



## The Cooperative Difference



From the desk of  
CEO & General Manager  
Eddie Oldham

For me, this is a time of year for reflection, and topping my list of things I'm grateful for is our wonderful community. I know I speak for all of our employees when I say that we are thankful to be a part of this community. We are fortunate to live in the same place where we work, which makes our ties to this community that much stronger.

You may recall that in October, my column touched on the first three Cooperative Principles that are essential to the co-op business model. So this month, I'd like to tell you about the remaining four principles.

### **Autonomy and Independence**

Co-ops operate in an autonomous way that is solely directed and guided by its members, reflecting the values and needs of our local community. This means the co-op is not being influenced by leaders or shareholders several states away. Instead, the co-op is led by the local members it serves.

### **Education and Training**

By investing in continuous learning for our employees and board members, our co-op is making a commitment not just to individual professional and personal growth, but to the future of the co-op and the high quality of service our members expect and deserve. It's a win-win situation.

We also strive to inform our members (that's you!) and the public about the mission and operations of the co-op. In fact, that's why you receive this magazine every month, so we can share the latest co-op news and updates, as well as energy efficiency and safety tips.

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### **Cooperation Among Cooperatives**

Cooperation among cooperatives is the sixth principle and fosters the way that co-ops work together to address bigger challenges. While this principle applies to all types of cooperatives, it is especially relevant in the energy industry. In our case, we put this principle in action after major storms and disasters that cause widespread power outages. When this happens, we call on nearby co-ops to come to our aid and assist with restoration efforts — and we of course extend the same help to them when they need us. I can't think of a better example of cooperation among cooperatives.

### **Concern for Community**

The seventh principle, Concern for Community, is essential to who we are as cooperatives. We serve our community not only by being an essential service, but by helping to power our local economy. Whether through economic development, volunteering or donations to local causes, we invest in this community because it's our home, too. I think you'll find that most cooperatives bring good people together to make good things happen in the community. We hope you feel that way about us, your local electric co-op.

On behalf of everyone at Central Electric, we're thankful for your membership, and we hope you have a wonderful holiday season!

*Eddie B. Oldham*