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Youth Tour Winners Bound for Washington D.C.

Heather Burk of Pawnee High School and Stephanie Rose of Woodland High School will be spending a week in Washington D.C. as winners of IEC's Youth Tour contest.

Burk and Rose are two of the four outstanding finalists who wrote essays for the competition. The other two finalists are Jesse Roberts and Brad Sexton, both of Pawnee High School. They won \$100 U.S. Savings Bonds and will take the place of one of the winners should she be unable to attend.

Burk and Rose will join between 50 and 60 other high school juniors who are winners of Youth Tour contests sponsored by Oklahoma electric cooperatives. Youth Tour is June 17-23.

Youth Tour finalists are (below, left to right) Brad Sexton, Heather Burk, Stephanie Rose and Jesse Roberts.

Each year juniors attending a high school in IEC's service territory are invited to participate in the contest by writing an essay on a specific cooperative-related topic. This year's topic was "Compare IEC to any other form of business."

A panel of judges reviews each submitted essay and four finalists are selected.

The finalists then attend a banquet in their honor where they give oral presentations of their

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*The official
publication
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Amanda Dietz, 2004 Youth Tour winner, tells of her Washington trip.

Up and Down and All Around

by Jack Clinkscale, General Manager

Recently, an article was published in the Tulsa World concerning the electric energy rates of its local utility, which we will refer to, for lack of a better name, as Brand X. Now according to this article, back in the winter, Brand X was forced to implement a rather large temporary increase in rates due to the high cost of natural gas which is used to generate a significant portion of its electric energy. Then, in January, Brand X received temporary approval from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission for a \$12 million increase to trim trees after numerous customer complaints about excessive outages and poor service quality. In 2003, Brand X went to the Commission requesting a rate hike of \$41 million. After significant bargaining, the increase request was reduced to \$28 million. They now say the average residential consumer will receive a decrease by \$1.45 on his monthly bill, but commercial rates will increase by 2 percent. The article ends with "The commission approved

a \$14.4 million rate increase for Brand X in December 2003. Since then, the utility has reduced its rates by more than \$35 million, the company said in a press release."

Are you as confused by this as I am? They talk about increases for this and that and yet they end the article telling you how they have reduced the rates by over \$35 million since 2003. The ultimate irony is the title of the article "ELECTRIC RATE CUT PLAN ADVANCES." How can a rate increase of \$28 million, which includes \$12 million for tree trimming, be called a rate cut plan? Now, I think Brand X leaves something to be desired in customer service and power quality, but its public relations department certainly gets an A+.

I don't pretend to know the business practices of Brand X. But it is hard to understand how they can be talking about substantial increases for power costs and increases in tree trimming expenses and yet put the spin on it that they are reducing rates. It just doesn't add up.

I do know the business practices of IEC. Just like Brand X, we have had rate increases, the most recent a 3 percent in June 2004. But we keep our rates as low as possible; we don't have huge increases and decreases based on market fluctuations or to implement maintenance programs such as tree trimming, which we have been doing for years. IEC purchases all its power needs from KAMO Electric Power Cooperative, which serves northeastern Oklahoma and southwestern Missouri and is headquartered in Vinita. They are a quality power supplier with steady, reasonable rates which allow IEC to keep its rates as low as possible. When we have rate changes, we will inform you in a straightforward manner. We won't use smoke and mirrors to try to make you believe we aren't really changing your rates. IEC is owned by you, our members, and we continually strive to give you the best service possible at a reasonable rate. We value your trust and will work hard to earn it and keep it.

THE LAMP

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Jennings Middle School students Brandon Wren (standing left) and Richard Dallas are IEC's delegates to Youth Power Energy Camp.

They will spend four days at Camp Canyon near Hinton, learning leadership skills, cooperative information and electrical safety with other young people their age.

Linemen Damon Lester (kneeling left) and Shawn Stocum will be camp counselors this year.



Operation Round Up[®] Survey Yields Impressive National Results

Through Operation Round Up[®], electric co-op members are making contributions each month to a charitable fund by rounding up their electric bills and donating the difference. The features of this program differ from co-op to co-op, but it has generated some impressive national numbers.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) conducted a survey in late 2004 of Operation Round Up programs at 152 electric cooperatives (of 192 identified as participating in Operation Round Up), which included these findings:

- ☑ On average, 72 percent of the funds collected through Operation Round Up is donated to charitable organizations, while 27 percent go to needy individuals (for example, need due to health or catastrophic events.)
- ☑ According to co-ops responding to the survey, they have donated a combined \$41,812,251 to charitable programs or needy individuals since the start of Operation Round Up.
- ☑ Approximately \$5.29 million has been donated to individuals, \$3.39 million to public schools programs, \$2.97 million to area fire departments, \$1.96 million to student scholarships and education programs, \$1.83 to youth center programs and activities, and \$1.82 million to health and medical needs (see chart).

Since 1994, when IEC began participating in Operation Round Up, over \$500,000 has been collected through members rounding up their electric bills. More than \$400,000 has been donated to area individuals and organizations.

Operation Round Up Total Dollars Donated



Since they began, Operation Round Up programs are now offered by 194 electric co-ops around the country with more than 1.6 million electric cooperative members participating. The programs have donated more than \$41 million to charitable programs or needy individuals. The numbers above represent the top ways to disburse the funds.

Source: NRECA

RECIPES



Marsha's Delight

2 cans of Crescent rolls
1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
1/2 cup sugar

1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 cup butter, melted
Cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350°.

Roll out 1 can of Crescent rolls in bottom of 9"x13" baking dish. Mix together cream cheese, sugar and vanilla. Pour mixture into a baking dish. Top with second can of rolls. Pour melted butter over the top and sprinkle desired amount of cinnamon and sugar.

Bake for 30 minutes and enjoy!



Dick Travis
1947-2005

Can you spell 'w-i-n-n-e-r-s'?

IEC's team won third place in a recent spelling bee for the Jay C. Byers Memorial Library in Cleveland. The annual event is a fund-raiser for the library's summer reading program. The team was comprised of (left to right) Don Lawrence, Kay Rabbitt-Brower and David Donalson.



Cancer Claims Former Employee

Former employee Dick Travis passed away March 4 following a lengthy battle with cancer.

Travis became an IEC employee in 1969 working as a draftsman in the engineering department. In 1978, he transferred to member services where he was editor of The Lamp. He was promoted to director of member services in 1986.

In 1992 Travis was hired as director of member services at East Central Electric Co-op in Okmulgee where he remained until he retired in late 2002.

During his 33-year co-op career, Travis was active in many tourism, economic development, civic and youth organizations. He also held positions with the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives (OAEC) and KAMO Power Member Services, Public Relations and Marketing (MP-PR & Marketing) Associations.

He and his wife Linda were chaperones on the OAEC-sponsored Washington Youth Tour, and Dick is a member of the MR-PR & Marketing Hall of Fame.

Congratulations!

Jack Moore, Mannford, gets a \$100 credit on his electric bill! Jack entered the bill credit drawing we offered at our Tulsa Home & Garden Show booth in early March.



Youth Tour Winners...

Continued from page 1.

essays. Judges then determine which finalists win the trip to Washington.

"Each of our finalists this year was exceptional," says Clara Eulert, IEC's Youth Tour coordinator. "It was difficult for the judges to pick just

two winners."

Supporting the finalists at the banquet March 8 were their teachers Myra McCurry, Pawnee High School, and Stacy Womack, Woodland High School.