

“Hotlines”

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



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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



AREA NEWS BRIEFS

August Area kids start back to school. Be aware of students on bicycles, students crossing streets, and students getting on and off buses. Have a safe school year.

August 4-7 YOUTH POWER Energy Camp AEC sends 8th graders to Red Rock Canyon, Hinton, OK to improve leadership skills and learn about rural electrification.

HOT SUMMER DAYS ARE HERE. GET YOUR A/C CHECKED AND GET THE FILTER CHANGED. CALL AEC SERVICES, INC. (580) 596-3333 or 1-800-853-4969



Terry Ryel prepares his heat and air department for another hot, humid summer day. (Front: Casey Carson, Trisha Reese, Thomas Wessels, Kashen Jackson, and Terry Ryel Back: Mitch Judd and Coy Troutt)

Comfortable customers

By Robyn Turney

Alfalfa Electric Cooperative members are like most people. They like to be comfortable – not too hot and not too cold. Alfalfa Electric Cooperative Services offers just that! The 6-man crew and 1 very important lady team up to keep homes and businesses just the right temperature.

Thomas Wessels, AEC Services Contractor, supervises Journeymen Mitch Judd and Casey Carson. Coy Troutt, mechanical apprentice, and summer apprentice Kashen Jackson round out the crew. Kashen is picking up some apprentice hours before he goes to OSU Institute **continued on page 3**

ALTERNATING CURRENTS...

Robyn Turney
Communications
Specialist



Time Flies

As I was replacing the planning calendar on my bulletin board, it occurred to me that it had been a full year since I started working full time at AEC. Wow! It doesn't seem possible. Looking back over the past year reminds me of all the neat experiences I have been a part of through AEC.

During the first weeks of my job as Communications Specialist, I realized that I was not only writing the *Hotlines* newsletter, but I was also putting it into publication through a program I was not familiar with at all. Training and help from Bonnie Haas made me feel more confident. It has taken awhile for me to get into the writing mode – I have spent years *grading* my students' writing. My students would be glad to know that my rough drafts have a great deal of red ink on them, too!

Organizing youth programs has been a joy for me. I love going back into the schools and spending time with the students. AEC is helping to mold the leaders of tomorrow.

The AEC Christmas party and Annual Meeting were fun nights. Planning a meal, entertainment, and gifts for 1,500 people was certainly a new but awesome experience.

As I start a new year, I feel blessed to have such an awesome job, surrounded by amazing people. Working with such wonderful adults and students has been the favorite part of my job. As always, I am open to new ideas. Any suggestions to improve the *Hotlines* or Annual Meeting are welcomed. After all, I am proud to work for you, the members of AEC.

continued from page 1 of Technology in Okmulgee, OK, to complete his Journeyman's license. Last but not least, office secretary Trisha Reese keeps these guys in line. Actually, Trisha spoils the guys with their favorite snacks throughout the year. "This is an excellent bunch of guys."

Terry Ryel is the Director of Technical Services, which oversees the Services department. Working for McDowell Electric in his earlier years makes Terry a great hand whenever he is needed. Terry makes several road trips a week to pick up parts or units and then delivers them to the sites for installation. "I enjoy working with the guys and Trisha from the beginning of all of our projects to the end. The guys are all local young men that will do the very best job that they can. The summer is a very busy time, and they may have to work 12-hour days or more just to try and keep up."

Thomas, who took over the job last October when Larry Miller retired, has seen a near record-setting year already with 45 installations completed since

January and 13 signed bids ready for installation. Providing services for customers from Medford to west of Freedom and from Ringwood to Sharon, KS, is very demanding. Still enjoying his new title, Thomas smiled and said, "Nothing like being busy."

Established in 1998, AEC Services concentrates on heat and air units and duct work for homes and businesses. Cars, trucks, and RV's are not on the service list, and neither are window units or floor furnaces. Years ago repair and installation of water heaters were on the agenda but not anymore; however, rebates for water heaters are still given through the co-op. For detailed information on water heater rebates contact Trisha.

This year 90% of the installations for AEC Services have been geothermal. What is geothermal (GEO), and why the sudden interest? Unlike traditional systems that use the air to heat and cool your home, geothermal systems circulate water through a system of sealed underground piping loops that carry heat to and from the earth to the



Mitch, Coy, and Thomas wave from the top of the Cherokee School Auditorium as they wait while a crane lifts the new heating and cooling system to the roof.



Casey and Terry watch the crane lift a unit to the Cherokee Auditorium roof.

system. In the heating mode, the system uses the heat from the earth to warm air that circulates throughout the house. In the cooling mode, the system reverses the process, taking heat out of the home's air and circulating the resulting cool, dehumidified air instead.

Because the system has less work to do to reach the desired temperature setting throughout the year, the system is highly efficient and lowers operating costs. A fossil fuel furnace may be 80% to 90% percent efficient; a geothermal system is amazingly 450% efficient. Another advantage to a geothermal system installed in a new home is that from day one you will be cash flow positive. The cost of the system each month is lower than the savings you realize on your monthly energy cost!

AEC Services is a Climate Master Geo Elite Dealer and will provide services to anyone in our territory. Climate Master has been making geothermal units since 1957. When Terry Ryel first began working for AEC, he remembers Sid Sperry and Boyd Lee helping members find geothermal companies because AEC did not do

the installations. There really was not a big demand for geothermal until the past few years.

In 1948 the first geothermal heat pump for a resident was installed in Ohio. These systems are now considered the most energy efficient available today, but high installation costs, attributed primarily to the underground loop, have put the technology out of reach for most homeowners *until now*. A federal tax credit – 30% of the total cost, installation included – combined with AEC's \$1000 per ton rebate and the energy savings make the overall price the same or less than a conventional heating and cooling system. Terry reveals, "With approved credit, AEC customers can receive 0% interest on the loan. There's never been a better time to go GEO."

With the earth being a natural solar panel, GEO units are environmentally safe, efficient, and now very affordable. To get more information, call the office, and either Thomas or Terry can make the dream of owning a GEO system for your home or business a reality.



GEO systems require drilling for the installation of water loops.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



By cleaning your air conditioner's air ducts, you can lower your energy consumption by between 5 and 15 percent.

Cool experience for local students

By Robyn Turney

While Kansas and Oklahoma members were enduring the summer heat, Alfalfa Electric sent two lucky students on a trip of a lifetime to Steamboat Springs, CO. Pond Creek-Hunter students, Kristen Steffens and Travian Semrad, met other high school students from Oklahoma and Kansas at Russell, KS. From Russell the group traveled to Steamboat Springs, CO where they joined other students from Colorado and Wyoming at the



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Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, CO.

While at the camp, which is coordinated by Kansas Electric Cooperative, Kristen and Travian participated in daily membership meetings, established committees, and elected a General Manager and Board of Directors. They toured Fish Creek Falls, Trapper Mine, and Craig Power Plant; visited Steamboat Springs; went river rafting; and enjoyed camp activities such as volleyball, swimming, a dance, and a talent show. What a week!

“The students learned how to improve their leadership and teamwork skills. They also gained a greater understanding of how their electric cooperatives operate,” said Shana Read, Kansas Electric Cooperatives (KEC) Director of Communications.

When asked about their trip, both students were thrilled with the experience. Kristen responded, “It has been a wonderful experience that I am very thankful for. I have grown as a leader, learned just how important co-ops are, and have made friends that will last a lifetime.”

Travian, too, was just as enthused. “It has been really fun with everyone here. The memories will last, and I am glad I got the opportunity to go.”

Travian and Kristen were chosen by AEC through writing an essay and going through an interview process. The students were selected based on academic achievements, positive attitudes and their involvement within their communities. Travian and Kristen proved to be the right choices and represented Alfalfa Electric perfectly.



Travian and Kristen enjoy the cooler climate and the views at Steamboat Springs.