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countryliving

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PUBLISHED FOR MEMBERS OF EAST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Consulting Firm To Study Rates

Increase is possible to ensure sound finances and operations

East Central Electric General Manager Tim Smith announced recently the board of trustees has retained the consulting firm of C.H. Guernsey & Co. to study the cooperative's current rate classes and the possibility of a rate increase.

"The decision to increase rates is never an easy one, but the board and management want East Central to continue to be a financially sound cooperative."

—TIM SMITH, GENERAL MANAGER

C.H. Guernsey & Co. is an engineering and architectural consulting firm with over 75 years experience working with clients in the US and abroad. It is headquartered in Oklahoma City.

"Guernsey is conducting a study of our rates to make certain

they are fair and equitable to all classes of consumers," says Smith. "Following the evaluation, a recommendation on a possible increase will be made to the board."

Smith says the co-op has not raised electric rates since 2005.

He goes on to say the price of needed equipment and supplies such as utility poles, transformers and wire has increased, as has fuel required for the co-op's fleet of trucks and cars.

He adds other Oklahoma utilities have experienced the same types of cost increases and have implemented rate increases, some as much as 8 percent.

Smith says the board anticipates any increase would not go into effect until early 2015.

"The trustees don't approach this situation lightly," says Smith. "Any increase in rates will affect them too, so they will pay a great deal of attention to



The price for construction materials used to build and maintain power lines continues to climb. Transformers cost \$425 each in 2005. Today's price: \$735.

this matter, while remaining aware of their responsibility for the cooperative."

He adds keeping the membership informed on the possible rate increase is a priority for the board and management.

"We will continue to include such information in upcoming issues of *Country Living*, along with our web page," he says.

"The decision to increase rates is never an easy one, but the board and management want East Central to continue to be a financially sound cooperative."

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- Pay via automatic draft of your checking or savings account. Sign up online or download the ebill form for easy automatic payments at www.ecoec.com.

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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.....	644
Applications granted.....	458
Applications denied.....	175
Applications tabled.....	11
Scholarships awarded.....	\$128,000

Total Disbursements.....\$1,200,654.08
Average member contribution.....44¢





Scam Targets Hispanic Members

East Central Electric Cooperative warns members that scam artists are on the prowl, and they are preying on co-op members.

In May, scammers called an East Central Electric (ECE) member and told him his meter needed to be repaired. They offered to fix the meter for \$600, claiming it would lower his electric bill and reduce outages. They also told him he would receive a \$200 credit on his electric bill.

"Luckily, this member knew better and he called us," said Tamara Hawkins, manager of co-op office services.

Electric co-ops across the country are reporting a rise in scams. Often the targets are Hispanic members. Scammers tell the member that their account is past due and their power will be shut off in 30 minutes unless they provide the caller with credit card information.

Another scam tempts members with the promise of a lottery win. In Iowa, a co-op member was contacted by phone and told his utility had provided the names and numbers of members who paid their electric bill. The caller told the man he could win \$1.5 million in cash, and proceeded to ask him for his personal information. The member promptly hung up and contacted his co-op.

Mentioning a utility is a new twist on what federal authorities say is an ongoing scam. The Federal Trade Commission, warns that "fraudulent telemarketers based in Jamaica are calling people in the U.S., telling them that they've won a sweepstakes or foreign lottery."

Members are reminded that ECE does NOT provide account information to others or make calls threatening to disconnect service. If you receive a suspicious call, hang up immediately and report the incident to your co-op at **918-756-0833**.



EPA Rule Sets Power Plant Emissions For Each State

Public comment period invites co-op members to voice their opinion to leaders in Washington, DC.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued its ruling on emissions from existing power plants on June 2. Electric cooperatives across the country plan to present their views about the agency's June 2 proposal at four public hearings next month.

The EPA's rule sets individual carbon dioxide limits for each state to achieve by reducing emissions from fossil generation. Each state has an emissions target, which could differ from state to state depending on its mix of resources as of 2012.

EPA requires the states to have their implementation plans ready in one to three years, depending on circumstances and the form of the state plan. Multistate plans will be allowed more time for development.

"Because the impact of the rule will depend a great deal on how it is implemented at the state level, it is impossible to predict how this could affect our power costs," said Tim Smith, East Central Electric general manager. "What we do know is it doesn't look good."

The rule is expected to be finalized next summer with compliance required between 2020 and 2030.

The agency is allowing an unusually lengthy public comment period of 120 days for the contentious 645-page rule—a move urged by co-op members visiting Congress during the NRECA Legislative Conference in May.

During this public comment period, East Central Electric and other co-ops will continue to urge members to add their comments to a national letter writing campaign to leaders in Washington,

DC, asking the EPA to reconsider its regulations on existing power plants. The effort is being coordinated by the Cooperative Action Network website, Action.coop.

Thus far, over 500,000 co-op members from across the U.S. have joined the effort by sending letters and email messages to EPA and elected officials.

East Central Electric members are encouraged to chime in on the issue by visiting www.Action.coop.

"A large percentage of the power we deliver to our member's homes comes from coal-fired generation," said Smith. "We can't stress enough how important it is for our members to help us advocate for keeping coal, which is a low cost, resource, in the mix of generating fuels."



Stop Your Electric Bill from Going Up.



Tell the government you can't afford costly regulation.

Visit Action.coop



Co-op Connections **SUPER SAVINGS**

Are you taking advantage of this member benefit?

If you aren't using your Co-op Connections card, you're missing out on great savings on everything from groceries to electronic gadgets and more at participating national and local retailers. Your card can save you money on prescription medicine, too; also eye exams, dental care, chiropractic visits, lab work and MRIs.

East Central Electric began participating in the nationwide discount program in 2007. Since that time ECE members have saved over \$400,000 in prescription costs alone. Even if you participate in another savings program, it pays to run your card every time you fill a prescription so you can use the program that saves you the most.

Use the Co-op Connections app or log on to their website, to check prices at local pharmacies for the best deal. There's even a grocery app (available on the Coupon page) that lets you compare grocery prices!

Want to earn money while you shop? Sign up for Co-op Connections Cash Back Mall. You'll earn cash back every time you shop at Bass Pro, Wal Mart, Target, and up to 4,000 national retailers.

Check out all the ways you can save at www.connections.coop, or use your card locally at the following participating businesses. Have fun!



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Tip of the Month

During summer months, our homes can be extremely hot, making living conditions uncomfortable. Before you turn up your air conditioner, try cooling off with a ceiling fan first. Using ceiling fans can actually allow you to raise your thermostat setting by four degrees and still feel just as comfortable.

Source: Department of Energy

For more energy saving tips and advice, please visit www.togetherwesave.com, or contact East Central Electric Cooperative at 918-756-0833 for details on energy efficiency rebates or to schedule a free home energy audit.

Use your Co-op Connections to save at these local businesses!

M&D Drug- Okmulgee
10% discount

Taylor Made Graphx- Okmulgee
15% off order over \$100

Brown Printing & Office supplies Inc.- Henryetta
10% off purchase

Once Again Consignment- Henryetta
5 free items with \$20 purchase

G & H Decoys Inc- Henryetta
10% discount on purchase

United Furniture- Henryetta
10% off Furniture

Massey's BBQ- Okmulgee
Free drink w/purchase

Cindy Kraft, CMT – Morris
10% off on massages

Edward Jones Investments-Henryetta
Free portfolio review and free financial assessment

The Ice House- Bixby
\$5 off recruiting rate

O.K. Staudt Jewelers-Okmulgee
Free cleaning and stone check

Practical P.C – Okmulgee
10% off in-house labor (computer service)

Rockin L-H Asparagus Farm –Cast Iron Kettle Cookouts – Eufaula
10% discount off entire purchase in country store

The Nutrition Shoppe - Okmulgee
10% off except sale items

Southern Cross Music and Sound – Okmulgee
10% off

Rockin L-H Asparagus Farm – Stagecoach Inn or Hat Creek Station – Eufaula
10% off regular rate on single night stay

Big River Emporium – Eufaula
10% off entire purchase



August billing cycles

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

Your prompt payment is appreciated.

	Mailed	Due
Cycle 1	Aug. 9	Aug. 30
Cycle 2	Aug. 16	Sept. 7
Cycle 3	Aug. 27	Sept. 15
Cycle 4	Aug. 30	Sept. 22



therecipebox

Favorite recipes from members of East Central Electric Cooperative.



Squash or Tomato Relish

Contributed by Elizabeth Ashbrook, Bristow

Ingredients

- 12 C. squash or green tomatoes, chopped
- 4 C. onion, chopped
- 4 large green bell peppers, chopped
- 2 large red peppers, chopped
- 2 hot peppers, chopped
- 5 T. salt

Sauce:

- 2 1/2 C. apple cider vinegar
- 1 Tsp. turmeric
- 2 1/2 Tsp. celery seeds
- 1/2 T. allspice
- 6 C. sugar

Directions

Set all vegetables over night in salt. Rinse in cold water next day. For sauce, bring those ingredients to a hard boil. Add vegetables to sauce and bring back to hard boil. Cook together. Have rings, jars and caps hot to seal.



playitsafe

A/C Keeps You Cool—and Healthy

Drinking lots of water, wearing light-colored clothing and staying out of the sun will protect you from dehydration and heat stroke. So can your air conditioner.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ranks air-conditioning as the No.1 protection against heat-related illness and death.

So take good care of yours. If you rely on single-room air conditioners instead of a central a/c system:

- Have a service tech perform routine maintenance and inspect your unit once a year.
- Repair defects as soon as possible to prevent a fire or a surprise breakdown on a hot summer day.

• Plug them into grounded, three-prong outlets. Make sure each outlet you use is on a circuit that's large enough to handle the load by asking an electrician.

• Avoid using an extension cord to reach from the window a/c to a grounded outlet, or buy a cord designed specifically for an a/c.

• Consider updating your room air conditioners if they're more than 10 years old. An Energy Star-qualified model could save you up to \$25 a summer.

For more safety or energy-saving tips, call **918-756-0833**, or visit www.ecoec.com.

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