

April 2017

Hot Watts

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Dishwasher Efficiency Tip: Air dry clean dishes to save energy. If your dishwasher does not have an automatic air-dry switch, turn off the dishwasher after the final rinse and prop the door open slightly so the dishes will dry faster.

Source: U.S Department of Energy



Congratulations!

Earl St. Aubin is our online survey winner.

Operation Round Up Update

Each month, members of CHEC join together to help meet the charitable needs of their neighbors by participating in the Operation Round-Up program. Operation Round-Up is a community outreach program that is funded by CHEC members who "round up" their electric bills each month. The small change that results from rounding up monthly electric bills has made a big impact in the cooperative's seven county service area.



The CHEC Foundation Board recently met on March 7, 2017. At the meeting, the board awarded grants to assist Nicut Rural Volunteer Fire Association, Maple Rural Fire District, Inc., and Keota Fire Department. The Foundation also approved a grant for Liberty Volunteer Fire Department - Ladies Auxiliary.

The CHEC Foundation Board meets every quarter to review applications. Individuals and community organizations throughout CHEC's service area are eligible to apply for an Operation Round-Up grant. The next meeting will be held on June 6, 2017, with applications due by May 12, 2017. For more information about Operation Round-Up or to obtain an application, visit CHEC's website at www.cooksonhills.com or contact Donna Rhodes at 918-775-2211.

Youth Tour Winners Announced!



The 2017 Youth Tour essay contest finalists have been announced and they are as follows: Abigail Deardorff of Webbers Falls High School, Bethany Bryce of Stigler High School, Harleigh Sharp of Muldrow High School, and Matthew Blaylock of McCurtian High School. A complete story will follow in the May issue of the Hot Watts.

COMING SOON

Our newly redesigned website is coming soon! Like us on Facebook and watch for an announcement. Until then, continue to visit our website at www.cooksonhills.com for information regarding your cooperative, or for payment or service information.

APRIL 10, 2017 IS NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY.

#ThankALineman



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**If You Find Your Account Number
Hidden in This Issue of the *Hot Watts*,
You'll Receive a \$25 Credit on
Your Electric Bill**

Electric Cooperatives' Policy Priorities

By Dan Riedinger

As a member of CHEC, you know that providing you with safe, affordable and reliable electricity is our top priority 365 days a year. Our employees are dedicated to this mission, whether they work on a line crew or spend most of their time behind a desk. But it might surprise you to know just how much the work we perform in the communities we serve can be greatly affected by what lawmakers and regulators are doing in Washington, D.C. That's why co-ops all across the country join together in making sure our leaders in Washington know what's important to co-ops and their members.

We do this, in part, through our membership in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the national service organization that represents the interests of the nation's more than 900 electric cooperatives on Capitol Hill and before federal agencies. Here are some of the policy priorities for NRECA and America's electric co-ops in the next couple of years.

Strengthening rural America

Electric cooperatives built and improved the infrastructure to bring electricity to people living in rural America who were being left in the dark and left behind. Today, co-ops provide power to 42 million Americans in 47 states. We know that growing a vibrant rural economy is essential to America's success and prosperity, and we count on the federal government to help. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has long been a partner in helping co-ops fund a wide 324001 variety of activities, including electric infrastructure improvements and expansion of rural economic opportunities. Co-ops will work to further strengthen our relationship with the USDA in 2017 and beyond.

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Five Easy Ways to

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY

Every Day

- 1. Conserve water by taking showers instead of baths.**
- 2. Turn off all lights when you leave a room.**
- 3. Bring your reusable bags to the market and other stores when shopping.**
- 4. Go paperless. Pay as many bills as possible online.**
- 5. Ditch the car and walk when possible.**

Watt's Cooking?



Millionaire Pie

- 1 large carton Cool Whip
- 1 8oz pkg cream cheese
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 20oz can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 cup chopped pecans



Let cream cheese soften to room temperature. Mix well with sugar, pineapple and pecans. Add the Cool Whip, folding gently. Pour into baked pie crust. Cover and chill for several hours.

The Three-Tier Cooperative System

CHEC is a distribution cooperative and is part of an extended system organized into three levels, or “tiers,” each with its own set of responsibilities.

CHEC is at the top tier of this system. CHEC provides electric service directly to 17,789 meters, including businesses, farms and households.

At the second tier of the system is KAMO Electric Cooperative, Inc. (KAMO Power), in Vinita, Oklahoma. KAMO is a Generation and Transmission (G&T) cooperative serving 17 member distribution cooperatives in northeast Oklahoma and southwest Missouri.

At the third tier of the system is Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. (AECI), in Springfield, Missouri. AECI is the source of wholesale electric power. AECI provides the capacity and energy needs for KAMO and five other G&T’s in northeast Oklahoma, Missouri, and southwest Iowa, serving 51 distribution cooperatives.

CHEC’s largest operational cost is our wholesale power bill. Our electricity is generated at AECI, and it is transmitted to us on KAMO transmission lines to their substations. We build and maintain the distribution power lines from the substation to your business or home.

Your electricity is produced using a mix of fuels and technologies: coal, natural gas, hydropower, wind and solar generation. AECI uses the lowest-cost resources and power plants whenever they are available to supply members. AECI also looks for opportunities to purchase power from other utilities at a cost that is lower than it can generate.

Many factors impact electricity prices

Electric prices generally reflect the cost to build, finance, maintain, manage, and operate power plants and the electrical grid (the complex system of power transmission and distribution lines), and to operate and administer the utilities that supply electricity to members.



- Fuels – Coal is relatively inexpensive, while natural gas tends to be more costly.
- Power plants – Construction and maintenance costs are greater for some kinds of power plants than others.
- Transmission and distribution lines – Maintaining and using the transmission system to deliver electricity contributes to the cost of electricity.
- Weather conditions – Rain and snow can provide water for hydropower generation. Extreme heat can increase the demand for electricity for cooling.
- Regulations – The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Clean Power Plan will set limits on carbon dioxide emissions from coal and natural gas plants. Environmental regulations as well as increases in fuel prices adds pressure to the electric utility industry’s costs. In general, rates go up because the cost to produce electricity continues to go up.

The CHEC Board of Trustees and management will continue to do everything they can to keep rates down for our members. Keep reading your Hot Watts newsletter for news affecting your cooperative.

Where your electric dollar went in 2016



Thunderstorm Safety Tips from the American Red Cross

When thunderstorms are rolling your way, stay safe with these helpful tips from the American Red Cross:

- Listen to local news or NOAA Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, like darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing wind.
- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are likely to occur. Many people struck by lightning are not in the area where rain is occurring.
- If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, take shelter in a substantial building or in a vehicle with the windows closed. Get out of mobile homes that can blow over in high winds.
- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be in danger from lightning. If thunder roars, go indoors! The National Weather Service recommends staying inside for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap.
- Avoid electrical equipment and telephones. Use battery-powered TVs and radios instead.
- Shutter windows and close outside doors securely. Keep away from windows.
- Do not take a bath, shower or use plumbing.
- If you are driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. Avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.
- If you are outside and cannot reach a safe building, avoid high ground; water; tall, isolated trees; and metal objects such as fences or bleachers. Picnic shelters, dugouts and sheds are NOT safe.

Source: American Red Cross

Policy Priorities Continued...

Avoiding regulatory overreach

Electric cooperatives strongly advocate for public policies that are driven by consumers' interests and needs. Overreaching federal regulations have a significant negative impact on rural America, so co-ops are asking Washington policy makers to revisit a number of federal rules that have hurt rural communities and threatened co-ops' mission to provide affordable and reliable electricity.

We're also looking ahead to future rules and actions under major environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act and Clean Air Act, to ensure that they carefully balance the nation's environmental and economic goals without imposing undue burdens on rural America.

Improving infrastructure

One of the themes that ran through last year's presidential campaign is the need to improve the nation's infrastructure. Electric co-ops have been in the infrastructure development and improvement business for decades and hope to work with leaders in Washington to continue this important progress.

Co-ops continuously improve the cyber and physical security of our systems and have been leaders in developing and using smart grid technologies. Here again, a strong public-private partnership remains essential, particularly in the area of cyber security. Electric cooperatives also support a wide range of research activities to help improve our nation's future energy infrastructure. The U.S. Department of Energy and other agencies remain key partners in advancing this research, as well.

These are just a handful of examples of co-ops' major policy priorities over the next couple of years. It is by no means an exhaustive list. But hopefully it demonstrates that America's electric cooperatives are working just as hard in Washington as we are here at home to keep the electricity flowing and improve the quality of life for our members.

Dan Riedinger writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

BE PREPARED BEFORE A STORM STRIKES

In the event of a power outage, be prepared by keeping the following items in an easy-to-find emergency supply kit.

- **WATER**
Three-day supply, one gallon per person per day.
- **TOOLS**
Flashlight, extra batteries, manual can opener, battery-powered or hand-crank radio, NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert.
- **FIRST AID KIT AND PRESCRIPTIONS**
First aid supplies, hand sanitizer and at least one week's supply of prescriptions and medications for the family.

Learn more at www.ready.gov

AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency.