

# NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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MAY 2023



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

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**John L. Myers** - District 4, Vice-President  
**Jimmy Caudill** - District 9, Secretary-Treasurer  
**Brian Kelly** - District 3, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer  
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**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

600 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)*

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## CHANGING PERSPECTIVE

**Nick Sutton**  
**Manager of Operations**

*I sure hope it storms tonight.*

I haven't said or thought that in a very long time.

If I'm being honest, early in my career I loved a good thunderstorm—maybe even a tornado—as long as no one got hurt. Being a lineman in those situations was an experience like no other. There was a sense of satisfaction that came with working on a downed powerline in the middle of nowhere, or in the pouring rain with the only light coming from a big lightning strike. Driving by dark houses trying to restore power and then seeing all the lights come back on is a great feeling.

I loved being a lineman and climbing utility poles or working out of a bucket truck—even in the bottom of a ditch. Having to wear protective gear while handling an energized line that you know has the potential to kill you is like no other experience.

The feeling I got when the phone rang in the middle of the night and I would go out into the elements and restore power was something I loved. As times goes on, however, your perspective changes. The fun begins to fade and what was once a thrill becomes a job—a job that takes time away from being with family and friends. I guess it's probably that way with most careers. It becomes more difficult to get out of bed in the middle of the night, especially when there is a cold rain beating down on your windows.

I consider myself one of the fortunate ones now. I worked my way into an office job and now I'm not out in the weather nearly as often. The trade-off is that now I worry about it more than I ever did before. Oklahoma weather can be unforgiving. I watch the weather daily and start worrying about a storm days before it even arrives.

*Continued on page 2.*



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IMAGINATION LIBRARY



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DISTRICT MEETINGS



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OTTAWA CO. RECIPES

HAPPY  
*Mother's*  
DAY  
Sunday, May 14th

**\$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 June 1, 2023, to claim a \$100 credit on your electric account.

**FUN FACT!**

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative is celebrating its 85th year serving you!

**MAY EVENTS** Celebrating National Electric Safety Month . . . . .

<p><b>Farmers Markets Near You</b>  <b>May 4   Chouteau</b>  <b>May 13   Locust Grove</b>  <b>May 24   Spavinaw</b>  <b>May 27   Pryor</b></p> <p><b>Business Workshops - Hiring Talented Workforce</b>  <b>May 4   Miami</b>          Miami Chamber of Commerce</p> <p><b>Food Truck Friday</b>  <b>May 5   Grove</b>          Grove City Hall Lawn</p> <p><b>Cinco de Mayo Celebration</b>  <b>May 5   Grove</b>          Patricia Island Country Club</p> <p><b>Burning of the Socks</b>  <b>May 6   Afton</b>          Safe Harbor Harbers View</p>	<p><b>Town-wide Garage Sale</b>  <b>May 5-6   Grove</b></p> <p><b>Grove Parkinson's Speech Therapy Group</b>  <b>May 11   Grove</b>          Grand Lake Family YMCA</p> <p><b>American Frontiersmen Days</b>  <b>May 12-14   Grove</b>          Har-ber Village</p> <p><b>Mother's Day Brunch</b>  <b>May 14   Grove</b>          Patricia Island Country Club</p> <p><b>Dropshots Pickleball Getaway</b>  <b>May 18-21   Afton</b>          Shangri La Resort</p> <p><b>Memorial Weekend Mayhem</b>  <b>May 25-29   Jay</b>          MidAmerica Outdoors</p>
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Events are published as space allows and must be submitted at least 60 days in advance. Send information to Northeast Connection Events Calendar, PO Box 948, Vinita, OK 74301 or email: publicrelations@noec.coop



# CHANGING PERSPECTIVE

CONTINUED FROM INSIDE COVER

## **I was asked the other day if I would recommend to someone a career as a lineman.**

I had to think about that for a moment. My mind immediately went to thoughts of how the work is hard, dangerous, and often consists of long days and nights. It is definitely not a 9 to 5 job. At the end of the day when you have completed your work and you hear that a storm may be coming in, you begin thinking about your evening plans. Those plans you have with your family and friends will probably have to be cancelled or at the very least you probably won't be able to attend.

**"I AM PROUD TO CONSIDER MYSELF A LINEMAN. EVEN THOUGH THE WORK IS HARD AND THE HOURS ARE LONG, IT IS REWARDING KNOWING THAT YOU ARE RESTORING POWER FOR OUR MEMBERS."**

Working as a lineman, you will miss ballgames, birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays. Knowing all of that, would I still recommend becoming a

lineman? My answer is yes. I am proud to consider myself a lineman. Even though the work is hard and the hours are long, it is rewarding knowing that you are restoring power for our members.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a lineman, I recommend checking out the many different trade schools in our area that now offer lineman training programs.

*I sure hope it doesn't storm tonight.*



# DID YOU KNOW?

## MAY IS ELECTRIC SAFETY MONTH

Prioritize a safer home for you and your loved ones!

### HOW TO KEEP A SAFER HOME

Each year, electrical malfunctions account for 35,000 home fires causing over 1,130 injuries, 500 deaths, and \$1.4 billion in property damage.

The average American home was built in 1977. Many existing homes simply cannot handle the demands of today's electrical devices.

### Learn the warning signs of an overloaded electrical system:



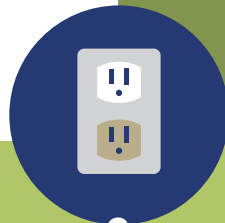
1

Frequent tripping of circuit breakers or blowing of fuses



2

Appliances that seem underpowered



3

Discolored outlets



4

Buzzing sound from switches or outlets



5

Dimming of lights when other devices are turned on

### HOW TO AVOID OVERLOADING YOUR ELECTRICAL SYSTEM:

Label your circuit breakers to understand the different circuits in your home

Have your home inspected by a qualified electrician if it's older than 40 years

Have a qualified electrician install new circuits for high energy use devices

Reduce your electrical load by using energy-efficient appliances and lighting

# 2023 DISTRICT MEETINGS .....

## DISTRICTS 1, 3, AND 5 TO SELECT BOARD TRUSTEE CANDIDATES

### MEETING DATES

#### JULY 10: DISTRICT 1

Charles Wyrick, Incumbent Trustee

#### JULY 11: DISTRICT 3

Brian Kelly, Incumbent Trustee

#### JULY 13: DISTRICT 5

Dandy Risman, Incumbent Trustee

*Note: Meeting locations and driving directions will be announced in the June Northeast Connection.*

The Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees is extending invitations to Cooperative members in Districts 1, 3, and 5 to attend their respective 2023 District Meetings this summer. The invitation includes freebies like a \$10 electric credit, meal for registered member and one guest, along with the chance to win a \$250, \$100, and \$50 electric credit.

### OFFICIAL TRUSTEE CANDIDATE FILING PERIOD: JUNE 26-30, 2023

Section 3.06 of the Cooperative Bylaws requires any member desiring to be a Trustee candidate from the District of their primary residence to file with the Cooperative their Notice of Candidacy for Trustee during the official Candidate Filing Period:

- **Monday-Thursday, June 26-29, 2023:**  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Friday, June 30, 2023:**  
8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Notice of Candidacy for Trustee MUST be filed at the Headquarters Office of the Cooperative: 27039 S 4440 Rd, Vinita, OK 74301, during the Candidate Filing Period. **Only pre-qualified Candidates can be nominated at District Meetings.**

### REQUIREMENT TO REGISTER

#### At District Meetings

Only eligible members may register and cast a vote at any member meeting. To register and vote you MUST be one of the following:

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

If you are not listed on the account, as a single or joint member, you will not be able to register to vote. We strongly encourage you to check your account. Call member services at 800.256.6405.

Members may register to vote/participate at their District Meetings from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. District meeting starts at 7 p.m., but those in line prior to 7 p.m. will be given a card ensuring their opportunity to register. The meeting will start as soon as is practical thereafter or when all members with cards have registered.

### MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENTS COMING THIS SUMMER

NOEC district meetings will double as member appreciation events beginning in 2023. Registered members in districts 1, 3 and 5 will have an opportunity to gather this summer at locations to be determined and enjoy a meal and prize drawings. Each registered member in attendance will also receive a \$10 electric credit.

“With the success of our REC Day drive-thru events, we have missed out on the opportunity to gather in recent years,” remarked NOEC General Manager Daniel Webster. “These member appreciation district meetings will help fill that void.”

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## INTERESTED IN BECOMING A TRUSTEE?

**Have you ever considered running for the Cooperative Board of Trustees? The Board meets regularly to review the performance of the Cooperative, establish goals and operating policies, and ensure the financial health of the Cooperative.**

Trustee elections for Districts 1, 3, and 5 will take place at the 2023 Annual Membership Meeting to be held in September. Eligible members residing in Districts 1, 3, and 5, and nominated at their respective District Meetings, may serve as a Cooperative Trustee for a term of 3 years if elected at the Annual Membership Meeting. Trustee eligibility requirements are as follows:

### TRUSTEE QUALIFICATIONS

#### SECTION 3.02. Qualifications

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a Trustee of the Cooperative who:

- (a) while serving on the Board or during the five (5) years preceding nomination thereto shall have been finally adjudged to be guilty of a felony;
- (b) is, becomes, or within the last five (5) years has been employed by the Cooperative, a Cooperative subsidiary, or a labor union which represents, or has represented, or has endeavored to represent any Cooperative employees;
- (c) is, and if elected and seated as a Trustee will continue to be, a Close Relative of an incumbent Trustee or Cooperative employee;
- (d) has not continuously been, for at least one (1) year prior to nomination, or who ceases after election to be, a Member in good standing of the Cooperative, receiving Electric Service at a permanent and year-round residence which is the Member's primary residential abode in the Trustee District from which the Member is elected; or
- (e) is not at least eighteen (18) years old; or

(f) while a Trustee, and during the one (1) year immediately before becoming a Trustee, is or was employed by, controlled, owned more than ten percent (10%) of, served as a trustee, director, or officer of, or received more than ten percent (10%) of annual gross income from an Entity that advances the Entity's financial interest by: (1) competing with the Cooperative or a Cooperative subsidiary; or (2) providing electric energy or a good or service related to providing electric energy; PROVIDED, however, that a Trustee shall be permitted to serve as a director or Trustee of such an Entity on the Cooperative's behalf.

Notwithstanding the Close Relative restrictions prohibitions in Section 3.02(c), no incumbent Trustee shall lose eligibility to remain a Trustee or to be re-elected a Trustee if, during incumbency, the Trustee becomes a Close Relative of another incumbent Trustee or of a Cooperative employee because of a marriage or an adoption to which the Trustee was not a party.

Upon establishment of the fact that a nominee for Trustee lacks eligibility under this Section or as may be provided elsewhere in these Bylaws, it shall be the duty of the Board (or a Board-authorized representative) to disqualify the nominee. Upon the establishment of the fact that any Person being considered for, or already serving as, a Cooperative Trustee lacks eligibility under this Section, it shall be the duty of the Board (or a Board-authorized representative) to withhold such position from such person or to cause such person to be removed therefrom, as applicable. A Trustee's office shall automatically become vacant if the Trustee is absent from three (3) consecutive regular Board meetings, unless the remaining Trustees resolve that there was good cause for such absences. Nothing contained in this Section shall, or shall be construed to, affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the Board.

# FULL READ AHEAD

MUSIC LEGEND'S READING INITIATIVE FUELS YOUNG MINDS



**We know Dolly Parton is a talented singer songwriter, but did you also know she is a busy philanthropist who has made a positive impact on the lives of thousands of children worldwide?**

The benefits of reading are so widely recognized, it's a wonder more people don't make it a daily ritual.

Like health food for your brain, reading has been shown to improve memory, reduce stress, and boost focus and concentration. Research indicates that older adults who read frequently retain cognitive function longer and may even live longer. Beyond its physiological benefits, the educational impact of reading is undeniable.

**Children who read at least 20 minutes a day are exposed to almost 2 million words per year.**

Studies show that children who read develop critical thinking and analytical skills that are absent in their non-reading peers. Young readers comprehend ideas and concepts more readily and also possess heightened imagination, creativity, and empathy.

One of the better known champions of childhood reading is country music legend Dolly Parton. Parton was inspired to launch her *Imagination Library* initiative after watching her own father's struggle with literacy.

Despite working hard to provide for his wife and twelve children in the mountains of east Tennessee, Robert Lee Parton couldn't read or write and never had the opportunity to attend school as a child.

**In a 2019 survey, 44% of Americans with a high school degree or less said they hadn't read a book in the last 12 months.**

## UNDERACHIEVING

Dolly Parton's father isn't an isolated case. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 43 million adults in the U.S. possess low literacy skills. Only 79% have a literacy skill level of 2 or higher, according to the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. In practice, this means around 21% have difficulty completing "tasks that require comparing and contrasting information, paraphrasing, or making low-level inferences."





Mark Duckworth reads with his grandson Jase.

*In terms of literacy, the U.S. ranks 125 out of 194 nations.*

During a recent national study, nearly half of students were determined to be at-risk for reading difficulties before entering kindergarten. Closer to home, a study found that only 39% of Oklahoma third graders scored proficient or above on state English Language Arts assessment, meaning that 61% of state third-graders are remedial readers.

## MISSION POSSIBLE

Parton's mission is to foster a love of learning in children, making the experience of reading fun and meaningful. *Imagination Library* fulfills this objective by sending kids a free book each month from birth until age five. These are quality, age-appropriate books selected by experts in publishing and education. There are no eligibility requirements for Parton's book club, so any child can join.

*Imagination Library* began in 1995 in Sevier County, Tennessee, where Dolly grew up. The first book order totaled 1,760 books. The program is now available in thousands of communities across the globe. Since its inception, *Imagination Library* has distributed more than 200 million books to over two million young readers worldwide. Here in the U.S., one out of every 10 kids under the age of five receives *Imagination Library* books.

## BOOK-BACKERS

***Imagination Library* has community partners right here northeast Oklahoma. Friends of the Pryor Creek Library, Grove Rotary Club, and Friends of the Miami Public Library are currently promoting the program. A partnership with the Rotarians and library in Vinita isn't far behind.**



Joanna Baker reads with her daughter Everly

**Mary Richardson is Grove Rotary Club's Imagination Library committee chairperson. She needs no convincing of the program's benefits.**

"Grove Rotary is proud to be the *Imagination Library* affiliate for Delaware County," said Richardson. "Improving the literacy of our children is a great fit for us and fills a clear need in our community. Studies show that a high number of kindergarteners are at-risk for reading difficulties. Our goal is to register all of the eligible children and we can't wait to get these free age-appropriate books to families so they can read together, learn and have fun."

The Miami Public Library is the partner for the Ottawa County area. Director of Library, Arts & Culture for the City of Miami. Librarian Callie Cortner is thrilled kids in the area now have access to books they wouldn't have had otherwise.

"Dolly's *Imagination Library* gives us the opportunity to bridge the gap between the love of reading and building a strong educational foundation for all kids under five years of age in Ottawa County. At no cost to parents, kids can build a library at home with a brand new book each month."

Oklahoma's impact on the *Imagination Library* initiative has been monumental, according to Laura Sikes, the director of *Imagination Library* for the Oklahoma State Department of Education. Sikes said that Oklahoma was the top state for new enrollments in April.

**"I'm not typically one for horn-tooting, but it's so exciting to see the progress we've been able to make in the past year of our partnership as a statewide initiative," praised Sikes. "With all of us working together, we've gone from 4,400 kids enrolled in Oklahoma to over 41,000. Thank you for all your hard work on community outreach and fundraising."**

Reading opens wide the doors of imagination and offers admission to new world full of opportunity. Thanks to Dolly Parton and her incredible cause, thousands of kids here in northeast Oklahoma are joining millions of others across the world in walking through those doors.



“YOU CAN NEVER GET ENOUGH  
**BOOKS**  
 INTO THE HANDS  
 OF ENOUGH  
**CHILDREN**”  
*Dolly*

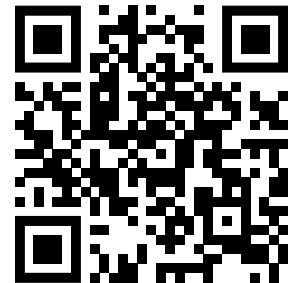


## INSPIRE A LOVE OF READING

Enroll your child in Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library and get a **FREE BOOK** every month until their 5th birthday.

“ Our daughter **LOVES READING** and being read to, and the **VARIETY** she receives from the Imagination Library is a **SIGNIFICANT** part of this ”

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by gifting books free of charge to children from birth to age five, through funding shared by Dolly Parton and local community partners in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Republic of Ireland.





# FEATURED RECIPES

## OTTAWA COUNTY | PARTY FAVES



Quick, easy, and fresh!

### PICO DE GALLO

LISA MCCARTH

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 diced onion
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 1 diced tomato
- Juice from 1 lime
- Dash of cumin
- Fresh cilantro to taste

**Step 1:** Sweat diced onion with salt and drain off liquid.

**Step 2:** Combine all ingredients into a medium sized bowl and stir to combine.

**Tip:** Add jalapeños for a kick!

### HOMEMADE PARTY MIX

MICHEL JONES

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup of oil
- 3 cups Chex cereal
- 2 cups pretzels of your choice
- 1 cup crackers of your choice
- 1 packet of ranch dressing seasoning mix
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp crushed red pepper
- 1 cup M&Ms

**Step 1:** Combine all ingredients, except M&Ms, in a large bowl and stir to combine.

**Step 2:** Spread mixture onto large baking sheet and bake at 350°F for 5 minutes. Remove pan from oven and stir mixture, then return to oven for an additional 5 minutes.

**Step 3:** Once cooled return mixture to large bowl and add M&Ms, stir to combine.



Bake time: 10 minutes

\*992120\*