

# HOT WATTS



CHEC's own lineman, Jason Blalock, helped electrify a rural Guatemalan village in October, including 65 homes in the isolated village of Chiis. The team, which was comprised of 13 linemen, electricians and engineers, represented Oklahoma's electric cooperatives through the Oklahoma Energy Trails Foundation.

Electric cooperatives were the driver for rural electrification in America's countryside, including rural Oklahoma, in the 1930s and 1940s. Today, however, there are still 1.2 billion people across the globe who live without access to electricity, reports the Energy International Agency. In a cooperative effort to increase access to electricity in developing nations, Oklahoma's electric cooperatives have partnered with NRECA International, the philanthropic arm for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), to electrify this poverty-stricken village in rural Guatemala.

"Going to Guatemala and helping turning the lights on was the experience of a lifetime," Jason Blalock says. "It was humbling to be able to witness what rural electrification pioneers experienced 80 years ago in rural Oklahoma."

The village of Chiis sits atop a mountain at 2,700 feet in altitude. The project consisted of wiring 50 poles in challenging terrain and wiring 65 homes in the span of 3 miles of line. The village is isolated, economically vulnerable, and mainly produces beans, spices and corn for self-consumption. Most villagers speak a Mayan-based dialect, Kekchi. A local utility, ADECORK, will generate power to the village by way of a small hydroelectric plant and maintain the lines Oklahoma's electric cooperative volunteers have built.

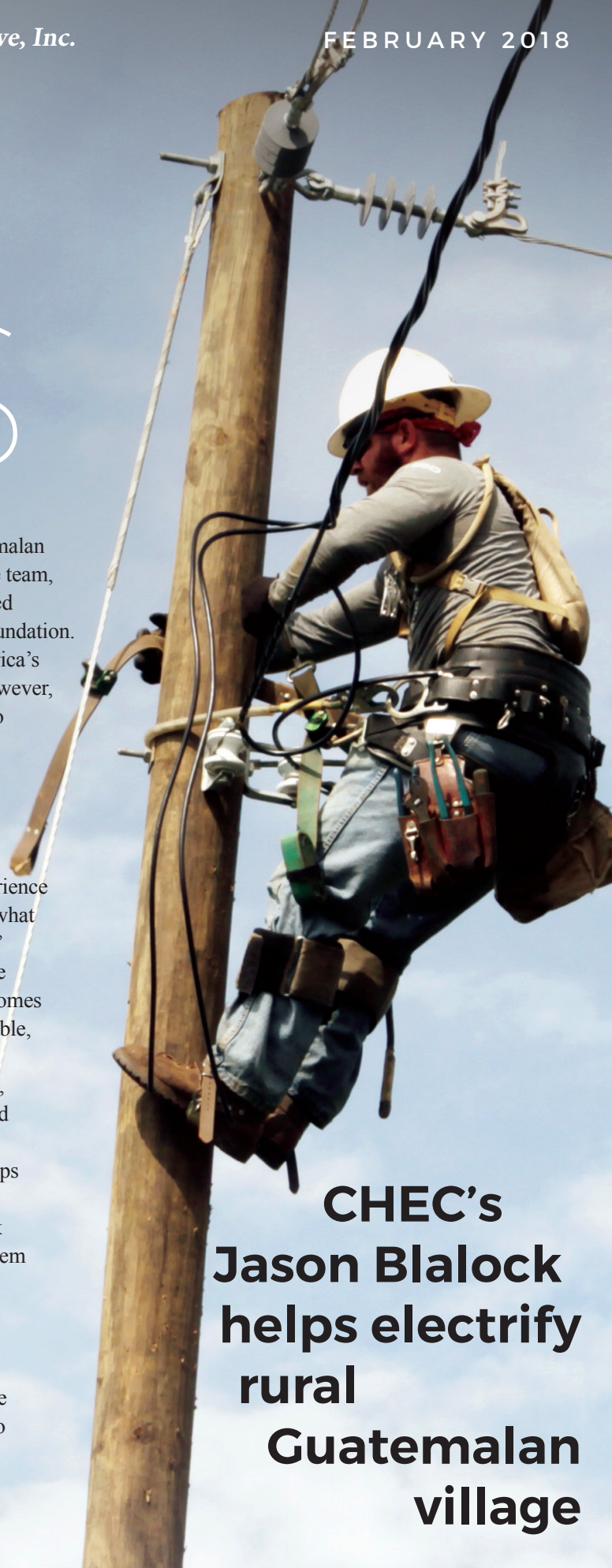
Despite communication barriers, the volunteers established friendships with local children and villagers.

"I will never forget the bond we created with the local kids," Blalock says. "I'm grateful we had the opportunity to help make a difference for them to have a better future."

Access to electricity will enable villagers with more economic development opportunities, enhanced safety, increased access to education and overall improved quality of life.

"We are proud of our own, Jason Blalock, for his willingness to leave his home for an extended period of time to give the miracle of electricity to this village in Guatemala," says CHEC General Manager Kendall Beck.

All contributions to the Oklahoma Energy Trails Foundation, a 501(c)3 are tax-deductible. To learn more, visit, <http://tinyurl.com/energytrails>.



**CHEC's  
Jason Blalock  
helps electrify  
rural  
Guatemalan  
village**



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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.**

# Herman Driscoll Scholarship

- Four \$500 scholarships
- High school seniors planning to attend college or technical school
- Applications: [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com) or CHEC offices
- Contact: Brittani Coble, 800-328-2368

## MARCH 9 DEADLINE



## Operation Round Up

Each month, members of CHEC join together to help meet the charitable needs of their neighbors by participations 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. [2934000]

The CHEC Foundation Board met Dec. 5, 2017. At the meeting, the board awarded grants to assist Central Fire Association, Boys & Girls Club of Sequoyah County, Trinity United Methodist Church’s “Kozie Quilters,” Sequoyah County Council for Children and Gore United Methodist Church Food Pantry.

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 board will meet again March 6, with applications due by Feb. 9. For more information about Operation Round Up or to obtain an application, visit CHEC’s website at [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com) or contact Donna Rhodes at 918-775-2211.

# Pole inspections in Muskogee and Haskell Counties

CHEC has contracted with Osmose Utilities Service, Inc. to inspect and treat power poles owned by CHEC in Muskogee and Haskell County. The project will begin in March and will continue for approximately 16 weeks. Crews will be working from Highway 71 south to the Canadian River in Muskogee County and Highway 2 west to the county line in Haskell County.

Osmose Crews will inspect and test poles making sure they have the proper strength requirements. The poles that pass all strength requirements will be treated to prevent future decay. Those that do not have the proper strength requirements will be replaced. The process will involve

excavating around the poles by inspection crews. Crews will need access to all poles that have been identified as needing inspection.

Pole maintenance can save money by reducing unnecessary replacement costs and by adding many additional years of service life to poles. This project will greatly enhance the reliability of CHEC's power system.

Osmose's vehicles will be identified by an Osmose logo on the door of the vehicle as well as a magnetic placard of CHEC's logo. They will have a letter identifying them as working on behalf of CHEC. Any questions regarding the project should be directed to Mark Blaylock, director of operations, at 800-328-2368.



**Energy Efficiency**

## Tip of the Month

Consider insulating your hot water pipes. Doing so can reduce heat loss, allow you to lower the temperature setting and save an additional 3 to 4 percent per year on water heating.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

Congratulations!  
Janet Carter from Vian is our online survey winner.

Manage your CHEC account from wherever you are with the free SmartHub mobile app



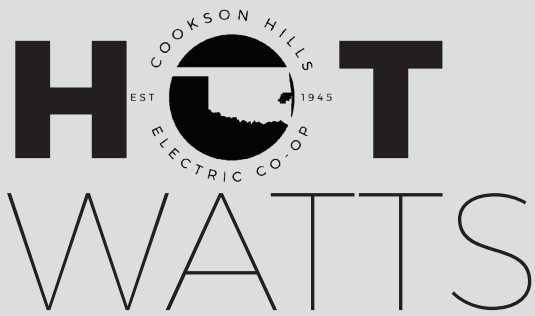
- Pay securely
- Monitor consumption
- Contact Member Service
- Manage email alerts
- View bills & payment history
- Update account information
- Set up recurring payments



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# Your new



As part of CHEC's continuous efforts to improve member experiences, we recently updated our logo and website. Now, we introduce you to the new look of the *Hot Watts*.

Now in our 73rd year, CHEC is proud to evolve alongside our sister co-ops across the nation. Our updated appearance across all platforms increases our brand awareness so our members can be proud to be served by a local, member-owned, not-for-profit electric utility.



Photos of Jason Blalock's trip to Guatemala provided by Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives



## Let's Stay In Touch!

Keeping your account information up-to-date is important to you as well as to CHEC. The most common inaccurate account information is your phone number. CHEC periodically calls members to notify you of a controlled outage, billing information, and other important information. If your phone number has changed, if you have disconnected your home phone, or if you have a new cell phone number, please contact us.

You can update your phone number and other account information by visiting our website at [www.cooksonhills.com](http://www.cooksonhills.com) and logging onto your SmartHub account, or by calling your local office at 800-328-2368 (Stigler) or 918-775-2211 (Sallisaw).