

# NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



**HARVEST HILL SILO**  
AGAINST THE GRAIN

**MARCH 2025**

# 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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## 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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## A CLEAR PATH FOR POWER

**Ray Davis**  
Vegetation Management  
Superintendent

Something interesting happens to me whenever I'm driving. Depending on your line of work, you may experience something

similar when you climb behind the wheel of your vehicle.

As I'm driving, I become keenly aware of any power lines along the roadside, as well as any encroaching vegetation. I honestly don't remember a time when I didn't do this.

Of course, not everywhere I drive is NOEC system territory, yet I still look at how other utilities take care of their rights-of-way. I can't help myself. I'm always looking for areas where maintenance is lacking or for potential trouble growing in the fence row just a few feet below a sagging power line. If you don't believe me, just ask my wife because this proclivity bugs the heck out of her.

Like I said, I've had this "awareness" for as long as I can remember. Perhaps that's because for the past 28 years of my life I've been a right-of-way vegetation professional. It's been my responsibility either as a crewman or supervisor to make sure power lines are kept free from trees and brush. There are plenty of other places where they can grow freely without hindrance. Around utility lines and equipment is not one of those places.

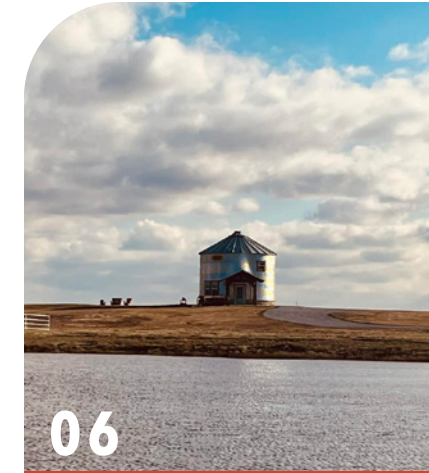
From a utility perspective, the benefits of a well-maintained right-of-way are numerous. The most obvious benefit is, of course, more service dependability for the consumer. Fewer blinks and fewer outages will result where bothersome vegetation has been removed. There are, however, many other reasons to make system maintenance a high priority.

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### \$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 April 1, 2025, to claim a \$100 credit on your electric account.

## MARCH EVENTS

**Grand Lake Boat and Sport Show**  
March 7-9 | Vinita

Craig County Community Center

**Grove Bluegrass Show: Grass Mountain Trailhead**  
March 8 | Grove

Grove Middle School

**Grove Home & Garden Show**  
March 14-16 | Grove

Whoops Surplus

**Queensferry Renaissance Festival**  
March 15-16 | Vinita

Park Hills Motel & RV Park

**Springfest Hunter Jumper Horse Show**  
March 15-16 | Claremore

Claremore Expo Center

**Bangers & Mash Lunch**  
March 17 | Claremore

Downtown Claremore

**Spring Break at Will Rogers Memorial Museum & Birthplace Ranch**  
March 17-21 | Claremore

Will Rogers Memorial Museum

**Big Meat Run**  
March 20-23 | Disney

South Grand Lake Recreation Area

**2 Hip Chicks Roadshow**  
March 22 | Grove

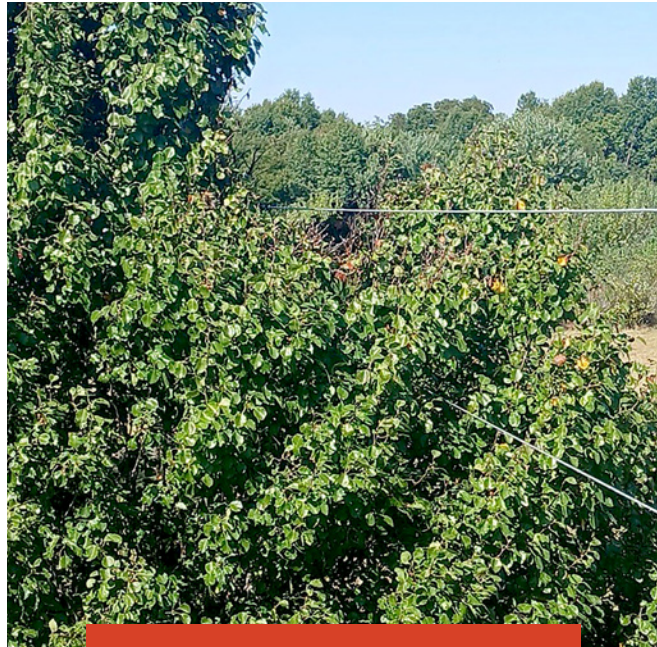
Whoops Surplus

**Dog Iron Cluster Dog Show**  
March 28-30 | Claremore

Claremore Expo Center

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](mailto:publicrelations@noec.coop)

# A CLEAR PATH FOR POWER



A LOOK AT BEFORE AND AFTER



*Continued from inside front cover.*

For one, it creates easier access for our crews when responding to an outage. During storm recovery efforts, a work zone free of debris allows our crews to navigate more efficiently. This results in reduced outage times and allows our crews to move on to the next outage sooner.

Safety is another big concern. Vegetation creates access for animals (and small humans) to climb dangerously close to electrical equipment. Since trees are living organisms containing moisture, their limbs and leaves are conductors of electricity. Eliminating these pathways greatly reduces incident potential.

To that end, we've adopted a proactive approach to right-of-way maintenance here at NOEC to which we credit a 17% reduction in total outages. In 2020, we began implementation of a comprehensive vegetation maintenance program. By the end of year 2026, we will have completely covered our system, which means we will have cleared all 5,000-plus miles of overhead primary lines to spec. Of course, the work doesn't end there because once we're done we will start right back at the beginning and commence the process all over again, hopefully reducing the amount of time it took us the first go-round.

A clear right-of-way is a top priority for our operations team every day here at NOEC. Along with your safety and the safety of our crews, the integrity of our electric service depends on it. And that's something everyone can appreciate.

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## NATIONAL EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY March 7<sup>th</sup>



*Member Services*



*Pryor Linemen*



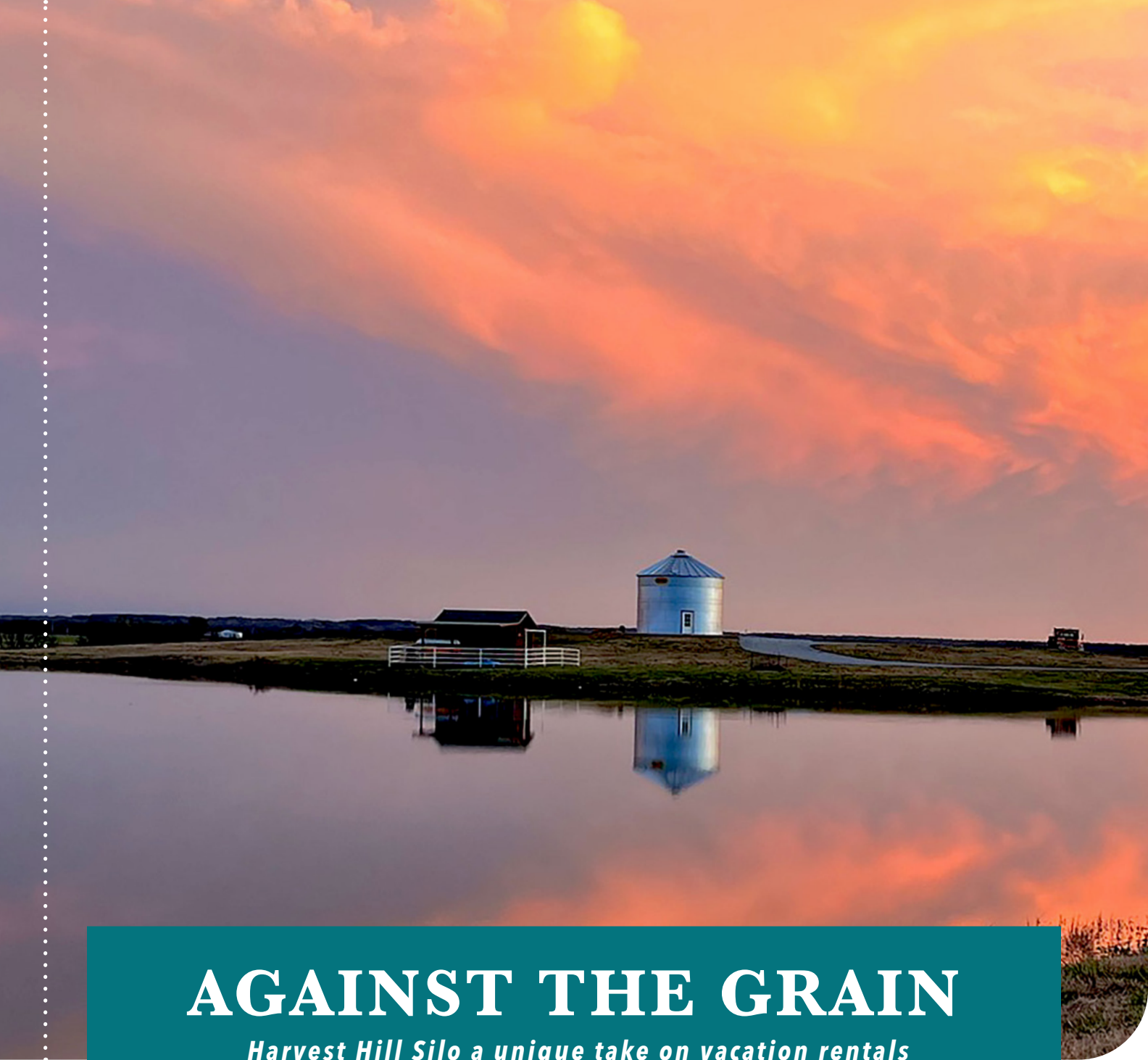
*Financial Services*



*Engineering*

## 5 WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY AT HOME DURING Spring Break

- Drop your water heater thermostat to its lowest set point.
- Unplug all power adapters and charging devices.
- Turn off indoor and outdoor lights.
- Close all curtains, drapes and blinds.
- Turn off ceiling fans and personal fans.



# AGAINST THE GRAIN

*Harvest Hill Silo a unique take on vacation rentals*

Imagine catching wind of a new development coming to your area and then having land nearby you could use to turn a potential profit should said development materialize.

That's the inspiration behind *Harvest Hill Silo*, a unique vacation rental constructed by Paul and Tasha Hillerman a few miles east of Vinita.

After hearing about the \$2.5-billion, 1000-acre American Heartland Theme Park & Resort being proposed just down the road, the Hillermans decided to set aside a small piece of their property on which to construct a vacation home rental.

The prospect of increased traffic bringing visitors to the area in search of accommodations was the impetus behind the project. While the sprawling resort is expected to feature an 320-acre RV park and eventually a hotel, a seasonal overflow of guests will almost certainly create demand for off-property rentals like **Harvest Hill Silo**.

**“Given the proximity of our location to the park, as well as being near the turnpike, Route 66, and the lake, we felt that even if the park did not come to fruition it would be somewhere people would stay,” Paul said.**

In the meantime, the Hillermans have finished up their little silo dwelling on the prairie. It's been a mostly do-it-yourself undertaking. With both Paul and Tasha juggling full-time jobs and two young sons, they allocated time to the project whenever they could squeeze it in to an already busy schedule.

“Ninety percent of the work has been DIY and only a handful of things have been contracted out,” Paul explained. “Since both of us work full-time, we've only had nights and weekends to work on the silo. That's why it has taken over a year to complete.”

Paul said the finishing touches included a porch roof, shower glass, and minor landscaping. Once those projects were complete, the property was ready to rent just in time for the 2024 holiday season.

It's hard to believe a 27-foot grain bin can be converted in 900 square feet of living space, but that's exactly what the Hillermans have done at **Harvest Hill Silo**.



“This build has been unique from the start,” Paul said, explaining that the verticality of the structure demands a different approach to construction. YouTube became Paul's best friend for how-to do a lot of the work and get ideas of what other people did when refurbishing a grain bin.



**“Bins are actually assembled beginning with the roof. You then use a jack to lift each segment before adding each new ring along the way—in our case it was five rings. After that we had to add regular framing to the curved inside walls to house insulation, plumbing, electric, etc.”**



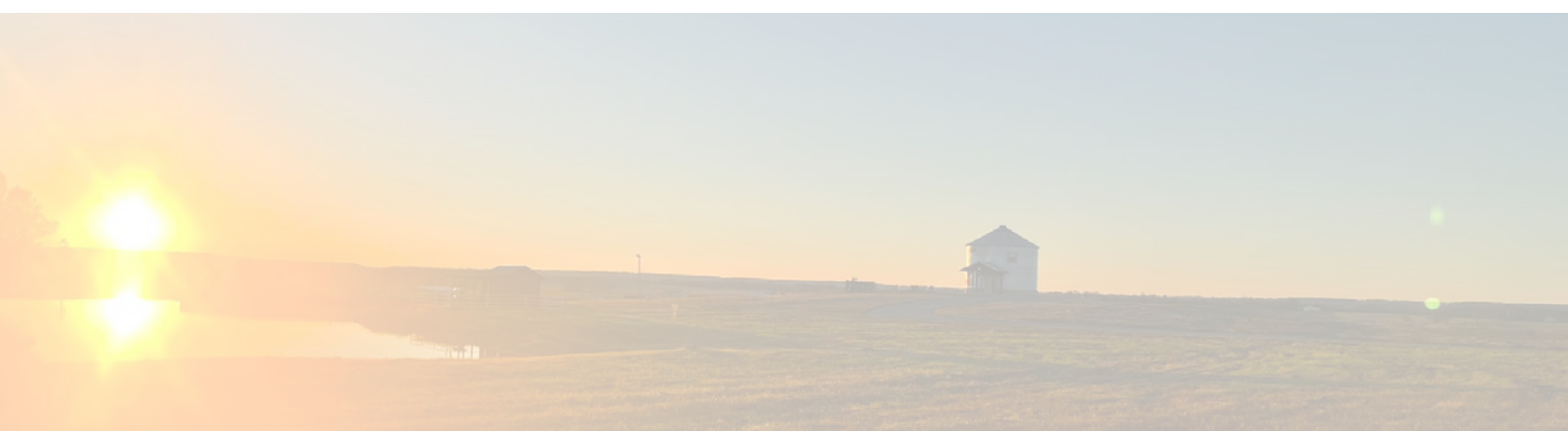
Guests are sure to enjoy all the amenities of home during a stay at the cozy vacation rental since the silo possesses all the features of a regular home, including a full kitchen, a washer/dryer, two bedrooms, two living spaces, and one and a half baths. A few of the more unique appointments include oak stair treads hand-cut by Paul himself with his homemade Alaskan saw mill, a windmill ceiling fan, a grain bin door that appears to be full of corn, and a few antique décor pieces.

**Harvest Hill Silo** is situated on twenty acres and offers sweeping views of Craig County that seemingly go on for miles in every direction. Adding to the quaint setting is a large pond that is teeming with several species of fish. Guests will be allowed to utilize the five-acre pond for fishing and kayaking during stays.



**“We are very excited about the project and look forward to guests experiencing something we have put a lot of time and effort into making special,” Paul said.**

Follow the property on Facebook at **Harvest Hill Silo** and book your next staycation or special occasion getaway on either Airbnb and Vrbo. Email: [harvesthillsilo@yahoo.com](mailto:harvesthillsilo@yahoo.com) for any questions or special requests.



## PLAY IT SAFE AROUND POWER LINES

Whether digging holes, climbing trees, or flying kites, outdoor play often creates beautiful childhood memories. Before hitting the great outdoors, discuss electrical safety with your children.

### FLYING FUN

While flying kites, model airplanes, remote-control flying toys and drones, stay in large, open areas (such as parks or fields), far away from power lines. If an item does get caught in a power line, teach children to never try to retrieve it. Instead, an adult should call the electric utility for help.

### GENERAL OUTDOOR SAFETY TIPS

**Other important safety guidelines for kids and adults alike include:**

- Never throw objects at power lines.
- Stay far away from downed, damaged, or low-hanging power lines. Call 911 to report a downed or damaged line.
- Be cautious after a severe storm causes a power outage. Downed power lines could be hidden under water, snow, or storm debris. Wait to go outside until power has been restored.
- Do not climb, sit, or play on padmount transformers.
- Do not climb trees that have overhead power lines near or running through them.

### POOLSIDE

When spending time by the pool, look up before using pool skimmers or other long objects to be sure you are not getting close to an overhead power line. If you are swimming and feel a prickly or tingling sensation, do not stay in the pool. There could be a stray electric current from a downed power line or a damaged electrical device. Also, never play in a flooded street or ditch; a downed power line could be hidden by the water and fallen debris.

### PREVENTION IS KEY

Electric shock and injuries are often preventable. Empower your family with electrical safety knowledge to avoid preventable electric injuries.

**For more information visit:**

[noec.coop/community-services/electric-safety](https://noec.coop/community-services/electric-safety)



Download our **FREE**

**BRIGHT IDEAS  
ACTIVITY BOOK**

Scan code with your smartphone.



## SHARING THAT KNOWS NO SEASON

The holidays are behind us and gone with them is the season of giving. The generosity here in northeast Oklahoma hasn't ended. However, that's because the sharing never stops with Operation Round-Up.

Why limit to only a few months the goodwill we show to others and discontinue beyond that the many ways of doing more to help our fellow man?

Operation Round-Up truly is an amazing demonstration of the care and concern Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative members have for their friends and neighbors.

NOEC adopted Operation Round-Up in 1998. Hundreds of electric cooperatives across the U.S. now implement the program as a way to positively impact the communities where they serve.

**OPERATION ROUND-UP TRULY IS SMALL CHANGE THAT CHANGES LIVES.**

NOEC is humbled by all that has been accomplished over the past 27 years. During the time the cooperative has been involved with the program, approximately \$3.5 million has been allocated to needy causes throughout its service territory of Craig, Mayes, Delaware, Ottawa, and Rogers counties.

What is remarkable is how little Operation Round-Up asks of each contributor in proportion to the amount of good it does. Our cooperative rolled out the program with the slogan *Small Change that Changes Lives*. That description is no less fitting today.

Operation Round-Up does just what its name implies. Each month, our cooperative simply "rounds up" the electric bills of participating members to the next highest dollar.

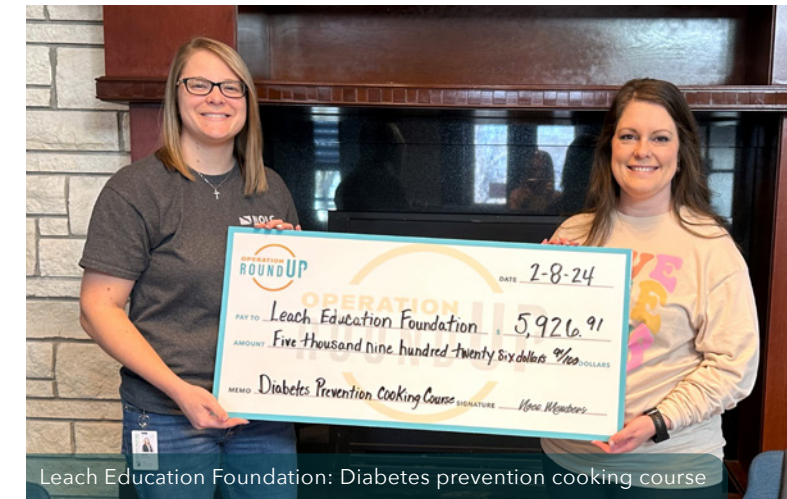
As a voluntary program, Operation Round-Up relies on member participation to ensure its success. When a member does participate, his/her average contribution is about 50 cents per month, totaling around \$6 on an annual basis. A bill of \$152.60 would be rounded up to \$153 with the additional 40 cents going to the Operation Round-Up trust.

Operation Round-Up donations are placed in trust and administered by an independent board of directors called the *Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative Foundation, Inc.* The Foundation board consists of designees from the cooperative's nine districts and is made up of community leaders who serve on a voluntary basis.

The Trust Foundation board receives and evaluates all requests, determines who receives funding and how all Operation Round-Up monies will be distributed. Typically, the funding is used to address crucial community needs such as emergency equipment, medical care, and efforts to fight food insecurity—such as restocking local food pantries and supporting backpack programs for children—but is not limited to these categories.



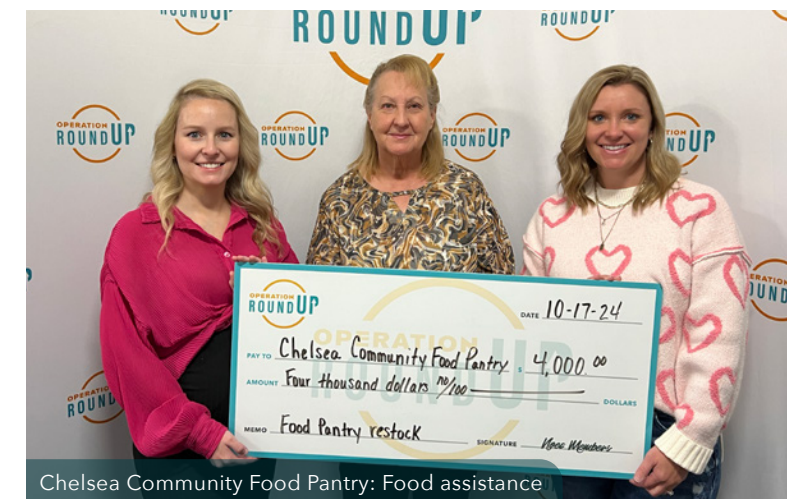
Big Cabin Senior Center: Meals for senior citizens



Leach Education Foundation: Diabetes prevention cooking course

If you are not already participating, consider joining the 17,842 NOEC members who are already giving to Operation Round-Up. There is nothing to lose and everything to gain. When you see the smiles on the faces of those appreciative grant recipients, you'll know you are part of something special. And all of that collective benevolence costs each participant less than what most people toss into their vehicle console after making a fast food purchase. What's even more special is that those recipients are folks from our own communities—our friends and neighbors. And who knows? Those emergency resources you helped fund may even be used one day to the save the life of someone you love.

**Not sure if you're participating? Look at the list of *Current Charges* on your latest bill. Questions? Give us a call at 918.256.6405.**



Chelsea Community Food Pantry: Food assistance

## WANT TO SIGN UP?

Visit [shorturl.at/bfovN](https://shorturl.at/bfovN) or scan the code below:



**SCAN ME!**



Vinita Fire Department: Purchase rescue tools

# FEATURED RECIPES



## HAMBURGER STROGANOFF | JOYCE NESTER - SALINA

### INGREDIENTS

- 1lb ground beef
- 3 slices of bacon, diced
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 cup sour cream
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp paprika
- pepper to taste

**Step 1:** Brown ground beef with bacon. Then add onion and cook until tender.

**Step 2:** Drain off excess fat from meat.

**Step 3:** Add seasonings to meat mixture then stir in cream of mushroom soup.

**Step 4:** Cook slowly, uncovered, for 20 minutes. Stir frequently.

**Step 5:** Add sour cream and heat through but do not boil.



## COFFEE ANGEL FOOD CAKE | ALICE RIGGS - AFTON

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 box angel food cake mix
- 3 tbsp instant coffee
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp milk
- sliced almonds (browned)

**Step 1:** Mix cake as directed on box then add 1 tbsp instant coffee. Cook as directed on box.

**Step 2:** When cool, cream together butter and powdered sugar. Then add vanilla, salt, 2 tbsp instant coffee, and milk.

**Step 3:** Chill the cake and then top with almonds.

**Step 4:** Serve with coffee ice cream and enjoy!