

NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

THE CROSS ON THE PRAIRIE

APRIL 2021



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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GROVE OFFICE

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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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WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS...

Darryll Lindsey

Manager of Member Services

Some of you may remember that Lindey Leforce retired back in February after 41 years of dedicated service to Northeast Oklahoma

Electric Cooperative. As the new manager of member services here at NOEC, I am adding my 30 years of electric utility experience while continuing Lindey's legacy of providing "Best-In-Class" service. Simply put, we are focused on putting our members first in all we do.

We've all heard the saying "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade." In my first 90 days, a couple of lemons related to the COVID-19 virus were launched at us that reduced available staff by 75 percent. Among other things, this challenge resulted in the closing of the Grove office drive-thru for three months. Thankfully, COVID-19 cases are steadily declining and our drive-thrus and offices have re-opened.

In mid-February, Winter Storm Uri dealt several lemons over the course of several days. We all remember the frigid temperatures, mounds of snow, talk of rolling blackouts, and depleted natural gas supplies.

Unfortunately, Uri's impact is still being felt. This "perfect storm" now impacts our wallets. Many of you are calling into the contact center confused, angry, tearful, and at wits-end. Remembering that our members come first, your cooperative has spent countless hours developing additional methods to help.

If you notice high usage on your electric bill, I urge you to call 1-800-256-6405 and press 3. You will be connected to a member services representative who will review your situation, answer your questions, and provide alternatives to help you.

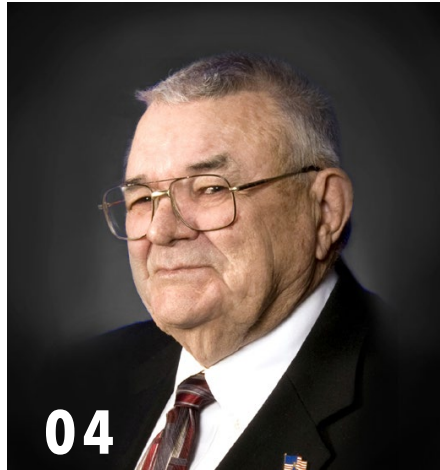
One question that has been asked repeatedly is "Why does it cost more to heat my home than to cool it?" Keep in mind that if you heat with electricity, you are converting electrical energy to heat energy. In contrast, when you are cooling an area, you aren't "making" anything. You are simply taking excess heat from inside your home and moving it outside. The next time you run your AC, place your hand near the outside unit and feel the heat coming out of it. That heat was inside your home.

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FEATURED RECIPE



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AIR FILTER TIPS AND TRICKS

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 918.256.6405, by May 3, 2021, to claim a \$100 credit on your electric account.

APRIL 2021 EVENTS

Jay Easter Egg Hunt

April 3 | Jay

Jay City Park
918.253.8698

Lady On the Links

April 6, 13, 20 | Grove

Patricia Island Country Club
918.786.8800

Gigging Tournament

April 9-10 | Jay

Lake Eucha
918.253.8698

Wheeling for Warriors

April 9-11 | Disney

Two Mom's Campground
316.259.1050

NEO Craft Fair

April 10 | Miami

NEO Student Activity Center
918.540.6388

Woolly Weekend at

Shepherd's Cross

April 22 | Claremore

Shepherd's Cross
918.342.5911

Anglers in Action

Tournament Trail

April 24 | Grove

Wolf Creek Park
314.591.4578

1st Annual Okies 2K10

Fundraiser Softball Tournament

April 24 | Adair

Adair baseball field
918.530.9171

Sip, Savor, & Shop

April 24 | Claremore

Claremore Convention Center
918.341.5881

Route 66 Pecan & Fun Fest

April 24-25 | Claremore

The Nut House
918.266.1604

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



FEATURE RECIPES

EASTER FAVORITES



Prep: 20 minutes

Cook: 15 minutes

Makes: 12 halves

CLASSICAL SOUTHERN DEVILED EGGS

SIDE DISH

INGREDIENTS

- 6 large eggs
- 3 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 1/2 teaspoons yellow mustard
- 2 dashes vinegar-based hot sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 1/2 tablespoons pickle relish (sweet or dill)
- salt
- pepper
- paprika (optional)

1. For easy-to-peel eggs, steam them rather than boiling them. To do so, add about 1/2 inch of water to the bottom of a medium-sized saucepan with a tight-fitting lid. Add a steamer basket if you have one, but it's not necessary. Over medium-high heat, bring the water to a boil. Turn the heat off. Carefully add the eggs to the basket or just to the bottom of the pan. Cover and return to a boil. Steam for 12 to 15 minutes. To check the doneness, you might add an extra egg and check it at 12 minutes to judge the cook time. Once cooked, place the eggs in an ice bath until they are completely cool.

2. Peel the eggs and slice them in half lengthwise. Carefully scoop out the yolk and place them in a small bowl. Use a fork to mash up the yolks. Add the mayo, mustard, hot sauce, and garlic powder. Mix until smooth. Add the pickle relish. Add salt and pepper to taste. Spoon the mixture equally back into the whites.

EASTER CROCKPOT CANDY

DESSERT

INGREDIENTS

- **34.5 ounces honey**
- **roasted or dry roasted peanuts**
- **48 ounces vanilla-flavored candy coating**
- **1.4 ounces M&M's milk chocolate plain candies**
- **optional garnish: seasonal sprinkles**

1. Layer peanuts and then vanilla candy coating into the crockpot. Cover. Cook for one hour on low temperature without lifting the lid. After one hour, stir the mixture and continue to cook, stirring every 15-20 minutes for another hour (a total of 2 hours).

2. Meanwhile, line three cookie sheets with Silpat mats or line countertop or table with a long piece of parchment paper.

3. Turn off the crockpot. Reserve 1/2 cup M&M's.

4. When you are ready to scoop, pour remaining M&M's into the crockpot and fold in.

5. Working quickly, use a one tablespoon scooper to portion out candy from crockpot and onto parchment paper. Make sure candy is not touching. Once the entire cookie sheet is scooped (before candy dries) top with M&M's and sprinkles.

6. Allow the candy to cool completely.



Prep: 30 minutes

Cook: 2 hours

Makes: 12 dozen (1 Tbsp)

WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS...

CONTINUED FROM INSIDE COVER

It is much cheaper to move heat from one place to another than it is to make it. Incidentally, this is how refrigerators work. They transfer heat from inside the fridge to the kitchen. In more temperate parts of the country, you can use a heat pump to effectively heat your home since it moves heat from outside the home (even if it is 40-50 degrees fahrenheit outside) to the inside. The colder it gets outside (like our recent sub-zero days), the harder the heating system must work to maintain a comfortable temperature inside. Because it works harder to heat your home, the result is a higher consumption of electricity, thus a higher bill.

2020 was an incredibly difficult year. While 2021 has started out much the same, spring is here and we will soon be able to enjoy a nice glass of lemonade while watching a beautiful Oklahoma sunset from the deck. As we anticipate those brighter days, it will be my honor to continue serving you and putting MEMBERS FIRST.

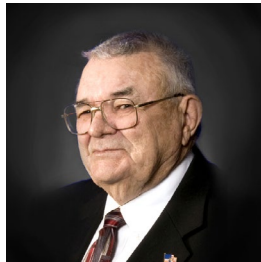
DISTRICT 8 BOARD SEAT OPEN

The Cooperative's Board of Trustees has declared a Trustee vacancy in District 8 after Mr. Kimbrell announced that he would be retiring from Board service effective January 29, 2021. The District 8 vacancy will not be filled by appointment prior to the District 8 Trustee Election scheduled to be held at the 2021 Annual Member Meeting in September.

District 8 Members interested in serving as Trustee are encouraged to register during the Trustee Candidate filing period (July 5 through July 9, 2021). More information regarding Trustee Candidate registration will be provided to the Membership in the June *Northeast Connection*. Please also refer to Section 3.02 of the Cooperative's Bylaws to learn more about Trustee qualifications. Bylaws can be found at www.noec.coop/member-services/form-downloads.

KIMBRELL RETIRES FROM NOEC BOARD

Longtime Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative board trustee Bill Kimbrell recently bid farewell after more than three decades of service to cooperative members. Kimbrell said his good-byes to his fellow trustees at the January 2021 monthly board meeting.



The 89-year-old Kimbrell, who spent 34 years representing District 8 members on the co-op board, retired from the post effective January 29.

Kimbrell joined the organization in a leadership capacity in 1986 as the District 8 trustee. He served as president of the NOEC board from 2004-2009 and as vice-president from 1998 to 2003. Kimbrell has also served as president and vice-president of the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC). He spent a number of years in various leadership roles for OAEC, often traveling to Oklahoma City to represent the cooperative and speak on its behalf as chairman of the legislative committee. He was also active at the state capitol as a member of the Oklahoma Association of Retired Teachers.

His involvement in these and numerous other organizations over the years earned Kimbrell much respect from his peers.

Bill and his beloved wife Wanda were together 63 years before her passing in 2019. The Kimbrells have done well for themselves here in northeast Oklahoma. They raised four children in Oaks, all of whom are now scattered from Kentucky, to Georgia, to Texas, and back to Oklahoma by the pursuits of successful careers. The Kimbrells have four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. A fourth great-grandchild is due in May.



A member of the Oaks community since 1966, Kimbrell has spent all but four years of his life in Oklahoma towns not easily located on the state map. He was born and raised in the tiny southwestern Oklahoma community of Mountain View. His version of big city “culture shock” came during his four years away at college. He attended Oklahoma State University from 1950-54.

Even his college experience wasn’t exactly subways and skyscrapers. Along with a handful of promising ag students, Kimbrell’s college quarters at OSU were located in the beef barn. The beef barn presented him with an opportunity to work his way through school when he wasn’t attending classes.

Upon graduation from Oklahoma State, Kimbrell spent a few years serving his country in the U.S. Army. His service from 1954-56 coincided with the Korean conflict. He obtained the rank of 1st Lieutenant.

Once his military service ended, it was back to small-town living. Kimbrell began what would be a long and rewarding career as a vo-ag teacher in the Nowata County town of Lenapah. A similar opportunity brought him to Oaks, and he and Wanda called this southern Delaware County community home ever since.

Kimbrell has always been anchored by his small-town roots. An exodus to the big city was never an option for he and Wanda. They wouldn’t have lived anywhere else if given the choice. The city simply had nothing to offer.

“Of course, as a teacher, you go where the opportunities take you,” said Bill, “but I’ve always been in small towns. I really enjoy the people.”

Kimbrell retired from teaching at Oaks-Mission Schools in 1991, but remained active with the Delaware County FFA and 4-H organizations.

“I have enjoyed serving the NOEC membership over the last 34 years and I want to thank members for allowing me to represent them. Employees, staff, and trustees have all been wonderful to work with. I am going to miss them and miss serving on the NOEC Board. I am not going anywhere, so you will still see me around. Best wishes to all.”

-Bill Kimbrell



His involvement with these organizations is foundational to his strong sense of community pride. He’ll be the first to admit that the lines between family and community are blurred since he is considered by many of his former students as a father figure. He stays in touch with many to this day.

“I check on ‘em from time to time to see how they’re doing,” he smiled. FFA and 4-H, he said “are my life. I’ve been involved with them ever since I was a freshman in high school. They have meant everything to me.”

The Kimbrells had a small cow/calf operation for many years where they maintained a herd of about 50 head on 240 acres. While Bill’s health no longer allows him to farm, he does try to stay active by attending fairs, shows, and livestock auctions.

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Editor’s note: On behalf of the entire NOEC organization, we would like to thank Mr. Kimbrell for his 34 years of loyalty and leadership and congratulate him on a much-deserved retirement.



EVEN WHEN WINTER CHALLENGES, NOEC PUTS MEMBERS FIRST



NOEC Engineering Team

At Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative, we love our members. Our mission each and every day is to serve our membership efficiently, effectively, reliably, and safely. We strive to ensure the power stays on even in the most extreme conditions.

Every so often, Mother Nature has a way of seeing just how far she can push the limitations of our distribution system.

That's precisely what she did February 12 when Winter Storm Uri made landfall in the Pacific Northwest. Uri began its descent into the central United States, bringing with it frigid temperatures and frozen precipitation. While snowfall amounts came up short of predictions here in Oklahoma, air temperatures most certainly did not. With temps dropping as low as -18 degrees Fahrenheit and wind chills often exceeding -30, it was a challenging week for us.

To no one's surprise, cooperative employees rose to the occasion. Unprecedented and extended cold temperatures stressed our distribution network in ways never before seen in our 82-year history. NOEC twice set peak demand records during that two-week stretch, delivering 247 megawatts on February 15 and then eclipsing that record the following day when demand peaked at 254 megawatts. Both of these marks shattered the previous demand record of 212 megawatts set in December 2017.

Demand of this magnitude requires constant monitoring of substations, protective devices, and voltage regulation devices to ensure proper operation and rating capacities are not exceeded.

Members served by NOEC are primarily rural and largely dependent on electrical appliances for heating and cooling their homes. While this is usually not an issue, Uri made sure heaters were running hard for days on end. A typical electric heat and air system, whether a split system or a package unit, consists of an air-source heat pump with electric resistance heating elements that serve as "back-up." Air source heat pumps are essentially cooling units that work backwards during winter months by extracting heat from outdoor air and exchanging it with the cool air inside the home. A small air-source system is rated for 10 kilowatts (kW) while a larger system can be as much as 20 kW.

Air source heat pumps are efficient under normal circumstances but lose effectiveness when outdoor air temperatures drop to around 28 degrees. At this point, air source heat pumps are no longer able to keep pace with home heating demands and switch over to the electric resistance, which can best be described as a big toaster oven. In other words, the back-up heating source becomes the primary heat source.

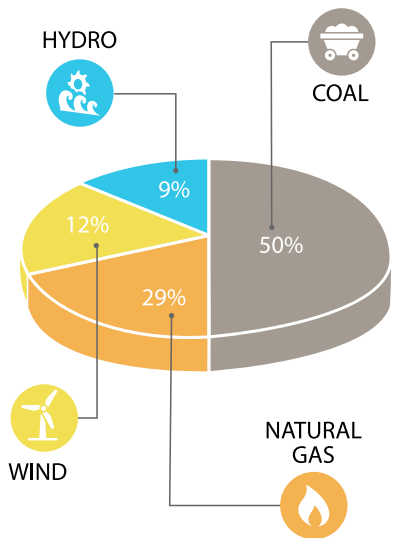
Cooperative members are billed on a usage basis. Electricity usage is measured in kilowatt-hours. A kilowatt hour is one thousand watts used for one hour. Consider this example: a 40-watt lightbulb in your living room is turned on and accidentally left on while you are at work. Let's say this bulb is on for 10 hours before you get home and turn it off.

A 40-watt bulb left on for 10 hours has a usage equivalent of 0.4 kilowatt hours. Now consider your heater running with 10 kW resistance heat for the same period of time: 10 kW multiplied by 10 hours is 100 kWh. The same system running in heat pump mode would only use about 40 kWh. All of that explanation is to say that electric resistance heat uses more electric energy than a heat pump. This means usage is higher and your electric bill will reflect the increase.

More energy is also required to heat air than is required to cool air. Combine that with sustained cold temperatures and you have a recipe for HVAC systems running more than normal. Systems running longer means more systems running at the same time. More systems running at the same time with electric resistance heat means the demand for electric increases.

NOEC is a distribution cooperative. We purchase power from KAMO, a generation and transmission cooperative. KAMO delivers power to substations where we take over and deliver it to members. KAMO is a member of Associated Electric Cooperative. Associated owns and operates generation assets such as coal-fired plants, natural gas combined cycle plants, and wind and hydro assets. Generation from these facilities is delivered to KAMO to meet the demand of their member systems.

2019 AECE Resources to Serve Member Load



Unfortunately, with Uri increasing energy demand, the ability of many generation and transmission entities was challenged, thus “rolling blackouts” were implemented as a means to reduce demand and meet capacity. Fortunately, for the NOEC family, our members helped us conserve energy through extreme conditions and the demand for electricity never exceeded the capacity available. Think of it like a gas station. A gas station has storage tanks that need to be filled once a day, based on the number of cars filling up. If twice as many cars decide to fill up all of a sudden, the storage tanks run empty.

At NOEC, our members are our number one priority. We understand the difficulties brought on by the recent weather. We are your friends and neighbors and experience the same challenges as you. As we move through the next couple months, remember this—your NOEC family is just a phone call away. We are ready to assist with a variety of payment assistance options, energy efficiency consultation, outage restoration, or just a friendly voice to listen.

Contributed by: Shane Burgess,
Director of Engineering

THE CROSS ON THE PRAIRIE

BRINGING INSPIRATION TO NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA

For those who profess allegiance to the Christian faith, the symbol of the cross serves as a reminder of the atonement Jesus provided for sin when he suffered and died during his crucifixion nearly 2,000 years ago.

Adair residents Clay and Missy Hibbard are extending an invitation to come to the cross. The invitation is literal, but it also carries spiritual significance.

You see, the Hibbards own and maintain The Cross on the Prairie, a unique attraction that draws several hundred people each year to the Adair community. The Cross on the Prairie is an actual 110-foot structure that towers above the horizon south of Adair and is visible for travelers along the east side of Highway 69.

"The cross was built as a memorial," Missy explained. "We hope that every time someone sees it they are reminded to share with family and friends the amazing sacrifice that our Creator God made in sending His Son. Jesus came to earth to take on a human body so that He could identify with us, so that He could do the will of God in a way we couldn't and so that He could do what we couldn't do ourselves. A brutal crucifixion was taken on willingly by Jesus to fulfill the Word of God and to settle once and for all the only way to God. There at the cross of Calvary, He bore our sins in His own body. Then, on the third day, He rose victoriously from the grave to die no more. The cross is a free gift for those who will receive it. It promises forgiveness and eternal life."

It was in 2010 that the Hibbards felt led to share their Christian faith on a larger scale.



They formed the non-profit Creation Science Institute ministry and made plans to eventually build a creation museum. Clay's parents, Thurman and Loretta Hibbard, donated 60 acres to the ministry and donated the money for the cross project.

The July 2016 erection of the cross was the culmination of a three-year endeavor. It was designed by Jim Potter, a retired engineer from Marysville, Tennessee, who performed the work pro bono. Jim's experience with billboard installations was crucial in designing a structure that could withstand Oklahoma's wind and soil conditions. Fabrication of the structure was directed by Jon Odom of Richmond, Indiana-based Productivity Fabricators. A Michigan company handled the final installation.

"There was a whole group of people who came together at the right time to complete this project," Clay said, adding that Potter has engineered similar crosses throughout the U.S., including one along the inner loop in Houston, Texas, and another 200-foot version in Groom, Texas. The largest such cross can be found in Branson, Missouri, and measures 210 feet. For comparison, the Golden Driller statue that proudly towers over Tulsa's Expo Center, stands at 75 feet. At that height, it would still fit under one of the crossmembers of the Adair cross.

At the base of the cross are rocks that symbolize the galaxy with the cross in the center. There are purple rocks to represent Jesus's royalty as the King of Kings. The surrounding path is red to represent the blood he shed. There are also pavers cut in triangles facing north, south, east, and west to remind visitors to share the good news. The benches around the cross were all hand-carved by Clay with the names of Jesus. Lights were added to illuminate the cross for nighttime viewing.

The attraction has developed into more than just the cross over the years. In September 2017, the Hibbards utilized an existing well on the property to share the story of the woman at Jacob's well found in the Gospel of John. Replicas of the garden tomb and Calvary were constructed in December 2017 and March 2018, respectively.

"Our goal was never to put up the tallest cross," Clay said. "Our goal was to remind the community of the amazing sacrifice our creator God made for us."



The Cross on the Prairie is open every day from sunrise to sunset. It is located at: 1203 N 420 Rd, Adair, OK 74330. For updates, visit [Facebook.com/crossontheprairie](https://www.facebook.com/crossontheprairie).

A memorial for life was added March 2019, and Clay built a statue depicting the armor of God in June 2019. The most recent addition to the park was an "I AM" sign in May 2020.

"There are plans to build other exhibits as well," Missy said. She added: "It really has become a beautiful park setting. We hope people will continue to come out to the park and consider what Jesus did for them on the cross and the empty tomb of Calvary."

People from all around the U.S. have visited The Cross on the Prairie. Guests from as far as California and the east coast who have been visiting Grand Lake or simply passing through the area have stopped by "to see what it's about," Clay said.

The cross draws large gatherings for Easter sunrise services and special church events and singings.

"We love that the community has really embraced the cross as their own," Clay said.

Clay and Missy have Tulsa roots and both graduated from Metro Christian Academy (he was a 1984 grad and she graduated in '85). They moved to Adair where they have been Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative members since 1993. Clay's time is devoted to the family farm, which includes a 340-acre cow/calf operation and also two breeder hen houses from which 4-5 million fertilized eggs are collected every year from around 30,000 hens.

Before relocating to Adair, Clay was part-owner of Tulsa Refuse Inc. (TRI), a garbage hauling company that served the Tulsa metro area. He did that for 37 years. TRI was a family business started by Clay's father. Missy, meanwhile, has served as director of the Northeastern Oklahoma Hope Pregnancy Center in Pryor since it opened in 2014. She has a teaching degree and is certified to teach math. She taught in Tulsa for two years at Wakefield Academy before the family began to grow.

Unable to have children of their own, the Hibbards adopted two South Korean children, both of whom are now grown and are living successful lives.

Cody, adopted when he was 13 months old, is now 28 and lives with his family in Houston, Texas, where he works for a company that fabricates welders used on pipelines. Cody and wife Kari have two children, Brinley and Arrington.

The Hibbard's daughter Courtney is 26 and works in Broken Arrow for RCB Bank's human resources department. She was adopted at four months of age.

Interestingly, Cody also has a successful career as a country western singer. He has flown all over the country to perform. You may have even heard him on a local radio station. He'll be performing at Cain's Ballroom in Tulsa for the second time later this year.



Clay and Missy Hibbard

"He has a wonderful voice with an Arkansas twang. You don't expect that voice to come out of him. He gets a lot of double takes," Clay chuckled. "A lot of people have heard of Cody. They're always a little surprised when they find out I'm his dad."

Clay said he and Missy are extremely proud of both children. "They're both great kids," he said. "We've been so blessed. God has been very good to us."

For both the Hibbard family and the Adair community, blessings come in many shapes and sizes. They can be as big as 110 feet tall. Look for those blessings to continue to grow at The Cross.

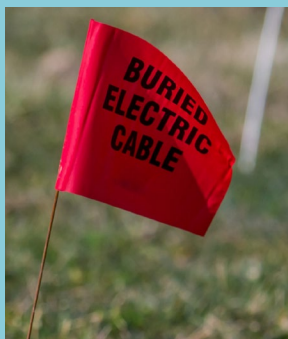
"I know God is leading us in a direction to do big things out here, but we really don't know what the next step is," Clay said. "Until a door opens and an opportunity is presented to us, we are just going to continue what we are doing and maintain what we have. I know the cross has made a huge impact on our community. Sometimes what we think is nothing is a big thing to God."








CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG

One phone call to 811 from anywhere in Oklahoma will route your call to Okie 811, which alerts owners of pipelines, telecommunication cables and power lines to mark their buried assets within at least 48 hours of the request (excluding day of notification, weekends and holidays). There's no charge for this service.

HERE IS WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU CALL 811

- Operators with underground facilities near your planned excavation are notified by Okie 811. This includes natural gas and power utilities, communications companies, cities and towns.
- Crews or subcontractors mark underground facilities with spray paint or flags, or they'll inform you that they have no lines in the area.
- Be sure and check your ticket before digging to ensure that all utilities have been notified.
- You can recognize the type of line marking by using the following color code:



	ELECTRIC
	GAS, OIL, OR STEAM
	TELEPHONE OR TV
	WATER
	SEWER
	TEMP SURVEY MARKINGS
	PROPOSED EXCAVATION

972201

TIPS & TRICKS

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

How often should you change your air filter in your home.

Manufacturers say to replace basic air filters every 30-60 days. If you suffer from light to moderate allergies, install a better air filter or replace them more often.

If you live in a more rural spot or less occupied residence (like a vacation residence) and there are fewer cars around, yearly could be regular enough.

Here are averages that may help you know how regularly you should get a new air filter at your residence:

- Vacation house or one occupant and no pets or allergies: every 6-12 months
- Ordinary suburban home without pets: every 90 days
- One dog or cat: every 60 days
- More than one pet or if anyone has allergies: 20-45 days

