

Powerline Press

NEWSLETTER



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August 2021

Successful 2021 Virtual Oklahoma Youth Tour

The 2021 Virtual Oklahoma Youth Tour Leadership Conference (OKYTLC) was held June 22 to June 25 by the Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives. Approximately 50 high school seniors, selected by Oklahoma's Electric Cooperatives, met online each morning to interact with one another and guest speakers. Students tuned in on social media each afternoon to complete daily challenges for a chance to receive a scholarship. LREC was happy to sponsor Ashley Trapp of Tahlequah, Sierra Winkler of Keys, and Lillian Chambers of Hulbert.

Stacey Howeth, OKYTLC Director, welcomed campers; she introduced the kickoff speaker: Janine Stange. Also known as The National Anthem Girl, Stange shared how she carried her mother's lessons with her during her journey of singing the national anthem in every state in America. She encouraged students not to let fears or doubts overshadow their desire to chase their life dreams – even if it meant getting outside their comfort zone.

To begin the second day of the conference, students watched a greeting video from Jim Matheson, NRECA CEO, before diving into the timeline and impact of rural electric cooperatives. Students also learned the seven cooperative principles and how electricity travels to communities.

The third day of the conference was filled with legislative education and guest speakers. Students heard stories from many local elected officials: Congresswomen Stephanie Bice, Rep. Mike Osburn, Rep. Cyndi Munson, and Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner, Todd Hiatt. Each speaker shared how they became interested in politics and why it's important for students to get involved in politics however they can.



Local Youth Tour students attending Zoom conference call left to right: Ashley Trapp of Tahlequah; Sierra Winkler of Keys; and Lillian Chambers of Hulbert.

For the conference's final day, students were invited to attend a luncheon at the OAEC Conference Center in Oklahoma City. Tim Downing, Associate Attorney General of Oklahoma, and Ryan Walters, Oklahoma Secretary of Education, made a guest appearance and spoke with the students.

"This year's Youth Tour finalists are a terrific group of young ladies that I enjoyed getting to know during the week-long event. The event gave them opportunities to get involved virtually with other youth from across the state and help further their leadership as well as personal development skills. They interacted with our elected officials virtually and in person, and I feel this opportunity positively impacted their lives. Of course, the event did not make up for the "normal" Washington DC trip, but it was a great alternative that I feel the students truly enjoyed this opportunity. All three of the LREC Youth Tour recipients each received a \$2,000 scholarship to continue their education," said Juanita Keener, Youth Programs Coordinator.

Campers Are Charged Up After Energy Camp ⚡👍



Jason Steeley lineman teaching student Braylee Johnson how LREC works on the electric lines.



Photo left to right: JuaNita Keener, LREC Youth Programs Coordinator, Michelle Smith, Katie Faglie, and Braylee Johnson.

The 2021 Virtual Energy Camp was held from June 1 to June 4 by Oklahoma Association of Electric Cooperatives. Thirty-eight eighth graders were chosen by their region's co-op to attend Energy Camp based on their leadership qualities.

Lake Region selected Braylee Johnson, Michelle Smith and Katie Faglie all from Hulbert to attend this year's Energy Camp. The students along with JuaNita Keener, Youth Programs Coordinator met for morning sessions at Sequoyah Lodge in Hulbert and afternoon sessions from home

that were packed with education, challenges and leadership building.

Stacey Howeth, OAEC Energy Camp Director, welcomed the students for the upcoming week. Then, she introduced their guest, Brandon Gosselin, an aspirational speaker. Gosselin encouraged campers to view life's hardships as challenges instead of trials that are impossible to overcome, and he challenged them to give back to their communities.

Later that afternoon, Energy Camp counselors visited a solar park, to learn more about solar energy sources. Campers tuned in for the lesson via Facebook and Instagram Live.

Local Lake Region Campers had the opportunity to learn with Glen Clark, Director of Marketing and Member Services, on day two of the camp. Glen spoke to the students about the different career opportunities at the electric cooperative.

Energy Camp coordinators met with students through social media in the afternoon to share helpful interview tips and announced the second challenge for campers to complete.

The third day of Energy Camp took place outside Sequoyah Lodge where LREC linemen volunteered to explain their job, demonstrate their daily duties, safety guidelines and how electricity travels from power lines to homes. Campers also had the opportunity to climb a pole and ride in a LREC bucket truck.

On the last day of Energy Camp, students attended a luncheon and awards ceremony at the OAEC Conference Center in Oklahoma City 124100.

Howeth welcomed campers and introduced the leadership team. Brandon Baumgarten, a leadership coach, prayed over the meal. While campers enjoyed pizza, Baumgarten spoke about how students can "lean into someone's life" through leadership and led group activities to strengthen communication skills.

"Younger generations catch a lot of grief for being online or on their devices too much, but the 2021 campers were a treat to host for Virtual Energy Camp," Howeth said. "With everything they have dealt with over the past year, they could have made excuses or had bad attitudes about missing out on the regular camp experience, but they didn't. They enthusiastically participated in every activity, discussion and challenge we put before them."

Congratulation Dean 35 Years of Service



One year out of high school Dean Buford came to Lake Region and joined the brush trimming right-of-way crew in June 1986, where he worked several years before becoming a lineman.

“I have enjoyed my career at LREC and all the guys I have worked with. It has been a good job. I lived close to the office when my wife Rachel and I first got married, outskirts of Hulbert. I would even say I lived a little too close to the office; I would have crews come by and pick me up all hours of the day and night to work. I have worked many outages and mutual aid trips during my time. The last co-op mutual aid work that sticks with me was fire damage around Mannford, OK, several years ago. Several burnt homes, buildings, poles, and working in the dirty soot and ash was bad,” said Dean.

Please join us in congratulating Dean Buford on his retirement, and we wish him and his family the best of luck in his retirement years.

When asked what Dean plans on doing now that he is retired, “As my good friend Danny Darrow says, I plan on petting my cows and chasing my grandbabies,” said Dean.

7,000 Connections



Photo left to right: Larry Mattes, Communication Specialist and Renita Griffin, owner of Bigfoot Hideaway Airbnb.

On June 30, 2021, Lake Region reached another milestone, our 7,000th fiber customer installation - Congratulations Renita Griffin. Thank you to everyone who has supported and continues to support our project to take our area forward with high-speed fiber-optic internet.

As more members come online every day, we are committed to building our fiber network and offering more members the ability to connect to high-speed internet at an affordable cost.

If you and your family ever need a place to stay near Fort Gibson Lake, be sure to find Renita's Bigfoot Hideaway on Airbnb. Guest can now experience blazing fast internet during their getaway. Thank you Renita for letting us tag along during your fiber installation.

www.LakeRegionFiber.com / 918-772-2526



Rural communities deserve equal access to broadband internet, and Lake Region is determined to build internet where no one else will. Above, LREC contractors crossing the Verdigris River to complete our fiber line to service rural Porter near the Muskogee Turnpike. Lake Region is building a fiber-to-the-home network that will allow all LREC members to connect to **FAST & RELIABLE** internet.

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