

“Hotlines”

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



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

December, 2014

Number 12, Volume 69

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



AREA NEWS BRIEFS

Dec. 7 Pearl Harbor Day-Fly the American flag at half-staff until sunset, and remember and honor those who died in the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Dec. 21 first day of winter-Cold weather is here!

Dec 25 Christmas Day-Celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with family and friends.

IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO SCHEDULE A SERVICE CHECK FOR YOUR HEATING SYSTEM. CALL AEC SERVICES, INC. (580) 596-3333 or 1-800-853-4969



CEO and General Manager Collin Whitley presents Larry Miller with his retirement gift from AEC.

Taking what comes next

By Robyn Turney

AEC heat and air services have ended...that is for one Services' employee. After 16 ½ years of working for AEC Services, Larry Miller has retired. Years of service to Alfalfa Electric Cooperative and several previous years working a multitude of other jobs finds Larry looking for something else to do with his time.

Larry Miller was born in Hardtner, Kansas, but lived a majority of his life in Oklahoma. He attended elementary school at Amorita and completed high school at Burlington. Larry's dad

Buck once told him, "You have to go to college, or you will just be a ditch digger." Larry laughs now, "I got my education and still dug ditches!" So after graduation Larry chose Oklahoma State University of Technical Training in Okmulgee where he completed his license in diesel mechanics.

Working for a short year in the Dallas area as a heavy equipment mechanic, Larry returned to Amorita to help his father who was facing some health issues. Maintaining Dad's propane

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ALTERNATING CURRENTS...

Terry Ryel
Manager of Marketing
and Public Relations



Ready for winter storms

When Alfalfa Electric Cooperative had a large winter storm in 2001, we were bombarded with questions on how to hookup a home generator safely. We search for the best most affordable and safest transfer for small home generators. In 2003 AEC became a dealer for GenerLink.

Homeowners are purchasing portable generators in record numbers to power critical appliances such as furnaces, pumps, refrigerators, and home office equipment during a power outage. GenerLink is a product that makes connecting a portable generator easy and safe while providing homeowners the flexibility of using a portable generator to operate virtually any appliance in their home.

GenerLink is a five-inch device that is installed behind your electric meter by Alfalfa Electric Cooperative. When you connect a portable generator to GenerLink and start it up, GenerLink automatically disconnects your house from the electric utility grid preventing the possibility of back feed, which can damage equipment and harm utility personnel.

Because GenerLink is designed and rated to connect directly to a standard household electric service of 200 amps or less, all you have to do to operate a critical appliance is flip a breaker on in the household breaker panel once the generator is connected and operating. GenerLink™ eliminates the hassles of running multiple extension cords or hiring an electrician to install an expensive transfer switch and sub-panel that limits the number of appliances you can operate.

GenerLink can be installed in less than 30 minutes. There is no need for you to be home, and there is no need to rewire the house. The 30 AMP GenerLink costs \$675, and the 50 AMP costs \$775. There is no additional cost for installation. If you have questions about this product, call Terry at (580) 596-3333.

GenerLink allows customers to safely connect a portable generator to their home.



Use emergency generators with care

Frequent, more severe fall and winter storms over the past few years have led more homeowners to invest in emergency backup generators that can run a couple of appliances or keep the lights on when wind, rain, and falling tree branches knock the electricity out.

Like any electric appliances, it's important to follow the manufacturer's safety instructions that came with your generator so nobody in your family gets hurt while using it. But unlike other appliances, an improperly operated generator can harm or even kill a member of a line crew who's working on a downed wire in your neighborhood.

Here are some generator safety tips:

- 1) Generators can produce carbon monoxide, an invisible, odorless and deadly gas. Never power up a generator indoors. Place carbon-monoxide alarms in the rooms of your house that are near the location where you operate your generator.
- 2) Never plug your generator into an electrical outlet. Instead, use extension cords to connect the appliance you want to run directly to the generator.
- 3) Do not connect the generator to any of your home's electrical circuits. This requires a transfer switch and installing a transfer switch requires a licensed electrician.

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service, some dapping with farming, and even welding kept him busy for a few years. However, the decision to go to Wichita, Kansas, to get his background in heating and air gave Larry a new direction in life.

After working for several heat and air companies, Larry opened his own business, Wind and Fire, in 1993. He continued his business until July of 1998 when Boyd Lee convinced the AEC board to add a heat and air department. AEC bought out Shockley Heat & Air in Ringwood and put together a team of four, two contractors and two apprentices, to create what is now known as AEC Services.

Working at AEC Services wasn't always *cool* – Larry recalls being the only licensed employee one summer. In more ways than one, that was one hot summer! AEC Services worked out of Boyd's office for a while and then moved to a few other offices before landing their real home.

In 2002 AEC named Larry the head of the Heat and Air Department. He managed the department with the help of three apprentices and one office assistant (one very patient lady). Larry maintained that position until his retirement.

Larry worked several other jobs alongside his AEC responsibilities. His wife Brenda was the Director of Ambulance Services in Cherokee, and Larry was an EMT for 22 years. For a year and a half, he was the Reserve Police Officer for the town of Cherokee. With a chuckle, Larry confirmed, "I did a little bit of everything."

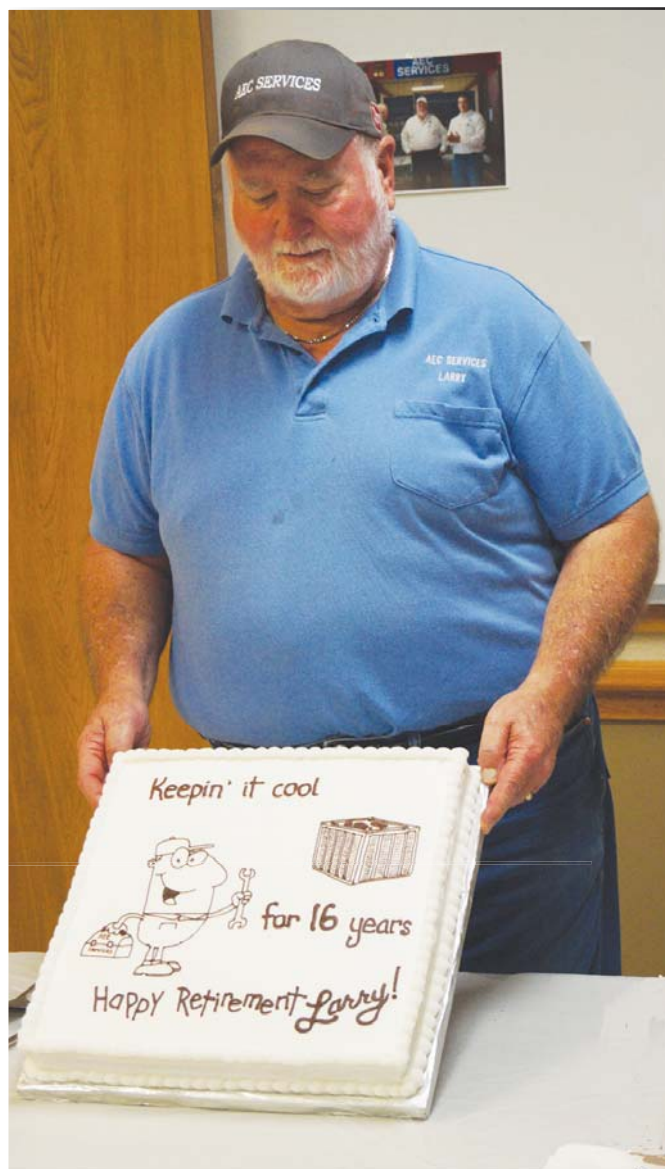
For most of his life, Amorita was home for Larry and his family, but in 2001 he and his wife decided to literally *move* their home to Cherokee. Today they live comfortably in that home close to family and friends.

When asked what his biggest accomplishment was, Larry responded, "I think we raised two pretty good kids who gave us three really neat granddaughters, Taylor, Kaitlyn, and Taryn." His sons, Travis and Shane, both live in Cherokee which is another blessing. Larry is also proud of getting the Cherokee Schools up and running with efficient heat and air – "a job well-done." He also cherishes the memories of the unique people he has met. "You learn a lot about people when you go into their homes." I am afraid to ask Larry what he learned about me!

Retirement will bring more time to enjoy some of the many hobbies Larry already takes pleasure in. Larry and his dad enjoyed tinkering with remote control planes. He also loves to trap shoot – just for fun, no contests. Collecting guns will continue to take up a great deal of his leisure time, which might lead to his helping out his son Shane with his gun store, Moa Guns. Larry plans to hang

out and help out at Cherokee Parts & Supply, the store owned by his sons and him. I heard Brenda say that she had a few "honey-do's" lined up for Larry, too. More trips to Disney World with the kids and grandkids are quite possible, as Larry loved Disney World as much as the grandkids did.

Larry shared, "I will just take what comes." AEC thanks Larry for his dedicated service and wishes him the best in his retirement. One thing that won't change for Larry will be "Happy Hour" with the guys, although now he can extend it to "Happy Hours"! Enjoy retirement, Larry. You have earned it.



At a reception held in his honor, Larry Miller looks at his cake before sharing it with family and friends who came by to wish him the best.

AEC would like to wish everyone a blessed Merry Christmas and to remind its members that AEC offices will be closed on Wednesday and Thursday December 24th and 25th so our employees can celebrate this Christmas holiday and spend time with their families and friends.



The **Hotlines** is published monthly by Alfalfa Electric Cooperative, Inc.
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Local before local was cool

Whether you travel across the country or prefer to stay close to your hometown, one thing you may be noticing is the emphasis on “Buy Local” campaigns. This is based on one simple fact: It’s important to support businesses that support our community.

The Small Business Administration and the research firm Civic Economics estimate that dollars spent at a locally owned business stay in the community more than three times longer than money spent at “Big Box” stores, headquartered far away from your hometown. This means your community wealth is more likely to grow by shopping locally.

Consumer cooperatives, like Alfalfa Electric Cooperative, have known this forever. We were formed in 1937 by people in this community to serve the people that work, worship, and live in this community.

A common expression among cooperators is, “If you’ve seen one co-op, you’ve seen one co-op.” While there are many similarities between co-ops, the fact that we are controlled locally, allowing us to serve your needs, is a critically important principle.

The fourth of our Seven Cooperative Principles is: *Autonomy and Independence*. And that is defined as follows: Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations

controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it is done so based on terms that ensure democratic control by the members and maintain the cooperative’s autonomy.

This will allow us to continue to be the self-help organization envisioned by the founders of the modern cooperative movement.

In other words, for the co-op to stay a co-op it is vitally important we stay close to you, our members, to ensure we are continuing to respond to your needs. This could be through increasing energy-efficiency programs, offering renewable sources of energy and continuing our efforts to support other local businesses, schools, and civic organizations.

You can be sure that Alfalfa Electric will not be moving our operations to Mexico or China, as so many other corporations do. We began right here in Cherokee, Oklahoma, and we plan on being here for a very long time. You can take that to the bank, or better yet, the credit union – as all credit unions are financial cooperatives. As always, we welcome your participation and suggestions about how we can improve our locally owned and controlled services.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Be merry and bright, but don’t let your holiday lights shine all night. Save money on your electric bill by installing a light timer for your decked-out home. It can help lower your electric bill and reduce energy consumption. Use a manual timer plugged into an electrical outlet to automatically turn lights on and off as scheduled.