

NE CONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

HONOR FLIGHT
SALUTES OUR VETERANS

DECEMBER 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.

OFFICERS & TRUSTEES

Dandy A. Risman - 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 - Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Sean Friend - Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
Ricky Hignite - Chief Technology Officer (CTO)
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

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.



TECHNOLOGY THAT POWERS OUR FUTURE

JEFF LUKER

Director Engineering Services

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative continues to lead the way in delivering reliable, efficient, and safe electric

service to its membership by embracing advanced technologies such as **SCADA—Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition**. That's a fancy name for a powerful system that has become a cornerstone of NOEC's operational excellence, transforming the way the cooperative monitors, manages, and maintains its electrical infrastructure.

SCADA allows us to remotely track system performance in real time, from substations to field equipment spread across thousands of miles of service territory. Through an integrated network of sensors, communication links, and control systems, the cooperative can instantly detect outages, voltage fluctuations, and equipment issues. This means faster response times, fewer disruptions, and improved service reliability for members.

Our line crews in the past had to be dispatched to identify and locate system faults. The "manual" process was both time-consuming and costly. Today, SCADA pinpoints the exact location of the problem within seconds, enabling targeted repairs and dramatically reducing downtime. The same system also helps NOEC analyze long-term trends, optimize power distribution, and plan for future load growth.

Beyond efficiency, SCADA enhances safety by providing early warnings of potential equipment failure and maintaining better control of energized systems.

As NOEC continues to modernize its grid, SCADA serves as a critical foundation for future innovations such as advanced metering, renewable integration, and smart grid technologies. Thanks to tools like SCADA, Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative is actively reinforcing its commitment to dependable service, operational excellence, and a brighter, more resilient energy future for its members.

.....



05

2026 YOUTH PROGRAMS



08

HONOR FLIGHT



12

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 January 1, 2026, to claim a \$100 credit on your electric account.

DECEMBER EVENTS

MLT Presents the Play *It's a Wonderful Life*

Dec 4-7 | Miami

Coleman Theatre Beautiful

A White Winter's Song Holiday Concert

Dec 5 | Miami

200 I Street NE

Shop Grand Lake & Lights on Grove

Dec 5 | Grove

Grove Area Chamber

Dog Walk @ The Chelsea Animal Shelter

Dec 6 | Chelsea

Town of Chelsea Animal Shelter

Christmas in Vinita: Breakfast & Activities

Dec 6 | Vinita

Craig County Fairgrounds

Christmas in Vinita: Tree Lighting Ceremony

Dec 6 | Vinita

RCB Parking Lot

Santa's Ozark Mountain Village

Dec 5, 6, 12, 19, & 20 | Grove

Har-Ber Village Museum

Jingle Bell 5k & Fun Walk

Dec 6 | Grove

Ridgerunner Stadium

Emerald Ball

Dec 13 | Grove

The Legacy

Christmas Light Boat Parade

Dec 13 | Afton

Cherokee Yacht Club

Brunch with Santa

Dec 13 | Jay

NEW Delaware Co. Fairgrounds

Annual Screening of *It's a Wonderful Life*

Dec 14 | Miami

Coleman Theatre Beautiful

A Big Band Christmas

Dec 20 | Miami

Coleman Theatre Beautiful



677978



EMPLOYEE NEWS



HILL, SMILEY COMPLETE CCC PROGRAM

It wasn't long ago that the NOEC Public Relations team was awarded the highest honor possible among the state's thirty electric cooperatives. The group proudly accepted the Cooperative Communicator of the Year Award in 2022 from the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives.

And now, just a few years later, the NOEC PR team finds itself celebrating another noteworthy achievement.

Two members of the five-person group recently completed the challenging requirements of the **Certified Cooperative Communicator (CCC)** program. Multimedia specialist Erin Hill and marketing specialist Alyssa Smiley both completed the CCC course in 2025, adding yet another feather to the cap of both our PR department and cooperative.

A graduation ceremony for Hill, Smiley and 33 other CCC program participants from across the U.S. was held September 18 at the NRECA branch headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin.

In addition to receiving over 110 hours of instruction, CCC cohorts build strong, long-lasting relationships they will carry with them throughout their careers. Participants develop valuable work products, such as strategic communication plans, crisis communication plans, or marketing/branding guides they can immediately implement at their respective cooperatives.

TAYLOR COMPLETES CFPC PROGRAM

Congratulations to NOEC Director of Accounting Leslie Taylor on her recent completion of the **Cooperative Financial Professional Certificate (CFPC)** program.

The CFPC program is a competency-based, interactive program for cooperative financial professionals and non-finance managers seeking to deepen their understanding of electric cooperative utility finance. It is offered through a partnership between the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (NRUCFC).

The CFPC program is offered twice yearly (spring and fall) and is limited each time to thirty participants. Taylor selected the spring option. The first was held at the Fluno Center in Madison, Wisconsin, April 28-May 2, and the second at CFC headquarters in Dulles, Virginia, June 9-13.

Taylor completed a series of online conferences in between the in-person sessions and then finished it all off with a final capstone project. The focus of her final project was to streamline budgeting with the NISC CFC Budget Pro Module, leveraging historical data and integrated tools for more accurate financial planning.





OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE FOR AREA STUDENTS, TEACHERS

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative (NOEC) is announcing its **youth programs** for the current school year and wants to make sure all eligible students have an opportunity to participate. Along with four \$2,000 college scholarships, the cooperative is sponsoring an all-expense-paid trip to our nation's capital for two students.

► YOUTH TOUR COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT (OR ESSAY)

Area high school juniors can complete a 6-8 hour community service project for a chance to win an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 13-19, as part of the 2026 Youth Tour contest. Winning students will also receive \$500 in spending cash. As an alternative form of entry, students can submit a 300-500 word essay on the topic "*Making a Difference Where I Live.*" Students who are in the eleventh grade and attend school within cooperative service area are eligible to participate in this contest. Cooperative membership is not a requirement.

Entry deadline: January 25, 2026.

► COLLEGE/TRADE SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP

High school seniors whose parents or guardians are NOEC members and who live in a household served by NOEC electric can apply for a \$2,000 scholarship to a college, university, or trade school of their choosing. Four winners will be selected.

Entry deadline: April 3, 2026.

► CLASSROOM INCENTIVE

NOEC is encouraging area teachers to get involved. If a teacher administers the Youth Tour Community Service Project (or essay) as part of a classroom assignment and produces a contest finalist, he or she could be rewarded with \$100 toward the purchase of classroom materials or equipment.

For additional information, including entry forms and applications, visit noec.coop. Students can also contact the NOEC Public Relations department at publicrelations@noec.coop.



SCAN ME!

Learn more by scanning this code with your smartphone or utilize the applications on page six and seven of this *Northeast Connection*.



YOUTH TOUR CONTEST

FOR AREA HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS

Tour Date: June 13-19, 2026 | Contest Deadline: January 25, 2026

6-8 Hour Community Service Project or 300-500 Word Essay

Two winners will be selected. Each will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., on June 13-19, 2026, as part of the 2026 Oklahoma Youth Tour. Each will also receive \$500 spending cash.

Students who are in the eleventh grade and attend public, private, charter, or home school within cooperative service area are eligible to participate in this contest. Cooperative membership is not a contest requirement.

Project must be 6-8 hours, documented with photos, and validated by a community representative for whom work is being performed. As an alternative form of entry, students can submit a 300-500 word essay on the topic *"Making a Difference Where I Live."*

Submit entry form and project photos or essay to: publicrelations@noec.coop, or mail this form and supporting documentation to NOEC, 27039 S 4440 Rd, Vinita, OK 74301.

Describe project _____

Why is this project important to you? _____

Community representative signature _____ **Phone** _____

Student name _____ **Age** _____ **Date of birth** _____

Guardian name _____ **Guardian signature** _____

I give permission for my child to attend Youth Tour if selected.

If you win, are you willing to attend Youth Tour? ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

School _____

Teacher name _____

If you were informed about this opportunity at school, please provide the name of the teacher so we can thank them.

\$2,000 SCHOLARSHIP

FOR AREA HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Deadline: Friday, April 3, 2026

Applicants may attend public, private, charter, or home school but must reside in a household served by NOEC, be in the top one-third of his/her graduating class, submit two letters of recommendation (one school source & one character reference), and an official copy of their high school transcript. Return this application with the supporting documentation listed above to: NOEC, 27039 S 4440 Rd, Vinita, OK 74301, or email to publicrelations@noec.coop.

I. Personal Information

Full name _____ Date of birth _____
Home address _____ County _____
Parents or guardians (*name and address if not the same*) _____
Household account # with Northeast Electric _____
Home phone number _____ Email address _____
Name of high school _____ Year graduating _____
What college/trade school do you plan to attend? _____
What will be your major field of study? _____

II. Financial Information

Annual household income ☐ \$39,999 or less ☐ \$40,000-\$69,999 ☐ \$70,000-\$99,999 ☐ \$100,000 or more
Number in family _____ Number currently in household _____
Factors or circumstances that affect your financial need _____

Other scholarships, grants, or financial awards you have received _____

III. Academic Performance & Potential: *Please Attach High School Transcript*

High school grade point average _____
Most recent ACT and/or SAT score, plus others ACT _____ SAT _____ Other _____
Honors & recognition received _____

Other academic achievements (*advanced placement, vo-tech education, concurrent college courses, etc.*) _____

IV. Other Activities: *List Includes During High School Only*

Participation in extra-curricular activities _____

Participation in school-affiliated organizations _____

Offices held in organizations _____

Work experience _____ Are you currently employed? _____
What type of work? _____ Other types of work? _____

2025 Oklahoma Warriors Honor Flight Group at the
US Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, VA



THANK YOU

FOR YOUR SERVICE

HONOR FLIGHT NETWORK SALUTES OUR VETERANS

HONOR FLIGHT NETWORK VISION

A nation where all of America's veterans experience the honor, gratitude, and community of support they deserve. In furtherance of this common goal, we have the enormous privilege of showing our nation's veterans the appreciation and honor they deserve.



Veteran George Mader and NOEC's Kelsie Wilson arrive in D.C.



Veteran George Mader at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Our country has been observing a day for veterans in one form or another for well over a century.

It began in 1919 with the first celebration of **Armistice Day**. Then-president Woodrow Wilson commemorated an end to World War I hostilities on the first anniversary of the conflict's armistice. Terms were reached one year earlier at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month that formally concluded the war between Allied Forces and Axis powers.

Armistice Day was first recognized by Congress in 1926 and became a federal holiday in 1938, but it was always primarily meant to celebrate World War I veterans only. The renaming of Armistice Day came about in 1954, following both World War II and the Korean War. The word armistice was changed to veterans to honor veterans of all American wars, and the annual federal holiday has been known as **Veterans Day** ever since.

Over the last 70 years, the occasion has celebrated and remembered all who have served in the military, both in wartime and peace.

THE HONOR FLIGHT NETWORK

Fast forward several decades to find an organization whose mission is to actively celebrate our nation's veterans by inviting them to share in a day of honor at our nation's memorials.

Founded 20 years ago, **Honor Flight Network** is a nonprofit organization comprised of 128 independent hubs in 46 states across the U.S. The organization was created to honor our nation's veterans by bringing them to Washington, D.C., where they visit the memorials built to commemorate their service and sacrifice.

► Initially focused on America's World War II veterans, Honor Flight Network now includes those who served in the military during the Korean and Vietnam War eras, along with veterans of any service era who are critically ill. Honor Flight Network transports approximately 22,500 veterans annually and has flown over 300,000 veterans and counting to Washington, D.C. since its inception.

Participation in Honor Flight gives veterans the opportunity to share the significant occasion with other veterans, remember the fallen, and convey their stories and experiences with their peers. Veterans always travel free of charge, thanks to generous donations to the organization.

Each hub and volunteer are crucial components in making the Honor Flight mission a success. Their time and talents are freely donated to coordinate flights, bus trips, welcome home ceremonies, thousands of phone calls and so much more—all with the common goal to honor our nation's heroes with the trip of a lifetime.

OKLAHOMA WARRIORS HONOR FLIGHT

The state of Oklahoma joined the Honor Flight Network in April 2017. Colcord resident and NOEC member Lana Hurt is the hub director for the state. There are also 14 unpaid board members who volunteer many hours to help make the local hub a success.

She said **Oklahoma Warriors Honor Flight** made its eleventh mission this past October 7.

"Counting the veterans on that flight, we have been blessed to have taken over 800 veterans to Washington, D.C.," said Hurt.

She added that around 400 people attended the sendoff program and enjoyed guest speaker Douglas McClain, himself retired military and a former Blue Angels pilot. She said there were approximately 450 people waiting at Tulsa International Airport to welcome the returning veterans home later that night.

Hurt explained that each flight costs approximately \$130,000, all of which is raised from donations, grants, sponsors, and fundraisers. Like its parent network, Oklahoma Warriors Honor Flight is a 501(c)3 nonprofit with all proceeds donated or raised going to cover any travel costs associated with the flights.

"We normally take two flights a year, but we were only able to have one flight this past year due to lack of funding," she said.

Hurt explained that each participating veteran has a "guardian" assigned to them.

"A guardian is there to make it the best day possible for the veterans," she said. "Some family members go as guardians for the veterans."

For guardians, a \$600 fee covers airfare, ground transportation, meals, and an Honor Flight shirt and backpack.

"There are 149 total people on each flight," said Hurt. "This includes 65-70 veterans, guardians, medical staff, flight staff, and we normally have a TV station from Oklahoma City and one from Tulsa, as well as KRMG go with us on the flight."

The morning of each honor flight, three charter buses transport the group from the Hard Rock Casino to Tulsa International Airport. An escort is provided by the Tulsa Police Department and Patriot Guard Riders.

"We board the plane, and usually land at Reagan Airport around 10 a.m.," Hurt explained. "There again we have charter buses waiting for us. While in D.C., we visit the WWII, Korean, Vietnam, Air Force, Lincoln, and Marine memorials, as well as watch the Changing of the Guard at Arlington National Cemetery. We then head back to board the plane and head home to Tulsa."

Hurt said there is a waiting list of 250 Vietnam veterans.

"If not for these honor flights the majority of our veterans would never get to experience this once-in-a-lifetime trip," said Hurt. "Time is running out for many of the veterans on our waiting list. As I was in the process of calling the veterans for the October flight, there were five who had passed away. Six others were unable to go because their health had deteriorated so much. We also had a Vietnam veteran pass away a week after the flight."

She added: "These flights are so much more than just a free trip to Washington, D.C., to visit the memorials. They are also a healing trip that brings closure for a lot of the veterans who haven't had that."

.....

AN OKLAHOMA CONNECTION

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative was a proud sponsor of **Oklahoma Warriors Honor Flight** in 2025. NOEC Director Public Relations Kelsie Wilson accompanied Pawhuska resident and Vietnam Veteran George Mader on his recent flight to our nation's capital.

Wilson said she was truly humbled by the experience and was appreciative of the chance to spend the day with Mader.

"It's hard to put into words how grateful I am for the opportunity to be there for George during this experience," said Wilson. "Watching the veterans share stories, laughter, and even moments of sadness was a blessing. The entire day felt as if they were all transported back in time to their youth."

Wilson said her time with Mader was unforgettable.

"I truly believe he was assigned to me by fate," she said. "We immediately hit it off and had a wonderful time together. From the moment I was introduced to him to the moment we returned to the hotel for our final goodbyes, it felt as if I had known him my entire life—like family."

Added Wilson: "George has left a lasting impact on my life and will forever hold a special place in my heart. I will never forget the light in his eyes during the welcome home parade. He was in utter disbelief that so many people came out just to celebrate him and his service to our country. His first welcome home, when he returned from Vietnam, was nothing like the one he received that day. Seeing him finally receive the recognition he deserved was one of the most moving experiences of my life. He kept saying, 'That was awesome. Wow. If that doesn't touch your heart, I don't know what could.'"

In a thank-you note to Wilson following the trip, Mader wrote: "Kelsie: Thank you for accompanying me on what was an amazing trip to Washington, D.C. I appreciate you taking time away from your family and job to make my day so special."

CONTACT US

If you would like to make a difference in the life of a veteran, please visit **oklahomawarriors.org** and learn how you can help. You can also follow on Facebook for the latest information.

"We welcome any financial support," said Hurt. "And we can always use volunteers at our sendoff programs. If you would like to be a guardian on a future flight or a volunteer, please go to our web page and complete an application."

RECIPES

FROM CRAIG CO.



CHERRY NO-BAKE CHEESECAKE | CARLA FISHER, VINITA

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Graham cracker pie crust
- 8 oz soft cream cheese
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- 1 can Eagle brand condensed milk
- 1 can cherry pie filling

Step 1: Mix cream cheese and milk in a blender until fluffy. Then stir in lemon juice and vanilla extract.

Step 2: Fill pie crust with mixture, cover, and refrigerate for two hours until firm. Remove from refrigerator and top with cherry pie filling.

Step 3: Cool pie in refrigerator before serving to set the topping and enjoy!

HONEY PECAN PIE | JUDITH WAYLAND, WELCH

INGREDIENTS

- 4 eggs
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup light corn syrup

Topping

- 3 Tbs butter
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 3 Tbs honey
- 1 1/2 cup pecan halves

Step 1: Beat eggs and then add remaining ingredients. Pour into unbaked pie shell and bake at 350°F for 30 minutes.

Step 2: While first part is baking, make topping by melting butter. Then stir in brown sugar and honey until sugar is melted. Add pecans halves, stirring until coated. When pie has baked for 30 minutes gently spoon topping over pie and bake an additional 20-30 minutes.



Have a recipe to share?

Email it to: publicrelations@noec.coop

