



# country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Count Yourself In

## The 2020 Census Matters to Everyone

**D**o you or anyone you know rely on Medicaid or Medicare? Do your children or grandchildren attend Head Start, or participate in the school lunch program? These and many other local programs receive federal funding based on data collected from the U.S. Census. Your participation in the census helps ensure our rural communities receive their fair share of federal tax dollars.

By April 1 you should receive an invitation in the mail to participate in the 2020 Census. Please don't ignore it. Your response is important to the health and welfare of every member of your rural community.

Highways and roads, local education agencies, community health programs, housing, and the low income energy assistance program (LIHEAP) all rely on accurate census figures. The count also affects your political clout because legislative districts are redrawn based on the latest census figures.

You have the option to respond to the census by mail, telephone or internet. Simply follow the instructions provided with your census information, or bring the form with you to ECE's census workshop tentatively scheduled for April 24. Remember, the method you choose to respond is less important than your follow through. Please do it. ☺

### Need Help With Census Forms?

To ensure our area is accurately represented by the 2020 Census, the Okmulgee County Farm Bureau and East Central Electric Cooperative will host a special event on Friday, April 24 from 9 am - 3 pm in the co-op auditorium. Census representative Chris Landis will answer questions and help residents complete their Census forms. The event is open to the public.



*Note: Due to coronavirus concerns, this event may be rescheduled. Please watch our Facebook page for updates, or call us at 918-756-0833.*

### UPDATE

## Co-op Takes Precautions



**E**ast Central Electric Cooperative (ECE) Manager Tim Smith issued an online announcement on March 13 informing members of the co-op's measures to address the coronavirus.

To protect the health and safety of employees and members, ECE has temporarily closed its front lobby to the public. The co-op continues to conduct business through the drive-through window, over the telephone, and online.

"We take our commitment to serve you seriously and we want you to know it is business as usual where your power needs are concerned," Smith said.

Employees will continue to make service calls while staying the recommended distance of six feet from others. Employees showing signs of potential illness or those with an increased risk of exposure will stay home. All professional travel and training has been postponed, and employees are taking extra precautions by wiping surfaces and washing hands frequently with disinfectant.

We'll keep you posted via Facebook page, website, Smarthub, and local media, or call us **918-756-0833**. Thank you for your patience.



WHEN YOU FIND YOURSELF  
IN THE DARK,  
WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK.

**Lineworker Appreciation Day  
April 13, 2020**

No matter what Mother Nature has in store, your electric cooperative lineworkers are ready to answer the call, ensuring you have safe and reliable power. Our lives are brighter, safer and stronger because of the selfless sacrifices of these unsung heroes.

Today and every day, let's thank our local lineworkers for powering our lives.



**East Central**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

To learn more about your elected trustees, or to view a district map, please visit [www.ecoec.com](http://www.ecoec.com). To contact your trustee, please call 918-756-0833.

**notes from  
the chair**



by **Lowell Hobbs**, President, East Central Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees

**Keeping Up With The Town Kids**

**H**igh speed internet to our rural homes started with a rush. Many members now enjoy a new quality of life through the efforts of our co-op family. Phase one of your co-op's six-phase fiber build-out is nearing completion. Phase two is well under way, and phase three is in the early planning stage.

When I was a kid from the country, going to school in town was quite an adjustment. The town kids enjoyed many amenities that were not available to those of us in the country. Yeah, we had electricity by then, but not running water and telephone.

Fast forward several years and reflect on all that has happened to elevate the quality of life for rural folks. With high speed internet being a reality now, all of us are another step closer to being town kids!

Political posturing is taking place, and I urge you to be an active and informed voter. Much effort has been expended to provide us with the right to vote. That right is also a responsibility. Please vote in any instance available to you!

The 2020 Census is upon us. It is vitally important that you and your family members are counted. So many things hinge on the census count that is conducted nationally every 10 years. Be sure you are counted.

When my grandson, Bryce, was three years old, we fed the cows in different pastures, he was just learning to count and was doing pretty well at it. I told him counting the cows was not only important, it was also a good way to learn to count.

As the cows were coming toward us, I told him to count them before they were in a bunch. As we entered the next pasture, the cows started toward us, and I quickly asked, "Did you count them?"

"Yep" he replied.

Stunned, I asked, "How many did you count?"

He said, "All of 'em."

P.S. He was valedictorian of his senior class. ☺

Lowell Hobbs represents ECE District #2. To reach him, please call his cellphone at **918-695-5289**.

**Have you noticed the silver tag on your trees?**

That's a tree growth regulator (TGR) tag. East Central Electric applies TGRs, such as Cambistat, to trees located in hard-to-reach areas. The use of TGRs improves powerline safety, enhances tree health, and reduces operations costs.

ECE kicked off its right of way maintenance efforts early this year. Landowners with sensitive crops, organic gardens, vineyards, or apiaries should contact the ECE right-of-way department at **918-756-0833**. When leaving a message, please include your name, phone number, and address.



one year treated growth      one year untreated growth

💡 CO-OP VALUES

# We're returning Your Fair Share!

*ECE allocates capital credits to members*



**THAT'S A  
FACT:**

Since **1975**, East Central Electric has returned **\$26.8 million** in capital credits to members.

**E**ast Central Electric (ECE) isn't a typical utility company—it's a cooperative. That means we are bound by certain principles and ways of doing business that set us apart from investor-owned companies. For one, we return profits to our members in a process known as a capital credit retirement.

At the end of the year, the ECE board allocates financial margins to members based on their kilowatt-hour use for that particular year. We notify you of your annual allocation by sending you a capital credit statement (*See infographic below*).

The money that accrues through capital credits serves as an important source of operating capital for your co-op.

If you have questions about capital credits, the following questions and answers may help.

💡 **How long do I have to cash the check?**

Checks must be cashed within 180 days. If not cashed within 180 days, contact ECE. Another check will be issued following identification and confirmation of your account.

💡 **Will I get a refund every year?**

ECE trustees determine when capital credits are paid to members based on co-op's financial condition and the provisions of your cooperative bylaws.

💡 **Why do I only receive part of my capital credit allocation?**

Each year the board of trustees decides if capital credits will be retired. Next, they approve an equity distribution plan that includes the total amount to be paid and the years to be retired.

💡 **Why didn't I get a check?**

Three possible reasons: (1) Your allocation amount was less than \$10 and will remain in your account until it accumulates to \$10 or more. (2) ECE doesn't have your current mailing address. Please contact our office, and a check will be re-issued. (3) The capital credit amount was applied to an outstanding account balance.

💡 **A check was sent to my address, but it's in the name of a former resident. What should I do?**

Please mark it "Return to Sender" and mail it to us or drop it off at the ECE office.

💡 **I received a check with the name of a deceased family member. What do I do with it?**

A representative of the deceased member's estate may apply for the estate capital credit with proper documentation. Forms are available at ECE office, by mail, or online at [www.ecoec.com](http://www.ecoec.com).

💡 **What happens to my credits if I move?**

Please keep us informed of address changes by contacting the office at **918-756-0833**.

**YOUR CAPITAL CREDIT STATEMENT**

ECE will issue capital credit allocation statements to members in May. The statements show your share of cooperative financial margins. Please watch for your statement in the mail. It also includes pertinent information on the process used to retire, or return, this money to you.

CAPITAL CREDIT STATEMENT Calendar Year 2018			
Acct. No	Total Billing	Capital Credits	Code
0000727500	729.08	19.84	1
		24.19	2
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$729.08</b>	<b>\$44.03</b>
<b>Cumulative Unretired Balance</b>		<b>\$1,113.28</b>	

The statement shows your share of ECE's 2019 financial margins based on your energy use throughout the year.

It also shows your total share of co-op margins to date.

# operation round-up

## MONTHLY UPDATE



Operation Roundup funds support local charitable organizations, civic groups, youth programs, community services, and needy families. For more information on this voluntary bill roundup program, please visit us online at [www.ecoec.com](http://www.ecoec.com).

Applications reviewed.....	1,542
Applications granted.....	771
Applications denied.....	336
Applications tabled.....	28
Scholarships awarded.....	\$245,000
<hr/>	
Total Disbursements.....	\$1,891,971.86
Average member contribution.....	48¢



## Strawberry Upside Down Cake

### INGREDIENTS

- |                                    |                               |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 cups crushed fresh strawberries  | 3 cups miniature marshmallows |
| 1 (6 oz) pkg strawberry Jell-O mix | 1 (18 oz) pkg yellow cake mix |

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat an oven to 350°F.

Spread crushed strawberries on the bottom of a 9x13 inch baking pan. Sprinkle strawberries with the dry gelatin powder, and top with mini marshmallows.

Prepare cake mix as directed on the package, and pour on top of the marshmallows. Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 40 to 50 minutes. Cool in the pan for 15 minutes. Run a knife around the pan to loosen the sides, and turn the cake out onto a serving tray. Store cake in the refrigerator.

Source: allrecipes.com



## ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Pay attention to power lines on your property, and avoid planting trees near them. If tree limbs are in contact with a power line, hire a professional to trim the tree. In the meantime, keep people away from it.

SOURCE: ELECTRICAL SAFETY FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL



**East Central**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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2001 S. Wood Drive  
Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447-1178

**(918) 756-0833**  
**[www.ecoec.com](http://www.ecoec.com)**



OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Friday, 8 am - 4:30 pm.

POWER OUTAGE HOT LINE

**(918) 756-0833**

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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*President*

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Max Shoemake, District 3

Tim Smith  
*General Manager*

### PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Pay online at [www.ecoec.com](http://www.ecoec.com) using SmartHub, or download the app.
- Pay by phone using VISA, Mastercard or Discover at **866-999-4584**. Available 24 hours a day. Convenience fee associated with payments.
- Pay with cash or credit/debit card at participating Moneygram or Pay Site locations. Convenience fee associated with payments.
- Pay using our drive-through window or lobby, Monday - Friday, 8 am to 4:30 pm.
- Pay via automatic draft of your checking or savings account. Sign up online or download the ebill form for easy automatic payments at [www.ecoec.com](http://www.ecoec.com).