



country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Hooked Up

ViaSat And ecoLink Provide Internet For Home-Bound Students and Professionals



There's nothing like a statewide stay-at-home order to drive home the need for high speed internet service in rural areas. As thousands of East Central Electric (ECE) members hunkered down to stem the rise of Covid-19, some like the Prater family of Pierce, quickly realized their home internet service couldn't keep up with the surge in demand. With their internet working at a snail's pace, Stephanie and Jimmy Prater's four kids would find it difficult to keep up with schoolwork when Checotah schools switched to online teaching due to the pandemic.

"Many of their lessons require YouTube, and as everyone knows, you have to have pretty good internet to run YouTube," said Stephanie. "Online school works good for kids in the city but for rural kids, it's a whole different story."

Desperate for a solution, she reached out to her co-op for help. She learned

that ECE's fiber broadband is not available in her area yet, but within two days of her call, co-op personnel set the family up with ViaSat satellite internet.

"It keeps up and has done really well," she said. "It's much better than our previous service," she said.

Laura Buell, fourth grade teacher at Wilson School, found herself in a similar situation. With no internet service at home, she couldn't post online lessons or interact with her students during the coronavirus crisis. Buell, who is accustomed to speaking and meeting with parents regularly, needed a solution—and fast.

Again, co-op personnel came to the rescue by hooking her up with satellite internet in short time. Now she posts videos of her daily lessons and uses Facebook messenger and email to interact with students and parents. For students without home internet service, she prints lesson packets for them

to complete and return it. She is also trying to create lessons that gets kids outside and away from the computer. So far, the format is working okay, but she still worries about her students, and misses the daily interaction.

As the stay-at-home order continues, rural residents such as Buell and Prater are examples of the deep digital divide that exists across rural America. Fortunately, ECE is able to provide an internet solution. Members in areas connected to the co-op's ecoLink fiber broadband are able to work and study online at blazing speeds. Fiber broadband will eventually be available throughout the ECE service area. Until then, the co-op will continue to reach out and help teachers, students and working professionals connect so they can continue to function from home. ❧

For more information on ECE's internet options, please call **918-756-0833**, or visit www.ecoec.com.



Stuck At Home?

Watch Your Energy Use

With the kids studying at home and parents teleworking over these past few weeks, you may see an increase in your energy bills.

During periods of higher-than-usual indoor activity, it's normal for electricity use to spike. The increased use of computers, lights, TVs, game consoles and other electrical devices adds up quickly.

The antidote: Follow smart, common-sense conservation practices to keep energy use in check. A few examples:

- Delay turning on the a/c by opening windows and running ceiling fans.
- When you do switch on the a/c, keep it at the highest comfortable temperature. For every degree higher you set the thermostat, you cut your energy use by up to four percent.
- Insist that everyone turn off the lights and the TV when leaving a room; disconnect the computer and printer at the end of the day; and don't leave phone chargers or other unused devices plugged into the wall. They continue to draw electricity and add to your bill.
- Hold off on running the clothes dryer and dishwasher until after dark. With so many people staying home during the day, we're all using more electricity at the same time. That results in a higher than normal usage peak that every member will pay for in higher wholesale power costs.
- Clean the a/c filter every month. A clean filter lets air flow easily so your unit runs efficiently.

For all your energy use questions, remember ECE can help. Call **918-756-0833**.

To learn more about your elected trustees, or to view a district map, please visit www.eceoc.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

In Times Like These

East Central Electric (ECE) held its March board meeting via teleconference. Also, your ECE staff continues to conduct business as usual while adhering to the health concerns facing our country.

As we look ahead, we are trying to adjust to what may be coming. Meetings where multiple attendance are expected are necessarily being suspended. Our fiber to the home is still moving on at full speed.

We continue to monitor the Covid-19 pandemic and will make a decision soon regarding both our district and annual meetings. I urge you to stay informed through our updates to the ECE website at www.eceoc.com.

Dale Bozarth, East Central Electric member and president of my Sunday School Class sent me the following:

In three short months, just like He did with the plagues of Egypt, God has taken away everything we worship. God seems to be saying, "You want to worship athletes, I will shut down the stadiums. You want to worship musicians, I will shut down Civic Centers. You want to worship actors, I will shut down theaters. You want to worship money, I will shut down the economy and collapse the stock

market. You don't want to go to church and worship Me, I will make it where you can't go to church."

"If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and see my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Maybe we don't need a vaccine. Maybe we need to take this time of isolation from the distractions of the world and have a personal revival where we

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focus on the ONLY thing in the world that really matters—JESUS.

Obviously it is time to talk to God about our problems. I urge you to have a conversation with Him today.

My Dad was a "never give up" kind of guy. He would often comment that you can eat an elephant—just take one bite at a time. During his latter years he told me, "Son, my teeth are such that I can't chew. My legs are bad, can't walk, I can't see and I can't hear, but I can still drive!" ☺

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

 CO-OP VALUES

Congratulations

2020 Scholarship Winners

The Operation Round-up board of trustees awarded \$21,000 in scholarships to students from local high schools.

Every spring, Operation Round-up offers a \$1,000 scholarship to one student from each of the 42 schools in and around East Central Electric service territory. This year, the board received applications from 21 schools, including public, private and homeschools.

Scholarship recipients are selected based on scholastic achievement, community and school activities, awards and honors, educational goals and financial need.

Congratulations to our 2020 winners on their achievement! 🎉

THANKS TO YOU

East Central Electric members participating in Operation Round-up have helped hundreds of local students attend college. Over the past decade, Operation Round-up has awarded \$266,000 in college scholarships to high school graduates. For details and applications, please visit www.ecoec.com.

Operation Round-Up Scholarship Winners

School	Winner
Beggs	Cassidy Terrell
Bixby	Kayley Henderson
Checotah	Eli Matthews
Depew	Madison Rodman
Eufaula	Jordan Jones
Glenpool	Tyler Kragel
Graham	Jayme Whitaker
Haskell	Hannah Taber
Homeschool	Nathan Faulk
Liberty	Logan Hickerson
Mason	Braiden Rowan
Morris	Madison Atwell
Mounds	Christina Townsend
Okemah	Macy Curry
Okmulgee	Mckenzie James
Oktaha	Ashton York
Porum	Briley Berry
Preston	Gage Allen
Sapulpa	Kayli Grant
Weleetka	Savanna Zackery
Wilson	Destiny Walker

COVID-19 UPDATE

Our Pledge To You: We Are Here To Help



East Central Electric Cooperative (ECE) continues to monitor the Covid-19 situation with service to members at the forefront of concerns.

ECE's mission is to serve our members and communities, and we take it seriously. We will continue to uphold our mission in these unprecedented times. More specifically, we pledge to:

- Ensure that your electric service remains reliable.
- Maintain excellent service while keeping everyone safe by closing our lobby. You can still make payments using our SmartHub mobile and/or web applications, or pay by telephone using our 24/7 automated phone system at **918-756-0833**, by mail, or using one of our PaySite kiosks located throughout our service area. You may also drop off your payment using our drive-through lane.
- Temporarily suspend late fees and disconnects for non-payment for members directly affected by the virus.
- Help members in need with custom payment arrangements they can handle. Please call us at **918-756-0833** to discuss payment options.

NEWS FLASH!

Due to the pandemic and the stay-at-home order, ECE district and annual meetings will likely be rescheduled. Please look for revised dates in our June newsletter, website, and social media.

It's Electrical Safety Month. Check Out Our Online Resources!

During Electrical Safety Month in May, East Central Electric is providing a number of online resources to help home-bound families emphasize important electrical safety lessons. From videos to games and other online activities, your kids will enjoy learning how to stay safe around electricity, especially as they spend more time around the house. Check it out at www.ecoec.com, or follow us on Facebook or Twitter.



We are here to help our members through this crisis. We will keep you up-to-date on any changes to our operating policies via email, SmartHub alerts, social media and our website. Questions? Please call **918-756-0833**.

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.

Applications reviewed.....	1,120
Applications granted.....	772
Applications denied.....	336
Applications tabled.....	12
Scholarships awarded.....	\$266,000
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Total Disbursements.....	\$1,892,971.86
Average member contribution.....	48¢



Unstuffed Cabbage Rolls

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 pounds ground beef | ½ cup water |
| 1 large onion, chopped | 2 cloves garlic, minced |
| 1 small head cabbage, chopped | 2 teaspoons salt |
| 2 (14.5 oz) cans diced tomatoes | 1 teaspoon ground black pepper |
| 1 (8 oz) can tomato sauce | |

DIRECTIONS

Heat a Dutch oven or large skillet over medium-high heat.

Cook and stir beef and onion in the hot Dutch oven until browned and crumbly, 5 to 7 minutes; drain and discard grease.

Add cabbage, tomatoes, tomato sauce, water, garlic, salt, and pepper and bring to a boil. Cover Dutch oven, reduce heat, and simmer until cabbage is tender, about 30 minutes.

Source: allrecipes.com



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

Know what's below before you dig. At least three days before starting any digging or excavating project, call 811, the National One Call Center, to have underground utility lines, pipes, and cables marked for free.

SOURCE: ELECTRICAL SAFETY FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL



East Central
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

PO Box 1178
2001 S. Wood Drive
Okmulgee, Oklahoma 74447-1178

(918) 756-0833
www.ecoec.com



OFFICE HOURS:

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

POWER OUTAGE HOT LINE

(918) 756-0833

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PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Pay online at 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-thru/night drop window Monday - Friday from 9 am to 3:30 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.