

ALFALFA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S

# HOTLINES

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PO Box 39, 121 E Main, Cherokee, OK 73728 | [www.aec.coop](http://www.aec.coop)

## Local students attend co-op camp

By Robyn Turney

Once again, students from Alfalfa Electric Cooperative's service area attended the Youth Power Energy Camp in Red Rock Canyon near Hinton, OK. Electric cooperatives from across the state sponsor upcoming 9<sup>th</sup>-grade students to the camp. This year AEC selected Lexi Williams and Baylee Oister, both from Cherokee.

Although one of the purposes of the camp is to teach the students about co-ops and how they function, this year's camp really hit on leadership skills, too. Students developed some leadership skills but were also reminded that it is ok to fail in life – just don't stay there. Campers learned how to make friends and how to be a good friend.

Burlington's own Brandon Gosselin opened the camp with his own inspirational story. Days after graduating from high school, Brandon suffered a traumatic brain injury when the four-wheeler he was driving struck a deer. His story is not only touching but also inspiring.

Brandon says, "I am honored to be an example for overcoming hardships. The glory goes to God." He has told his story to tens of thousands of people. He has also shared the stage with notable speakers, such as NFL Legend Peyton Manning. Brandon is passionate about serving others and helping them realize their potential. He spoke to the students and let them know that they are not alone in their insecurities. Brandon encouraged them to never give up on their dreams and reminded them to help others along the way to those dreams. As one of Brandon's former teachers, I had an emotional, proud

moment watching him interact with the young students – he just might have inspired this retired teacher.

The first day the campers were divided into small group "communities" with a direct tie to the electric co-op with headquarters in that community. Campers learned the history and details of their community and when rural electric cooperatives first provided power in their areas.

The communities met several times throughout the week for "Town Hall Meetings" – in those meetings, the groups did icebreakers, learned what life was like before power, did skits to show-off their community to

the rest of camp, did a photo scavenger hunt, researched and did a presentation on the 7 Cooperative Principals. Each community elected a representative for the 2019 Energy Camp Board of Directors and chose one camper to interview for the Energy Camp Manager position.



Burlington graduate Brandon Gosselin inspires and motivates the Energy Camp students in the opening exercises at camp.



## ALTERNATING CURRENTS...

Richard Jackson  
Journeyman



Although Richard lives in Cherokee now, he was raised in Ringwood and graduated from high school there. His parents Paul and Debbie Jackson still live in Ringwood today.

Richard is a proud father of five children – Xander, Kyson, Gracia, Cooper, and Ryan. He and his wife Jilisa have made their home here in Cherokee. "I am a lucky man."

In 1999 Richard moved from Ringwood to Cherokee to work for AEC, where he received his journeyman certification. After working at AEC for almost six years, Richard moved to Norman. OEC, an electric co-op in Norman, hired him.

In 2016 he returned to Cherokee to work for AEC again. "I couldn't be happier to be back at AEC and back in Cherokee. I enjoy the guys I work with – it's a comfortable environment."

Hunting and fishing take up some of Richard's spare time. He also enjoys his time with the kids and riding motorcycles with Jilisa. On their honeymoon, they took a seven-day motorcycle ride through 11 states that extended to North Carolina. The couple survived the "Tail of the Dragon" in North Carolina, an 11-mile stretch that has 318 curves. A trip to the west coast is in future plans.

Richard's dad Paul is his biggest inspiration in life. He encouraged Richard to always be a hard worker, and he motivated him to help others. While living in Norman, Richard spent two weeks in Haiti, where he helped rebuild churches that were destroyed during the 2010 earthquake. AEC has some wonderful employees. Richard is undoubtedly one of them.

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One afternoon, campers had the opportunity to experience the following sessions:

"Meet a Manager" – what is it like to be a co-op manager and the journey to that position?

"Where does electricity come from?" – Darryll Lindsey from Associated brought their virtual reality experience to show campers what a coal-fired power generation facility looks like from a 360 view.

"Poles & Wires" – campers built models of various power lines, using real staking sheets and reference books.

"Behind the Switch" – campers learned how power moves from a generation facility to their homes. In this session, campers learned how power is stepped up and down along the way to their house.

"Careers – Co-op Jobs" – campers completed a career interest survey and had a chance to learn about different types of jobs at co-ops.

"Energy Trails" – 4 volunteer linemen shared their international experiences with campers, very impactful.

AEC camper Lexi Williams shared a little about her experience at Energy Camp. "I got to learn a lot about co-ops and got to see and do a bunch of fun stuff. Thank you for sending me to such a wonderful camp."

The next morning, campers learned about the "Life of a Lineworker"



Baylee Oister, Robyn Turney, and Lexi Williams enjoy time spent and Energy Camp near Hinton, OK.

and more – sessions included:

Pole-climbing demo – counselors helped campers climb a pole, using real lineman climbing gear.

Bucket truck rides – campers had the opportunity to go for a ride in the bucket truck.

High-voltage demo trailer – counselors showed campers what happens when there is disruption to equipment on the lines.

Pepper the robot/Tesla EV – campers interacted with Pepper the robot and were able to check out the features of a Tesla car.

**"Thank you for sending me to such a wonderful camp."**

**Lexi**



Lexi Williams (second from the left), along with other campers, listens to Pepper the robot and interacts with her by asking new questions.



Lexi Williams pays close attention as a Matt Crandall (Cimarron Electric Co-op) gives her pole-climbing instructions and helps her with the gear.

Electric bicycles/EV – campers had the opportunity to ride electric bikes and check out an EV (electric vehicle).

Drone – campers had the opportunity to see how a drone operates and learn how co-ops can use drones in their operations.

**"I hope you can give this amazing opportunity to other campers in the future."**

**Baylee**

Youth Tour/YLC – the 2018 YLC representative visited with small groups about Youth Tour and her experience as the YLC rep for Oklahoma.

AEC camper Baylee Oister added some of her thoughts. "I met so many new friends and learned so many life lessons, skills, and fun facts. I hope you can give this amazing opportunity to other campers in the future."

Students left the camp with a plethora of information about co-ops. There is a new appreciation for the work that linemen do at the co-ops, for sure. Last, but not least, the students learned multiple ways to be a leader and a friend. Did I mention



After watching G.R. Kirkpatrick (Cimarron Electric Co-op) demonstrate the safe way to climb poles, Baylee Oister takes her turn at climbing.

"friend"? As in years past, many students were very emotional about leaving new-found friends. Counselors assured them it would be possible to stay in touch. Energy Camp 2019 was undoubtedly a SUCCESS!

## Help neighbors keep cool this summer

It's hard enough to endure the hot summer heat when you're healthy, fit and have an air-conditioned home. Not everyone is as prepared as you are.

Keep an eye on your neighbors and others who might need some help getting through the hottest summer days, which can put people at risk for heat-related illnesses and can worsen existing medical conditions.

Doctors recommend that you spend the hottest part of a sweltering summer day indoors enjoying the air conditioning.

But for those whose homes don't have air conditioning or who can't

afford to turn it on, the risk is acute. That's especially true for the elderly or ill, who could be at risk for heat stroke or even death.

If you know someone whose house might get too hot to handle this summer:

Call them or stop by to check on them every day.

Use a neighborhood association directory or your own personal contacts to arrange a phone tree so others can help check on neighbors who live alone when you're not able to.

Encourage neighbors or family members to use air conditioners during the hottest part of the day or

spend it in an air-conditioned public place, like a mall or library.

If you find someone in medical distress because of the heat, call 911.

Some states and counties encourage residents to help keep their neighbors safe through campaigns like Check on Your Neighbor. Your local Salvation Army or hospital can tell you about programs already in your area. You can also start one in your own neighborhood.

Show your neighbors you care enough to check in. You could save someone's life.

# Plan for a safe and happy Fourth of July

The month of July is a special month. It's the middle of summer, the kids are out of school, and, of course, most people celebrate Independence Day! Typically, on the Fourth, AEC members celebrate our nation's independence with grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, homemade ice cream and other sweet treats, and last but not least, fireworks. This is a time for fellowship with family and friends, but at Alfalfa Electric Cooperative, we also want to make sure our members focus on safety.

To ensure you have the best Fourth of July possible, AEC would like to remind you about a few important safety tips from The American Red Cross.

Nothing says "Fourth of July" like a spectacular fireworks display! The safest way to enjoy this part of the celebration is to head to a local fireworks show. But, if you want to

put on your own show at home, be sure to follow these safety tips:

Always follow the instructions on fireworks' packaging and *never* give fireworks to small children.

Keep a supply of water close by as a precaution.

Make sure to wear protective eyewear when lighting fireworks.

Light only one firework at a time and never attempt to relight "a dud."

Store fireworks in a cool, dry place away from children and pets.

Never throw or point a firework toward people, animals, vehicles, structures, or flammable materials.

Cookouts are a great way to bring folks together on the Fourth. Whether you are grilling in your back yard or at a community park, make sure your feast includes a generous portion of fun and a side helping of safety! We recommend the following safety tips:

Supervise your grill at all times.

Use the proper tools for cooking on a grill.

Never add charcoal starter fluid when the coals have already been ignited.

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when using grills.

Fireworks and cookouts wouldn't be complete without a sunny day. Here's hoping we have good weather, and if we do, make sure you are practicing sun safety:

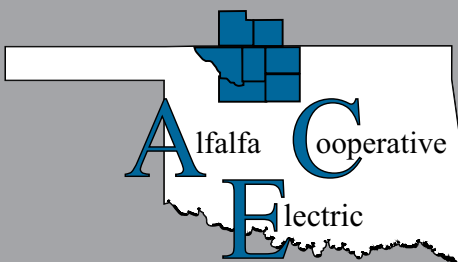
Use a broad-spectrum SPF sunscreen and reapply often.

Protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses.

Drink plenty of water.

Be on the lookout for signs of heat stroke (hot red skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; rapid, shallow breathing).

However you choose to celebrate, Alfalfa Electric Cooperative wishes you a safe and Happy Fourth of July!



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