



POWERGRAM

A monthly newsletter for OCEC Members

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.



NEED HELP WITH YOUR HOME HEATING BILLS?

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides assistance to qualifying individuals and families with paying heating costs in the winter months.

Applications are now being accepted on a first-come, first-served basis as long as funds are available. Businesses are excluded from receiving benefits.

LIHEAP is not administered by Otero County Electric Cooperative, but rather through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and is operated by the New Mexico Human Services Department (HSD).

The amount of financial help available varies based on income, the number of people in a household, and other factors. LIHEAP eligibility is determined by and through the application process by HSD.

According to HSD, the program is designed to lower the energy burden for low-income New Mexico households that pay a disproportional amount of their income for home energy costs. Contact your local HSD field office to apply or for more information, printable applications and facts on LIHEAP can be found by visiting the webpage listed below.

www.hsd.state.nm.us/lookingforassistance/low_income_home_energy_assistance_program/



February CALENDAR PHOTO
submitted by Jake Chesney

FEBRUARY 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

Area rugs are an easy, cost-effective solution to cold floors. Adding area rugs to hard-surface flooring can add warmth to any room and keep your feet cozy on cold winter days.

Choose rugs made from wool or other natural fibers and plush or high-pile textures for the most insulation. Place rugs in areas where you need additional warmth, like the foot of a bed or under a coffee table. Area rugs can enhance the aesthetic of your home and keep you cozier.

HOW EXTREME WINTER WEATHER IMPACTS RELIABILITY

When outdoor temperatures drop, our electricity use increases. That's because we're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times—in the morning and early evenings—and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At OCEC, we work closely with our local generation and transmission cooperative, Tri-State, in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch. Still, the electric grid is much larger than your local co-op and G&T.

OCEC and Tri-State take proactive steps to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts and disaster response planning; but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the heat on for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid (and save a little money along the way):

- Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it down several degrees whenever possible. Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temp and the outdoor temp.
- Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers.
- Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.
- When possible, use cold water to reduce water heating costs.
- Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.

As we face the challenges posed by winter weather, understanding its impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, not only can you save money on your electric bills, but you can also each contribute to the resilience of the power grid, keeping our local community warm and connected.

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.

- San Patricio to El Valle Loop area
- High Rolls
- Nogal Canyon (Nogal)
- Capitan

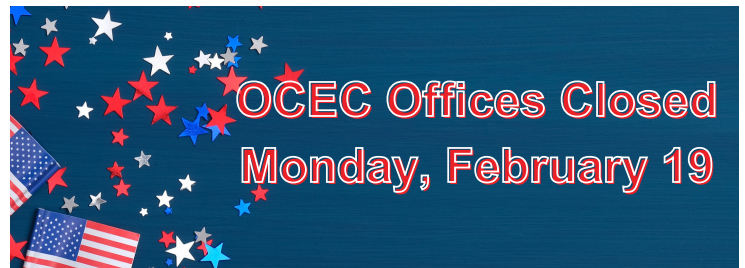
OCEC reminds members that you may see vehicles, ATVs, and crew members from Rogers Tree Service cutting trees near existing power lines. Vehicles will be marked with their company name and an OCEC contractor placard.

END OF WINTER MORATORIUM PROTECTION

Protection from winter shut-off began November 15, 2023. To avoid potential disconnection of service please contact the Human Services Department at 1-800-283-4465, or the appropriate tribal or pueblo entity for eligibility information for Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

Your service will not be disconnected from November 15, 2023, through March 15, 2024, if you meet the qualifications of LIHEAP and have no past due amounts or you remain current on any settlement or installment agreement for amounts due as of November 15, 2023.

Members of New Mexico tribes or pueblos who need help with translation or with other matters may contact the commission's consumer relations division at 1-888-427-5772, who will contact the appropriate tribal or pueblo official for assistance.

An infographic with a light blue background and snowflake icons. It features a central text box on the left and five tip boxes on the right, each with an icon and a brief description.

BEST BETS FOR Winter Savings
Energy consumption spikes during winter months as we spend more time indoors and heating systems work overtime. You can help reduce demand and strain on the electric grid by conserving during peak energy times. Reducing energy use will also help lower your energy bills.

- UNPLUG WHEN POSSIBLE**
Turn off unnecessary lights and electronics when you aren't using them.
- ELIMINATE DRAFTS AND AIR LEAKS**
Seal air leaks and drafts around windows and exterior doors.
- USE APPLIANCES WHEN ENERGY DEMAND IS LOWER**
Run large appliances like clothes washers, dryers and dishwashers early in the morning or before you go to bed.
- MAINTAIN HEATING EQUIPMENT**
Maintain your heating system by replacing dirty, clogged filters and scheduling an annual inspection for necessary maintenance.
- LOWER THE THERMOSTAT**
Home heating accounts for a large portion of energy consumption. Adjust your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting (68 degrees or lower).