

# “Hotlines”

Published Monthly  
for the Members of  
Alfalfa Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
Cherokee, OK  
www.aec.coop



Support your  
county fair.



September, 2013

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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## Area News Briefs

### LABOR DAY



Celebrate  
on Labor Day,  
Monday,  
Sept. 2

SEE  
AEC  
ON  
FACEBOOK

INDIAN SUMMER  
IS HERE!

Call AEC  
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**(580) 596-2638 or**  
**1-800-853-4969**

**POWER  
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**(580) 596-3333**  
**OR**  
**1-888-736-3837**

To place brief announcements  
in “Hotlines” please call  
(580) 596-3333 EARLY

## Orphan trains delivered children to the western plains for 80 yrs.



*A 19th century orphan train typically traveling from New York City westward hopes to find homes for destitute children. Story on page 3.*

## Lightning--nature's fireworks

What makes lightning strike, anyway? According to the National Weather service most lightning occurs during the summer months in the afternoon or evening but actually lightning can occur anytime.

About 400 people are injured by lightning each year with 93 of those struck becoming fatalities. Florida is the state most often struck with the west coast hardly registering on the lightning map.



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## ALTERNATING CURRENTS...

### A Better Way!

By Colin Whitley, CEO

Recently in Oklahoma, public concerns regarding the use of smart meters have resulted in news stories regarding both privacy issues for the consumer and possible health issues experienced by consumers. While many electric providers are implementing smart meters as a way to more efficiently serve these consumers, Alfalfa Electric Cooperative has chosen another method.

What is a smart meter? Meters at our homes and businesses measure energy usage as it accumulates over the course of each billing month – in much the same way that the mileage odometer in a car measures the total distance over the course of a trip. A smart meter is characterized as two way radio communication between the meter and the utility. Most smart meters also come with another radio that can exchange information with smart devices the consumer may have in the home.

Do AEC consumers have smart meters? No. AEC consumers have traditional meters, which communicate with AEC via a power line carrier system (PLC). The PLC system utilizes the existing wires connecting the home or business to AEC electric system to transmit the monthly meter readings back to AEC. This system can also be used for outage detection, tamper detection capability and reductions in estimated billing. AEC's automated meter reading system provides many of the same benefits as smart meters and we have been using this system for over eight years now. Because of the success we have experienced with our automated metering system, AEC has chosen not to use smart meters.

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## Lightning

Quiz yourself regarding lightning myths or facts:

1. If it isn't raining there is no danger of lightning. (Myth)
2. Lightning may occur as far as 10 miles away from any rainfall. (Fact)
3. The average lightning flash could light a 100-watt light bulb for more than 3 months. (Fact)
4. Your chances of being struck by lightning are estimated to be 1 in 100,000. (Myth) The ratio is 1 in 600,000 and it can be reduced by following safety rules.
5. Rubber tires provide a barrier of safety for a car during a lightning storm. (Myth) Rubber tires and rubber-soled shoes offer no protection from lightning. The steel frame on a hard-topped car offers some protection if you are not touching the metal. You can be injured inside the car but are still much safer than being unprotected on the outside.
6. People hit by lightning carry an electrical charge and should never be touched. (Myth.) Those injured by lightning should be cared for immediately. CPR and first aid classes address these issues.
7. "Heat lightning" occurs after a hot summer and poses no threat. (Myth) The thunder may be too far away to hear but the storm could be moving your direction!
8. To estimate the distance in miles between you and the lightning flash, count the seconds between the lightning and the thunder and divide by five. (Fact)
9. Lightning actually travels from the ground up. (Fact) An invisible channel of electrically charged air moves from the cloud toward the ground and meets a powerful surge of electricity moving upward to the cloud producing the lightning strike!
10. Southern Oklahoma gets more lightning strikes than Kansas or northern Oklahoma. (Fact according to Texas A&M University study in 1991.)

## Patronage Taxable Income Allocation for 2012 announced

The Notice of Patronage Taxable Income Allocation for Tax Purposes is issued in accordance with the bylaws of Alfalfa Electric Cooperative, Inc. The amount of patronage taxable income for the calendar year 2012 that exceeds patronage book income due to 2012 net temporary book/tax differences is \$2,763,152. The allocation factor is .1229951588. To determine your amount of this allocation, multiply the allocation factor by the total amount of your electric bill for 2012, less the bill minimum. This allocated amount is not immediately available as either cash or credit on

your electric bill. These notices are redeemable only at the discretion of AEC's Board of Directors, and are not required to be reported by you for income tax purposes until redeemed for cash and then only if you receive an income tax deduction for the payment made to the cooperative during 2012. Accordingly, it is unlikely that residential patrons will be required to report such allocations even when paid to them in cash or credited to their electric bill. If you have any questions concerning this allocation please call 580-596-3333 x 117-Christy Schanbacher or x114-Gail Ridgway.

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# Orphan trains delivered children to the great plains for nearly 80 years

Smiling for the potential parents, little children crowded onto an orphan train--some barely old enough to look up at the strangers who passed inspection on them at each whistle stop. Most were real orphans but sadly 25% had parents too poor to feed their own children.



Newspaper ads touted the availability of adoptable children traveling on "orphan trains."

The first orphan train was the brain child of Charles Loring Brace, a minister who tried to rid New York City of so many homeless orphans. His idea was to spread the misery over a larger area--perhaps people in the western states would be willing to shelter a child or two...

For nearly eighty years, from 1854 to 1929 over 200,000 orphans and unwanted children were transported from New York City.

Children were paraded at each stop as prospective parents inspected their teeth, nails



*A tired child looks out the window dreaming of a new family or perhaps longing for the old one.*



*The streets of New York City were inhospitable to orphan children in 1854 with the birth of orphan trains.*

and muscles. Some were merely looking for cheap labor.

There were a few horror stories. Young recruits ended up working in the beet fields of Greeley, Colorado. A few even provided cheap labor in California factories.

But at least one orphan ended her journey in Alva, Oklahoma. Family genealogists can't agree about her first name but her maiden name was **Grows**.

"Grandma McArthur" got off the orphan train at Haven, KS. (The special trains didn't travel

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# Orphan trains

to Indian Territory until Oklahoma became a state.)

The traveler was only five years old and a true orphan. Her father was killed in World War I and her mother died suddenly.

The child's first family employed her to herd sheep but she apparently didn't like the job

because she ran away. A second family took her in until as an adult she married a farmer and moved to Oklahoma.

Grandma McArthur bore 15 children of her own, never to be lonesome again.



*Alison Moore and Phil Lancaster of Driftwood, Texas perform an historical presentation about the displaced children.*

has been seen by over 500 museums, libraries and schools in Arkansas, Texas, Arizona and Oklahoma. Sponsors are: Humanities Texas, Arkansas Humanities Council, The Department of Arkansas Heritage and the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation.

Alison Moore and Phil Lancaster of Driftwood, Texas delighted audiences with their "Woody Guthrie type-music."

Guitar and banjo ballads fit well with the clickity-clack of train wheels on the track. You can almost picture young girls with shy smiles and boys too tall for their patched overalls.

Check *Orphan Trains* on the Internet and the photos will draw you into a time when minor children were given away to anyone who would take them.

Placement was better than abandonment, who would argue?

Don't miss the presentation if it comes near you. The video backdrop with interviews of former orphan children and the folk songs so aptly matched spell a fascinating educational program about a little-known subject.



The **Hotlines** is published monthly by Alfalfa Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
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[www.aec.coop](http://www.aec.coop)

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AEC Members may recognize The Ackerman, Barclay and Tate families some of whom trace their genealogy to this brave woman.

Traveling orphans also rode the trains to Sand Springs, Ames, Shawnee, Ft Gibson and Enid.

**Riders on the Orphan Train**, a multi-media program recently presented in Stillwater and Enid,



*Children line up from the youngest to those old enough to work.*



**AEC Offices  
will be closed  
on Monday,  
September 2, 2013  
to observe  
Labor Day.  
Celebrate safely!**