

# Northwestern Electric News

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



February 2014

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## Scammers target cooperative members

It seems like every time you listen to the news or read the paper, there is a report on how a scam artist has tricked someone into giving them money. Scammers continue to target everyone, regardless of age, gender, education or income level. They can cost people a lot of money and cause a great deal of distress.

Scammers have been targeting electric cooperative members in several states. They have been using a variety of schemes including one where a man dresses like a cooperative employee.

Big Sandy RECC members in Kentucky have been approached by a man requesting money with the threat of disconnection. He drives a vehicle that looks similar to the cooperative's vehicles and is dressed like a utility worker. The vehicle doesn't have a logo emblem on it, but if the members aren't paying attention it could go unnoticed. Fortunately, the members he approached knew they had paid their bills and didn't give him any money.

In Tennessee, scammers posing as co-op employees have been calling residential and business members, demanding immediate payment to avoid disconnection. The calls sound official and sometimes the caller ID even displays the name of the utility.

Scammers in Colorado have been calling commercial members of La Plata Electric Association trying to steal credit card information. The caller indicates the businesses' account is past due, and payment must be made immediately by credit card or the electricity will be disconnected.

In New Mexico, Kit Carson Electric Cooperative members have been getting calls from someone claiming

to be a co-op service representative. He threatens to turn off the electricity in 30 minutes unless they make an immediate payment using a prepaid money card.

So far, we have only received one call from a member stating a representative from our office called requesting him to pay his past due balance with a prepaid card or he would be disconnected. He was positive he had paid his bill so he hung up and called our office directly. Sure enough, he had paid his bill in full earlier that month. Thank goodness he decided to call us first to verify we had received his payment.

Although we can't stop the scammers from approaching you, we do want to give you a couple of tips on how to avoid falling victim to a scam.

Our billing representatives occasionally call to remind members their account is past due or they have a broken arrangement. We ***do not*** demand you pay immediately with a credit or prepaid card. Our reps will provide you with a date and time you need to pay your bill by to avoid being disconnected.

If for any reason you suspect this may be a scam artist calling, hang up and call our office at 580.256.7425 or 800.375.7423. We will verify if it was one of our consumer reps who called and the reason for contacting you.

When working collects and disconnects, one of our servicemen may come to your home. He should be wearing a blue shirt with



**Carl Bryer wears Northwestern Electric's official uniform—blue shirt with his name and company logo on it—and keeps his employee identification handy while he is on the job. Our fleet vehicles are clearly marked with our company logo. If you are approached by someone you suspect is not a cooperative employee, give us a call immediately.**

Northwestern Electric's logo and his name on it. Also, the vehicle will be clearly marked with the Cooperative's emblem. Our linemen carry employee identification cards and will show them upon request.

Just like the phone scams, if you suspect the person is not a cooperative employee or you want to make sure, call our office for verification.

"You are the best protection you have to keep from being victimized by scammers," says Jonna Hensley, NWEC's member services and communications specialist. "If you think you are being approached by a scammer, contact us immediately to let us know what is going on. It's safer to take a minute or two of your time and ours to make sure you are dealing with one of our employees."

**NORTHWESTERN  
ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

Woodward, Oklahoma  
Operating In  
Beaver, Dewey, Ellis, Harper,  
Major, Woods and Woodward  
Counties in Oklahoma

**TYSON LITTAU  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Kenny Knowles, Pres. .... Arnett  
Ray Smith, Vice-Pres. .... Taloga  
John Bruce, Jr., Sec.-Treas. .... Sharon  
Dean Stone ..... Buffalo  
Clair Craighead ..... Woodward  
Wayne Hall ..... Mooreland  
Duane Henderson ..... Mooreland  
Lee Huckaby ..... Selman  
Gilbert Perkins. .... Gate

Jonna Hensley ..... Editor  
Michael W. Mitchel ..... Attorney

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

**1st to 10th of Each Month—**  
Pay electric service bill

**20th of Each Month—**  
-Delinquent collections begin.

**IN CASE OF TROUBLE CALL:  
24 HOUR EMERGENCY  
1-877-9NOPOWER  
877.966.7693.**

If no answer call:  
John Kirkwood .....866.3245  
Bob Appell .....273.4088

**NOTICE**

A copy of NWEC Bylaws will be made available for any member upon request.

**Web page: [www.nwecok.coop](http://www.nwecok.coop)  
E-mail: [nwec@nwecok.coop](mailto:nwec@nwecok.coop)**

Postmaster: Send address changes to:  
NORTHWESTERN ELECTRIC NEWS  
2925 Williams Ave.  
P.O. Box 2707  
Woodward, OK 73802.



These are a few of the items we found in the office that NWEC has given away at annual meeting. The LED flashlight in the lower right hand corner is this year's registration gift.

**Do you have any of these old treasures hiding in your closet?**

It's hard to believe January has already come and gone and February is off to a fast and furious start. What's even harder to believe is in 18 months Northwestern Electric will be celebrating 75 years of serving our members.

This thought sparked a walk down memory lane for some of our employees who recalled registration gifts we have given away at annual meeting over the past several years.

One of the employees (thanks Donnie Irvin!) thought it would be fun to see how many past registration gifts our members could find stashed away

in the back of their closets. So we are holding a contest to see who can come up with the most gifts!

Start digging in those storage boxes and make a list of all the items you find. You can turn the list in by person at either the Woodward or Buffalo office or by emailing it to [jonnah@nwecok.coop](mailto:jonnah@nwecok.coop). You can also mail it to NWEC, P.O. Box 2707, Woodward, OK 73802 and put Attn: Jonna on the envelope. (13654001)

The deadline is March 7. The person who finds the most items will win a \$50 gift card.

Ready! Set! Start hunting!

**November 2013 Operating Report**

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Revenue - Billing .....	2,426,211	2,497,160
Cost of Power.....	1,437,713	1,576,693
Miles of Lines .....	4,922	4,949
Members Connected .....	11,603	11,755
Density per Mile .....	2.36	2.38
Average Member KWH .....	2,313	2,201
Average Bill .....	209.10	212.43
KWH Purchased.....	27,205,724	27,960,712
KWH Sold.....	26,836,184	25,873,476
Income per Mile.....	495	507
Expense per Mile .....	463	512

## Seal manufactured home air leaks to slash electric bills

If energy bills for your manufactured home seem too high, the likely culprits are air leaks. Here are some tips from Northwestern Electric that can help you stop leaks from your home—and your wallet.

Older manufactured homes, especially those built before 1994, may be plagued by leaking ducts and inadequate insulation. Leaky duct work can reduce the efficiency of your heating and cooling system by as much as 20 percent. A good time to check for leaks is on a windy day, when you'll be able to find drafty spots.

Experts recommend going after big leaks first. That means plugging all holes around chimneys, vents, water pipes, and heating system duct work. Seal any duct leaks with mastic. Avoid the use of duct tape, which can dry out and disintegrate when used. Adding insulation to floor, walls, and ceiling cavities can improve energy ef-

ficiency, but may be a job for a professional contractor.

Once you've sealed major leaks, look for smaller ones—around windows, doors, electrical outlets, and light switches. Seal gaps around windows and doors, using caulk on non-moving parts. And replace any worn weather stripping.

Caulk or expanding spray foam are perfect in spots where plumbing, wiring, vents and ducting penetrate through walls. Installing foam outlet gaskets behind electrical outlets and light switches—especially on outside walls—can save energy, too.

For safety's sake, make sure that all combustion appliances, such as furnaces, stoves, and water heaters, are properly vented.



Sealing air leaks in manufactured homes can help lower utility costs. Installing foam outlet gaskets behind electrical outlets and light switches is just one way to help save energy.

For other tips on how to save energy—and money—visit Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives energy-saving website, [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com).

### Hidden account number contest

Congratulations to Carlene Krueger for recognizing her account number in last month's newsletter. The other number belonged to J. C. Beauchamp.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the contest, this is how it works. We have hidden two account numbers somewhere in the articles in this newsletter. The numbers will always be enclosed in parentheses and will look similar to this example (XXXXXX).

If you recognize your account number, all you have to do is give us a call on or before the 8th of the current month and we'll give you a credit on your bill for the amount stated.

This month's numbers are worth \$25 each. Happy hunting!

### Countryside Cooking

#### Cream Cheese Oreo Balls

- 1 (16 ounce) package Oreo cookies
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 (24 ounce) package white almond bark
- 1 (24 ounce) package chocolate bark, *optional*



Crush Oreos with a blender until powder like. Using the blender or hand mixer, mix Oreos and cream cheese together. Roll into walnut size balls and chill for one hour.

Melt approximately 3/4 package of white almond bark. Stick a toothpick in an Oreo ball and dip it in the melted white almond bark. Allow to harden on wax paper for about 15 minutes.

*Optional* - When Oreo balls are no longer sticky to the touch, decorate with drizzles of melted chocolate and white almond bark to give them a festive look. Use a sandwich bag with a tiny hole cut in one corner to drizzle the melted chocolate.

Store in an air tight container in the refrigerator. *Yield: 25-35 walnut sized treats.*

# Hearts at Risk

## ■ Blood pressure basics for American Heart Month

**H**ealthy hearts face risks from many different factors: high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, tobacco use, an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, and secondhand smoke, among others. But another common—and often misunderstood—risk factor is high blood pressure.

One in three Americans suffers from high blood pressure, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). With February designated as American Heart Month, now's a great time to understand more about this condition.

Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers, written as a ratio: 118/75 mm Hg. The top number, **systolic**, measures pressure in the arteries when a heart beats and the heart muscle contracts. The bottom number, **diastolic**, measures pressure in the arteries between heartbeats (when the heart muscle rests between beats and refills with blood).

The AHA lists five stages of blood pressure:

- **Normal:** Systolic less than 120 and diastolic less than 80
- **Prehypertension:** Systolic between 120-139 or diastolic between 80-89
- **High Blood Pressure Stage 1:** Systolic between 140-159 or diastolic between 90-99
- **High Blood Pressure Stage 2:** Systolic 160 and higher or diastolic 100 or higher
- **Hypertensive Crisis (emergency care needed):** Systolic 180 and higher or diastolic 110 or higher

### How is high blood pressure diagnosed?

Health care providers want an accurate picture of blood pressure to chart what happens over time. Starting at age 20, AHA recommends a blood pressure screening at least once every two years. (14761001)

If a patient's blood pressure reading comes in higher than normal, a doctor may take several readings over time and/or have the patient monitor blood pressure levels at home before diagnosing high blood pressure.

A single high reading does not necessarily translate to high blood pressure. However, if readings stay at 140/90 mm Hg or above (systolic 140 or above OR diastolic 90 or above) over time, a doctor will likely begin a treatment program. Such a program almost always includes lifestyle changes and often prescription medication.

If, while monitoring blood pressure, a patient notes a systolic reading of 180 mm Hg or higher OR a diastolic reading of 110 mm HG or higher, the patient should wait a few minutes and try again. If the reading remains at or above that level, a patient should seek immediate emergency medical treatment for a hypertensive crisis.

### Which number is more important, systolic (top) or diastolic (bottom)?



**Measuring your blood pressure is quick and painless. A doctor or health professional wraps an inflatable cuff with a pressure gauge around your arm to squeeze the blood vessels. Then he or she listens to your pulse with a stethoscope while releasing air from the cuff and watching the gauge. The gauge measures blood pressure in millimeters of mercury, abbreviated as mmHg.**

*Source: CDC/Amanda Mills*

Typically, more attention is given to the top number (the systolic blood pressure) as a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease for people over 50. In most cases, systolic blood pressure rises steadily with age because of increasing stiffness of large arteries, long-term build-up of plaque, and increased incidence of cardiac and vascular disease.

To learn more, visit [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org).  
*Source: American Heart Association*

## Important dates

### District 7 Meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2014

Meal at 6 p.m. - Meeting at 6:30 p.m.  
First Baptist Church, Buffalo

### District 8 Meeting

Monday, Feb. 24, 2014

Meal at 6 p.m. - Meeting at 6:30 p.m.  
Buffalo High School Auditorium

### District 9 Meeting

Monday, Feb. 17, 2014

Meal at 6 p.m. - Meeting at 6:30 p.m.  
Victory School south of Logan

### Annual Meeting

Thursday, Apr. 10, 2013

Meal at 5 p.m. - Meeting at 6:45 p.m.  
Woodward County Fair Barn