

NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

CHANGING THEIR STORY
CASA HELPS OKLAHOMA CHILDREN | PG 8

ENERGYKIDS DAY
SAVE THE DATE | PG 6

APRIL 2024



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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CYBER SAFETY

Jamie Bodine

Director of BOLT Business Services

A local television news station ran a story recently and in it offered some eye-popping statistics on the skyrocketing cost

of internet crime. Here's the takeaway: The cost of reported cybercrime in the U.S. jumped 22% last year to more than \$12.5 billion, according to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3). The IC3 received a record 880,418 complaints during the year, up almost 10% from 2022. While investment fraud and business email scams continued to dominate the statistics in terms of the cost to victims, losses from reported ransomware attacks saw a 74% spike.

Think you're not a worthy target of a cyber scammer? Think again. Hackers don't care how much is in your bank account. They want access regardless of your net worth. Your identity, your financial data, what's in your email—it's all valuable. And online predators will cast a wide net to trap anyone they can. They're counting on you thinking you're not a target. So how can you reduce the chances of falling for the scams? Let's start with the basics of cyber safety.

Turn on multi-factor authentication

Multi-factor authentication goes by many names: two-factor authentication, two-step verification, MFA, and 2FA. They all mean the same thing—opting into an extra step when trusted websites and applications ask you to confirm you really are who you say you are. Your bank, social media network, school, workplace—they want to make sure you're the one accessing your information. So they're taking a step to double check, instead of asking you for a password that can be reused, more easily cracked, or stolen.

Continued on page 4.



05

PLANTING SEASON SAFETY



06

ENERGYKIDS DAY



08

CHANGING THEIR STORY



12

CRAIG COUNTY RECIPES

\$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 May 1, 2024, to claim a \$100 credit on your electric account.

APRIL EVENTS

Brush and Palette Paint Party
Apr 2 | Grove

Brush and Palette Gallery

Lineworker Appreciation Day
Apr 8

Upper Elementary Spring Concert

Apr 11 | Grove
PAC Auditorium

The Coleman Presents: Life with Lucy

Apr 11 | Miami
Coleman Theatre

Chelsea Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet: Casino Night

Apr 13 | Chelsea
119 Ash St

Income Tax Deadline
Apr 15

Colonial & Civil War: A Walk Through Time

Apr 18 | Grove
Har-ber Village Museum

Spring Choir Concert
Apr 18 | Grove

PAC Auditorium

Youth Art Show
Apr 18-21 | Grove

City Community Building

6th Grade, Middle School, & High School Band Concert

Apr 27 | Grove
PAC Auditorium

Arts & Humanities Council: Ottawa Country Arts Festival

Apr 27 | Miami
Downtown

617643

CYBER SAFETY

CONTINUED FROM INSIDE COVER

Update your software

Turn on automatic software updates if they're available. Bad actors will exploit flaws in the system. Network defenders are working hard to fix them as soon as they can, but their work relies on all of us updating our software with their latest fixes. Update the operating system on your mobile phones, tablets, and laptops. And update your applications (especially web browsers) on all your devices. Leverage automatic updates for all devices, applications, and operating systems.

Think before you click

Have you ever seen a link that looks a little off? It looks like something you've seen before, but it says you need to change or enter a password. Or maybe it asks you to verify personal information. It could be a text message or even a phone call. It may pretend to be your email service, your boss, your bank, or a friend. The message may claim to need your information because you've been a victim of cybercrime. It's likely a phishing scheme: a link or webpage that looks legitimate, but it's a trick designed by bad actors to have you reveal your passwords, social security number, credit card numbers, or other sensitive information. Once they have that information, they can use it on legitimate sites and they may try to get you to run malicious software, also known as *malware*. Sadly, we are more likely to fall for phishing than we think. If it's a link you don't recognize, trust your instincts and think before you click. We all need to "phight the phish."

Use stronger passwords

Did you know the most common password is "password," followed by "123456"? Using your child's name with their birthday isn't much better. Picking a password that is easy is like locking your door but hanging the key on the doorknob. Anyone can get in. Here are some tips for creating a stronger password. Make sure it's long (at least 16 characters), unique, and randomly generated. Make sure you're not recycling the same password across all your apps and websites. Consider using a password manager to generate and store all of your passwords. They're better than humans at being random and you won't have to remember them all. If you go this route, make sure your master password is strong and memorable, and secure your password manager account with multi-factor authentication.

Share your knowledge

Our world is becoming increasingly digital and interconnected. While we must first protect ourselves, it's going to take all of us to really protect the systems we rely on. I encourage you to follow the four suggestions outlined above and help at least two friends do the same.

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**YOUR IDENTITY, YOUR FINANCIAL DATA,
WHAT'S IN YOUR EMAIL—IT'S ALL VALUABLE.
AND ONLINE PREDATORS WILL CAST A WIDE
NET TO GET TO ANYONE THEY CAN.**

ATTENTION FARMERS

As you prepare for planting season, don't forget to plan for safety.



1 TRAIN OTHERS

Train anyone working on your farm, including family members and seasonal workers, about electrical hazards.

2 SAFETY FIRST

Have daily meetings to review the day's work. Know and review where the power lines are, the clearance required, and the proper position of extensions as they are transported.



3 WAIT TO UNFOLD

Remind workers to fold or unfold extensions well into the field, not close to the field's edge where power lines are typically located.

4 USE A SPOTTER

When working in the vicinity of power lines, always have a spotter on the ground who can direct you away from power lines or poles if you are getting too close.



5 DO NOT EXIT YOUR CAB

If your machinery or truck makes contact with a power line, pole, or guy wire, you could become electricity's path to ground and be electrocuted if you step out of the cab.

6 CALL 9-1-1

Call 9-1-1 to have your electric utility dispatched to de-energize the power source. Only exit the cab if your equipment is on fire. If that happens, make a big jump out and hop away with your feet together.



ANNOUNCING ENERGYKIDS DAY



*energy***KIDS**

JOIN US!

SATURDAY, MAY 4, 9-11AM

**Craig County Fairgrounds
915 E Apperson Rd, Vinita, OK 74301**

Attend and ENJOY:

Bounce house & obstacle course

Meet your linemen heros

Touch-a-truck

Games & activities

Exploding hot dog safety demo

Donuts with LED Lucy

One lucky registrant will win a FREE iPad.



STEP 1 Sign up for energyKIDS

EnergyKIDS is open to member children and grandchildren living in NOEC service territory. Scan the code or visit noec.coop/js2b to sign up.



SCAN ME!

STEP 2 RSVP for energyKIDS Day

Let us know if you'll be attending energyKIDS day with your children! To RSVP scan the code at right or visit noec.coop/5xar.



SCAN ME!

THANK A LINEMAN ON LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

APRIL 8TH



Electric linemen provide an essential service: They install and maintain overhead and underground power lines that keep electricity flowing. These specialized workers are on call 24/7 in case severe storms or other circumstances cause the power to go out.

Linemen work with high-voltage electricity, often at great heights, in all weather conditions. Maintaining the power grid is physically demanding. To become proficient, most linemen go through a technical training program and learn on the job as apprentices under the careful eye of seasoned linemen who have earned journeyman status.

Electric power line installers and repairers held approximately 122,400 jobs in 2022, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Nearly half of these employees worked for electric power generation, transmission and distribution utilities.

Safety comes first

Linemen spend numerous hours in safety training each year and must understand and apply crucial safety regulations.

Protective clothing is required to shield linemen since they work around high voltages. Collectively, gear components can weigh up to 45 pounds.

According to the BLS, electric power line installers and repairers typically:

- Install, maintain or repair the power lines that move electricity.
- Identify defective devices, voltage regulators, transformers and switches.
- Inspect and test power lines and auxiliary equipment.
- Install power lines between poles, towers and buildings.
- Climb poles and transmission towers and use truck-mounted buckets to access equipment.
- Operate power equipment when installing and repairing poles, towers and lines.
- Know and implement safety standards and procedures.

When a problem is reported, linemen must identify the cause and fix it. This usually involves diagnostic testing using specialized equipment and repair work. To work on poles, they usually use bucket trucks to raise themselves to the top of the structure, although all linemen must be adept at climbing poles and towers when necessary. Workers use specialized safety equipment to keep them from falling when climbing utility poles and towers.

Storms and other natural disasters can cause extensive damage to power lines. When power is lost, linemen must work safely and efficiently to restore service. We salute our linemen who work around the clock to keep the power on. Their safety, as well as yours, is our top priority.



FOUR LETTERS

THAT CAN HELP CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY

CASA proudly supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy so every child who has experienced abuse or neglect can be safe, have a permanent home, and the opportunity to thrive.



CASA. Four letters. Four letters that mean so much to so many—many of whom are still too young to even know the alphabet.

Since 1977, CASA has stood for court-appointed special advocates. The concept for such advocacy was conceived by David W. Soukup, a juvenile court judge in Seattle.

During one case in particular, Judge Soukup had insufficient information to make a life-changing decision for a three-year-old girl who had suffered from child abuse.

“It terrified me to make decisions about kids when I didn’t have anyone there who was only advocating for the child,” Soukup later recalled.

So a call went out in the Seattle community for volunteers who would be a voice for children facing similar circumstances—children who had experienced abuse or neglect.

A meeting of potential volunteers was scheduled. Soukup remembers thinking six or seven people would show up.

“I had my bailiff call four or five people in the community who might be resources for recruiting volunteers to ask if they would meet at juvenile court to discuss the idea,” recalled Soukup. “When I walked into the room, there were 50 people there and I said, ‘This is going to work.’”

Soukup passed away on December 16, 2023, at the age of 90, having left a legacy of advocacy that continues to flourish today throughout the country. There are now 939 state and local CASA organizations and programs operated in 49 states; 97,900 dedicated volunteers; and 242,000 children served annually.

“While sitting at juvenile court, I never got a night’s sleep without waking to wonder if at least one decision I made that day had been the best for a child,” Soukup said before his passing. “It struck me that it might be possible to recruit and train volunteers to investigate a child’s case so they could provide a voice for the child in those proceedings, proceedings that could affect their entire lives.”



Mark Ogle, Resource Development & Marketing Coordinator for CASA of Northeast Oklahoma

Soukup added: "Judges need CASA volunteers in their courts and they really need them to be a party to the action, because there's no one else in that courtroom whose only function is to address the child's needs. Everyone else has some other role."

And the process works. Almost 100,000 volunteers speaking up for nearly a quarter of a million children proves that it does.

Soukup himself became an advocate upon retirement.

"After I retired from the bench, I became a volunteer," he said. "It was an extraordinary experience. Both the hardest—and the best—thing I've ever done."



CLOSER TO HOME

CASA is a cause that is also near and dear to Mark Ogle's heart. Perhaps it's because Mark and wife Karen saw the importance of child advocacy while fostering numerous kids for more than a decade at their home in Foyil, Oklahoma.

In addition to raising their five children, Mark and Karen fostered 76 kids over the course of twelve years, from 1997-2009.

"Having been foster parents ourselves, my wife and I saw firsthand the difference it can make having an advocate assigned to a foster child's case," Mark said.

As foster parents, the Ogles strove to show the children in their care that they could overcome any circumstance and achieve their goals and dreams. They still hear from many of those former foster children and are as proud as any parent could be of their accomplishments.

"When people talk about how much of a blessing foster parents are to the children they care for, Karen and I always stop and consider how much we were the ones being blessed," Mark said. "These kids taught us more than we ever taught them. They taught us to appreciate the little things in life—to appreciate what we thought were boring childhoods, upbringings with a reliable family in a two-parent home. We never wondered if we were going to have a roof over our heads and food in our stomachs. We never feared that we were going to be abused if we said the wrong thing."

During their years as foster parents, Mark and Karen co-founded of the Rogers County Foster Care Association, each serving a term as president the organization. Mark also served as a director on the Oklahoma Foster Care Association board, and Karen is a former CASA of Northeast Oklahoma board member.

▶ During that time, the Ogles became well acquainted with CASA from the perspective of foster parents. Advocates were sometimes assigned to the cases of the children in their care. They saw the difference in the outcome when a CASA advocate was assigned to a child's case and when one wasn't.

Now empty nesters, the Ogles continue to serve the community—Mark as Resource Development & Marketing Coordinator for CASA of Northeast Oklahoma and Karen as a board member for both the William W. Barnes Children's Advocacy Center and Foyil Public Schools.

Given their personal experience with foster care, Mark jumped at the chance to join the staff of CASA of Northeast Oklahoma when the opportunity presented itself in the Fall of 2021. He couldn't turn down the chance to help promote and support quality volunteer representation and provide children with a safe, permanent, and nurturing home. Unfortunately, he also knows there are many more children in foster care who could benefit from an advocate than there are advocates available.

The Problem

Overwhelmed systems

- Child welfare systems are in a state of crisis, partly due to a devastating opioid epidemic.
- More than 390,000 children are in foster care on any given day.
- The average child in foster care spends more than a year in care.

The Solution

Advocates from the community

- Volunteer advocates are screened, trained and supported by CASA program staff.
- CASA volunteers form a one-on-one relationship with a child and get a full picture of the case.
- Judges depend on CASA volunteers for critical information to help them make the most well-informed decisions.

CASA OF NORTHEAST OK

CASA of Northeast Oklahoma is a regional court-appointed special advocate program serving district and tribal courts in the 11th, 12th, and 13th judicial districts of Oklahoma. CASA of Northeast Oklahoma supports and promotes court-appointed volunteer advocacy so every child in northeast Oklahoma who has experienced abuse or neglect can be safe, have a permanent home, and the opportunity to thrive. CASA staff and volunteers work every day to help change a child's story.

Mission

The mission of CASA of Northeast Oklahoma is to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children in district and tribal courts in northeast Oklahoma. We promote and support quality volunteer representation for children to provide each child with a safe, permanent, and nurturing home.

Vision

The vision of CASA of Northeast Oklahoma is that every abused and neglected child has a CASA volunteer appointed to represent his or her best interest.

Statement of purpose

CASA is central to fulfilling society's most fundamental obligation by making sure a qualified, compassionate adult will fight for and protect a child's right to be safe, to be treated with dignity and respect, and to learn and grow in the safe embrace of a loving family.

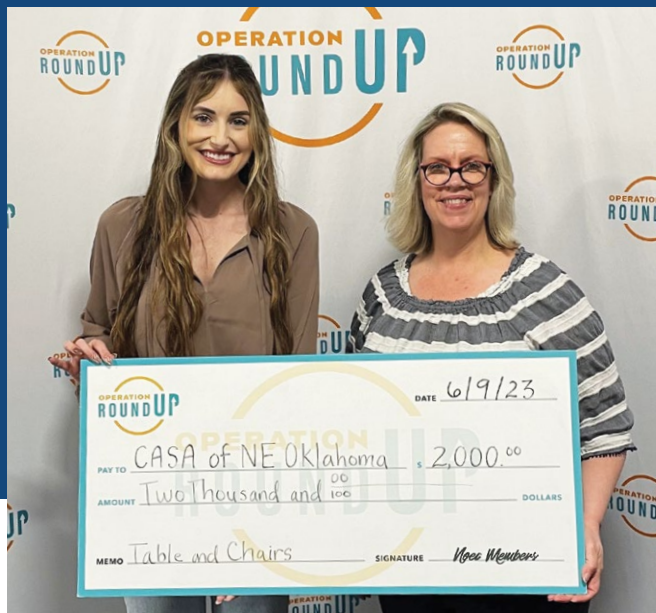
For more information on sponsorship or how to become a volunteer advocate, please contact Mark Ogle at 918.694.2510 or send an email to mark@casaneok.org.



Operation Round-Up lends a hand

A \$2,000 grant from Operation Round-Up in June 2023 helped CASA of Northeast Oklahoma purchase office furniture and equipment, as well as secure space for training and public education. CASA provides services to more than 200 individuals in Craig, Delaware, Mayes, Ottawa, Rogers, and Washington counties in northeast Oklahoma. The grant was made possible by Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative members who voluntarily permit their monthly electric bills to be rounded up to the next highest dollar. Since 1998, NOEC members through Operation Round-Up have contributed more than \$3 million dollars in local assistance to worthwhile causes throughout Craig, Mayes, Delaware, Ottawa and Rogers counties.

Pictured: NOEC's Kelsie Wilson (left) presents grant funds to CASA Executive Director Angela Henderson.



Sarah Wilhelm (left) and CASA Executive Director Angela Henderson pose with NOEC's 2023 Paper Doll Project Fundraiser doll entries

Dolling up for a good cause

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative has proudly sponsored CASA of Northeast Oklahoma's paper doll project fundraisers each of the last three years. This one-of-a-kind campaign creates awareness for children in foster care. As a gold-level sponsor, NOEC receives child-sized wooden dolls to dress up, name, and display in its offices during the month of April, which is also National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Dolls then participate in a "pageant" at an organizational luncheon. Clothing worn by the dolls is distributed to children living in foster care at the conclusion of the fundraising event.

Any business, organization, church, or individual can participate by agreeing to "foster," name, and dress up a selected number of dolls and display them during the month of April. All clothing, shoes, and other items collected with the dolls will be distributed to children living in foster care.

"I invite you to join other sponsors in your community to ensure that a CASA of Northeast Oklahoma volunteer advocate can be there for an abused and neglected child living in foster care," said Mark Ogle, Resource Development & Marketing Coordinator for CASA of Northeast Oklahoma.

FEATURED RECIPES

FROM CRAIG COUNTY



Serve with ice cream or whipped cream

CARAMEL DUMPLINGS | CLEO NEWMAN

INGREDIENTS

Dumplings:

- 1 TBS butter
- Pinch of salt
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 cup flour
- 1/4 tsp vanilla

Syrup:

- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 TBS butter

Optional Toppings:

- Ice cream
- Whipped cream

Step 1: For dumplings, cream butter, sugar, and vanilla in a large bowl. In a separate bowl mix baking powder, salt, and flour. Add powdered mixture alternately with milk to creamed mixture. If needed add more flour to make dough stiff.

Step 2: For syrup, add 3/4 cups of sugar to a cast iron skillet and allow to melt, stirring to avoid burning. Then add 2 cups of boiling water and stir until sugar syrup is completely dissolved. Add an additional 3/4 cups of sugar and butter, stirring until sugar is completely dissolved and starts to boil.

Step 3: Once syrup is ready drop dough by tablespoons into boiling syrup. Cover and let boil until dumplings are done. Serve warm.

OLD FASHIONED CHOCOLATE PUDDING | WANDA BRANNON

INGREDIENTS

Pudding:

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 2 TBS cocoa powder
- 3/4 cup nuts
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 TBS oil
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

Step 1: Mix together pudding ingredients and pour into a greased pan.

Step 2: Combine pour over ingredients in a bowl and then pour over pudding mixture.

Step 3: Bake for 40 minutes at 350°F.

INGREDIENTS CONTINUED

Pour over:

- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- 1 3/4 cups hot water



Serve with ice cream or whipped cream