



# POWER-GRAM

A Monthly Newsletter for Members of

**OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

**April  
2020**



## **We Are Here for You Amid Coronavirus Pandemic**

As we all deal with the new realities brought on by the coronavirus, we want to assure you that your local electric cooperative is here to help you. Early in this crisis, our staff began to plan with a special emphasis on ensuring we can continue to provide the reliable electric service you have come to expect from your electric cooperative.

So far, that is exactly what has happened. We know that after a sufficient supply of food and water, electricity is the No. 1 thing you need to maintain some sense of normalcy as we hunker down in our homes. With that in mind, keeping the power flowing is priority for everyone involved in maintaining the electric cooperative system.

We thought you might want to know some of the steps we have taken in order to keep your power flowing. We've closed our lobbies to prevent potential exposure. Instead, we are encouraging members to use our drop box, online and phone payment options and the "good old" US Postal Service to pay bills.

Many of our employees are working from home. We've divided departments so that they can practice social distancing even when in the office. If you call, the phones will be answered as always. Any business you need to do with us can be handled by fax, email, or by using the drop box outside each office.

We have separated our line crews from other employees and even from each other when feasible to limit possible spread of the virus. New routines are in place for contractors working on our system in order to keep them away from employees.

Our management team and board are meeting constantly to fine-tune this plan. We are in contact with the other electric cooperatives in New Mexico and with New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperative Association, which in turn is working closely with our national association, the state legislature, governor and New Mexico Department of Health.

So far, it is working well and everyone has adapted to the new norm. Nothing brings out the best in our employees better than a crisis situation. It's kind of like gold that has been tested in fire...stronger and more beautiful!

Our focus here is on doing our part to keep your life as normal as possible through this situation and beyond. The cooperative way of doing business has brought us this far, and the cooperative way will help us through this crisis.

All the best to everyone. Stay healthy, stay home and we will get through this together!

[www.ocec-inc.com](http://www.ocec-inc.com)

## **LOBBY HOURS**

**8 AM - 4 PM  
Monday - Friday**

**TO REPORT AN  
OUTAGE, CALL  
1-800-548-4660**

**FOR BALANCE  
INFORMATION  
OR TO PAY YOUR  
BILL, CALL  
1-844-846-2695**

FOLLOW US ON  
**facebook**

**LOBBY TEMPORARILY CLOSED**  
to help prevent the spread  
of COVID-19 Coronavirus

**EFFECTIVE MONDAY**

**MARCH 23, 2020**

**ALL OCEC OFFICE LOBBIES WILL  
BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC UNTIL  
FURTHER NOTICE**

LINeworkERS KNOW HOW TO GET THE JOB DONE.

LET'S THANK THEM FOR POWERING OUR LIVES.



### Safety Measures Amid Coronavirus Pandemic

Safety is the culture of OCEC. In joining the requirements of government officials to protect one another from contracting and spreading COVID-19, we are implementing lessons learned from others to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Equally important is the well-being of our employees. We are using best practices, good judgment and safety precautions to better serve you. We are also utilizing innovative ways to work together from safe spaces, including video conferencing, teleconferencing and more.

To help your cooperative and area communities reduce spreading the virus and encourage social distancing, please follow these guidelines:

- ◆ Contact our support staff and report power outages by calling 1-800-548-4660.
- ◆ Keep up with our latest updates by following us on Facebook and our website.
- ◆ Conveniently pay your energy bill and access account information online at [www.ocec-inc.com](http://www.ocec-inc.com) or call our secure payment line at 1-844-846-2695.
- ◆ If you see our employees working in the field, please wave a great big hello but keep your distance. We need to keep them – and you – healthy and safe.

We are taking additional steps to mitigate unnecessary risk:

- ◆ Work-related travel has been suspended and participation in group gatherings halted.
- ◆ Many of our staff are now working from home to help with social distancing.

Please stay safe and know that OCEC will continue to operate and provide the highest-quality service possible for you, the members we serve. The spread of COVID-19 may necessitate changes in how we interact, but it will not change what we do.

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP

This spring, consider using a rain barrel to save energy. Rain barrels capture rainwater from a roof that can be used later for watering your lawn, garden or indoor plants.

### April Employment Anniversary

Sherry Crosson—Accountant—Part-time—44 years  
Jessica Gaston—Accountant—11 years  
Linda Hamilton—HR Manager—20 years  
Chris Hughes—Journeyman Lineman—6 years  
Julie Walker-Grinder—Chief Finance Officer—5 years

### WORKING FROM HOME? KIDS NOT AT SCHOOL?

1

#### PROGRAM YOUR THERMOSTAT

Setting your thermostat one degree lower when heating or one degree higher when cooling can reduce energy use by up to 5%.

2

#### WASH LAUNDRY IN COLD WATER

Using warm water instead of hot can cut a load's energy use in half, and using cold water will save even more.

3

#### AIR DRY DISHES

This can cut your dishwasher's energy use by up to 50%.

4

#### USE LED BULBS

Lighting can amount to up to 12% of monthly energy use. LED bulbs can cut lighting costs by 75%.

Try these tips for managing energy use to avoid higher costs later on.

OCEC understands the financial hardship the COVID-19 outbreak may be causing our members. During this time, we encourage you to pay what you can toward your electric bill to avoid an extremely high balance when situations return to normal. If you're struggling to pay your bill, call us at **1-800-548-4660**. Representatives will be happy to work with you to find an arrangement that fits your situation.