



the COOPERATOR

MARCH 2023 | For the members of Kay Electric Cooperative
A supplement to Oklahoma Living



On Feb. 6, the KEC board recognized José Esparza for becoming a U.S. citizen and presented him a Kay Accomplishment Coin. He is the first-ever recipient.

Pictured from left: KEC CEO Jason Boesch, Esparza, and board president Max Hohmann.

Celebrating citizenship

Kay Electric employee José Esparza completes naturalization journey

Congratulations to one of the newest U.S. citizens, José Esparza! On January 23, 2023, Esparza took the oath of allegiance, and was naturalized along with approximately 60 other foreign-nationals.

Esparza grew up in Chihuahua, Mexico. At age 18, he relocated to Blackwell. He married and became a permanent resident. After 16 years of residency, he decided to apply for citizenship.


The citizenship requirements included filling out paperwork, completing a biometrics appointment, a citizenship

interview, and attending an oath ceremony. The process took approximately 8 months. In preparation for the interview, Esparza studied 100 questions about U.S. history and government. A U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services official then asked him 10 questions; he had to answer six correctly.

About nine months ago, Esparza began working at Kay Electric as part of the tree crew—after encouragement from his friend and KEC employee, Miguel Mireles.

"We've been friends since 1994 and we

worked together in another company," Esparza says. "Every time there was an opening, Miguel told me to apply. He insisted so much."

Esparza previously worked in the oil field, but says enjoys the co-op culture and appreciates the employee benefits. When he's not working, he helps out at his family's restaurant in Ponca City, Tortilleria Los Compadres. His sister-in-law runs the restaurant, and he operates the machine that makes fresh corn tortillas. Esparza is married and has two step-children. Congratulations, José! 



OUR MISSION

Founded in 1937, Kay Electric Cooperative remains focused on our primary mission: to provide safe, affordable and reliable power for our member-owners. Today, our service territory includes 2,400 miles of line and more than 5,800 meters located in Kay, Grant, Noble, Osage and Garfield counties.

CONTACT US

Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
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REPORT AN OUTAGE

Call 800-535-1079 or use Kay Electric's SmartHub at www.kayelectric.coop or download the SmartHub app for smartphone or tablet.

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EASY WAYS TO PAY YOUR BILL

- Pay online using SmartHub at www.kayelectric.coop or download the SmartHub app for smartphone or tablet.
- Pay over the phone: 800-535-1079.
- Pay in person at Kay Electric or use our 24-hour payment drop box located at 300 W. Doolin Ave. in Blackwell.
- Pay via automatic draft of your checking or savings account or major credit card. Sign up for auto-pay online at www.kayelectric.coop.

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Winter Storm Elliott 2022

By Jason Boesch, CEO

On December 23, 2022, an arctic cold front originating in northern Canada pushed an area of low pressure and freezing temperatures across the eastern Lower 48, which became known as Winter Storm Elliott. The cold front brought sub-zero temperatures and blizzard conditions, causing natural gas supply disruptions and a significant spike in demand. As we have discussed in the past, Kay Electric is a distributor of power, but we do not produce power ourselves. The power we distribute comes from the 14-state Southwest Power Pool market, from many different generation providers and sources.


Similar to the February 2021 Winter Storm Uri, domestic energy providers failed to accurately forecast demand leading up to Winter Storm Elliott, which forced outages in certain areas of the country to maintain grid stability. Winter Storm Elliott again highlighted vulnerabilities of the U.S. electric grid. While natural gas generation has become the dominant fuel in the thermal stack, market rules and coordination have failed to keep pace.

On Friday, Dec. 23, total domestic demand for natural gas increased nearly 20% from the prior day. Residential and commercial demand for natural gas increased to a multi-year high, which was approximately 30% higher than the average consumption in 2021. While national heating demand increased at a rapid rate, U.S. natural gas producers were experiencing wellhead freeze-offs in the sub-zero temperatures which caused domestic natural gas production to decrease to an annual low. Freeze-offs occur when production is limited or halted



due to water or other liquids contained in the natural gas mixture at the wellhead freezing.

This significant supply and demand imbalance occurred as domestic demand for natural gas significantly increased and production basins struggled to supply the pipelines transporting natural gas to thermal generators across the Lower 48. Some critical pipelines faced overwhelming loads and lower supply. Our multi-state region, known as the Mid-continent, saw freeze-offs on two major importing gas pipelines which issued force majeure declarations during the storm, with a resulting cut of nearly 10% in daily production to the region.

Anomalous weather events will continue to disrupt grid operations and create significant energy price volatility. To mitigate risk and maintain reliability in extreme conditions, the industry's planning and infrastructure needs to adapt and improve. The demand and reduced supply dynamics during Winter Storm Elliott led to increased natural gas fuel prices. Fortunately Kay Electric avoided curtailment outages experienced during the 2021 polar vortex. We continue to encourage market power providers and generators to harden their infrastructure against these weather extremes. While there are many complexities on the path to getting power to your light switch, everyone must do their honest part in making that process reliable.  2314200

LOCAL HIGHLIGHTS



**K-UP Grant
applications
are due April 3**



Scan to apply or visit
www.kayelectric.coop/k

Kay Electric: a great place to work!

As part of the 2022 Best of Kay County awards, Blackwell Journal-Tribune readers selected Kay Electric Cooperative as the Best Place to Work—and we agree. We're grateful for this honor!

Save the Date!

KEC'S DRIVE-THRU ANNUAL MEETING IS FRIDAY, APRIL 14

More information to come in April's Annual Report.
Watch for a registration card in the mail.



Drive thru for your chance to win these and other prizes!

GOOD COOKIN'



Double Chocolate Chunk Brownies

Yields approximately 1 dozen

Ingredients:

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup cocoa powder
- ¾ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1 1/3 cups dark chocolate chunks, divided
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup packed dark brown sugar
- ¾ cup unsalted butter, melted
- 3 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Instructions:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa powder and salt. Melt 1 cup chocolate chunks in the microwave, stirring often until smooth. Combine sugars, melted butter, eggs and vanilla in large bowl. Beat with an electric mixer on medium-high speed until frothy and light caramel in color, about 1 minute. With mixer running on low speed, slowly pour melted chocolate into egg mixture. Fold in flour mixture until incorporated. Transfer batter into prepared pan, and smooth top. Sprinkle remaining chocolate chunks over batter. Bake in preheated oven until a toothpick comes out clean, 18 to 20 minutes. Cool brownies on a wire rack for at least 2 hours.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



JACOB BARR

LINEMAN APPRENTICE

Jacob Barr started at Kay Electric in May 2020 and serves as an apprentice lineman. He lives in Blackwell with his wife, Brooke, their 1-year-old son, Waylon, and their black lab, Remi. Prior to Kay Electric, Jacob served five years in the U.S. Navy. He spent part of his time on a submarine patrolling the Arctic near the North Pole. Jacob says one of his proudest accomplishments was earning his submarine warfare device. His dad has been a great inspiration in his life: "He has taught me many things in life and keeps a positive attitude while facing any challenges," Jacob says. Thank you, Jacob, for your service!



U.S. NAVY
VETERAN



ENJOYS FISHING
AND HUNTING



HAS A TWIN
BROTHER

Images: courtesy flaticon

\$25 is hiding in this issue!

If you spot your account number hidden in these pages, please contact Kay Electric to claim a \$25 credit on your electric bill. If no account numbers are claimed, the prize money will carry over to the next month for a maximum bill credit of \$50. Call 800-535-1079 or email contact@kayelectric.coop to claim your prize.

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