

NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



NORTHEAST SENDS HELP
HURRICANE RESTORATION UPDATES

RECORD SETTING REC DAY
THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS

NOVEMBER 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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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 publicrelations@noec.coop

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SMALL CHANGE THAT CHANGES LIVES

Connie Porter

Manager of Financial Services

In recent months you have read in this column about the history of Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative as well as Northeast Rural Services, the co-op's wholly-owned subsidiary.

This month I would like to provide you with a little history regarding our Northeast Oklahoma Electric Foundation, also known as Operation Round-Up.

Operation Round-Up is a charitable and philanthropic organization that seeks to improve the quality of life throughout our multi-county service territory. The organization was established in June 1998.

Operation Round-Up is a voluntary program that allows cooperative members to have their monthly electric bills rounded up to the next whole dollar. For example, a bill of \$97.54 would be rounded up to \$98. The extra 46 cents would go to the Operation Round-Up fund. The average yearly contribution for a participant is \$6 with the most being \$11.88.

Operation Round-Up is governed by a nine-member board of directors appointed by the NOEC board of trustees. These directors meet the last Tuesday of every odd month to review the applications and select grant recipients. The board packet is mailed the week prior to the meeting date, with the application deadline date eighteen days before the board meeting.

Since its inception in 1998, the Operation Round-Up program has awarded grants totaling more than \$3.1 million dollars to various organizations such as local police and fire departments, Boys & Girls Clubs, and other nonprofit organizations, along with needy individuals who meet the requirements set forth in Foundation by-laws. Foundation by-laws prohibit the board from awarding grants for the purpose of paying electric bills.

Thank you to the 19,900 NOEC members who participate in this program, you help make a difference in the lives of our northeast Oklahoma communities by volunteering this small amount of change each month. Thank you also to the Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative Foundation board of directors, who volunteer numerous hours of loyal service and made valuable contributions through their prudent decision-making. All of this truly improves the quality of life for many throughout our service territory.

Cooperative members who are currently not involved with the Operation Round-Up program but would like to begin contributing, please use the SmartHub app or contact the NOEC Member Services Department today by calling 1.800.256.6405.



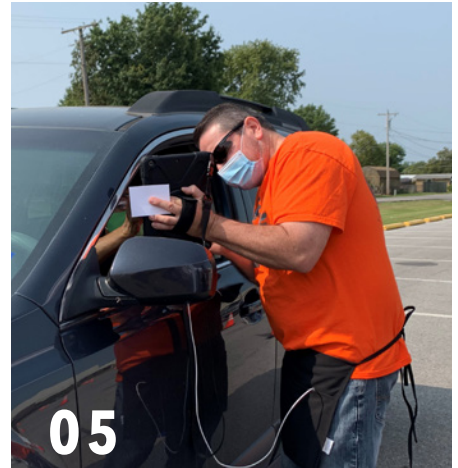
02

HURRICANE RESTORATION



10

NATIONAL DRESSING MONTH



05

2020 SETS REC DAY RECORD



08

HOLIDAY LIGHT SAFETY

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 December 1, 2020, to claim a \$100 credit on your electric account.

NOVEMBER 2020 EVENTS

Helping Children Cope with Divorce Classes

Nov 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 | Grove
Family Services on Grand LLC
918.404.4620

Active Parenting Classes

Nov 5, 12, 19, 26 | Grove
Family Services on Grand LLC
918.404.4620

David Phelps

Nov 6 | Miami
Coleman Theatre
918.540.2425

Boho Health Consulting Cannabis Wellness Retreat

Nov 6 | Spavinaw
Hampton Heights
918.782.6113

2 Hip Chicks

Nov 7 | Pryor
Mayes County Fair Grounds
918.825.3241

Potluck Dinner at The Pub

Nov 10 | Monkey Island
Monkey Island Pub
918.257.8776

2020 Blue Star Mothers Annual Auction Fundraiser

Nov 12 | Pryor
Mayes County Fair Grounds
918.825.3241

American Legion Meeting

Nov 14 | Afton
City Hall
918.257.4304

Elvis, Orbison, Cash

Nov 21 | Miami
Coleman Theatre
918.540.2425

Santa's Ozark Mountain Village

Nov 27 | Grove
Har-Ber Village on Grand Lake
918.786.6446

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

NOEC SENDS MULTIPLE CREWS

TO ASSIST WITH HURRICANE RESTORATION



Crew 1: Aaron Farbro, Matt Lemons, Clint Cupp, Ricky Reece, Kelly Morgan, Troy Dingman, George Howard, and Todd Workman

The second round of employees to volunteer included six linemen and three ROW crewmen. They were: Dalton Hale, Daniel McCann, Mike Knowles, Jerrod Tynon, Jasper Smith, Garrett Davis, John Scott, Colby Manners, and A.J. Haskins.

They took with them a digger derrick, bucket truck, service truck, and skid steer. These men worked to replace tap fuses and energize meters as increasing numbers of substations were brought online.

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative answered the call for mutual aid assistance when it sent crews to help with restoration in the aftermath of Hurricane Laura. One of the hardest hit utilities, Beauregard Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Deridder, Louisiana, lost power to each of its over 42,000 meters as a result of the Category 4 hurricane, which made landfall shortly after midnight on August 27.



Crew 2: Jerrod Tynon, Jasper Smith, Garrett Davis, Daniel McCann, Mike Knowles, and Dalton Hale

Clint Cupp, Matt Lemons, Troy Dingman, Ricky Reece, Aaron Farbro, George Howard, Todd Workman, and Kelly Morgan were the first from NOEC to respond. They were in Beauregard EC service territory for two weeks repairing three-phase line amid difficult conditions. These NOEC crews were able to get new line built, but substations were still without power as they returned home.



Crew 2: Colby Manners, A.J. Haskins, and John Scott



Crew 3: Clint Cupp, Adam Carter, Ricky Reece, Jordan Stovall, Tim Fink, and Brayden Ingram



Cassie Jeans and husband Shane



Crew 3: Hayden Cunningham, Todd Workman, and Trent Greenwalt

A third and final group of NOEC employees departed for Louisiana September 22. They were: Brayden Ingram, Jordan Stovall, Adam Carter, Tim Fink, Hayden Cunningham, Trent Greenwalt. Cupp, Reece and Workman also returned from the first group. They initially worked on a substation in Merryville and then moved on to Longville where they worked to restore service. A majority of homes in this area were destroyed. This crew returned October 1.

NOEC workers ate meals in tent cities at the end of each long day. They also slept on cots in tents designed to accommodate 500 workers. Due to COVID-19, only 200 occupants were permitted per tent. Showers were taken in specially-designed semi-trailers. The tent city operated on large generators. Weather was very hot and humid, and bugs were in no short supply.

"It was probably 98 to 99 degrees with 90 percent humidity. The conditions were very challenging to work in at times," said Clint Cupp, a lineman. "But there's a real sense of satisfaction that comes from helping these people get back on their feet."

Cupp said that the damage was comparable to that left by Hurricane Katrina.

"We saw areas of damage—both single-phase and three-phase—that were worse than Katrina," Cupp said.

He said one area in particular near a lake had approximately 60 mobile homes was hit hard.

"We only heated up a dozen homes in that area because there was so much damage," he said. "There were trees through the houses. The houses were demolished. It was pretty bad."

One member of Beauregard Electric Cooperative was especially touched by the hard work she witnessed from NOEC employees.

Cassie Jeans, a Beauregard Electric Cooperative member who resides in Merryville, Louisiana, said NOEC crews had been working in her neighborhood, and she was very grateful that they had left their families in Oklahoma to help her community rebuild.

One day when NOEC crews were working in a remote area, Cassie called in an attempt to locate them. Her call ended up being fielded by the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC).

"Since she didn't see the linemen in her neighborhood that day, she called us in hopes we could help her with their whereabouts," said OAEC's Anna Politano. "She was very grateful the linemen had left their families in Oklahoma to help her community. We thanked Cassie for her kind gesture, but told her we did not have their exact location. She then proceeded to tell me that she would find them somehow. She was very happy when she was able to find them."

Said Politano: "When I expressed our gratitude for her care and kindness, Cassie said: "My dad's family is from Stillwater, Oklahoma. In the south we are taught to share what we have and a little more. If we have it, it's yours too. Those men are away from their families trying to help my family. I would want someone to try to take care of my husband. I appreciate them more than they will ever know. They have replaced poles, countless miles of lines, and cleared debris."

Cassie even prepared a home-cooked meal for the linemen. The meal was prepared in her outdoor kitchen, since she was still without power. She served them beef tips, gravy with rice, macaroni and cheese, creamed peas, hot pepper sauce, snack cakes, and gave them a jar of peach pit jelly. She also brought them lunch the following day.

Jeans' power was finally restored September 14, marking 19 days without electric service.

Jeans and her family evacuated to Athens, Texas, as Laura approached. Upon their return, they found their home intact but discovered extensive damage to electric lines and trees.

Jeans is no stranger to hurricane damage. They also experienced Hurricane Rita back in 2005. They went 14 days without power during that event.

"It was rough," she said. "I had two small children at that time."

Added Jeans: "We had no damage to our home with either storm—praise the Lord. But Laura caused more damage to our property. We have too many trees down to count. We had no damage with Rita."

She said her husband Shane is a logger by trade and has been helping Beauregard Electric Cooperative load poles since the storm during the entire recovery process.

Jeans understands the daily working conditions encountered by NOEC crews. She does not take their difficult work for granted.

"Bless their hearts. It was hot. I know Oklahoma is hot, but to me, it's worse down here. The humidity is bad, gulf mosquitoes come in from the beach during hurricanes—and they are bad. Love bugs overwhelm you. We appreciate the help. I wish I could have made them a couple more meals, but life called and I had to return to work."

Clint Cupp said everyone they encountered was appreciative of their work.

Cupp said: "You tell someone it may be a month before they have power and they say 'That's fine. At least you're working on it. What do you want for lunch?' People are extremely hospitable. They cooked us lunch several times. Our bird dog (crew leader) took us to his house three times and fed us. Everyone was very appreciative. Quite a few of them told us 'We know what to expect living here.' Everyone knows they are going to lose power at some point, so they are ready. Everyone has a generator."

Nick Sutton, NOEC Manager of Operations: "Mutual aid assistance is something I am proud to be a part of. It is one of those things that, simply put, is just the right thing to do. When I was a lineman I loved to go to other cooperatives to help with their outages. It did make you feel good that you could help someone in need restore power to their membership after a bad storm."



Todd Workman clears a large, storm-damaged tree.



Crew member enjoys lunch provided by Cassie Jeans and her family.

REC DAY 2020 ONE FOR THE RECORD BOOKS: COOPERATIVES SET NEW REGISTRATION RECORD

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative members turned out in record numbers for the organization's 82nd annual meeting on Saturday, September 19. The event was actually FOUR events in one—four drive-thru registration sites held in strategic locations across the organization's multi-county service territory.

NOEC members could pick any of the four locations to register and they could do so between the hours of 8 a.m. and noon. Registration sites included: Grove Middle School, Vinita High School, Locust Grove Early Learning Center, and Miami High School.

After registering and voting on the proposed bylaw amendments, each member was presented with a complimentary member gift and was also entered into the big REC Day prize drawings—all without leaving their vehicle. The drive-thru process took each registrant mere minutes.

A combined total of 2,535 cooperative members registered during the four-hour window, shattering the previous record of 2,430 set back in 2002. The Grove site led the way with 973 members registered, followed by Vinita at 698, Locust Grove at 501, and Miami at 357.

Despite careful planning and preparation, many weren't sure what to expect when it was decided to forego the customary gathering at the Grove Civic Center in favor of the drive-thru event. But cooperative management knew one important fact.

They knew NOEC members are fiercely loyal. "Our members are to be commended for their active participation under such unusual circumstances," said NOEC General Manager Daniel Webster. "This meeting format was such a big departure from what we've always done and they supported their cooperative like they do each and every year."

Cooperative members have convened yearly on the third Saturday in September at the Grove Civic Center since 1998. For the 59 years previous, the annual

REC Day gathering took place outdoors under the tents at Vinita's South Park.



"Even though there was some uncertainty surrounding this year's annual meeting, one thing we've learned over the years is that our membership steps up. They show up and

they show support," said Webster. "We saw smiles all day long at all four drive-thru registration sites. I truly believe our members appreciated us making the effort to come to them, to make things more convenient under the circumstances."

The bylaw measure was approved by a runaway margin of 2,151 votes. A total of 2,331 members voted to approve the updates with only 180 voting against.

"Obtaining approval of proposed measure was an extremely important piece of this year's meeting," Webster explained. "Bringing our bylaws up-to-date truly helps our cooperative better serve its membership."

Continued on next page.



Sue Johnson Grand Prize Winner

Incentives were generous at REC Day 2020. More than \$25,000 in cash and electric credits were awarded. Drawing winners were announced on Facebook following/during the live business meeting. Vinita resident Sue Johnson had her name drawn as the winner of the \$10,000 grand prize, while Gary Thole was the \$5,000 prize winner. Charles Jordan of Pryor won \$3,000, and Afton's Bryan Clark earned a \$2,000 payday. Winners of \$500 electric credits included: Jim McCorkell of Miami (District 1), Jack Riggs of Afton (District 2), Greg Highsmith of Bluejacket (District 3), Stanley Charles of Vinita (District 4), Jennifer Crabtree of Eucha (District 5), Pamela Pitts of Pryor (District 6), Charles Edwards of Salina (District 7), Johnda Hendren of Colcord (District 8), and Lester Schmidt of Grove (District 9). Vinita resident Clinton Nigh won the \$500 bonus electric credit drawing for using his drive-thru pass to register for the meeting.



Gary Thole \$5,000 Winner



Charles Jordan \$3,000 Winner



USE LED LIGHTS FOR SAFETY

LED lights, while a bit more expensive, are a much safer option for indoor and outdoor lighting. Because they produce very little heat, they are perfect for holiday decorations. They also last up to 25 times longer and use 75 percent less electricity.

USING LIGHT TIMERS

Professional Christmas light installers say you should consider a timer for your energy efficient display this year. Timers save you from wasting energy by leaving your lights on, so they make an excellent investment. The amount you'll save will depend on how you set the timer, and on the amount of energy you would normally waste by leaving them on. Many timers are commonly available at hardware stores. Make sure that you combine your timer with a smart plug so that your lights don't continue to draw vampire power while they are turned off.

SAVE ENERGY

CHRISTMAS & HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Avoid Incandescent Bulbs

Traditional incandescent light bulbs are certainly recognizable. In fact, they're extremely popular during the holiday season, as many people seek them out for multicolored displays. However, incandescent lights waste more energy than any other kind, according to a report put out by BC Hydro. Only 10 percent of the energy used by each bulb will be put into producing light. The rest is released as heat and quickly wasted in the cold winter air.

Advantages to Using LED Lights

LED lights represent a much more energy efficient way to decorate for winter festivities. According to Darren Vader at The Christmas Light Emporium, LED lights use less energy and are substantially longer-lasting than their incandescent counterparts. Just how much more efficient are LED bulbs? Consider this: while a string of incandescent Christmas light bulbs is almost certain to have burnouts after 2,000 hours, the average LED Christmas light lasts for well over 4,000. They can also save up to 90% of the energy used by incandescents.

Choosing a Lighting Style

Once you've made the decision to switch over to LED bulbs, you'll still have some aesthetic choices to make. For example, will you rely on strings of wide angle LED lights wrapped around your shrubs and trees, or will you opt for some LED icicle lights to make your doorways and windows some of the coolest in the neighborhood? There are many options from which to choose, so don't feel as though you have to settle on the first LED lights you find. Since LED lighting is becoming more popular and affordable, many new products are entering the market.

ANNUAL MEETING 2020

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Dandy A. Risman
Board President



0
DAYS OFF
DUE TO LOST-TIME
INJURY ACCIDENTS

Hello members of Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative and welcome to the 82nd REC Day. On behalf of the NOEC board of trustees, thank you for your participation in this important cooperative process.

I realize that this is not the REC Day to which you are accustomed. It took a lot of thought and discussion, but with input from the employees and management, we made the hard decision to use the drive-thru process. This allowed you to exercise your right to participate in the cooperative's democratic process while reducing the risk of exposure for you and our employees. It is a brand-new process for us, and were glad it turned out successful. COVID-19 has prompted a lot of change this year. That's why I am pleased to share with you some of the highlights and achievements your cooperative experienced during 2019.

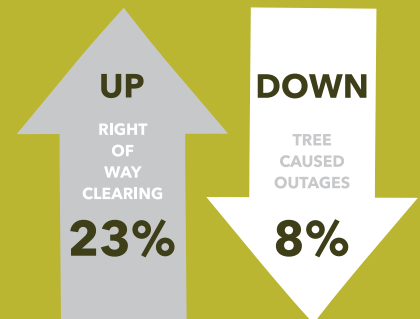
One accomplishment that makes us especially proud is the cooperative ended 2019 with zero days off due to lost-time injury incidents. This is impressive considering the number of man-hours spent in storm-related recovery work. This achievement reflects the dedication of our employees to performing their work safely.

Northeast Oklahoma endured more than its fair share of bad weather in 2019--tornadoes, lightning, extensive flooding, and windstorms. Nearly 500 poles were destroyed.



NEARLY
500
POLES REPAIRED
AFTER STORM DAMAGE

We made changes to improve our right-of-way program with a comprehensive vegetation management plan and we are already reaping the results with a reduction in tree related outages.



We began a program to change reclosers to electronic reclosers that can be controlled from our headquarter location. These devices protect the system while allowing us more options for reducing outage time.

We constructed to 458 new services. During 2019, we implemented a new process for new services which reduced the average wait time to completion from 50 days to 34 days. To provide electricity to all our services, we purchased 701,906,521 kilowatt-hours!



We revamped our mapping system and incorporated drone technology into our inspection process. The drone will also allow us to inspect damage in hard to access areas to more quickly and safely decide a plan for repair and restoration.

Our member services representatives fielded more than 83,000 phone calls in 2019, averaging nearly 7,000 calls each month. This number increases to 145,023 total calls and averages 12,085 each month, if we include all calls made to BOLT.



During 2019, we completed five system improvements identified in our work plan. This includes changing out 41,739 feet of conductor. The work plan is integral to maintaining service reliability.

****963876****



\$148,512
FOR OPERATION ROUND-UP

Operation Round Up participants are responsible for \$148,512 being distributed to individuals and organizations in need.

Much more happened in 2019, but I wanted to share with you some highlights. As daunting as it has been, when completed, we will be able to look back on 2020 and have good things to report. The employee dedication to serving our members, regardless of the challenge, continues as strongly as ever.

Again, thank you for making the effort to see us on REC Day, and for making the event such a success.



FEATURE RECIPES

NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL DRESSING MONTH



Dressing will keep in your freezer for 1 month. Simply thaw and reheat when ready.

EASY DRESSING RECIPE

COMFORT FOOD

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Small Onions
- 4 Stalks Celery
- 2/3 Cup Butter
- 1 1/2 tsp Poultry Seasoning
- Black Pepper to Taste
- Salt to Taste
- 12 Cups Bread Cubes
- 3-4 Cups Chicken Broth
- 2 TBL Fresh Parsley
- 1 TBL Fresh Herbs of Your Choice

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.

2. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion, celery and poultry seasoning (and rosemary if using). Cook over medium-low until tender (do not brown), about 10-12 minutes.

3. Place bread cubes in a large bowl. Add onion mixture, parsley and fresh herbs.

4. Pour broth otop until cubes are moist (but not soggy) and gently toss. You may not need all of the broth. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

5. Place mixture in a serving dish, dot with additional butter and cover.

6. Bake 35 minutes, uncover and bake an additional 10 minutes.

Recipe Notes:

If using rosemary in the herbs, cook along with the onions/celery. To stuff turkey, dressing must be cooled completely in the refrigerator at least 45 minutes.

To Make Ahead:

Prepare as directed, cover tightly and refrigerate up to 48 hours.

To bake, remove from the fridge at least 30 minutes before baking.

Prepare as directed (you may need to add a few minutes extra if it's still cold from the fridge).