



MONROE COUNTY
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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



Alan W. Wattles

Across the President's desk

OK. So you aren't really into politics. As a junior or senior in high school, you're thinking about college and where you're going to come up with more than \$100,000 to pay for higher education. You're also trying to decide what you want to work at the rest of your life to make that college experience pay off.

Oddly enough, the very people who may have answers to those questions are wearing the title of state legislator or seated in chambers of the U.S. Congress in Washington D.C.

Before you know it, you will be voting in your first election and the weight of the country's decisions will partially belong to you. Will you support a Congressman who wants to pass Cap & Trade? Will you be in favor of farm subsidies? As you approach what was once "draft-age," do you think we should send more troops to Iraq and Afghanistan or should the military be strengthening our borders? Oh, and when you get the opportunity to meet your Congressman, in addition to these questions will you ask: What has Congress done to make higher education more affordable and will I be able to find a job when I graduate?

Electric and telephone cooperatives in more than 40 states believe that young people deserve a first-class opportunity to educate themselves in the government process. Each year, the cooperatives across the nation sponsor more than 1,500 high school students to make the trek to Washington to get that personal initiation, and they have a lot of fun in the process.

It all begins in Springfield on April 21, 2010 during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperative Youth Day where nearly 300 students will visit the State Capitol and spend much of the morning meeting with legislators. You will tour the Supreme Court and spend the afternoon touring local sites.

While here, staff from the Association of Illinois

Who will map your future?

You can find out on the Youth to Washington trip

Electric Cooperatives will conduct interviews with students from various co-ops to determine those who win the trip to Washington D.C. To be considered for this trip, see your guidance counselor for details as participation rules vary from co-op to co-op.

This year marks the 51st trip to the nation's capital and promises to be as exciting as ever. Students learn the principles required to keep cooperative members working together for the cooperative's success by establishing their own "chip and pop" cooperative while on the bus trip.

While in Washington during the week of June 11-18, in addition to meeting with Congressman from Illinois, students are treated to tours of historic sites, given the opportunity to make life-long friends and receive information to help determine career paths.

Hopefully, at the conclusion of the tour, you will understand the only crystal ball in Washington is the one you help develop through your participation in government and public service. The future of the country depends on the youth of today getting involved.

To learn about this opportunity, contact your local electric or telephone cooperative or visit the website at www.aiec.coop for additional details.



School grants awarded to area schools

Monroe County Electric Cooperative awarded four \$500 Touchstone Energy Empowerment grants to four area teachers that submitted applications.

The applications were judged by a group of coopera-

tive employees from neighboring co-ops.

The grants were awarded to the following teachers:



t Holly Garrett, fifth grade teacher at Rogers Elementary School in Waterloo received a grant for a document camera system called an ELMO that is used in conjunction with an interactive whiteboard already present in her classroom. This works in a similar way that the old overhead projectors used to, but offers an instant image from a document that can be shared to the whole class quickly.

+ Karen Lundy, school counselor at Immaculate Conception in Columbia received a grant for a computer software program that will enhance the Connors 3 Rating Scale used to assess and diagnose students with conditions such as Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD).



+ Shelby Jany, first grade teacher at Red Bud Elementary, received a grant for an ELMO system also.



✦ Betty Schmitz, kindergarten teacher at St. John's Lutheran School in Red Bud received a grant and will use it toward the purchase of a SmartBoard for her classroom. The remainder of the funds will come from other sources.

We congratulate all the winning teachers and schools! We also thank all non-winning teachers for their participation.

Note: Touchstone Energy Cooperatives is an alliance of more than 640 local, member-owned electric cooperatives across the country committed to providing superior service to all members, large and small.

Touchstone Energy – the national brand of electric cooperatives – has core values that consumers have long associated with cooperatives: integrity, accountability, innovations, and genuine commitment to their communities.

Tax credits still available for 2010

Not too late to make your home more energy efficient and save tax dollars

Just because 2009 is over, it doesn't mean that the tax credits for energy saving improvements to your home are gone forever. Below are some of the tax credits still available for this year and beyond. Check out energystar.gov/taxcredits for more information.

Federal Tax Credits for Consumer for Energy Efficiency includes:

Tax credits are available at 30 percent of the cost, up to \$1,500, in 2010 (for existing homes only) for:

- n Windows and Doors
- n Insulation

- n Roofs (Metal and Asphalt)
- n HVAC
- n Water Heaters (non-solar)
- n Biomass Stoves

Tax credits are available at 30 percent of the cost, with no upper limit through 2016 (for existing homes & new construction) for:

- n Geothermal Heat Pumps
- n Solar Panels
- n Solar Water Heaters
- n Small Wind Energy Systems
- n Fuel Cells

Keep out the cold with weather stripping

No mistaking it: winter has arrived. Any drafts around doors and windows that went unnoticed during fall are now downright uncomfortable — and adding to your energy bills.

Weather stripping offers a relatively quick fix for drafty doors. To determine if a door leading out of your house needs new weather stripping look for daylight. If even a sliver of daylight remains visible between the door and its frame or the floor, add weather stripping.

Next, shut the door or window on a piece of paper. If you can pull the paper out without tearing it, you're losing energy.

There are a variety of weather stripping materials available, each good for fitting different types of door and window frames. Most are made of rubber, foam, metal, vinyl, or a combination of materials. To determine the right item for the job, check the area: If any old, worn material has been previously installed, take a sample to your local hardware store or expert like a contractor. If no material exists as a guide, make detailed notes about the type of gap and how the door or window is installed — someone at the hardware store or your expert should be able to make a recommendation for you.

Once you have the proper materials for the job, consult any instructions that may be on the weather stripping package. Installation techniques range from simple to technical, depending on the type of material being used. If replacing old, worn weather stripping, be sure to note how it was installed as you remove it.

Here are a few basic guidelines:

- ☞ Weather stripping should be applied to clean, dry surfaces in temperatures above 20 F.
- ☞ Measure the area to be weather stripped twice before you cut anything.
- ☞ Apply weather stripping snugly against both surfaces. The material should compress when the window or door is shut.

When weather stripping doors:

- ☞ Choose the appropriate door sweeps and thresholds.
- ☞ Weatherstrip the entire door jamb.
- ☞ Apply one continuous strip along each side.
- ☞ Make sure the weather stripping meets tightly at the corners.
- ☞ Use a thickness that causes the weather stripping to tightly press between the door and the door jamb, without making it difficult to shut.

When weather stripping windows:

- ☞ Apply weather stripping between the sash and frame.
- ☞ The weather stripping shouldn't interfere with the operation of the window.

2009 Weatherization Program Eligibility

The federal Weatherization Assistance Program began in 1976, and in 2009 the stimulus package expanded eligibility for the program to households whose income falls below 200 percent of the national poverty level. Each state has unique eligibility guidelines. To learn about your state's guidelines, visit www.eere.energy.gov/weatherization.

Persons in family	Poverty Income Level	x 200 percent
1	\$10,830	\$21,660
2	\$14,570	\$29,140
3	\$18,310	\$36,620
4	\$22,050	\$44,100
5	\$25,790	\$51,580
6	\$29,530	\$59,060
7	\$33,270	\$66,540
8	\$37,010	\$74,020

For families with more than 8 persons, add \$7,480 for each additional person.



Source: 2009 Poverty Levels for the 48 contiguous states and the District of Columbia, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Energy

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