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July 2013

Hot Watts

PUBLISHED BY COOKSON HILLS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Lighting accounts for about 13 percent of the average household's electric bill. Cut costs by choosing new light bulbs that have increased output and longevity. Some cost more up front, but prices are dropping as technology advances.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Congratulations!

Shanda Gann is our online survey winner!



Offices Closed

CHEC will be closed July 4th in observance of Independence Day.

THE POWER OF CO-OP MEMBERSHIP

Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc. is a member of Touchstone Energy Cooperatives and the National Rural Electric Cooperative. Recently, Touchstone Energy launched a new advertising campaign called "The Power of Co-op Membership." "The Power of Co-op Membership" campaign focuses on five core messages that spotlight how co-ops bring value into the lives of their members and community every day.

- **Power of Electricity-**

The electricity your co-op provides is essential to everyday life and is often taken for granted. Now more than ever before we depend on electricity to enhance our quality of life and stay connected. Through innovation and new technology electric co-ops are doing everything they can to provide reliable and affordable electricity.

- **Everyday Value** - Affordable electricity. While so many things we buy have climbed steadily in cost over the years, electricity is still one of the best values out there. That's comforting to know because electricity is essential to energizing our lives and keeping us connected more than ever before. And that's a powerful thing.

- **Membership** - Your electric co-op belongs to the members it serves. You have

a say in how the co-op is run. You can feel confident that decisions made are in your best interest and in the best interest of your community.

- **Working Together (Using Energy Wisely)** - We all have a responsibility. With the helpful tools and resources from your electric co-op, using energy wisely is easier than you think, especially when we are working together. After all, using energy responsibly and saving money go hand in hand, which is something every member can have a hand in.

- **Connections** - Your co-op membership means more than just affordable electricity for every member. With the Co-op Connections Card, it also means up to 85 percent in savings at hundreds of participating local and national retailers. It's just another way your co-op is connecting with members on pocketbook issues.

As we celebrate America's independence, we look at the independence and self-reliance that brought electricity to

the nation's countryside. These messages remind us how important it is to be a member of an electric cooperative. Cookson Hills Electric's Board of Trustees and employees will continue to work together with you, our members, to bring you the best service possible.

Have a safe and happy 4th of July!



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 Electric Cooperative, Inc. welcomes members to submit photos, and articles which will be subject to editing. Cookson Hills reserves the right to publish or modify any article. Companies and individuals featured in the *Hot Watts* newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official policy, position, or view of Cookson Hills.

If You Find Your Account Number Hidden in This Issue of the *Hot Watts* You'll Receive a \$25 Credit on Your Electric Bill

Changes to Phone System

Cookson Hills Electric (CHEC) has implemented several important changes which has recently affected our automated phone system:

- **NEW PHONE SYSTEM.** The local phone number at Stigler, 918-967-4614, will no longer be available. Please call **800-328-2368** if you need to contact the Stigler office to report an outage and for customer inquiries or customer service.
- **NEW TOLL-FREE NUMBER FOR PAY-BY-PHONE PAYMENTS ONLY.** The new phone number is **888-678-1937**. The new number will provide additional security for our customers that utilize the pay-by-phone option. **Please note that this phone number can only be used to make payments.** If you need to speak to an operator or if you need to report an outage, please continue to call us toll-free at 800-328-2368 if you live in anywhere in CHEC's service territory, or dial 918-775-2211 if you live in the Sallisaw area.

CHEC also offers many other payment options:

- Drive-thru & lobby at Stigler and Sallisaw offices
- Mail
- Auto Bank Draft
- Auto Credit Card Draft
- Online payment – www.cooksonhills.com
- Mobile device via SmartHub app



Jessica Smith, CHEC Cashier

Photo by: Donna Rhodes

If you would like more information regarding any of these payment options, you may visit our website at www.cooksonhills.com or call us toll-free at 800-328-2368.

Construction Crews Working in Sequoyah County

Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) has contracted with Gordon Construction Company, Inc. of Stigler to complete several projects this summer. The first project was recently completed along Highway 59 south of Sallisaw, upgrading approximately 2 miles of power lines. This will help with voltage support south by Kerr Lake and also provide additional capacity to allow for future growth. Additional poles have been added for reinforcement to improve reliability and continuity of service.

The next couple of projects will occur near the Muldrow substation with anticipated completion of approximately 8 weeks. Gordon Construction will replace and upgrade poles and wire north of Muldrow at Turnham Road, continuing east along Shamblin Road and ending east of Swan Road.

These system improvement projects are costly and time-consuming investments, but are necessary to provide our members with reliable electric service and to meet the growing demands for electricity.

Area Students Attend Energy Camp At Hinton, Oklahoma

Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) joined Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives and other electric cooperatives from Oklahoma in sponsoring more than 80 students to attend the YouthPower Energy Camp. The camp was held May 28-31 at Canyon Camp near Hinton, Oklahoma. This year's camp was the largest camp since the program began.

YouthPower Energy Camp is a program for eighth grade students. The camp is designed to help students develop leadership skills and learn about the rural electric cooperative industry. While at camp students formed a coke and candy co-op, electing a general manager and a board of trustees, and ran their own cooperative business.

The students attended sessions on energy, electrical safety, and rural electric careers. Campers enjoyed hands-on demonstrations, climbed a utility pole, rode in a bucket truck, and participated in a low element ropes course. Of course there was time for swimming and lots of games.

CHEC sent four students to camp this year. They were: Casey Smith of Porum, son of Timothy and Amy Smith; Shaun Gragg of Sallisaw, son of James and Donna Gragg; Ethan Brooks of Sallisaw, son of Michael and Wendy Brooks; and Alayna Holcomb of Sallisaw, daughter of Dion and Angela Holcomb. Dion is a lineman at CHEC's Sallisaw office.



Left to right: Alayna Holcomb, Shaun Gragg, Ethan Brooks, Casey Smith, and Donna Rhodes, CHEC Energy Camp Coordinator



Photos by: OAEC

Alayna Holcomb climbs a utility pole.

Operation RoundUp Aids Communities

Each month members of Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) join together to help meet the charitable needs of their neighbors. By participating in the Operation RoundUp program you are contributing to your community.

Cookson Hills Electric Foundation, Inc., a separate entity from CHEC with its own board of directors, is the trust in which Operation RoundUp funds are placed. The board consists of volunteers who consider grant requests and who oversee the distribution of Operation RoundUp funds. The board meets each quarter to review and grant requests to organizations and individuals in need.

The impact of round-up dollars is multiplied when donations are given to nonprofit service agencies and community groups. Grants to rural volunteer fire departments help ensure the health and safety of our communities. A grant to the "Save Our Theater" group is helping to maintain the local theater which is an historical landmark in Stigler. A grant to the Haskell County Coalition

will purchase school supplies for students going back to school, which will relieve financial hardship on families.

To apply for an Operation RoundUp grant, you may obtain an application at your local CHEC office or visit our website at www.cooksonhills.com.



Photo by: Donna Rhodes



Local Photographer Stays Busy

“What do you get when you cross creativity, artistic abilities, and talent with a Cookson Hills Electric (CHEC) member? You get Carrie Palmer Photography. Birthed on a whim, Carrie Palmer started her photography business in her home near Tamaha about a year ago.”

“I took some lessons from a local photographer and I took a few Photoshop lessons. I fell in love with photography as I was taking those lessons. I love to design and make the props for the backgrounds in the photos I take. I never did any photography until I started taking lessons, and the idea of a photography business just exploded from there,” said Carrie.

Carrie doesn't just take pictures of one specific genre. She does photos of weddings, engagements, newborns, senior pictures, and family photos. She works primarily out of her office in her home, but also works inside Miss Behavin' Children's Boutique in Stigler. The majority of her photos are shot on location. Carrie was very busy during May taking photos at many area schools.

The summer will be busy also with several weddings scheduled. The business has spread simply from word of mouth.

“Many years ago I worked in the hospital in Ft. Smith. Then my husband and I operated a rock quarry for about ten years. I went from being around a lot of people to no people at all. It is nice to get out in the public again. I get to meet all kinds of people since I began my photography business. I don't have any set hours because I am a day-by-day person,” stated Carrie.

If you would like to contact Carrie, you may call her at 918-448-1122 or 918-967-4782. You may also visit her website at www.carriepalmerphotography.com.

Carrie and her husband Kelly live on their ranch with their three children. They have lived in CHEC territory for the past fifteen years.



Photos by: Carrie Palmer



Right-of-Way Crews Begin Spraying in July

Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) has contracted with Progressive Solutions LLC, to proceed with our annual brush control program on the rights-of-way associated with the cooperative.

Starting in July, Progressive Solutions' crews will be selectively spraying the tall growing brush under the electric lines, using products that will stop the growth of brush and trees in the right-of-way.

The crews will be spraying areas from Webbers Falls west to the McIntosh County line. They will continue south and west to the Pittsburg County line and east along the Latimer County line to Hwy 82, and continue north to I-40. Locations in Sequoyah County and the eastern portion of Haskell County were sprayed in 2012.

Please note that the people spraying on your property are indeed doing work on behalf of CHEC. The contractor crews' vehicles should be identified by a company name or logo on the door of their vehicle.

Progressive Solutions LLC are responsible applicators and the products 145800 they use were selected based on our concerns for your safety and for our environment. Their service is one of the very effective tools that we use to assure reliable electric service.

