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February 2015



Hot Watts

Published for the members of Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Did you know that 90 percent of the energy used to operate a washing machine comes from using hot water? A simple switch from hot to cold can save a great 1466000 deal of energy! Also, consider air drying or even line drying to save even more household energy.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Congratulations!

Sandra McFarland

is our online survey winner.



Write the date on a filter when it's replaced.

CHEC Scholarship Available to Area Students

Area high school seniors whose parent or guardian is a member of Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative (CHEC) have an opportunity to apply for a \$500 scholarship. Each year the Herman Driscoll Memorial Scholarship committee awards four scholarships to help deserving seniors pay for college or technical school.

To be eligible for consideration, students must have a GPA of 2.0 or better, good character, good citizenship, financial need, and a desire to further their education. Additionally, seniors must enroll as a full-time student at a college or technical school.

High school seniors may complete the application on page four of this Hot Watts issue or obtain an application from the CHEC website www.cooksonhills.com.

Please return your application, along with two letters of recommendation, by April 3, 2015, to the following address:

Cookson Hills Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Scholarship Committee
Attention: Felicia Williams
PO Box 539
Stigler, OK 74462



ROW Contracts in Place for 2015

Right-of-way maintenance is an important task of utility companies so that they may provide reliable electric service. Regular inspections and maintenance of all overhead distribution lines in our seven county service area is a major ongoing project. CHEC's goal of decreasing power outages and outage duration time is directly linked to maintaining proper clearances with our right-of-ways. CHEC contracts with companies whose crews work year round clearing trees, limbs, and debris away from power poles and electric lines in our right-of-way.

CHEC has contracted with Wolf Tree Inc., Wright Tree Service, and Progressive Solutions, LLC, to clear and maintain right-of-way in our service territories throughout 2015. Wolf Tree is equipped to clear right-of-way utilizing a variety of specialized equipment

as they work from substation to substation. Wright Tree focuses on trimming yard trees and hot spots that demand immediate attention. Progressive Solutions will be spraying the brush under the electric lines, using products that will control the growth of brush and trees.

These crews working on your property are indeed doing work on behalf of CHEC. The contractor crews' vehicles should be identified by their company name, logo, or CHEC logo on the door of their vehicle. If you have any questions concerning right-of-way, please call 800-328-2368 or 918-775-2211.



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If You Find Your Account Number
Hidden in This Issue of the *Hot Watts*
You'll Receive a \$25 Credit on
Your Electric Bill

Space Heaters and Electric Blankets *Give Heaters Some Space and Your Blankets a Break*

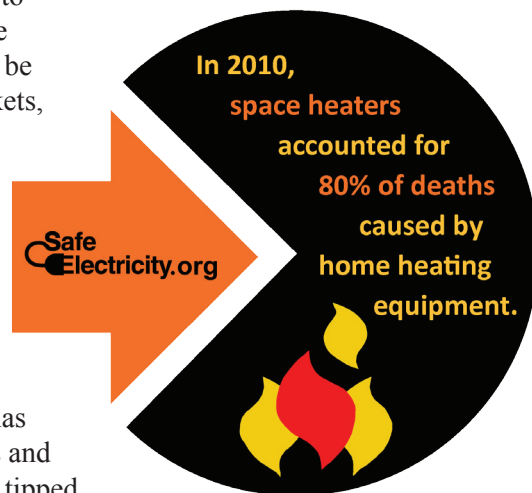
For many in the wintertime, a simple way to save money and stay warm means turning down the furnace and plugging in space heaters and electric blankets. However, the Safe Electricity program urges consumers to use these devices with caution.

According to a National Fire Protection Association study in 2010, space heaters accounted for 32 percent of the 57,100 reported home fires and 80 percent of deaths caused by home heating equipment.

In September of 2012, the Chicago Tribune reported the death of a 2-month old baby girl. A space heater placed too close to the bed sparked a fire in the apartment, which reportedly had non-working smoke alarms.

Prevent tragedies such as this by using the following guidelines to operate space heaters safely:

- Many fires start when flammable products are placed too close to heating devices, such as space heaters. Space heaters should be kept at least 3 feet from blankets, clothing, paper, and other flammables.
- Place space heaters out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard, non-flammable floor surface—NOT on carpets, furniture, or countertops.
- Look for a space heater that has guards from heating elements and automatically shuts off if it is tipped over or overheating.
- Do not attempt to warm your entire home using only space heaters. Space heaters are useful in small areas, such as a study or living room. However, if you need to keep large areas warm, your home heating system will do the job more efficiently.
- Plug space heaters directly into the outlet, and never use an extension cord.



research collected from the National Fire Protection Association

For the safe use of electric blankets, Safe Electricity offers the following tips:

- Only use electric blankets with an automatic shut off designed to prevent the blanket from overheating.
- Pets should never be allowed to sleep on top of electric blankets.
- Electric blanket wires should never be bent or tucked under a mattress.
- Replace old or damaged electric blankets. The blanket should not have any charred or dark areas.

Check space heaters and electric blankets before use. Cords should not be frayed, brittle, or cracked. Always remember to turn off space heaters and electric blankets when not in use. Never leave one of these devices on unattended or after going to bed.

To learn more on how to avoid electrical hazards, visit SafeElectricity.org.

BEN COOPER

Retires

After 26 years of service to CHEC, Ben Cooper is retiring on February 27th, ending his career in computer technology.

“I’m looking forward to moving on with my life,” said Cooper.

Cooper, referred to as “Gentle Ben,” is always pleasant, affectionate, and friendly to everyone. During any given day, there isn’t an employee more invaluable than Ben. The employees rely on him for his computer expertise, but above all, they appreciate his personality and friendship.

Cooper’s parents were both educators, and he followed in their footsteps, receiving his Bachelor and Master of Science in Mathematics at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah. His first job was teaching math at Sapulpa Junior High School. Five years later, he purchased and operated a medical supply company in Tulsa before moving back to Stigler. After teaching at Stigler for a few years and working for Syntec Computer in Wilburton, he settled in at CHEC.

Cooper began working part-time training employees on computers. Before long Chris Cariker, General Manager at that time, offered him a full-time position. His first full-time job was Energy Use Specialist, where Cooper performed energy audits for members, assessing their energy needs and the efficiency of their home. Eventually his focus was



directed towards the computer department and became the company’s Computer Technician, where he still holds the title. As Computer Technician he supports and maintains the in-house computer systems, desktops, laptops, and peripherals. This includes installing diagnosing, repairing, maintaining, and upgrading all hardware and equipment, while ensuring optimal workstation performance to over 40 desktop and laptop computers throughout the offices. However, the most rewarding aspect of his job has been helping his fellow employees.

Warm memories filled his mind as he reflected on his tenure at CHEC. One of his favorite recollections was attending conferences with co-workers in St. Louis.

“My saddest memory was finding out that Teresa Shaw, our office manager, had died. She had the “heart of a co-op” in her and she had so much knowledge to give. I’ve spent eight to nine hours a day at work with my co-workers. They have become family to me, and I will miss them.”

“I’ve had the pleasure of working with Ben since 1995. If you every needed someone to talk to, he was always willing to listen. Although we are sad to see him leave, we are happy for this opportunity for him, and we wish him many blessings in this new chapter of his life,” said Juli Orme, CHEC Chief Financial Officer.

Cooper may be closing one door, but he is opening the door to many new opportunities. He is looking forward to spending more time with his wife Nancy and their extended family, volunteering at the Veteran’s Administration Hospital in Muskogee, and donating a few days a week selling his collectable toys on eBay, which he has accumulated over the years.

Thank you, Ben, for your dedicated years of service!
May God bless you!



Ben with co-workers Juli Orme and the late Teresa Shaw

Application for the Herman Driscoll Memorial Scholarship

Name _____

Social Security # _____ Telephone # _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Parents' (guardians') name(s) _____

Number of children at home or in college _____

Family income last year (check one): Below \$35,000
 Above \$35,000

GPA Score _____ ACT Score _____

Currently attending school at _____

List your involvement in school, community, and vocational groups. Also include any work experience:

In 75-100 words tell why you are applying for the scholarship and share your goals and ambitions:

List scholarships you have earned and their value: _____

Choice of Schools: _____

Note: Please attach two letters of recommendation.