

NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A young woman with long braids, wearing a purple t-shirt and a lanyard, is seated in a wheelchair on a red running track. She is smiling and reaching up to high-five a man who is wearing a purple t-shirt, a wide-brimmed hat, and a yellow wristband. The man's shirt has the word "SEER" visible. In the background, there are bleachers with spectators and a clear blue sky. A purple text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

ALL THE HATS WE WEAR
NOEC EMPLOYEES SERVE THE COMMUNITY

JULY 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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Sami Jo Frisby - Administrative Services
Kristen Sturgess - Human Resources
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

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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Upgrade & Save

Cindy Hefner

Director of Billing

You've probably heard the quote: "You have to spend money to make money." I almost like "spend money to save money" more—partly because it aptly describes our **rebate program** here at NOEC.

We all know that smart energy choices make a home more comfortable and power bills more affordable. One of the easiest ways for a homeowner to conserve energy and save money by upgrading aging appliances.

Sure, grandma's olive green Sears cookstove has sentimental value, but even the most budget-minded granny wouldn't hang on to an old clunker if she could put her hands on a better model (even though she stuck it out with grandpa for all those years). After all, granny herself was once all about upgrading appliances. If you aren't convinced, just ask her if she still uses her old washboard. My guess is she replaced that knuckle scraper the first chance she could. Using that harvest gold Maytag washer for the first time, well, let's just say it was love at first sight.

Think of it like swapping an older gas-guzzler with a newer fuel-efficient model. You immediately begin saving at the pump with fewer fill-ups.

There's also less maintenance and also more of your valuable time saved.

You get the idea.

Along those same lines, newer appliances have come a long way, thanks to the many technological advances.

Continued on page 4

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05

DISTRICT MEETINGS



06

ALL THE HATS WE WEAR



11

OUTDOOR ELECTRIC SAFETY



12

RECIPES FROM MAYES CO.

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

July Events

Drawing with Rich Davis

July 1 | Grove

Grove Public Library

Fireworks Show

July 2 | Vinita

Fireworks Show

July 3 | Grove

Freedom Fest

July 4 | Pryor

Mayes Co. Soccer Complex

Fireworks Show

July 4 | Jay

Fireworks Show

July 4 | Duck Creek

Huckleberry Festival

July 4-5 | Jay

City wide

Fireworks Show & Festival

July 5 | Monkey Island

Shangri-La Resort

NOEC District 7 Meeting

July 7 | Salina

American Legion

NOEC District 9 Meeting

July 8 | Grove

Community Center

NOEC District 2 Meeting

July 10 | Fairland

Crossroads Church

Wolf Creek Drag Boat Nationals

July 12-13 | Grove

Wolf Creek Park

Craig Co. Farmers Market

July 12, 23 | Vinita

BancFirst Pavilion

Ours To Tell: Cherokee Stories

July 19 | Vinita

Cherokee Nation Welcome Center

Route 66 Heritage Fest

July 25-26 | Miami

Main Street

Craig Co. Free Fair

July 25-26 | Vinita

Craig Co. Fairgrounds

Culture Camp

July 30, 31 | Wyandotte

Shawnee Skies Event Center



Upgrade & Save

CONTINUED FROM INSIDE COVER

Our rebate program here at NOEC is offered in partnership with **Take Control & Save**, a suite of energy efficiency services and rebates offered by our wholesale power supplier *Associated Electric Cooperative (AECI)* and its member systems. Take Control & Save provides financial incentives for member-consumers to save energy. In this way, AECI can equip member systems to offer energy-saving incentives, while exploring ways to keep its wholesale power rates competitive.

So if you are in the market for a new **heat pump water heater**, a rebate of \$750 per unit with no size restrictions is currently available. This rebate represents a significant increase from the previous offering of \$500 per unit.

Nice incentives ranging from \$150 per condensing unit to \$500 per ton are also available on **ducted, ductless mini split, and dual fuel air source heat pump systems** that are ENERGY STAR® certified.

If you are considering upgrading your home's thermostat, a rebate is available that covers up to 50% of the total cost of the unit (up to a \$50 max) on an ENERGY STAR® rated advanced programmable thermostat.

The newest rebates take effect July 1, 2025, and can be viewed at **www.noec.coop** or scan the code below with your smartphone. Look for the *Energy Services* tab and then click *Rebates*. All rebates are issued either as checks or applied in the form of a credit to your electric bill. Please be sure to read the complete requirements in each rebate application.

It's a priority for us here at NOEC to help our members create a more energy-efficient home. If you have an energy improvement project or are considering an appliance upgrade, you could be eligible for a money-saving rebate.



SCAN ME!

noec.coop/energy-services/rebates

win big at District Meetings

Meeting Dates

JULY 7: DISTRICT 7

Jim Wade, Incumbent Trustee
American Legion, 401 E Ferry St
Salina, OK 74365

JULY 8: DISTRICT 9

Jimmy Caudill, Incumbent Trustee
Grove Community Center, 104 W 3rd St
Grove, OK 74344

JULY 10: DISTRICT 2

Mike Detherage, Incumbent Trustee
Crossroads Church, 56900 E Hwy 59
Fairland, OK 74343

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.



Two members attend District Meeting in Vinita

Attend for a Chance to Win!

The Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees is extending invitations to cooperative members in Districts 2, 7, and 9 to attend their respective 2025 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.

Scan this code to locate your district:



SCAN ME!

noec.coop/about/governance



Beisley (right) visits the state capital as a representative of VOID

all the Hats We Wear

NOEC employees are known for the hats they wear—and not just those familiar hard hats that keep our operations employees safe while on the job.

No, we're talking about the hats we wear in the evenings and on the weekends—the ones we wear when we're serving in our communities after we clock out. These hats may be worn by a town official, a civic club member, a volunteer firefighter, someone who donates to a charitable organization in their free time, or a little league coach. Many of you know exactly what we mean, because you are serving right alongside us.

Some of this behind-the-scenes work you may see, some you may not. Of course, like you, these NOEC employees aren't going to toot their own horns, so we're here to toot those horns for them.

Following are several examples of how we spend our time when we aren't working hard for you here at NOEC:

When she isn't serving our cooperative as a billing representative, you can find **Kelly Beisley** making contributions in the area of victim's advocacy. Kelly lost her 18-year-old daughter Madison tragically in February of 2024. Since that time she has channeled her grief by serving as a member of the advocacy group **VOID (Victims of Impaired Driving)**. VOID members like Kelly seek to raise awareness, support families, and enact legislative change to prevent needless tragedy for others. In order to further honor her daughter's memory, Kelly also co-founded a non-profit memorial scholarship that is awarded to a Ketchum High School graduating senior seeking to further their education.

As key accounts coordinator, **Nick Bowers** spends a lot of time in the community when he's on the job.

He attends numerous meetings and functions and connects daily with member businesses across our service territory to make sure they are receiving the full benefits of cooperative membership. Off the job, Nick serves as the town mayor in Fairland, a post he has held for three years. And if his mayoral duties weren't enough, Nick is also active with the **Grove Rotary Club**, where he is finishing up a 12-month term as president of the organization. Nick has been a Rotary Club member since 2017 and has served on various club committees during that time, including catering, charitable giving, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, events & socials, and fishing tournament boat launchers. He is also a member of the **Rotary Club** and **Rotary Foundation** boards. He takes all of these responsibilities very seriously and is happy to be able to make a difference when and where he can.

Community involvement has always been a priority for billing supervisor **Cindy Hefner**. She served as president of the **Grove Rotary Club** and is now past president, a role that allows her assist and provide guidance to the new president. In addition, Cindy is a member of the **Grove Chamber of Commerce**, where she serves as emcee of the annual banquet and pitches in to help with events such as Christmas parade and trash pick-ups.

Before she joined the cooperative marketing team in 2022, public relations director **Kelsie Wilson** was lending her talents to the **Fire Ball Foundation**, a benevolent organization that provides crucial financial support to rural volunteer fire departments across Ottawa County. Wilson today is the acting foundation treasurer and a member of the planning committee tasked with organizing the group's big annual fundraising event **Fire Ball**.

Member services representative **Jesse Roth** doesn't have a lot of free time, thanks to her involvement in two organizations. She serves as secretary of the Craig County chapter of the **National Ladies Homestead Gathering** organization.

The group hosts monthly gatherings for women interested in learning homesteading skills such as canning, butchering, beekeeping, firearms maintenance, foraging, and gardening. Jesse is also an avid supporter of her daughters' high school band, even donating her time to serve as president of the **Vinita Blue Pride Band Booster Club** for the 2024-2025 school year.

Another member services representative here at NOEC is also involved with the Craig County chapter of **National Ladies Homestead Gathering**. **Dana Mink-Roy** serves as president of the chapter whose stated purpose is to empower women through homesteading and whose mission is to share knowledge, build community, and grow friendships. Dana is also very active at her church, where she is a Sunday school teacher and a member of the praise and worship team. She can also be found on any given Sunday working in the welcome center or baby room.

Several other NOEC employees are actively involved at their respective churches. Member services representative **Shelly Aikman-Serage** serves her church family in multiple ways. Not only does she help lead worship service on Sunday mornings, she is also a member of a ladies group at her church that cares for the residents of a local nursing home. The group gifts the home's residents at Christmas and on birthdays, and also provides them with personal care and inspirational items.

Billing representative **Janet Epperson** also wears two hats at her church. She serves as both a **Bible Study Fellowship** ladies group leader on Tuesday evenings and an adult **Connect** group teacher on Sunday mornings.

Director of accounting **Leslie Taylor** is on the cafe team at her church and serves attendees at the coffee bar during assigned morning services. Leslie also volunteers her time for her local **DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution)** and **FFA**.

DAR service projects include sending local veterans cards during the holidays, serving chili to the local veterans, decorating the area with patriotic banners during the Memorial Day holiday. FFA involvement for Leslie include judging officer elections and speech contests.

When she isn't performing her duties as contracts administrator here at NOEC, **Kathy Markham** can be found singing and leading the music at her church and serving as secretary/treasurer for the **Vinita Aviators** organization.

He's the director of project implementation for our engineering team here at NOEC, but **Robert Cook** directs projects of a different sort once his regular workday concludes. As a coach and mentor for the **Mayes County FIRST Robotics Club**, Robert offers support and insight to participating students as they fabricate and assemble their robots for competition.

Youth sports are a time-honored pastime here in Oklahoma, and those teams need good coaches. We have several here at the co-op who fit the bill, including apprentice lineman **Tyler Blalock** serves as president of the **Salina Little League** organization while coaching an 8U team. Foreman **Dalton Hale** is also helping shape young athletes as the coach of a 10U baseball team, the **Snagz**.

More than a few co-op employees hold civic posts where they live. Engineering field superintendent **JD Davenport** serves on the **town council** and as vice mayor for the **City of Ketchum**.

Workflow administrator **Sherre Johnson**, meanwhile, is the treasurer for the **Grand Lake Towne** community. In that role, she maintains accounts receivable and payable, prepares reports for the monthly board meetings, and provides the state with a yearly budget.

First responders are vital for every community and we are proud to have several working here at NOEC. **Crewman Jeremy Poole** is a good example of serving in this capacity. He is the fire chief for the **Bluejacket Volunteer Fire Department** and is charged with maintaining equipment in good working order and ensuring the safety of department volunteers during fire runs.

The spirit of volunteerism is just as strong at the top of our organization. General manager/CEO **Daniel Webster** serves on the board of directors for **CASA of Northeast Oklahoma**. The mission of CASA of Northeast Oklahoma is to provide quality representation for abused and neglected children appearing in district and tribal courts within the 11th, 12th, and 13th judicial districts of Oklahoma.

When we are wearing our NOEC employee hats, know that we are working hard to ensure your electric service is as reliable as the flip of a switch. When we aren't on the job, you'll find us volunteering and serving our communities in a number of capacities.

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**We're your friends, family, and neighbors.
We love our cooperative, we love our
communities, and we're here to serve.**

.....



Hale (back row, second from left) with his 10U baseball team



Smiley (left), Hill (middle) prepare and deliver food



all the hats we wear Meals of Hope

One of the seven cooperative principles was on full display recently as electric cooperative employees representing multiple states gathered at Lake of the Ozarks and packed more than 11,000 meals for distribution in their respective territories. The endeavor took just one hour and demonstrated the principle of *Concern for Community* that electric cooperatives hold in such high regard.

The packing effort took place following a conference hosted by the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives and was conducted in partnership with **Meals of Hope**, a nonprofit organization founded in 2007 that has packed more than 80 million meals for communities in need across the United States and worldwide.

At the conclusion of the three-day conference, a small army of around 60 co-op employees donned hairnets and busied themselves packing a total of 11,064 individually-portioned meals. The meals were destined for distribution throughout the service territories of electric cooperatives across Missouri and Oklahoma.

Oklahoma, where they were distributed to **Craig County Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Chelsea Community Food Pantry, and Wyandotte Food Pantry**. Two members of the NOEC marketing team, **Erin Hill** and **Alyssa Smiley**, were among the army of co-op volunteers packing meals that day.

"There's something deeply humbling about packing a meal, knowing it could be the only one someone has that day. Through Meals of Hope, we're not just giving food—we're offering hope, kindness, and a reminder that no one in our community is forgotten," relayed Hill, a multimedia specialist for NOEC.

Smiley agreed, explaining that it was a privilege of participate.

"This cause brought me a lot of joy," she said. "Knowing these meals were going directly to people in need in our communities was extremely rewarding."

Meals of Hope partners with organizations and businesses to sponsor packaging events that provide food for children and families across the U.S. It's a great way to increase community outreach and come together to help fight hunger.

all the hats we wear

Special Olympics

NOEC sends six volunteers to summer games

Six employees represented NOEC as volunteers during the 2025 Oklahoma Special Olympics Summer Games.

Accounts payable specialist **Shannon Mariott**, journeyman linemen/servicemen **Matt Montgomery** and **Jake Ornder**, broadband operations technician **Jeremiah Garcia**, director of public relations & marketing **Kelsie Wilson**, and multimedia specialist **Erin Hill** all pitched in to help out during the games, held May 14-16 in Stillwater.

NOEC was one of 25 Oklahoma electric cooperatives represented at the event. A total of 5,062 athletes participated this year, and Oklahoma cooperatives sent 155 volunteers to assist in the massive effort.

For both Mariott and Montgomery, it was the first time to volunteer at the games.

"It was an unforgettable experience," Mariott said. "Everyone was so happy and excited to be there. I loved watching the smiles and waves as they passed by the stands. They reminded me that attitude towards adversity affects our perspective. I really hope to attend next year too."

Montgomery was likewise grateful for the experience.



From left: Mariott, Garcia, Hill, Montgomery, Ornder, and Wilson

"To see athletes compete with some of the physical handicaps they deal with is an inspiration," he said. "They compete with a smile on their face and with their whole heart."

For nearly three decades, electric cooperative employees from across the state have volunteered at the Special Olympics Summer Games, making Oklahoma's electric cooperatives one of the event's largest volunteer groups.

Montgomery, for one, can see why co-ops keep signing up to help.

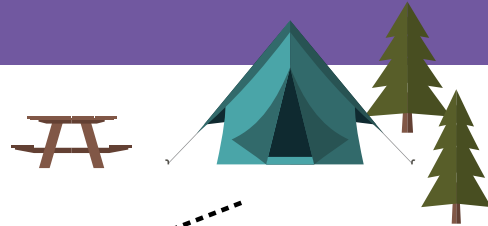
"It's a great experience giving high fives and hugs all day," he said.



Ornder cheers on an athlete

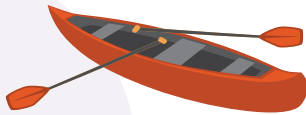
love the Outdoors?

BE SAFE OUT THERE.



**2
3**

of lightning fatalities are associated with outdoor recreational activities.



PAY ATTENTION

to weather forecasts before you go canoeing or boating. Get off the open water as soon as you hear thunder.



DO NOT USE GENERATORS IN ENCLOSED AREAS

The same goes for grills, camping stoves or other small appliances that produce carbon monoxide.



LOOK UP

for power lines while fishing or sailing. FACT: Fishing is the most common outdoor activity associated with lightning-related deaths.



GOING FOR A HIKE

If you hear thunder or see lightning, do not seek shelter under a tree.



TENT CAMPING

Plan ahead, seek shelter in a hard-top vehicle or four-sided building during a storm or at the first sight of lightning.

RECIPES

FROM MAYES CO.

summer desserts



LEMON PINEAPPLE SALAD | ALETHA, PRYOR

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can crushed pineapple (do not drain)
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 package lemon Jell-O
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 1 cup unpeeled apple (diced)
- 2/3 cup nuts
- 1 cup celery chopped
- 1 cup Cool Whip

Step 1: In sauce pan combine pineapple and sugar and bring to boil. Boil for 3 minutes then add Jell-O and stir until dissolved.

Step 2: Add cream cheese to pan and stir until mixture is thoroughly combined.

Step 3: Cool mixture then fold in apples, nuts, celery, and Cool Whip. Then pour into 9-inch square dish and chill in refrigerator.

Step 4: Serve on a lettuce leaf.

my notes _____

STRAWBERRY ICEBOX PIE | MAYME, LOCUST GROVE

INGREDIENTS

- 1 graham cracker piecrust
- 8 oz cream cheese
- 1 package strawberry Jell-O
- 10 oz frozen strawberries, thawed, drained, and sliced
- 8 oz Cool Whip

Step 1: Add cream cheese to bowl and stir until smooth then blend in package of Jell-O. Stir in sliced strawberries. Then fold in Cool Whip until fully incorporated.

Step 2: Pour mixture into Graham cracker pie crust and refrigerate until ready to serve.

my notes _____

