



POWERGRAM

A monthly newsletter for OCEC Members

BECOME A YOUTH TOUR DELEGATE

Otero County Electric Cooperative proudly sponsors delegates to attend the 2024 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience for high school sophomores, juniors and seniors to visit Washington, D.C., for a week in June.

OCEC began sponsoring students for the first time in 2018. The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has brought high school students from across the country to the nation's capital since 1950. This year, OCEC will sponsor up to four students to go on this unique trip to watch history come alive as they explore museums, memorials and monuments, visit with U.S. senators, and make friendships that last a lifetime.

We encourage members to share this opportunity with students you know so they can apply to become a Youth Tour delegate. Applications can be picked up at your local OCEC office, from your school guidance counselor, or at www.ocec-inc.com.

**Deadline
to apply
JANUARY 31**



2023 Youth Tour Delegates: L to R - Alexandra Almanza, Warrick Nowell, Haleigh Shendo & Baylynn Grinder

APPLY NOW FOR 2024 SCHOLARSHIPS

The Otero County Electric Education Foundation began awarding scholarships to area students in 1989. Since its inception, more than \$1.4 million has been awarded to students attending a university, college, or technical school.

The scholarship is \$1,000 per semester for the first two semesters. It increases to \$1,500 per semester for an additional six semesters if the required GPA is maintained and the student continues enrollment.

To be eligible, the student must be an active member receiving electric service from OCEC. Applications are available in OCEC offices, from your school guidance counselor, or at www.ocec-inc.com.

The deadline to apply is March 15.

Another scholarship opportunity is available for through Basin Electric Power Cooperative, which awards scholarships to upcoming high school graduates who receive electric service from OCEC and will attend a post-secondary school during the fall of 2024.

The deadline to apply for this scholarship is February 15. Details can be found on our website.



JANUARY CALENDAR PHOTO
submitted by Jessica Gaston

JANUARY 2024

CLOUDCROFT
575-682-2521

ALTO
575-336-4550

CARRIZOZO
575-648-2352

LOBBY HOURS
8 AM - 4 PM
MONDAY - FRIDAY

**TO REPORT AN OUTAGE,
CALL**
1-800-548-4660

**FOR BALANCE
INFORMATION OR TO
PAY YOUR BILL, CALL**
1-844-846-2695

WWW.OCEC-INC.COM

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP

During winter months, ensure your home is well sealed to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around your home and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on annual energy bills.

Install weather stripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is required.

Source: [energystar.gov](https://www.energystar.gov)

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Crews working to trim trees and vegetation in rights-of-way are currently in the following areas and are expected to remain there for the next few weeks.

- Hondo Valley
- High Rolls
- Flying H

OCEC reminds members that you may see vehicles, ATVs, and crew members from Rogers Tree Service cutting trees near existing power lines. Vehicles will be marked with their company name and an OCEC contractor placard.

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO THE ELECTRIC GRID

Electricity plays an essential role in everyday life.

It powers our homes, offices, hospitals and schools. We depend on it to keep us warm in the winter (and cool in the summer), charge our phones and binge our favorite TV shows. If the power goes out, even briefly, our lives can be disrupted.

The system that delivers your electricity is often described as the most complex machine in the world, and it's known as the electric grid.

What makes it so complex? We all use different amounts of electricity throughout the day, so the supply and demand for electricity is constantly changing. For example, we typically use more electricity in the mornings when we're starting our day, and in the evenings when we're cooking dinner and using appliances. Severe weather and other factors also impact how much electricity we need.

The challenge for electric providers is to plan for, produce and purchase enough electricity so it's available exactly when we need it. Too much or too little electricity in one place can cause problems. So, to make sure the whole system stays balanced, the electric grid must adjust in real time to changes and unforeseen events.

At its core, the electric grid is a network of power lines, transformers, substations and other infrastructure that span the entire country. But it's not just a singular system. It's divided into three major interconnected grids: the Eastern Interconnection, the Western Interconnection and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. These grids operate independently but are linked to allow electricity to be transferred between regions when backup support is required.

Within the three regions, seven balancing authorities known as independent system operators (ISOs) or regional transmission organizations (RTOs) monitor the grid, signaling to power plants when more electricity is needed to maintain a balanced electrical flow. ISOs and RTOs are like traffic controllers for electricity.

The journey of electricity begins at power plants.

Power plants can be thought of as factories that make electricity using various energy sources, like natural

gas, solar, wind and nuclear energy. Across the U.S., more than 11,000 power plants deliver electricity to the grid.

OCEC receives power from our generation and transmission (G&T) co-op, Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association. We work closely with Tri-State to provide electricity at the lowest cost possible. Being part of a G&T benefits members like you by placing ownership and control in the hands of your co-op, prioritizing affordability and reliability, supporting local economic development and fostering a sense of community.

To get the electricity from power plants to you, we need a transportation system.

High-voltage transmission lines act as the highways for electricity, transporting power over long distances. Massive towers support these lines and travel through vast landscapes, connecting power plants to electric substations.

Substations are like pit stops along the highway, where the voltage of electricity is adjusted. They play a crucial role in managing power flow and ensuring that electricity is safe for use in homes and businesses.

Once the electricity is reduced to the proper voltage, it travels through distribution power lines, like the ones you typically see on the side of the road. Distribution lines carry electricity from substations to homes, schools and businesses. Distribution transformers, which look like metal buckets on the tops of power poles or large green boxes on the ground, further reduce the voltage to levels suitable for household appliances and electronic devices.

After traveling through transformers, electricity reaches you—to power everyday life.

We're proud to be your local, trusted energy provider. From the time it's created to the time it's used, electricity travels great distances to be available at the flip of a switch. That's what makes the electric grid our nation's most complex machine—and one of our nation's greatest achievements.

Check out OCEC's Facebook page this month for graphics that explain how the electric grid works.