

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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800-456-6720

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**WESTERN  
COOPERATIVE  
ELECTRIC**

## WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

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## Hang Your Sockets with Care

Cherished family memories often involve the twinkling lights of the tree and decorations inside and outside the home.

Western Cooperative Electric offers these decorating tips for keeping your holidays safe and bright:

- ▶ **Look for signs of wear** on cords, sockets and plugs. Verify bulbs are not broken and wires are not cracked or frayed. Repair or replace any damaged items.
- ▶ **Make sure all holiday lights have been tested** by a certified laboratory and labeled with a quality marker, such as "UL."
- ▶ **Don't place cords over points of entry or exit** to prevent tripping hazards and damage to cords.
- ▶ **Use a step stool or ladder if you need to reach overhead.** Use one with a stud base and place it on a stable surface. Always climb facing toward the rungs.
- ▶ **Don't pierce the cords**, if you are using nails or tacks to hang lights, rather rest the cords on them or use plastic clips instead.
- ▶ **Be aware of overhead power lines**, when decorating outside, including the service connection to your home.
- ▶ **Use only heavy-duty extension cords designated for outdoor use when decorating outside.**
- ▶ **Keep live trees from drying out.** Use a sturdy stand and refill the water at least once a day. Keep your tree away from heat sources, especially fireplaces and space heaters, as well as curtains. Know the location of your fire extinguisher. Although artificial trees are less flammable, purchase a flame-resistant model.
- ▶ **Make sure your lights are turned off when leaving the house.** Keeping your lights on continually presents the risk of lights shorting out and resulting in an electrical fire.

For more information on this topic and additional safety tips, contact Western at 800-456-6720 or [western@westerncoop.com](mailto:western@westerncoop.com) to schedule a safety demonstration.

### Western Cooperative Holiday Closings

Our office will be closed the following dates during the holiday season:

#### Christmas

- ▶ Monday, Dec. 25 and Tuesday, Dec. 26

#### New Year's 2018

- ▶ Monday, Jan. 1

Western Cooperative Electric would like to wish you and your family a joyful, safe and festive season.



# YOUTH PROGRAMS **BUILD**

## Apply for Trips & Scholarships



From left: Kansas delegates Arely Yanez, Noah Ochsner and Allison Williams visit the Lincoln Memorial during the 2017 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.



2017 Western camper Emily Roy (right) and friends tour Trapper Mine at the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

Each year, Western Cooperative Electric offers free trips to four youth in our membership. If you are a high school junior whose parents/guardians are Western members, submit your application for a trip to Washington, D.C., or Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and for scholarships, too!

### Tour the Capital City

Imagine—a chance to visit our nation’s capital for one week, meet with more than 1,800 students from across the U.S. and visit with Kansas’ senators and congressional representatives. The best part? It won’t cost you a penny.

Western will choose two winners to go to the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., from June 7 to 14, 2018.

The week-long trip to Washington, D.C., is jam-packed with sightseeing. Students will visit many of the major monuments and memorials, including the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial and the Washington Monument.

While in Washington, D.C., students will meet with state and national legislators and nationally recognized speakers to talk about current topics important to our rural communities. Many past participants were so inspired by this experience that they later served as interns on Capital Hill, and many have pursued a career in politics.

To see what’s in store, visit <http://bit.ly/dcytvideo2015>.

### Adventure in the Rockies

Two winners will also be chosen to attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, July 13-19, 2018.

Rafting, hiking and building memories—it’s not just another trip! Campers will stay at the scenic Glen Eden Resort in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. At camp, you will join winners from other co-ops in Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming to build valuable leadership skills while forming lasting friendships.

So pack your sunscreen and hiking shoes and get ready to build memories that will last a lifetime.

Learn more at <http://bit.ly/CYLCVideo>.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp are much more than sightseeing and adventures. Students spend every waking minute together for a solid week, and it’s not uncom-

## Scan these Codes to Get More Information

Electric Cooperative Youth Tour



Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp



Download a free scanning app in the Apple App Store or Google Play.

mon for lasting friendships to form. In fact, many of Kansas' past participants ended up being college roommates, professional colleagues and lifelong friends. Most importantly, these youth programs inspire many students to discover who they want to be.

### There's More—Winners Earn Scholarships, too!

In addition to the trips, each winner will receive a \$250 scholarship. An additional \$250 scholarship is being offered as a memorial for past Board Trustee Darrell J. Brown.

To apply, students submit an application and résumé, take an open-book quiz and write a short essay on a topic to be announced. Based on these items, finalists will be selected for an interview at the Western office on Sunday, Feb. 18, 2018.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, Cooperative Youth Leadership and scholarships are just a few of the ways we're investing in our future leaders. Western does so much more than provide safe, reliable and affordable power—we are dedicated to improving the futures of students in our community because we know they are next in line to lead the way.

To apply for a chance to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour or Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, please complete the form below and return to Western Cooperative Electric Association Inc., 635 S. 13th St., P.O. Box 278, WaKeeney, KS, 67672. Applications can also be downloaded from Western's website [www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com).

**All applications must be received by Jan. 15, 2018.**

For more information contact Christina Lowry or Shelli Nowlin 785-743-5561 or 800-456-6720.



Western's Kayla Gavert and Kinsey Griffith and fellow Kansas Youth Tour delegates pose for a photo during the 2017 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

**“We began the tour in Topeka as strangers, flew to Washington, D.C., as acquaintances, traveled to memorials and museums as friends and said goodbye as family.”**

**ALLISON WILLIAMS, 2017 YOUTH TOUR PARTICIPANT**

## Application for Youth Tour Contest—Due Jan. 15, 2018

To apply for a chance to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour or Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, please complete the form below and return to Western Cooperative Electric Association Inc., 635 S. 13th St., P.O. Box 278, WaKeeney, KS 67672, by Jan. 15, 2018.

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Year in School \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Phone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Western Cooperative Electric Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

I agree that all information supplied in this application is accurate and true.

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

## Get to Know Your Western Cooperative Electric Staff

### Brad Barta

Journeyman Lineman

#### TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

I've been married to my smoking hot Texas wife, Rachel, for 10 years. We have two children: Coulson, 7, and Kynzie, 4.



Brad Barta

#### HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED AT WESTERN?

9 years

#### WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

Ellsworth

#### WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

Golfing, fishing, hunting and coaching my kids' sports.

#### WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Being a DAD.

#### WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?

Colorado

#### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK OR MOVIE?

*Lone Survivor*

#### WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE TEAM?

Kansas Jayhawks

#### IF YOU COULD BE ANY ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD YOU BE AND WHY?

Bigfoot, because I would always be a mystery.

#### WHAT IS SOMETHING PEOPLE MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I was a preschool legend and an all-star basketball player.

#### WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?

My kids. They always live in the moment and enjoy life.

## Space Heaters Safety Tips

Space heaters can be a quick way to heat up a room. However, they can be as dangerous as they are convenient if used improperly. Space heaters cause numerous home fires a year, and many emergency room visits.

Approximately one-third of all house fires nationwide happen during the cold home heating months between December and February. Equipment intended to add a little extra warmth, such as space heaters, is the leading cause of these fires.

Western offers the following precautions when using electric space heaters:

- ▶ Purchase only space heaters that have been safety tested and UL approved. Make sure the unit is equipped with an emergency tip-over shut-off feature and heating element guards. Read and follow all the manufacturer's instructions for operation and care.
- ▶ Make sure your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are in good working condition before using a space heater.
- ▶ Make sure the heater is clean and in good condition, and have all problems professionally repaired.
- ▶ Place heater out of high-traffic areas and on a level, hard, non-flammable floor surface—NOT on carpets, furniture or countertops.
- ▶ Space heaters have one purpose—to provide supplemental heating. Never use them to thaw pipes, cook food, or dry clothing or towels.
- ▶ Remember to keep space heaters at least three feet from combustible liquids like fuel, spray cans and paint, as well as flammable items such as draperies, blankets and sofas.
- ▶ Never allow pets or children near an electric heater. Accidental contact could result in serious shock or burns.
- ▶ Don't overload circuits. Never use extension cords or multiple plugs with a space heater, and make sure the unit is not plugged into the same circuit as other electric appliances.
- ▶ If your space heater is plugged into a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) and it trips, don't assume there is something wrong with the GFCI. Immediately stop using the heater until it can be checked by a professional—if not, a serious shock could occur.
- ▶ Never leave space heaters unattended. Turn off your space heater and unplug it before leaving the room or going to bed.
- ▶ Replace older space heaters with newer, safer models.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Purchasing electronic gifts this holiday season? Remember to purchase Energy Star®-certified electronics and give the gift of energy efficiency. Visit [www.energystar.gov/productfinder](http://www.energystar.gov/productfinder) for a full list of efficient products.

Source: [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)

