

[Trustees Vote to Return \\$1 Million in Capital Credits p. 3](#)

## Safety Achievement Program is Hard Work, but Worth the Effort

Each morning our trucks roll out carrying linemen intent on providing you with dependable electric service. It is our intent to make sure they do that as safely as possible.

Every three years VVEC has its safety regulations and practices, vehicles and equipment inspected as part of

the co-op pays," explains VVEC Job Training and Loss Control Coordinator Bill Gillespie.

Throughout each year, Gillespie and members of the Operations staff, perform inspections to make sure VVEC adheres to its safety policies. Meetings are held almost every month

man. And employees are each certified in CPR, First Aid, and AED defibrillator equipment.

"We test our safety equipment more often than OSHA requires," says Gillespie. "OSHA requirements are that these tests be conducted once a year. But we want to make certain our equipment is safe, and isn't defective and doesn't need to be replaced, so we test it twice a year."

Approval through the Safety Achievement Program requires an on-site inspection by a team of certified personnel who spend the day at VVEC. Gillespie says the team includes safety personnel like him from other Oklahoma co-ops, and Kenny Guffey, director of loss control for OAEC. Gillespie says the program team begins the day early, inspecting equipment on the vehicles such as gloves, harnesses and tools, along with inspecting the vehicles, booms and buckets. They visit with the linemen, questioning them on how to safely perform certain field tasks.

The team also visits a crew in the field to watch them do their 'hot' work, meaning the electricity is not shut off while they're working.

The team returns to the co-op, where they inspect the office building, warehouse, and pole yard.

In addition to the on-site inspection, Gillespie has to prepare a 58-page report, which he begins working on about 12 months before the on-site

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OAEC Director of Loss Control Kenny Guffey inspects the bucket on a VVEC line truck as part of the on-site Safety Achievement Program.

the Safety Achievement Program. The program is sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and conducted by the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC).

"It is a lengthy and involved process, but the benefits of being approved are evident in lives being saved and a reduction in the insurance premiums

with safety personnel from OAEC so employees can review and discuss established safety regulations. A pole-top rescue is held each year and linemen are required to rescue fellow linemen in a specific amount of time. Rubber gloves and the booms and buckets on the line trucks are tested to make sure they can tolerate specific amounts of electricity before endangering a line-

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**Summer Residential Rates**

April through September usage,  
May through October billing

Customer Charge                      \$20.20

**Energy Charge**

1st 2,000 kWh                      \$0.0809/kWh  
Over 2,000 kWh                      \$0.0860/kWh

A power cost adjustment (PCA) will be applied to all bills when the actual cost of power purchased exceeds or is less than 55.993 mills per kWh.

In addition, a gross receipts tax of 2% of revenue will be included, plus additional taxes if applicable.

**Safety Achievement Program**

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visit. He is required to note such things as how many times equipment is tested, how many employees are certified in pole-top rescue, CPR, First Aid, AED, when were refresher courses last attended, what topics were covered in the monthly safety meetings, identify the employee certified in accident investigation training, along with noting when any public safety programs were offered, OSHA logs, and when a variety of safety policies were reviewed.

Nodding his head, Gillespie says “It

is a lot of work, but it’s worth it to keep the guys safe.”

Gillespie says VVEC also benefits through reduced insurance premiums.

“Receiving our safety certification means we can save thousands of dollars in insurance each year.”

“Our purpose is to provide dependable, affordable electric service, but it is our priority to do that safely,” says VVEC General Manager Alice Houston. “Our personnel are professional in how to do their jobs, and sincere in their intent to always do a good job. That is evident in how meticulous they are in knowing and practicing our established safety policies everyday.

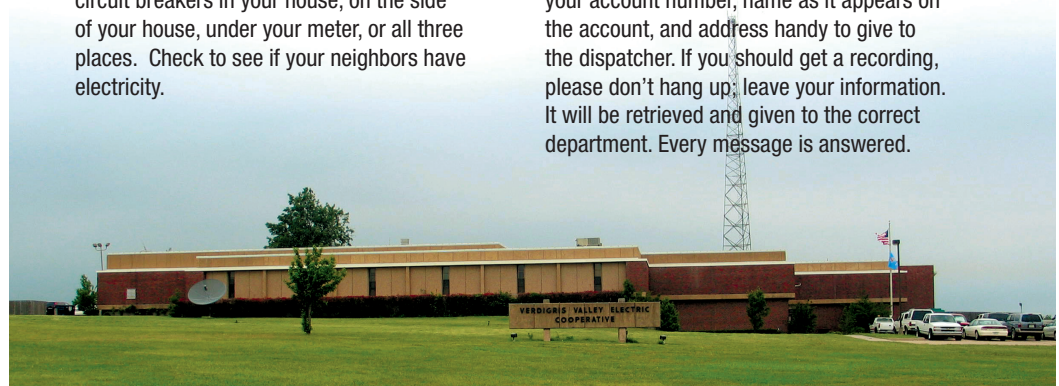
“They keep each other safe, as well as keeping the public safe.”

*Chad Morrow (left) and James Long with Oklahoma Electric Co-op, Norman, inspect equipment in one of the trucks.*



**What to do if Your Power Goes Off**

1. Check your fuses or circuit breakers. Every service is different. You may have fuses or circuit breakers in your house, on the side of your house, under your meter, or all three places. Check to see if your neighbors have electricity.
2. Call the Co-op at 371-2584, or 1-800-870-5948 if the call is long distance for you. Have your account number, name as it appears on the account, and address handy to give to the dispatcher. If you should get a recording, please don’t hang up, leave your information. It will be retrieved and given to the correct department. Every message is answered.



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*The purchase of Kay Electric's 'Oklahoma Proud' T-shirts raised funds to help co-op members who were victims of the May tornadoes in the Oklahoma City area. Showing off their shirts are (back row left to right) Darrell White, Roger Penick, Logan Wells, Blake Leibovitz, and Terry Ishmael. Standing in front are Bill Gillespie, Jon Van Pelt, and Kim Ford.*

# Oklahoma Proud!

## Employees Help Tornado Victims through Purchase of Co-op T-Shirts

A group of employees is wearing their support for victims of the May tornadoes. They purchased T-shirts Kay Electric Co-op, Blackwell, sold to raise funds to help tornado victims who are also members of electric co-ops.

KEC's Member Services Representative Austin Partida designed the shirts which have 'OKLAHOMA PROUD' on front. On the back, electric lines and utility poles run along the top of the state of Oklahoma with the phrase 'Cooperative lines of love.'

In thanking VVEC's employees for purchasing the shirts, KEC's CEO, Joe Harris, says KEC sold over 1,800 shirts and raised over \$30,000 for the Touchstone Energy Cooperative Oklahoma Relief Fund, which was set up by the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives. This relief fund is allocating all proceeds to four Oklahoma distribution cooperatives that were affected by the May tornadoes.

Employees ordered them for themselves and family members.

## Members to Receive \$1 Million in Capital Credit Refunds

One of the most enjoyable benefits of being a member/owner of your cooperative is receiving capital credit refunds.

Your board of trustees recently approved returning \$1 million in capital credits this year.

**The amount will appear as a credit on your October electric bill.**

Capital Credits are unique to the cooperative form of business. Clyde Willard, VVEC's director of finance, says about 65-percent of the \$1 million - or about \$650,000 - will be paid to members who were receiving electricity from VVEC in 2012. The remaining 35-percent - about \$350,000 - is being returned to members who were receiving power in 1981.

Refund amounts are based on the electric usage of each member during those two years.

As in the past, the credit will appear as a 'patronage refund' and will be subtracted from the total amount due on the October bill.

Willard says members with multiple accounts will receive one credit on their membership account, and that credit will reflect the total accumulated capital credits from all their accounts.

Willard says this is the 20th consecutive year capital credits have been returned, adding \$14,593,490 has been returned since VVEC was founded.

Former VVEC members will be sent a check for their refund if it is \$5 or more. Lesser amounts will be held in the individual's capital credit account until it reaches the \$5 minimum.

## Coffee Makers Use More Energy than You Might Think



It might surprise you to learn the coffee maker in your kitchen uses more electricity than your refrigerator or washing machine.

If you're one of the millions of Americans who rely on a cup of hot Java to jump-start each day, consider these energy-saving tips:

- Don't just turn your coffee maker off when you're finished with it; unplug it. Coffee makers continue to use electricity as long as they are plugged in, even if the power is off.
- Even the most basic drip coffee makers usually are equipped with an automatic power-down function to shut

the machine off between 20 minutes and four hours after the last batch is brewed. The most common time lapse between brewing and shut-down is two hours. To save energy, invest in a maker that allows you to manually program the auto shut-down, and set it for the shortest time, according to your coffee-drinking habits.

- Most coffee makers consume more electricity while they're keeping the pot warm than they do to brew the beverage. Even if your machine automatically powers down after two hours, turn it off once you've had your fill of coffee. There's no sense spending electricity to warm coffee that you're going to pour down the drain later.

- It takes less energy to reheat a cup of coffee in a microwave oven than to leave the coffee maker's warming tray turned on or to brew a new batch.

- Single-serving "pod" coffee makers have no warming tray and brew coffee quickly, which reduces energy costs. Environmentalists, however, criticize the technology because most of the pods – small, plastic containers of ready-to-brew coffee – are disposable rather than reusable.



### RECIPE

## Sweet Corn Chowder

- 3 slices bacon, chopped or 1" piece of salt pork**
- 1 med. onion, diced**
- 2 cups peeled, diced fresh potatoes**
- 1/2 tsp. salt**
- 1/4 tsp. pepper**
- 3 cups sweet corn kernels**
- 2 cups milk**

In a heavy pot, cook and stir the bacon/salt pork until crisp. Add 1 med. onion and cook over low heat until soft. Add diced potatoes, salt, pepper, and enough cold water to cover. Bring to a boil and simmer for 10-15 minutes until the potatoes are just tender. Add the sweet corn kernels and a bit more water if needed. Return to a boil and simmer for about 10 minutes. Stir in milk and heat through.