 publicrelations@noec.coop

\$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 918.256.9337, by January 4, 2020, to claim a \$100 credit on your electric account.

DECEMBER 2020 EVENTS

STEM Activities Dec 1, 7, 8, 10, 15, 17 | Grove Grove Public Library 918.786.2945

Active Parenting Classes Dec 3, 10, 17 | Grove Family Services On Grand Lake 918.404.4620

Christmas Light Boat Parade Dec 5 | Afton Cherokee Yacht Club 918.782.4421

American Legion Bingo for Everyone Dec 5, 12, 19, 26 | Grove American Legion Post 178 918.786.9860

Helping Children Cope with Divorce Classes Dec 7, 14, 21, 28 | Grove Family Services On Grand Lake 918.404.4620

American Legion Meeting Dec 8 | Afton Town of Afton 918.257.4304 Christmas Carols at The Coleman 2020 Dec 11 | Miami Coleman Theatre Beautiful 918.540.2425

Lights On the Lake Dec 12 | Grove Downtown Grove 918.786.9079

Santa's Ozark Mountain Village Dec 19 | Grove Har-Ber Village On Grand Lake 918.786.6446

Second Chance Pet Rescue Membership Drive Dec 31 | Grove Second Chance Pet Rescue 918.786.7630

> December events are subject to date change or cancellation. Please contact the host for most current event information.

DECEMBER 2020 - NECONNECTION | 01

THE MARKET AT 216 RANCH

How many businesses host a grand opening the same weekend as a global pandemic?

How many start ups hang a shingle only to face a nationwide shutdown?

Monkey Island residents Randy and Mary Williams did just that and survived to tell about it.

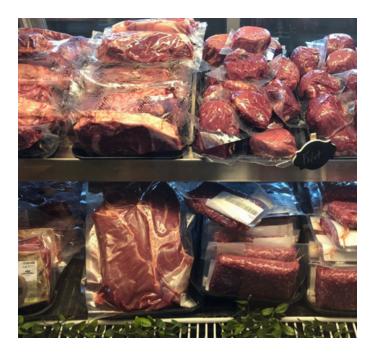
The truth of the matter is that the couple's venture did much more than just survive. It thrived.



Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative is proud to serve the Williamses and one of the area's newest ventures, **The Market at 216 Ranch** on Monkey Island. If you

haven't been to The Market, you are missing out on the area's finest selection of locally-raised and processed beef, as well a variety of other locally-produced baked items.

The Market is open three days a week. Plan a visit from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursdays, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fridays, or from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturdays.



Against what some would consider all odds, The Market at 216 Ranch has indeed flourished.

Randy remembers well that last weekend of March 2020. After three months of weather-induced construction delays, The Market was finally ready to open its doors. It just so happened that the country's COVID-19 response ramped up that weekend. He chuckles now as he recalls the anticipation of unveiling his family's new investment "the same weekend America closed."

Randy would have never planned it this way–actually he had much different plans–but things couldn't have worked out any better for The Market from a strictly business standpoint. You'll no doubt recall the mad dash that cleared grocery store shelves and the subsequent meat shortage. Demand was created. Supply was on its way from a brand new business that just so happened to fit the "essential" description.

"We had planned months in advance. We had kill dates booked. We had beef hanging. It was ready to go," he said.

About that beef. The beef sold at The Market isn't just any beef. It's all 100% USDA Certified Hereford beef from the Williamses' own 216 Ranch.

"We sell only certified Hereford beef," Randy said. "We produce a large percentage of the beef we have in the store. Due to the overwhelming demand we have for premium steaks, we've partnered with another certified Hereford producer to supplement what we produce. We use all local vendors and all Made in Oklahoma products in the store. We have fresh cinnamon rolls, fresh cobbler, and other fresh products. We bring them in fresh right before we open. Every week we have new items in the store. It's a constant evolution."

Randy added: "One of our mottos is we spend our money where we make our money. We are going to invest in people around here. We pay our taxes here, we own property here, and we live here. We are going to invest in people who are here to help us with our business.



The business model employed by The Market is certainly distinctive. "What we are doing is pretty unique," Randy agreed. "Plus the fact that we are all Hereford beef is totally unique."

Why Hereford, you ask?

"In the cattle industry there are measurables," Randy explained. "Each year they do what is called a shear test where they take representations from all breeds of cattle and they shear the beef. Nine out of ten years Hereford will win the tenderness shear test. From tenderness to flavor, it's exceptional beef. That is why we went the direction that we did. Angus are great cattle and the Angus Association is a fantastic organization with brilliant marketing. We sell every one of our Hereford bulls to Angus cattle people. But I have never been one to follow the crowd. We chose the Hereford for a couple of reasons, but winning the shear test tenderness rating nearly ever year is a big plus in my book."

The Williamses are no strangers to Grand Lake. They moved to Grove from Owasso in 1998 when Mary accepted the job of bank president at Bank of Oklahoma in Grove. They eventually bought land in Fairland and started a commercial cattle operation.

"We did that for a couple of years and then we got into the registered Hereford cattle business," Randy explained. "That's where we are today. We are one hundred percent registered Hereford."

Randy said the primary family business over the past several years has been selling bulls.

The Market at 216 Ranch 27885 Hwy 125, Afton, OK 74331 www.216ranch.com



"As you well know, not every calf makes a breeding bull, so we developed a pretty good business selling beef," he said. "When we bought this property here on Monkey Island, we decided to add a storefront to see if we could sell a steak. That's how The Market started."

The Williamses are a testament to hard work. Both Randy and Mary also have full-time jobs in the corporate world. Mary works in banking–she's now with Bank of Grand Lake. Randy is Vice-President of Sales for Alabama-based Fontaine Trailer, the largest flatbed trailer manufacturer in North America.

"I typically travel all over North America," said Randy. "Almost every week I get on an airplane and go somewhere. During this COVID-19 outbreak I've had almost zero travel. Randy said The Market learned to adapt quickly to the buying habits and trends of its growing customer base. Many adjustments are simply made on the fly.

"One of our biggest challenges is estimating what products to have on the shelf," he explained. "Weather plays a huge role. If it's a beautiful weekend, people are going to grill and eat a lot of steak. On a cold, rainy, fall weekend they buy hamburger and make chili. Holiday weekends are pretty easy because everyone grills. They're going to grill because they're at the lake. Of course, we cut our meat to match what people are going to be doing. We put in our meat order on Monday and steaks are cut on Wednesday. If I look at the weather and I see rain all week but then Friday and Saturday are supposed to be beautiful, I know people are going to want to get outside because they've been cooped up all week so I'll go pretty heavy on ribeyes and filets."

He added: "For us, it's about demand. It's about what the customer wants. I had no idea the demand we would have for filets and ribeyes. I had no idea how popular they are. Another thing we don't do is cut thin steaks. Our steaks are an inch and a quarter or more. We can't sell thin steaks."

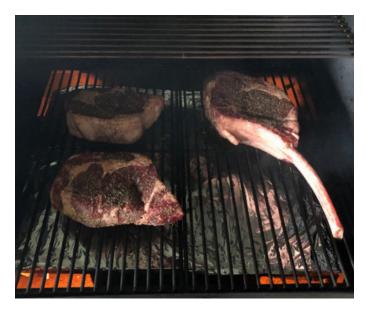
As one might expect, The Market's customer base is a fairly even split of weekenders and full-time lake residents.

"We do have a lot of local, repeat customers who are very consistent about coming in and getting what they need," Randy said. "It really is an interesting dynamic. It's kind of a fifty-fifty deal, but the local buy is a totally different buy than the weekender so, again, that means more adjustment on inventory."

Even though winter months will undoubtedly bring fewer people to the lake, Randy does not expect The Market to be "seasonal." He did say they plan on closing the store for up to a month this winter in order to accommodate an expansion project.

"At this point, I would say we are going to be open eleven months out of the year," he said. "We have plans this winter to close down for a few weeks. We aren't sure when or exactly how long, but probably right after the holidays. We want to expand the store so we can offer more local products next year. That's one of our immediate goals. But I would say for the most part we will be open all year."

Don't be surprised if you see a celebrity or two shopping at The Market.



"We do have several high-profile customers who come in here," Randy said. "For their privacy I'm not going to mention their names, but if I did you would know them all."

For those occasional visitors to the lake who don't want to wait for another of The Market's delicious Hereford steaks, Randy said they are now shipping beef all over the U.S.

"Fifty percent of our customer base is not local," Randy said. "They come to this area from all over the country and now they're calling and asking us to ship beef to them."

The Market can accommodate such requests since it uses a USDA-inspected processing plant.

"Our beef products are all one-hundred percent USDAinspected," said Randy. "We use the Quapaw plant in Miami. They do one-hundred percent of our work there and they do a fantastic job. Every cut of beef is sealed in a Cryovac package. They do fantastic work."

Follow them on Facebook. For more information about The Market at 216 Ranch, call or text Randy at 918.964.0216 or email him at randy@216ranch.com.

"We felt like we had a leading to open this business," Randy said. "We felt like it was something we were supposed to do. We had a lot of people buying beef from us already so we knew there was a need in the area. The timing was unimaginable. We would have never planned it this way. Our business absolutely went from zero to 'we can't keep up.' We were blown awayjust really humbled by it all. Now we're out here trying to keep our heads down, do our jobs, and make this thing work."





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DECEMBER 2020 - NECONNECTION | 05

RESPONSIBLE GENERATION

A Message from AECI | By Mark Viguet

An old saying states that people who live and work in rural America are the original environmentalists. After all, communities so connected to the land, air and water for their well-being are naturally tuned to safeguard them today and for future generations. When it comes to power generation for member-consumers, Associated Electric Cooperative reflects the values of the people who receive its electricity. Generating power responsibly is a key priority.

Power generated the right way

Balancing reliable and affordable electricity with environmental responsibility is a longstanding commitment Associated Electric makes to those receiving its electricity. By adding significant amounts of wind power to diversify generating sources, investing in environmental controls and staying up to date with regulations and technologies, Associated continues to comply with environmental regulations at an affordable cost for members. This requires teamwork throughout the generation cooperative.

Environmental commitment delivers results

"Making sure our power generation activities safeguard air, water and land is a big responsibility. Our track record shows Associated delivers meaningful results members can be proud of," says Brent Ross, Associated's managing director of environmental, health and safety. "It's a team effort."

Ross and his staff keep up with complex federal and state regulatory changes, conduct safety and environmental training and audits, and monitor employee safety. They also handle reporting to state and federal agencies, permits, plus monitor and take samples of water, air and soil to ensure Associated continues to be a good steward of natural resources.

Significant investments make the difference

More than \$1.1 billion has been invested by Associated to reduce air emissions since 1994, resulting in tremendous improvements in air quality. Emissions from Associated's coal power plants have dropped 80 to 90 percent, depending on the specific emission being monitored. While the current results are impressive, compliance with new and changing land, air and water regulations is an ongoing priority.

"We understand how important our environment is to everyone we serve, so making a difference with measurable results is what we strive for each day," Ross said.

Wind power diversifies generation sources

Associated was the first utility provider in Missouri of large-scale wind power and remains a leader. Already receiving power from seven wind farms, an eighth wind farm later this year means Associated will have 1,240 megawatts of wind power delivered from 626 wind turbines across three states. Locking in long-term, fixedcost wind power helps Associated diversify its generation sources for years to come.

Electric cooperatives comply with net metering laws

While large utility-size solar installations have yet to make sense for Associated, about 30 megawatts of solar power is being produced by member-consumers connected to Associated's member systems. Net metering laws mandate the process for local cooperatives to purchase any excess energy produced by the solar systems located at the homes and businesses of member-consumers.

A legacy of environmental excellence

Associated Electric received the U.S. Department of Interior's highest honor for its innovative, successful reclamation that improved water quality and transformed 1,000 acres that previously served as a coal mine into productive pasture, wetlands and forest.

Today, the land features ponds that provide fishing and wildlife habitat, woodlands that provide shelter for many species, land leased to neighboring farmers for pasture, soil and crop research and planted habitat for Monarchs and other pollinators.

Responsible generation for today and tomorrow

Whether the challenge is managing generation sources or making investments to ensure land, air and water are protected, Associated Electric takes its responsibilities seriously. Members wouldn't have it any other way.

For more information about Associated Electric and its environmental efforts, visit www.aeci.org.

"Making sure our power generation activities safeguard air, water and land is a big responsibility. Our track record shows Associated delivers meaningful results members can be proud of."

 Brent Ross, Associated's director of environmental health and safety Cow Branch Wind Farm helps diversify energy sources. Photo courtesy of Associated Electric Cooperative Incorporated.

GREEN POWER AVAILABLE TO NOEC MEMBERS SINCE 2006

Green power was first made available to Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative members back in 2006 through a partnership with KAMO, our wholesale power supplier. NOEC members were given an opportunity to join the "green team" and support the use of renewable, environmentally-friendly energy.

What is green power? The term "green power" generally refers to electricity generated by renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, geothermal, hydropower and various forms of biomass. Increasingly, electricity customers are being afforded options as retail power markets open to competition or when regulated utilities develop green pricing programs. A growing number of retail customers in the United States now have an option to purchase green power directly from their electricity supplier.

Why buy green power? By choosing to purchase green power, you can support increased development of renewable energy sources, which can reduce the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and natural gas. Greater reliance on renewable sources also provides economic benefits and can improve our national energy security.

Green power is reserved in "blocks" that represent 100 kWh of energy per month for one year. Members interested in participating are required to complete a year-long agreement with the cooperative to purchase green power. In doing so, an additional expense known as an "adder" is added to the electric bill. The adder represents the exact, additional cost the cooperative pays the wholesale power supplier. While the adder may change from year to year, participating members lock in the same rate for the year. During the initial offering in 2006, members were limited to a maximum purchase of up to five blocks. This maximum since has been removed. Members who wish to participate may commit to purchase whole blocks with an unlimited purchase level.

COOPERATIVE EVALUATING EVS

While Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative continues to be environmentally responsible in its operations, one area that deserves to be watched closely is electric vehicles–specifically electric pickups. Among several other automobile makers, Ford is developing an electric F-150 and investing nearly a billion dollars into a new production facility to build the pickup.

"The development of a fleet pickup capable of extended operating ranges could be more cost efficient for cooperative operations, ultimately saving members money," explained Darryll Lindsey, NOEC's Manager of Member Services. "For things like staking new services and storm assessments, electric pickups make sense for the cooperative. They may also be attractive for members to use in farming operations."

NOEC will keep members posted as the technology develops.

"The developmen of extended ope be more cost eff operations, ultir money." explair Manager of Men





FEATURE RECIPE DECEMBER IS NATIONAL PEAR MONTH



Prep: 35 minutes Bake: 80 minutes + cooling Makes: 8 servings

RUBY LEWIS | CHELSEA

GINGERSNAP CRUMB PEAR PIE

INGREDIENTS

 Pastry for single-crust pie (9 inches)

Topping

- 1 cup crushed gingersnap cookies (about 16 cookies)
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- Pinch salt
- 1/2 cup cold butter, cubed

Filling

- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp ground ginger
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2 1/2 lbs ripe pears, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Hot caramel ice cream topping, optional
- *426452*

1.On a lightly floured surface, roll pastry dough to a 1/8 inch thick circle; transfer to a 9 inch pie plate. Trim and flute edge. Refrigerate 30 minutes. Preheat oven to 400°.

- 2.Line unpricked pastry with a double thickness of foil. Fill with pie weights. Bake 15-20 minutes or until edges are golden.
 Remove foil and weights; bake 3-6 minutes or until bottom is golden. Cool on a wire rack.
 Reduce oven setting to 350°.
- 3.For topping, in a food processor, combine crushed cookies, flour, brown sugar, and salt. Add butter; pulse until crumbly.
- 4.For filling, mix sugar, flour, ginger and salt. Gently stir in pears, lemon juice and vanilla. Transfer to crust; add topping.
- 5.Place pie on a baking sheet; bake 60-70 minutes or until lightly browned and pears are tender. Cover with foil the last 15 minutes if needed to prevent overbrowning. Cool on a wire rack 1 hour before serving. If desired, drizzle with caramel topping. Serve.

WINTER PREPAREDNESS ENERGY EFFICIENCY & HOLIDAY SAFETY

ENERGY EFFICIENCY & HOLIDAY SAFE

SEALING YOUR HOME

Reducing the air that leaks in and out of your home is an effective way to cut heating costs, increase comfort, and create a healthier indoor environment. Caulking and weatherstripping are two simple and effective air-sealing techniques that offer quick returns on investment, often one year or less. Caulk is generally used for cracks and openings between stationary house components such as around door and window frames, and weatherstripping is used to seal components that move, such as doors and windows.

Common Trouble Spots:

- Windows & Doors
- Attic Air Sealing
- Attic Kneewalls
- Shaft for Piping or Ducts
- Dropped Ceiling/Sofitt
- Staircase Framing at Exterior Wall
- Porch Roo⁻
- Flume or Chimney Shaft
- Attic Access
- Recessed Lighting
- Ducts
- Whole-House Fan
- Exterior Wall Penetrations
- Fireplace Wall



HOLIDAY DECORATING SAFETY TIPS

Keep live trees away from heat sources

Place your tree away from fireplaces and heaters, and keep a fire extinguisher near your tree. Live trees are highly flammable, due to needles and sap.

Hydrate your tree

A dry tree can catch fire faster than one that has been properly watered. Check the water level every day to ensure proper hydration. Starting with a green tree is one way to keep it from drying out so quickly.

Fake it

If you buy an artificial tree, make sure it's labeled "fire resistant." Fire-resistant trees are less susceptible to catching fire.

Work as a team

When stringing lights and decorations above your normal reach, make sure you use a proper ladder with someone supporting the base.

Power down before you turn in

Turn off all lights when you go to bed and before leaving the house to avoid a short that could start an electrical fire.

Prevent electrical cord damage

Don't mount lights in a way that might damage the cords, and avoid using nails or tacks. Use hooks or insulated staples instead.

Beware of poisonous plants

While festive, poinsettias are poisonous when eaten, so keep them out of reach of kids and pets.



YOUTH TOUR: JUNE 18-24, 2021

Submissions Due: March 5, 2021

- Essay of 500 words or more
- Topic for essay will be "Of The Seven Cooperative Principles, My Favorite Is..."

COLLEGE/TRADE SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

Submissions Due: March 19, 2021

• High school seniors whose parents or guardians are NOEC members and who live in a household served by NOEC electric

ENERGY CAMP: JUNE 1-4, 2021

Submissions Due: April 9, 2021

- Essay of 500 words or less
- Topic for essay will be "Three Ways I Can Help My Family Save Energy..."

YOUTH PROGRAMS 2021: SUBMIT TODAY!

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative is inviting area students to participate in its 2020-21 school year youth programs and in return receive some muchdeserved recognition.

The cooperative is sponsoring two essay contests, as well as a college scholarship opportunity. Information can be found online at www.noec.coop under the Community Services tab. Interested individuals can request information by emailing clint.branham@noec. coop or by phone at 1-800-256-6405, ext. 9340.

Youth Tour

NOEC will be sending four high school juniors from its service area on a week-long, all-expense-paid tour of our nation's capital in 2021 as part of its annual Youth Tour essay contest. If you are in the eleventh grade and attend school within the cooperative service area of Mayes, Delaware, Craig and Ottawa Counties (or Chelsea High School in Rogers County) you are eligible to enter this contest.

College/Trade School Scholarship

High school seniors whose parents or guardians are Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative members and who live in a household served by NOEC electric are encouraged to apply for a \$1,000 college/trade school scholarship. Four winners will be selected. Scholarship applications are available upon request.

Energy Camp

Four eighth-graders from the cooperative service area will enjoy a week-long adventure at Canyon Camp near beautiful Red Rock Canyon in Hinton, Oklahoma, during the 2021 Energy Camp. A winning essay will earn these eighth-graders an opportunity to take part in a fun and educational trip that comes around only once.

Classroom Incentive

NOEC is encouraging area teachers to get involved and incorporate the essay contests into classroom curriculum. If an instructor whose administration of an essay as part of classroom curriculum produces a contest finalist, he or she could be rewarded with as much as \$200 toward the purchase of classroom materials or equipment.

Find more youth program information and applications on our website at: www.noec.coop.

NECONNECTION DECEMBER 2020