



POWERGRAM

A monthly newsletter for OCEC Members

KEEPING OUR RIGHT-OF-WAY CLEAR FOR SAFETY

At OCEC, our priority is to provide members with reliable electricity while maintaining safety for our community. One key component in achieving this is the effective management of electric right-of-way areas.

An electric right-of-way (ROW) is a designated strip of land where our utility lines are installed. This easement is essential for constructing, operating, and maintaining our electrical infrastructure, allowing us to deliver power efficiently to your homes and businesses.

Keeping our ROW clear of trees and underbrush is crucial for a few important reasons:

- **Fire hazard prevention** - Dense vegetation can pose a significant fire risk. Trees and underbrush that grow too close to power lines can ignite if they come in contact with the line, potentially leading to wildfires that threaten life and property.
- **Reliability of service** - Overgrown vegetation can also interfere with our lines, leading to outages, especially during inclement weather. A well-maintained ROW ensures that we can provide consistent and reliable service.
- **Safety for all** - Clear pathways allow our crews to access lines more quickly, ensuring swift responses to power issues and safer overall operation.

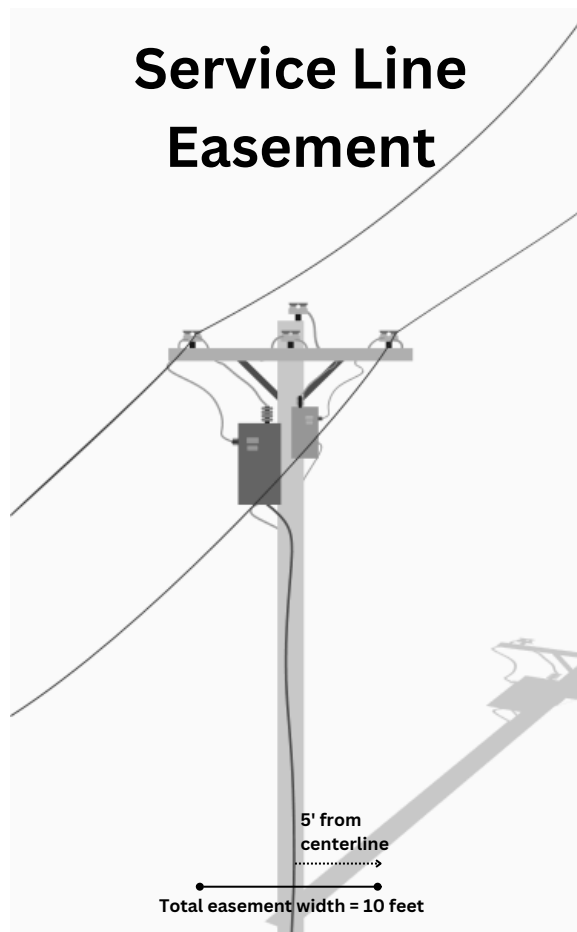
On many occasions, we hear that we should just cut more trees to decrease the chances of starting a wildfire, but it isn't really that simple. Electric easements only give the utility access to a small area directly around poles, conductors, and metering equipment and must be honored. Cutting anything outside the ROW would violate the agreement between OCEC and property owners.

Easement widths vary depending on the type of line installed within the easement. Our system's easement width specifications are below.

- **Service line** - 5 feet from centerline, for a total of 10 feet in width. A service line is the line going from the transformer to the meter on your home.
- **Single-phase distribution line** - 10 feet from centerline, total of 20 feet in width.
- **Three-phase distribution line** - 15 feet from centerline, total of 30 feet in width.
- **Transmission line** - 50 feet from centerline, total of 100 feet in width.

As part of our vegetation management efforts, our crews may need to trim or remove trees that are encroaching on right-of-way areas, even on personal property. We kindly ask for your cooperation during these necessary actions. By allowing our crews to keep these areas clear, you play a vital role in reducing fire hazards and ensuring consistent power delivery.

If you notice vegetation that is near power lines on your property, please contact us so a member of our vegetation management team can make a determination of what the best course of action is to handle it. Your support is invaluable in keeping our community safe. Together, we can accomplish our shared goal of reliable electric service and fire prevention.



FEBRUARY CALENDAR PHOTO
submitted by Aristeo Chavez

**FEBRUARY
2025**

**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
1-855-940-3957**

WWW.OCEC-INC.COM

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace. Use ENERGY STAR®-rated equipment, which consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life. Another way to save energy in your home office is to use efficient lamps for task lighting. Replace any older bulbs with energy-saving LEDs.

Source: energy.gov

APPLY NOW FOR 2025 SCHOLARSHIPS

The Otero County Electric Education Foundation began awarding scholarships to area students in 1989. Since its inception, more than \$1.9 million has been awarded to students attending a university, college, or technical school.

The scholarship is \$1,500 per semester for the first two semesters. It increases to \$2,000 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.

UNDERSTANDING FACTORS THAT IMPACT YOUR ENERGY BILLS

February brings some of the coldest weather of the year, and as our home heating systems work harder and longer to keep us warm, we typically see higher energy bills. There are a few key factors that affect electricity prices, as well as a few ways you can make a meaningful impact on home energy savings.

When you receive your monthly bill from OCEC, you're provided with a summary of how much electricity you used during the billing cycle. But you might be surprised to learn that beyond your monthly energy consumption, there are external factors that can impact the cost of electricity.

Fuel Prices

OCEC purchases electricity from our power generation partner, Tri-State G & T, at a wholesale cost, then we deliver that power to our local communities. The cost of generating and transmitting electricity from our generation partner accounts for a significant portion of the cost to provide electric service to local homes and businesses—and the cost of fuels that are used to generate that electricity, such as natural gas and coal, fluctuates based on supply and demand. While these fluctuations can impact the cost of electricity, we work closely with Tri-State to plan ahead and help stabilize electricity prices for our members.

Extreme Weather

While we can't control the weather, we can review weather patterns and forecasts to prepare for times of extreme cold or heat, when we know the demand for electricity will increase. But when temperatures become extremely cold and the demand for electricity spikes, the price of electricity can also increase.

Infrastructure and Equipment

To cover the costs associated with providing electricity to your home or business, OCEC members pay a monthly service charge. This flat monthly fee ensures the cost of equipment, materials, labor and daily operations are covered for all members in OCEC's service territory. To ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local grid, including power lines, substations and other essential equipment.

Energy Policy and Regulations

Federal energy policies and regulations can have a profound impact on electricity costs. As energy generation shifts to the use of more renewable sources and stricter regulations for traditional, always-available fuel sources, such as natural gas and coal plants, costly upgrades and technologies must be constructed and deployed. These additional costs are ultimately passed to consumers.

U.S. power consumption is expected to double by 2050. Across the country, electric cooperatives are working with members of Congress to advocate for smart energy policies that reliably power our local communities.

You Have Control

While many of these external factors that impact electricity costs are out of our control, we all have the power to manage our energy use at home. The most effective way to lower use is thermostat management. Since heating and cooling account for a major portion of home energy use, adjusting the thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting can help you save energy and money. Remember to service your heating and cooling system annually and replace dirty filters as needed.

You can also reduce energy use by taking advantage of off-peak periods, when the demand for electricity is lower. Reserve energy-intensive chores for off-peak times, such as early in the morning or later in the evening, to save energy. Be sure to seal air leaks around windows, doors and other areas where gaps are possible. This will help your heating and cooling system work less and improve the overall comfort of your home.

OCEC is your local energy partner, and we're here to help. Visit www.ocec-inc.com to learn about our efficiency programs designed to help you save. As always, we will continue working diligently to provide you with reliable power at an affordable cost.



Presidents Day

OCEC Offices Closed Monday, February 17.

