



POWER-GRAM

A Monthly Newsletter for Members of

**OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

**February
2020**



2019 Year in Review with General Manager, Mario Romero

Cludcroft
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www.ocec-inc.com

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With another year complete, I'd like to give a quick review of 2019 as we enter a new year and decade. Otero County Electric Cooperative (OCEC) has been serving our member-owners since 1939. At the Annual Meeting in August, we celebrated our 80th Anniversary with record attendance of nearly 500 members and over 900 people in total. Members enjoyed prizes, goody bags, lunch and learned about their co-op.

Substantial construction projects continued throughout 2019 to improve service and reliability. The rebuild of the electrical system in the Town of Carrizozo is more than half complete, with the remaining portion expected to be completed in 2020. The rebuild of the line serving Sunspot, Timberon, Bug Scuffle, and Long Ridge was also nearly completed, with the remaining construction expected to finish in the first quarter of 2020. Replacement of failing underground facilities in Alto Village was ongoing throughout the year and will continue well into this year. From a planning perspective, we have completed our next Construction Work Plan, which guides what projects we are planning over the next few years. The largest planned project will be addressing an aging system in the Hondo Valley. Over the next several years, we will be working with landowners to most efficiently rebuild much of the system between Ruidoso Downs and Tinnie.

Safety continues to be our highest operational priority. Our Board, management, and employees have made a concerted effort to focus on safety each and every day. This effort is paying off. I am proud to report our line crew had no lost-time accidents in 2019.

As many of you know, a rate change was filed with the New Mexico Public Regulations Commission in December, which went into effect on January 1, 2020. The overall rate change was an increase of approximately 4.39%. With the last rate increase going into effect in late 2015, this equates to less than a 1.1% increase each year. With this rate adjustment, most residential bills will increase between \$5.00 and \$8.00 per month.

After years of declining energy sales, I am happy to report we are finally starting to see a small uptick in both 2018 and 2019. "Beneficial Electrification" is the most recent buzzword in the industry and may help sustain this trend. With expected increasing adoption rates of new technologies like electric vehicles (EV's), high-efficiency heat-pump HVAC systems, and battery-powered outdoor tools (chainsaws, lawnmowers, snowblowers, etc.), beneficial electrification has the potential to help keep electric rates stable, while lowering members' overall energy costs. Increased EV adoption likely has the greatest potential benefit to Cooperative Mem-

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Each year, OCEC's Electric Education Foundation awards thousands of dollars in scholarships to deserving students to continue their education at a New Mexico university, college or technical school. To be eligible, the student must be an active member receiving service from Otero County Electric.

Applications are available now at any OCEC office, from our website, www.ocec-inc.com, or from your school guidance counselor.

Don't wait, deadline to apply is March 16.



2019 Year in Review (continued)

bers. Within the next year or two, you will start seeing more EV chargers in our area. Please read our article on Electric Vehicles in the October 2019 edition of the Power Gram if you want to learn more.

From a broader perspective, I would like to briefly address topics affecting our co-op from a state, regional, and national level. In 2019, the Energy Transition Act was signed into law, which requires NM co-ops to have 40% of their energy come from renewable resources by 2025, 50% by 2030, and a goal of 80% by 2050. Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association, which is the cooperative who supplies almost all of our power, already produces over 30% of our energy from renewable resources. With recently announced coal plant closures and the installation of over 1,000 megawatts of very low-cost renewable energy in the next few years, Tri-State is confident they will meet the 2025 and 2030 requirements, with little to no impact on rates. More details can be found in the July 2019 Power Gram.

As you can see, 2019 has been a busy and eventful year. Going into 2020, I leave you with one thought. In the simplest terms, OCEC exists to improve the lives of the people in the communities we serve. We do this by providing safe, reliable, and affordable electricity to our members. Thank you for your support and for allowing us to serve you.

Is Your Account Information Correct

Having the correct physical address noted on your account is important so crews respond to the proper location in the event of an outage. In addition, your electric bill gives you a document to provide proof of residency when needing to renew your driver's license.

It is also a good idea to ensure the rate class for your account is right so you are being charged correctly. The example below shows 2 areas on your bill to check for accuracy. If you have questions about the proper rate class for your account, please call and speak to someone in the Member Services Department for assistance.

Account # 1234500
Emergency Add: 123 First Street
Map Location: 6-1111
Service Desc.: 123 First Street
Rate: RESIDENTIAL

Previous Bill Amount	\$99.00
Payment Received	\$99.00CR
Adjustments	\$0.00
Balance Forward	\$0.00

Current Charges 01/10/2020	\$107.00
Amount Due	\$107.00
Past Due After 02/02/2020	
Current charges only	

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP

Are you using your fireplace efficiently? Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire, and close the damper when a fire is not burning.

Source: energy.gov

**For account balance or
to pay by phone, call toll free,
1-844-846-2695**

New Rate in Effect as of January 1, 2020

Recently announced rate increase for OCEC members went into effect on January 1. Details about the new rates can be found on OCEC's website—www.ocec-inc.com. Your February 10, 2020 statement will be the first bill reflecting the revised amounts.

If you have questions about how the new rate will affect your future electric bills, please call the office and speak to one of the Member Services team members who will be happy to analyze your electric usage and billing.

January Employment Anniversary

Mary Jo Cook—Accounting Clerk—4 years
Leah Freeman—Accountant I—6 years
Daimhin Kelley—Crew Chief—13 years
Damon Marez—IT Manager—16 years
Leslie Samora—MSR Supervisor—17 years
Baylee Sanderson—Staking Technician—1 year
Debbie Zintak—Meter Reader/Collections—12 years

Vegetation Management Update

Crews working to trim trees and vegetation in rights-of-way are currently in the following areas and are expected to remain there for the next few weeks

- Glencoe/San Patricio
- Capitan
- Bent
- Cloudcroft
- East of Mayhill

OCEC reminds members that you may see vehicles, ATVs and crew members from Rogers Tree Service, Wilson Thinning and Penasco Gravel trimming and cutting trees near existing power lines. Vehicles will be marked with their company name and on OCEC contractor placard.