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country living

AUGUST 2013

PUBLISHED FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Representatives from Deep Fork Community Action Agency, East Central Electric Cooperative, and the Operation Roundup board of trustees celebrate an Operation Roundup milestone: A check to the social services agency brought Operation Roundup's cumulative donations to local charities to \$1 million.

Operation Roundup hits \$1 million

The Operation Roundup Foundation celebrated the \$1 millionth dollar donated to local organizations and needy families.

Launched by East Central Electric Cooperative in 2007, Operation Roundup gathers voluntary contributions from co-op members by rounding up their monthly electric bill to the next highest dollar. For example, a bill of \$36.27 is rounded up to \$37, with 73 cents going to the Operation Roundup fund.

Since its inception, over 381 non-profit organizations and families have received financial assistance. Volunteer fire departments, youth groups, senior citizens, schools, health clinics and more have benefited from Operation Roundup funds.

Today over 85 percent of co-op members participate in Operation Roundup. Members give no more than \$11.88 a year, with the average donation per member around \$5 per year.

For Operation Roundup participants, the \$1 millionth donation is a remarkable achievement. For funding recipients it's like pennies from heaven.

"I feel so blessed to be a part of such a worthwhile organization," said Mike Brannon, president of the Operation Roundup board of trustees. "This foundation really is proof that small change changes lives."

For more information on Operation Roundup, visit www.ecoec.com.

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POWER OUTAGE HOT LINE
(918) 756-0833

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PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Pay online at www.ecoec.com.
- Pay by phone using VISA, Mastercard or Discover at **866-999-4584**. Available 24 hours a day. Convenience fee associated with payments.
- Pay in person using our drive through window or lobby during regular office hours, Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4:30 pm.
- Pay via automatic draft of your checking or savings account.

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operation roundup update

Operation Roundup funds support local charitable organizations, civic groups, youth programs, community services, and needy families and individuals. For more information on this voluntary bill roundup program, please visit www.ecoec.com.

Figures to date:

Applications reviewed.....	554
Applications granted.....	406
Applications denied.....	138
Applications tabled.....	10
Scholarships awarded.....	\$107,000.00
Total Disbursements.....	\$1,047,829.94
Average member contribution.....	44¢





Closed for Labor Day

East Central Electric Cooperative will close on Monday, September 2 for Labor Day. To report a power outage during this time, please call our 24-hour hotline at **918-756-0833**. Please have a safe holiday.

Back to School Safety

With kids heading back to school this month, it's a good time for youth leaders and school teachers to plan activities for their kids.

East Central Electric Cooperative offers safety demonstrations for kids that make learning about electrical safety fun and educational. The course uses tools, toys and even hot dogs to demonstrate the power of electricity.

Students get to see first-hand what can happen when a ladder makes electrical contact, a shovel digs into underground service, a kite gets caught in a line, and many other everyday situations where safety can prevent serious accidents.

At the end of the demonstration, kids come away with a greater respect for electricity and its potential dangers.

To schedule a free safety demonstration, please contact East Central Electric Cooperative at **918-756-0833**.

Bill Payment Assistance

Hot weather is no time to experience an interruption in your service, but for those who are struggling to pay their electric bill, going without might be the only option.

If you are struggling to make your monthly bill payment, please contact your co-op before your bill is overdue. East Central Electric billing representatives are happy to connect you with local agencies and charitable organizations that offer help to qualifying families and individuals.

For more details, please contact your co-op at **918-756-0833**.

New CO₂ regs worry co-ops

Restricting fuel options could increase electricity prices

President Obama's plan to combat climate change by reducing emissions on both new and existing power plants has electric cooperatives worried.

In June, the President announced that he will instruct the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to regulate carbon emissions under the federal Clean Air Act. Under the mandate, the nation's entire coal fleet—roughly 37 percent of generation capacity—would be forced to reduce their emissions by 50 percent. Utilities claim it's an impossible goal given the short time frame and the technological advancements necessary to comply.

"Whether you agree with the President or not, the basic fact is that short of closing all coal-fired power plants there are no economically viable tools available to accomplish his goals," said Tim Smith, general manager of East Central Electric Cooperative.

Electric co-ops fear the President's proposal will jack up electric bills for those who can least afford it—their members. Household income in electric co-op service territories runs 11 percent lower than the national average, while one person in six served by a co-op lives in poverty.

Jo Ann Emerson, CEO of the national Rural Electric Cooperative Association said that forcing electric co-ops to shut down coal plants and switch to other fuels amounts to levying a punitive, regressive tax on rural America. "NRECA and America's electric cooperatives will fight this proposal at the agency level and in the courts if necessary. If the president doesn't recognize the need to keep electric bills affordable, we promise to bring it to his attention," she said

Co-ops point to the Power plant and Industrial Fuel Use Act of 1978 as proof that regulation of fuel choices is a bad idea. Prompted by fears of declining



supply, Congress passed the act to prohibit burning natural gas to generate electricity. To meet growing demand, utilities were forced to choose either coal or nuclear power facilities.

Many co-op owned generation and transmission (G&T) plants were forced to partner with investor-owned utilities in nuclear reactors, or construct state-of-the-art coal plants equipped with scrubbers and other pollution control technologies.

As a result, power costs soared. Congress repealed the act in 1987, but by that time co-ops had invested deeply in coal. Today, coal accounts for about 74 percent of the power produced by G&Ts and 55 percent of all electric co-op electricity requirements.

"The President's call for action has us once again faced with shifting fuels—in this case, choosing natural gas or renewables over coal," said Smith. "But we know the wind doesn't always blow, and natural gas isn't always cheap. To keep the lights on 24/7 requires traditional baseload generation, namely coal, nuclear, and hydro, as well as renewables."

NRECA will continue to urge the President and his administration to work with electric co-ops on a balanced energy strategy to keep electric bills affordable for rural Americans. East Central Electric will keep you posted on these issues. Please watch your newsletter for more information.



Auditing Your Energy Usage

Small measures can add up to real savings on your bill

No matter the age of your home, it could benefit from an energy audit. East Central Electric Cooperative offers free home energy audits conducted by certified energy advisors, but you can get started on your own in finding low-cost solutions that could save money on your electric bill.

First, ask yourself a question: Does my home feel drafty in the winter, or stuffy and hot in the summer? If yes, then it probably experiences air leakage.

To track down these spots, start with damaged seals around doors and windows. If you see daylight or feel air, then apply caulk and weather stripping to keep outdoor air where it's supposed to be.

Next, check areas such as recessed canister lights and electrical outlets. Outlet insulation kits can be purchased for as little as \$2, and you can fix up your canister lights with some caulk around the edges. Also look where walls meet the ceiling. Cobwebs mean you've got drafts.

Next, inspect your attic, crawl space or basement for sufficient insulation. East Central Electric energy specialists are happy to make recommendations for this area, or you can check out the insulation calculator from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory at www.ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html. Remember that insulation won't do its job well if you don't have a proper air barrier working in tandem. That means all joints and cracks must be sealed between your living space and insulation.

Finally, look to your light fixtures. Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) are up to 75 percent more efficient than traditional incandescent bulbs, and they've come



The energy saving 60-watt incandescent replacement LED bulb is engineered to have the familiar size and shape of an incandescent bulb while providing a crisp white light.

a long way in light quality, design, and affordability. You can purchase CFLs in a variety of shapes and hues. They cost more upfront, but you'll make your money back in less than nine months; after that, they start saving money. Make sure to purchase a CFL that's rated by ENERGY STAR, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's program that denotes products meeting specific energy efficiency criteria. ENERGY STAR-rated CFLs will typically last 10 times longer than a traditional incandescent bulb producing the same amount of light.

LEDs—light-emitting diodes—are the next wave in residential lighting. An ENERGY STAR-rated LED is estimated to use only a quarter of the electricity consumed by traditional bulbs and can last for 25 years. Of course, the up-front cost for an LED bulb is still much more than even a CFL, but prices are expected to drop as new products are developed.

To learn more about ways to reduce your electric bill, visit **TogetherWeSave.com**, or call East Central Electric at **918-756-0833** and ask about our free home energy audit program.

Check Out Our Rebates!

Is there a new water heater, AC or heat pump in your future? If so, you can take advantage of your co-op's Take Control and Save rebate program when you purchase qualifying energy efficient models.

East Central Electric offers rebates of \$50, \$150, \$750 on the following Energy Star-rated models:

- Room air conditioning units..... \$50
- Ground source heat pump\$750/ton
- Marathon water heater..... \$150

To qualify for these rebates you must provide East Central Electric with a copy of the proof of purchase receipt. The receipt must include your name and address, dealer's name and address, amount of purchase and date of purchase. Remember, your product must be Energy Star-rated to qualify.

For more details, please visit www.ecoec.com or contact your cooperative at **918-756-0833**.



August billing cycles

For bill payment questions or details about East Central Electric's convenient bill payment options, please visit www.ecoec.com, or call **918-756-0833**.

Your prompt payment is appreciated.

	Mailed	Due
Cycle 1	Aug. 8	Aug. 30
Cycle 2	Aug. 15	Sept. 7
Cycle 3	Aug. 23	Sept. 15
Cycle 4	Aug. 30	Sept. 22



therecipebox

Favorite recipes from members of East Central Electric Cooperative.



Lemon Ice Cream

Source: Allrecipes.com

Ingredients

- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 1 cup half-and-half cream
- 1 1/2 cups white sugar
- 3 tablespoons grated lemon zest
- 5 egg yolks
- 3/4 cup fresh lemon juice

Directions

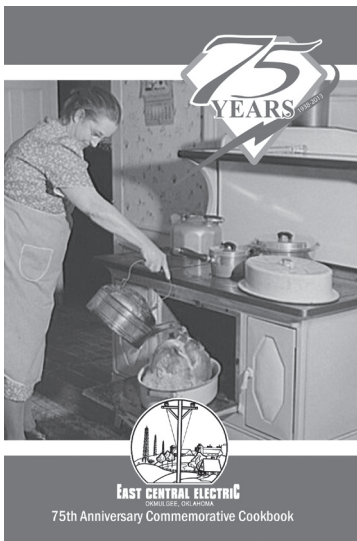
Combine heavy cream, half and half, sugar, and lemon zest in a saucepan; bring to a simmer over low heat. Cook and stir until sugar is dissolved, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Cover saucepan and allow the mixture to steep for 10 minutes.

Uncover pan and bring back to a simmer over low heat. Beat the egg yolks in a bowl. Gradually stir one cup of the hot cream mixture into the eggs, several tablespoons at a time. This will help to bring the eggs up to temperature without scrambling them. Stir the egg mixture back into the cream mixture in the saucepan. Cook and stir over low heat until the mixture just coats the back of a spoon, 5 to 10 minutes. Transfer to a large bowl; cover. Refrigerate overnight.

Stir the lemon juice into the cold ice cream mixture. Freeze in a 4 to 5 quart ice cream maker according to manufacturer's directions. Transfer ice cream to a lidded freezer container, and freeze for 4 hours to ripen flavors before serving.

Cookbooks Available

Pick up a copy at your co-op office in Okmulgee



East Central Electric's 75th Anniversary Cookbook includes over 350 recipes from co-op members. Some are reprinted from historic editions of your co-op newsletter and cookbooks published in the past; others are new dishes contributed by today's members. Cookbooks are available for \$5 per copy. Pick up a copy of the cookbook at East Central Electric headquarters in Okmulgee. Hurry, there are a limited number left.



playsafe

Seniors should stay cool

Hot weather is no joke for elderly persons

The older we get, the more careful we need to be on the hottest days of summer.

Even when kids and younger adults seem unfazed by a sweltering August afternoon, the heat can knock older folks right off their feet. Common health problems among seniors, including poor circulation, inefficient sweat glands, heart, lung or kidney diseases, and high blood pressure, can affect how an older person's body deals with heat.

In addition, people on multiple medicines, or who take diuretics or sedatives, may not be able to sweat. And some seniors may not notice the heat, so they may wear too many clothes without realizing the danger.

Seniors can follow a few summertime strategies for keeping cool:

- If you don't have air conditioning, ask a family member or friend to drop you

off for the day at a shopping mall, a library or a nearby senior center, where it's air conditioned. Many senior centers provide transportation.

- Ask your doctor if any of your medications interfere with your ability to cool your body down when it's hot.

- Dress in light, cotton clothes instead of synthetics when the temperature climbs.

- Drink plenty of cool water during the day, even if you don't feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine; they can dehydrate the body.

- Stay indoors or go someplace cool when the forecast calls for heat, humidity or high air pollution.

- Ask a relative or a neighbor to check in with you every day during the summer, just in case you need some help if the weather gets the better of you.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Tip of the Month

When shopping for a new appliance, consider lifetime operation costs as well as the up-front purchase price. Refrigerators last an average of 12 years, clothes washers about 11, and dishwashers about 10. Check the Energy Guide label for the appliance's estimated yearly operating cost, and look for ENERGY STAR units, which usually exceed minimum federal standards for efficiency and quality. To learn more, visit EnergySavers.gov.

-US DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY