

PowerLines

YOUR CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE NEWS CONNECTION

**Central Electric
Cooperative**

A Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperative



Photo by Yvette Kowal of Kennerdell

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A New Year

BY MATT BOSHAW
CEO & General Manager

Happy New Year! The beginning of every new year provides us with the opportunity to reflect on the most recent year and set goals for the year ahead. 2024 marks a year of significant transition at your electric cooperative. A lot is going on in the world and, as I have mentioned in previous articles, much of it will have direct and indirect impacts on Central Electric Cooperative (CEC).

Issues like the economic outlook, the electrification of the transportation sector, and efforts to transition the fuel supply of electric generation, all create a dynamic environment for a distribution electric company. I have discussed my strong belief that as the electric vehicle market matures there are concerns, but rural areas, like ours, are uniquely positioned to implement greater utilization of electric vehicles in a manner that will grow our load while more efficiently utilizing off-peak available supplies of power. This is only the case if it is done in a responsible manner that considers all aspects of the supply and demand for electricity.

Similarly, the transition of generation supply to one that is carbon-free will need to take more than political aspirations into consideration. Those who are advocating for the closure of baseload generation have no immediate alternatives and are simultaneously advocating for the electrification of the transportation sector — which creates additional demand.

The combination of these two issues can and will have a direct impact on the economic outlook of our country and, in our case, the rates our members pay for their electric service.

Now that I have your attention, let me get to the “happy” part of our new year. Despite all these pressures, CEC starts the year with no plan for a rate increase in 2024. We will, of course, continue to monitor the financial condition of your cooperative throughout the year to ensure its continued financial health, but we have no plan to increase rates.

The issues that I discussed as well as a host of others can certainly be points of concern, but the transition that alleviates that concern for me is our workforce. At a recent cooperative event, one of our board members pointed

Continued on page 2

out that there were many new faces that he was not familiar with. That is because, like so many other businesses, we have seen our workforce change dramatically over the past few years. As a matter of fact, since June 2020, over one-third of our workforce is new. We haven't increased our workforce though. We've had about the same number of employees for many years. We have simply experienced the changing of the guard that comes with retirements, both planned for and accelerated by the pandemic, and the departure of some others who have decided to pursue other opportunities.

This has created an environment at CEC that is creating significant professional development and employment opportunities for our employees. For our members, this has created a group of employees with renewed enthusiasm and new ideas for how to approach the rapidly changing environment. While our departing employees take valued experience with them, a core of experienced employees remain. The infusion of new approaches tempered with the lessons learned from experience is allowing us to align our resources to optimally meet the changing needs of our membership.

Literally every area within the cooperative has new employees and/or employees in new roles. We have employees with varied years of experience collaborating with those providing a fresh perspective to meet new challenges. There are also employees with new responsibilities that we never needed to have before, such as solar facilities and electric vehicles.

I considered referring to the individuals I described, but I would not want that recognition to apply to only a few. As I mentioned, one-third of our group is new since 2020. Two-thirds are new since 2010 and more than that are in new roles in that timeline, so this article would have been several pages longer. All of this adds up to an exciting list of challenges and a dynamic workforce enthusiastic to meet them.

It is an exciting and challenging time to work in the field of electricity distribution and 2024 should be a great opportunity to recognize that. We are looking forward to

working together with our members for a happy, healthy, and prosperous new year. So once again from all of us here at your cooperative, happy new year!

Do You Know A High School Junior?



Tell them to apply to Youth Tour!

Youth Tour is a free, week-long trip to Washington, D.C. from June 16-21, 2024. The trip will provide students with leadership and resume-building skills and activities.

Applications are due Feb. 2.

Visit www.central.coop/youth-tour to apply.



MANAGEMENT TEAM

Matthew P. Boshaw

CEO & General Manager

Chester Conti

Director of Finance and Accounting/CFO

Lisa A. Hoover

Director of Member Services

Christopher W. Kossman

Director of Information Technology

Fred E. Terwilliger

Assistant General Manager/COO



CALLING ALL CURRENT HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS!

Earn a FREE week-long leadership-focused trip to Washington, D.C.



Boost your team building and leadership skills.



Visit historical monuments, museums and memorials in Washington, D.C.



Deadline to apply: Feb. 2, 2024.



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TO LEARN MORE AND APPLY ONLINE, VISIT:

CENTRAL.COOP/YOUTH-TOUR

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

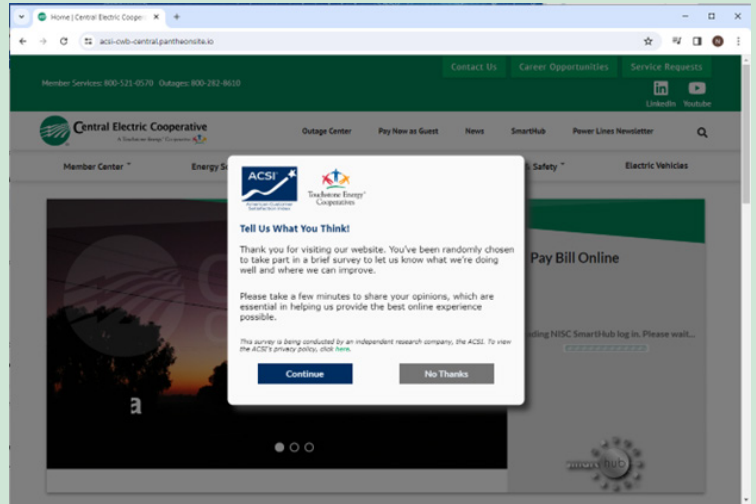
New Website Survey

CEC is partnering with Touchstone Energy Cooperative and ACSI to help improve your website experience.

In December, a survey was launched on central.coop for our members to tell us what they think of the current website features. If you should be randomly selected, CEC encourages you to complete the survey. It is safe to do so and will help us make improvements for you, our members.

Should you have any questions, please contact Nikki Staley at nstaley@central.coop or 800-521-0570 extension 2151.

Thank you in advance for your participation!



Good Neighbor Scholarship Applications Are Open!

One of the best investments a community can make is in education. Each spring, CEC awards scholarships to graduating seniors or adults going back to school who live at a residence receiving electricity from the co-op. CEC will award 10 scholarships of \$2,500 in 2024.

Applicants must be enrolled in a post-secondary educational institution, complete the application on our website, and submit a 500-word essay. The funds used for these scholarships come from unclaimed capital credits and does not impact members rates in any way.



\$25,000 GIVEN YEARLY

We award approximately \$25,000 in scholarships each year to students within our service territory.



APPLY NOW!

Applications are open now on our website. The deadline to apply is **March 15, 2024**.



SCHOLARSHIPS FOR COLLEGE & TECH/ VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Our scholarships are open to students going to college, students going to a tech/vocational school and adults returning to school.

VISIT

CENTRAL.COOP/GOOD-NEIGHBOR-SCHOLARSHIP TO APPLY!



CO-OP NEWS

CEC Employees Donate Gifts to Families in Need

Throughout the month of November, 20 CEC employees put together 63 bags of Christmas gifts to donate to local families in need!

Read more about these stories on our website!



Winter Sun Protection

by Dylan Linke, Manager of Safety and Loss Control

Looking back at past articles, it occurred to me that most of my safety topics are focused on the seasons and potential hazards that are associated with those seasons. For example, when faced with a hot, sunny day at the beach, most of us recognize the need for sunglasses and sunscreen. Many would also sense a similar urgency to protect themselves from the sun while working outside on the job or at home.

Have you ever considered the sun in the winter to be harmful? The CDC states that skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the U.S. Unfortunately, few take the precautions necessary to ensure their protection from the sun, let alone in the winter.

Exactly like sunshine in the summer, winter sunshine contains two types of radiation that are dangerous to us: ultraviolet-A and ultraviolet-B. The following information will provide you with some tips to think about when considering winter sun protection.

When it comes to your eyes, the winter sun can be blinding – literally. Overexposure to ultraviolet rays can damage the retina, which contains photo-sensitive cells in the back of the eye that allow you to see. Winter sun reflecting off snow is more blinding than summer sun

reflecting off water. If bright enough, it can easily cause a temporary, but very painful condition called “snow blindness.” Snow blindness occurs when the surface of the eye is sunburned.



Dark lenses alone do not ensure protection from the sun. You need to protect your eyes from ultraviolet radiation, not just the sun’s brightness. If the lenses are extremely dark, but lack proper protection, this will cause even more damage. Damage occurs when the pupils of your eyes open wider to accept additional light and allow more harmful rays to reach the retina.

Just like the summer sun, overexposure to winter sunlight will give you a sunburn. Sunscreen will filter out harmful rays and allow you to be in the sun without the threat of sunburn. Sunscreen with an SPF rating of 15 or higher is suitable for most skin types. Wide-brimmed hats can cut the amount of UV radiation that reaches your eyes by up to half. There is also protective clothing available that can filter out the sun’s harmful rays.

It’s just as important to protect yourself from the winter sun as it is when you are headed to the beach. Protecting your eyes and skin will ensure that you don’t cause long-term damage. Best of all, it will allow you to enjoy your time in the sun.

The information in this article has been sourced from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Role: Chief Financial Officer (CFO)

Employee Since: May 1998

Employee Spotlight: Chester Conti



What is something you’re most proud of? My wife and two sons. They are everything to me.



What is a fun fact about yourself? I enjoy home remodeling, except drywall.



What do you enjoy doing outside of work? Playing pickleball.



What is your favorite family tradition? While others shop on Black Friday, our family would travel to Pittsburgh for a day of activities. We would visit the Strip District and would end the day with ice skating around the Christmas tree in Market Square.



What was your first job? A gas station attendant.

HOW ELECTRICITY GETS TO YOU



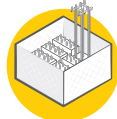
step 1
Generation
Electricity is generated from various sources.



step 4
Transmission Substation
Voltage is lowered so electricity can travel across the local system.



step 2
Step-Up Transformer
Voltage is increased to push the electricity over long distances.



step 5
Distribution Substation
Voltage is lowered further for safe distribution.



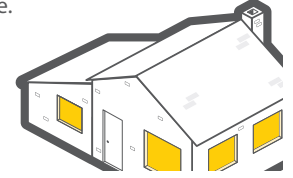
step 3
Transmission Power Lines
Lines carry electricity over long distances.



step 6
Distribution Power Lines
Electricity travels across these lines in your community.



step 7
Final Stop
A transformer reduces voltage a final time, and electricity is sent to your home.



Beginner's Guide to the Electric Grid

by Kessa Moore, Communication Specialist

Electricity plays an essential role in everyday life. It powers our homes, offices, hospitals and schools. We depend on it to keep us warm and cool, charge our phones and binge our favorite TV shows. If the power goes out, even briefly, our lives can be disrupted.

The system that delivers your electricity is often described as the most complex machine in the world. What makes the electric grid so complex though? We all use different amounts of electricity throughout the day, so the supply and demand is constantly changing. For example, we typically use more electricity in the mornings when starting our day, and in the evenings when we're cooking dinner and using appliances. Severe weather and other factors also impact how much electricity we need.

The challenge for electric providers is to plan for, produce and purchase enough electricity so it's available exactly when we need it. Too much or too little electricity in one place can cause problems. So, to make sure the whole system stays balanced, the electric grid must adjust in real time to changes and unforeseen events.

At its core, the electric grid is a network of power lines, transformers, substations and other infrastructure that span the entire country. But, it's not just a singular system. It's divided into three major interconnected grids: the Eastern Interconnection, the Western Interconnection and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. These grids operate independently but are linked to allow electricity to be transferred when backup support is required.

Within the three regions, seven balancing authorities known as independent system operators (ISOs) or regional transmission organizations (RTOs) monitor the grid, signaling to power plants when more electricity is needed to maintain a balanced electrical flow. ISOs and RTOs are like traffic controllers for electricity.

The journey of electricity begins at power plants. Power plants can be thought of as factories that make

electricity using various energy sources, like natural gas, solar, wind and nuclear energy. Across the U.S., more than 11,000 power plants deliver electricity to the grid.

CEC receives power from our generation and transmission (G&T) co-op, Allegheny Electric Cooperative (Allegheny). We work closely with Allegheny to provide electricity at the lowest cost possible. Being part of a G&T benefits members by placing ownership in the hands of your co-op, prioritizing affordability and reliability and supporting local economic development.

To get the electricity from power plants to you, we need a transportation system. High-voltage transmission lines act as the highways for electricity, transporting power over long distances. These lines are supported by massive towers and travel through vast landscapes, connecting power plants to electric substations.

Substations are like pit stops along the highway, where the voltage of electricity is adjusted. They play a crucial role in managing power flow and ensuring that electricity is safe for use in homes and businesses.

Once the electricity is reduced to the proper voltage, it travels through distribution power lines, like the ones you typically see on the side of the road. Distribution lines carry electricity from substations to homes, schools and businesses. Distribution transformers, which look like metal buckets on the tops of power poles or large green boxes on the ground, further reduce the voltage to levels suitable for household appliances and electronic devices. After traveling through transformers, electricity reaches you — to power everyday life.

We're proud to be your trusted, local energy provider. From the time it's created to the time it's used, electricity travels great distances to be available at the flip of a switch. That's what makes the electric grid our nation's most complex machine — and one of our nation's greatest achievements.



Winter Energy Saving Tips

by Connie Long, Member Energy Specialist

The holiday season is winding down and with that comes the start of the new year. Unfortunately, cold weather is also here. I know I tend to stay home more when it's cold, the days are shorter and the dark nights come sooner. Finding ways to keep my usage down during that time is very helpful, so let me give you some winter energy saving tips to help keep your costs low to start your year.

- Stay warm with clothes and blankets. It is more cost effective to warm your body than your house.
- Choose LED lights. LED uses about 75% less energy and they last longer.
- Leave your oven door ajar after using it. Letting the heat escape can help utilize the heat that would otherwise be trapped in the oven until it cools down.

- Lower the set temperature in your home. Turning it down even a few degrees can help.
- Turning the thermostat down at night and when no one is home can help save 10% on your electric bill. A smart thermostat would be great for this.
- Close doors and vents in unused rooms. This will help from heating rooms no one is using.
- Insulated curtains. This will help keep the heat inside and maximize the efficiency of your windows.
- Eliminate air leaks and drafts. Using caulking or weather stripping helps eliminate wasted or lost heat. The top three places to check are windows, external doors and your basement or attic.
- Space heaters. These are great for a small area for a short period of time. However, using a space heater as a main source of heat will raise your usage.
- HVAC check-up. Having your heating system checked and cleaned yearly keeps it running efficiently.

Remember, keeping these 10 tips in mind can help you keep your usage lower during the colder months!

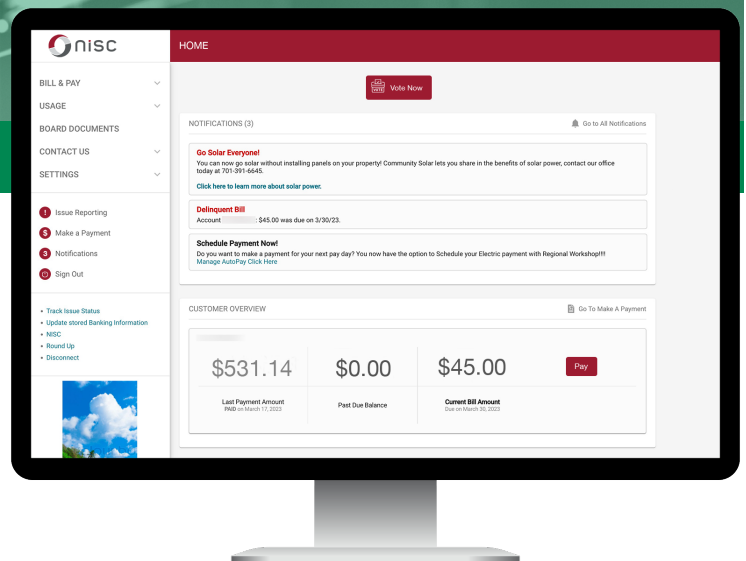
NEWLY REDESIGNED SMARTHUB



Watch for the new SmartHub updates in Feb.

Save time and money by managing your account at anytime from anywhere.

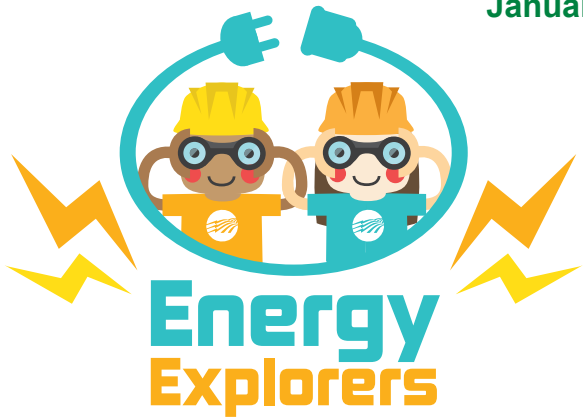
- Easy payment options to avoid late fees and service interruptions.
- The information you need to make the right decisions about your account.
- The eco-friendly way to instantly access your bill.



Manage your account at anytime from anywhere

WINTER ENERGY EFFICIENCY CROSSWORD

Did you know there are several ways you can fight the winter chill and save energy at home? Complete the crossword puzzle below to learn how to save energy during winter months.



1 Down: Open curtains and blinds during the day to allow _____ in to warm your home.

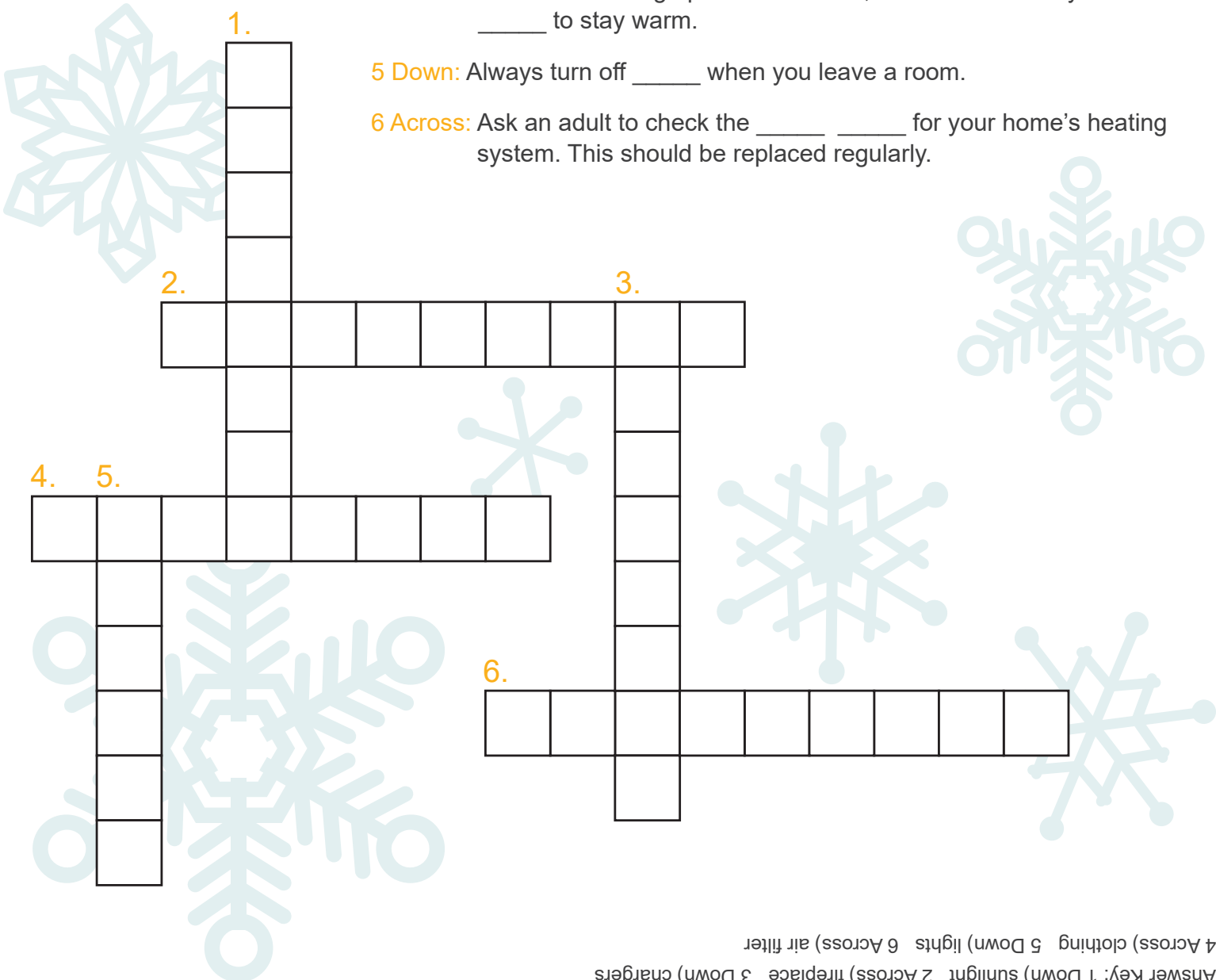
2 Across: If you have a _____ at home, ask an adult to close the flue when a fire is not burning.

3 Down: Unplug phone and tablet _____ when they're not in use.

4 Across: Instead of turning up the thermostat, wear additional layers of _____ to stay warm.

5 Down: Always turn off _____ when you leave a room.

6 Across: Ask an adult to check the _____ _____ for your home's heating system. This should be replaced regularly.



Answer Key: 1 Down) sunlight 2 Across) fireplace 3 Down) chargers 4 Across) clothing 5 Down) lights 6 Across) air filter

From the Kitchen of:
Louise Sotace

RECIPE: **FRENCH TOAST**



INGREDIENTS:

Loaf of sliced Texas Toast bread (12 slices)

1/2 cup melted butter (Optional) nuts

1 cup milk

1/4 teaspoon salt

3 eggs

3/4 cup brown sugar

Cinnamon (to liking)

INSTRUCTIONS:

Melt butter on a large cookie sheet. Sprinkle the brown sugar, cinnamon and nuts (if wanted) onto the pan. In a large mixing bowl, beat the eggs, milk and salt.

Drip the bread into the mixture and arrange slices on the cookie sheet. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight.

Before baking, sprinkle some extra brown sugar and cinnamon on top of the bread. Bake at 325 degrees for approximately 30 minutes. Bake until they begin to brown.



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Your Board of Directors

From left (back row): Robert Smith, President, Butler County; Jody Weaver, Clarion County; **(middle)** Ken Durrett, Butler County; Rick Weaver, Clarion County; John Campbell, Vice President, Forest County; **(front)** Nancy Lendyak, Armstrong County; Ken Etzel, Venango County; and Althea Smith, Secretary/Treasurer, Venango County.

 central.coop/meet-your-directors

MISSION: CEC safely provides reliable and competitively priced electricity to our consumer-members and was established by and is committed to the communities we serve.

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www.central.coop

Newsletter Editor: Kessa Moore

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Missed an issue?

Catch up at www.central.coop

Read past issues of Power Lines and stay up to date on CEC news.

