

Powered by People

Celebrating the retirement of three employees whose dedication helped shape VVEC for decades.



Every retirement tells a story, but this year, three stories come together to tell something even bigger about Verdigris Valley Electric Cooperative. Between them, Larry Sylvester, Inez Wright and Jodi Cooper represent 79 years of service, countless friendships and a lasting impact on the members and coworkers they served alongside every day.

Their careers took different paths... Larry in the field, Inez at the front desk and Jodi in several areas across the cooperative... but when asked what they'll miss most, all three shared the same answer: the people. Through storms, changing technology, daily challenges and years of growth, the relationships

they built became the heart of their careers and the foundation of the cooperative culture they helped create.

As they begin well-earned retirements, they leave behind stories, laughter, traditions and examples for future generations to follow.

Please join us as we celebrate Larry, Inez and Jodi and the remarkable legacy they leave at VVEC!



VVEC encourages the safe, efficient use of electricity and actively supports community initiatives that benefit our members and the public.

IN CASE OF AN OUTAGE

- First, check your fuses or circuit breakers. Every service is different. You may have fuses or circuit breakers in your house, on the side of your house, under your meter, or all three places. Check to see if your neighbors have electricity.
- Then, call the co-op at 371-2584 or 1-800-870-5948. Have your account number, name as it appears on the account, and address handy to give to the dispatcher. If you should get a recording, leave your information; every message will be answered.
- Download the SmartHub app at www.smarthubapp.com to report outages from your smartphone.

SUMMER RESIDENTIAL RATES

April through September usage;
May through October billing

Customer Charge: \$40.00

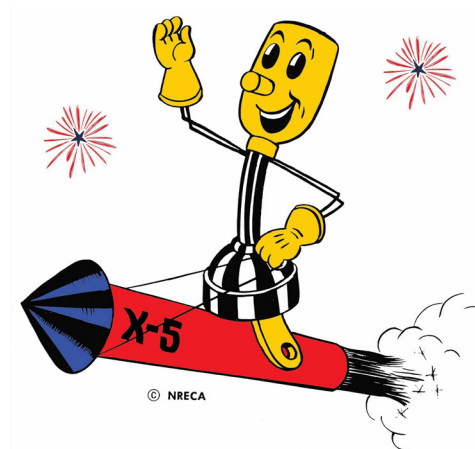
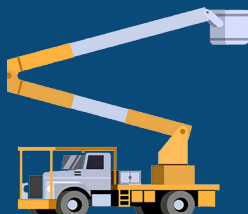
Energy Charge: 1st 2000 kWh | \$.08279 / kWh
over 2000 kWh | \$.08789 / kWh

A power cost adjustment (PCA) will be applied to all bills when the actual cost of power purchased exceeds or is less than 62.088 mills per kWh.

In addition, a gross receipts tax of 2% of revenue will be included, plus additional taxes, if applicable.

Tree crews are working to clear right-of-way on the Oologah and Javine substations.

Brush Coordinator:
Chub Brewer
918-586-6208



Verdigris Valley Electric Cooperative earns this award based on data modeled by the ACSI® in 202X. Award criteria are determined by the ACSI based on customers rating their satisfaction with VVEC in a survey independent of the syndicated ACSI Energy Utility Study. For more about the ACSI, visit www.theacsi.org/badges. ACSI and its logo are registered trademarks of the American Customer Satisfaction Index LLC.

LARRY SYLVESTER



After 43 years at Verdigris Valley Electric, Larry Sylvester is retiring with a legacy built on hard work, humility and always answering the call.

Larry's journey into the electric industry wasn't exactly planned. Fresh out of high school, he was hauling hay when an opportunity at VVEC opened up. "Duane knew some employees and talked to them. I interviewed and was hired. Nothing planned, it just happened," he said.

Over the years, Larry worked on the maintenance crew throughout the Osage, Tulsa and Rogers County areas. In four decades, he has seen the industry transform dramatically including vast improvements to schooling, mapping and technology.

When asked how he'd describe the people at VVEC, Larry kept it simple: "Characters with character. We all have different strengths and weaknesses, but collectively we make a good team."

The teamwork is what Larry says he'll miss most. "The guys. The camaraderie. Lunches, coffee in the mornings... just stupid guy stuff," he laughed.

Larry remembers the 2007 ice storm as one of the most memorable times in his career. Transmission lines were down and some members were without power for weeks. But amid the exhaustion came moments he never forgot.

"We went into a restaurant and the people there paid our bill and gave us a standing ovation," he recalled. "That was extremely humbling and so very appreciated."

He also remembers how different outage work was before cell phones and constant communication. "When you went on outages, nobody knew where you were or what was happening," he said. "It was hard on families. I'm glad my family doesn't have to worry about me like that now."



Throughout his career, Larry says Danny Lemke had a major influence on him. "He showed me a lot, even years into my career. We learned a lot together."

One story that still makes him laugh involved a right-of-way job in the middle of the night when a coworker pretended to be a mountain lion to scare him. "He got me pretty good," Larry laughed.

As retirement begins, Larry is looking forward to sleeping through storms, spending more time with family at the lake and traveling while he still can. He and his wife, Angela, have a daughter, Jessica, and a granddaughter, Brooklyn who join us in celebrating this special time.

When asked how he hopes people remember him, Larry's answer reflected the dependable reputation he built over four decades. "I always answered the phone," he said. "If the call came in, I'd go, regardless of what was going on in my life... I guess the guy who was always there."

And what kept him at VVEC all these years?

"They never told me to stop showing up," he said with a grin. "I was never the first person through the door, but they kept letting me come back."

Before wrapping up, Larry shared one final piece of advice for younger employees:

"It doesn't matter if you're the guy diggin the hole or the guy taking out the trash (or the guy hauling hay), do your best, because you never know who's watching and what opportunities will come from it."



Thank you for 43 years of service, Larry!

Enjoy your retirement!

JODI COOPER

After eight years at Verdigris Valley Electric Cooperative, Jodi Cooper is heading into retirement with plenty of memories, laughter and friendships she says made every day worthwhile.



During her time at VVEC, Jodi worked in several areas including data entry, the mailroom, as operator, in office services, CPCs, vaulting and eventually moving back to operator.

She said the company's location and opportunity originally drew her to the co-op, but it was the people who made it feel like home.

"The people and all the fun we've had," Jodi said when reflecting on her favorite memories. "There's been a lot of laughter, and I've had some really good supervisors."

One moment she says she'll never forget was the day employees had to take shelter during severe weather.

"We've always had storms and our linemen have responded to them, but we'd never had to actually take shelter at work ourselves," she said. "That was crazy!"

Jodi says one of the biggest changes she's seen over the years has been technology, but some things never changed, especially the friendships built along the way.

"What I'll miss most is the friends I've made and seeing everyone in the halls every day," she said. "Just the people."



Known around the office for her laughter and positive attitude, Jodi shared simple but heartfelt advice for newer employees: "Be on time. Be polite. Treat members with kindness and respect, regardless of the walk of life someone is in."

Outside of work, Jodi and her husband, Kevin, who have been married for 43 years and counting, are looking forward to slower mornings and spending more time enjoying life together. Retirement will also give them the opportunity to travel more as they continue checking sprint car tracks off their list, with plans to visit Texas, Knoxville, and the famous Eldora Speedway in Ohio.

Jodi also looks forward to scrapbooking, gardening, birdwatching, working on family history projects and caring for her plants and dog.



As she looks ahead to retirement, Jodi says she hopes people remember her as someone who was fun, kind and always good for a laugh.

Her final advice to her coworkers?

"Use your vacation time! Go live!"

Congratulations, Jodi!

INEZ WRIGHT



For 28 years, Inez Wright has been a familiar and friendly face at Verdigris Valley Electric Cooperative, building lasting friendships and brightening the days of those around her before beginning her next chapter in retirement.

Inez spent her career serving members at the front desk, a role she says never really felt like “just a job.” What originally drew her to the position? “Banking hours,” she joked with a laugh. But what kept her here all these years was much deeper.

“I love my job... it’s that simple,” she said.

Throughout nearly three decades at VVEC, Inez became known for her joyful personality, her strong relationships with members and the way she could brighten a room with humor and kindness. Coworkers describe her as funny, happy and someone who truly knew the members she served.

When reflecting on her time at the cooperative, Inez says the people are what mattered most. “I can’t imagine working anywhere else,” she said. “There have been so many favorite memories of fun with fellow employees and being around really great people.”

One moment that especially stands out to her was the ice storm of 2007, when dangerous conditions made it difficult for employees to even get to work. She remembers coworkers Marlin and McClellan helping her get safely into the building without being asked, something she says showed the caring spirit of the people at VVEC.



Still, she says the relationships she built along the way never changed. She credits coworkers and leadership for making her career meaningful, especially



Manager Alice Houston, whom she says always cared deeply about employees.

“When I was in ICU with covid, she called me every day,” Inez shared. “She really cares about us.”



When asked what she’ll miss most about VVEC, Inez didn’t hesitate: the people.

She says she’ll especially miss eating lunch every day with her long time friend, Sharon, along with all of “VVEC’s Finest”: the coworkers who made each day special and filled the years with a lot of laughter.

As retirement begins, Inez is looking forward to visiting friends, spending time outdoors and going “junkin”, antiquing and treasure hunting. While some people look forward to slowing down in retirement, Inez says she plans to stay active.

“I like being busy... that’s relaxing to me,” she said.

When asked how she hopes people remember her, her answer was simple and perfectly fitting: “A good ol’ gal.”

And for everyone who worked beside her over the last 28 years, that’s exactly how she’ll be remembered.

Congratulations on a job very well done, Inez!

Enjoy your retirement!





Member Appreciation Lunch!

We were blown away with the awesome turnout for this year's Member Appreciation Lunch! Seeing all your faces and having the chance to visit with our members was truly special and so much fun! The weather cooperated, with the rain holding off and the overcast sky providing some much-needed shade throughout much of the event.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by, you made the day memorable. We are proud to serve such a wonderful community, and having the opportunity to step away from our desks and trucks to visit with the people we serve is something we always enjoy.

Thanks to the great turnout and positive spirit of our members, the entire event ran seamlessly. It was wonderful to see neighbors catching up, families stopping by and members taking time to visit with our employees. Those personal connections are what make serving our communities so rewarding.

From all of us at Verdigris Valley Electric Cooperative, thank you for allowing us to serve you. We look forward to seeing you again next year!



VVEC sends three students to Energy Camp

Since the camp began in 1989, VVEC has sponsored YouthPower Energy Camp with the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives.

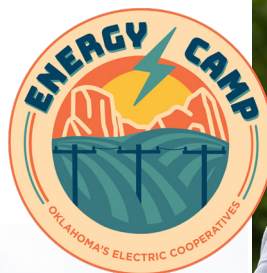
This year, Immaculee D'Oliveira, Madison Middle School, and Castin Tucker and Mathias Porter, Foyil Middle School, experienced it first-hand!



Pictured left to right: Immaculee D'Oliveira, Castin Tucker and Mathias Porter

The camp's seventh grade participants experience the exciting world of rural electrification by electing board members, working in small groups to discuss real-life issues and concerns for their communities and developing leadership skills. They witness safety demonstrations, get to take a ride in the bucket of a co-op service truck, and even climb a utility pole!

Congratulations! We are so proud of you!





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CLASSIFIEDS

SUBMIT ADS to classified@vvec.com or send to ATTN: Classified, P.O. Box 219 Collinsville, OK 74021. Ads must be in writing. Your account number, name, address and a phone number is required on all ads. The deadline for all ads is the 1st of the month. Ads submitted by the 1st of the month will run in the following month's newsletter. *Classified ads are a free service to VVEC members only. As many ads as space allows will be included in each issue. VVEC reserves the right to delete or shorten items or descriptions..*

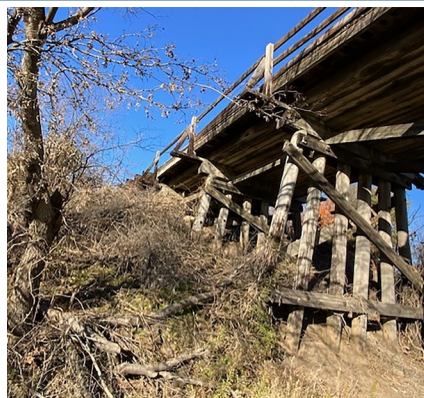
- Professional, personalized dog grooming at your home. Small dogs only. Most dogs only \$50.00. Over 40 years experience. 918-381-1170
- Handyman service to repair and remodel; affordable plumbing and electric. Call or text for free estimate; references available. 918-231-6385
- Ford New Holland Hay Rake. 1988 Model 256; \$1,275 or trade. Call or text for pictures. 918-231-6385
- Savage 30 - Series B 12 ga pump 3" chamber; \$300. 918-497-6989
- Sheltered square baled hay; \$10; No spray, Collinsville area. Text only 918-504-6264
- 500 Gal. Butane Tank, good condition. \$1,000 or best offer. If no answer, please leave message. 918-398-3340 or 918-530-8150
- Back Rack and tool box for full size pickup truck, \$250. 918-637-3314
- S&W SD9 VE, Laser sight, LN \$275 918-497-6989
- Boito - BR7 20 ga dbl bbl 2-3/4" chamber \$350. 918-497-6989



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on Facebook!

Stay connected with VVEC! Scan the QR code to follow us on social media and stay up to date on news, outages and cooperative events!



JULY MYSTERY PICTURE

Think you recognize the location? Call Megan Jackson at 918-586-6241 **starting JULY 1** to submit your guess. The **first** correct answer wins a \$50 bill credit!

Contest runs through the end of July.

June Mystery Location:
Crosses at W 2600 Rd and N 3940 Rd - NE Corner, South of Gap Rd