

Northwestern Electric News

Vol. 67 Number 10

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

August 2016

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Experiencing the cooperative difference first hand

by Hannah Darr

The summer of 2010, I attended the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperative's (OAEC) Youth Power Energy Camp. Little did I know six years later I would be interning with them and attending camp as an intern assistant director.

I started my internship with OAEC at the end of May under Stacy Howeth and Nikki Withey. My main duty was helping prepare everything for Energy Camp. I learned the process of planning and preparing for a youth camp. I also helped prepare for the Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C. I enjoyed preparing for the banquet and helping with student registration.

My favorite part of interning with OAEC was attending Energy Camp. It was a rainy week filled with energy, learning and a lot of fun. I enjoyed seeing the students' willingness to learn about cooperatives and how excited they were to be at camp.

One of my main duties at camp was planning, organizing and leading the games. I thought getting the campers to play games would be easy. However, it is much harder to get over 80 campers to listen and understand the game than I thought it would be. It was challenging, but rewarding when the campers understood and enjoyed the games. I think camp might have been even more fun coming back as an adult. It was definitely a highlight of my summer.



Hannah Darr got first hand experience of doing business the cooperative way when she interned this summer for the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives and NWEC.

Next I came to intern at Northwestern Electric under Jonna Hensley. I was so excited because this is my cooperative, and I received a scholarship from them when I was in high school. The first day I felt right at home. Everyone was welcoming and excited I was there to intern.

My main task was preparing social media posts for NWEC. I prepared them for months in advance. These posts contain information about NWEC, energy fun facts and tips, employee spotlights, and much more. I think social media is a powerful tool to promote an organi-

zation, so I loved getting to do this.

Not only did I work in communications, but I got to learn about the different aspects of a cooperative. I helped in the consumer accounts department and learned about the billing process and the importance of quality customer service. I also spent one afternoon with the director of finance and administration. I was amazed how many spreadsheets and different programs are used to keep everything in order. This is a meticulous, detail-oriented job that is vital to the cooperative's success.

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NORTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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

TYSON LITTAU

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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

NOTICE

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

Web page: www.nwecok.coop

E-mail: nwec@nwecok.coop

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NWEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Experiencing the cooperative difference first hand

Continued from page 1.

I even got to attend a safety meeting, a board meeting, and watch the linemen participate in safety training. I never knew how each part of the cooperative depended on the other so much. Without one, the cooperative would not be successful.

I am thankful NWEK took the time to teach me so much about cooperatives. As a member of NWEK, we are lucky to have a group of people who are passionate and work hard to make this organization the best it can be for its members.

Furthermore, while interning at both OAEC and NWEK, I saw what they talked about as being “the cooperative difference.” They have a true concern for their communities and are dedicated to making a difference.

Also, at a cooperative your fellow employees are like your family. They support them during the hard times and celebrate with them during the good times.

I have seen the strong bonds and friendships they have. This made work enjoyable and fun. I am so thankful for this experience and to have been a part of the cooperative family.

Editor’s note: Hannah Darr applied for the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC) internship program and worked with both OAEC and Northwestern Electric during the summer. She attends school at Oklahoma State University majoring in Agricultural Communications.



**Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month**

Is your room air conditioner working overtime? Reduce air leaks by installing rigid foam panels (instead of the commonly used accordion panels) in between the window frame and unit, and secure with duct tape.

Source: energy.gov

May 2016 Operating Report		
	2015	2016
Revenue - Billing	2,419,719	2,414,951
Cost of Power	1,513,916	1,455,975
Miles of Lines	4,976	4,992
Members Connected	11,905	11,863
Density per Mile	2.39	2.38
Average Member KWH	1,947	2,093
Average Bill	203	204
KWH Purchased.....	24,951,203	25,687,892
KWH Sold.....	23,177,470	24,832,770
Income per Mile.....	488	486
Expense per Mile	496	497

Washington Youth Tour: A life changing experience

Shayla Miller and Molly Landers experienced the sights and sounds of the nation's capital as NWECC's delegates during the Annual Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

The tour began June 10, 2016, with a "Get Acquainted Banquet" in Oklahoma City. The 69 winners, representing 25 of the state's rural electric systems, departed for the nation's capital the next morning for their week-long adventure.

"The most exciting part of the trip for me was going to see monuments I had only seen in pictures," said Shayla. "This trip is truly a once in a lifetime experience. You meet some amazing people and create relationships that will last a lifetime."

For Molly, the most exciting part of the trip was getting the opportunity to meet Oklahoma's representatives



Shayla Miller and Molly Landers made lots of unforgettable memories during the 2016 Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

and asking them specific questions about their lives in D.C. "I got to meet people and see things that will forever alter my life," said Molly.

In addition to seeing all the historic monuments, the teens toured the U.S. Capitol, Mount Vernon and enjoyed a riverboat cruise on the Potomac.

Hidden account number contest

Last month's numbers went unclaimed. They belonged to Librada Ortega and Sally Johnson.

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 \$100 each. Happy hunting!

Country cooking

Chicken Salad

- 1 (20 oz.) can pineapple chunks
- 2 (11 oz.) cans mandarin oranges
- 4 cups cooked, chopped chicken
- 2 cups diced celery
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 1 lb. seedless grapes, halved



Drain the canned fruit and mix with all the other ingredients. Chill thoroughly and serve on lettuce or use for sandwiches.

Got capital credits? We do!

It pays to be a member/owner of Northwestern Electric Cooperative

When you sign up for service with Northwestern Electric Cooperative, you become a member/owner. One of the benefits of being a member/owner is capital credits. When Northwestern Electric makes more money than it needs for operating costs, capital improvements and cash reserves, we return that money to you, our member/owners, in the form of capital credits.

Capital credits are allocated annually based on how much you paid to the co-op for electricity during the previous year. There are two ways capital credits are refunded: general retirement (when board approves) and estate retirements (when a member is deceased). The following addresses questions/scenarios we often encounter.

► **What's the difference between allocated and retired capital credits?**

Allocations are made annually based on NWEC's margins (profits) and reflect member equity/ownership. The funds have no cash value until they are retired. When capital credits are retired, a physical check is mailed to the member or credit is given on active electric accounts for the year(s) being retired.

► **How often do members receive capital credits?**

Northwestern Electric's board of directors decide every year whether or not to refund capital credits. When the Cooperative is strong enough, the board directs our staff to refund a portion of past years' capital credits. In March 2016, our board approved a refund of \$602,000 for the year 1996.

► **Do I lose my capital credits in the years the board decides NOT to approve a general retirement?**

No. All capital credits are allocated for every year members are served by NWEC and are maintained in individual member accounts until a retirement is approved.

► **What happens to capital credits when a member leaves the cooperative's service area?**

The allocated amount is held in the former member's capital credit account. When the retirement is approved for the year(s) the member received service from NWEC, a check is mailed to the forwarding address we have on file. It is important to leave a valid forwarding address when you move so you can receive your last allocation notice and your general retirement checks years down the road.

► **What happens to the capital credits of a member who dies?**

The capital credits of a deceased member can be approved to pay without waiting for a general retirement. However, these estate payments are not automatic. A representative from the estate must contact our office or visit our website (www.nwecok.coop Account Services-Capital Credits) to receive a proper form to complete on behalf of the deceased's estate. Along with the completed form, a certified copy of the death certificate and final decree of a will or a trust is required to complete the application process. These are approved and paid out monthly by our attorney and board of directors.

These legal documents are required because capital credits are considered to be personal property of the member (NOT whoever is paying the bill). They are distributed according to the will/trust provided for the member(s) whose name is on the account.

When a member passes away, we recommend the surviving spouse or family member contact our offices (Buffalo or Woodward) so a name change on the account can accurately end accruals and start the claim process for capital credits. (728800002)

► **Why is it important that my electric service account be in my own name?**

The name on the account is the person to whom the capital credits will be allocated and who will receive refunds in the future—whether they are paying the bill or not.