

Powerline Press

NEWSLETTER



A Supplement of Oklahoma Living Published by Lake Region Electric Cooperative for its members. **March 2025**

Helping Our Communities

with Operation Round-Up



Operation Round-Up is a charitable program funded entirely by LREC members for our communities and members. You can “round up” your electric or telecom fiber bill each month to the nearest dollar, and those extra cents go into a charitable fund. It doesn’t seem like much to donate that extra change, and alone, it’s not. But with 11,974 electric members and 3,414 fiber customers participating, that change turns into thousands of dollars each month and tens of thousands of dollars each year.

All that money goes directly back to families in need and worthwhile organizations in our local communities. In 2024, \$79,902 was granted through our Operation Round-Up program to our members for things like medical expenses, food banks, school programs, shelters, and organizational projects.

LREC has established an independent foundation that oversees the funds and grants donations. This nine-member board is comprised of local volunteers from across the service territory. They meet quarterly to review applications and grant donations. Every penny contributed to Operation Round-Up is distributed within the service territory. Your donations stay local!

**Operation Round-Up
Awarded \$79,902
in Grants for 2024**

Below are a few grant recipients from the recent January meeting.

- Humane Society of Cherokee County – Spay/Neuter Clinic - \$2,000
- Keys 4-H – Travel Expenses - \$2,500
- Norwood Elementary – Upgrading Library - \$2,500
- Tahlequah Community Playhouse – Production Cost/Supplies - \$3,775.16
- Tahlequah Sports League – Backstops - \$5,000
- Wagoner High School Grad Night 2025 – Graduation After Party - \$1,000

Applications and deadlines are available online at lrecok.coop/operation-round-up

Application deadlines are 4 p.m. on the 1st day of January, April, July, and October.

For more information and grant applications visit lrecok.coop/operation-round-up

LREC Advocates for Rural Communities

Advocacy is at the heart of Lake Region Electric Cooperative's (LREC) mission, ensuring that the voices of our local members are heard at every level of government. As the 60th Oklahoma Legislature kicked off last month, LREC joined other electric cooperatives in Oklahoma City for the "Out of the Gate" reception. This event provided a valuable opportunity to connect with 79 state legislators and key officials, discussing the future of rural energy and broadband expansion. Representing LREC were Scott Manes, Board President; Glen Clark, Director of Marketing; JuaNita Keener, Member Services; and CEO Hamid Vahdatipour, along with three student ambassadors, Calan Teague, Hailey Fort, and Adam Luna from our service area.



Beyond the Capitol, LREC remains active in legislative advocacy year-round. We attend town hall meetings, host office visits, and organize community events to engage directly with lawmakers. These grassroots efforts strengthen relationships and reinforce our commitment to serving and improving the rural communities we call home.

FIBER INTERNET IS THE FUTURE and the future is here.

Robots that do ALL our chores? Yes, please! We may not know what the future will bring. But one thing is certain: you will need fast, reliable internet that stays fast and reliable no matter how many new gadgets you add or what new robot you invent.

Residential Internet

Fast Internet

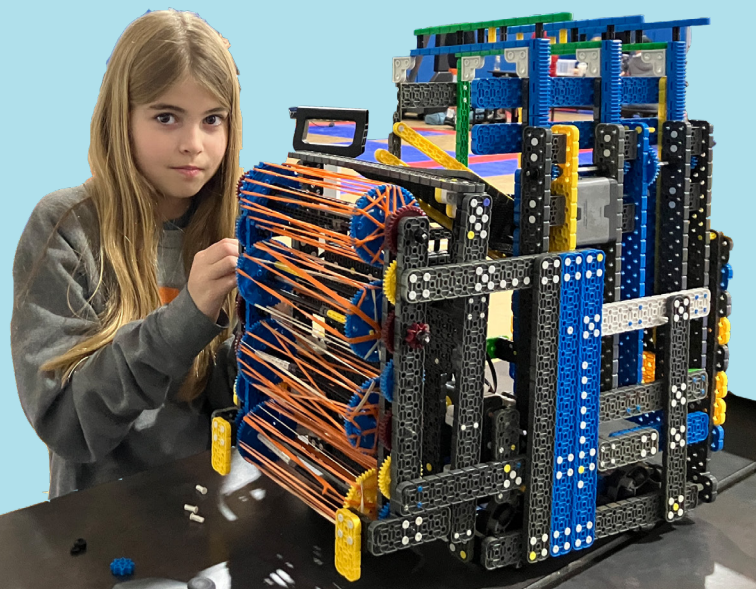
100 Mbps	\$58.94/mo
500 Mbps	\$108.94/mo
1,000 Mbps	\$118.94/mo

Even Faster Internet

2,500 Mbps	\$148.94/mo
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Duane Watkins Retires After 15 Years of Service

LREC Lineman Foreman Duane Watkins officially hung up his hard hat and climbing hooks last month, closing out a dedicated career in linework. Known for his positive attitude, Duane joined LREC in 2010, transitioning from the ironwork industry to pursue a new challenge. With family connections to the cooperative—several longtime employees and an uncle who retired from LREC—he felt right at home from the start.

“When I was hired, I started on a tree-trimming crew for nine months before moving to line crews,” Duane recalled. “I enjoyed working with all the guys—it was fun work and a great job.”

Among his many experiences, storm restoration trips stood out, particularly a deployment to Louisiana after a devastating hurricane.

“It was eye-opening to see the extent of the damage and work the long hours, but the appreciation from the locals made it all worthwhile. Even late at night, as we returned to the contractor man camps, people were still waving, honking, handing out water and food—cheering us on after those long days,” Duane shared.

Now at 65, Duane says he’ll miss the work and the camaraderie of the crews but knew it was time to step away.

“I have some aches and pains, but if you keep your body in shape, you can last in this field for many years. That’s something I always told the younger guys. I also enjoyed the pole-top rescue training—I proved I could still climb quickly and do the work, which was a good feeling.”



Duane Watkins

As he moves into retirement, Duane looks forward to catching up on projects at home, taking long-awaited vacations, and spending more time with family.

“I feel like I haven’t taken a vacation in 15 years! I want to enjoy time with my wife, stay healthy, and watch my grandbabies grow up,” he said.

LREC thanks Duane for his years of service and dedication. We wish him all the best in this next chapter!

ROUTER PLACEMENT FOR MAXIMIZING WI-FI SIGNAL

Locate your router centrally

Position your router in the center of your home, ideally on the main floor, to ensure an even signal distribution. Avoid placing in a corner, basement, or far side of the house. If you have a larger home, consider upgrading to a LRTC mesh router system (multiple routers). 2915800

Interference is your enemy

Avoid placing the router near devices that emit signals (e.g., printers) or near metal objects and thick walls, which can disrupt the signal.

Install router high for better signal

Mount the router in a raised area, like high on a shelf or wall, to minimize obstacles and improve signal range. Wi-Fi signals travel better when not blocked by furniture or other objects.



Power On

Where Do You Find Value?

Did you know the average daily cost of electricity is \$4.57 or around \$140 per month?



\$6 Morning To-Go Latte



\$10 Fast-Food Lunch Combo



<\$5 All-Day Power

Electricity fuels our daily life essentials, from heating & cooling equipment to entertainment devices and appliances. Think of how vital power is compared to other everyday purchases. *That's real value.*

Sources: Energy Information Administration, MoneyGeek and CNET.

STAY IN THE KNOW

Stay connected by keeping your contact information up to date. Current contact information benefits you in multiple ways.

- ✓ **Faster outage reporting and response**
- ✓ **Smoother customer service interactions**
- ✓ **Improved access to member benefits and programs**
- ✓ **Timely alerts about planned outages**

Give us a call at **918-772-2526** or visit our website www.lrecok.coop/update-contact-info or you can complete the slip (right) and return to LREC: PO Box 127 Hulbert, OK 74441.



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Office Hours

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Hidden Account Number

Look for your account number hidden in this issue of the *Powerline Press*. If you find your number, Lake Region Electric will credit your next bill. To claim your credit, notify LREC's Hulbert office by phone during the month of publication.

The amount increases by \$10 with each issue the prize goes unclaimed to a maximum of \$50.

Cooperative bylaws are available upon request at Lake Region Electric Cooperative's office in Hulbert.