

2022-2023 RESOURCE BOOK



CO-OPS CONNECT

YOU WITH OPPORTUNITY



WASHINGTON YOUTH TOUR





INTRODUCING THE TENNESSEE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CREATIVE WRITING AND SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

Before you lies a unique opportunity. Winners of the Electric Cooperative Writing Contest not only earn spots on a once-in-a-lifetime tour of our nation's capital, but they also qualify for additional trips and thousands of dollars in scholarships and have a chance to network with other young leaders from across the nation.

More than 6,000 high school juniors from across Tennessee have participated in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

This booklet will tell you more about the trip, let you hear from previous delegates and outline the requirements and resources to help you write the

Exciting stops on the Washington Youth Tour include the Washington Monument, above, and the U.S. Capitol, right. Seeing the sites they've studied in school is a highlight of the delegates' D.C. experience.

best short story. It will also tell you a little bit more about electric cooperatives and the reasons they have provided this opportunity to students for more than 50 years.



WHAT YOU GET

Your prize for showing the benefits of cooperative power: an unforgettable trip to Washington, D.C., in **June 2023** with nearly 2,000 other students your age from across the country.

Each day of the Washington Youth Tour brings more impressive sights, opportunities for photos and lots of memories. Among activities filling the agenda are tours of Washington, D.C., and all its landmarks, memorials and museums. Highlights include the Smithsonian Institution, White House, U.S. Capitol, Mount Vernon and Monticello.

Food, travel and lodging expenses are paid by Tennessee's electric cooperatives. But the benefits of the Youth Tour go far beyond an expense-paid trip.

Youth Tour winners can compete to represent Tennessee on the **Youth Leadership Council**. One student from each state is selected to return to Washington, D.C., for a leadership workshop, which focuses on the electric cooperative industry.

And don't forget about the chance to help pay for your college education with **scholarships of \$3,000, \$2,000 or \$1,000** awarded by the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association if your story is judged one of the top three in the state.

You can also choose to participate in our **Cooperative Youth Ambassador** program. Delegates who stay active and engaged with their co-ops in the 12 months following Youth Tour qualify for a drawing for a **\$10,000 scholarship** to the school of the winner's choice.

Other scholarships, including the **Glenn English National Cooperative Leadership Foundation Scholarship** and the **Engineers of the Future Scholarship**, are available through the Glenn English National Cooperative Leadership Foundation.



TRAVEL



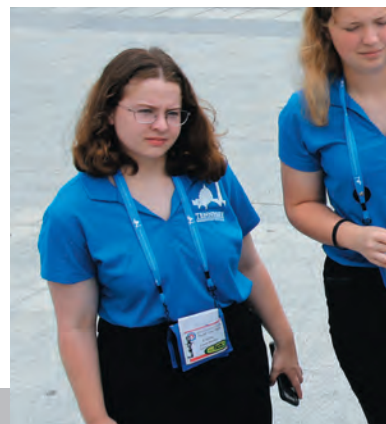
RECOGNITION



SCHOLARSHIPS



CONNECTIONS





HEALTH AND SAFETY WILL BE A PRIORITY

In addition to scholarships provided by the electric co-ops, **Union University** in Jackson and **Carson-Newman University** in Jefferson City have recognized the leadership potential of Youth Tour delegates. The universities have agreed to provide dozens of scholarships worth up to \$10,000 a year for four years.



IMPORTANT NOTE: The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our ability to take students to Washington, D.C., for the past few years. Tennessee's electric co-ops will follow the advice of medical experts and public health officials as we plan for the 2023 Tour. If we are unable to ensure the safety of our winners, the trip will not be possible, and other prizes may be awarded in place of the trip.

THERE'S MUCH MORE ONLINE

Visit our website for more information about the trip, scholarships and other opportunities:

youthtour.tnelectric.org



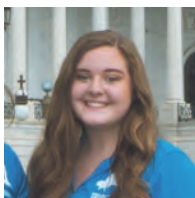


HEAR FROM THE WINNERS



"The trip was honestly a trip to remember. I was very nervous at first to meet everyone, but I became really close with most of the people. I love that I was able to go on the trip because of the amazing sites I got to see, the amazing friends I met, and how the trip helped me open up and step out of my comfort zone."

**Kaylea Tholin, Meigs County High School
Volunteer Energy Cooperative**



"I will forever be grateful for the Washington Youth Tour! It was a life-changing experience, especially all the sites I had the opportunity to see. I never thought that 900 words would change my life, but they did! I will never forget the people I met and the best experiences I've ever come across!"

**Savanna Bryant, Gordonsville High School
Upper Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation**



"When everyone said this would be the trip of a lifetime, I didn't believe them. I was wrong. This trip impacted me in so many ways. I met some of the most amazing people, and I got to see and learn about the things that make our country what it is today. I can't thank my electric co-op enough for giving me this opportunity and allowing for me to experience the trip of a lifetime."

**Meagan Blackwell, Clarksville High School
Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation**



"Now that I've been on the Washington Youth Tour, I know exactly what they were talking about when they said, "This will be a trip of a lifetime." The monuments and museums we got to experience as well as many places that represent our country on a national level made the trip spectacular. The most important part was being able to make friends all across the state who I can continue to have contact with for years to come!"

**Michael Carter, Portland High School
Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation**



Each day of the Washington Youth Tour brings more impressive sights, opportunities for photos and lots of memories. Among activities filling the agenda are tours of Washington, D.C., and all its landmarks and memorials.

JOIN A NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

Politicians, authors, athletes and business leaders, including Apple CEO Tim Cook, are proud Youth Tour alumni.



2022 ROBERT MCCARTY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS



Trace Gearlds,
Monroe County High School,
Tri-County Electric
Membership Corporation,
\$3,000 Scholarship



Malcom Gora,
DeKalb County High School,
Caney Fork Electric
Cooperative,
\$2,000 Scholarship



Brayden Rouse,
Dyer County High School,
Forked Deer Electric
Cooperative,
\$1,000 Scholarship

2022 CO-OP YOUTH AMBASSADOR



Camden Robertson,
Southside High School,
Southwest Tennessee
Electric Membership
Corporation,
\$10,000 Scholarship

Delegates who stay engaged and active with their local co-ops in the year following the Youth Tour have a chance to win a \$10,000 scholarship to the college or trade school of their choice.

RULES AND RESOURCES

The energy provided by electric co-ops has far-reaching impacts on Tennessee. Write a short story explaining how “Co-ops Connect” Tennessee communities with energy, education, broadband, economic development and more.

There are a few rules you need to follow:

1. Only juniors in high school are eligible to participate.
2. Every short story must be titled “Electric Cooperatives Connect.”
3. Submissions must not exceed 900 words, including articles (“a,” “an” and “the”). The exact word count must be included on your cover page. Entries must be typewritten and double-spaced.

Remember, you’re writing a short story, which gives you more creative freedom than the rigid guidelines of an essay. Your story should be an entertaining, informative description of electric cooperatives.

Visit youthtour.tnelectric.org to learn more about electric co-ops. Resources there will provide you with lots of information and material to write your story.

CO-OP CONTACT PERSON

EMAIL ADDRESS

DUE DATE





CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS:

The tips below can help you get one step closer to D.C. Use these suggestions to make your story stand out.

Characters, time and place

Spend some time to develop the characters, location and time frame of your story.

Get specific

Include at least three specific examples of the many ways electric co-ops strengthen their communities. The expansion of broadband, availability of reliable energy, efforts to recruit new businesses and jobs, and leadership development for young people are just a few examples.

Include one (or more) co-op principles

The seven principles of electric co-ops are listed on pages 14 and 15. Include these in your story to demonstrate your understanding of the many things that make electric co-ops unique.

THERE'S MUCH MORE ONLINE

Find additional resources on our website to help you write your story:

youthtour.tnelectric.org

JUDGING CRITERIA

Be creative in your writing, utilizing the information in this booklet and your own distinctive voice. Your writing will be judged on three factors:

50% Appropriate treatment of theme and knowledge of subject

To gain full credit in this category, you'll have to effectively weave the information relating to the theme throughout the short story. Judges will see indications of additional research, a grasp of what information is vital to making your story believable and credible and creative ways of presenting that information.

35% Originality and Creativity

Use a different, entertaining, effective way of presenting information that will educate a reader and get your points across.

15% Grammar and Composition

If you need an explanation here, check your English textbook.



LAST YEAR'S WINNING STORY

If you take a stroll down the side of the cold, brisk water banks of the Cumberland River, you can find an old, bald headed man. He will be there in a pair of old faded, denim, bib overalls that have burnt, welding holes spread across them like sprinkles on a doughnut. His face is worn like Red Wing boot leather, and his hands don't seem quite as steady as they once were.

He will be sitting there with an old cane pole and a cup of worms while sippin' on a jug of sweet tea. If you take a notion to set a spell with my granddaddy he will share with you knowledge that has been his livelihood.

In big or even small, little, remote towns across this great country are power plants and smokestacks that have built our wonderful nation as they generated electricity. My granddaddy has traveled these lands as a boilermaker. He is a retired tradesperson who built, repaired and maintained these plants. He mainly worked on coal fired, steam and nuclear power plants, and in the boilermaker world, he is known as Colonel. He has spent many years working at power plants in Cumberland City, Hartsville, Gallatin and New Johnsonville, Tennessee, making sure we would have electricity.

Ol' Colonel let me know that the sources used to generate electricity in Tennessee have changed substantially over the decades. He said, "Them there coal fired plants beller out too much

air pollution from them stacks for the likings of the environment people." Coal's share of power has declined as nuclear power passed coal up as the top source of electricity. Tennessee is home to two of the newest nuclear reactors in the United States and the third largest pumped storage hydroelectric facility.

As he takes out a big, ol' fat, red worm, Colonel then explains how the local power companies work closely together to make life better for the people they serve. He said, "Public power means that it's not beholden to any of them there investor types, and they ain't there to make nary a profit either." Instead, the focus is on generating safe, clean, reliable and affordable electricity for the people. Low rates and low energy bills attract companies from across the globe, bringing with them high paying jobs.

Colonel has seen many changes over the years, and he will let you know that the rapidly evolving energy marketplace has made close partnerships more important than ever. Colonel says, "You might be good at shootin' that there ball in your backyard, but if you find a half dozen more like you....well, you got you a heck of a team there that'd be hard to beat, now wouldn't it?" A few years back, local power companies were offered the opportunity to lengthen and strengthen their partnership with TVA. This helps secure long-term access to the benefits of public power for decades to come.



Colonel reaches down, picks something up and grins, " You see this here acorn? Just sittin' here, it might get eaten, it may rot or maybe something else. If I take this seed and plant it, you know it will more than likely grow into a mighty oak. Same goes for children. You work with them, help them and show them the way, and they will be good people someday." Electric cooperatives hire employees and pay taxes, but the community involvement digs even deeper, especially with the youth as they want to give back to the community in meaningful ways. That's why they give back and participate in the Washington Youth Tour, Youth Leadership Summit and Electric Camp and Youth Leadership Conference.

Tennessee's electric cooperatives are building a brighter Tennessee, investing in a stronger, better prepared and more resilient future for the communities. Healthcare, education and businesses depend on high-speed connectivity. This is something many small, little remote communities just do not have access to. Tennessee's electric cooperatives are investing more than \$1.2 billion to expand connectivity in rural and suburban Tennessee.

Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association powers everyday life for rural and suburban Tennessee and impacts the communities they serve. Electric co-ops serve 71% of the state's landmass, 38% of the state's population, 84 out of 95 counties, 1 in 3 homes and 100,000

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES: CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Trace Gearlds, a student at Monroe County High School in the Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation service area, was the state winner of the 2022 Washington Youth Tour Writing Contest, earning him a \$3,000 scholarship.



This year's theme is "Co-ops Connect." Write your story about the many ways co-ops connect their communities with energy and opportunity.

miles of distribution line and cover 2.5 million Tennesseans.

If you are out and about near the Cumberland River, you should take a good look around. If you see an old, bald headed man in his old faded, denim, bib overalls, holding an old fishing pole, you should stop for a spell. People who've lived through generations play a vital role in how our society functions. Listen to the stories and experiences of older generations – whether it's a family member, neighbor or coworker. They can help us understand history and how to better shape our future. They may even educate you about electricity and co-cops.

TENNESSEE'S ELECTRIC CO-OPS

Tennessee's electric cooperatives provide power to more than 2.8 million Tennesseans. Unlike other businesses, electric cooperatives are owned by the consumers they serve and operate as not-for-profit businesses. This may not sound important, but it means that consumers are the priority. Rates are kept low because there are no stockholders to pay, and the co-op is responsive to members because they vote on co-op leadership.

In the 1930s, there was no power in rural Tennessee. Homeowners and farmers came together to

create co-ops that would bring power to their homes.

Today, co-ops are modern businesses that use technology to efficiently operate a large, advanced grid. Despite these changes, the primary goal of co-ops have not changed: provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our neighbors, the very people who own the co-op.

Because of their local ties, co-ops are committed to improving lives in their communities. Going be-



MEMBER-OWNED AND -REGULATED

Electric co-ops are owned by the people they serve, not by government. Members elect board members to represent their interests and set policy and procedures for the co-op.



NOT-FOR-PROFIT

Co-ops exist to serve their communities instead of shareholders. They distribute and sell energy at cost and invest any excess revenue back into the electric system.



COMMITTED TO IMPROVING COMMUNITIES

Electric co-ops work to improve everyday life in our rural and suburban communities. We do this through reliable energy and efforts in education and community development.



yond simply keeping the lights on, co-ops recruit businesses and investment, help members operate their homes and businesses more efficiently and prepare students to be tomorrow's leaders.



ELECTRIC CO-OPS SERVE

2.8 MILLION

TENNESSEANS



1 IN 3
TENNESSEE
HOMES

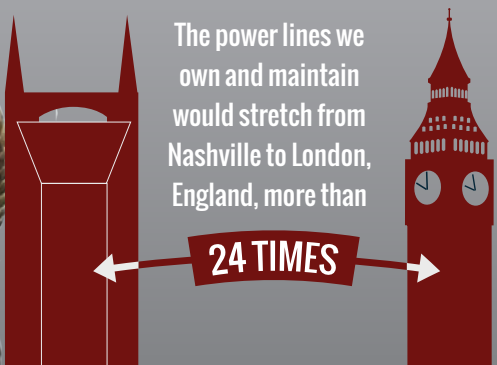


84/95
TENNESSEE
COUNTIES

99.96% RELIABILITY

The power lines we own and maintain would stretch from Nashville to London, England, more than

24 TIMES



CO-OP CAREERS AND PRINCIPLES

CO-OP CAREERS

Electric co-ops provide career opportunities that are close to home but far from ordinary. If you are looking for an opportunity to provide for your family and serve your community, consider a co-op career.



ELECTRIC LINEWORKER

These professionals keep the power on. They not only construct, replace and maintain the electric lines – they get the power back on when storms or other disasters strike.



ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Engineers are detail-oriented problem solvers. Using state-of-the-art equipment, they design, plan and monitor the transmission, distribution and service lines.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IT pros ensure that technology functions efficiently. They develop programs, evaluate hardware and software needs, manage cybersecurity and maintain communications systems.

THE SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Co-ops are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.

DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Co-ops are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members contribute equitably to the capital of their co-op. Members allocate surpluses to further develop the cooperative or support other activities approved by members.



FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING

Finance professionals ensure co-ops can build and maintain infrastructure to keep the lights on. Duties include risk management, forecasting and overall financial management.



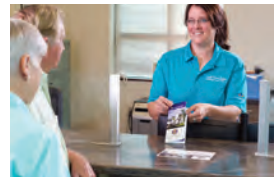
PUBLIC RELATIONS

The co-op's storytellers, marketing and communications professionals tackle a variety of responsibilities, including reputation management, social media and media relations.



HUMAN RESOURCES

HR pros help engage with co-op employees and manage multiple responsibilities, including payroll, benefits administration, recruiting, employee training and leadership.



MEMBER SERVICE

Member service reps are the voice of the co-op and the initial point of contact for our consumers. They answer phones, assist new members, solve problems and collect payments.

AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Co-ops are autonomous organizations controlled by their members.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Co-ops provide education and training for their members, elected officials and employees on the nature and benefits of cooperation.

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Co-ops serve their members most effectively by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.



WASHINGTON YOUTH TOUR

PRESENTED BY YOUR LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE AND



2964 Sidco Drive, Nashville, TN 37204

615.367.9284 | tnelectric.org