## NECONNECTION

A PUBLICATION OF NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



### **NE**CONNECTION

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Northeast Connection is published monthly to communicate with the members of Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative.

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Shane Burgess - Engineering

Kristen Sturgess - Human Resources Ricky Hignite - Information Technology Nick Sutton - Operations

#### **VINITA HEADQUARTERS**

27039 South 4440 Road, Vinita, OK 74301

#### **GROVE OFFICE**

600 South Main, Grove, OK 74344

#### **BUSINESS HOURS**

Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Offices are closed Saturday, Sunday and holidays.

#### **DISPATCHING AVAILABLE 24 HOURS AT**

1.800.256.6405

#### If you experience an outage:

- 1. Check your switch or circuit breaker in the house and on the meter pole to be sure the trouble is not on your side of the service.
- When contacting the cooperative to report an outage, use the name as it appears on your bill, and have both your pole number and account number ready.

Please direct all editorial inquiries to Public Relations at 800.256.6405 or email publicrelations@noec.coop

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## A COMMON BOND Shane Burgess Manager of Engineering

We don't necessarily associate electricity with fiber optic technology, but perhaps we should. Allow me to explain.

In the 1930s—less than a century ago—the convenience of electricity was found only in major cities where investor-owned utilities found the business case profitable. This inequity left farms, ranches, and other rural areas in the dark, quite literally.

In May of 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 7037, creating the Rural Electrification Administration. Codified in 1936 by Congress through passage of the Rural Electrification Act, this mechanism financed the first rural electric cooperatives in the United States.

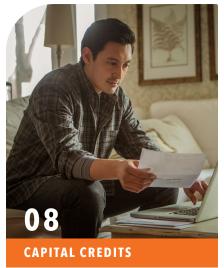
Cooperatives were formed by neighbors helping neighbors with the common goal of electrifying America's heartland. And it was effective. By 1959, nearly 90% of all farms had electricity.

It is a rare occasion when history repeats itself on the scale of the Rural Electrification Act, but we find ourselves witnessing a very similar movement today. The need for broadband and the discrepancy between urban and rural availability has often been compared to the electrification disparity of the 1930s.

In 2014, the NOEC Board of Trustees began pursuing a vision to bridge the digital divide here in northeast Oklahoma. This necessitated the procurement of a loan from the Rural Utility Service on behalf of our wholly-owned subsidiary, Northeast Rural Services, LLC. That loan was the catalyst for BOLT Fiber Optic Services. Since then, BOLT has grown to over 17,000 subscribers with more connected each day.

Continued on page 4.









**DELAWARE COUNTY RECIPE** 

#### \$100 IS HIDING!

#### FEBRUARY EVENTS

**Life Line Screening** Feb 4 | Grove

Grove Community Center

**Mardi Gras Crafts** Feb 4 | Miami

Miami Public Library

**Home of Hope Chocolate Affair** Feb 5 | Vinita

Craig County Fairgrounds

**Cornerstone Outreach Overflow Women's Conference** 

Feb 8 | Grove

Cornerstone Outreach Revival Center

**Souper Saturday** Feb 8 | Claremore

Downtown Claremore

**Vinita Polar Plunge** Feb 8 | Vinita

Lee | Coats Law Firm

SpringStreet @ River Ridge **Bluegrass** 

Feb 8 | Grove

Grove Middle School

**Teen Valentine Craft Event** Feb 10 | Miami

Miami Public Library

Midsouth Tackle, Hunting & Boat **Show** 

Feb 13-16 | Pryor

MidAmerica Expo Center

**Eagle Watch and Coffee** Feb 22 | Langley

151 W. Cherokee Ave

**Father of the Bride** Feb 22 | Miami

Coleman Theatre

# A COMMON BOND CONTINUED FROM INSIDE COVER



The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 created funding aimed at further reducing the digital divide between rural and urban habitants. Grant funds were earmarked for broadband expansion nationwide with each state receiving an allocation. The Oklahoma Broadband Office was formed and charged with administering these funds through the ARPA SLFRF, ARPA CPF, and BEAD programs.

BOLT was fortunate enough to be the recipient of nearly \$24 million in funding through the SLFRF and CPF programs. Adding an approximate \$18 million match, BOLT will be expanding throughout Craig, Delaware, Mayes, Ottawa, and Rogers counties over the next two years. This expansion will cover over 1,000 miles and pass close to 7,500 residences and businesses with broadband availability.

It remains the vision of NOEC and BOLT to ensure that cooperative members and non-members alike have access to quality broadband services. These new grant opportunities are allowing us to move that vision forward.

We're still lighting up rural America, the light just looks a little different now.

### **BOLT FIBER LAUNCHES BROADBAND EXPANSION IN NORTHEAST OKLAHOMA**



Multiple projects for high-speed internet expansion totaling \$27.7 million were officially launched during a groundbreaking ceremony hosted by BOLT Fiber and the Oklahoma Broadband Office (OBO). The groundbreaking event was held December 4 at BOLT Fiber's Vinita headquarters location. BOLT Fiber is a subsidiary of Northeast Rural Services, LLC., a division of Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative (NOEC).

The current BOLT Fiber footprint passes almost 27,000 locations in northeast Oklahoma with a take rate over 60%. Including an investment from BOLT, the ARPA SLFRF-funded expansion project will carry a price tag of \$40 million and reach nearly 7,000 additional serviceable locations.

The launch is but one example of the progress being made statewide to make high-speed internet access available to all Oklahomans. BOLT Fiber projects are scheduled in Delaware, Craig, Mayes, and Ottawa counties.

OBO and BOLT Fiber officials, along with local legislators and municipal officials attended the ceremony.

"Today's launch is more than just the laying of fiber-it's the foundation for opportunity, growth, and connectivity in every corner of Oklahoma. With each mile of broadband we expand, we're not just bridging a digital divide, we're empowering our communities for a brighter, more prosperous future," said OBO Executive **Director Mike Sanders.** 

"There are many individuals and entities to thank for this achievement," remarked BOLT Fiber CEO and NOEC General Manager Daniel Webster. "Significant effort was made behind the scenes to secure this important funding and we are thankful for all who helped make it happen."

Added Webster: "The potential now exists for thousands more living here in northeast Oklahoma to access high-speed broadband internet. Many who have been waiting patiently for fiber-based services won't be waiting much longer. This project will ensure the continued growth of our communities by helping solidify future employment and educational opportunities."

ARPA SLFRF-awarded grant projects will result in some 50,000 homes and businesses statewide being served with affordable and reliable highspeed internet. But the growth of broadband access across Oklahoma is just beginning. With tens of thousands of locations to be served through OBO administered programs, the office is on pace to complete its mission of acheiving statewide coverage.

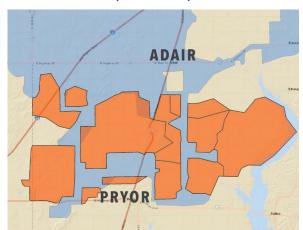
#### **BOLT SERVICEABLE NOEC MEMBER LOCATIONS PASSED**

**BEFORE EXPANSION: 63% AFTER EXPANSION: 83%** 

## Now Accepting **NEW REGISTRATIONS!**

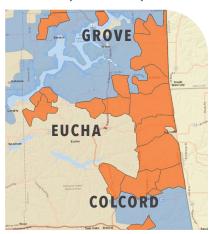
#### **MAYES COUNTY**

(APRA SLFRF)



#### **DELAWARE COUNTY**

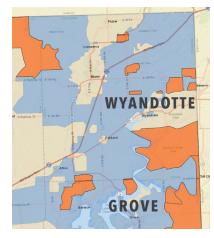
(APRA SLFRF)



Expansion areas denoted in orange.



**CRAIG COUNTY** (APRA SLFRF)



**OTTAWA COUNTY** 

(APRA SLFRF)



**ROGERS COUNTY** (APRA CPF)

Scan the QR code to validate eligibility and address





### TIPS & TRICKS

#### WINTER ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- Make sure your home is equipped with functioning carbon monoxide detectors. Carbon monoxide is an odorless gas that can Deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning
- Keep outdoor outlets closed. Check your they don't have an accumulation of ice and snow on them. Keep them cleared off and
- Practice outdoor extension cord safety. Your extension cord should also be device to avoid electrical shock.
- Use caution with electric blankets. Never Be sure to dispose of electric blankets that
- Be careful with your kitchen appliances. plugs before use.

#### WINTER ENERGY EFFICIENCY

- Lay down a rug to preserve warmth. You'll not only help insulate your floors, you'll also cut down on noise.
- Don't heat spaces unnecessarily. Avoid heating areas of your home that are not insulated (such as a garage, crawlspace, attic, or storage shed).
- Protect your windows. Clear plastic sheeting on your windows can add insulation and reduce icy drafts with minimal effort and cost.
- Heat your home responsibly. Cranking up the heat to warm the house quickly doesn't work. The house will warm up at the same rate, regardless of the temperature setting.



Attic air sealing may be a DIY project if your attic is accessible and large enough to allow you to move around. Contact a contractor first if you inspect your attic and detect any of the following:

- Wet or damp insulation indicating a leaky roof.
- Moldy or rotted attic rafters or floor joists indicating moisture problems.
- Kitchen, bathroom, and clothes dryer vents that exhaust moist air directly into the attic space instead of outdoors.
- Little or no attic ventilation.
- If you have unsealed and uninsulated recessed can lights, special care must be taken when insulating around these fixtures.



# UNCLAIMED DOLLARS COULD BE YOURS

Checks totaling \$10 or more have been mailed to eligible members. Checks were not mailed to members whose patronage capital accounts totaled less than \$10. These accounts will continue to accumulate funds with each retirement. When an account reaches \$10 or more, a check will be issued following the next retirement. NOEC makes every effort to ensure members receive patronage capital that is rightfully theirs. To accomplish this, it is important for NOEC to have your current mailing address. Checks are often returned marked "undeliverable." Many of these do not have the correct 911 address. A partial listing of unclaimed checks is provided here. If you see your name, claim your check by calling 800.256.6405, extension 9313.

A complete list of returned checks is available online at **www.noec.coop/refund-checks**.

G

GAMBLE, GARY - JOPLIN MO
GIBBY, EVELYN F - COLCORD OK
GIDEON, RICKY L - WYANDOTTE OK
GOULD, DOROTHY P - WATTTS OK
GRAND LAKE MARINELAND - KETCHUM OK
GRAY, BRENDA R - LANGLEY OK
GREEN, BOBBY J - VINITA OK
GREEN, BRENT - LANGLEY OK
GRINER, LONNIE R - WYANDOTTE OK
GROOMER, JAMES - KANSAS OK



HAILEY, MICHAEL D - GROVE OK
HALL, KEVIN R - SEMINOLE OK
HAM, CHARLES - GROVE OK
HAMBRICK, FLOYD - OWASSO OK
HAMILTON, JIMMY - TULSA OK
HAMPTON, JOE -- COLLINSVILLE OK
HANKINS, ROCKY - BENTONVILLE AR
HARP, EZRA C - VINITA OK
HARRELL, JOANN - CHELSEA OK

HARRISON, WEJR-TULSAOK HAYWORTH, JOHN W SR - SAPULPA OK HECKADON, MITCH - SALINA OK HENDERSON, MARTY C - SALINA OK HENDRICKS, ARLENE - LANGLEY OK HENSLEY. TAMMY - VINITA OK HENSON, WILLIAM C - BEGGS OK HOGAN, REX - TULSA OK HOLLIS, DWIGHT L - WYANDOTTE OK HOLMES. JOANNA - WATTS OK HOLR, EVELYN - TULSA OK HONEY CREEK BAPTIST VILLAGE - GROVE OK HOOD G M - WYANDOTTE OK HOOKER TRANSPORTATION - OKC OK HOWERTON, TIMOTHY R - KANSAS OK HUCKABY, VANESSA - AFTON OK HUDSON, BILLIE D - CLAREMORE OK HUDSON, JAMES S JR - DENVER CO HUNT, DIANE - KANSAS CITY MO IRWIN, FRANKLIN D - CONWAY AR



JACKSON, LELAND C - KANSAS OK JACKSON, MIKE V - JAY OK JOHNSON, LAVENE L - CHELSEA OK
JOHNSON, RUSSELL E - LIBERAL KS
JONES, GENE - PLUMERVILLE AR
JONES, HAROLD G - CHELSEA OK
JONES, RICHARD L - WYANDOTTE OK



KARGER, TOBY A - INOLA OK

KEEP, RICHARD E - TULSA OK

KENNEDY, JOE - JAY OK

KENYON, JACK - VINITA OK

KILGORE, ROGER - CHELSEA OK

KIMREY, BILL L - AFTON OK

KINCHELO, KATAIYA L - COLCORD OK

KING, CRYSTAL J - AFTON OK

KING, MICHAEL G - MIAMI OK

KLAUS, V R - SAPULPA OK

KNIGHT, DEAN B - TULSA OK

KOLOFF, RITA - KETCHUM OK

KRAFT, ALAN L - OKC OK



LALICKER, KENNETH L - ENID OK

LAMBERT, DON - TULSA OK

LAWSON, PAULINE J - GROVE OK

LEE, ROBERT - COUNCIL BLUFFS IA

LEEVER, JOHN R - ROSE OK

LEGG, KENNY W - JAY OK

LEICHTER, SYDNEY N - MOORE OK

LEWIS, BILL R - EUFAULA OK

LEWIS, RICHARD - JAY OK

LOUCKS, JOHN E - WYANDOTTE OK

LOWERY, DOLORES - COLCORD OK

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .



MACH, MARGARET E - AFTON OK

MAHURIN, KENNETH D - PEA RIDGE AR

MAPLES, JOHNNY L - GROVE OK

MARTIN, FLOYD F - JAY OK

. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

MARTIN, LARRY D - WYANDOTTE OK MARTIN, LORETTA F - ROSE OK MARTIN, PATRICIA J - VINITA OK MARTIN, WESLEY D - SALINA OK MATHEWS, MICHAEL - LOCUST GROVE OK MCCOIN, JORDAN J - AFTON OK MCDOUGAL, DEBORAH M - AFTON OK MCGEE, BOBBY J - JAY OK MCGEE, LARRY - NOWATA OK MEDERIS, JOHNNY - VINITA OK MEGAN COVE PROJECT - GROVE OK MILES, WILLIAM - MIAMI OK MILLER, NORMAN L - ROSE OK MOORHEAD, ARCHIE - KETCHUM OK MORGAN, DAN - CHELSEA OK MORGAN, HARRY E - LAKE WALES FL MORGAN, JONATHON A - GROVE OK MORROW, JAMES E - CHOUTEAU OK MOTTER, LOIS J - EUCHA OK MOYA, MARILYN - SALINA OK MYERS, BARRY G - AFTON OK

#### N

NEWTON, HOWARD - SEMINOLE OK

#### 0

O'BRIAN, BRIAN - KETCHUM OK OESTREICH, CLARENCE - GROVE OK

#### D

PACK, VERONICA - COLCORD OK
PAIGE, ROGER D - RED OAK TX
PARADEE, JOHN W - COLUMBUS KS
PARKER, ROBERT - MIAMI OK
PARROTT, MAMIE W - WYANDOTTE OK
PATCH, BILL/SAVANNAH L- TULSA OK
PAUL, GENIA L - PRYOR OK
PENDERGRAFT, CHARLES W - MIAMI OK
PEPPER, RON L - SILOAM SPRINGS AR
PETERMAN, CINDY R - AFTON OK
PHILLIPS, CLINT - KETCHUM OK
POINTER, DOUGLAS - PLEASANT VIEW CO
PORT DUNCAN - AFTON OK
PORT KETCHUM - KETCHUM OK
PORTER, BILL E - GROVE OK

POWERS, JUDY A - SALINA OK
PRAIRE BREEZE INC - EUCHA OK
PRESSURE SYSTEMS - SILOAM SPRINGS AR

#### R

RAMSEY, AARON B - STRANG OK
REEVES, TOMMY - WYANDOTTE OK
RHOADES CONSTRUCTION INC - NEWTON KS
RHODES, LARRY - SPRINGER OK
RICHARD, LESTER - VINITA OK
RILEY, FRANK - INDEPENDENCE MO
ROBERTS, GRANT - CHELSEA OK
ROBERTS, SHERYL L - AFTON OK
ROUDYBUSH, DONALD - SAINT GEORGE KS
RUNABOUT, SYLVIA R - JAY OK

#### S

SAPEDA, DEBBY L - TAHLEQUAH OK SAUNDERS, JERRY M - VINITA OK SCHIEBNER, ANDY - AFTON OK SEIGRIST, MATTHEW C - WYANDOTTE OK SETTERS, MARY F - COLCORD OK SHELLY, PHAGAN - GENTRY AR SHIRLEY, JOSIAH - EUCHA OK SILER, LARRY - PRYOR OK SIMMONS, BUNNY - JAY OK SKAGGS, KELLIE J - LANGLEY OK SKINNER, MONA S - KETCHUM OK SMALL, BERTHENA - COLCORD OK SMITH, DAVID M - FOYIL OK SMITH, DONALD L - WAYNE OK SMITH, EDGAR L JR - TULSA OK SMITH, L J - JAY OK SNIDER, P L - TULSA OK SOONER EQUIPMENT CO - EDMOND OK SOTELO, TERESA - TULSA OK SOUTH GRAND REALTORS - KETCHUM OK SPEED, DAVID L - SENECA MO SPENCER, VICTOR - DISNEY OK STRAUB, STEPHANIE M - KANSAS OK STRICKLAND, JESSE - COLCORD OK SUMMERFIELD, JASON - COLCORD OK

#### Т

TAKALA, BRION E - CHELSEA OK
TALBURT, HAROLD - AFTON OK
TENNISON, BILLY R -GENTRY AR
THATCHER, ELIZABETH - SALINA OK
THOMAS, JAYME - KETCHUM OK
THOMPSON, RON - BROKEN ARROW OK
THREADGILL, NETTIE R - BROKEN ARROW OK
TIMMONS, KENDALL R - CHELSEA OK
TRANS AMERICAN - TULSA OK
TRUDE, DAVID A JR - CHELSEA OK
TWO TREE HOMEOWNERS - AFTON OK
TYE, HEATH W - ROSE OK



VERNON, TERESA - JAY OK
VICTORY, LISA G - CHELSEA OK
VONSCHRILTZ, EVERETT - FOYIL OK
WALKER, MARTIN E - WATTS OK

#### W

WALLIS, JERRY - MIAMI OK WALTERS, JOE W - AUGUSTA KS WEBB, DONALD L - BARTLESVILLE OK WHEATLEY, CHERYL - JAY OK WHITETREE, TONYA M - FOYIL OK WILEY, CAROLYN J - TULSA OK WILKINSON, JEANEANE - LOCUST GROVE OK WILLIAMS, GARY - PAULS VALLEY OK WILLIAMSON, JUNE E - COLCORD OK WILLIS, ELMER G - WYANDOTTE OK WILSON, DAVID - CHELSEA OK WILSON, JEFFERY D - WYANDOTTE OK WILSON, M DELORES - LOCUST GROVE OK WINFIELD, LARRY L - KANSAS OK WISE, TERRY - GROVE OK WOODALL, WILLIAM - CHELSEA OK WYATT, ARTHUR L - EUCHA OK



YOAKUM, JACK R - TULSA OK

# ANNOUNCING ENERGYKIDS DAY



# energyKIDS JOIN US!

SATURDAY, JUNE 7, 9AM-12PM

Craig County Fairgrounds
915 E Apperson Rd, Vinita, OK 74301

Attend and ENJOY:

Bounce house & obstacle course

Meet your linemen heroes

Touch-a-truck

Games & activities

One lucky registrant will win a FREE iPad!

THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO ALL CHILDREN, INCLUDING NOEC MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS

#### **RSVP for energyKIDS Day**

Let us know if you'll be attending energyKIDS day with your children!
To RSVP scan the code at right or visit noec.coop/5xar.









#### Opportunities available for area students, teachers

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative is announcing its youth programs for the current school year and wants to make sure all eligible students have an opportunity to participate. Along with four (4) \$2,000 college scholarships, the cooperative is sponsoring an all-expense-paid trip to our nation's capital for two (2) students, as well as offering some other nice incentives.

#### **Youth Tour Community Service Project (or essay)**

Area high school juniors can complete a 6-8 hour community service project for a chance to win an allexpense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 13-20, as part of the 2025 Youth Tour contest. Winning students will also receive \$500 in spending cash. As an alternative form of entry, students can submit a 300-500 word essay on the topic "Making a Difference Where I Live." Students who are in the eleventh grade and attend school within cooperative service area are eligible to participate in this contest. Cooperative membership is not a requirement. Entry deadline: March 23, 2025.

#### **College/Trade School Scholarship**

High school seniors whose parents or quardians are NOEC members and who live in a household served by NOEC electric can apply for a \$2,000 scholarship to a college, university, or trade school. Four winners will be selected. Entry deadline: April 21, 2025.

#### **Classroom Incentive**

NOEC is encouraging area schools to get involved. If a teacher administers the Youth Tour Community Service Project (or essay) as part of a classroom assignment and produces a contest finalist, he or she could be rewarded with \$100 toward the purchase of classroom materials or equipment.

#### **Community Service Award**

Local FFA, FCCLA, and 4-H organizations can apply for \$300 to assist with program expenses.

#### **Safety Presentations**

Area students can receive an introduction to electrical safety this school year, thanks to NOEC's kidfriendly safety presentations. Traveling presentations are available upon request to elementary school classrooms and local youth organizations. Presentations utilize visual aids and are geared toward a younger audience.

For additional information, including entry forms and applications, visit www.noec.coop and click on Youth Programs under the Community Services tab. Students can also contact the NOEC Public Relations department at publicrelations@noec.coop for a community service project idea or to schedule a safety presentation.

### FEATURED RECIPES

#### FROM DELAWARE COUNTY



#### CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES | SHERRIE BARBEE OF KANSAS

#### **INGREDIENTS**

- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa powder

**Step 1:** Heat sweetened condensed milk on stove then add 1/2 cup of unsweetened cocoa powder. Mix until well combined.

**Step 2:** Transfer to a 9x9 baking sheet and place in freezer for 2 hours.

**Step 3:** Cut into 1 inch pieces and dust with remainder of cocoa powder.

**Step 4**: Serve and enjoy!

#### GRILLED PORK CHOPS | DONNA AND TRACY ROY OF AFTON

#### **INGREDIENTS**

- 1 cup Hellmann's mayonnaise
- 2 Tbsp. lime juice
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 tsp. chipotle chili powder
- 8 pork chops

**Step 1:** Blend first five ingredients for the sauce.

**Step 2:** Reserve 1/2 cup; set aside.

**Step 3:** Grill or broil pork chops, brushing with 1/2 cup of mixture, until done.

**Step 4:** Serve with reserved mixture sauce.



Have a recipe to share? Send it to publicrelations@noec.coop for a chance to be featured in an upcoming edition of *Northeast Connection*.

\*997144\*