April 2011

Northeast Connection

America's energy challenges

Can renewable alternatives fill the generation gap?

April 22, 2011

Volume 64 No.4

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

COVER:
Earth Day 2011 on April 22 gives Americans an opportunity to consider the role renewable energy alternatives could play as we look to a future filled with uncertainty. Time is critical as the nation's escalating energy demand continues to outpace not only current supply but also planned generation facilities.

INSIDE:

All Around Green Country

Events are published as space allows and must be submitted at least 60 days in advance. Include a telephone number for publication. Send information to Northeast Connection Events Calendar, P.O. Box 948, Vinita, OK 74301. Email: clint.branham@neelectric.com, or fax: 918-256-9380. Please call ahead to confirm dates and times.

APRIL 1-2 • Jay
Delaware County Intertribal Youth Council Pow Wow
Jay Bulldog Arena
918-253-8698

APRIL 1-16 • Grove
Performance of Edward Albee's "Seascape"
The Playmaker Theatre
918-786-8950

APRIL 2 • Grand Lake
Welcome Back Weekend
Cherokee Yacht Club
918-782-3214

APRIL 8 • Miami
The Best of Broadway
Historic Coleman Theatre
918-540-2425

APRIL 8-10 • Wyandotte
Neosho Powersports ATV Trail Stomp
D-Day Adventure Park
918-666-3411

APRIL 9 • Adair
Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast
Adair Community Center
918-785-2515

APRIL 14-17 • Grove
Grand Lake Cluster Dog Show
Grove Civic Center
918-786-8656

APRIL 15-16 • Miami
Living Green Spring Expo
Miami Civic Center
918-542-4481

APRIL 15-16 • Grove
Grove Area Merchants' Spring Open House
Downtown Grove
918-786-6600

APRIL 16 • Vinita
6th Annual Rough Rider Cowboy Trade Day
Craig County Fairgrounds
918-694-6127

APRIL 16 • Vinita
Rough Rider Dutch Oven Cookoff
Craig County Fairgrounds
918-244-6102

APRIL 16-17 • Wyandotte
Blackhawk Down Paintball
D-Day Adventure Park
918-666-3411

APRIL 23 • Adair
Adair Chamber of Commerce Easter Egg Hunt
Adair High School football field
918-785-2515

APRIL 23 • Bernice
Easter Egg Hunt
Bernice State Park Nature Center
918-257-8330

APRIL 23 • Jay
Easter Egg Hunt
Jay City Park
918-253-8698

APRIL 23 • Miami
Route 66 Cruise Night
Waylan's Ku-Ku Drive-In
918-542-9693

APRIL 24 • Grove
Easter Egg Hunt
Sports Complex
918-786-3248

APRIL 28-30 • Miami
Miami Rodeo
Ottawa County Fairgrounds
918-542-4435

APRIL 29 • Grove
2011 Earth Day Celebration
Lendonwood Gardens
918-786-2938

APRIL 30 • Grove
Humane Society of Grove & Grand Lake "Fur Ball"
Grove Civic Center
918-257-5569

APRIL 30 • Grove
Art in the Garden
Lendonwood Gardens
918-786-2938

APRIL 30 • Bernice
Earth Day Celebration & Great American Cleanup
Bernice State Park Nature Center
918-257-8330

Projects defined for fourth phase of co-op's construction work plan

With continued emphasis placed on enhancing system reliability in recent years, Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative has scheduled another aggressive round of improvements over the next two years as part of a multi-million dollar system-wide construction work plan.

Steady progress has been made during the first three phases of the work plan. Nearly 80 miles of line has been either added or upgraded, and almost 1,000 poles have been added or upgraded since 2008 as outlined by work plan projects.

Substation performance is a top priority for NEOEC engineers in 2011-2012. To this end, extensive work has been scheduled at five different sites over the coming year. An aging substation at Jay will be completely rebuilt in an effort to improve reliability and the substation at Adair will receive significant upgrades. New substations will be constructed near the Ketchum, Dry Gulch and Saline Creek areas.

Work plan upgrades continue to improve our cooperative's reliability and performance.

A new station near Ketchum and notable distribution upgrades are needed to accommodate increasing capacity in the Cleora and Pensacola areas. The Saline Creek substation will replace an aging Chimney Rock station.

In addition to substation work, conductor upgrades will help with voltage support in the Seneca and Pyramid areas. An upgrade of single-phase service to three-phase in the Chimney Rock area is expected to greatly enhance reliability for affected members.

In all, over 200 miles of line will be impacted by the fourth phase of work plan projects. Included are approximately 100 miles each of conductor upgrades and copperweld replacement.

"We have multiple projects planned system-wide in an approximately $30 million, two-year work plan," explained NEOEC System Engineer Shane Burgess.

"Some of the projects include aged conductor replacements northwest of Welch, a new substation in the Pryor area, a new substation near Ketchum, a rebuild of the Jay substation, upgrades to the Adair substation, and multiple line conversions and upgrades identified throughout the service territory. These projects will reinforce voltage support, reliability and overall service quality for our membership."

Notice regarding credit, debit card payment

The process for making credit and debit card payment on your Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative account—either online and over the phone—is undergoing change. In order to meet compliance requirements geared toward enhancing security and confidentiality, the process will be automated. A new screen will be added to the on-line process on May 1, 2011, that requires both a name and address. The change for those who call to make payment will take effect June 1, 2011. Please contact our office if you have questions or concerns about this upcoming change.

Northeast Connection

Northeast Connection is published monthly as an effective means of communicating news, information and innovative thinking that enhances the profitability and quality of life for members of Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative.

Please direct all editorial inquiries to Communications Specialist Clint Branham at 800-256-6405 ext. 9340 or email clint.branham@neelectric.com.

Vinita headquarters: 4.5 miles east of Vinita at 443857 East Highway 60.
Grove office: 212 South Main.
Business hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Offices are closed Saturday, Sunday and holidays.

A representative is available 24 hours at:
1-800-256-6405

If you experience an outage, please 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. If you contact us to report service issues or discuss your account, please use the name as it appears on your bill, and have both your pole number and account number ready.

Officers and Trustees of NEOEC, Inc.

President
Dandy Allan Risman — District 5
Vice President
Harold W. Robertson — District 1
Secretary-Treasurer
Benny L. Seabourn — District 2
Asst. Secretary-Treasurer
Everett L. Johnston — District 3

John L. Myers — District 4
Member
Sharron Gay — District 6
Member
James A. Wade — District 7
Member
Bill R. Kimbrell — District 8
Member
Jack Caudill — District 9
Member

NEOEC Management Team

Robert Echenrode
General Manager

Larry Cisneros, P.E.
Manager of Engineering

Susanne Frost
Manager of Office Services

Cindy Hefner
Manager of Public Relations

Lisa McMeen
Manager of Financial Services

Rick Shurtz
Manager of Operations

Generation gap

Time running out for nation's electric utilities to meet growing demand

Our nation's electric utilities have some important energy choices to make. We can't stall or wait for a quick fix. Tighter government regulations—and the high cost to comply with new rules—may signal lights-out for many of the nation's older coal-fired power plants at a time when forecasters predict energy demand will eventually outpace supply. We're approaching crunch time on our ability to keep the lights on—we need to build new power plants.

The recent economic turmoil, terrible as it was, provided some much-needed breathing room in addressing our growing energy needs. But as the economy rebounds, so will our nation's hunger for electricity. The U.S. Energy Information Administration predicts when the final 2010 numbers are tallied, energy use will shoot up five percent from 2009 levels.

We've encouraged you to be energy efficient both for your sake (lower electric bills) and to help mitigate the need to build new generation sources. You've certainly done your part; between 1980 and 2006, the average amount of energy each American used dropped 2.5 percent. But with an ever-expanding population, these measures are not enough to completely offset escalating energy demand.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the nation's bulk power grid watchdog, estimates we need to build 135,000 mega-watts (MW) of new generation by 2017 to meet demand. Generation facilities on the drawing board, though, will only deliver 77,000 MW—leaving a generation gap.

Challenging days lie ahead for power producers.

Compounding this issue, some of our current power plants may soon be shut down by federal regulations. One NERC-commissioned report claims new government rules could force utilities to retire or retrofit 33,000 MW to 70,000 MW of generating capacity by 2015. Meanwhile, every year we delay building new plants drives up construction costs. If we wait too long, we could see power shortages by the end of this decade.

Traditional power plants (coal, natural gas, nuclear) take between three years and a decade to build not leaving much wiggle room before shortages become a reality. Renewable energy resources, notably wind farms, can be constructed more quickly, but they're not perfect options. It may sound cliché to say the wind doesn't always blow, but it's the truth—and you wouldn't be satisfied with only having power 40 percent of the time.

At Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative we're focused on affordability. Our nation needs to build new power plants before the need for electricity outstrips current generation resources. Although NEOEC doesn't build and operate power plants—as a distribution cooperative our focus is delivering power to you—we're working with wholesale power suppliers like GRDA and KAMO to find the best fuel mix solution for your future.

We appreciate your support as we make these critical and time-sensitive choices. Balancing your energy needs with electricity reliability and affordability is one more way we're looking out for you.

Our Energy, Our Future

A Dialogue With America

Climate change legislation should be:

☑ Fair.

☑ Affordable.

☑ Achievable.

Go to **www.ourenergy.coop** and let your voice be heard.

Considering the alternatives...

The changing face of energy

Does the solution to our nation's growing demand for energy rest on renewable resources?

Some say, emphatically, yes.

As we look ahead to Earth Day on April 22, let us consider for a moment the potential for alternative energy sources to fill a void created by a shrinking supply of fossil fuels. Let us also look ahead to a day when some experts grimly predict our nation's reliance on fossil fuels will leave us all in the dark.

Making wind work

Wind farms are sprouting up all over the country. In 2009, enough wind was harnessed to power almost 10 million American homes—roughly 35,000 mega-watts (MW).

With help of tax credits and federal funding, wind power costs have dropped from 80 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) in 1980 to 8 cents per kWh in 2009. By comparison, the cost for electricity from coal-fired power plants averages 3.6 cents per kWh; nuclear power roughly 2.1 cents per kWh; and natural gas, 7 cents per kWh. As generation becomes more affordable, wind power plants in some parts of the country—often called wind farms—are now as common as weather-beaten windmills of the past.

But wind doesn't blow everywhere, and rarely does so around the clock. Even in areas with strong wind resources, an active wind turbine typically only generates 20-30 percent of its "capacity factor"—the total electricity it could generate operating around the clock. A 2010 National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) survey found less than 1 percent of land in states like Alabama, Kentucky, and Georgia windy enough to achieve at least 30 percent capacity factor.

Because it's temperamental, wind can't be relied on as a steady source of energy. Instead, think of wind as a "fuel displacer," allowing baseload power plants that rely on fossil fuels like coal and natural gas to burn less when wind blows.

Moving energy from a wind farm to homes also raises difficulties. Transmission infrastructure may not be available in areas where the wind blows best, and building new transmission lines takes time, money, and a lengthy governmental approval process. Before turbines go up, studies must be done to judge the wind's variability in a given area. And although the sight of a tall, white wind tower may not be as intrusive as other types of power plants, environmental and economic impacts must be assessed.

Although great strides have been made in recent years and more wind turbines are built daily, making wind work as a reliable, affordable energy source will take time.

Time-tested hydropower

In the 1880s, converting water into electricity became a reality in the United States. The breakthrough quickly swept the nation, and within a decade 200 U.S. plants were using water power for some or all generation.

Today, hydropower provides about 80,000 MW of capacity in the United States and accounts for 86 percent of all renewable, carbon-free electricity used by co-ops. It's inexpensive, pollution-free, and has been supplying electricity to rural areas since the inception of electric co-ops in the mid-1930s.

Hydroelectric power is being generated right here in our own backyard. Grand River Dam Authority, NEOEC's primary wholesale supplier, has generation facilities on both Grand Lake (Pensacola Dam) and Lake Hudson (Kerr Dam). The six units at Pensacola Dam have a combined generation capacity of approximately 120 MW, while Kerr Dam houses four, 28.5-MW generators that combine to produce 114 total MW of electricity.

More than 600 electric co-ops across the country purchase power from 134 federally-owned and operated dams, most of which were built between the late 1930s and early 1960s. Despite the incredible importance of these resources, maintenance has lagged in recent years and created room for improvement.

Electric co-ops are making efforts to address this problem, advocating that funds be set aside to repair and maintain dams and the turbines inside them. This push for increased maintenance and technology development will ensure that

(continued on page 8)

Local flavor

Shop close to home at your friendly, neighborhood grocery store and more

Neighborhood grocery stores replaced the general stores of yesteryear while retaining their decidedly local flavor. Typically located in small towns or in rural areas, these compact, mostly family-owned enterprises filled a niche between traditional supermarkets and convenience stores by stocking shelves with a wide selection of foodstuffs and general merchandise.

Shawnee Grocery is just such a store. Located five miles east of Miami, it fills a need in the area by providing a supply of essential food items and much more. Patrons will find a variety of other items, ranging from hardware, tools and electrical supplies to tobacco, fishing gear and cleaning supplies. Of course, snacks and beverages are in no short supply. Stock up on cold drinks and pick up a hot pizza or an order of ribs for dinner.

Earnestine Helmick

Marketing Specialist

Just as importantly, Shawnee Grocery also serves as a gathering place where neighbors catch up on local happenings while filling the gas tank or stocking up.

Mary and Lynn Wakefield purchased Shawnee Grocery in June of 2000. Lynn previously owned Wakefield Trucking. When he sold the trucking business in 1999, he and Mary thought they would travel, remodel their home and just relax a bit. But after a short while they grew restless and began looking for something else to fill their time.

"We came by the store one day and the owners told us they were thinking of selling the business," Lynn recalls. "We thought about it and said, 'Okay, we'll buy it.'"

Mary smiled and said: "I think we are just hands-on over-achievers. Little did we know what we were getting into, but it has been a good thing."

The Wakefields took ownership of the business in June of 2000. The former owner called them at four in the afternoon and said, "The business is yours tomorrow morning." Lynn and Mary spent the

Pictured above are Shawnee Grocery owners (from left) Lynn and Mary Wakefield and daughter Alena. At left, Shawnee Grocery can supply all of your fuel needs.

evening taking inventory and had the doors open for business at 6 a.m. the very next morning.

Mary was involved in a car accident a few days before the opening and her arm was in a cast. Their daughter Alena and her roommate gave up their summer jobs in Stillwater and worked all summer helping them get the business running.

"I don't think we could have done it without her, because we were in learning mode that whole first year and working 16-hour days," Mary explained. "I think it is really important when you have a mom and pop store to have family to help. I don't know how we could have done it without Alena."

Alena continued to help her parents after finishing college and can run the store when called upon to do so.

"People you can trust and lean on just make all the difference in the world," said Mary. "We have been very fortunate over the years to have exceptional employees who have become friends and added to our business."

When the Wakefields purchased Shawnee Grocery over a decade ago, it had been in existence for over 70 years. Over the years it has not only become a popular destination but a landmark for those providing directions in the area.

While location and ownership has changed several times, the Shawnee Grocery name has remained constant. Many customers are the fourth and fifth generation of families who have patronized the store through the years.

When originally built, Shawnee Grocery was a small white building with two gas pumps. Legend has it that locals would come by to make purchases and then sit and play cards and visit by the wood stove. That original building was located just across the highway from where Shawnee Grocery is today.

Lynn and Mary appreciate what is so good about their business.

"We have such a great group of good friends and customers. Everyone is friendly and on a first-name basis. We truly are a neighborhood store and the area is very much a community. We care about our customers' families and they care about ours. Our customers watch the store and often call us at home to let us know if something doesn't look right at the store."

Over time, Lynn and Mary have remodeled the store's interior. They have added more grocery items and more deli selections, including biscuits and gravy, breakfast sandwiches and half-pound grilled hamburgers. A delicious bowl of chili is a popular choice during winter months. Fresh doughnuts are available each morning and tasty Simple Simon's pizza is always hot and ready to go.

Lynn smokes rib every Thursday. Mary describes them—with no partiality whatsoever—as "absolutely the best ribs in the country."

Shawnee Grocery's fuel bays feature updated pumps and a new canopy. Pay-at-the-pump is an available option and Fuel Man has been added to accommodate businesses that use the service.

"It is just like any other business," Lynn stresses. "You have to stay on top of it. Change is constant. Each year we plan upgrades to the store. For example, this past year we put on a new roof."

Because the store is located in an area known well for its fishing opportunities, store staffers begin receiving inquiries as soon as the fishing season starts in March. They begin getting calls from fishermen asking if the white bass or spoonbill are running or simply "How's the fishing?" Lynn and Mary have developed friendships with many of these anglers and look forward to seeing them each year.

"We are right on the way to Twin Bridges so they pass by here first to say hello and get some supplies."

Shawnee Grocery is located five miles east of Miami and four miles south of Quapaw at 60999 East 100 Road. Store hours are 6 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. each day. Stop by and say hello. You'll be glad you did.

Pictured above: Look for the Shawnee Grocery signs five miles east of Miami and four miles south of Quapaw on East 100 Road.

The changing face of energy... *(continued from page 5)*

hydropower remains a reliable and affordable renewable resource for decades to come.

The bright side

Humans have always harnessed solar energy to accomplish daily tasks. The latest wave of solar technology focuses on generating electricity. Some solar power systems span acres, while others are no bigger than a postage stamp. At the end of 2009, America's cumulative solar capacity reached 2,108 MW, ranking it fourth in the world behind powerhouses like Germany, Spain, and Japan.

Last year, the largest area of growth involved photovoltaic (PV) installations, jumping 38 percent. Solar water heating, not to be outdone, grew by 10 percent. Pushing this trend are falling prices for solar equipment due in part to federal tax credits.

Sunlight may look like an easy way to generate electricity, especially in remote areas without easy access to transmission lines. But there are drawbacks. The sun only shines for a set number of hours daily, and cloudy or overcast conditions can wreak havoc on solar power production. Without an effective way to store electricity for nighttime and cloudy day use, a solar system's effectiveness remains limited.

Cost has been a long-standing barrier, though the outlook in that area looks brighter. Researchers at the U.S. Department of Energy Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory released a study in late 2009 showing PV installation costs over the last decade had dropped more than 30 percent—and more than 4 percent of the drop occurred in 2008 alone.

Solar power can serve as an excellent supplement to an existing grid. As costs continue to drop, you may want to research the long-term benefits of adding a system to your home.

Fueling the fire

The term "Biomass" refers to any biological material that can be burned as fuel to produce electricity, and it's everywhere. A quick drive down a country road provides a virtual tour of this renewable energy resource: trees, grasses, crops, livestock waste, and even landfill gas. Recent advances in technology have made it possible to use tried-and-true biomass in more efficient ways.

Today, the U.S. boasts almost 11,000 MW of biomass generating capacity, making it the third largest source of renewable energy behind hydropower and wind. Biomass has come a long way from putting a log on a fire. Applications continue to develop, many of which involve converting biomass to other forms to supplement petroleum use.

New sources of electricity and fuel production are being researched every day, and soon waste such as corn stover (stalks, leaves, and husks) and wheat straw will be added to the mix. Non-food crops such as trees and grasses are also being researched for their energy-producing potential, especially in liquid form.

Renewable energy and you

You may not be able, or willing, to make an investment in a wind turbine or solar panel to supplement your household electricity needs, but there are ways you can support renewable energy.

As a member of Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative, you have an opportunity to support the use of renewable energy by purchasing "green power."

NEOEC offers green power to members in blocks of 100 kWh each month. Since 2006, the cooperative has purchased green power from wholesaler KAMO in the form of either wind power or biomass.

Lucky Account Number

CHECK your copy of the Northeast Connection each month and see if you are the lucky winner of a $25 electric credit. Match the number in the box below to the account number on your monthly statement and then call 1-800-256-6405 ext. 9340 to claim your prize.

This month's winning account number is: **926318**

Know what's below: Call before you dig

Whether it's a dreamed up deck addition or a landscaping masterpiece, spring weather is a great time for outdoor improvement plans to actually play out.

But if your planned projects include digging, like planting a tree or bringing in a backhoe for trench work, you'll want to wait a few more days so the job can be done safely. Underground utilities, such as buried gas, water, and electric lines, can be a shovel thrust away from turning an outdoor project into a disaster.

To find out where utility lines run on your property, dial 811 from anywhere in the country a few days prior to digging. Your call will be routed to a local "one call" center. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig and what type of work you will be doing, and affected local utilities will be notified.

Within a few days, a locator will arrive to designate the approximate location of any underground lines, pipes, and cables with flags or marking paint so you'll know what's below. Then the safe digging can begin.

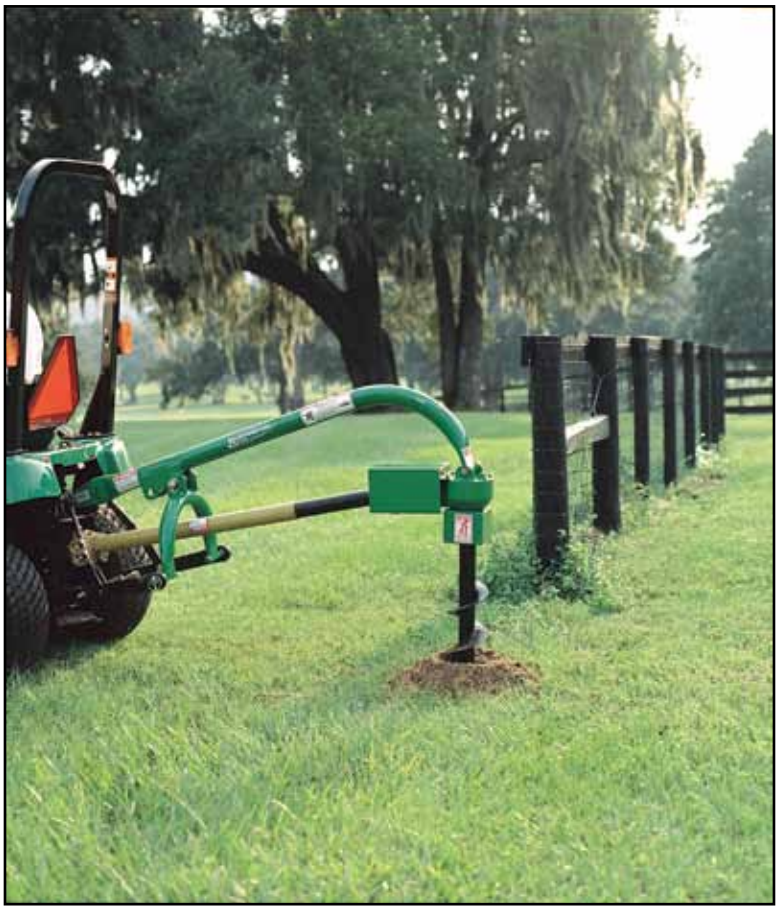
Although many homeowners tackling do-it-yourself digging projects are aware of "Call Before You Dig" services, the majority don't take advantage of the service.

A national survey showed that only 33 percent of homeowners called to have their lines marked before starting digging projects, according to the Common Ground Alliance, a federally mandated group of underground utility and damage prevention industry professionals.

Although light gardening typically doesn't call for deep digging, other seemingly simple tasks like planting shrubs or installing a new mailbox post can damage utility lines. A severed line can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm diggers, and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. There's no need: the 811 service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted, and can help you avoid serious injury.

For more information about local services, visit **www.call811.com.**



Calling 811 before you begin that outdoor project could help you locate underground services and prevent needless tragedy.

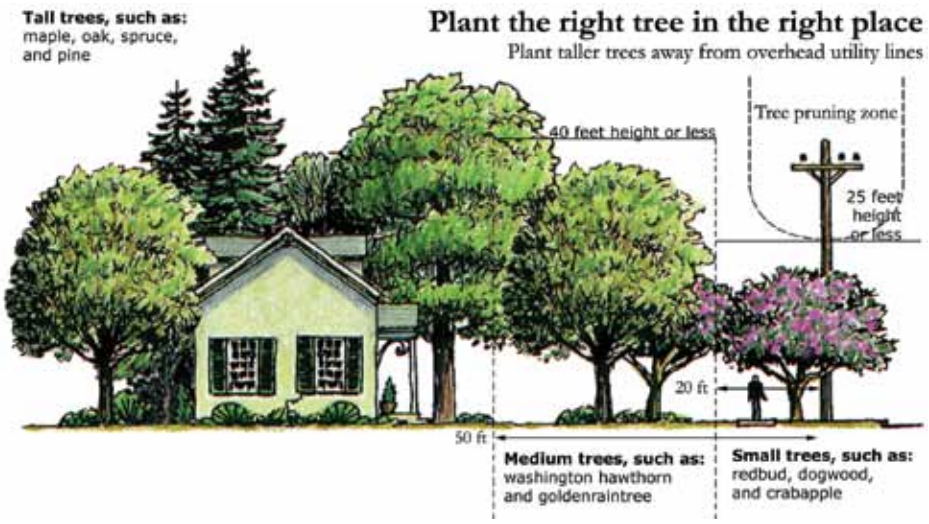
Energy-efficient landscaping

The right tree in the right place

Solar heat absorbed through windows and roofs makes your air conditioner work harder and gobble up more electricity. But incorporating shading concepts into your landscape design can help reduce this solar heat gain–and your cooling costs.

Shading from trees can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 9° F. Because cool air settles near the ground, air temperatures directly under trees can be as much as 25° F cooler than air temperatures above nearby blacktop.

Trees can be selected with appropriate sizes, densities, and shapes for almost any shading application. To block solar heat in the summer but allow much of it in during winter, plant deciduous trees. To provide continuous shade or block heavy winds, use dense evergreen trees or shrubs.



Deciduous trees with high, spreading crowns (leaves and branches) should be planted on the south side of your home to provide maximum summertime roof shading. Trees with crowns lower to the ground are more appropriate to the west, where shade is needed from lower afternoon sun angles. Trees should not be planted on the southern sides of solar-heated homes in cold climates because branches will block some winter sun.

Although a slow-growing tree may take many years before it shades your roof, it will generally live longer than a fast-growing tree. Also, because slow-growing trees often have deeper roots and stronger branches, they are less prone to breakage by windstorms or heavy snow loads. Slow-growing trees can also be more drought resistant than fast-growing trees.

A 6-foot to 8-foot deciduous tree planted near your home will begin shading windows the first year. Depending on the species, the tree will shade the roof in five to 10 years. If you have an air conditioner, shading the unit can increase its efficiency by as much as 10 percent.

Trees, shrubs, and groundcover plants can also shade the ground and pavement around the home. This reduces heat radiation and cools the air before it reaches your home's walls and windows. Use a large bush or row of shrubs to shade a patio or driveway. Plant a hedge to shade a sidewalk. Build a trellis for climbing vines to shade a patio area.

Vines can also shade walls during their first growing season. A lattice or trellis with climbing vines, or a planter box with trailing vines, shades a home's perimeter while admitting cooling breezes to the shaded area.

Shrubs planted close to the house will fill in rapidly and begin shading walls and windows within a few years. However, avoid allowing dense foliage to grow immediately next to a home, since the resulting humidity will create maintenance-related problems. Well-landscaped homes in wet areas allow winds to flow around the home, keeping surrounding soil reasonably dry.

The Arbor Day Foundation encourages thoughtful practices that help preserve community trees while also benefiting electric co-op consumers.

Trees can help cool your home and neighborhood, break cold winds to lower your heating costs, and provide food for wildlife. Properly placed trees can lower line clearance costs for utility companies, reduce tree mortality, and result in healthier community forests.

Tall trees surrounding your home, such as maple, oak, pine and spruce, provide summer shade to lower cooling costs and keep out cold winter winds. Medium trees, 40 feet or less in mature height, might include Washington hawthorne and Golden raintree, while smaller trees suitable for planting beneath utility lines might include Redbud, Dogwood, and Crabapple. When planting near utility lines, consider a 25 foot maximum mature height and 20 foot spread.

To learn more about which trees might work best in your yard, visit **www.arborday.org.**

Watts for Dinner *with*

The Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma

The Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma is one of nine federally-recognized tribes with tribal headquarters located in Ottawa County, Oklahoma.

The Peoria Tribe is a confederation of Kaskaskia, Peoria, Piankesaw and Wea Indians united into a single tribe in 1854. The Confederated Peorias, as they were then called, originated in the lands bordering the Great Lakes and drained by the mighty Mississippi River. They are Illinois or Illini Indians, descendants of those who created the great mound civilizations in the central United States a few thousand years ago.

Forced from their ancestral lands in Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and Missouri, the Peorias were relocated first in Missouri, then in Kansas and, finally, in northeast Oklahoma.

The Peoria Tribe is a federally recognized sovereign Indian tribe, organized under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of June 26, 1936, and functioning under the constitution and bylaws approved by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior on August 13, 1997. The Peoria Tribe is now approximately 2,900 members strong.

Chief John P. Froman

The Peoria Tribal Business Committee, consisting of seven elected officials, is the legislative body of the Tribe and has the authority to act on all matters and subjects relative to the tribe and its governmental operations. Tribal Administration oversees a budget of approximately $3 million per year, providing its members and members of other tribes residing in its jurisdiction services in housing, health care, education and child welfare, as well as addressing environmental issues. The tribe owns nearly 2,400 acres of land with the majority being used for agricultural purposes.

The Peoria Tribe has invested in three business enterprises: Peoria Ridge Golf Course, Buffalo Run Casino and Buffalo Run Hotel. These businesses employ 338 individuals and have an economic impact to Miami and the surrounding area of approximately $50 million. Additional impact is enjoyed by surrounding area during special events such as concerts and the annual Bike Run at Buffalo Run Casino and the NGA Hooters professional golf tournament at Peoria Ridge Golf Course.

Culture and traditions of the Peoria are shared during the annual stomp dance (held the first Saturday in March each year) and the Peoria Pow-wow which is scheduled each year in June.

HOMINY SOUP

1 pound ground bison (or ground beef)
1 large onion, chopped
3 stalks celery, chopped
2 cups cooked kidney beans with liquid (optional)
2 cans white hominy with liquid

In a large pot, cook ground bison. When half done, add onions and celery and finish cooking. Add beans (optional) and hominy and season to taste. Heat until warm. Add water and simmer if too thick. For a variation to lower sodium content, drain and discard liquid from canned beans and hominy and replace liquid with equal amount of water (about one cup).

YAM CORN BREAD

2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups yellow cornmeal
2 ½ tablespoons baking powder
2 teaspoons salt
½ cup granulated sugar
4 eggs
¾ cup milk
⅓ cup vegetable oil
2 ⅔ cups mashed cooked, or canned yams (sweet potatoes)

Sift dry ingredients together and set aside. Combine eggs, milk and oil in a large bowl and beat until smooth. Add yams and beat until well blended. Add dry ingredients, stirring only until moistened. Spoon batter into two greased 8-inch square baking pans. Bake at 425 degrees F for 40 minutes or until done. Cut into squares and serve warm with butter.

FRIED HOMINY

Several strips of bacon
One or two cans of white hominy
Onion, if desired
Black pepper to taste

Fry bacon crisp. Remove from pan. Drain most of grease. Drain water off hominy. Fry hominy in bacon grease. Crumble bacon and mix into hominy.

Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative
P.O. Box 948, Vinita, OK 74301 • www.neelectric.com

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TULSA, OK
Permit 2171

Prescription card savings continue to climb

In the fall of 2007, Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative employees spent an afternoon stuffing envelopes for a project they knew would be a tremendous benefit to co-op members. Over 30,000 Co-op Connections Cards were then mailed to members. The card would allow members to receive discounts from national and local businesses, as well as savings on pharmacy prescriptions.

Today, NEOEC members continue to save an average of 33.6% on their prescriptions by using the Co-op Connections Card. With 16,842 prescriptions filled since the card was mailed, savings now total $227,823.

The Co-op Connections Card can be used at most area pharmacies (a list of those participating is included below). Members need only to present the card with their prescription. The pharmacy computer system will compare discounted price with the pharmacy's retail price when the prescription is processed and members will pay the lower of the two prices at the time of sale. Members with insurance can ask the pharmacy to determine the best savings between the Co-op Connections Card and their regular insurance card.

Testimonials praising the card are shared at cooperative meetings and community events. Members without insurance are especially thankful for the savings the card provides. Others with insurance often find the card savings to be better than their regular insurance card.

The Co-op Connections Card Program is available to all members of Northeast Oklahoma Electric Cooperative. If your card is lost or was never received, you can request a new one by visiting with one of our member service representatives at 1-800-256-6405.

More information about the program is available at **www.neelectric.com**. Share your story with an e-mail to: **public.relations@neelectric.com.**

Co-op Connections Card participating pharmacies

Chelsea: Chelsea Family
Chouteau: Chouteau Discount
Claremore: Claremore Compounding, Drug Warehouse, Health Center, Reasors, Wal-Mart, Walgreens
Grove: Grove Drive-In, Wal-Mart, Walgreens, RX Shoppe
Inola: Inola Drug
Jay: Sam Rider Health Center RX, Wal-Mart, V and V Drug
Langley: Reasors, Langley Drug
Miami: Osborn Drug, Wal-Mart, Walgreens, Northeastern Tribal Health Systems, Mays Drug
Pryor: Beggs, Drug Warehouse, Elliott Plaza, The Cross, Wal-Mart
Siloam Springs: Price Cutter, USA Drug Express, Wal-Mart, Walgreens
Vinita: Osburn Drug, Wal-Mart, V and V Drug

A complete list of participating pharmacies is available at **www.locateproviders.com** (use code 22203). Go to **www.rxpricequotes.com** to look up drug prices.