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April 2012

Hot Watts

PUBLISHED BY COOKSON HILLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Do not get your electric bill caught in a spin cycle!

When doing laundry, use cold water. If your dryer has a moisture meter, use it to prevent over-drying clothes, 50 minutes often works best for a full load. Remember to check your lint filter each time before you run a load to help your dryer run more efficiently. Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: Touchstone Energy Cooperatives

Congratulations

Rick Blair is our online survey winner!



Right-of-Way Maintenance Improves Service Reliability

At Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC), we strive to enhance member satisfaction by providing reliable service to our members. Our goal of decreasing power outages and duration time is directly linked to maintaining proper clearances with our right-of-ways.

“ Trees and shrubs that grow into power lines can cause power outages and delay restoration of power. ”

Regular inspections and maintenance of all overhead distribution lines in our seven county service area is a major ongoing project. CHEC contracts with specialists in the management of vegetation and right-of-way clearance to help keep our right-of-ways under control. This year CHEC has several contractors clearing right-of-way. Wolf Tree Service finished cutting and clearing the Muldrow substation in February 2012. Then they moved on to the Sallisaw substation. This twelve-month contract consists of cutting and clearing 280 miles of line on the Sallisaw substation.



Courtesy Photo

CHEC will resume the summer right-of-way herbicide-spraying program in May 2012. The spray crews will begin working northeast of Stigler and then move to the east end of the system, spraying the Liberty substation. We will also continue using three crews from Wright Tree Service to concentrate on service orders, yard trees, and hot spots that demand immediate attention. If you have any questions concerning right-of-way issues, please contact your local office at 918-967-4614 (Stigler), 918-775-2211 (Sallisaw), or toll-free at 800-328-2368.

Scholarship deadline is April 6th

April 6th is your last chance to turn in applications for the Herman Driscoll Memorial Scholarship. The Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative scholarship committee will award four \$500 scholarships.

To be considered, you must have a GPA of 2.0 or better and an ambition to continue your education at a state accredited college or technical school that offers an associate's or bachelor's degree. Other criteria required are good citizenship, good character, and financial need. Applications may be obtained from your school counselor, online at www.cooksonhills.com, or by stopping by your local Cookson Hills office.



Hot Watts

is published monthly by Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. Hot Watts informs members in parts of seven Eastern Oklahoma counties about Cookson Hills' programs and issues. Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative continually strives to provide quality electrical service at a reasonable cost for its members.

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Cookson Hills welcomes members to submit photos and articles which will be subject to Cookson Hills editing. Any submissions must be received before the 12th of the month prior to the publication date.

If you find your account number hidden in this issue of the Hot Watts you will receive a \$25 credit on your next electric bill.

Home Wiring Over the Hill?

Consider Easy Upgrades to Boost Safety

Nothing has the charm of an older home on a family farm or a cute cottage in a historical downtown district. But cosmetic and structural upgrades are often packaged with the cozy charm.

When upgrading your home, a fresh coat of paint and updated fixtures may come to mind. But what about hiring a professional to update the wiring behind a switch plate or outlet? Do you know the hidden dangers of aged wiring in your home? Do not take on wiring problems yourself; electrical upgrades often require a professional who knows what inspections and permits are needed. Here are a few clues to find out if your home's electric network needs a professional upgrade.

Type of wiring. Modern wiring is insulated, meaning it is covered in plastic. Older homes may have copper or aluminum wiring. Copper 1045400 wiring can work just as well as modern wiring if it is still in good condition and has not been altered or improperly installed. However, fire risk increases in homes with both copper and aluminum wiring. Corrosion to aluminum from copper can lead to loose connections causing fires. Use only aluminum-approved switches, outlets, and other accessories if your home has aluminum wiring.



Photo by: ESFI

Ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlets are required in areas around water, near a kitchen or bathroom sink or outdoors, but many older homes do not have these safety measures installed.

- Plugs that fall out of outlets easily. Loose plugs are a high fire danger. Older outlets that have lost their grip need to be replaced. Luckily, this upgrade is affordable.
Not enough outlets. The increasing use of chargers for phones and many other electronic devices means outlets are in high demand, especially in older homes where outlets are not as plentiful. A lack of outlets can result in overuse of extension cords and power strips. Be sure to use quality, 14-gauge or thicker cords that are approved by Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Never overload an outlet. Overloading can cause heat, leading to a fire risk. Consider hiring a licensed electrician to add outlets to your home.
Danger in wet areas. GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) outlets are now required in areas around water, near a kitchen or bathroom sink or outdoors. But in older homes, GFCIs may not have been installed. It is fairly simple to replace old receptacles with GFCIs; hire a professional to upgrade outlets near water.



Source: This Old House and Underwriters Laboratories

Watch your mail this month for your Co-op Connections Card



Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) has finalized our new member benefit program, the Co-op Connections Card. As a member of CHEC, a Touchstone Energy cooperative, you will get discounts on products and services from participating local and national businesses. The Co-op Connections Card is absolutely free.

Here is what you get: Big savings when you shop online. For online shopping, simply use the coupon codes and/or links provided on the site to save. Also available are printable coupons for groceries that update daily. Use your card for 10% to 85% discounts on most prescriptions at over 60,000 participating pharmacies. You will also get 10% to 60% discounts on eyeglasses, contact lenses, eye

exams and LASIK. As well as 20% to 40% discounts on dental care such as cleanings, x-rays, root canals, crowns and orthodontics. Plus, additional savings on chiropractic visits, lab tests, imaging scans and hearing aids. **The Co-op Connections Card is not an insurance plan, only a discount program. Discounts cannot be combined with an insurance claim.**

Here is what you do: Log on to www.cooksonhills.com to view a list of the discounts available to you.

Show your card at participating locations and start saving! Stay tuned to www.cooksonhills.com for new discounts.

This is just one more way you benefit from being a cooperative member. As a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, we are always “looking out for you.” If you have any questions, please contact Donna Rhodes at Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, 918-774-1516. You may also obtain information by visiting www.connections.coop.



Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative Continues System Upgrades for 2012

In an ongoing effort to provide dependable electric service to our members, Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) is making upgrades to our system for the 2012 work plan. The purpose of the construction work plan is to provide a comprehensive analysis of our system and to determine and document the most cost effective construction projects that will result in improved system reliability and efficiency.

The first system upgrade for this year will be in Haskell County, east of Stigler, and will consist of upgrading 3.5 miles of line. This project is a continuation of our feeder project for the new Stigler substation. It will increase reliability, improve voltage, and allow for additional capacity. The project will cross highway 9 on Airport Road and continue along City Lake Road for a mile then turn back east for 2.5 miles. Gordon Construction, CHEC contractor, is completing this upgrade. If you would like any additional information or have any questions, please contact CHEC at 918-967-4614 or toll-free at 800-328-2368.



Gordon Construction contractors working on City Lake Road in Stigler.

Get smart.

Download the Co-op Connections Card App.

The new Co-op Connections Card smart phone app helps you find deals from pharmacies and a host of regional, online, and national retailers! The new GPS feature maps all the deals in your immediate area. To download the app, for iPod, iPhone, or iPad, go to the iTunes Store and enter "Co-op Connections" in the search box. Also the Droid version is now available in the Android Market.



pay•as•you•go

Prepaying for electricity eliminates several fees

Traditionally, members receive an electric bill once per month for the electricity they used for a 30 day period. With the new Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative pay•as•you•go program, it works differently. This new program allows you, the member, to choose how much and how often you want to pay. This new program is not mandatory, but simply an additional billing option available to residential members.

Think of pay•as•you•go the same as you would putting gas in your car; you pay for it before you use it. You can purchase small amounts every few days or "fill up" the tank and not worry about it for several weeks. When your account runs low, you simply purchase more.

Because you pay for your electricity in advance, the pay•as•you•go program does not require members to pay a new service fee of \$25.00 or a deposit (based on your credit score). As a pay•as•you•go member when your service is automatically disconnected, you simply pay for more electricity, and your service is automatically reconnected without being charged a disconnect or reconnect fee. There are no monthly bills and no late fees.

If you would like more information on the pay•as•you•go program, please contact Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative at 918-967-4614 or toll-free at 800-328-2368.

COOKSON HILLS

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Standard Fees

Return check/bank draft.....	\$50.00
New service connect.....	\$25.00
Normal disconnect (if needed immediately).....	\$25.00
Normal reconnect.....	\$25.00
Disconnect for non-payment of electric service.....	\$75.00
Reconnect for non-payment of electric service (during normal office hours).....	\$75.00
Trip charge for non-payment of electric service if not disconnected.....	\$50.00
Meter reading or read out if member requests meter to be physically read.....	\$50.00
Security light connect (if needed immediately).....	\$50.00
Meter reseal if called in by member.....	\$25.00
Meter reseal if found by CHEC representative.....	\$50.00
Destroyed residential meter	\$200.00
Destroyed residential meter with remote disconnect.....	\$235.00
Meter test.....	\$25.00
Tampered service.....	\$200.00
After-hours reconnect for non-payment.....	\$250.00