

**WESTERN  
COOPERATIVE  
ELECTRIC**

## WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC **NEWS**

### Coburn & Gustin Attend Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

Teaching 35 Kansas high school students about electric cooperatives, as well as helping to develop their leadership skills, was an important objective of the 54th annual Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., June 12-19.

Included in the Kansas group were Shelby Coburn and Sarah Gustin. Coburn and Gustin were selected as winners in the Western Coopera-

tive Electric Youth Contest held in February.

The trip, sponsored by Kansas' electric cooperatives, began in Topeka with several guest speakers at the kick-off banquet. Kansas Electric Cooperative's (KEC) Bruce Graham led the event and introduced Brant Laue, Chief Counsel for Gov. Sam Brownback, who attended youth tour in 1978; Steven

Johnson, Kansas House of representatives District 108, who attended in 1983; Kyle Hoffman, Kansas House of Representatives District 116, who attended in 1989; and Travis Couture-Lovelady, Kansas House of Representatives District 110, who attended in 2000.

Before leaving Kansas, the students visited Kaw Valley Electric where they learned how electric cooperatives work and rode in a bucket truck. They also toured the Kansas State Capitol.

Once in Washington, D.C., the group visited with Senators Jerry Moran and Pat Roberts, and Congressman Tim Huelskamp, allowing the students to learn about the nation's government and talk with their elected officials. For

many students, meeting their representatives was inspiring and motivated them to set leadership goals. Despite flight delays and cancellations upon departure, the youth were still able to tour the Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Smithsonian museums, Mt. Vernon, Arlington National Cemetery, several memorials, along with seeing the Broadway musical Disney's *The Lion King* at the Kennedy Center. The delegates also attended the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Day, which celebrated the 50th anniversary of NRECA coordinating the Youth Tour trip.

"This was a trip of a lifetime," Coburn said, "I am so proud and thankful to be an American."

Since 1960, Kansas' electric cooperatives have sponsored the trips of thousands of high school juniors and seniors to visit U.S. congressional members, energy and grassroots government education sessions, and sightseeing in Washington D.C.

"This trip was amazing," Gustin commented. "Walking amidst history and standing next to the memorials was inspiring."

The Kansas group was one of 42 states to send a youth delegation to the Youth Tour this year.

For more information contact Western Cooperative Electric at 800-456-6720 or 785-743-5561 or visit [www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com).



Sarah Gustin (left) and Shelby Coburn stop in front of our nation's capitol while on Youth Tour.

# Western Plans Automatic Metering Pilot This Year

These days, many people are looking for ways to lower their energy use and save money. Some are buying smaller cars that get better gas mileage. Others are cashing in on energy tax credits for weatherizing their homes. Still, others are replacing incandescent light bulbs with LED lights.

At Western Cooperative Electric, we have actively pursued and encouraged energy savings for our members with traditional conservation methods. We have also been preparing to implement Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) to modernize our existing electrical distribution system to meet increased demands for energy and combat rising energy prices, while remaining mindful of environmental impacts. This AMI implementation includes an investment and implementation of a device, often referred to as an “advanced” meter at each member location.

Advanced meters represent the next generation of electric meters and replace antiquated metering units. They take advantage of two-way communication to enable Western to communicate with the electric meter in your home or business, enhancing reliability and providing additional capabilities. The remote communication and data transfer these technologies provide enable remote meter-reading, outage notification, optional pricing programs, and alerts to help with troubleshooting and preventative maintenance.

Information coming from the meters will allow us to improve our

efficiency during “peak” energy usage periods, helping to keep the cost of electricity lower than it would be otherwise.

Modernizing our metering infrastructure will also promote better power quality and enable Western to be more efficient when responding to outages, conducting routine maintenance, and/or planning for new equipment. Instead of using models or educated guesses, decisions can be made by utilizing real information



**Our system upgrade paves the way toward eventually providing members greater access to energy use information and offering more options for members to see savings on their electric bills.**

throughout the electric system.

Advanced meters also increase accuracy of electric bills (no more estimates) and allow us to diagnose and correct problems before the end-user even realizes that a problem exists.

“Advanced meters provide for improved reliability and enhanced capabilities that will be needed in the future,” said Darrin Lynch, Western’s General Manager. “For example, the meters, in conjunction with automated

equipment, will give us the ability to remotely identify the location of outages before members call in, isolate the problem, and re-route crews to speed restoration. Outage response times are expected to be exponentially faster with information available as to exact outage location, allowing crews to be dispatched much more effectively.”

Members can rest assured that the advanced meters are tested by manufacturers and that they meet stringent national standards for safety, security, and privacy requirements. Meters use a variety of communication methods to communicate and transmit data: two main modes are radio frequency (RF) and power line carrier (PLC).

Your specific AMI meter will operate using a radio frequency similar to what is used by walkie-talkies or some cordless phones. These meters transmit information to Western by broadcasting for just a few seconds each day to routers and data collectors that transmit the data to Western.

Western plans on an initial pilot/rollout program sometime in the last quarter of 2014. Members who have an advanced meter don’t have to do anything special. The installation and technology upgrades should be transparent and will not require any action by members to complete the process.

Looking ahead to the advantages available to Western through new technology, we look forward to working collaboratively towards that vision for a more efficient, secure, affordable, and reliable energy environment.

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