



Prairie Land Sponsors Youth on Trip of a Lifetime

KAYLYNN HENDRICKS, Bird City; **LEXI KATS**, Lenora; and **ERIN MAY**, Oberlin; were among 36 Kansas high school students to witness “government in action” firsthand during the 2019 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. Prairie Land sponsored Hendricks, Kats and May on this all-expenses-paid trip that took place June 13-20.

The students began their experience in Topeka with a get-acquainted banquet before flying to Washington, D.C., where they joined more than 1,800 high school students from 43 states.

Students met with their senators and congressional representatives, including Sen. Pat Roberts and U.S. Reps. Ron Estes, Roger Marshall, M.D., and Steve Watkins.

They toured the U.S. Capitol, The White House, Smithsonian Museums, Arlington National Cemetery, the Holocaust Memorial Museum and various memorials. New to the Youth Tour schedule this year was the National Law Enforcement Museum, where the students participated in a police training simulation.

Youth Tour participants were also able to attend the musical “Hello Dolly!” at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

“The Holocaust Museum was one of the most impactful experiences on this trip. Seeing



Kaylynn Hendricks



Lexi Kats



Erin May

the pictures and actual shoes the victims wore, helped me understand how blessed we are today,” Kats said.

As part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s Youth Day program on June 17, all of the state groups convened to learn from inspirational speakers. This year’s keynote speaker was Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic Medalist and two-time world wheelchair basketball champion, who shared his inspiring message, “Just because you can’t stand up doesn’t mean you can’t stand out!”

“Seeing all of our memorials in Washington, D.C., was inspiring,” Hendricks said. “Visiting all of the war memorials and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier allowed me to reflect and think of what all the men and women have done for our country to grant us our freedom.”

Many students express how this trip changes their view on the world and how they view themselves.

“Meeting with our legislators has inspired me to be more involved with politics on all levels,” May said. “I understand my vote is important.”

Kansas Electric Cooperatives Inc. (KEC), headquartered in Topeka, coordinates the annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. KEC is the statewide service organization for rural electric cooperatives in Kansas. Today, KEC serves 28 distribution electric cooperatives and three generation and transmission electric cooperatives providing electricity to over 300,000 Kansas homes and businesses.

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From left: Kaylynn Hendricks, Erin May and Lexi Kats at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Electric Co-ops Engage State Policymakers through Co-ops Vote Activities

As leaders in the communities they serve, Kansas electric cooperatives continue to engage their consumer-members and policymakers through Co-ops Vote, a non-partisan campaign focused on boosting voter turnout in areas served by cooperatives and educating voters and policymakers on issues important to rural Kansans.

As part of this year's Co-ops Vote activities, Prairie Land Electric Cooperative hosted Kansas legislators and local officials at their Norton office on Wednesday, June 5, to discuss topics related to the delivery of affordable and reliable electricity in rural areas.

"It's critical for us to have an opportunity like this to have some one-on-one time with the people who make decisions in the legislature and local government so they are aware of the issues that are most critical to the members of Prairie Land Electric," said Chuck Look, Prairie Land CEO. "We are involved in several local communities, but state issues are most critical and we need to have a voice in that process. This gives us a really great opportunity to do that."

Special guests in attendance were **REPRESENTATIVE KEN RAHJES, SENATOR RICK BILLINGER**, Nex-Tech CEO **JIMMY TODD**, Norton County Economic Development Executive Director **MIKE POSSON**, and Norton County Commissioner **RICHARD THOMPSON**.

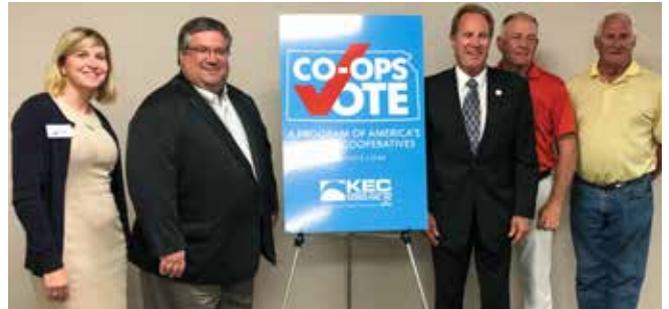
"One of the things I learned is the high level of concern there is with the rate study and what kind of implica-

tions are we going to have on our rural electric cooperatives. One size doesn't fit all," said Sen. Billinger. "I represent five electric cooperatives and I like to come meet the folks. There are a lot of new folks I get to

meet and find out what the concerns are for each individual cooperative because they're all unique and they all have little things that are different in the way they operate."

Staff of Kansas Electric Cooperatives Inc. who helped coordinate the event discussed issues including lack of access to high-speed, reliable broadband; renewable generation; retail wheeling; transmission and generation build out; and utility rate-making for nonprofit electric co-ops. KEC staff also outlined the economic impact electric co-ops have on their communities and the United States: supporting nearly 612,000 American jobs and contributing \$440 billion in U.S. gross domestic product between 2013 and 2017, or \$88 billion annually. In 2017 alone, electric cooperatives generated \$22.5 billion in federal, state and local taxes.

"One of the biggest things to take back are the key issues from the Kansas rural electric cooperatives, and as we look at different bills that are proposed, what



Tara Mays, Director of Government Relations, Kansas Electric Cooperatives; Rep. Ken Rahjes; Sen. Rick Billinger; Chuck Look, Prairie Land CEO; Ron Griffiths, Prairie Land Board President.

their ideas are, and also the general raw impact that our rural electric cooperatives have on the economy of the state," said Rep. Rahjes. "To me, it's a non-partisan issue. We have to do our best to make sure our economy is strong, whether you're eastern Kansas or western Kansas. These groups are so important, they are some of the leaders in our communities so it's very important to hear what their thinking is. This comes from the grassroots, these ideas come from the board members that are elected by the members, that's why it's so important."

Kansas electric co-ops are committed to providing affordable and reliable electricity and empowering the communities they serve. This means being more than just an electricity provider; it means being a partner in economic development and activities that improve the lives of their members. KEC and its member co-ops will continue to initiate dialogue with Kansas policymakers for the benefit of the consumer-members they serve.

2018 Prairie Land Youth Tour *Continued from page 16A* ▶

"Meeting new people and creating friendships that will last a lifetime, are sentiments we hear every year from our students," said Anna Foley, Prairie Land Youth Tour Coordinator. Prairie Land sponsors three students for the Youth Tour each year as part of our strong commitment to the community and our mission to help the future generations to become leaders. Hendricks, Kats and May were selected through a competition held by Prairie Land Electric. To be selected, the

students took a written test and were interviewed by a panel of judges.

"Prairie Land is proud to be an avid supporter of our student leaders. We understand that these outstanding youth will soon become community leaders," said Chuck Look, CEO of Prairie Land.

To learn how you can participate in Prairie Land's 2020 Youth Tour contest, contact Anna Foley, 800-577-3323.

Congratulations Prairie Land Employees!

Prairie Land extends its congratulations and appreciation to Anna Foley and Spencer Ketterl for their years of service to our members and the cooperative.



Anna Foley
25 Years

ANNA FOLEY began her career with Norton-Decatur on Aug. 18, 1994, as a customer service representative.

In 2002, she joined the member services department and became the Youth Tour coordinator and editor of the centerspread for *Kansas Country Living* magazine. Foley is currently the member services assistant for Prairie Land.

"I love the variety of my job in the member services department," Foley said. "It allows me to be involved with our members in the office helping them with energy efficiency and promoting the cooperative's products. I also have the opportunity to work out of the office with our local schools and youth through our Safety Poster contest and Youth Tour contest."

Foley and her husband, Craig, have two grown children and three grandsons. In her spare time, she enjoys visiting her kids and grandkids, cooking and traveling.

"Thank you, Prairie Land, I have been so fortunate to be part of this cooperative family for the last 25 years," Foley said.



Spencer Ketterl
20 Years

SPENCER KETTERL began his employment with Prairie Land on Aug. 19, 1999, working on the construction crew in the Bird City area.

In 2002, he advanced to apprentice lineman and relocated to the Oberlin area. Ketterl is currently a journeyman lineman in Oberlin.

Ketterl and his wife, Krickit, have two children Ryan, 15, and Taylor, 13. In his spare time, he enjoys working on the family farm and hunting.

Prairie Land Welcomes New Employee



Deborah Anderson

DEBORAH ANDERSON began her employment with Prairie Land on June 10 as a communications specialist in the Member Services department.

Anderson was previously employed by Nex-Tech, LLC as a creative solutions specialist.

Anderson currently lives in Lenora with Doyle, and their two dogs and attends the Lenora United Parish.

In her spare time, she enjoys reading and walking the dogs with friends. She loves live theater, museums and opportunities to travel and learn about new places.

KILOWATT TIPS

The Wind Chill Effect Can Save You Money



Kilowatt

Those lazy, hazy days of summer are upon

us. If you are interested in keeping money in your pocket and lowering your electric bill, consider installing ceiling fans.

Using ceiling fans along with air conditioning will allow you to turn your thermostat up about 4 degrees. A higher setting on your thermostat will help keep your energy bills down, saving cash.

Fans keep you cooler by using the wind chill effect. This effect works by blowing air around a room, making it easier for sweat to evaporate from your skin. Although any fan can create this effect, ceiling fans are considered the most effective for their ability to circulate air through an entire room.

During the summer you want the fan to blow air straight down, so your ceiling fan needs to run in a counterclockwise direction as you look up at it. The warmer it is, the higher the speed should be.

Preparing for a Safe Semester at College

With all the necessities of college life (laptops, phone chargers and desk lamps) or even the non-necessities, (microwaves, refrigerators, printers, televisions and gaming systems), it is easy to overload electrical outlets, which can start a fire.

Before moving into campus housing, make sure to purchase a power strip with a built-in circuit breaker or a surge protector. Similar to a power strip, a surge protector allows for more plug-in options and helps stop the negative effects on inconsistent power quality on electronic devices.

KILOWATT was adopted by Prairie Land after the December 2006 ice storm. She now brings you energy and safety tips each month.

HAPPY LABOR DAY

Hats off to our staff! In observance of Labor Day, our office will be closed on Monday, Sept. 2. To report an outage, call 785-577-3323 or 800-577-3323.



Kansas' Largest Solar Project Breaks Ground

At a sunny 84 degrees, June 17, 2019, seemed a perfect day for Sunflower Electric Power Corporation and Mid-Kansas Electric Company to celebrate the groundbreaking of the 20-megawatt Johnson Corner Solar Project. Both companies are member-owned by six Kansas electric cooperatives, including Prairie Land Electric Cooperative Inc.

A 25-year power purchase agreement was made with Lightsource BP, an independent power producer that will build, own and operate the solar facility. The facility will be located approximately 2 miles southwest of Johnson City.

U.S. 1ST DISTRICT CONGRESSMAN ROGER MARSHALL, dignitaries from Mid-Kansas, Sunflower, Lightsource BP and the National Renewables Cooperative Organization, and guests attended the event at the Stanton County 4-H Building. Two trustees for Prairie Land Electric were in attendance: **JERRY GAL-**

LAGHER of Concordia and **ERIC WITMER** of Phillipsburg. Gallagher is also a director on the Sunflower Electric Power Corporation board.

"The Johnson Corner Solar Project will be the largest solar project in Kansas, and that's definitely something to celebrate," said Rep. Marshall. "I congratulate Sunflower, Mid-Kansas, Lightsource BP, and NRCO on their successful collaboration to launch this project."

"There will be 77,000 panels measuring 4 feet by 6 feet on the over 200 acres used for the project," said Gallagher. "Each panel is dual-sided so energy can be created from the reflected light as well as direct sunlight, and are expected to last from 25-30 years."

The project was announced in February 2018 with an expected completion date in late 2019. However, in the fourth quarter of 2018, Lightsource BP requested a schedule extension to allow them

to package the Johnson Corner Solar Project with several others so they could achieve more favorable financing terms.

The solar project will add another fuel source to Sunflower's and Mid-Kansas' generation portfolio that already includes natural gas, coal, wind and hydro-electric power.

The facility will produce approximately 55,500-megawatt hours annually, comprising 1% of the Mid-Kansas and Sunflower combined-system's energy.

"Our system is summer peaking, which means energy demand is highest during those months," said Stuart Lowry, president and CEO of Mid-Kansas and Sunflower. "In contrast to wind facilities, which generate the most energy during winter night hours, this project will generate energy on hot, summer days, providing protection against high market prices during those times."

Locating the solar facility at Sunflower's Johnson Corner Substation will also reduce loading on an area transmission line that is importing energy at its full capacity and would require expensive upgrades without the local energy injection provided by the future Johnson Corner Solar Project.

"The solar project is an example of fuel diversification to generate electricity," explained Steve Epperson, Mid-Kansas chairman of the board and Sunflower board member. "As locally elected boards of directors, we have a responsibility to employ the right combination of traditional and renewable generation resources that protect both the affordability and reliability of electricity."

Construction will begin in August, and the facility is scheduled to be energized in the first quarter of 2020.



From left: Kevin Christy, COO North America at Lightsource BP; Rep. Martin Long (R-Ulysses); Clare Gustin, Sunflower vice-president member services and external affairs of Sunflower and Mid-Kansas; Corey Linville, Sunflower vice-president power supply and delivery of Sunflower and Mid-Kansas; Wes Campbell, Sunflower board chairman; U.S. Rep. Roger Marshall (R-Kansas); Stuart Lowry, president and CEO of Sunflower and Mid-Kansas; Stephen Epperson, Mid-Kansas board chairman; Kyle Nelson, COO of Sunflower and Mid-Kansas; Sen. John Doll (R-Garden City); Todd Bartling, vice-president of renewables development for National Renewables Cooperative Organization.