

NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

WHITE BUFFALO LODGE

EVERYTHING YOU NEED, NOTHING YOU DON'T

JUNE 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.

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

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

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TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

Darryll Lindsey
Manager of Member Services

Each month a different member of the leadership team here at NOEC writes a column for this publication. Often, we try to give

you a peek "behind the scenes" of our operation. Last year, I wrote about the changes coming to our billing system. Those changes were painful but necessary in order to provide you with better service. We fared well, all things considered. All 41,000-plus electric meters and 16,000-plus fiber subscribers were successfully migrated over to a new system without a single loss of service. That was a huge success.

Our member services team works continuously to improve. This 30-member team consists of member service representatives who field your calls, visit with you in our lobbies, and process your drive-thru transactions each workday. This team includes the technical service representatives who keep our line crews safe 24/7/365 by monitoring voltage on the electric system, processing switching orders, and helping restore electric and fiber service in the event Mother Nature has a violent streak. They also respond to calls for technical assistance from our fiber subscribers.

And let's not forget two very important team members: our *quality assurance specialist* and our *key accounts coordinator*. These two individuals ensure that we provide the best possible experience to our members and subscribers.

Continued on page 4.

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WHITE BUFFALO LODGE



GRILL TO SAVE ENERGY



OTTAWA CO. 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 July 1, 2024, to claim a \$100 credit on your electric account.

JUNE EVENTS

Kickball with a Twist

June 1 | Wyandotte

Seneca Athletic Club Complex

Grand Lake Camp Bandage

June 1 | Afton

Grand Lake RV Resort

Fairy Festival at Lendonwood

June 1 | Grove

Lendonwood Gardens

50's Sock Hop

June 7 | Zena

Zena Community Center

O'Reilly Auto Parts Outlaw National Monster Trucks

June 7-8 | Miami

Miami Fairgrounds

Toes in the Grand

June 7-8 | Grove

Wolf Creek Park

Heritage Music Festival

June 7-8 | Grove

Har-Ber Village Museum

Traditional Native Games

June 8 | Vinita

Vinita Health Center

Grand Lake Triathlon

June 8 | Grove

Grand Lake Family YMCA

Farm, Ag, and Ecology Day

June 8 | Grove

Har-Ber Village Museum

Boats, Bikes, & BBQ

June 8 | Bernice

MarineMax Grand Lake

Visions Off-Road 2024

June 12-16 | Jay

MidAmerica Outdoors

Oklahoma 8-Man All Star Football Game

June 15 | Miami

NEO A&M College Robertson Field

Smokin' on the Route

June 26-27 | Miami

Downtown

Grand Jam Music Fest

June 27-30 | Cleora

Grand Meridian Resort

Miss Huckleberry & Miss Delaware County

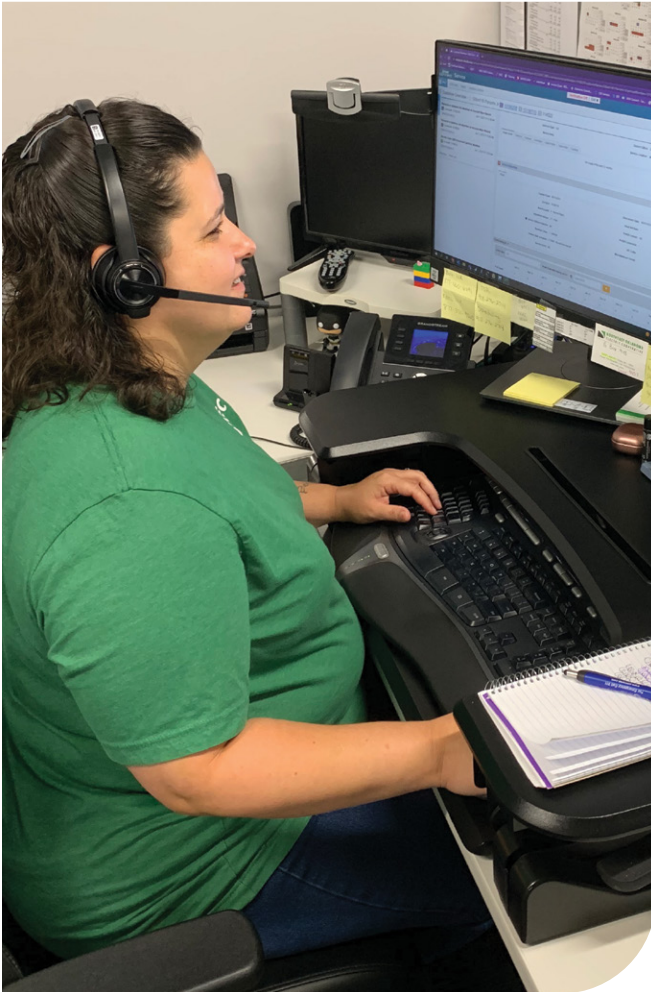
June 29 | Jay

Bulldog Arena

TEAMWORK

MAKES THE DREAM WORK

CONTINUED FROM INSIDE COVER



In our call center, these team members combined handled **94,000 total calls** during 2023, compared to 86,500 in 2022. In our office locations, we saw **14,687 visitors** in our lobbies and another **22,493 vehicles** in our drive-thru lanes, compared to 10,886 visitors and 17,747 vehicles in 2022. These team members also processed **20,937 service orders** for 18,769 different locations throughout the year. Here is a breakdown of the five most requested service order types:

- **Broadband change of service:** 2,755
- **Photo light maintenance:** 2,496
- **Transfer of electric service:** 2,464
- **Broadband new construction:** 1,714
- **Broadband disconnect service:** 1,584

The numbers you see for our broadband service only reflect the work performed since mid-May 2023, following our software conversion.

We anticipate 2024 will be another banner year across our entire organization and look forward to reporting the future successes of these outstanding teams.

2024 DISTRICT MEETINGS

DISTRICTS 4, 6, AND 8 TO SELECT BOARD TRUSTEE CANDIDATES

MEETING DATES

JULY 8: DISTRICT 4

John Myers, Incumbent Trustee

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

JULY 9: DISTRICT 8

Nancy Kimbrell, Incumbent Trustee

Northeast Tech - Kansas Campus
450 N Highway 59, Kansas, OK 74347

JULY 11: DISTRICT 6

Sharron Gay, Incumbent Trustee

Adair Elementary Cafeteria
101 S Harley Hughes Ave, Adair, OK 74330

The Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees is extending invitations to Cooperative members in Districts 4, 6, and 8 to attend their respective 2024 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 17-21, 2024

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 17-20, 2024:**
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- **Friday, June 21, 2024:**
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:

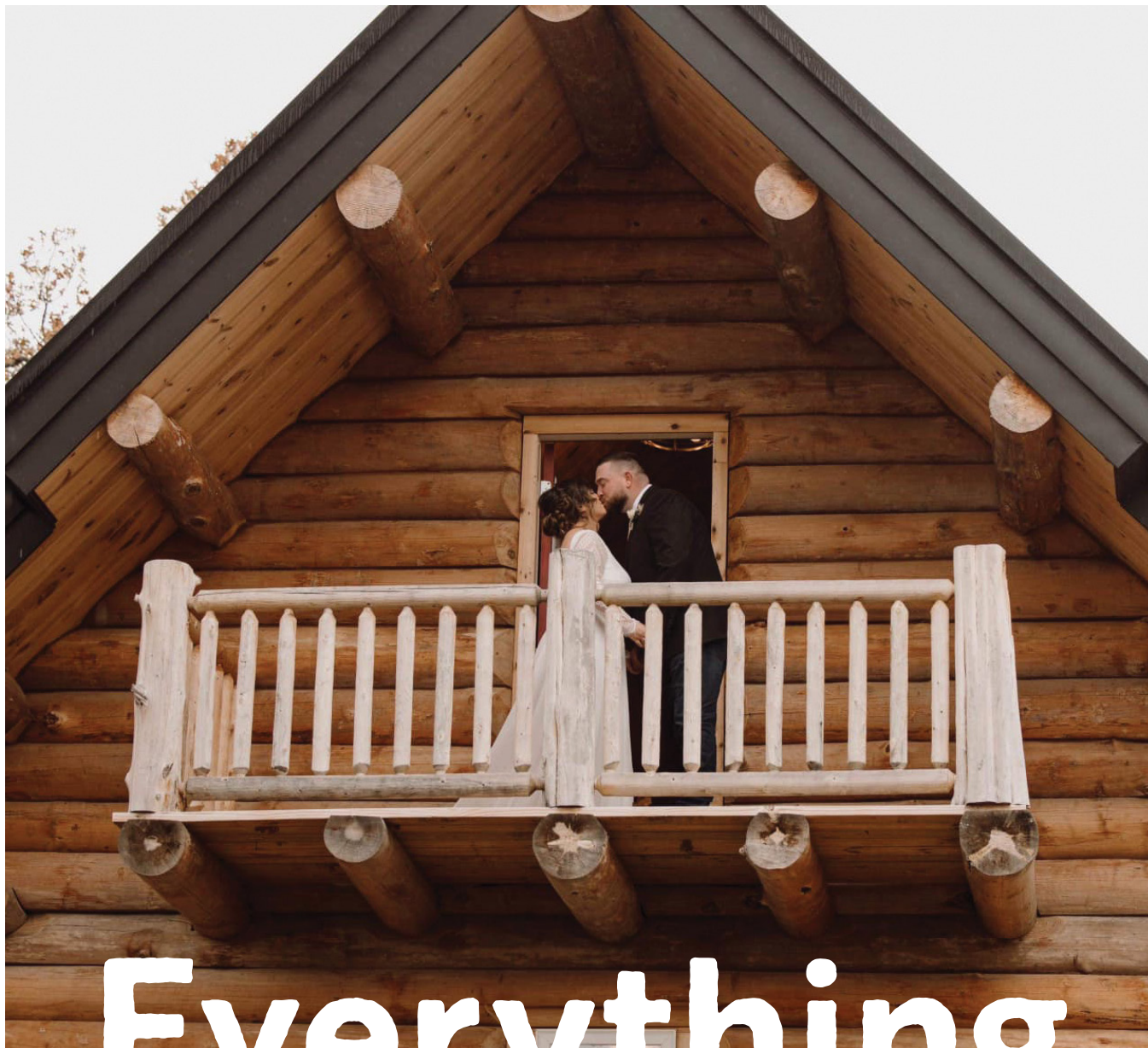
- **Primary on an individual account**
- **Primary or secondary on a joint account (only one joint member may vote)**
- **Named representative of a business or organization (present a letter from the governing body of the entity stating you are the representative for that entity per bylaw SECTION 2.06.)**

If you are not listed on the account, as primary on a single account or primary or secondary on a joint member account, 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. All district meetings start at 7 p.m., or as soon as is practical thereafter.

MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENTS

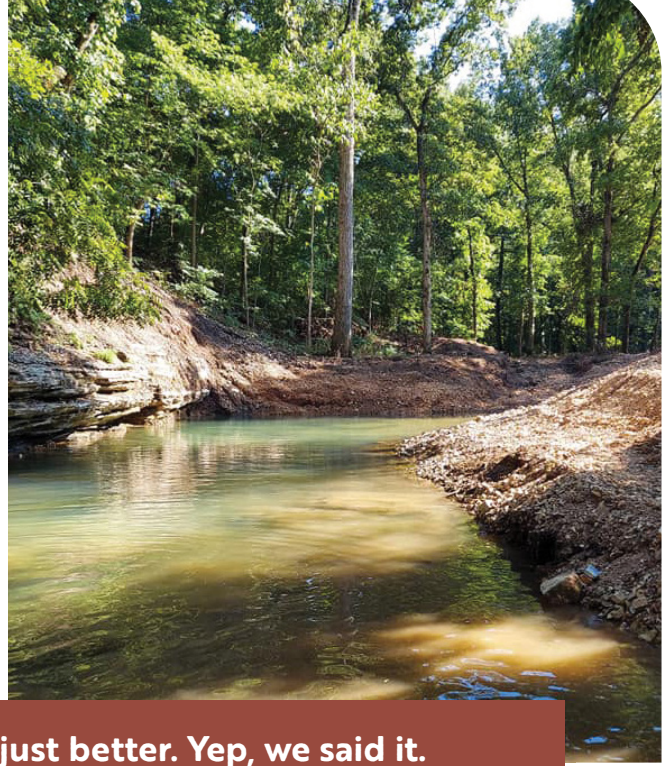
NOEC District Meetings now double as member appreciation events. This format change took effect in 2023. Registered members in Districts 4, 6, and 8 will have an opportunity to gather this summer at locations to be determined and enjoy a meal and prize drawings. Each registered member in attendance will also receive a \$10 electric credit.



Everything You Need

AND NOTHING YOU DON'T

If you're looking for a memorable and relaxing getaway,
you'll find everything you need and nothing you don't at **White Buffalo Lodge**.



After all, sometimes less is just better. Yep, we said it.

It isn't necessarily what most people imagine when they consider an outdoor getaway here in northeast Oklahoma.

Even though the pristine waters of Grand Lake are a mere stone's throw away, this isn't some fancy lakefront resort. There's no bustling dockside restaurant, no noisy party barges anywhere to be found. What there is everywhere you look is unspoilt beauty. A forest green with swaying pine trees gives way to a serene meadow where American bison and exotic deer graze peacefully. A crystal clear spring traverses the property, flowing below the face of a towering cliff.

A hidden gem

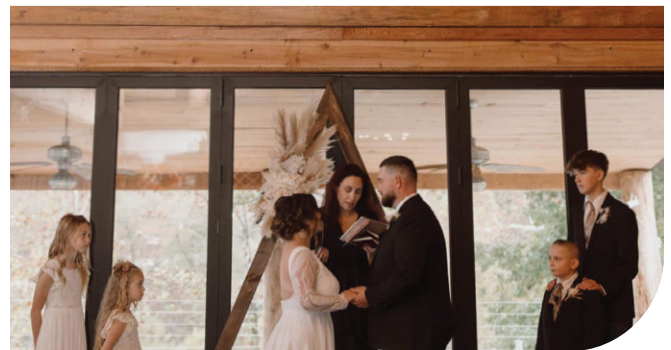
Imagine discovering a place so beautiful that you immediately know it needs to be shared with others—a spot so filled with allurements that you don't want to keep it all to yourself. That's precisely what happened when Dr. Bruce Frye and wife Laura found a little slice of paradise at Grand Lake.

The Fries first stumbled upon this wooded wonderland more than a decade ago. They were living in Tulsa at the time and visiting the lake in search of a place to retire.

Native to the Pauls Valley community located an hour south of Oklahoma City, the Fries began migrating eastward in 1993 with a move to Tulsa. It was there that Dr. Frye opened a clinic where he successfully proffered his chiropractic and naturopathic services for 31 years.

During one particular visit to the lake, the Fries found themselves in the Governor's Retreat area. Suffice to say they needed look no further. They fell in love with the forested acreage, made a deal for property, and went to work building their dream home, a 2,500 square-foot log structure with a 600 square-foot guest house enveloped by tall pine trees. They eventually acquired another 320 acres and started making bigger dreams a reality with the construction of a 1,600 square-foot event center, and rental cabins.

"The beauty of the land is what ultimately brought us here," Bruce explained. "We've always wanted to help people and to live in a place with pine trees. Our land has lots of pines. People who visit say it is like a different world. They didn't know a place like this existed in Grove."



► **White Buffalo Lodge** officially opened for business in March 2023. The operation is a team effort that includes not only Bruce and Laura, but also their son Dustin and his wife Kayla.

The lodge itself is an inviting space where rustic meets elegant. It can accommodate up to 75 event guests, and double trifold doors open to an outdoor patio that looks out over a spring-fed pond below. Back inside, a stacked stone bar is the perfect place to gather and enjoy the merriment. Add the attention to detail and personalized service you'll receive from lodge staff and you have the perfect venue for an unforgettable event, be it a wedding, family reunion, party, or corporate retreat.

Should you and your significant other decide to say "I do" at White Buffalo Lodge, an option that is sure to make the occasion all the more memorable is a carriage drawn by Gypsy Vanner horses. Inquire with the lodge about that addition to your special day.

For overnight stays, each hillside cabin features 1,000 square feet of living space for up to seven guests, including two bedrooms, two full baths, a living room with a queen sleeper sofa, a dining room, and a kitchen. Cabin guests will also enjoy walking out to stellar views from both covered and uncovered decks, the latter of which features a gas grill and fire pit. Construction on a third cabin that will sleep up to five people is currently underway.

For those seeking a more primitive experience, White Buffalo Lodge offers Creekside camping under the stars in traditional, Native American tipis. Each of the four tipis can sleep up to four individuals. In addition to camping, guests who prefer a not-so-rustic outdoor experience will soon be able to enjoy a more tailored alternative known as “glamping.” Plans are underway to offer a “glamping” tipi village and will consist of up to four tipis positioned around a beautiful waterfall. Tipis will be furnished with air conditioning, water, and electricity.

Along with an event venue, cabin rentals, and camping/glamping, White Buffalo Lodge offers wildlife tours at a cost of \$20 per person for a one-hour experience. In addition to the plentiful native wildlife that already calls the area home, the Fries rehomed six American bison (three white and three brown) and 25 rare exotic deer, including 15 sika, five white fallow deer, and five silk deer. The animals have their own enclosure from which they enjoy their own 60-acre portion of the property.

The property is also a perfect setting for special occasion photography. What’s more, there’s no need to search long and hard for a photographer because the lodge already works closely with **Hearts and Hooves Photography LLC**. Three session options are offered and can be booked by either contacting the lodge or photographer, whichever is more convenient. Find and follow Hearts and Hooves Photography LLC on Facebook for more information.

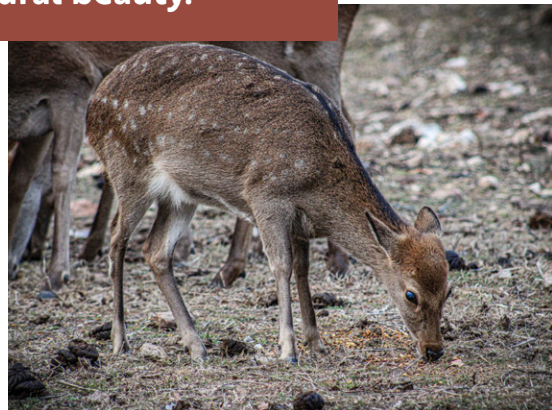
Looking ahead, the lodge anticipates hosting health retreats, stocking trout for fishing, and a trail for hiking and mountain bikes, among other offerings. The Fries are also excited to unveil a supper club where wild game will be featured on the menu, along with their own signature line of craft beer. The lodge hosted a successful fall festival in November 2023 and also held a wine tasting and food pairing event earlier this year.

Reservation inquiries and information about scheduled events can be directed to Kayla Frye at 918.638.7112. Follow on Facebook or visit online at whitebuffalolodgegrandlake.com. The property is located at 33621 South 595 Road in Grove.

Whether you're planning an event, craving a peaceful escape, or seeking an adventurous getaway, let White Buffalo Lodge help you make it happen.

“Since we first opened our doors, we have been dedicated to providing a joyful and invigorating escape for our guests,” Kayla said. “Our aim is to help you disconnect from the stress and monotony of everyday life and reconnect with the beauty of nature. We pride ourselves on our dedication to customer satisfaction. When you choose White Buffalo Lodge, you can expect personalized attention, exceptional service, and unforgettable memories.”

Book your stay today and start creating cherished memories in the heart of northeast Oklahoma's natural beauty.





HEAT UP THE GRILL TO SAVE ENERGY

Grilling and America go together like hot dogs, baseball and apple pie. There's nothing like a sizzling grill on a summer day. But guess what? Grilling not only satisfies our cravings for great food but also helps conserve energy. So, let's fire up the grill and save energy!

THE COST OF STAYING COOL

As refreshing as it is to feel the cool breeze of an air conditioner (AC) on a hot summer day, its energy consumption can be hefty. Much like a marathon runner, it can run non-stop, using anywhere from 0.48 to 5.14 kWh per hour. That is enough to make anyone break a sweat.

Did you know that millions of people add to their AC energy consumption without realizing it? How? By opening the oven door while cooking. According to the book *Bakewise* by Shirley O. Corriher, an oven can lose up to 150 degrees within 30 seconds. Where does all that heat go? You guessed it – right into your home. Plus, even with the door closed, your oven still radiates heat into your home since it has nowhere else to go.

THE SOLUTION: GRILLING

If you are looking to maintain a cool vibe and lower your AC energy consumption, head outside to the grill.

Rather than generating heat indoors, the heat is dispersed outside, reducing strain on the AC, which ultimately lowers utility bills. Additionally, you will be chowing down in no time like a true grill master, as grills reach a toasty 375 degrees in just 5 minutes. Compare that to the oven's sluggish 20-minute warm-up, and you'll be laughing all the way to the butcher shop.

TIPS FOR SAFE GRILLING

Make sure your next BBQ extravaganza is a sizzling success without any burns or mishaps. Here are some safety tips to follow:

- Take it outside. Only use grills in the great outdoors.
- Keep your grill at least 10 feet from any buildings or structures.
- Make sure your grill is on a flat, steady surface.
- Stay close. Never leave your grill unattended while preheating, cooking or cooling down.
- Dress for success. Avoid loose or long clothing that can catch fire.
- Keep a water spray bottle beside your grill to tackle any little flames that flare up quickly. Keep your cool with a fire extinguisher nearby, just in case.



KEEPING YOUR GRILL CLEAN

Grills should undergo deep cleaning once or twice per year. Follow these steps to keep your gas grill in prime condition:

- **Burn away buildup:** Turn on the grill, close the lid and set the heat to maximum for at least 30 minutes. This process will eliminate any remaining grease or food debris.
- **Scrub it clean:** In a bowl, mix warm water with soap and dip a rag into the mixture. Scrub the grates to remove any carbon buildup. You may also use a wire brush, but there is some evidence the wire bristles may make their way into your food. For tough buildup a safer option could be a pumice stone or grill brick.
- **Let it cool:** Allow the grill to cool down completely before storing it. Now your grill is ready for your next barbecue feast.
- **Regular maintenance:** In between uses, preheat your grill and then scrape it off with a metal scraper or rag before adding food. Happy grill, happy life

If your grill uses gas, it is also important to regularly check the propane tank and replace it if necessary. Inspect the hoses and connections for any leaks or damage. Make sure the burners are free of debris and functioning properly. Finally, covering your grill when not in use can help protect it from the elements and prolong its lifespan.

Menu options are truly endless when it comes to grilling. Grab your apron, fire up the grill and get ready to impress your friends and family with your grilling skills while saving energy.



FEATURED RECIPES

FROM OTTAWA COUNTY



YAYA'S CRISPY CHEDDAR CHICKEN | HEATHER FORREST



INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs chicken breast tenderloins or 4 large chicken breasts
- 2 sleeves Ritz crackers
- 1/2 cup milk
- 3 cups cheddar cheese, grated
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/8 tsp pepper
- 1 tsp dried parsley

Step 1: If you do not already have pre-cut chicken breast tenderloins, cut each chicken breast into 3 large pieces and set aside.

Step 2: Pour milk into a medium-sized bowl. Then in a separate medium-sized bowl combine crushed Ritz crackers, cheddar cheese, salt, and pepper.

Step 3: Dip each chicken piece into the milk and then coat with the cracker and cheese mixture. Make sure to press the mixture into the chicken so it sticks well. Then sprinkle with dried parsley.

Step 4: Spray a 9x13 pan with cooking spray and lay chicken inside. Cover with tin foil and bake at 400°F for 35 minutes. Then remove foil and bake for an additional 10-15 minutes. Enjoy!



MEXICAN CASSEROLE | KATHY ENYART



INGREDIENTS

- 1 bag tortilla chips
- 2 cups chili hot beans
- 1 1/2 lbs ground beef
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1 qt diced tomatoes
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can cheddar cheese soup
- Grated cheese

Step 1: Brown ground beef in pan and drain. Then add chopped onion to same pan and cook until it becomes soft, set aside.

Step 2: In a 9x13" pan add crushed tortilla chips (enough to cover bottom), chili hot beans, beef and onion mixture, diced tomatoes, cream of mushroom soup, and cheddar cheese soup. If desired, you may mix the tomatoes and soup together before adding to casserole.

Step 3: Top casserole with crushed tortilla chips and grated cheese. Then bake at 350°F for 25 minutes.