



Cooperative difference



From the desk of
CEO & General Manager
Eddie Oldham

Did you know that all cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles? It's hard to believe, but the holiday season and the New Year are upon us. This time of year is generally a time of reflection, so, this is the perfect time of year to reflect on the cooperative principles that make co-ops unique. They have stood the test of time but also provide a framework for the future. Let's take a look at the first three cooperative principles.

Voluntary and Open Membership

Just like all co-ops, Central Electric was created out of necessity — to meet a need that would have been otherwise unmet in our community. Over eighty years ago, in 1941, a group of neighbors banded together and organized our electric co-op, so everyone in our community could benefit. Neighbors came together to tackle a problem that they all had but couldn't solve alone. They worked together for the benefit of the whole community, and the newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in our community. While this little piece of history may not seem as important today, the focus on our mission and serving the greater good is still just as important today as it was back then. In this, we include everyone to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for the entire community.

Democratic Member Control

Our co-op is well suited to meet the needs of our members, because we are locally governed. Each member gets a voice and a vote in how the co-op is run, and each voice and vote are equal. The co-op's leadership

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team, employees and board of directors live right here in the community. Board members are elected by neighbors just like you. We know our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we are continually seeking your input and encourage you to weigh in on important co-op issues and participate in co-op elections. Our close connection to this community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on members' priorities, which allows us to be responsive to your needs.

Members' Economic Participation

As a utility, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. But as a co-op, we are also motivated by service to the community, rather than profits. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of the co-op. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for co-op programs, initiatives, capital investments and supporting other activities approved by the membership. It's not just about dollars — it's about being fair and engaging with our members.

The cooperative difference is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. We view our role as a catalyst for the community and making our corner of the world a better place. And by the way, that sums up the seventh co-op principle, “concern for community,” which we'll touch on next month!

Edward B. Oldham