



Rural HIGHLIGHTS

Local News from Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

Local students represent RECC during Youth Tour



Each summer, hundreds of high school students from across the United States embark on an educational and inspirational journey to the nation's capital. On June 14th, the Youth Tour bussed 54 Illinois students to Washington, D.C. for a weeklong trip of a lifetime. The program has been around for more than 50 years and is sponsored annually by Illinois' electric and telephone cooperatives. Three of those students represented RECC and reside within the co-op's service territory. They include Carson Contreras, Kristi Wright and Michael Biesenthal.

Youth Tour began in 1964, after President Lyndon B. Johnson inspired the nation's electric cooperatives to sponsor youths to go to D.C. to educate young people about the role of electric co-ops and the significance of the legislative process. It became an annual tradition.

"Youth Tour is more than just a trip," said Sean Middleton, President/CEO of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative. "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that empowers future leaders to become informed, engaged and active citizens. Many Youth

Tour alumni go on to become leaders in their communities, inspired by this experience."

The event offers a unique opportunity for students to explore the nation's capital, meet their peers from across the state and beyond, and engage with the political process. Youth Tour not only highlights the importance of electric cooperatives but also fosters civic engagement and leadership skills.

The itinerary for the Youth Tour was packed with both educational and cultural experiences. The students visited major landmarks such as Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery, the U.S. Capitol, and the National Mall. They also visited several museums, including the Smithsonian, Air and Space Museum, and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

"There's a lot more to Youth Tour than sightseeing," said Brooke Gross, Youth Tour coordinator at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. "It also provides students with a deeper understanding of American history and government and the role electric and telephone cooperatives play in the communities they serve."

Continued on 18B ►

Youth Tour (continued from 18A)

One way the students learned about cooperatives was by forming one themselves. The Chip 'n' Pop Co-op is an engaging way to provide the Youth Tour participants with experience in understanding the fundamentals of the cooperative business model.

"This hands-on activity emphasizes the importance of teamwork," Gross said. "The students gained practical business skills and a deeper appreciation for cooperatives."

The students created their own snack shop cooperative by forming a nominating committee, electing a board of directors and hiring a co-op manager. RECC representative Kristi Wright participated as a member of the nominating committee, and Carson Contreras served on the board of directors. The students worked together to manage all aspects of the operation and had an equal say in decision-making, just like the cooperatives that sponsored them on the trip.

"The impact of Youth Tour goes far beyond Washington, D.C.," Gross said. "One of the most impactful parts of Youth Tour is the relationships that students build with their peers from different parts of the state and country. These connections often turn into lifelong friendships."

High school students who live within the service area of RECC are eligible to participate in the annual program. To learn more about Youth Tour, go to youthtour.coop or facebook.com/ILYouthTour.



Carson Contreras
Pawnee High School



Kristi Wright
Franklin High School



Michael Biesenthal
New Berlin High School





Brandon Taylor - Network Administrator
Brings a bird's eye view to the cooperative



Hathaway Homes - Taylorville, IL



Double Black Diamond Solar Farm - Lowder, IL

New Construction



Builder: Self Contracted
HVAC: Snell Plumbing & Heating
Geothermal: Water Furnace

Owners: Josh and Erin Smith



Dual Meter can reduce your costs for heating, cooling, and hot water

Cooperative members with electric heat and an electric water heater can receive a discounted rate for the energy used to heat and cool their home and heat their water. The dual meter is a stand-alone meter installed exclusively to record the kilowatts used for heating, cooling, and domestic hot water.

Rebates are also available. New geothermal or heat pump owners will receive \$250, and members who install an add-on heat pump will get \$100 back from the co-op. Installing an electric water heater will qualify for an additional \$250 rebate. If you are planning for a new home or an upgrade to your heating and cooling system, give us a call or visit our website at recc.coop for more details.

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

3973 W. State Route 104
P.O. Box 19 • Auburn, IL 62615
(217) 438-6197
e-mail: recc@recc.coop
www.recc.coop

President/CEO Sean Middleton
Editor Jeff Lancaster

Payment Options

- At our office front desk or outside drop-box
- Mail to: PO Box 19, Auburn IL 62615
- Set up recurring bank draft or credit card payments
- Online, with Pay Now from our website
- Use SmartHub portal, online or mobile app
- By phone to our office, using credit card or checking account
- By phone using automated payment (217) 438-6197

See our web page for monthly Board meeting reports.

Chris Wilcox, Chairman
Clayton Bloome, Vice Chairman
Jimmy L. Ayers, Secretary/Treasurer
Garry Niemeyer, Asst. Sec./Treasurer
Neil Bryan Thomas Hart
Cassie Eigenmann Mel Repscher
Andy Goleman