Clinton County Connection

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Published by Clinton County Electric Cooperative, Inc. • cceci@cceci.com • www.cceci.com

At the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Annual Meeting in Chicago in 1957, Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson addressed the crowd, stating, "If one thing comes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital, where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents." Soon thereafter, Illinois sent a busload of young people to Washington. By 1964, approximately 400 students from 12 states made the trip to D.C. The word of the program continued to spread, and today, over 2,500 students and their chaperones participate in the Youth Tour every year.

Clinton County Electric Cooperative (CCEC) was proudly represented by three local students on this year's "Youth to Washington" tour, held from June 14-21. Abigail Steinkamp, Emily Cirrincione and Kara Schomaker were chosen to attend this year's "Youth to Washington" tour. The girls boarded a bus in Mt. Vernon early Friday morning, June 14, and started what was an eye-opening experience seeing numerous D.C. area attractions and monuments, learning more about electric cooperatives and creating countless friendships that will last for many years to come.

Over 2,500 young adults from all over the United States gathered at the Hyatt Regency Hotel one morning for the Youth Day assembly to hear phenomenal speakers. The students were privileged to hear keynote speaker Mike Schlappi, who delivered an inspiring message from his wheelchair. Mr. Schlappi was accidentally shot at age 14, and doctors told him he would never walk again. Prior to his accident, he was dreaming of a career as a top American athlete. In his message, he stated, "Just because you can't stand up, doesn't mean you can't stand out." His message was inspiring for the young and old.

The week in Washington, D.C., was action-packed with students

Continued on 18B ▶

Youth Tour continued from 18A

representing cooperatives from the entire state of Illinois. 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. Among the fun activities the students enjoyed was an assembly of Youth Tour participants from across the nation. The Youth Program allows today's students to experience government firsthand by visiting Capitol Hill and seeing historical sites in Washington D.C. Abigail, Emily and Kara, along with all the students from Illinois who attended, did not want this awesome week to end. They made long-lasting friendships and will remember their week of learning more about our wonderful nation for a very long time.

Each year Clinton County Electric sponsors up to three students to attend this weeklong all-expense-paid educational trip. Children of board members and employees are eligible to attend at their own expense. The program is kicked off each year in March or April with "Youth Day" in Springfield and followed by the trip to Washington, D.C., in June. Information about next year's trip will be available in the December issue of Illinois Country Living magazine or can be found on our website at www.cceci.com under the Youth Programs tab.

Attention Educators and Administrators!

Have an educational project you'd like funded?

$4,000 available through Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants

Enter Touchstone Energy's Classroom Empowerment Grant Competition and your submission could win a $500 grant for classroom and education enhancement projects!

Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grants totaling $4,000 are being funded by Clinton County Electric Cooperative (CCEC) for the 2024-2025 school year. For more information about the grant program, or to get an application, please contact your school superintendant or Carrie Trame at Trame@cceci.com.

Grant applications will need to include the following information:

1. A description of the project and what it will accomplish
2. The estimated cost of the project
3. An explanation of why outside funds are necessary to complete the project
4. Whether other funding options have been pursued, and if so, how
5. When project will be completed
6. The number of people affected by the project
7. If the project's goals are measurable, and how
8. How the project ties in Touchstone Energy's four core values of Integrity, Accountability, Innovation, and Commitment to Community

Photos and supporting data are optional. Grant applications must be received at CCEC by Nov. 8, 2024. Entries will be evaluated by an impartial panel of judges. Awards will be announced on Dec. 9, 2024.

Touchstone Energy®

The power of human connections

Last year's winners:

$500 – Aviston Elementary School
Submitting educator: teacher Matthew Scheibel
$500 – Carlyle Junior High School
Submitting educator: teacher Jessica Hogg
$1,500 – Germantown Elementary
Submitting educators: teachers Cheri Markwell, Kristine Beer and Rose Wilken
$500 – Mater Dei Catholic High School
Submitting educator: band director Jordan Profitt
$500 – Trenton Elementary School
Submitting educator: teacher Sara Barton
$500 – Trinity Lutheran School
Submitting educator: Sara Kuper

Our office will be closed Monday, September 2 in honor of Labor Day.

Although the office will be closed, obtain your account information and pay your bill 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by visiting our website www.cceci.com or by calling 800-526-7282.

Whether it is a do-it-yourself project, or you are hiring a professional, call 811 two to three days prior to starting any digging project to request all underground utilities be marked. This service is free but remember that **privately owned underground lines will NOT be marked by utility locators**. Examples of private lines/equipment include well and septic, underground sprinkler systems, invisible fencing, gas or electric lines that serve a detached building, as well as any lines (electric, water, sewer) from the meter to your home. If you have any private utilities, you will need to hire a private utility locator.

IMPACTS OF THE EPA'S POWER PLANT RULE

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) power plant rule threatens access to reliable electricity for millions of Americans. The EPA's power plant rule will:

1. Force the premature closure of many power plants that currently provide electricity 24/7.
2. Mandate the deployment of unproven carbon capture and storage technology.
3. Jeopardize the reliability of the grid at a time when America is already facing a surge in electricity demand.
4. Heighten the risk of rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the electric grid.
5. Increase costs for consumers as utilities are forced to pay for new power generation to comply with the EPA rule.