

Western Sponsors Youth on Washington, D.C., Youth Tour

Brianne Plante, Plainville and Danielle Weber, Ellis, were among the nearly 1,500 high school students from across the country who participated in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour held June 11-18, 2009, in Washington, D.C. Brianne and Danielle were selected as the winners in the Western Cooperative Youth Contest held in March.

The Youth Tour has been a joint effort of electric cooperatives, such as Western, their statewide cooperative associations, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for nearly 50 years.

Each year in June, an action-filled week provides high school students opportunities to learn first-hand what it is like to be involved in politics, community service and today's pressing issues.

The students began their trip touring the Kansas state capitol followed by visits to the Wolf Creek Nuclear Power Plant and the Lyon-Coffey Electric Cooperative before flying to Washington, D.C. The group learned about the U.S. government through visits with Senator Pat Roberts, Congresswoman Lynn Jenkins, and Congressmen Jerry Moran and Todd Tiahrt, meetings with youth from other states and tours of museums, Capitol Hill, Arlington National Cemetery and the White House.

"This trip was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I



Danielle Weber (left) and Brianne Plante stand on the steps before the U.S. Supreme Court, just one of the many stops on the "Government in Action" Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.



Brianne (far right) strikes the "Rosie the Riveter" pose at the Newseum.

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Local Youth Tours Washington, D.C.

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The 2009 youth tour delegates stand in front of the U.S. Capitol.

will never forget," Brianne said. "The historical sites and memorials that we stopped at will forever have a positive impact on my life."

In addition to taking in the sights and sounds of the nation's capital, all the state groups convened for National Youth Day to learn from public figures and other inspirational speakers. This year's Youth Day agenda included Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic Medalist and two-time world Wheelchair Basketball champion. Schlappi shares his inspiring message for every American, young or old: "Just because you can't stand up, doesn't mean you can't stand out." As president of Mike Schlappi Communications, he spreads that word to audiences ranging from students to chief executive officers, from rookies to Olympic champions, and from small gatherings to major conventions.

"This trip was absolutely amazing," Danielle said. "Some of my favorite places were the war memorials, but the Holocaust Museum touched me the most. I will never forget this trip and the people I met."

Since 1964, the nation's cooperative electric utilities have sponsored more than 40,000 high school juniors and seniors for visits to their U.S. congressional delegations, energy and grass roots government education sessions, and sightseeing in Washington, D.C.

For more information about this annual youth contest, contact Western Cooperative Electric at 800-456-6720 or 785-743-5561.



Danielle gets a hug from Slugger at the Kansas City Royals game.



Brianne poses in front of the White House.

Western Energizes Web Site with Apogee Interactive's Latest Energy Calculators

Western has expanded its web site to include a new HomeEnergySuite and CommercialEnergySuite(TM), a series of customized energy efficiency tools developed by Apogee Interactive to address the region's unique weather and allows members to discover various ways to save money and energy.

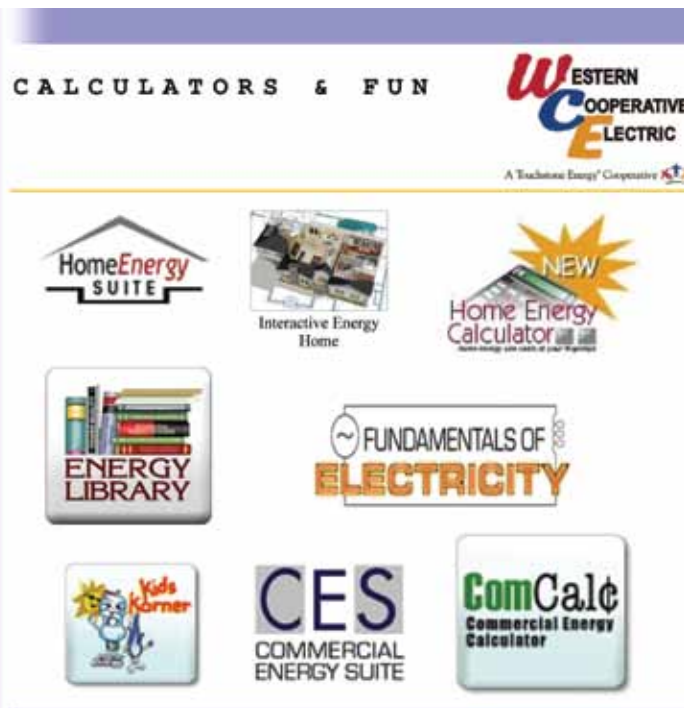
These energy analysis tools provide insights on year-round energy use. "Our mild winters tend to moderate home heating needs, so national "off-the-shelf" energy calculators were likely to miss the mark for our members' heating and cooling energy use patterns," said Dennis Deines, manager of member services for Western.

The HomeEnergySuite offers a full array of evaluation tools including a home energy calculator, appliance calculator, lighting calculator, interactive cut-away house and comprehensive energy reference library.

The suite's flagship tool - the HomeEnergyCalculator - starts with select data points provided by the member, draws upon local weather data, Western's energy prices and Apogee's proprietary energy analysis system to produce a quick and accurate view of the home's energy consumption and costs. Members can then modify their data inputs to see the impact and savings possible with various equipment or usage changes.

Consumers can dig deeper by "walking through" an interactive cut-away house to learn more about home energy consumption room by room. Separate appliance and lighting calculators provide down-to-the-penny energy costs for nearly 50 appliances, electronic devices and lighting options; everything from compact fluorescent light bulbs and whirlpool

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Just click the light bulb on our home page at www.westerncoop.com to try out these new tools.

tubs to big screen plasma TVs.

Kids Korner is also a part of its online energy efficiency information. This fun-filled, interactive section covers all aspects of energy production and use, from Thomas Edison and solar power to electrical safety and utility industry careers.

The Apogee HomeEnergySuite of web tools on Western's Web site also features an interactive lighting calculator that shows the cost savings of using compact fluorescent light bulbs instead of standard ones. For all the other common home appliances, another calculator estimates electricity usage for more than 50 appliances—from flat screen TVs to Energy Star-rated refrigerators.

Western also offers a new com-

mmercial lighting calculator to help businesses find their best lighting solutions, new energy efficient technology and business designs. The CommercialEnergySuite is also complete with an irrigation calculator to assist the area farmers with energy costs and project paybacks.

"The beauty of these new online tools is the simplicity with which they communicate complicated concepts like 'what is my home's carbon footprint, and how much will I reduce it by changing my thermostat settings?'" said Susan Gilbert, Apogee's president and chief executive officer. "Our calculators communicate in terms members can relate to and then use in making wise decisions about their energy use."

"The beauty of these new online tools is the simplicity with which they communicate complicated concepts..."

Tips for Tenants and Renters

Today, whether you rent or own, almost everyone is searching for ways to reduce their energy costs. Although the landlord or management company is ultimately responsible for a building's energy efficiency and safety, there are many simple safety and energy conservation measures that anyone can take.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, more than 33 million properties are occupied by renters in the US. Western Cooperative Electric encourages tenants to take simple steps to make their housing both safe and efficient.

In today's world of growing technology usage, power for electronics is an increasingly larger portion of the electric bill. These include computers, audio equipment, televisions, DVD players and VCRs. Consider plugging all your entertainment equipment into a power strip which, when switched off, will eliminate any standby draw from these devices. This also has the added benefit of protecting your equipment from possible power surges.

For computers, keep them in "sleep" mode when not in use or turn off completely. Contrary to popular beliefs, turning a computer on and off is not harmful. Depending on how you use these electronics, they could add up to about 20 percent of your energy bill.

Using new lighting technologies can reduce lighting energy use in homes by 50 to 75 percent. Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) are the most common energy

efficient bulbs on the market. They only use about one-quarter of the electricity compared to standard incandescent bulbs. During daylight hours, take advantage of natural light instead of artificial light. You will feel better and you will save money too. You can also save money by installing timers to reduce the amount of time your lights are on.

Leaky or dripping hot water faucets can waste as much as 48 gallons of hot water a week! Have them fixed quickly. You can also reduce hot water use by asking your landlord to



There are many things that tenants and landlords can do to reduce energy costs in rental properties.

install a low-flow showerhead if your current one uses more than three gallons per minute.

When living on your own, you are ultimately responsible for your own safety. It's important to know and follow electricity safety measures.

Never use extension cords as permanent wiring. They should only be used with portable appliances and plugged directly into an approved receptacle, power tap or multi-plug adapter. Remember that all extension cords need to be in good condition without splices, deterioration or damage. Use three-pronged extension cords and outlets for appliances with three-pronged plugs.

Older wiring in apartments and homes may not be able to handle the increased electrical demand of modern day appliances and electronics. If use of an appliance frequently causes power to trip off, or if its power cord or the outlet feels hot, the appliance should be disconnected immediately. Make sure that this condition is reported to your landlord as soon as possible so that it may be properly repaired.

Keep these simple safety tips in mind—they will be a benefit to you and your landlord:

- ▶ Pull electrical plugs out of the wall socket only by the plug and never by the cord.
- ▶ Make sure cords are in good condition, that they are not frayed or cracked.
- ▶ If an outlet has loose-fitting plugs, contact the landlord/superintendent to have it replaced. Outlets with bad contact can overheat leading to fires.
- ▶ Have broken wall plates replaced.
- ▶ Never cut the third prong (safety/ground connection) off of electric plugs. That third prong is to protect you if the outlets are properly grounded.
- ▶ Use light bulbs with the correct wattage for lamps. If no indication is on the product, do not use a bulb with more than 60 watts.
- ▶ Make sure outlets around sinks and tubs are GFCI equipped before use.

Energy Conservation Tips

- ▶ Set refrigerator temperature to 36-39°F (2-3°C).
- ▶ Set freezer to 0-5°F (-18 to -15°C).
- ▶ Turn off water while shaving and brushing teeth.
- ▶ Do not preheat your oven except for baking.
- ▶ Cover pots/pans when cooking.
- ▶ In the summer, open windows and use a fan for air circulation instead of air conditioning.
- ▶ In the winter, turn down the thermostat 10 degrees at night and keep curtains open on the sunny side of your apartment during the day.
- ▶ Maximize day lighting.