

**Valley
Rural Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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GUEST COLUMN

Investing in our communities' future leaders



by **Luanne H. Eckenrode**
Vice President,
Consumer Services and
Public Relations

MORE years ago than I care to admit, I left a position in the academic world to work for an electric cooperative. Though I was excited about the new challenge, I did wonder if I would miss interacting with students on a regular basis. It didn't take me long to realize that, at Valley Rural Electric, I would continue to have opportunities to make an impact on the lives of young people (and vice versa).

One of my job responsibilities was to present educational programs on electrical safety, energy efficiency, energy and the environment, and other utility topics. My teaching experience came in handy as I reviewed the program materials, tinkered with the demonstration units and researched publications for information on everything from grounding rods to electromagnetic fields. After a crash course in the basics of electricity, I was prepared to share what I had learned.

Over the years, I spoke with students from preschool to high school. With the help of Valley linemen, I displayed the power of electricity with our high-voltage demonstration. I reminded youngsters to watch for wires when outdoors by using our "Safety City" exhibit. And I played many a game of electrical "Jeopardy," explaining how electricity works and why it deserves our respect.

Whether meeting with children or adults in a classroom, a fire house or a church basement, I was always impressed with the enthusiasm of the audience. And more often than not, I was asked a question for which I had no answer (but gladly checked and got back to them).

I also coordinated the cooperative's sponsorship of high school students on the Rural Electric Youth Tour. The week-long trip to Washington, D.C., gathers

the "cream of the crop" from area schools to experience the sights and appreciate the history of our nation's capital and the rural electric program.

I've had the pleasure of preparing young adults for this "trip of a lifetime" — in their words, not mine. I've watched nervous girls and boys meeting for the first time who later became lifelong friends. I've seen kids take this life-changing opportunity and make the most of it, transforming their outlooks and expanding their horizons. Each year I think there could not be a nicer group of teenagers ... and then another one comes along. (For more on this year's Youth Tour, please see Pages 14b-14c.)

Five years ago, I chaired the committee that established Valley's Brighter Future Scholarship Program. Funded by unclaimed capital credits refunds that formerly had to be returned to the state treasury, it awards 25 \$1,000 scholarships each year to students in 18 public and various non-public high schools within seven of the eight counties served by the cooperative, as well as students already enrolled in post-secondary institutions.

Developing the selection criteria, scoring the applications and presenting the scholarship certificates has been an investment in time that has reaped huge rewards, not only for the cooperative's public relations efforts but also personally. (For information on this year's recipients, please see Page 14d.)

All of these "value-added" programs offered by the co-op continue to make an impact on the youngest of our consumers. And they have made a positive influence on my career and commitment to life-long learning. If you have sons, daughters or grandchildren who might be able to take advantage of our educational and outreach programs, please encourage them to contact us. We believe in investing in our local communities and empowering our future leaders. 

Valley REC sponsors 14 area students on Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

BY DOUG ROLES
Director of Member Services

VALLEY Rural Electric Cooperative sponsored 14 high school students on the 2014 Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., June 15-20. The teens, from eight different schools in three counties, spent their time in the capital meeting legislators and learning about the cooperative business model.

They joined more than 1,600 other juniors and seniors from electric cooperatives all over the country — 92 from co-ops in Pennsylvania and New Jersey — who participated in the event.

The all-expenses-paid trip was packed with activities, including meetings with lawmakers and rural electric leaders, visits to historic monuments throughout Washington, and tours of the Smithsonian museums, Holocaust Museum, National Zoo, and Arlington Cemetery. The agenda also included a cruise on the Potomac River, a parade at the Iwo Jima Memorial and a theater production at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Arts.

“My favorite things were getting to know different people from different states,” says Shyanne Wible, a Youth Tour student from Three Springs. “I also liked the Iwo Jima Sunset Parade.”

Hannah Taylor, a student from McVeytown, says Youth Tour was one of the best trips she’s taken. She also says she enjoyed the many activities.



PHOTO BY STEPH OKUNIEWSKI

2014 YOUTH TOUR: Valley REC students on Youth Tour were, front from left, Elizabeth “Libby” Lane, Hannah Taylor, Michaelynn Lauer and Caitlin England; middle, from left, Shyanne Wible, Morgan Brumbaugh, Melissa States, Taylor Boonie and Abbey Cresswell; and back, from left, Mikaela McGraw, Lance Barnett, Carly England, Dylan DeShong and Todd Chapman.

“It was great to be there with other students who wanted to be there as much as I wanted to and to be able to make such great friends in the process!” she says. “It was such a great experience. Honestly, it felt like one really long day with a bunch of naps in between. ... My favorite part about the trip had to be when we visited Arlington Cemetery. It was just so humbling to see just how many people gave their lives for our country’s freedom.”

Youth Tour participants are dependents of co-op members. During the trip, they

heard about the principles that govern rural electric and other cooperatives. Recommended by guidance counselors at their respective schools, the students were selected for the trip on the basis of academic achievement, leadership in extracurricular activities and community service.

Huntingdon Area High School had two juniors on Youth Tour 2014. They were Melissa States of Hesston, daughter of Kevin and Sarah States, and Michaelynn Lauer of Huntingdon, daughter of Steve and Cindy Lauer.

Melissa is considering becoming a physician. She serves as secretary of her class and president of the 4-H club. She was chosen as one of two students to represent Valley Rural Electric Cooperative in Pennsylvania’s Youth Leadership Council competition during Youth Tour.

Michaelynn plays softball and field hockey for the Bearcats and is a student council member. She has also been a contestant in the Rotary speech competition. Her goal is to become a pharmacist or an attorney.

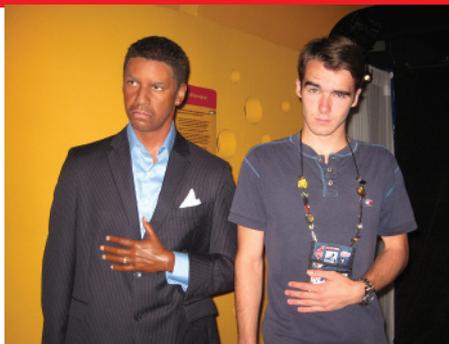
Two of the participants are from Mount Union Area High School. They are



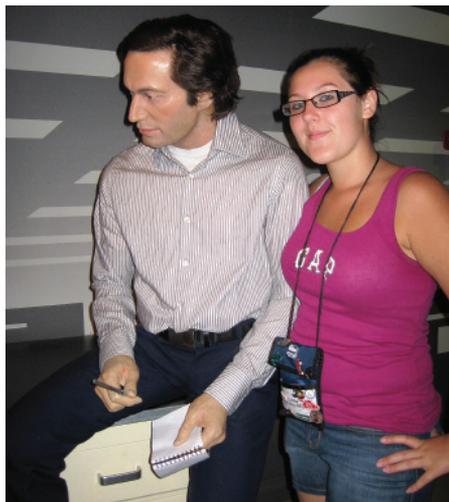
PHOTO BY STEPH OKUNIEWSKI

ABOVE: Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Hollidaysburg) speaks with Youth Tour students from central Pennsylvania. The visit to Capitol Hill is one of the highlights of Youth Tour each year.

PHOTOS BY HANNAH TAYLOR



TOUR FUN: Youth Tour includes a few hours of fun at Madame Tussauds Wax Museum. Above: Lance Barnett poses with actor Denzel Washington. Below: Libby Lane enters the newsroom of *The Washington Post* to compare notes with reporter Bob Woodward.



Elizabeth “Libby” Lane of McVeytown, daughter of Beau and Mitzi Lane, and Hannah Taylor of McVeytown, daughter of James and Rebecca Taylor.

Elizabeth is involved with Health Occupation Students of America and placed first in a health-related Skills USA regional competition. She has played softball for the Trojans for three years and enjoys camping and fishing. She hopes to become a registered nurse and work with children.

Hannah enjoys acting in school plays, playing guitar and participating in church activities. She is involved in her school’s chapter of Future Business Leaders of America, student council and choir. She plans to pursue a career in sports nutrition.

Southern Huntingdon County High School had three students on this year’s Youth Tour. They are Abbey Cresswell of Cassville, daughter of Timothy and Jodi Cresswell; Shyanne Wible of Three Springs, daughter of Jason and Monica Wible; and Todd Chapman of Blairs Mills, son of Gerald and Teresa Chapman.

Abbey, the current Orbisonia/Rockhill Homecoming Queen, loves singing and

dance and has served for three years as president of her 4-H club. She plays field hockey, competes in track and field, and volunteers with the Trough Creek Volunteer Fire Co. Abbey plans to become a psychologist and work with troubled youth.

Shyanne enjoys spending time with her church youth group. Like some of her fellow Youth Tour students, she, too, is involved in the Future Farmers of America program, serving as her chapter’s historian. She also is secretary for the 4-H club and is a Young Lions (LEO) Club member with Abbey and Todd.

Todd is president of the South Huntingdon County LEO Club and a member of the school’s marching band. Todd has participated in track and field for the Rockets and competed in the science Olympiad. He is considering a career as an information technology manager.

Two of this year’s Youth Tour students were from Williamsburg High School. Twin sisters Carly and Caitlin England of Williamsburg are the daughters of Barry and Gwendolyn England.

Literary club and math league keep Caitlin busy, along with her other pursuits. She plays volleyball and softball for Williamsburg and is in band. She hopes to become an orthopedic surgeon.

Carly plays softball and volleyball for the Blue Pirates. She is in the school band and enjoys spending time with her church youth group. She is considering becoming a veterinarian.

Tussey Mountain High School junior Morgan Brumbaugh of James Creek is the daughter of Bill and Marcy Brumbaugh. She is vice president of her class and is involved in marching band, basketball and softball. She has served her church as a Sunday school teacher for three years and is involved in her school’s 4-H chapter. Like Carly, Morgan is considering a career in veterinary science.

Lance Barnett of Todd was the only senior on this year’s tour. The son of Chris and Maria Barnett, Todd was a Youth Leadership Council candidate for Valley REC. A homeschooled student, Lance also played football for Tussey Mountain High School, serving as the senior captain. He, too, is involved in Huntingdon County’s 4-H program and is active with the mission

program of Calvary Independent Baptist Church.

Dylan DeShong of Hustontown is the son of Chris and Lori DeShong. The Forbes Road High School junior serves as his class secretary. He plays soccer for Forbes Road and with the American Youth Soccer Organization. He is interested in history, and sees military service and engineering work in his future.

Taylor Boonie, Juniata Valley High School Class of 2015, is the daughter of Troy and Erica Boonie of Petersburg. Her school activities include cheerleading, volleyball, track and yearbook. Like many of her Youth Tour counterparts, her after-school hours include time spent with her church youth group and the local FFA chapter. She would like to work in international affairs.

Mikaela McGraw of Martinsburg is the daughter of Patty McGraw. The Central High School junior enjoys fitness and sports training, and has attended youth tennis and basketball camps. She plays both sports for Central, where she also serves as class vice president. She is interested in becoming a CPA or an attorney.

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative is a member-owned utility that serves more than 21,000 consumers in Bedford, Blair, Centre, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata and Mifflin counties.

For more information on the Rural Electric Youth Tour, contact the member services department at Valley REC at 814-643-2650, toll-free 800-432-0680 or email memberservices@valleyrec.com. 



MEMORIAL VISIT: Youth Tour students visit the U.S. Marine Corps (Iwo Jima) War Memorial.

PHOTO BY HANNAH TAYLOR

Valley Rural Electric Cooperative awards 25 \$1,000 scholarships to local students

BY LUANNE H. ECKENRODE
Vice President, Consumer Services & Public Relations

VALLEY Rural Electric Cooperative recently awarded 25 \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors as well as students already enrolled in post-secondary institutions.

The co-op's Brighter Future Scholarship Program was established in 2010 to assist eligible students who are cooperative members or their dependents. Selection criteria include academic achievement, financial need, and school activities and community service.

The money to finance this initiative comes from unclaimed capital credits, refunds that previously had to be turned over to the state treasury. But now, thanks to the efforts of the cooperative's political advocates, these resources can be kept in co-op communities and used to assist consumers facing financial hardships and to fund educational scholarships.

The following 23 high school seniors were awarded scholarships from Valley REC:

Bedford County: Tussey Mountain High School — Keirsten Brode of Dudley, daughter of Lori McGhee and Randy Brode, attending Mount Aloysius College.

Blair County: Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School — Matthew Keefer, son of

Gary and Jeanette Keefer, attending Penn State Altoona; Central High School — Laura Ritchey of Martinsburg, daughter of Thomas and Cindy Ritchey, attending Penn State University; and Andrew Johnston of East Freedom, son of Ritchie and Marsha Johnston, attending Penn State Altoona; Claysburg-Kimmel High School

University; Mount Union Area High School — Ciera Ranck of McVeytown, daughter of Eric and Laura Ranck, attending Messiah College; and Alicia Baker of Huntingdon, daughter of Richard and Jody Baker, attending Pennsylvania College of Technology; Southern Huntingdon County High School —

Chandler Kern of Cassville, daughter of Christopher and Tina Kern, attending Penn State; and Hannah King of Shade Gap, daughter of Ron and Wendy

King, attending Slippery Rock University.

Juniata County: Juniata High School — Megan Shoop of Port Royal, daughter of Robert and Tina Shoop, attending York College of Pennsylvania; and Callie Stouffer of Honey Grove, daughter of Joseph McCalips, attending Harrisburg Area Community College.

Mifflin County: Mifflin County High School — Victoria Hildebrandt of McVeytown, daughter of Jamie and Lara Hildebrandt, attending Kutztown University of Pennsylvania.

Two students currently enrolled in post-secondary institutions were also awarded scholarships from Valley REC for the 2014-15 academic year. They are:

Crystal Collins of Huntingdon, daughter of Elizabeth and Joseph Rolley, a 2013 graduate of Huntingdon Area High School attending Moravian College; and Nathaniel Reitman, also of Huntingdon, son of Carol Peters and Robert Reitman, a 2012 graduate of Huntingdon Area High School attending Duquesne University.

Valley Rural Electric is a member-owned cooperative providing electric service to consumers in eight counties of south-central Pennsylvania, including Bedford, Blair, Centre, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata and Mifflin.

For more information about Valley Rural Electric Cooperative's Brighter Future Scholarship Program, call 800-432-0680 or visit www.valleyrec.com and follow the Programs and Services link to the Scholarships section. 



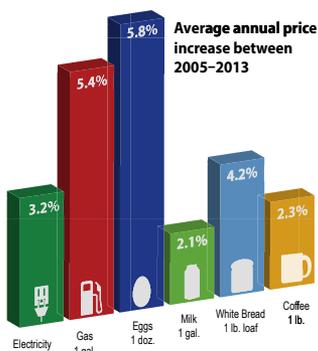
— Ryan Smith of Claysburg, son of Ed and Gail Smith, attending Penn State; Hollidaysburg Area Senior High School — Erik Stern of Duncansville, son of Kevin and Veronique Stern, attending Penn State; and Caitlyn Edgell of Hollidaysburg, daughter of John and Penne Edgell, also attending Penn State; Williamsburg Junior/Senior High School — Austin McMonagle of Williamsburg son of Daniel and Tracy McMonagle, attending Penn State; and Danielle Delp, also of Williamsburg, daughter of Durrell and Dawn Delp, attending Messiah College.

Fulton County: McConnellsburg High School — Sara Wenschhof of Needmore, daughter of Ed and Lisa Wenschhof, attending Penn State Mont Alto; Southern Fulton Junior/Senior High School — Timothy Mottern of Warfordsburg, son of Brian and Carolyn Mottern, attending Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics; and Madison Mellott, daughter of Thomas and Ronda Morton and Jeffrey Mellott, attending Shepherd University.

Huntingdon County: Huntingdon Area High School — Sara White of Huntingdon, daughter of Jamie and Laura White, attending Carleton College; and Alex Gibboney, also of Huntingdon, son of Joel and Christie Gibboney, attending Elizabethtown College; Juniata Valley High School — Zachary Grove of Petersburg, son of Jim and Kim Grove, attending Penn State; and Amanda Hutchison, also of Petersburg, daughter of David and Karen Hutchison, attending Saint Francis

Electricity Remains a Good Value

Electricity continues to be a bargain, especially when compared to other consumer goods. As demand for energy rises and fuel prices increase, your electric cooperative is committed to providing safe, reliable electricity and keeping your electric bill affordable.



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Mainstream Graphics