

# NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## THE YOUTH ISSUE

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS & MORE

AUGUST 2025



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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## 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

**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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## REGISTER WITH PURPOSE

**Kelsie Wilson**  
**Director**  
**Public Relations & Marketing**

Mark your calendars, NOEC members. REC Day 2025 is set for Thursday, September 11,

2025, and we can't wait to observe it with you.

Good news: We are happily returning to four drive-thru locations for this year's event. We understand this gives all involved the most convenient, efficient drive-thru experience possible.

We hope you'll make plans to join us that day from 2-6 p.m. at any one of these locations: Craig County Fairgrounds in Vinita, Mayes County Fairgrounds in Pryor, Miami Fairgrounds, or the new Delaware County Fairgrounds campus in Jay. Along with a special edition souvenir NOEC cap, each member who registers at the event will receive a \$20 electric credit.

This year's event carries a special purpose.

We're proud to partner with the **9/11 Memorial & Museum** to help support its mission of remembrance, education, and honoring all those who served. As part of this effort, \$2 for every REC Day 2025 registration will be donated directly to the museum.

We're also inviting local fire departments to join us at the event, where they'll be "passing the boot" for any members who wish to make a personal donation to this meaningful cause. Again, all proceeds will go to the **9/11 Memorial & Museum**.

At Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative, we believe strongly in the power of our seventh cooperative principle, Concern for Community. That timeless principle guides everything we do here at NOEC—every decision we make. For us, REC Day 2025 is another way of living that principle—by honoring the past, supporting our present-day heroes, and bringing our cooperative together in a spirit of unity, generosity, and gratitude.

We hope to see you on September 11 as we recognize a day of special significance for our country and our cooperative!





**PATRONAGE ALLOCATION**



**SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS**



**YOUTH TOUR WINNERS**



**CRAIG 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 September 1, 2025, to claim a \$100 credit on your electric account.

**\*992058\***

## AUGUST EVENTS .....

**Ottawa Co. Fair**  
**Aug 2-9 | Miami**  
Miami Fairgrounds

**Wyandotte Nation Backpack Event**  
**Aug 7 | Wyandotte**  
Bearskin Healthcare & Wellness Center

**Hitched - Jay's Premiere Tractor & Truck Pull**  
**Aug 9 | Jay**  
America's Outdoor Adventure Park

**National 811 Day**  
**Aug 11**  
Call before you dig!

**Vinita Main Street Open Meeting**  
**Aug 18 | Vinita**  
139 S Vann St

**Rocklahoma**  
**Aug 29-31 | Pryor**  
Pryor Creek Concert & Festival Grounds

**Demolition Derby**  
**Aug 30 | Miami**  
Miami Fairgrounds

**BullFest**  
**Aug 30 | Grove**  
Wolf Creek Park

### ..... NATIONAL 811 DAY

An underground utility line is damaged **every six minutes** in the United States, meaning that ten times an hour, a potentially dangerous and costly incident causes a utility outage for one customer or an entire neighborhood.

Don't be a statistic. National 811 Day is August 11, serving as an important reminder that everyone, whether a homeowner with a shovel or a professional excavator with an earthmover, must **Call 811 Before You Dig.**



# NOEC BOARD APPROVES 2024 PATRONAGE ALLOCATION

**C**ooperative businesses are unique. They are owned by the members they serve and guided by seven principles that reflect the interests of those members. One of those seven principles is *Member Economic Participation*.

Economic participation simply means that members contribute equitably to—and democratically control—the capital of the cooperative. Unlike investor-owned utilities, cooperatives do not issue stocks. Surpluses are *margins*, not profits.

Margins represent an amount that exceeds what is required to operate and are allocated to member patronage accounts. The success of a cooperative is shared with its members through an annual patronage allocation.

**The Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative (NOEC) board of trustees recently approved the allocation of 2024 patronage capital totaling \$5,466,606.**

For 2024 usage, an allocation factor of \$0.0073191220 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) will be used. For example, a member consuming 1,233 kWh per month would accumulate \$108.29 in patronage for the year.

To calculate the capital credit allocated to your member patronage account for 2024, simply multiply the allocation factor of \$0.0073191220 by your total kWh of usage for the year.

**If you are an active member of the cooperative, you can find the allocation amount in the upper right-hand corner of your August 2025 statement. This amount will remain in your patronage capital account until a future patronage retirement is made.**

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## FORMULA EXAMPLE

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \$0.0073191220 & \times & 1,233 & \times & 12 & = & \$108.29 \\ \text{allocation} & & \text{kWh} & & \text{months} & & \text{patronage} \\ \text{factor} & & & & & & \end{array}$$

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NOEC is honored to serve and share its success with you. If you have questions about how capital credit is allocated or if you would like to know the total amount in your member patronage account for this or previous years, feel free to contact us at 918.256.6405, ext. 9313.

# NOEC AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

The deserving winners of **NOEC's college/trade school 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 2025 NOEC College/Trade School Scholarship include: Pryor High School's Ryleigh Hill, Grove High School's Emma Oliver, Ketchum High School's Shianne Fowler, and Adair High School's Gunner Huffman.

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**RYLEIGH HILL | PRYOR**

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**Ryleigh** is the daughter of Caleb and Kayla Hill of Pryor. She graduated from Pryor High School in May as valedictorian of her class and will be attending Washington University in St. Louis this fall to pursue a PNP (philosophy, neuroscience, and psychology) degree on a pre-med track.

Ryleigh carried a **4.0** GPA and scored **32** on her ACT. One of 100 academic all-staters in the state, she was named to the superintendent's honor roll all four years of her high school career. She was a three-year LifeSmarts winner and was twice named to the National LifeSmarts Top 25. In addition to AP Biology and Language, Ryleigh has a jump start on college having completed **26** hours of concurrent courses.

Along with LifeSmarts, Ryleigh was an active participant in the following organizations at Pryor High School: LEAP, FCCLA, Student Council, and National Honor Society. She served as captain of LifeSmarts for three years, LEAP national panel member for two years, NE District 2 FCCLA President, Student Council President, and National Honor Society Vice-President.

Ryleigh's schedule outside of school was also busy. She worked as a barista for a local coffee shop, volunteered her time with children's church and the worship team at NorthStar Church; and was a volunteer for the Mayes County LEAD Team.



Notable among Ryleigh's accomplishments was founding a charitable initiative in fifth grade known as R&R Lemonade that would eventually raise over **\$14,000** for various local charities, such as the National Alopecia Areata Foundation, St. Jude's, and the Pryor Animal Shelter.

"I have had the privilege of observing Ryleigh over the years and have been continually impressed not only by her academic achievements and leadership but also her outstanding character," remarked Pryor High School FCCLA Advisor Sharon Rash. "Ryleigh's drive, compassion, and sense of purpose are qualities that define her and make her a remarkable individual."

Added Rash: "Ryleigh is someone who goes above and beyond to make a positive impact on others. Her character is marked by her unwavering commitment to excellence, her willingness to serve others, and her ability to lead with both compassion and purpose. She is a role model for her peers and has touched the lives of everyone she encounters with her kindness, work ethic, and dedication to making the world a better place. I am confident that Ryleigh will continue to make a profound impact wherever she goes. She has already demonstrated that she is a leader, a compassionate friend, and someone who strives to bring out the best in those around."

Rash's praise of Ryleigh was echoed by Pryor High School Math Instructor Alecia Heiderscheit.

"What truly sets Ryleigh apart is her exceptional ability to balance her rigorous academic workload with her extracurricular commitments. Despite her busy schedule, she maintained top-tier academic performance, demonstrating her time management and prioritization skills," said Heiderscheit.

"Her ability to excel in a challenging academic environment while contributing to her school community is a reflection of her strong character and determination."



**Emma** is the daughter of Cameron and Ellen Oliver of Grove. She graduated from Grove High School in May and will be enrolling at Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College in Miami this fall to begin her pursuit of a degree in social work. She carried a **3.8** GPA, scored a composite **27** on the ACT, and completed several AP or concurrent college courses including English, Composition, English Literature, and Algebra.

Emma was named to the Grove High School Superintendent's Honor Roll at the conclusion of both her junior and senior year, she was a Junior STEM Scholar (2024), an Oklahoma Academic Scholar nominee (2025), received the Trail of Tears Award of Excellence (2025), and was awarded third place Oklahoma Rural Museum of Poetry Contest (2023).

An active student, Emma was a member of the varsity soccer team (2021-2022) and was the girls' soccer team manager (2022-2023). She was also a member of the GHS Soccer Booster Club (2021-2023), Hope Squad (2023-2025), Spanish Club (2023-2025), Interact Club (2023-2025), Character Counts (2023-2025), and National Honor Society (2024-2025).

Extracurricular participation for Emma was robust. She was a member of the Jay Lions Club (2021-2025), a Parish Volunteer (2023-2024), was employed at Ginger Jake's food truck (2022-2024), a Walmart/Spark independent contractor (2024-2025), and a teacher/after-school program supervisor at Wee Little Lambs Christian Childcare & Learning Center.

"Emma is a dedicated, reliable, and conscientious student who strives for excellence," praised Grove High School Mathematics instructor Joan Johnson. "She is caring and compassionate and strives for success in everything she does. While maintaining a heavy load of college preparatory classes, concurrent classes and extracurricular activities, Emma has also held a part-time job the past two years. This has allowed her to learn the importance of time management, teamwork, and prioritizing tasks. These skills will benefit her greatly as she pursues her college degree."

Added Johnson: "Emma has the academic record and work ethic that adults like to see in high school students. She is a well-rounded person with the drive and ambition to succeed."

Employer Chelsea Perryman echoed Johnson's commendation of Oliver.

"Emma is a highly-motivated and responsible individual with a consistently strong work ethic," remarked Perryman, owner of Wee Little Lambs Childcare & Learning Center, LLC. "Whether she's working independently or on a team, she approaches every task with dedication and professionalism. She is also incredibly punctual, always prepared, on time, and ready to contribute. Her reliability sets her apart and earns her the respect of her peers and mentors alike."

Perryman continued: "What truly stands out about Emma is her loyalty. She is committed not only to her goals but also to the people and organizations she represents. Whether it's her school, extracurricular activities, or her part-time job, Emma gives her all and takes great pride in being dependable and trustworthy. I have no doubt she will continue to excel in her academic and professional pursuits and make a positive impact in her community."



**SHIANNE FOWLER** | LANGLEY

**Shianne** is the daughter of Lance and Amber Wigington of Langley. She graduated from Ketchum High School in May as valedictorian of the Class of 2025 and will be attending Rogers State University this fall. Shianne has enrolled in the RSU nursing program and is an RSU Merit Scholarship recipient. She has a jump start on her degree goals, having completed **18** hours of concurrent college coursework. She carried a **4.0** GPA and scored a **21** on her ACT.

An active high school student, Shianne was involved in FFA, National Honor Society (NHS), FCCLA, and Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). She served as treasurer, vice-president, and secretary for her FFA chapter; president of NHS; and FCA co-leader. She was a member of Student Council, and class officer (secretary) as a senior.

A decorated FFA participant, Shianne received her Discovery Degree in 2021, her Greenhand Degree in 2022, was Top Blue & Gold Salesperson for 2022, and earned her State FFA Degree in 2025.

Shianne's athletic prowess was on display during track & field and basketball seasons. Participation in LEO Club and the Vinita Volleyball Club were counted among her extracurricular activities. She was captain of the Vinita Volleyball Club, and treasurer and vice-president of the LEO Club. She was named Oklahoma District 3 LEO of the Year for 2024.

No stranger to hard work, Shianne was gainfully employed at Reasor's and Cabin Creek Bullies, and also worked as a car detailer and babysitter.

**"Shianne is a stellar student and a leader in her community," noted Ketchum Public Schools Superintendent Joy Taylor. "She is a talented and self-motivated person and has developed superb leadership skills and work ethic."**

Another strong recommendation for Shianne came from a local civic organization representative.

"I have known Shianne for seven years and have watched her grow into the amazing leader she is today," said Vinita Lions Club treasurer and Leo Advisor Heather Beisly. "Shianne has a very strong work ethic, she is always eager to help in any challenge, and works exceptionally well with others. She has excellent leadership skills as well as a strong ability to figure out the job even with little to no direction."

Added Beisly: "Shianne is always willing to take the lead. She is very pleasant to work with and does everything with a smile and great attitude."



**Gunner** Huffman is the son of Beeper and Lindsey Huffman of Vinita. Gunner attended Adair High School and graduated in May. He plans on attending Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas, and majoring in physical performance. He is also looking ahead to the day when he'll be applying for a post-graduate program for physical therapy.

A National Honor Society member, Gunner finished with a **3.94** GPA and scored a **22** on his ACT. He was concurrently enrolled in college coursework, held the past office of FFA reporter, and was a Junior Lion.

As a standout athlete, Gunner will likely have an opportunity to secure additional scholarship backing to play football or baseball at the collegiate level. He was big contributor to his school's baseball, football, wrestling and powerlifting programs. His athletic achievements included being named District 2A-2 Outside Linebacker of the Year in football in 2024, 4A-7 All-District Catcher in 2024, and 3A-6 All-District Catcher in 2022 and 2023. When he wasn't playing himself, Gunner could be found giving back to kids in the community by helping coach little league football, baseball, and wrestling programs.

A teacher and coach at Adair High School had high praise for Gunner.



"Having had the privilege of knowing Gunner through school and athletics, I can confidently say that he is one of the most hardworking, dependable, and charismatic individuals I have encountered," described Adair High School head football coach Brady Bradbury. "His unwavering integrity sets him apart as someone who not only strives for excellence but also uplifts those around him."

Added Bradbury: "Gunner's work ethic is second to none. He approaches every challenge with determination and resilience, never hesitating to put in extra effort to ensure success. Whether it's through his dedication to athletics, school, or his willingness to help others, Gunner consistently proves himself as someone who can be relied upon. Beyond his dedication and dependability, Gunner possesses a natural charisma that makes him a strong leader and a positive presence in any environment. His ability to connect with people, offer encouragement, and bring out the best in those around him speaks volumes about his character. His character, commitment, and leadership will positively impact any team or community he joins."

An employer also offered a glowing recommendation.

"Gunner is a bright, respectful, and highly motivated young man," said Vinita business owner Joe Frisby. "He can be trusted and always be counted on to the job efficiently. When football season starts, he will work it into his schedule to get the job accomplished, even if it means working late hours. He is a hard worker, and I believe he will accomplish whatever he sets his mind to achieve."

# EXPLORE OUR YOUTH PROGRAMS!

## **NOEC Youth Programs:**

College/trade school scholarship

Youth Tour: Washington D.C.

Community Service Awards

energyKIDS

## **FOR MORE INFO VISIT:**

**[noec.coop/community-services/youth-programs](https://noec.coop/community-services/youth-programs)**



**SCAN ME**  
for more info

A large photograph of the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C., showing the iconic dome and the portico with its columns. The image is partially obscured by a dark olive green banner on the right side.

# MEET OUR WINNERS YOUTH TOUR

Two local high school juniors represented Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative during the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives 2025 Youth Tour of Washington, D.C., held June 14-19.

Vinita High School junior **Isaac Birkes** and Salina High School junior **Izabel Pritchett** enjoyed the trip of a lifetime to our nation's capital along with 67 other Oklahoma high school students, seven dedicated chaperones, a nurse, a photographer/videographer, and a director.

"From the Lincoln Memorial to the Smithsonian museums, from Capitol Hill to Arlington National Cemetery, and much more—the group experienced the history, power, and pride of our country up close and personal," remarked OKYT Director Amber Himle. "The trip isn't just about sightseeing, however, it's about leadership, learning, and building lifelong friendships. These young leaders returned home inspired, informed, and ready to make a difference in their communities."

Himle added: "Every summer, I have the incredible opportunity to travel with a group of high school students to D.C., and every year, it fills my cup in ways I can't explain. It's more than just a trip, it's the beginning of relationships that last far beyond one week in June. I get to cheer these students on through their senior year and often stay connected as they continue chasing big dreams. Watching the next generation of leaders learn, grow, and find their voice is such a privilege and an absolute blast. I'm so proud to be a small part of their journey."

A photograph of two teenagers, a girl and a boy, standing on the wide stone steps of the U.S. Capitol building. They are both wearing red t-shirts and lanyards. The girl is on the left, and the boy is on the right.

*Izabel and Isaac at Capitol Hill*

A photograph of the same two teenagers, Izabel and Isaac, standing in front of the Washington Monument. They are wearing blue t-shirts with a logo that says "OKLAHOMA YOUTH TOUR". The monument is visible in the background across a body of water.

*Izabel and Isaac at the Washington Monument*

Meet our 2025 Youth Tour  
Community Service Project/Essay  
Contest winners:

ISAAC BIRKES

**Isaac** qualified for OKYT25 with a winning essay submission, in which he explained how he has been able to make a difference in his community through his participation in three organizations: Boy Scouts of America, robotics, and National Honor Society.

**“Throughout my life I have strived to make a difference where I live,” Isaac explained. “I try to improve my community through these groups.”**

In eight years of involvement with Boy Scouts, Isaac has accumulated over 200 service-project hours. One of his most influential endeavors with the organization was an Eagle Scout project where he helped construct a raised bed garden at Bernice Town Hall.

Robotics also provide opportunity for Isaac to make important contributions. During the recent First Tech Challenge “Into the Deep,” he and his team were tasked with building a robot that could collect and transfer samples from the ocean floor for analysis. Testing would determine how much and what types of trash were contained in the samples.

During a similar contest, a First Robotics Competition called “Reefscape,” Isaac and his team enabled a robot to remove algae from a reef habitat and transfer it to a barge for analysis.

**“Every season the challenge is to make the world a better place in terms of technological advancements,” he said.**

He added: “Another benefit of robotics is the encouragement of outreach and helping others in your community. I have personally worked with my local 4-H group to incorporate technology into farming and livestock, thus improving the efficiency of those areas.”

Lastly, Isaac’s participation in National Honor Society has helped him make an immediate impact in his community, especially during the American Red Cross blood drives hosted by NHS.

“ I enjoyed the entire experience of Youth Tour and I made a group of friends that will last forever. It made me come out of my comfort zone and come out of my shell and unlocked more potential for me. My favorite experience was meeting new friends and dancing with them on the river cruise. It was also incredibly educational as to what a cooperative is and how co-ops helped rural people access electricity. It was also a great educational experience of the history of America. This trip has truly affected me in the best way possible and it was a pleasure being someone who represented Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative. ”

- Isaac Birkes

IZABEL PRITCHETT

**Izabel** went full-on blue collar for her winning Youth Tour submission. She elected the community service project option for her entry and went right to work. She spent several hours of her Spring Break week out of school picking up litter along roads and sidewalks, and near businesses in her town of Salina.

**“This project was so important to me because the town I live in has always heavily supported me and the activities I am involved in,” Izabel explained.**

“ Living in small-town Oklahoma and having a busy schedule like mine, I can hardly find time to travel. Oklahoma Youth Tour provided me with the best opportunity! This trip really opened my eyes to see that I can make it out of ‘My Little Town.’ I met so many talented people and created such amazing memories and friendships. OKYT taught me that the sky is the limit and to BE YOURSELF! My favorite part of the trip was seeing so many historical monuments. ”

- Izabel Pritchett



# RECIPES

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## FROM CRAIG CO.

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### CARAMEL APPLE BITES | SHARON WALKER, VINITA

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 package mini twist or small square pretzels
- 1 package Rolo candy
- 1-2 Granny Smith apples

**Step 1:** Preheat oven to 250°F. Then cut apples into bite size slices and soak in salt water for a few minutes.

**Step 2:** Place pretzels in a single layer on a baking sheet. Then place one Rolo candy on each pretzel. Bake for 3-4 minutes until Rolo is soft but not melted.

**Step 3:** Remove baking sheet from oven and place an apple slice on each candy.



### APPLE CAKE | MARIETTA JINKS, WELCH

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 stick margarine or butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 2 1/2 diced apples
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- Nuts if desired

**Step 1:** In a large bowl blend butter, sugar, and egg together, then add apples.

**Step 2:** In a second bowl sift flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon together. Then mix dry ingredients into bowl with wet ingredients, adding nuts if desired.

**Step 3:** Pour mixture into an 8x8 inch pan and bake at 350°F for 30 minutes.

#### SAUCE

- 3/4 cup sugar • 2 tsp flour • 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg • 1/2 tsp vanilla • 2 tbs butter
- 1 cup water

Boil until thick and pour over cake.

