



**FREESTATE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

The Outlet

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Tip of the Month

Routinely replace or clean your air conditioner's filter. Replacing a dirty, clogged filter can reduce your air conditioner's energy consumption by 5-15%. Source: energy.gov

FROM THE CEO

Exposure to Cooperative Careers

In June FreeState had a unique opportunity to host 40 youth from Kansas and Hawaii who were on their way to the annual Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. We have been on the schedule for the Hawaii and Kansas delegation for years, and every year, I remind myself that we have an opportunity to expose these youth to more than just a bucket truck ride, a safety demonstration and seeing a cooperative office.

We see kids from across the state (and the island of Kauai). Some already set on what they want to do, and others are still thinking and exploring the opportunities. I hope their visit to FreeState might sway one or two into considering a career in electrical distribution in the field, or the office.

A nationwide economic impact study of electric cooperatives shows that co-ops support nearly 612,000 jobs. With almost 1 in 8 residents across the country served by an electric cooperative, we have many jobs to power up cooperative members across the United States. Also, think about the jobs that will pop up in the next five years when many of these youth will be entering the workforce. They may be doing something we haven't even discovered yet.

It is our goal to highlight all the people it takes to power a community, and it isn't just our linemen. We plan an

activity for the youth during their visit that allows dialogue and one-on-one career advice from the professionals. We give them time to ask questions about accounting, finance, engineering, safety, communications, human resources, information technology and member relations. They visit with our staff so they can

hear firsthand what kind of path they could take to end up with a job at their electric co-ops back home. We share that employees of co-ops are dedicated to the members they serve. We want them to know that jobs like these are options and that not all of our positions require a four-year degree.

No matter what cooperative these kids represented, we have something in common. We are all guided by the same seven cooperative principles, and we all want to improve the lives of those we serve by empowering communities.

**AS ALWAYS, IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS
CONTACT US AT 800-794-1989 OR
CUSTOMERSERVICE@FREESTATE.COOP.**



Steve Foss

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ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR

Inspired & Elevated Leadership

An opportunity to take part in a program that promotes life skills that today's generation values, including building relationships, developing leadership skills and preparing them for what's next, is exactly what FreeState wants to accomplish for these delegates.

Two Tonganoxie students attended the 59th Annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour June 13-20 with more than 1,800 peers from across the nation.

Delegates toured the White House, the U.S. Capitol, the Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Smithsonian museums, Mt. Vernon, Arlington National Cemetery, the National Cathedral among other memorials and historical sites. They saw the pandas at the National Zoo, participated in a simulation at the National Law Enforcement Museum, took in a Nationals baseball game and a show at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

As part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative

Association's National Youth Day on June 17, all state groups heard keynote speaker Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic Medalist and two-time world wheelchair basketball champion.

Jake Edholm, Tonganoxie High School

Over the course of seven days, I had some of the most exceptional experiences of my life. From 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., we were adventuring. The itinerary was chock-full of museums, activities and tours. We visited everything from the Holocaust Memorial Museum to Fort McHenry. Every day was a new adventure, whether it was meeting our representatives or getting an in-depth view of how an electric cooperative operates. I didn't think about it much on tour, but afterward, I realized that FreeState invested in me and Payton. It made me feel incredibly proud knowing

that I got to represent the cooperative members in Washington, D.C. There were countless great things about the tour, but the best part about Youth Tour was the people I met. We went into the trip 40 strangers, but I now have friends that will last forever. Not only did I get to see some of the most moving places on the planet, but I got to see those monuments with great people. That's what I will take away most from this trip: the people. I got to meet kids from all over Kansas and all over the country. They all have had a lasting impact on me, and I think I came out of the Youth Tour a better person than I went into it. Not only does the cooperative provide electricity where commercial electric won't, but they also offer programs like the Youth Tour that leave lasting impacts.

Payton Lynn, Tonganoxie High School

When I first found out I was going on

Senator Pat Roberts was a strong source of inspiration. Talking to him about co-ops and Kansas issues was enlightening as well as rewarding. It is also pretty inspiring knowing I'm part of the best co-op in the State of Kansas.

Jake Edholm, Tonganoxie, visits with Senator Pat Roberts at the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C.





Delegates build relationships that last a lifetime. One of the goals of the trip is for the youth to build leadership skills and form connections that will strengthen their networks.



Above: Delegates visit several monuments, including Iwo Jima.

Left: A thumbs up for the White House tour. The delegates were granted a rare opportunity to see inside this iconic home, as well as visit several historical memorials throughout the week.

Below: Payton Lynn, Tonganoxie, creates a playful pose during the tour in Washington, D.C.



Youth Tour, I was nervous about going across the country with 40 strangers. Youth Tour introduced me to 40 smart, charismatic and funny people from Kansas and Hawaii. We started our tour as strangers, traveled as friends and came back as a family, which is something that I could never have imagined.

I knew from others that this trip would be life changing, but I was skeptical of how one week could change my life. Now I realize how. I got to experience new things. Among my favorites was seeing *Hello, Dolly!* at the Kennedy Center and touring the Capitol Building.

Meeting Senator Pat Roberts and Congressman Steve Watkins was inspiring. Before this experience, I had never

considered a career in politics. Seeing firsthand what kind of an impact I can have by putting my mind to something has made me reconsider some of my future goals.

My week in D.C. was the best. Whether it was visiting the Smithsonian Museums, touring the White House, or going to what seemed like every memorial in the D.C. area, every minute of our trip included learning, critical thinking, laughter and relentless joy. Youth Tour taught me to think in ways I never had before and even influenced new opinions about things that are going on in our country. My opportunity was an unforgettable experience, and undoubtedly, the trip of a lifetime!





ASK Matt

Energy Use Coordinator **MATT LAMBERT** will answer questions about energy efficiency, renewables, co-op programs and everything in between. Email Matt your question at askmatt@freestate.coop.

This month we are printing multiple questions, all dealing with solar energy. Please remember to contact FreeState before purchasing or considering grid interconnected renewable energy.

I have had some solar panels put up at my place and wondering why FreeState has not been out to change the meter yet?

We have determined that FreeState was unaware of your intention to interconnect a solar array with the electric grid. **PLEASE COMPLETE AN APPLICATION** to seek approval for your solar array to be activated and connected.

What information is FreeState looking for on this application?

We are capturing information like who sold you the system, who is building the system, details of the system itself and the specifications of the equipment. We also request specification sheets of the material, a line diagram (a kind of electricians blueprint) and a **\$325 APPLICATION FEE** to ensure our time working on this is not paid for by other members.

The application process should begin with FreeState before purchasing your solar array. By doing so, we can review the system and make sure it is compatible with the section of line you want to interconnect with and that it meets our criteria regarding system size. However, most importantly, completing the application with FreeState first protects you because your system will be signed off on before you have purchased or built it.

Why does Freestate need to know what I do on my property concerning solar?

We only need to know what you are doing when it interconnects with the electric grid. At that point, your electric generation impacts the grid infrastructure that we maintain, and the electricity that flows to your neighbors' homes and businesses. Most importantly, **THE SAFETY OF THE LINWORKERS** must be considered when pushing power onto the grid.

What other steps will FreeState need to be involved in during the process?

Once completed, a Certificate of Completion requires a **QUALIFIED INSPECTION** assuring the system meets the electrical codes and is safe to activate. Then FreeState will come out, perform an inspection of our own and put in a new electric meter that will allow solar generation.

My solar array costs as much as a new car. In your experience, what sales tactics should I be aware of?

The most concerning tactic is insisting you sign up or purchase their product the day they come out or meet with you. Most reputable installers will allow you the opportunity to think over a large purchase. Also, be wary of paperwork that details your payments to them but doesn't provide any information about the actual product they are selling.

There have been companies from outside our area whose salespeople do not have any information on who will be coming to your property to construct the system. Any promises

that sound too good to be true probably are. If they tell you that you won't have an electric bill, it's not true. If you are connected to the grid, you'll be billed.

On a final note, solar has been a hot topic in Kansas, and it can be hard to know whom to trust. Remember that FreeState is your cooperative, and as a member-owner you are our priority. We know members are interested in renewable energy and technology, and that is why we constructed arrays at both of our offices in McLouth and Topeka.

We want you to be safe, we want our employees to be safe and most of all we want to protect our members.

We want you to come to us and ask questions, and we want you to feel free to contact us to talk about taking that step toward your energy generation.

There are some fantastic energy companies in our area that are reputable and do a great job from start to finish with their customers. Consider getting bids from multiple companies, and make sure there is some form of maintenance or help available if a problem arises.

I would also recommend research. Know what you are buying, and **EDUCATE YOURSELF** on different types of materials, sizes of arrays, warranties and what specific needs you have.

If I were buying a new car, I would compare a few different makes and models, and if someone insisted I buy a car the first time I walked onto a lot, well, **BUYER BEWARE.**