

NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

A BRIGHTER TOMORROW | PAGE 5

JULY 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

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, 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.



SAVE A STAMP, SAVE SOME HASSLE

Cindy Hefner
Director of Billing

There's an old saying I'm sure most of us have heard and have probably even used at some point.

All you have to do is ask.

In other words, if you need something, just let me know and I'll do my best to oblige.

Well, here I am asking.

As the director of billing here at NOEC and BOLT, I hear my fair share of complaints when certain processes aren't functioning as intended. One such case occurs when you mail in your payment. You know, the old check-envelope-stamp method. Now, there's nothing wrong with that method under normal circumstances, but there are circumstances beyond any of our control when using "snail mail."

I'm sure you've experienced delayed deliveries and heard about postal centers shutting down around the country in increasing numbers. That's what we are told is happening when you drop your check in the mail on the first of the month and it doesn't reach the payment processing center until the second or sometimes even the third week of the month. When that happens, of course, there is a possibility of being penalized for late payment. No one likes penalties and we hear from many of you when it happens.

Here's the deal. None of us need to leave our fate in the hands of the postal service when it comes to time-sensitive matters, especially when there are so many other REALLY good alternatives.

Continued on page 4.

.....

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



YOUTH TOUR WINNERS



SPRING EVENTS WRAP-UP



COWBOY POTATOES

CINDY VICTORY | CHELSEA

INGREDIENTS

- 3 lbs thinly sliced potatoes
- Bacon bits
- 1 stick butter, sliced thin
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- Chopped jalapenos (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste

Step 1: In a 2 and a half quart casserole dish, with lid, layer the above ingredients, except cheddar cheese, until the dish is full.

Step 2: Cook in microwave until potatoes are done. Stirring often.

Step 3: Top with grated cheese and microwave for one more minute. Garnish as desired.

JULY EVENTS

Huckleberry Festival

Jul 1-6 | Jay

City-wide

Vinita Fireworks Show

Jul 2 | Vinita

Craig County Fairgrounds

Independence Day Celebration

Jul 3-6 | Salina

Ferry Street

Duck Creek Fireworks

Jul 4 | Afton

32894 S 4507 Rd

4th of July Shake-Up

Jul 4 | Bernice

Bernice Grand Lake State Park

Grand Lake Fireworks

Jul 5 | Disney

Grand River Dam

NOEC DISTRICT 4 MEETING

Jul 8 | Vinita

Craig County Fairgrounds

NOEC DISTRICT 8 MEETING

Jul 9 | Kansas

Northeast Tech Kansas Campus

NOEC DISTRICT 6 MEETING

Jul 11 | Adair

Adair Elementary Cafeteria

Invasion of Drag Boats

Jul 12 | Grove

Downtown

"Elvis: In Person"

Jul 19 | Miami

Coleman Theatre

Aquapalooza at Grand Lake

Jul 20 | Vinita

Willow Park Marina

Route 66 Heritage Festival

Jul 26-27 | Miami

Downtown

Craig County Free Fair

Jul 27-Aug 3 | Vinita

Craig County Fairgrounds

Save a Stamp

CONTINUED FROM INSIDE COVER

NOEC and BOLT are just like most other utilities and/or service provider out there in that we have several payment options available. Here's a brief rundown on the most convenient payment options we offer:

The best payment options for all involved are automatic options. The first is an **electronic funds transfer** from a bank account of your choosing. We still mail a bill to you on your billing date that shows the amount to be drafted from your account. We then process the bank draft on the due date listed on your bill. Your bank statement will reflect the draft amount as proof of payment.

You can also make an **automatic recurring payment** using a **credit** or **debit card**. Again, you'll still receive a paper bill showing the amount to be charged to your account. A payment draft will be made on that account on the due date of your bill. Your statement will reflect the amount as proof of payment.

Almost as convenient as those two options would be **paying online** or using the **Smarthub app**. They are essentially the same since logging into your account re-directs you to our Smarthub payment portal. Once you receive your bill, just be ready to log-in or access the app and have your credit or debit card info ready.

Thirdly, we have several **payment kiosks** across our service territory where you can pay with **cash** or a **credit/debit card**. NOEC members can use the kiosks now; BOLT subscribers will be able to soon. Provided you live near one of these kiosks, they are pretty handy. You can find these kiosks in Chelsea, Grove, Jay, Langley, Miami, Pryor, and Salina. For exact locations, visit us online at **www.noec.coop**.

As you can see, we have some very convenient options from which to choose when paying your bill. Even better, you can save the cost of a stamp and the hassle that comes with leaving an important matter in someone else's hands—in this case, at the mercy of the postal service.

If it helps you decide, we would like to sweeten the deal. If you are not currently using one of the payment options I just mentioned and have opted instead for snail mail, how about a little incentive? If you utilize one of these options before July 31, we will place your name in a drawing for a \$50 bill credit.

If you are currently using auto-pay, thank you. As a way of showing our thanks, we will include your name in a separate drawing for a \$50 bill credit.

Thank you for your consideration as we pursue the best experience possible for you.

YOU'RE INVITED!

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative is hosting district meetings this summer for members in Districts 4, 6, and 8.

If you are an NOEC member residing in one of these three districts, please join us for a brief meeting, meal, \$10 electric credit, and a prize drawing for a \$250, \$100, and \$50 electric credit. Register from 6-7 p.m. (locations provided at right). Meetings will begin at 7 p.m.

More info: www.noec.coop/about/governance

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

NOEC AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

It was a banner year for youth programs here at Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative. We saw excellent participation with our college/trade school scholarship program with the amount awarded doubled from \$1,000 to \$2,000. The deserving winners of those four scholarships were selected from a competitive field of their peers. Selections were made by the committee from among many qualified applicants whose parents or guardians are NOEC members and who reside in a household served by NOEC electric.

Recipients of the 2024 NOEC College/Trade School Scholarship include: Colcord High School's Alyson Marie Shelley, Ketchum High School's Aiden Trevor Hicks, Kansas High School's Maddy Jo Pruitt, and Sequoyah High School's Daemian Daxx Baker Cowan.



ALYSON MARIE SHELLEY

Alyson is the daughter of Jeremy and Crystal Shelley of Colcord. She attended Colcord High School and graduated in May. She is excited to begin her pursuit of an English degree this fall at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College in Miami.

Alyson was a busy student at Colcord High School by all accounts. Her extra-curriculars included Student Council, FFA, FCA, Senior Leadership Team, and Drug-Free Youth Coalition. She served as STUCO senior class vice-president, received recognition from the Oklahoma High School Honor Society, and was no stranger to the Superintendent's Honor Roll.

A notable contributor athletically, Alyson was a decorated member of the school's varsity fastpitch and slowpitch softball, basketball, cheer, and track & field squads. Memorable among her athletic accolades were her conference championship and regional finalist performances in the 100-meter dash, her appearance as a sprinter at the state track meet, and her all-district and all-conference honorable mention nods in softball. She was also named varsity cheer captain her senior year.

Not one to shy away from volunteering opportunities, Alyson served as worship leader, VBS worker, and Falls Creek team leader for her church family. She also participated in the Colcord Community Clean-Up.

► **Alyson's** contributions to Colcord Public Schools did not go unnoticed by Superintendent Bud Simmons.

“My experience with Ms. Shelley has been one of respect for her maturity, leadership, and interpersonal communication skills such as listening, empathizing, and problem-solving,” explained Simmons. “She has strong abilities, many of which allow her to be an outstanding leader. She has excellent attention to detail, is hard-working, demonstrates teamwork, is resourceful, and is motivated.”

Added Simmons: “I truly believe Ms. Shelley is an outstanding person. She has shown the ability, desire, and work ethic to accomplish anything she endeavors. She is determined and motivated at whatever she is trying to accomplish.”

Simmons’ sentiments were echoed by another member of the Colcord High School faculty.

“Alyson has shown tremendous effort and growth not only in being a student-athlete, but in academics as well,” remarked instructor and coach Kyla Howard. “According to her teachers she has been a delight to have in class. She works hard, exhibits determination, and dedication. As a student, Alyson has demonstrated excellence in all stages of academics. She has shown a love of learning and the level of commitment necessary to succeed in college and beyond.”

Howard added: “Alyson is a trustworthy, reliable, good-humored student, athlete, and friend who supports others in and out of the classroom. She was a pleasure to have on my squad, and her positive attitude and belief in herself, even in the face of difficulty, is an immensely admirable asset. I’m confident that she will continue to demonstrate the same diligence, perseverance, and optimism that she shows myself and her peers.”



AIDEN TREVOR HICKS

Aiden is the son of Christopher Boyd and Elizabeth Crockett. He attended Ketchum High School and graduated in May ranked fifth in his class with perfect attendance and all A grades on his senior year transcript. Aiden has his sights set on earning a certification in the field of electrical technology and has already invested a year of training in this field at Northeast Tech’s Afton campus concurrent with his high school studies.

An honor roll student, Aiden was heavily involved in school life. In addition to membership in the school’s FFA chapter, he was a member of both FCA and Student Council, and an instrumental contributor to the school’s baseball, basketball, and track & field programs.

While gainfully employed within the community, Aiden also found time to volunteer as a basketball coach in the Ketchum little league organization. Ketchum High School Counselor Wendy Brown did not hesitate to recommend Aiden.

“Aiden is a remarkable young man who demonstrates exceptional commitment and leadership qualities both inside and outside the classroom,” Brown praised. “He is actively involved in athletics, showcasing his athleticism and teamwork skills. Additionally, his participation in Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Student Council highlights his diverse interests and his desire to contribute positively to his school and community.”



Brown described Aiden’s academic achievements as “equally impressive.”

She said: “He has proven himself to be a dedicated student who takes his studies seriously.”

Added Brown: “Beyond his academic and extracurricular activities, Aiden is a well-mannered and respectful individual who is admired by both his teachers and peers. He is known for his strong work ethic, his positive attitude, and his willingness to go above and beyond to achieve his goals. I am confident that he will continue to excel in all his future endeavors.”

Aiden received another glowing recommendation from Martin Dyer, Senior Pastor of Newsong Church in Grove.

“I have had the opportunity to see Aiden grow from a small boy into the young man of godly character that we see today,” remarked Dyer. “Over the past several years I have seen him be teachable and trainable in spiritual matters as well as natural matters. He is eager to be involved. He is humble and willing to help. He has demonstrated a pure heart.”

Dyer added: “I believe Aiden to be a young man of character. He will do what he says he will do. He has a strong mindset of completing what he starts. Aiden has shown character and integrity. I am proud of Aiden and he is a blessing to our church family.”



MADDY JO PRUITT

Maddy is the daughter of Dianna and Scott Ivey. She attended Kansas High School and graduated in May as valedictorian of her class and ranked first overall among 69 students. She will pursue a degree in nursing this fall at Rogers State University and already has a jump start on that career path thanks to some concurrent work at the local Northeast Tech campus.

Maddy kept a robust school schedule. In addition to playing varsity basketball, she held membership in Student Council, FCCLA, Drama, FCA, BETA Club, BPA, and newspaper. She served as STUCO class president, president of BPA, and editor of the school newspaper.

Recognition for Maddy came in the form of awards in Science and AP English and as a member of both the National Honor Society and National Tech Honor Society. She completed Health Careers 1 & 2 coursework at Northeast Tech and served as president of the local chapter of HOSA, an organization of young, aspiring health professionals.

As stated previously, Maddy is well on her way to achieving her immediate and long-term medical career goals. She is already a certified Long-Term Care Aide (CNA) and Home Health Aide with CPR and OSHA-10 certifications.

► Kansas High School English Instructor Kristie Asher recommended Maddy without hesitation, describing her as “highly responsible and driven” and “a hard-working student who is always diligent about completing her assignments and conscious of her performance in class.”

Asher said: “Maddy is well-respected by her peers, and is involved in many extracurricular activities. Her presence is always felt at school functions, being in charge and up front at activities and fundraisers. As a dedicated member of the community, Maddy has volunteered on many levels. Her volunteer hours are spent with her local BPA and BETA Club chapters where she has participated in community angel trees, elder care baskets, campus clean-up, local blood drives, and athletic banquets. Her caring nature and positive attitude make her a valued member of the school and the community, and she has always represented them with dignity and pride.”

Asher’s praise of Maddy was seconded by Northeast Tech instructor Kim Foster, BSN, RN, CSFA.

“I have had the pleasure of having Maddy as a student in my Health Careers class,” said Foster. “She is an active participant in our curriculum and always has a positive attitude. Her kind personality allows her to work well with others in a team setting. I am certain she will do great things in the future.”

.....



DAEMIAN DAXX BAKER COWAN

Daemian is the son of Audrey Baker of Chelsea. He attended Sequoyah High School in Claremore and graduated in May as valedictorian of his class. Daemian will begin his pursuit of a degree in mechanical engineering this fall at the University of Tulsa.

Extra-curricular activity for Daemian was robust as demonstrated by his participation in DeMolay, an international youth leadership organization. Daemian is a member of the Holland Chapter of Oklahoma DeMolay and has held multiple chapter offices, including junior councilor, senior councilor, and master councilor. He has also been recognized as Chevalier, the highest honor bestowed to an active DeMolay member.

Aside from DeMolay, Daemian was a Courtesy Core Member for Business Professionals of America. He also volunteered a number of hours for the Akdar Shrine Circus in Tulsa, Dickens on the Boulevard in Claremore, and while working football concessions for the University of Tulsa.

Daemian is a recipient of the National Rural and Small Town Recognition Award. Additional recognition has come from both the Oklahoma Honor Society and the National Society of High School Scholars.

Glowing praise for Daemian came from Becky Koger, U.S. History instructor at Sequoyah High School.

"Daemian is an exceptional young man who possesses an excellent work ethic and extraordinary leadership skills," she remarked. "His work ethic definitely sets him apart from his peers. He always does what is asked of him and more. He never hesitates to take on a leadership role or help in class. He also continuously searches for ways to improve in the classroom, as well as in his every day life. His work ethic and dedication not only benefit him but also inspire his peers and others to improve as well."

Added Koger: "Daemian encourages, assists and offers a helping hand whenever it is needed without a second thought. He puts everything into being a role model and example for his peers. He is extremely reliable and has helped at numerous community service events on and off Sequoyah High School campus. He displays a professional work ethic and was dedicated to helping our school staff."

Daemian was also lauded by Gina Helt who, in addition to being local business professional, is an advisor for Holland DeMolay.

"I have known Daemian for many years and have watched him grow as a boy to become the remarkable young man he is today," said Helt. "Over the years, I have seen him flourish in the many organizational roles in which he has been involved. In the time I have known him he has shown himself to be a leader and mentor. He has led the young men of our chapter in organizing charitable events to benefit those in need in our community. He has mentored the young men in his charge, encouraging them to be better public speakers, more confident and sure of themselves, and helped them develop their own leadership skills and working with them to help those in need in their own communities."

Helt continued: "Daemian is looking to further his accomplishments by pursuing the fields of Engineering and German in an honors program. His keen mind and thirst for knowledge ensure he will succeed and flourish in these programs at any school lucky enough to be selected by him. I can tell you that Daemian does not set for himself goals he cannot accomplish. He has never failed to meet a goal he has given himself. I have faith that this young man will be a prominent leader blazing a future that we would be proud to be a part of."

EXPLORE OUR YOUTH PROGRAMS!

NOEC Youth Programs:

College/trade school scholarship

Youth Tour: Washington D.C.

Community Service Awards

FOR MORE INFO VISIT:

noec.coop/community-services/youth-programs



SCAN ME
for more info

MEET *our* WINNERS

Participation in a long-standing cooperative youth program was as strong as it's ever been in 2024, and our two winners submitted exemplary entries. One of the most competitive Youth Tour Community Service Project/Essay Contest years in recent history produced two excellent representatives for NOEC.

Meet our winners:

ADDISON ASHER

Addison is a 17-year-old student at Kansas High School who just completed her junior year. She is the daughter of Ruth and Brad Asher of Kansas.

Addison is closely involved with the Unified Special Olympics team at her school, thanks in large part to opportunities created by school's FCCLA and FFA programs. As a Unified Special Olympics partner, Addison not only works directly with the athletes to prepare them for competition, she also helps with fundraising projects.

"Fundraising is a very important aspect of being part of an organization," she said. "If we don't raise enough money we do not get to participate in competitions and activities. We have had many fundraisers to allow us to go to Special Olympics competitions, State FCCLA Convention, and State and National FFA Convention."

The idea, explained Addison, is to provide opportunities for peer-equivalent events and activities to increase inclusiveness.



Left: Addison Asher; Right: Kansas High School Homecoming ceremony for special needs youth

"Each day I am surrounded by this amazing group of my peers as I help them be successful in school and in life by participating in Special Olympics," explained Addison. "I assist with their participation in extracurricular activities through FCCLA and FFA, as well as being a member myself."

Addison said her team competes in volleyball, bocce, horseshoes, basketball, football, e-games, soccer, and softball.

"This was our first year ever to participate in the Oklahoma Secondary Schools Activities Association Unified Volleyball League games," she explained.

"This is a league throughout Oklahoma high schools in which Special Olympic athletes compete along with their non-disabled peers in a regular league."

She also helped create the first-ever homecoming ceremony for the school's special needs youth.

"This was the first time we had ever done that," she said. "I helped set everything up and, of course, take it down, as well as being an escort for a male player."

Addison's can-do attitude landed her a spot on the Special Olympics Youth Activation Committee, where she can make an even bigger difference.

"I was elected to that committee," she said. "It teaches you how to better encourage inclusion within your school, and how to stay more involved with Special Olympics."

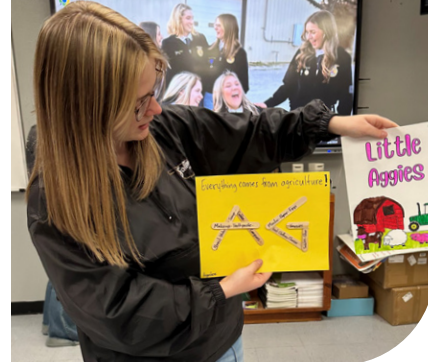
As she prepares to enter her senior year, Addison is excited to continue having a meaningful impact the lives of those around her.

"Helping students jump the hurdles in life is one of the most amazing parts of the Special Olympics organization, and FFA and FCCLA made this possible for me. To this day, I cannot believe that I am lucky enough to be part of it. I love competing alongside athletes. I love initiating, organizing, and implementing activities that allow my peers to be successful. I love taking it to another level with leadership at the state level. I also plan to make working with students with disabilities my career choice. There is nothing that can replace the smiles that I see on a daily basis as I get to tell them, 'Yes. Yes, you can.'"

.....

"Can you imagine being told no your whole life? No, you cannot walk. No, you cannot dribble. No, you cannot play. Over the past two years, I have had the amazing opportunity to help a great group of students prove all the pessimists in their lives wrong."
- Addison Asher

.....



Left: Lynlee McCurry; Right: Lynlee displays two Little Aggies student projects

LYNLEE MCCURRY

Lynlee is a 17-year-old student who just completed her junior year at Salina High School. She is the daughter of Josie McCurry and the late Shawn McCurry of Locust Grove.

Lynlee is the originator of Little Aggies, an after-school FFA club for elementary-age students at Salina Public Schools.

Once a week, students in the third through fifth grades who are in the after-school program come to the ag building where Lynlee and a few other members of the school's FFA chapter lead the youngsters in activities that center around agriculture.

"There is an ag-related lesson, a hands-on project, a game and, of course, a snack," explained Lynlee. "This program is FFA-member planned and run. The idea came from the fact that more and more of our youth do not understand where their food comes from, and we want to make sure we do our part to help in that education. We hope that next year we can expand to interacting with all elementary students who enrolled in the after-school program."

Being an FFA kid herself, and having experienced the many benefits of the program, Little Aggies is a cause near and dear to Lynlee's heart.

"This project is important to me because as an active FFA member I have learned and benefitted from the importance of agricultural education," Lynlee said.

Salina FFA Advisor Crystal Pritchett says Little Aggies is a game-changer, and so is Lynlee.

"This project was the original idea of Lynlee's, and she and her team are really doing well with the program. I am super proud of them and excited to see its growth."

CO-OP SPRING SAFETY EVENTS

Wrap-Up



ENERGYKIDS DAY

Our first-ever energyKIDS Day was held on May 4 from 9-11 a.m. at the Craig County Fairgrounds in Vinita. The day was a success as kids in attendance enjoyed a number of activities that kept them busy, including an inflatable bounce house and obstacle course, games, craft and coloring stations, and various other electrical safety activities. NOEC linemen autographed replica hard hats and showed off a bucket truck and safety gear. To cap off the fun, families enjoyed an engaging and educational live line safety demo from 46-year utility veteran Steve Hancock.

Stay in-the-know about co-op events!

Follow us on Facebook: NEOKREC



LIVE LINE DEMO

Response was excellent to our first-ever live line demonstration for area first responders. The event took place the afternoon of May 4 at the Craig County Fairgrounds following our inaugural energyKIDS day. Agencies from across northeast Oklahoma were represented, and feedback received from attendees following the event was overwhelmingly positive. Information provided during the demonstration by 46-year utility veteran Steve Hancock was reportedly very beneficial. NOEC is committed to presenting this type of potentially life-saving information on a regular basis with those in our communities who find themselves working near power lines in emergency situations.

5 WAYS TO PREPARE YOUR HOME FOR Summer Vacation

- Unplug small appliances and electronics.
- Turn your natural gas water heater to low.
- Turn off your electric hot water heater.
- Use light timers or smart lighting.
- Make sure windows are shut and locked.

