

DISCOVERING SOUTH KENTUCKY

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SPEDA donates Lineman Training Center to Somerset Community College

Story by SPEDA

The Somerset-Pulaski Economic Development Authority (SPEDA) board of directors has voted to donate property to Somerset Community College (SCC) that has been used as a Lineman Training Center for the last 12 years.

The 8-acre tract of land and building behind Valley Oak Technology Complex is home to SCC's Lineman Training Program, a \$2.5 million partnership between Somerset Community College, SPEDA, South Kentucky RECC, Lake Cumberland Area Development District and American Electric Power. Many other utility industry partners have also donated equipment and materials to support the Lineman Training Center since its inception.

The idea was born from the need for regional utility companies and cooperatives to provide training for entry-level lineworkers and, at the time, a decline in the number of lineworkers nationwide. The closest training facility was in Georgia, a five-hour drive away.

Today, SCC's Lineman Training Center offers its training course every nine weeks year-round. The curriculum uses proven training methods taught by instructors with extensive experience in the utility industry.



Students of the Somerset Community College Lineman Training Center receive hands-on experience and training in preparation for work in the electric utility industry. Photo: Tim Webb

Upon completion of the course, students have spent about 240 hours in the field and have all the necessary training to enter the line utility industry.

"Many years ago, the vision to create this entity by South Kentucky RECC along with Somerset Community College and others was well ahead of its time," SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler says. "Many throughout the country have

tried to replicate this model and it is a national leader."

In the beginning, SPEDA's predecessor, the development foundation, offered to provide the 8-acre property for the project as well as apply for a grant to help fund building the training center on the grounds. As the development foundation was dissolved and SPEDA was created to take its place, SPEDA retained ownership of the property.



SOMERSET COMMUNITY COLLEGE

From left, Somerset Community College Vice President of Workforce Solutions Alesa Johnson, Lake Cumberland Area Development District Executive Director Darryl McGaha, SPEDA President and CEO Chris Girdler, SCC President and CEO Carey Castle, South Kentucky RECC VP of Engineering and Operations Kevin Newton and Lineman Training Coordinator Dean Rhodes.

Girdler says donating this property to SCC is another way in which SPEDA can contribute to education and workforce development efforts.

“Somerset Community College is a tremendous asset for the entire Lake Cumberland region,” Girdler says. “SCC’s Lineman Training Center has a tremendous track record of success and we are excited to give the college this property. I believe this will help the center

to excel even further and I’m also thrilled to see SCC expanding its physical footprint in our community.”

SCC President and CEO Dr. Carey Castle says the Lineman Training Center has become one of the nation’s most expansive and comprehensive training centers of its kind because of innovative thinking and continued support from economic development and industry partners.

“We are immensely grateful for South Kentucky RECC’s vision to bring this training to our region and for SPEDA’s ongoing commitment to its success,” Castle says. “We are thrilled to accept ownership of the property and remain committed to offering workforce training opportunities that enhance economic development in our region. The Lineman Center is a wonderful demonstration of industry, economic development, area development district and educational partners working together to advance training needs in our area and we want to thank all the partners who have donated funding, equipment, materials and supplies to the center.”

Girdler says SPEDA will continue to keep education and workforce development as a top priority, seeking ways to collaborate and partner with public and private sectors to enhance economic development and promote community unity.

“I thank the SPEDA board of directors for their generous hearts and mindsets,” says Girdler. “They are all fully committed to seeing this community prosper and dedicate countless hours of service to see that happen. This is another example of their ability to see the big picture and look at the long game of what is best for our community.” **DSK**

South Kentucky RECC awards scholarships to 2020 seniors

Each year, South Kentucky RECC awards scholarships to seniors from Adair County, Casey County, Clinton County, Lincoln County, McCreary Central, Pulaski County, Somerset, Somerset Christian, Southwestern, Russell County and Wayne County high schools, as well as one applicant from private schools

and/or home-school programs.

Information about the \$1,000 senior scholarship is available at the guidance offices of each high school in January, as well as on the co-op's website www.skrecc.com.

Each student applicant's principle residence must be an active account of South Kentucky RECC. Students are

required to submit an essay—this year's essay was "Why energy efficiency and conservation is important."

For more information about the South Kentucky RECC senior scholarship, visit your guidance counselor's office, call your local SKRECC office or (80) 264-5112, or visit our website at www.skrecc.com.

Congratulations to our 2020 scholarship winners:



Erica Dick
Somerset High



Grace Monsanto
Kentucky Home School Program



Hunter Thomas
Russell County High



Jenna McGaha
Adair County High



Kelsey King
McCreary Central High



Lauren Kessler
Somerset Christian



Macey Wright
Pulaski County High



Nadia Flynn
Southwestern High



Rachel Rains
Wayne County High



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Visit www.skrecc.com to pay your bill online, to visit our outage center, or for more information about the Co-op Connections Program.

To report an outage 24/7/365, please call your local office, (800) 264-5112, or set up your account to be able to text outages. Please do not report outages via social media.

Plug into South Kentucky RECC. Follow us on social media:



South Kentucky RECC launches redesigned website

South Kentucky RECC has updated its website. While you can still find us at www.skrecc.com, you will notice the site has been redesigned allowing for more ease of use and a sleeker design.

If it has been awhile since you have visited our website, we invite you to stop by and browse at all we have to offer. You will find several locations on the site that will allow you to pay your bill, explain how you can report or track an outage and find information and answers to most of your questions.

Our online member portal allows members to view or pay their bills; review their account(s); set up to receive e-bills and e-delinquents; report minor issues; sign up for alerts; learn about and sign up for various

co-op programs; and a number of other actions.

There is valuable information on the new website regarding South Kentucky RECC's energy efficiency programs and rebates.

The new online site is also a good source for co-op updates, particularly through these trying times. It will be updated regularly, so our members will be able to stay up-to-date on the latest information.

Visit us at www.skrecc.com and see what we have to offer!
#WeAreSKRECC



Website Scavenger Hunt

While you browse our newly redesigned website at www.skrecc.com, find the answers to the following, jot them down and email them to skrecc@skrecc.com by September 1 to be entered for a chance to win a \$50 VISA gift card.

1. On what social media can you follow SKRECC?
2. List three ways you can report an outage.
3. When are People Fund applications due?
4. A Touchstone Energy Home uses how much less energy than a home built to typical construction standards?
5. Through the SKRECC PrePay program, you will begin getting low-balance alerts when you reach what amount?
6. What are three ways you can pay your electric bill?
7. What are SKRECC's office hours?
8. How many districts are in the SKRECC service territory?
9. Who was the co-op manager in 1942?
10. Where can you find a list of participating Co-op Connections businesses?