

Lighthouse Electric Cooperative reaches safety milestone



Lighthouse Electric cooperative employees

Courtesy photo for The Sun

Special to The Sun

MEMPHIS – Lighthouse Electric Cooperative has reached a milestone in safety. The cooperative has worked over 500,000 hours without a loss time accident.

Lighthouse did not reach this milestone by accident. We have all heard of the old adage that states plan your work and work your plan. Around an electric cooperative you plan how to do the job safely, then you perform the work safely.

In May, the Lighthouse Board of Directors passed a resolution to join the Commitment to Zero Contacts initiative. Lighthouse has joined more than 500 electric cooperatives from 41 states in pledging to take steps to help eliminate serious injuries and fatalities due to electric contacts. A new job planning app has been created as a part of the safety initiative.

The purpose of this app is to slow work down and

direct line personnel's attention to "life-saving" rules to help build and reinforce safe habits. The app delivers a job briefing process that emphasizes engaging analytical thinking and reasoning in safety procedures.

Under the direction of Albert Daniel, general manager, Lighthouse started a safety committee in 2019, the committee met for the first time in January.

The safety committee is made up of employees who work in the office and linemen who work outside the office. Any employee who has an idea or a way to improve safety can bring it to the committee. The committee meets once a month and makes recommendations to the general manager.

The safety committee recommended purchasing AEDs for the cooperative. Lighthouse is purchasing two AEDs this fall, one AED for the Floydada office and one for the office in Memphis. In 2020, Light-

house plans to purchase two more AEDs.

The electric cooperatives in Texas are blessed to have a good safety program. The Loss Control division of Texas Electric Cooperatives have safety specialist that conduct safety meetings regularly at cooperatives across the state. Phil Henricks is the safety specialist for Lighthouse and has 27 years of experience in electrical line work and 10 years in safety training.

When Phil meets with the linemen, they discuss safety practices and procedures that are in place. Accidents from other electric utilities are evaluated and discussed by Phil and the line crews. Why did the accident happen? Could the accident have been prevented?

This discussion helps linemen recognize hazards they might encounter in a similar situation and work safely getting the job completed.

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Brooks continues service to community



Bev Odom/The Red River Sun

Collingsworth County Home Delivered Meals (CCHDM) Director Leona Davis, left, reminisced with 20 year volunteer Vonna Brooks and her delivery partner, Peggy Neeley. Neeley formerly served as the volunteer program director for CCHDM among her duties with Panhandle Community Services, and retired about six years ago. Her husband, Jack Neeley, continues to serve as a volunteer as well with CCHDM.

Special to The Sun

WELLINGTON — One of the longest serving volunteers for Collingsworth County Home Delivered Meals (CCHDM), Vonna Brooks has served under five program directors during her tenure.

Recently recognized by CCHDM and Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Brooks has 20 plus years of volunteer service. She worked at Sears until just before they closed, and then worked for Hatch Dry Goods until they sold out in May 1993.

Brooks started delivering meals with her husband, Hubert, after he retired back in the 1990s. They enjoyed seeing the meal recipients and talking to them. Over time she becomes attached to the recipients and continues to enjoy checking on them.

Now, it is a way for Brooks to get out of the house and have interaction with others to keep her spirits up as well as lift the spirits of others. She rides along and assists Peggy Neeley. The team enjoys visiting with each other and seeing everyone as they deliver their route.

"Without volunteers like Vonna with a long standing commitment to helping others and our community, our program would not exist," said CCHDM Director Leona Davis. "CCHDM relies heavily on volunteer assistance to deliver the meals and check on our recipients and assist them to age in place in their homes as long as possible, with just a little outside assistance."

The meal program is always in need of volunteers.

"We are very thankful we have had the Wellington High School students helping us out over the last several years, but with class schedules this year, we won't be able have their assistance," added Davis. "We are always looking for additional volunteers whether it may be just a day here and there, or a week at a time or every week."

If you have about 45 minutes to an hour to volunteer, come by and see Davis and the CCHDM staff at 1001 Amarillo St.

"Sign up to brighten someone's day!" Davis said. "We'll even throw in a hot lunch for you if you deliver meals!"



Courtesy photo for The Sun

A section of the Childress County Solar Farm by M.A. Martenson Company of Minneapolis, Minnesota is pictured. The 1,400-acre solar farm is located east of the town of Childress, south of US287. It is at the intersection of County Road 17 and County Road AA, with the photographer capturing a nice sunset in the background. Brent Hicks, Project Manager, discussed the solar farm at the August Adult Fellowship Luncheon at Childress First United Methodist Church.

Clean energy solar farm panels convert sunrays into electricity

By Grace Holman

The Red River Sun

CHILDRESS – Rows of 838,000 solar panels on 1,450 acres in Childress County constitute the largest solar farm in Texas, producing 326 megawatts for homes and businesses.

Brent Hicks, Project Manager II with M. A. Mortenson Company of Minneapolis, Minn., is the construction supervisor for the Childress County solar farm, with an October 2019 completion date. Construction began in November 2018. Mortenson is the number one solar farm construction firms in the US.

Hicks gave details about the solar farm during the Abilene District United Methodist Women (UMW) meeting August 23, hosted by Childress First United Methodist Church UMW. In her introduction of the speaker, UMW member Lila Hoobler said preservation of natural resources and respect for the earth are among basic tenets of the United Methodist Church and UMW.

Working in cooperation with county government is a mission of Mortenson, with solar farms a new industry with constant updates, Hicks said. He has a degree in construction management, to leave the Childress farm when complete in November.

Mortenson, however, does not build only solar farms, Hicks noted. The company has done construction for ALDI, a German family-owned discount supermarket chain. Other construction jobs have been stadiums, hospitals, offices and churches.

The solar farm concept is simple, Hicks, "convert sunlight into electricity." His talk featured slide show illustration of this conversion. Nighttime - with no sun - is not a deterrent, Hicks explained, with huge batteries to store electricity, storage of electricity one endeavor Mortenson is exploring. Solar power creates electricity as DC (Direct Current) to be converted into AC (Alternating Current) used in the US. The change from DC to AC is through 83 converters, with the current sent to power companies through Texas. The identity of these companies is confidential, Hicks said, and Mortenson does not set the price the customer pays for electricity.

A visit to the solar farm, north on each side of US287, shows the panels in 9,855 tracking rows, but "don't drive in (the farm)," Hicks

said. The panels are at varying heights above the ground, to allow rotation of the panels to have maximum access to sun. Panels are 1 ½ feet off the ground, for movement, with rows arranged so that no row is ever in the shade created by another row.

The choice for a solar farm site involves several factors, Hicks said. Closeness to a transmission line, which companies are potential customers, availability and cost of land, type of land and climate are primary factors.

Topography is not the sole factor in choosing a plot of land for construction of a solar farm.

The surveyor will drill a hole; if rocks, or the bedrock is struck, the location is nixed.

Persons adept in several professions are involved in the preliminary work before construction, Hicks said. Climate, including rainfall, hail, wind and tornados; topography, soil (erosion and stability) and vegetation, especially grass, best suited for the planned construction area are considered in the preliminary plans. A geologic hydrologic technician calculates water flow in keeping with the contour of land to minimize erosion.

The solar panels, also called PV Panels and modules, are arranged in eight tracts on the Childress far. Panels are manufactured in both the US and abroad, particularly in Asian countries, about 50-50, Hicks said. They are made of biodegradable glass, encased in a recyclable metallic frame. Although manufactured abroad, the panels are designed in the US.

"The panels are durable but can break under extreme circumstances. They have a 30-year life expectancy," Hicks said. In answer to a question about hail, common here, Hicks said the panels are strong enough to withstand most hailstorms. Also questioned is the effect of high wind speed and possible tornados, another facet of local climate. Hicks said the design and fixture into the ground to withstand high winds and even tornados are factored into the design.

The panels move all day, with programming for the different seasons, Hicks said. If seen flat rather than angled, "something is known to be coming, such as high winds," Hicks explained.

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Cassie Colson is Passionate about Her Patients

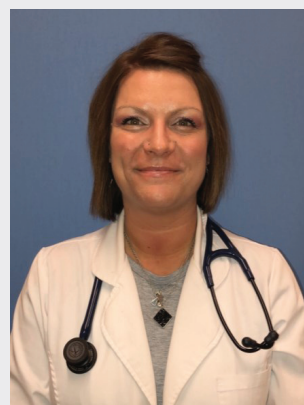
"I can't think of anything I would rather do than provide patient care," says Cassie. "Working first as a nurse at Collingsworth General and now as a family nurse practitioner (FNP), I have the opportunity to be of real help to my neighbors when they are most vulnerable. In return, their life stories and their life experiences inspire me."

Cassie provides patients at Collingsworth Family Medicine with preventive, diagnostic and treatment services during the day, and emergency care in the Collingsworth General emergency department. *Cassie is a patient person.*

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Courtesy photo for The Sun

Western Oklahoma State University President Chad Wiginton, left, and Lawton's Cameron University President John McArthur, expand degree options for education, agriculture and math majors with their recent agreement for students in Southwest Oklahoma.

WOSC, Cameron enter agreement

Special to The Sun

ALTUS, Okla. — Western Oklahoma State College and Cameron University have entered into an agreement that will enable agriculture, liberal arts and mathematics majors who earn associate degrees at WOSC to more easily work toward bachelor's degrees at Cameron.

The articulation agreement was announced today by the presidents of both higher education institutions and goes into effect immediately.

"For decades, Western and Cameron have worked diligently to meet the needs of Southwest Oklahoma through higher education and have often collaborated informally," said Chad Wiginton, president of Western Oklahoma State College. "We are pleased to announce these articulation agreements, which will allow for a seamless transfer between our two institutions and ultimately benefit our students."

Often called "2+2 articulation agreements" because they combine the two years of lower-division study at the community college level with the two years of upper-

division work at a university, these agreements allow Western students who complete associate degrees in three different educational fields to be admitted directly into Cameron. There they can work toward bachelor's degrees without losing any college credit earned at WOSC.

Specifically, WOSC students working toward Associate in Science degrees in Agriculture will seamlessly transfer into CU's agriculture program after graduation. There they can work toward a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture, which offers options in agribusiness management, agronomy, animal science or general agriculture.

WOSC graduates with Associate of Arts degrees in Liberal Arts can work toward a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education at CU. Students who earn Associate of Science degrees in Mathematics and Sciences from Western can work toward a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mathematics from Cameron. In no case will they lose any college credit earned at WOSC.

In most cases, lower division agriculture coursework at Western is identical

to Cameron's. In situations where courses are not identical, an equivalent core course is assigned. Hours earned by transferring WOSC graduates will count toward CU bachelor's degrees.

"We are excited about the chance to increase educational opportunities in our part of the state in the fields of agriculture, education and mathematics," said John McArthur, president of Cameron University. "The ag industry continues to be vital to Oklahoma's economy, and teachers and graduates with math experience continue to be in short supply. Cameron wants to support students interested in careers in those fields."

Both institutions agree to help students complete their degree programs in a timely manner. As part of the five-year agreement, Cameron will assign a specific advisor to WOSC graduates to help them progress through the program successfully.

"We appreciate President McArthur and his team for joining forces with Western as we all work diligently to contribute to the social and economic welfare of this great region of the state," Wiginton noted.

sons, four supervisors and four craft team members, are in the HVT (High Voltage Group) two energy personnel. Third party consultants are involved with the farm. Local workforce is 38 percent, with others commuting from area towns.

Mortenson maintains community involvement, notably the "Catch the Sun" elementary school program, complete with two books the students receive. School fundraisers have been conducted in Childress and Quanah, and a golf tournament is in the works. Toys, clothing, school supplies, and backpacks - 300 - have been provided to schools as a donation match by Mortenson. The company has made a quarter million dollar purchase locally.

Hicks describes Mortenson as "one of the best companies" for employment, with one reason being that the company "contributes to the betterment of the environment."

Hicks will leave Childress when his job is complete - construction of the solar farm - to return to Minneapolis for a brief stay before reporting to his next job in Virginia.

Childress Healthcare Center celebrates birthdays



Whitney Wyatt/The Red River Sun

Childress Healthcare Center Administrator Amanda Self with her grandmother Kitty Stuart



Margaret Jackson, Donny Jackson and Carolyn Heathington at the birthday party



Jenny Lou Taylor with Occupational Therapist Ellie Carter at the celebration



David Galligan celebrated his birthday with his wife Darlene and grandchildren

By Whitney Wyatt

The Red River Sun

CHILDRESS – Childress Healthcare Center held a birthday party for its residents who had birthdays in August.

"It's special," said Donna Brown, activity director at Childress Healthcare Center. "The residents really appreciate it."

The birthday parties are a monthly celebration at Childress Healthcare Center. Complete with birthday cake, ice cream and decorations, they celebrated David Galligan, Kitty Stuart, Marjorie Hendrick, Willie Dobbs, Albert Moore, Mary Hill, Donald Jackson and Connie Reynolds, who all turned a year older in August.

For David Galligan, his wife and grandkids even came to the party. "It's wonderful," Galligan said. "Donna is awesome."

Brown said the same thing about Candy Cottage. The shop that specializes in sweets donates two birthday cakes a month. One is sugar-free.

"It's a really awesome thing," Brown said. "They never charge us."

SOLAR

From Page 11A

An eighty percent degradation of a panel causes a mere 20 per cent decrease in electrical output, Hicks said.

Hicks compared environmental side effects of fossil fuel and natural gas in producing electricity - global warming, emissions, air pollution, water usage and waste - to solar farm which have no side effects. Among consequences of fossil fuel usage are respiratory problems such as a COPD.

Mortenson's Childress solar farm has more than 400 personnel. Eight per-

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