Clinton County Connection

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Youth to Washington

At the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Annual Meeting in Chicago in 1957, Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson addressed the crowd, stating, "If one thing goes 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. Word of the program continued to spread, and today, more than 1,000 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 June 17-24. Joe Cirrincione, Kaitlyn Steinkamp and Jensen Boatright were chosen to attend this year's "Youth to Washington" tour. Joe, Kaitlyn and Jensen boarded a bus in Mt. Vernon early Friday morning, June 17, and started what was an eye-opening experience by 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.

More than 1,000 young adults from all over the United States gathered at the Hyatt Regency Hotel one morning for the Youth

"Youth" continued from 18A

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 representing cooperatives from the entire state of Illinois. The students visited historical sites including Arlington National Cemetery, the Holocaust Museum, the U.S. Capitol and a variety of memorials. Among the fun activities the students enjoyed was an assembly of Youth Tour participants from across the nation. A highlight of the trip was the opportunity to meet our United States representatives and senators. Joe, Kaitlyn and Jensen were able to personally meet with United States Congressman Mike Bost. The Youth Program allows today's students to experience government firsthand by visiting Capitol Hill and seeing the historical sites in Washington, D.C. Joe, Kaitlyn and Jensen, 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 two students to attend this week-long, all expense-paid educational trip. Since this trip was canceled in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19, CCEC sponsored three students in 2022. 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 is followed by the trip to Washington, D.C., in June. Information about next year's trip will be available in the December issue of our newsletter or can be found on our website at www.cceci.com under the Youth Programs tab.

Pictured from left, Congressman Mike Bost, Joseph Cirrincione, Kaitlyn Steinkamp and Jensen Boatright.

Steinkamp selected to serve as chairwoman of the Chip and Pop Co-op Board

Kaitlyn Steinkamp, daughter of Eric and Jennifer Steinkamp of Bartelso, was selected as one of the students to represent Clinton County Electric Cooperative on the Youth to Washington tour held June 17-24. During the trip to Washington, Kaitlyn sought election to the Board of Directors for the Chip and Pop Co-op. After interviewing with members of the nominating committee, she was selected as chairwoman of the Chip and Pop Co-op Board of Directors.

The Chip and Pop Co-op works very similar to that of an electric cooperative. It provides snacks and drinks to the students/members throughout the week. The first task for Kaitlyn and the other members of the board was hiring a manager. The manager was responsible for distributing the snacks and drinks, but it was up to the board to decide how much to charge for the items being sold. The year 2022 proved to be a good year for the Chip and Pop Co-op. They ended the week with $80.50 in margins/profits. At the end of the week, Kaitlyn and the other board members held a final meeting and decided to donate their margins/profits to the Illinois Hurt Lineworker Fund.

At the end of the week, Kaitlyn thought her time on the board really helped open her eyes as to how a cooperative works and was extremely grateful for the learning experience.

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 2022-2023 school year. For more information about the grant program, or to get an application, please contact your school superintendent 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 by CCEC by Nov. 7, 2022. Entries will be evaluated by an impartial panel of judges. Awards will be announced on Dec. 9, 2022.

Last year's winners:

$500 - All Saints Academy
Submitting educator: administrative assistant Jamie Fields

$500 - Central High School
Submitting educator: special education teacher Nicole Weh

$1,500 - Germantown Elementary
Submitting educators: kindergarten teacher Cheri Markwell, third grade teacher Dawn Strake, and special education teacher Kristine Beer

$500 - Mater Dei Catholic High School
Submitting educator: science/chemistry teacher Erika Knolhoff

$500 - Trinity Lutheran School
Submitting educator: teacher Sara Kuper

$500 - Wesclin Middle School
Submitting educator: teacher Julie Boeckman

In observance of Veteran's Day, the office will be closed on Friday, Nov. 11, 2022.

In observance of Thanksgiving, the office will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 24, 2022 and Friday, Nov. 25, 2022.

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

Considering Solar?
Call us first!

As interest in "green" energy and ways to save money on utility bills continue to grow, some cooperative members may be considering the installation of a solar array.

Since these types of systems have the capability of returning electricity back to the electric grid, there are some major safety considerations to sort through before a system is installed.

Before deciding to buy a solar array, examine the economics to determine if such a system will lower your monthly electricity costs. If you do decide to install a solar array, contact our office as early as possible in the process.

A CCEC representative will provide information on our interconnection process and policies, as well as answer any questions you may have. That way, you and your installer will have the information needed as you progress with your system.

For more information on CCEC policies and requirements, please contact our office Monday through Friday, between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. at 800-526-7282.

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