



# Hi-Lites

## 2018 Youth to Washington Tour



What do you get when 71 students from 27 Illinois electric and telephone cooperatives join more than 1,800 of their peers across the United States? You get the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth to Washington Tour.

Two local students were selected from a diverse group of applicants to represent Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative (CMEC) to enjoy an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. from June 8-15 as part of the annual Youth Tour.

The 2018 Youth Tour delegates from CMEC included Aly Easton of Neoga and Emma Harris of Atwood. Sam Adair, Manager of Marketing and Member Services, also attended as a chaperone.

The students toured Capitol Hill and met with U.S. Senator Dick Durbin, Congressman John Shimkus and Congressman Rodney Davis. They also visited historical and cultural sites including Arlington National Cemetery, the Supreme Court, Newseum, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, a variety of memorials and the U.S. Capitol. Among fun activities the students enjoyed were the Marine Corps Sunset Parade, the Smithsonian Museums and an assembly of Youth Tour participants from across the nation.

“Youth Tour is a great opportunity that changes these students’ lives,” says Kim Leftwich, President/CEO, CMEC. “This experience helps prepare them for their futures. After touring our nation’s capital, meeting congressional



*Pictured from left – Aly Easton, Congressman John Shimkus and Emma Harris.*

representatives and learning firsthand how our government works, they return home with valuable knowledge and memories that will last a lifetime.”

Since 1964, the nation’s cooperative electric and telephone utilities have sponsored more than 60,000 high school students to visit Washington, D.C. To learn more about the Youth to Washington Tour, go to [www.youthtour.coop](http://www.youthtour.coop).



## Power Outages

Our mission is to provide you with safe, reliable electricity 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Unfortunately, forces outside our control occasionally damage equipment and cause outages. We are proud of what we do and work hard to mitigate any effects that weather and other damages have on our electric grid. Should you ever experience an outage, trust that we understand how big of an inconvenience it is and we are working as quickly as possible to restore service.

P.O. Box 709 (104 Dewitt Ave., East)  
Mattoon, Illinois 61938

Phone: 217/235-0341 or  
Toll-Free: 1-888-661-CMEC (2632)  
Office hours:  
Monday-Friday  
7:30a.m. - 4:30p.m.

**Chairperson**

Debbie Albin.....Mattoon

**Vice Chairperson**

John Bowers.....Lovington

**Secretary**

Natalie Parkerson.....Mattoon

**Treasurer**

Steve Shrader.....Westfield

**Director**

Jeff Hudson.....Charleston

Kent Metzger.....Gays

District #1.....Vacant

**President/CEO**

Kim Leftwich

**To report an outage**

- First check your fuses or circuit breakers and see if your neighbors have power.
- If the problem appears to be with the cooperative's lines, call the office at the toll free number (888-661-2632), give the name the service is listed under, and report any hazardous conditions.

**Send your current email to [info@cmeccoop.com](mailto:info@cmeccoop.com)**



**for a chance to win a \$25 bill credit.**

**President & CEO Report – May 2018**

**Safety**

- CMEC Safety Committee is sponsoring its first ever CMEC Safety Day; the day will include training and exercises of Emergency Action Plan elements to insure all employees are fully aware of actions to be taken – includes fire, tornado, active shooter and mayday training.
- AIEC safety training focused on use/inspection of fall arrest and load securement equipment (outside department).

**Key Accounts Conference**

- CMEC held its 3rd annual Key Accounts Conference for commercial and industrial members at Lake Land College on May 3.
- The conference included presentations from national level cooperative organizations including CFC and Touchstone Energy, USDA, and our G&T, Prairie Power Inc.
- Featured as part of the conference were all-electric and hybrid-electric vehicles (EVs), part of an advocacy program by CMEC; EV experts had the opportunity to meet and teach Lake Land College students about EVs.
- Attendance has continued to grow; participants feedback was very positive.

**Center for American Rural Energy (CARE)**

- Following the Key Accounts Conference, CFC's Peter Muhoro and Touchstone Energy's Alan Shedd visited CARE on the Eastern Illinois University campus for a presentation on the energy innovation projects CARE is researching and developing.

**Rivian Automotive**

- May 4, CMEC CEO and staff hosted Muhoro, Shedd and EIU faculty/students for a visit to Rivian Automotive, an all-electric vehicle manufacturer located in Normal, IL.

- Rivian is refurbishing the former Mitsubishi Motors plant to produce all-electric pick-ups, SUVs and "adventure" vehicles.
- CMEC has offered Rivian testing opportunities of systems that could be evaluated through the Center for American Rural Energy (CARE).

**Sharing Success Contribution**

- May 10, CMEC was joined by CoBank through its "Sharing Success" program to contribute to Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Services for support of the current Cath Lab building program.
- CoBank matches our contribution, doubling the member benefit.

**Electric Cooperative Lobby Day**

- Director Debbie Albin and CEO Kim Leftwich attended the 1st Annual Cooperative Lobby Day at the State Capital, Springfield.
- Fashioned after the NRECA Legislative Conference conducted in Washington, D.C. each year, 75 cooperative directors and managers participated in the event.
- Participants were able to meet with many of our state legislators and address cooperative concerns affecting members now and in the future.

**Lake Land College Foundation Golf Outing**

- CMEC, as a sponsor, had staff and members participate in the golf fundraising event.
- The foundation provides scholarship opportunities to many Lake Land College students.
- CMEC sponsors two scholarships each semester, again with matching funds from CoBank, for students entering technological fields.

**ILEPA Public Hearing – Beneficial Mitigation Plan (BMP)**

- CEO Kim Leftwich attended a public hearing of the Illinois Environmental Protection

Agency regarding the mitigation plan evolving from the VW Mitigation Settlement.

- Attendance was to propose inclusion of rural Illinois in application of settlement funds as the draft plan ignored all rural areas of the state.
- State Senators Righter and Rose have been briefed as well and may have opportunity to participate in a State Senate Working Group on the matter.

#### Director Election

- Ballot materials began arriving at members' homes/businesses on May 24.
- Voting continues until June 12.
- Voting may be completed electronically (new) or by regular mail.

#### Northern Manager's Meeting

- CEO Kim Leftwich met with fellow cooperative managers from across the northern part of Illinois at EnerStar May 30 to address common concerns.

#### Accounting/HR/Billing

- IVR Call Capture Payment Processing deployed 5/18/18; in less than a week, the system took 185 in-bound calls/payments, freeing CSRs to do other tasks.
- Performed training for CSRs regarding the director election process.
- Kim Brodack joined CMEC as a new CSR.
- Jef White bid and was awarded a Field Engineer position.
- Working with AIEC's Nancy McDonald, Corn Belt's Justin Stuva and EnerStar's Angela Griffin to develop a statewide CSR program

#### CMEC Connect

- CMEC Connect Staff and Irby personnel installed new switches and troubleshooting equipment during the week of May 14; the improvements will permit evaluation and reset to systems from the office before rolling trucks; the measures add reliability with

significant decrease in downtime.

- Lake Land Tower had been loading up and members were having less than satisfactory service; Staff upgraded to new Biacell technology and found a switch gone bad as well; Connect customers should see much improved service.

#### Marketing/Member Services

- HomeServe began a secondary campaign in April to add a water heater warranty service; thus far, some 230 members subscribe to programs; CMEC continues to receive calls from across the country from other cooperatives that want to consider the HomeServe Program.
- Carla Bradbury covered for Shelby Electric Cooperative at Taylorville Schools Conservation Day; over 150 students participated in the day.
- Drew Haumesser spoke with Cumberland grade school students regarding summer electrical safety; over 80 children were present.
- Marketing and Member Services Manager Sam Adair has been asked to accompany the Youth to Washington trip this year as a chaperone.

#### Engineering

- Staff met with Milsoft, provider of our engineering platform, to discuss CMEC's GIS platform; discussed interoperability of Milsoft staking program with our GIS.
- JULIE locates and Report-on-Calls have increased as expected; Reps busily handling member requests.
- Solar inquiries have exploded because of the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA); inclusion of cooperatives in the program is still under review, but AIEC and a manager's team is discussing with the Illinois Power Agency.

#### Operations

- Met with PPI Operations to consider any issues or concerns with transmission operations; excellent relationship with PPI.
- Staffing for line crews is becoming

optimal; we now have three complete construction crews and three servicemen giving us flexibility and capability; improved capacity to complete Construction Work Plan provisions and maintaining operations/maintenance for the members.

- The H4 mile Construction Work Plan project is nearing completion; with the completion last winter of H1, H2, and H3, the full project will complete once we take feeders under the railroad and highway to Mattoon substation; the project upgraded poles and conductors for better service and reliability to the Coles open point.
- April was not a good month for poles: total 24 (7-bad; 4-lightning; 6-high winds; 3- farm equipment; 2 O&M, 1 service upgrade and 1 new service.)

#### Fleet

- New On-Call service truck has been purchased and came in well under budget; presently, being outfitted with storage and equipment; likely under budget, once all complete, by \$8,000.

#### IT/SCADA

- Continuing software updates to office computers to reduce system vulnerabilities; under surveillance routinely to preclude any issues.
- Interoperability of our Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) with our NISC platform has been problematic in the past; Staff understanding of MultiSpeak has benefitted us as our personnel may take a larger role in the development of the solutions.
- Developing integration of GIS with AMI provider, Trilliant.

#### GIS

- Continuing build-out of GIS by now adding CMEC Connect towers and spur sites.
- Developing with NRECA a white paper on our unique GIS system; working a GIS build with NRECA that will integrate with other cooperatives.

# 79th Annual Meeting at Peterson Park

Members braved the heat to attend the annual meeting of the cooperative held June 15 at Peterson Park. They enjoyed a catered lunch, ice cream, a variety of vendors and had the opportunity to see an electric vehicle on display.

CMEC President/CEO Kim Leftwich addressed the crowd and explained the changes that are occurring in electric vehicles (EV) including increased range, lower cost and more model choices. “CMEC is beginning its EV advocacy program as we believe range, cost and availability offer opportunities for EV use in rural areas,” said Leftwich. “Soon there will be more complete information on the CMEC website.”

Leftwich went on to highlight the work employees have done over the past year to meet the service needs of all members. “By putting personnel in the right place at the right time, we are able to execute our work more efficiently and with improved results,” he said. One example of the efficiencies is the capability of members to pay bills over the phone system and enhancing the GIS (geographic information system) to be live on the iPads and other devices permitting inside staff and linemen to have real



time updates on outages. Leftwich also explained system improvements as part of the co-op’s four-year construction work plan.

“Your cooperative is making the improvements and planning for the future to ensure continued safe, secure, reliable and affordable electric service,” Leftwich concluded.

Board President Jeff Hudson presented six high school students with \$500 scholarships from the cooperative.

Director election results were announced at the conclusion of the meeting. District 5 Director Steve

Shrader, Westfield, was re-elected to a three-year term. Newly-elected directors are Kent Metzger, District 3, Gays, and Natalie Parkerson, District 6, Mattoon.



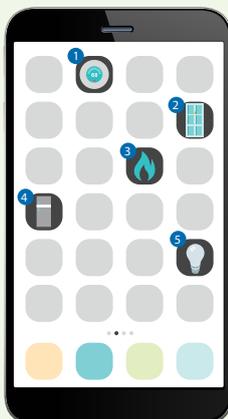
Natalie Parkerson



Kent Metzger

## SMART HOME TECH APPS

Smart home technologies are continuously improving, but their companion mobile apps are taking convenience to a whole new level. Let’s take a look at some of the latest app functionalities.



- 1 Smart Thermostat Apps:** Geofencing is great enhancement for smart thermostat apps. Set a boundary with your smartphone and when you leave the boundary, the thermostat switches to away or return mode.
- 2 Smart Security Apps:** Video doorbells are becoming increasingly popular, allowing consumers to keep a watchful eye from anywhere. Smart security apps send alerts to signal activity outside your home, giving you peace of mind.
- 3 Smart Smoke and CO Sensor Apps:** These apps have the ability to send alerts, conduct status checks and silence alarms – even when you’re away.
- 4 Smart Appliance Apps:** App functionality depends on the appliance. Refrigerator cameras allow you to see what needs to be stocked (while grocery shopping!), and smart dryers can sense when electric use is high and turn off.
- 5 Smart Lighting Apps:** Control lighting options for individual rooms, adjust brightness and color, create lighting scenes based on mood – all from the convenience of your smartphone.