

# THE LAMP

MAY 2005



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■  
*The official  
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of the members of  
Indian Electric  
Cooperative*



**If a Tree Falls  
in the Forest...**

**15 Feet Can Save  
Lives and Property**



**Celebrate  
Cinco de Mayo!**



## IEC Loses Former Manager

Former IEC General Manager Charles Culbertson passed away March 22 following a brief illness. He was 86.

Culbertson was named general manager in 1965 following the retirement of his father, IEC's first general manager, Willard Culbertson.

While Culbertson was at the helm of Indian Electric, the co-op grew and experienced many changes.

He recognized the need for a new headquarters facility when the co-op outgrew its office on Cleveland's main street. He supervised the building of IEC's new facility, which was built south of town in 1969. Under Culbertson's leadership, the co-op saw upgrades and modernization of equipment used for power line construction; computerization of all office operations; and increased attendance at annual meetings.

Culbertson was not only a strong supporter of IEC and the electric cooperative program in Oklahoma, he also gave of his time and talents to numerous area organizations. He was active in the Cleveland Area Chamber of Commerce and the Cleveland Rotary Club where he held numerous offices. He was a former member of the Cleveland



Charles H. Culbertson  
1918 - 2005

Area Hospital Board of Directors and served on the board of Pawnee Country Rural Water District #1. He was a member of the American Legion, a longtime member of the Cleveland United Methodist Church and an avid University of Oklahoma fan.

Born in Iowa, Culbertson moved with his family to Cleveland when he was very young. He attended Cleveland Public Schools, graduating in 1936. He attended the University of Oklahoma where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism in 1940.

In 1942 he was inducted into the United States Army and served during World War II. He attained the rank of sergeant and was discharged in 1946.

He is survived by Phyllis, his wife of almost 64 years; a daughter Kelly Potter and her husband Keith; four grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his son, Dick.

IEC offices will be closed  
**Monday, May 30**  
in recognition of the  
Memorial Day holiday.

Please call  
(918) 358-2514 or  
1-800-482-2750  
to report an outage.

# If a Tree Falls in the Forest...

by Jack Clinkscale, General

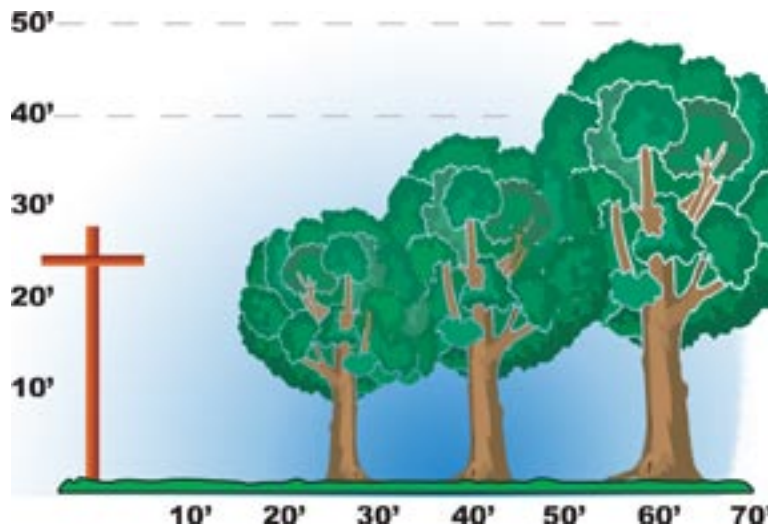
I have been known to throw a few jabs at other utilities in this column. Despite the vast differences in the structure and function of electric utilities, we have many points in common. We all want to provide the most reliable and stable electric service possible and we want to reduce power outages and voltage fluctuations. We do differ greatly in revenue philosophy. Electric cooperatives, like IEC, strive to deliver this power at the lowest rate possible. Any margins, or profits, left over are returned to members – the vast majority living right here in Green Country – in the form of capital credits. Investor-owned utilities generally try to collect as much revenue as possible so they can return a profit to their investors who may be located anywhere in the world. This is just one difference that makes the cooperative

form of business the best.

But, as usual, I digress. One problem all utilities in Green Country share is the problem of trees. Now trees in general are not a problem. They provide refreshing shade, a break from the spring winds, and tasty fruits and nuts while adding to the beauty of the land. Trees in the power lines, however, are a whole different story! Trees in

power lines cause power outages and those annoying blinks, and become very dangerous to persons coming into contact with them once the trees touch a power line. In order to keep electric service as reliable as possible, utilities need to remove these trees from beneath the lines and those in close proximity that could grow into the lines or come into contact with lines during extreme times such as high winds or ice storms.

The vast majority of utility consumers will readily agree they want reliable power. They will also agree they want it at the lowest possible cost. Most will agree trees in the power line are a problem. However, many have the “NIMBY” attitude



*Continued on page 4.*

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### INDIAN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

**Office Hours**

7:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Monday - Friday)  
(918) 358-2514  
www.iecok.com

**To Report an Outage**

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# 15 Feet Can Save Your Life



## *Don't Place Buildings, Trees or Pools within 15 Feet of Power Lines*

Every year we find members who have built some type of structure under existing power lines. It's obvious they have spent a lot of time and money getting just the building they wanted placed in just the area they wanted on their property.

But what we see is that they didn't

pay attention to where the power lines are. And now they have a situation that is not only dangerous, but is illegal and could be costly to correct.

Oklahoma law states it is unlawful to build or place any house, other building or swimming pool within six feet of any high voltage overhead conductor.

Federal law is more restrictive as it requires a clearance of 10 feet.

**We recommend a clearance of 15 feet.**

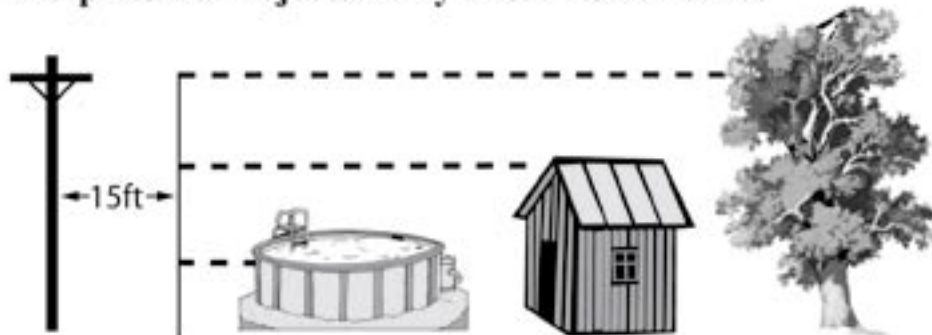
"What people don't realize," says Bill Graham, IEC's safety coordinator, "is that the voltage flowing through those electric lines is enough to kill.

"They also don't realize they are responsible for any damages that might occur and for the costs of having to move the electric line," he says.

Graham encourages anyone wanting to place any type of building near an electric line, to first call the co-op so a meeting with IEC's engineering personnel can be scheduled.

"Following our recommendations and established electrical code regulations can not only save lives and property, but can save money for the homeowner too," explains Graham.

## Keep Home Projects Away From Power Lines



*Illustration refers to the minimum safe distance of buildings and trees near power-lines.*

# May is Electrical Safety Month

- ❖ Use appliances and equipment according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- ❖ Replace frayed cords, broken plugs or cracks that could cause hazards; cut and throw out damaged cords.
- ❖ Use ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection when working where water is near electricity.
- ❖ Be alert for hazards of old wiring. Flickering or dimming lights can be signs of electrical wiring problems. Have wiring in homes 40 years old or more, or those over 10 years old that have had major renovations, inspected by a licensed electrical inspector.
- ❖ Add protection by installing a new electrical safety device—an arc fault circuit interrupter (AFCI)—to detect and stop electrical arcs that can cause fires. Arcs are not detected by most breakers and fuses.
- ❖ Make sure power strips and surge suppressors are designed to handle the loads for their intended use. Avoid overloading circuits by plugging too many items into the same outlet.
- ❖ Use only the proper wattage light bulbs in light fixtures and lamps.

# RECIPES



*Celebrate Cinco de Mayo with this delicious Mexican recipe!*

## Guacamole

2 avocados, peeled, pitted and diced  
2 tsps. salt  
1 large tomato, diced

1 onion, diced  
2 jalapeno peppers, chopped  
1/2 Tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro  
2 Tbsps. fresh lime juice

In a medium bowl, mash the avocados and stir in salt. Mix in tomato, onion, jalapeno, cilantro and lime juice. Cover and chill in the refrigerator at least 30 minutes before serving.

YIELD: 2 cups (16 servings)

## If a Tree Falls in the Forest... *Con't. from page 2.*

toward their own trees. Trim all those annoying, potentially dangerous trees from the power lines, but "Not In My Back Yard." My trees are beautiful, stately, provide wonderful shade and have been here for generations! You can just cut mine a few inches from the line and come back next year and do the same thing!

IEC maintains almost 3,500 miles of power lines. About 10 years ago, we began an intense program to clear all the right-of-way under these lines. It has taken that much time and many millions (yes, millions) of dollars to accomplish this task. We have seen many benefits from this program, including increased service reliability with many less outages. It is a program we must maintain since the trees continue to grow. Most consumers have been understanding of our need to trim and sometimes remove trees around IEC lines. They have allowed us to trim and cut trees near and dear to their hearts. Most realize that we cannot afford to trim a little here and a little there and then repeat the process every year. If we did this, then we

would need to spend millions more and where would that money come from? That's right; it would come from you, the IEC member. So we must make right-of-way maintenance as cost effective as possible.

We have outstanding right-of-way crews. They strive to meet IEC's need to clear the right-of-way and do it in a manner acceptable to home and land owners. We never trim or remove trees, unless a dangerous condition exists, without first making every effort to contact the owner. As you can imagine, despite our best efforts, we cannot make everyone happy. But that doesn't mean we won't keep trying.

The next time an IEC employee contacts you about right-of-way maintenance, please remember he is there to do his job – to make the system safe and reliable for all members.

## Employees Active in Special Olympics, Relay for Life Walk

Each spring, IEC employees, trustees and their family members can be seen wearing shirts that don't bear the co-op's logo.

Instead, they don t-shirts with the Special Olympics and American Cancer Society's Relay

for Life logos. And they can be found in their new shirts encouraging and hugging Special Olympians as



they participate in the track and field events at the state

**Special Olympics**

games in Stillwater each May. In June, they can be found spending one evening walking from sundown to sunrise to raise money for the American Cancer Society.

These are two events the employees look forward to each year.

"They're both good causes," says Trena Zickefoose, IEC's Relay for Life coordinator. "But they're also a lot of fun."

Clara Eulert, the co-op's coordinator for Special Olympics says IEC has been a strong supporter of the games for

more than 15 years.

"IEC has had the largest volunteer group of any Oklahoma co-op for the past two years. I think that shows what kind of employees we have."

