

DISCOVERING SOUTH KENTUCKY

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South Kentucky RECC Youth Leadership Council winner

Story by Joy Bullock

Each year, South Kentucky RECC selects up to 12 high school juniors within its service territory to go to Washington, D.C., in June, for the annual Kentucky Washington Youth Tour (WYT) to learn first-hand what it is like to be involved in politics and community service. They also learn about cooperatives, the seven cooperative principles and hear from government leaders regarding today's pressing issues. We know that, in just a few years, these young people will be our community leaders, business leaders, government leaders and members of South Kentucky RECC.

During WYT, students are given the opportunity to be selected to represent their state on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Leadership Council (YLC). One student from each state is selected. These students return to Washington, D.C., in July for a leadership workshop which focuses on the electric cooperative industry. The purpose of the YLC conference is to build leadership and public speaking skills, and to enhance the delegates' knowledge of the energy industry and the cooperative form of business.

Things were different this year, though, due to COVID-19 concerns,

and the Washington Youth Tour and YLC were canceled. However, South Kentucky RECC's state-wide association, Kentucky Electric Cooperatives, decided to continue with YLC selection from all the students that had applied for WYT.

Each student across the state who applied for WYT was encouraged to make a video application regarding leadership. From the 12 who applied, South Kentucky RECC's Hannah Monsanto, an upcoming senior at Somerset Christian School, was selected to represent Kentucky.

In her video application, Hannah spoke about what being a leader means to her.

"It can be standing up for your rights or for your passions; it can be leading a team into a business strategy; or it can be becoming a figure for those who need someone to look up to," says Hannah. "Anyone can become a leader with the right amount of discipline, passion and integrity."

Hannah adds that several areas of her life have taught her leadership skills.

At Somerset Christian School, she has served in student government and National Honor Society. Hannah was selected as a junior for Kentucky Youth Salute, which honors high school juniors who maintain a high scholastic average and have demonstrated leadership ability.



Hannah Monsanto, 2020 Kentucky Youth Leadership Council selection. Photo: Joelle Jones

Through her job as hostess at Cracker Barrel, Hannah says she has been able to focus on developing communication skills with guests, coworkers and managers. She says

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Hannah says one area of her life that has taught her leadership is playing guitar and helping lead worship for her church youth group. Photo: Grace Monsanto

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her leadership skills have also been put to the test as she has had to train new employees or take charge in uncomfortable situations.

In her church—Danville First Church of God—Hannah has served on the youth group leadership team for three years; played guitar for the Sunday morning worship team; and been able to participate and

graduate from the Tri-level Student Leadership Institute where she has been accepted into the internship program.

She says it was quite an honor to be selected as Kentucky's representative.

"It genuinely feels surreal. When I submitted my video, I didn't think I would get anywhere. I wanted to be

a part of this amazing opportunity, but there's so much talent and passion in Kentucky. I wasn't sure if my enthusiasm for leadership could shine through in my video. And, I suppose it did! I'm genuinely grateful for this opportunity, and I can't wait to see what this next year holds."

Mary Beth Dennis, Kentucky Electric Cooperatives director of cooperative outreach, says Hannah's leadership skills, which led to her selection as YLC, will be used this year to help promote Kentucky's electric cooperatives on social media, to assist in promotional videos for Youth Tour and at other events, as needed.

Dennis adds it was unfortunate that the program had to be canceled this year.

"This year, we were so disappointed that WYT and YLC were canceled, because we cannot recreate the connections that these students make with each other and their cooperatives. However, we believe the health and safety of our students is the most important thing. We are hopeful that next year we will be able to take the students to Washington, D.C. again."

Dennis says, for her efforts, Monsanto will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship since the WYT and YLC trips were canceled.

Hannah is the 17-year-old daughter of Monte and Wendy Monsanto of Eubank. She plans to attend a four-year university after graduation. **DSK**

About Washington Youth Tour

South Kentucky RECC members with students who are juniors this upcoming year should encourage them to apply for participation in the Washington Youth Tour, says SKRECC Energy Services and Member Engagement Manager Alan Coffey.

"Information about the trip will be in all the guidance offices at the

high schools in our service territory by the end of January. We will make our semi-finalist selections, and those students (up to 24) are then taken to tour the state capital in March. After that trip, final selections are made for the Washington trip."

He says to be eligible for the trip, students must be high school

juniors, between the ages of 16 and 18, whose parent(s) or guardian(s) receive electric service at their primary residence from South Kentucky RECC.

For more information on the Washington Youth Tour, visit www.skrecc.com or <https://kyelectric.coop/services/youth>.

South Kentucky RECC PrePay offers convenience

South Kentucky RECC provides a payment option for its members that allows them to pay for electricity as they use it. PrePay is an option that allows members to avoid paying deposits, late fees, and/or reconnect fees. It gives members control regarding when and how much they pay for electricity.

Rather than paying for electricity after it is used, with PrePay, you pay for your electric before you use it or as you use it, and you don't have to pay one large monthly bill.

How does PrePay work?

Members need an initial minimum purchase balance of \$100; new South Kentucky RECC members must also pay a \$25 membership fee. If you are already a member and sign up for PrePay, you will be given credit for any deposit being held on your account.

To be eligible for a PrePay account, members must have access to either an email account or text messaging for alerts. Each day, you have the option to receive an email, a text alert, or both, letting you know how much electricity you

have used and what your remaining balance is on your account.

Once you get to a remaining balance of \$25, you will also begin receiving low-balance alerts.

What is the benefit?

The greatest benefit of the PrePay option is its convenience. With PrePay, you can purchase electricity at any time during the month, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and not just when a bill is due.

In addition, studies have shown that PrePay consumers can use up to 12% less electricity than they did before they signed up for PrePay. That's because PrePay users tend to monitor their usage better, which leads to better choices.

You can monitor your usage, as well as manage your account, on our website, www.skrecc.com, or with the South Kentucky RECC smartphone app available for both iPhone and Android.

Another benefit, since you are prepaying for electricity, is there is no longer the threat of late fees, nor is there a fee for reconnection. Should

To learn more about PrePay, visit our website at www.skrecc.com or call (800) 264-5112.

you forget to make a payment and your electric gets turned off, when you make a payment and have a balance on your account, your electric will automatically be restored.

How do I sign up for PrePay?

To be eligible for the South Kentucky RECC PrePay option, you need to be able to receive emails and/or text messaging on a daily basis and your account must not be signed up as a medical priority need account.

You can sign up for PrePay at any of the co-op's offices. You will need to fill out an application to establish your participation in the PrePay program.

Payments for the PrePay option can be made at any office, by telephone, online at the South Kentucky RECC member portal, at the co-op's payment kiosk at the Somerset headquarters or by the SKRECC smartphone app.



The offices of South Kentucky RECC will be CLOSED on Monday, September 7, in observance of Labor Day.

If you have an emergency or outage, call your local office or (800) 264-5112 for 24/7 outage reporting.

Our offices may be closed, but our service never stops.

Our members don't have to worry. If you have an outage or issue, South Kentucky RECC employees will be at work as soon as possible! Call your local office or (800) 264-5112 to report an outage.

If you need to make a payment, there are several ways to pay: by phone, online at www.skrecc.com, at the Somerset kiosk, at a participating CheckOut location (visit skrecc.com to learn more), or by mobile phone app—SKRECC.

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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:



ELECTRICAL SAFETY

STARTS WITH EDUCATION

Born with a natural curiosity, children are always exploring, asking questions and trying new things to understand the world around them. Unfortunately, that curiosity can be dangerous—and even deadly—when it comes to electricity.

Keep your children safe by teaching them the rules of outdoor and indoor electrical safety.

OUTDOOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY RULES

- Do not climb trees near power lines or climb utility poles, transmission towers or fences around electrical substations.
- Keep electrical cords away from water.
- Never touch an electrical pole or wire that has fallen to the ground.
- Watch out for thunderstorms. If you can hear thunder, you can be struck by lightning.

INDOOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY RULES

- Do not overload an extension cord with too many plugs.
- Teach older kids how to safely plug in and unplug cords.
- Remind children that water and electricity do not mix.
- For younger children, install safety caps on outlets.

Be sure kids know how to call 911 in an emergency if they ever need help. If you have questions about keeping your family safe from electrical hazards, contact your electric cooperative.

TOUCHSTONE ENERGY COOPERATIVES

