

Rural Power

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Kansas youth tour students visit legislators on Capitol Hill

Kansas electric cooperatives sent 35 youth from across the state on the 53rd annual Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. The tour, which was held June 13-20, taught youth about electric co-ops and helped students develop leadership skills.

The group learned about the U.S. government through visits with Senators Jerry Moran and Pat Roberts, Congressmen Tim Huelskamp and Mike Pompeo and Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins. The students learned about cooperatives through a visit to Kaw Valley. They toured many sites in Washington, D.C., including museums, the Capitol and Arlington National Cemetery.

However, the tour is more than a history lesson – there are remarkable stories of leadership and personal development that come from the week together.

“As the Youth Tour coordinator for Ark Valley, I had seen enough to know that this trip was important. Now having experienced it firsthand, I have an overwhelming passion for this program,” said Ark Valley’s Melinda Thomas who chaperoned the trip. “Youth Tour brings in



Senator Pat Roberts visits with the Kansas youth tour delegates at the U.S. Capitol on June 18.

some of the finest youth in our nation, refining and honing their leadership skills to produce tomorrow’s leaders.”

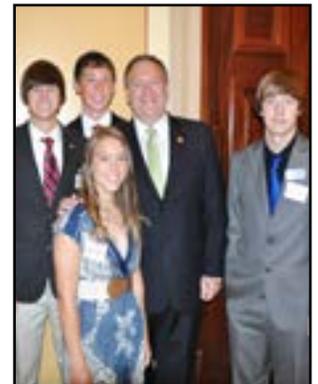
Thomas continued, “I was humbled and honored to witness the spark in our delegates as each one discovered that they are important and that they have the ability to make a difference. It was inspiring to see what takes some a

lifetime be achieved in a one-week period.”

Many of the students expressed how this trip has changed their view on the world, and also their view on themselves.

“With a grateful heart, I am so appreciative to all those who made Youth Tour possible,” said Catie Crosley, a youth delegate sponsored by Pioneer. “It is the co-ops’ investment in this program that has changed, and will continue to change, the lives of those who participated. This program exposed us to witnessing the American government system in action, as well as experiencing the history our forefathers left behind.”

Crosley was chosen to be the 2013 Youth Leadership Council representative for Kansas, and will participate in NRECA’s 2014 annual meeting in Nashville.



The students hosted a breakfast for the Kansas Congressional delegation. Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins (left photo, center), Congressman Tim Huelskamp (center photo) and Congressman Mike Pompeo (right photo) took the time to visit with the youth tour delegates and to pose for photos. More photos are available at www.youthtour.coop.



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Co-ops alarmed by President's proposal that will increase electric bills

Jo Ann Emerson, NRECA's CEO, made the following statement in response to the President's proposal that will raise electric utility bills for millions of Americans:

"Electric cooperatives oppose President Obama's proposal to use the Clean Air Act to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants. America's rural communities depend on coal-fired generation for affordable electric power and would be disproportionately penalized by this scheme. Folks in rural communities and those with low or fixed incomes already spend more of their household budget on energy; this proposal would increase their burden. The President's proposal would be, in effect, a regressive new climate tax on America's most economically vulnerable citizens.

NRECA and America's electric cooperatives will fight this proposal at the agency level and in the courts if necessary. If the President doesn't recognize the need to keep electric bills affordable, we promise to bring it to his attention."

NRECA - 6/25/13

Relief fund for co-op members in Black Forest fire

More than 500 electric co-op members had their homes and businesses destroyed in the June Black Forest Fire northeast of Colorado Springs.

The Colorado Rural Electric Association has established a relief fund to be donated to charitable organizations assisting those within that area.

Mail a check or money order made payable to CEEL/Black Forest Fire Fund to: CREA/Black Forest Fire Fund, 5400 Washington St., Denver, CO 80216. Include your name, address, email and phone number. Please note if you need a receipt.

COLORADO RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION - 6/20/13

JULY

- 4-5 **Independence Day Holiday and floating holiday**, KEC office closed
- 9 **Lane-Scott Annual Meeting**, dinner at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7:30 p.m., Lane County Fairgrounds, Dighton
- 13-19 **Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp**, Steamboat Springs, CO
- 17-18 **KEPCo Board of Trustees Meeting**, KEPCo Headquarters, Topeka
- 19 **Sunflower Board of Directors Meeting**, Sunflower Headquarters, Hays
- 31 **MDM Meeting**, KEC Headquarters, Topeka, 10 a.m.

Former KC Chiefs player, NRECA staff among KEC Summer Board Meeting speakers

Final touches are being applied to the 2013 KEC Summer Board Meeting. The event will be held August 5 at the Overland Park Marriott.

Speakers for this year's meeting include several NRECA staff. Kirk Johnson, NRECA's Senior Vice President of Government Relations, will give an update on the activities in Washington, D.C. Peter Baxter, NRECA Senior Vice President of Insurance & Financial Services, will give a primer on the NRECA Pension Plan. Megan McKoy-Noe, NRECA's Member & Community Engagement Representative, will highlight ways co-ops engage members through new technologies.

Monday's luncheon will feature Kevin Lockett, Kansas City Chiefs Ambassador, former player and K-State star. Other speakers include Wallace Barron, Barron & Associates, who will

review current issues in co-op policies. Federated's Phil Irwin will explain how safety does pay at the co-op. KEPCo's Charles Terrill and Sunflower's Stuart Lowry will give an update on Kansas power supply. Finally, KEC's Larry Freeze will explain how *Kansas Country Living* is built each month.

In addition, there will also be a meeting of the Kansas NRECA membership on Monday to hold elections for the NRECA Director.

The KEC Auxiliary Program will also be held on Monday. Speakers for this program include Caney Valley's Betsy Zadorozny who will share her "Experiments with the Electric Grandmother". Kansas Youth Tour alumni Chantz and Amber Martin will share their memories. There will also be a performance by the 89th Street Bluegrass Band.

Directors training offered at KEC's Summer Board Meeting

KEC's Summer Board Meeting will be held at the Overland Park Marriott.

On Sat., Aug. 3, Wallace Barron will facilitate the CCD Course 2610 Understanding the Electric Business and Jody Severson will facilitate the Board Leadership Course 913 Cooperative Foundations: Co-op Legacy, Principles and Impact on Communities.

On Sun., Aug. 4, Wallace Barron will also facilitate the Board Leadership Course 955 Your Board's Culture: Its Impact on Effectiveness. KEC's Carrie Kimberlin will offer BoardPaq instruction that afternoon.

The KEC Summer Board Meeting agenda will follow on Mon., Aug 5. Registration materials have already been sent to each cooperative.

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Raymond "Bud" Brown and Veta Reece

Flint Hills Manager Bob Reece's father-in-law died on June 19 and Reece's mother died on June 21.

Services for Bud Brown were held at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Emporia on June 23. Memorials may be made to Sacred Heart Catholic School or Emporia Friends of the Zoo, and sent in care of Roberts-Blue-Barnett Funeral Home, P. O. Box 175, Emporia, KS 66801.

Services for Veta Reece were held at the Funeral Home First Christian Church in Emporia on June 26. Memorials may be made to First Christian Church, 202 E. 12th Avenue, Emporia, KS 66801.

Co-ops successfully appeal property valuations

Several Kansas electric cooperatives recently learned that their 2013 tax bills will not be as high as previously anticipated.

Eleven co-ops and Southern Pioneer each requested an informal conference to appeal their state-appraised valuations before the Kansas Division of Property Valuation (PVD). Owners of state-appraised property have an opportunity to present evidence to the appraisers supporting their case that the value is overstated. This must be done before the final values are certified to the local taxing districts.

Of the 12 appeals, all but three valuations were decreased. Of the five cooperatives represented by KEC's Doug Shepherd, one was unchanged and the other four received reductions ranging from two percent to 16 percent for an estimated 2013 tax savings of \$127,000. These co-ops include Bluestem, DS&O, Nemaha-Marshall, Sedgwick County and Twin Valley.

KEPCo's Colleen Wells was also successful in securing an 11 percent reduction for KEPCo which will result in tax savings of \$402,000 for 2013. Four others received an average reduction of 4.4 percent.

Leavenworth-Jefferson hosts rural Zimbabwean delegation

A delegation of rural district council men and women from Zimbabwe toured Leavenworth-Jefferson Electric Co-op (LJEC) on June 25.

The co-op visit was part of the group's rural economic development tour.

"They want to see how rural electric utility projects provide reliable, affordable electricity to rural areas," said Susan Peoples, Program Associate of the Kansas City International Visitors Council (KCIV).

KEC was contacted by KCIV, and Bruce Graham organized the tour.

LJEC's General Manager, Steve Foss, members of his staff, and KEC's Vice President of Government Relations, Dave Holthaus, met the group of eight delegates at LJEC's substation near Tonganoxie that recently had a standby generator installed. They returned to the co-op's headquarters where Foss and Holthaus gave presentations on electric



Steve Foss, LJEC; Dave Holthaus, KEC; and Jennifer Fisher, LJEC; met with members of the Zimbabwe rural economic development delegation and gave them a tour of LJEC's facilities.

cooperatives.

"They were in Kansas City, so we were asked to give them a tour," Foss said. "We recently installed a standby generator at our substa-

tion, and they were very interested in that part of the facility."

Holthaus added, "They wanted more information on how to start an electric co-op, and they were interested in NRECA's international programs."

KCIV hosts Department of State sponsored delegations from around the world. These groups come to the U.S. typically on three-week programs, spending a few days in Kansas.

The group toured industries with programs designed to improve the economic stability of rural communities, businesses, residents, and farmers, including Growing Grocers food cooperative, the Olathe Chamber of Commerce, and K-State's Johnson County Extension Office.

Kansas Electric Cooperatives supports Kansas FFA Organization State Degree winners

Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., sponsored the State Degrees at the 85th Kansas FFA Convention in Manhattan on May 31.

KEC sponsors the State FFA Degree each year. The State Degree is the highest honor the Kansas FFA Association can bestow upon its members. The degree is presented to members who have met the qualifications of this degree.

In order to achieve this award, members must meet seven requirements. First, the member must have



Kevin Lewis, Kanyon Kelly, and Marissa Bland are former Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp attendees and FFA members. Kelly was among the 236 students who received their FFA State Degree charm from KEC's Carrie Kimberlin.

received their chapter FFA Degree and been an FFA member and agricultural education student for at least two years. They must have earned at least \$2,000 or worked

600 hours in their Supervised Agricultural Experience program.

The recipient must also give a six-minute speech about agriculture or FFA and participate in eight different leadership activities. The student needs to earn a "C" average or better in high school while showing a record of outstanding leadership and community involvement.

As the membership of the Kansas FFA organization grows, the participation grows as well. This year, 236 Kansas FFA members earned their State Degree. Carrie Kimberlin, Communications Specialist, represented KEC and presented those members their gold charms.

"It's always great to be a part of the degree ceremony to congratulate FFA members individually on receiving their state degree," Kimberlin said.

During the convention and at the Blue and Gold Celebration, KEC was recognized as a Four Star Partner of the Kansas FFA Foundation.

"We are proud to recognize KEC for its continued support," Kerry Wefald, Executive Director of the Kansas FFA Foundation, said. "The future of agriculture is bright for Kansas, the community is embracing agriculture programs and it is great to see business involved."

Right on “Q”: Wheatland employee uses BBQ skills to aid tornado victims in Oklahoma

After a devastating EF5 tornado ripped through Moore, OK, on May 20, many people wondered what they could do to help. Few had the opportunity like Wheatland employee Bryan Mulligan.

Mulligan, an avid BBQ'er and member of the competition BBQ team C-Mor-Butz, got a call from fellow team member on May 22. Operation BBQ Relief was looking

for volunteers to assist the relief efforts from the devastation of the Moore tornado, and the team wanted to help out.

Operation BBQ Relief is a non-profit relief organization founded by the collaboration of three competition BBQ teams in the wake of the aftermath of the 2011 tornado that struck Joplin, MO. Its mission is to help those whose lives have been affected by the devastation of natural disasters through their expertise in

cooking and catering BBQ meals. The concept is simple – take advantage of the network of competition BBQ teams and mobilize them quickly. Less than 24 hours after the Moore

tornado, Mulligan's team, along with another local barbecue team member, assembled to head to Moore.

“When we learned that Brian had the opportunity to help out with Operation BBQ Relief, we wanted to do all we could to support him and the relief efforts,” said Bruce Mueller, Wheatland's General

Manager. “Wheatland donated some funds, a pallet of bottled water and Brian's paid time while he was volunteering. We are proud of the work Brian and his team did in Moore and are glad to have been a part of it.”

The team left Scott City stocked with over 3,000 pounds of meat donated from local feedyards, as well as \$5,000 that had been donated from local community members. The team stopped in Dodge City to pick up another

1,000 pounds of brisket donated by Cargill, Inc. The team used the donated funds to buy more meat and additional supplies.

Once in Moore, the Scott City team joined another 15 to 20 BBQ teams who also responded. The teams would fire up the smokers at 6 a.m. to warm the meat that had been cooked the day before. They packaged meals and smoked more meat for the next day. Volunteers delivered the boxed lunches to families whose homes had been destroyed, people in shelters, and other volunteers.

From May 22 to May 29, operation BBQ Relief delivered over 143,000 meals.

Mulligan said there were lots of people who expressed gratitude to Operation BBQ Relief. One individual who had lost everything to the tornado's destruction tried to make a donation back to the relief organization as a token of his appreciation. Though the donation was politely refused, the significance of the gesture was not lost on Mulligan.

Mulligan says, “It was pretty obvious that we were making an impact and people were very appreciative of our efforts.”



Bryan Mulligan and fellow BBQer 'Doc' Kenneson cook for the victims and volunteers following the Moore, OK, tornado.



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