

# NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## LIGHTING A PATH

ELECTRIFYING GUATEMALAN VILLAGE

NOVEMBER 2022



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.**

## OFFICERS & TRUSTEES

**Dandy A. Risan** - District 5, President  
**John L. Myers** - District 4, Vice-President  
**Jimmy Caudill** - District 9, Secretary-Treasurer  
**Brian Kelly** - District 3, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer  
**Charles A. Wyrick** - District 1  
**Mike Detherage** - District 2  
**Sharron Gay** - District 6  
**James A. Wade** - District 7  
**Nancy Kimbrell** - District 8

## MANAGEMENT TEAM

**Daniel Webster** - General Manager/Chief Executive Officer (CEO)  
**Sean Friend** - Chief Financial Officer (CFO)  
**Sami Jo Frisby** - Administrative Services  
**Shane Burgess** - Engineering  
**Ricky Hignite** - Information Technology  
**Darryll Lindsey** - Member Services  
**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 [publicrelations@noec.coop](mailto:publicrelations@noec.coop)*

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found on-line at [www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call 866.632.9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax 202.690.7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).



## WE'RE HERE FOR YOU

**Deanna Hornback**  
**Director of Member Services**

Do you ever wonder what skills the people who answer your phone calls must learn to perform their duties each day? It takes someone with good

listening and communication skills as well as a good working knowledge of computer software applications.

A member services representative is often the first point of contact for NOEC members and BOLT subscribers. When a member or subscriber calls, ours is the first voice they hear. When they come into our offices, ours is the first face they see. In many instances, ours may be the only voice or face that they ever hear or see. For them, we represent NOEC and BOLT.

When you contact us, we ask several questions to gather information and determine your need. You may say "I need my electricity turned on" or "I've moved to a new location and need to know what to do." Our member services representatives ask questions to determine how many meters are involved and gather relevant information so that employees in the field can complete the service order in a timely manner. They also ask questions about the types of fiber services you need for your BOLT account.

Perhaps you are building a house and need to know the process of initiating electric service. There are certain specifications that the cooperative requires before a new service can be constructed. You may be renting a home and are unsure how to proceed. Maybe you need power in the barn but not the workshop. You and your neighbor may have questions about solar panels. Perhaps you are calling to inquire about transferring a service. Every member service representative must be knowledgeable about a wide variety of circumstances or know who to connect you with in the office.

*Continued on page 2.*



04

84TH REC DAY SETS RECORD



08

LIGHTING A PATH



06

2023 YOUTH PROGRAMS



07

OTTAWA COUNTY RECIPES

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, OK 74301 or email to: [publicrelations@noec.coop](mailto:publicrelations@noec.coop)

### \$100 IS HIDING!

Search the pages of *Northeast 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 November 1, 2022, to claim a \$100 credit on your electric account.

## NOVEMBER 2022

### Dancing with the Pryor Stars

Nov 4 | Pryor

Mayes County Fairgrounds

### Friday Night Bingo

Nov 4, 11, 18, & 25 | Grove

American Legion Post 178

### Mount Olive Craft Fair

Nov 4-5 | Miami

Mount Olive Lutheran Church

### Harbor of Hope Ministries Craft Fair

Nov 5 | Grove

Harbor of Hope Ministries Church of God

### Autumn Moon Fall Festival

Nov 5 | Ketchum

Church On the Lake

### Veterans Day Parade

Nov 11 | Jay

Downtown

### Legends of the Fall

Nov 11-13 | Jay

MidAmerica Outdoors

### Lights On Downtown Pryor

Nov 17 | Pryor

Downtown

### Christmas Lighting Ceremony

Nov 23 | Jay

Delaware County Courthouse

### Twin Bridges Park of Lights

Starts Nov 24 | Miami

Twin Bridges Area at Grand Lake State Park

### Santa's Ozark Mountain Village

Nov 25 & 26 | Grove

Har-ber Village Museum

### Tall Cop Says Stop, Law

Enforcement Training

Nov 29 | Pryor

23 N Vann St

### Happy Veterans Day!

Nov 11

From us at NOEC

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



# WE'RE HERE FOR YOU .....



Each situation requires its own documentation and a different action on the conversation. We want to be certain that we capture the unique details of each request. We strive for first contact resolution by taking care of your needs the first time you contact us so that a follow-up phone call or a visit to our offices isn't necessary.

This group processed more than 90,000 phone calls in 2021, approximately 43 calls per working hour. We anticipate the same number of phone calls in 2022.

Our member services team includes technical services and billing employees. The technical services team consists of those who operate the electric distribution system and manage electric service outages. They are also in constant communication with our line crews. This team also has specialists who provide technical support for BOLT. These highly skilled team members resolve nearly any technical issue you may have with your Internet, phone or television services.

These departments work together to ensure the needs of our members and subscribers are being met. During an electric or fiber outage, for example, the technical services team will handle the initial phone call. Once the impact of the outage is assessed, member services representatives will be called upon, regardless of the time (day or night), to take over answering incoming phone calls and assisting our members and subscribers. They'll handle this responsibility for the duration of the outage.

Our representatives often encounter people who are experiencing challenging circumstances. A newly widowed individual whose name isn't on the account, the member who relies on oxygen and gets scared when the electricity is off, or even someone who just lost their job. We understand that these are upsetting situations. Electricity is a necessity today. The cooperative provides a list of agencies that offer payment assistance to those who may not realize that such help is available. Our team helps navigate these difficult times and provides reassurance that we are here to help.

The strategic goals of the member services team include increasing the satisfaction of our members and subscribers while providing best-in-class service. Our team continues to strive toward those strategic goals each day. As we head into the winter months, our team can help you prepare for increased electricity usage. From billing options to energy efficiency tips, to world class fiber optic service, we go above and beyond to help you.

**\*974657\***

.....

# NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

## RIGHT-OF-WAY SAFETY TRAINING

**Two employees from a southeast Kansas electric cooperative spent two days earlier this month learning and training various right-of-way safety practices with some of the best in the business.**

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative hosted Hunter Davis and John Sluder from Girard, Kansas-based Heartland Rural Electric Cooperative on September 8-9. Davis and Sluder worked alongside NOEC employees Roy Tanner, Jeremy Poole and Patrick Somerville and covered everything from safe bucket procedures to knot-tying.



**"Our guys all have ten-plus years of right-of way experience, so our guests were learning from the best," said NOEC Operations Manager Nick Sutton. "We were definitely happy to help them out. Anything we can do to promote safety for a neighboring cooperative is a welcomed opportunity."**

## CONGRATULATIONS!



**NOEC would like to congratulate its latest round of line worker certification program graduates.**

Wade Hurst (left) and Derek Janaway (right) with the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives, and NOEC Operations Manager Nick Sutton (second from right) presented the certifications to Caleb Reynolds (second from left), Jasper Smith, Jacob Ornder, Charlie Coble, George Howard, Garrett Davis, and Brayden Ingram during the annual lineman graduation. The graduation ceremony was held in conjunction with the annual OAEC Engineering and Superintendent Conference on September 29 at Embassy Suites in Oklahoma City. Apprenticeship graduates not pictured included Jake Bullard (line program) and Tracy Autry (staking). With COVID-19 cancelling the ceremony in 2020 and 2021, this group represents NOEC's apprenticeship graduates from the past three years.



Sami Jo Frisby presents a grand prize check to Douglas Pitcher



Erin Hill presents a Stihl lawn package to Jane and Terry Crawford

# 84TH REC DAY

## PRODUCES RECORD TURNOUT

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative's first-ever Thursday annual member meeting was one for the record books. A total of 2,590 members registered for the 84th annual event on Thursday, September 15, eclipsing the previous benchmark of 2,535 members set back in 2020—making it the most attended "REC Day" in the history of the organization.

Quorum was met less than two hours after registration opened—another REC Day record.

**"Year after year, our members continue to demonstrate great interest in our cooperative," said NOEC General Manager Daniel Webster. "We have a presence in these communities and strong relationships with our members. We're proud of that, and our membership appreciates that we are much more than an electric utility. We are their friends and neighbors."**

Accommodating the growing needs of a diverse member demographic is important to the cooperative's forward-thinking Board of Trustees, explained Webster.

**"REC Day was held on a Saturday for the first 83 years," said Webster. "The first 60 or so of those years it was held at North Park in Vinita. We really began to outgrow the original location from what I've been told."**

Webster said the meeting was then moved to the Cooperative's population center in Grove in the late 1990s.

"The civic center there in Grove served us well for many years," he said, adding that the pandemic necessitated a change in format three years ago. Members responded in record numbers to the first-ever, multi-site, drive-thru meeting.

Webster said he understands that some miss the carnival-like atmosphere of the single-event location REC Day, but he said many appreciate the convenience and accessibility of the new drive-thru format.



**"We have members for whom the drive to Grove was simply not feasible. They never attended the event when we were there," he said. "They appreciate us bringing REC Day to them and are participating for the first time."**

The move to a Thursday was yet another example of the Cooperative adjusting to meet the needs of its membership.



Teresa Gault presents a check to Robert and Jon Wardlaw

**"A growing number of our members have important family commitments on Saturdays and are unable to participate. They value their weekend time," he said. "This Thursday afternoon/evening meeting not only suits the retired demographic, it also allows our working members to stop by on the way home from work or after picking the kids up from school."**

This year's event retained the popular drive thru format with multiple registration sites once again offered in strategic locations across the Cooperative's multi-county service territory. Sites this year included Wolf Creek Park in Grove, Mayes County Fairgrounds in Pryor, Craig County Fairgrounds in Vinita, and MidAmerica Outdoors in Jay. Members could select any of the four drive-thru locations at which to register between the hours of 3-7 p.m.

Along with an opportunity to cast an electronic ballot in the trustee election, each registered member received a \$20 electric bill credit automatically for attending. Members were also presented with a souvenir hat and entered into the big REC Day prize drawings—all without leaving their vehicle.

During the general election, members confirmed the nominated candidates vying for a seat on the Cooperative Board of Trustees. Incumbent trustees Jim Wade (District 7) and Jimmy Caudill (District 9) retained their seats unopposed. Mike Detherage, meanwhile, was welcomed to the Board after having his unopposed nomination for the District 2 seat confirmed.

Incentives were plentiful at REC Day 2022. More than \$25,000 in cash and bill credits were divided among nearly 40 winners. A \$5,000 cash grand prize was awarded to one lucky member. Cash prizes of \$1,000, \$500, and \$250 were awarded to one winner in each of the Cooperative's nine districts. A \$500 electric credit was also presented to a member from each district who registered using the barcode page included with their August bill. A bonus drawing was held for a Stihl lawn care prize package that included a gas-powered shredder vac/blower, gas-powered trimmer, and backpack sprayer.

**"I commend our membership for helping the Cooperative set a new all-time registration record at the 84th annual meeting," said Webster. "Their overwhelming support and loyalty helped make this record-breaking day possible."**



Ryan Higgins is presented a check by Marcus Wyatt



Loretta Amos is presented a check by Deanna Hornback

# YOUTH PROGRAMS ANNOUNCED



## Youth Tour Community Service Project or Essay | High School Juniors

Area high school juniors can complete a 6-8 hour community service project for a chance to win an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 17-22, as part of the 2023 Youth Tour contest. Winning students will also receive \$500 in spending cash. As an alternative form of entry, students can submit a 300-500 word essay on the topic *"Making a Difference Where I Live."* Students who are in the eleventh grade and attend school within the cooperative service area are eligible to participate in this contest. Cooperative membership is not a contest requirement. Entry deadline: March 27, 2023.



## College/Trade School Scholarship | High School Seniors

High school seniors whose parents or guardians are NOEC members and who live in a household served by NOEC electric are encouraged to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship to a college, university, or trade school of their choice. Four winners will be selected. Entry deadline: May 1, 2023.

## Community Service Award | FFA, FCCLA, 4-H

Local FFA, FCCLA, and 4-H organizations can apply for \$200 to assist with program expenses.



## Energy Camp Community Service Project or Essay | Eighth Graders

Eighth graders can complete a 3-4 hour community service project for a chance to win a trip to Energy Camp May 30-June 2, 2023. Each of the four contest winners will also receive \$150 in spending cash. As an alternative form of entry, students can submit a 200-300 word essay on the topic *"Making a Difference Where I Live."* Students who are in the eighth grade and attend school within the cooperative service area are eligible to participate in this contest. Cooperative membership is not a contest requirement. Entry deadline: April 24, 2023.



SCAN ME!

Visit **[www.noec.coop](http://www.noec.coop)** and click on the *Community Services* tab for youth programs entry forms and additional information.

## Community Service Project Ideas

Pick up trash around your school campus and/or athletic field(s), your church, a park, or your town sports complex. Volunteer time at a local animal shelter, food pantry, or thrift store. Offer to mow, pull weeds, or rake leaves for an elderly neighbor. Collect non-perishable items to donate to a local food bank. Assemble goodie bags and deliver them to a local day center or assisted living facility.

**Need more help? Contact the NOEC Public Relations department at [publicrelations@noec.coop](mailto:publicrelations@noec.coop) for a project idea in your area!**





# HOLIDAY SIDES FEATURED RECIPES OTTAWA COUNTY



## Have a recipe to share?

Send it to:  
[publicrelations@noec.coop](mailto:publicrelations@noec.coop)

## CRANBERRY SALAD

ED & JILL FITZGIBBON

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup cranberries
- 3 cups mini marshmallows
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 cups chopped, unpeeled, apple
- 1/2 cup grapes
- 1/2 cup pecans
- 1/2 pt whipped cream
- 1/4 tsp salt

**Step 1:** Combine cranberries, mini marshmallows, and sugar in large bowl and set overnight in refrigerator.

**Step 2:** Add apple, grapes, pecans, whipped cream, and salt to bowl and combine.

**Step 2:** Garnish as desired and serve.

## DRIED BEEF DIP

MORGAN PITTMAN

### INGREDIENTS

- Jar of dried beef, sliced thin
- 1 block cream cheese
- 3 green onions, sliced
- Crackers or chips

**Step 1:** Combine beef, cream cheese (room temp), and green onions in bowl.

**Step 2:** Serve with your choice of crackers or chips.



# LIGHTING A PATH

**Light pierces the darkness for the first time in La Montanita de la Virgen, Guatemala. Oklahoma and Colorado electric cooperatives partnered with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's philanthropic arm, NRECA International, to help bring electricity to the isolated village located in the region of Jalapa east of Guatemala City.**

Sixteen volunteer line workers, including Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative's Matt Montgomery, spent three weeks building powerlines and wiring 84 structures, including an elementary school and two churches. The project consisted of 77 poles, approximately 5.5 miles of line, and six transformers. Each home received four lightbulbs, two light switches, and two electrical outlets.

The local partner for this project was the Empresa Eléctrica Municipal de San Pedro Pinula, the municipal utility now responsible for the maintenance of the newly-built infrastructure. The predominant generation source in Guatemala is hydropower. Villagers here live in extreme poverty without running water, plumbing, or food refrigeration. They depend on farming operations for economic sustenance and produce corn, beans, rice, coffee, potatoes, pepper, tomatoes and onions.

It was the second such mission for Montgomery, who was also one of 13 Oklahoma electric cooperative volunteers to help bring electricity to 65 homes in the remote Guatemalan village of Chiis for the first time back in October 2017.

He was positively impacted by both missions and his involvement changed his outlook on life.

**"These missions are once-in-a-lifetime opportunities," says Montgomery. "Being able to use my skill and experience to make a positive difference in the lives of the people of La Montanita was a privilege. Their simplicity, joy, and friendship are both humbling and rewarding."**

NOEC's management and board strongly supported Montgomery's participation in the project.

**"We are proud of Matt for selflessly giving of his time for an extended period of time to help our neighbors in Central America," commended NOEC General Manager Daniel Webster. "This is a powerful way to display one of the core cooperative principles, Concern for Community, at home and abroad."**

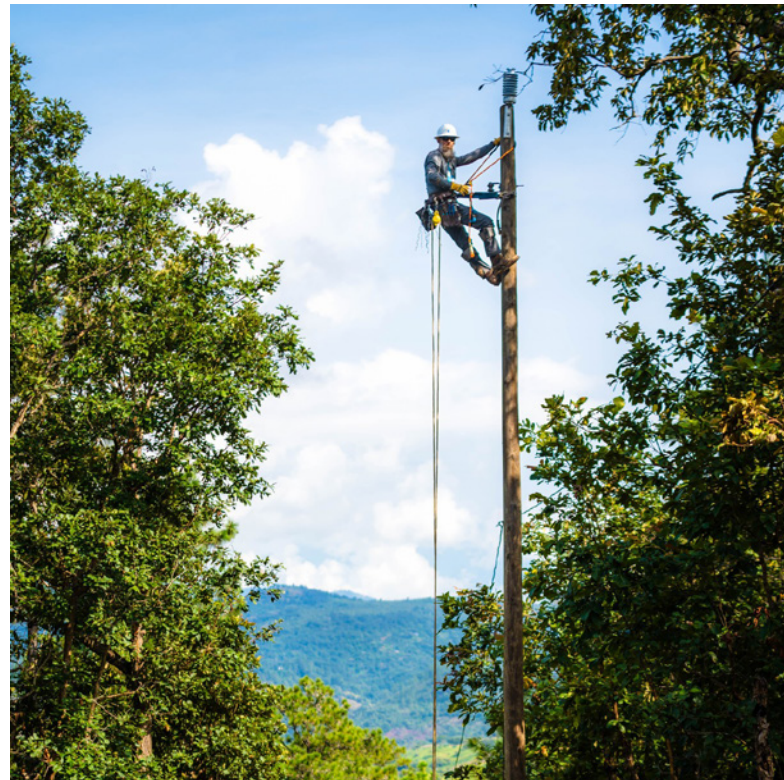
Electric cooperatives have a long-standing tradition of championing the cause of the underserved. More than eighty years ago, cooperatives brought power to rural America. Given their origins, electric co-ops are well-positioned to help other areas that do not have access to electric power.





**“Bringing electricity to remote areas in developing countries takes electric cooperatives back to their roots,” says Chris Meyers, General Manager of the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives. “It reinforces our commitment to improve the quality of life for local communities at home and abroad. Access to electricity will bring economic empowerment, better access to health care and education and enhanced safety for these villagers. It’s a life-changing gift.”**

Collectively, Oklahoma’s electric cooperatives have made possible nearly 700 first-time electric connections in seven villages in Central America and South America.



Oklahoma’s electric cooperatives have established a 501(c)3 not-for-profit, The Oklahoma Energy Trails Foundation, to support this cause. Five projects have been sponsored since 2016. Learn more at [oaec.coop/co-op-difference/energy-trails](https://oaec.coop/co-op-difference/energy-trails).

.....





## 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.