

# country living

FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



## JEWELRY FROM JUNK



The old adage about one man's trash being another's treasure had never been so obviously true until the sight of beautifully hand-crafted jewelry resting on the ledge of a dumpster full of used copper and aluminum wire.

The jewelry was made by the students of a Native American school in northern Kansas.

The copper and aluminum used to make the pieces was donated upon request from the scrap heap at East Central Oklahoma Electric Cooperative.

Over the last decade, East Central has been in the process of replacing obsolete copper lines with aluminum.

"The 8A copper wire is considered obsolete," said ECE Director of Operations Jerome Roberts. "Over the years, the co-op has replaced several miles of 8A wire with aluminum wire."

The co-op replaces at least 20 miles of old line every year.

"Copper is one of the best conductors there is, but it's expensive," Roberts said. "Aluminum works well and is a lot cheaper."

The approximately 125 students at the Kickapoo Nation School learn metalworking and beadworking among other skills.

The bracelets are made by hammering out melted copper and etching in the designs.

The belt buckles require a mixture of melted aluminum and zinc to be poured into sand molds.

"Once they cool, we do a bit of designing and polishing," said jewelry instructor Bryan Moon. "We use epoxy to add the colors, and

we finish our designs with a clear coat to get a smooth finish."

"The good thing about working with metal is, if we mess up, we can always melt it down and do it all over again," Moon said. "We try again until we get it right."

Moon was born and raised on the reservation, and has been teaching these classes at the school for about five years.

"We're trying to give the kids an education to help them get off the rez," Moon said. "Back at home, there's not a whole lot of opportunities. We'd rather them get off the rez and get a good job so they can afford to support a family."

"We hope that eventually, when they are independent and successful, that they will give back to the community," Moon said.

## notes from the chair

The Power of  
Generosity


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

By the time you read this our annual meeting will be over and new goals and ideas will be the normal. I urge you to complete the survey from the annual meeting to help us serve you better. Since Jay and I drew no opponent, there will be no need for adjusting to someone new on the Board. I will speak for both of us, “thank you for your show of confidence by allowing us to continue to serve.”

Seems like it’s always a critical but satisfying time at the Co-op. We are pursuing the build-out of high-speed internet to our neighboring communities that do not have broadband or are under-served. This is an effort that will continue until we complete our responsibility to see high speed internet to ECE’s basic footprint, even though we don’t provide electric power to some. The build out to our members was expected to take six years, but we accelerated the work and finished to all our members in 4 years.

I was in the 7th grade and had just turned 13 when my Mother was called out of the classroom. (She was my English teacher.) Soon she summoned me out in the hall to tell me privately that my Dad had just had a traffic accident. I asked her if he was dead. She said no, but he was seriously injured. She told me to ride the bus home as usual, do the chores, and that she would be late getting home.

Our Chevy was totaled, but a friend loaned my Mother their Desoto car until we could get a vehicle. News

spread quickly and in a few days the community of Cleveland began taking up collections to buy us a new vehicle. The Ford dealer offered a new 1948 Ford 1/2 ton pickup at cost to start the deal. People my Dad had helped with their animals began donating to the fund. Most contributions were \$5.00 and \$10.00 with an occasional \$15.00 or \$20.00. One gave \$25.00 and they collected \$715.00. The cost of the new pickup was \$725. The Ford dealer gave the last

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“My Dad was so overwhelmed by this show of appreciation that he vowed to never refuse to help anyone when they called on him.”

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- LOWELL HOBBS

\$10.00. My Dad was so overwhelmed by this show of appreciation that he vowed to never refuse to help anyone when they called on him.

From the start of our arrival in Cleveland he was called on by anyone that had a sick animal—from a horse to a kitten. The nearest veterinarian was 22 miles away and not everyone had a phone, so the news got out that Earl Hobbs could help. It never

stopped. When the wreck happened many people wanted to help us.

A lesson learned—Don’t drive into smoke. Daddy was taking one of his Vo-Ag students to Stillwater (then Oklahoma A&M college) to pursue enrollment in college. Before they got to Stillwater the highway department was flagging traffic during a fire on the north side of the highway. A flagman motioned my dad into the smoke on the south side of the highway. Flames were pretty big so he was driving in the middle of the highway. Since the flagman had no radio communication, they had simultaneously motioned another car into the smoke from the opposite direction, and they met almost head on. The highway patrol estimated Daddy’s speed at 18 MPH, and the other car at 40 MPH. Daddy’s student was unconscious, but Daddy drug him out of the car and into the field away from the fire. Daddy was the only one seriously injured, but soon recovered completely. Even in his latter years he often spoke of the generosity of all those people that helped. He enjoyed helping others, and his main journey was helping young boys and girls become assets to the world. His motivation was training boys to become productive men. Girls were not part of Vo-Ag or FFA until after he retired.

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

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



## Meet Our Next Level Team: Office Services

Providing our co-op members with top-notch customer service is a point of pride for this Cooperative. We fight for our members, and that is reflected by a customer satisfaction score that is 14 points higher than other electric utilities. On the front lines of our ongoing battle is our Office Services department, always answering the call, literally and metaphorically.

### The Office Officer



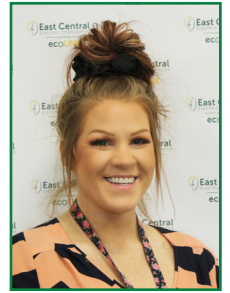
Our Vice President of Office Services oversees a great team of service representatives, cashiers, and billing personnel whose number one focus is on the member. In addition to direct involvement in addressing member needs, she is also responsible for running reports and analyzing member interactions to ensure regular improvement in the level of service we provide.

### The Entrance Emissary



For over a decade, our Operator, Receptionist and Office Services Clerk has been the initial point of contact for phone calls and member walk-ins. As the first friendly face and voice members get when they interact with the co-op, she strives to help people fulfill their needs.

## The Support Specialists



Our Customer Service Representatives operate on the explicit goal of one-call resolution. When a member takes time out of their day to call the Cooperative, our dedicated team in turn takes the time to get their questions and concerns addressed as smoothly as possible. This involves listening carefully to each individual's needs to create a service order or forward them to the person most suited to help.

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“I am not only an employee who gets to help our members every day, but I’m also a member, so I’m conscious of what I do here and how it affects my fellow members and neighbors.”

- TAMARA HAWKINS, VP OF OFFICE SERVICES

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### The Transaction Troops

Our Cashiers handle a variety of member interactions every day, from in-person bill-pay to mail processing, electronic bill-pay, and bill-pay assistance programs. Their interactions with members during what can often be a stressful time often set the compassionate tone our co-op seeks to maintain.

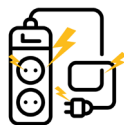
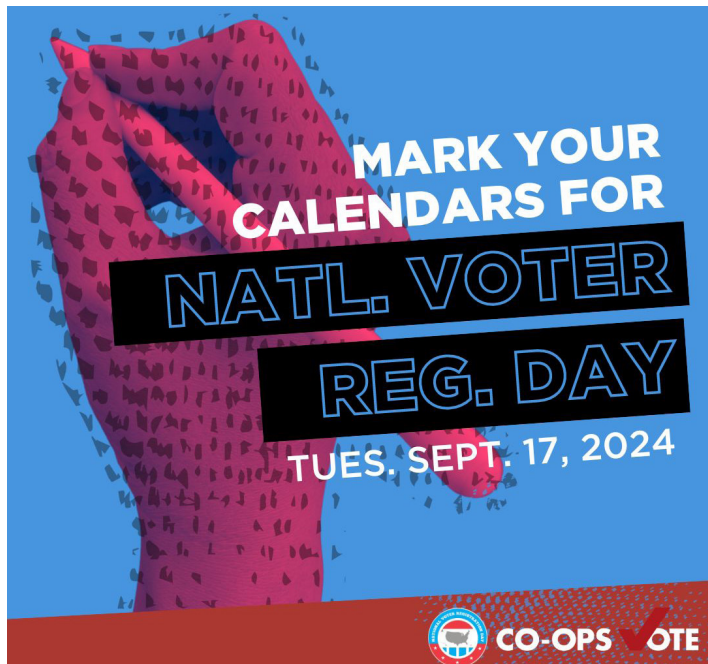



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“I am dedicated to focusing on each member and find fulfillment in being helpful. I value the variety of tasks I handle, as they collectively make up an essential role for which I am uniquely well-suited.”

- HOLLY BRIANS, OPERATOR, OFFICE SERVICES CLERK

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## ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

When moving equipment in the field, be aware of power lines and maintain at least a 10-foot clearance to ensure safety. If you must move a large structure under power lines, be sure to call the co-op days in advance for forms and assistance.

SOURCE: SAFELECTRICITY.ORG

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## Lemon Bars

### INGREDIENTS

Crust:	1/2 tsp. baking powder
2 C. flour	4 eggs, beaten
1/2 C. powdered sugar	2 C. sugar
3/4 C. butter	1/2 tsp. grated lemon rind
Filling:	1/3 C. lemon juice
1/2 C. flour	powdered sugar to dust

### DIRECTIONS

Combine crust ingredients until mixture resembles coarse meal. Spoon into an ungreased 13x9x2 inch pan. Press firmly and evenly into pan. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Combine remaining flour and baking powder and set aside. Combine eggs, sugar, lemon rind, lemon juice and stir well. Stir dry ingredients into egg mixture and pour over baked crust. Bake at 350° for 25 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool on wire rack. Dust lightly with powdered sugar and cut into bars. Makes about 2 dozen.

SOURCE: ECE 85TH ANNIVERSARY COOKBOOK



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