



VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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2019 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

Are you up for an adventure?

"This was truly a trip of a lifetime, and I will never forget all the amazing experiences, along with all the wonderful people I met." Macie Martinell

"Overall, the Youth Tour was an incredible experience, from the places we visited to the food we ate. However, the most important thing I got from the tour was meeting all sorts of different people and making new lifelong friends." Blu Keim

Last month in this publication, these quotes were provided by the two outstanding young women representing our organization at this past summer's National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Each year, our participants are asked to submit a story about their trip, and while all of the stories are a little different, their feelings about the trip are quite similar. While it may be a bit of a cliché, "trip of a lifetime" gets used a lot — and for good reason.

During this weeklong event, participants' days are filled with opportunities for adventure, learning and a lot of fun. While it is impossible to adequately describe the magnitude of this event in one article, the 2018 participants' itinerary was packed with the types of experiences that can only be found in Washington, D.C., and the surrounding areas.

The group from Montana toured many of the historical sites enshrined in and around Washington, D.C. They visited the Marine Corp Museums and the Smithsonian Institute, and did a night tour of the World War II, Vietnam War, Korean War, and Lincoln memorials. They had breakfast and a tour of Mount Vernon, and also visited the Newseum, the Holocaust Museum and the U.S. Naval Academy.

While in Washington, D.C., our kids met with the Montana congressional delegation consisting of Senator Steve Daines, Senator Jon Tester and Representative Greg Gianforte, who was gracious enough to arrange a night tour of the Capitol.

They also ate at the Hard Rock Café in Baltimore, went to a Washington Nationals baseball game, got a private tour of FedEx Field (home of Washington's NFL team) and took a riverboat cruise with the participants from Arizona and Georgia. Additionally, they participated in two social events hosted by NRECA that were attended by nearly 1,900 students.

Since 2003, Vigilante Electric Cooperative has proudly sponsored students in the NRECA Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., and we are now looking for candidates

for the 2019 Youth Tour. If you are a student (or know one) that is currently a sophomore or junior in high school, your parent or guardian is a member of Vigilante Electric, and you want to experience this one-of-a-kind tour, here is your opportunity.

The dates for the 2019 Youth Tour to Washington D.C. are June 15 -21.

Information and applications for the Youth Tour can be found on our website and at area high schools. The winner(s) is selected through an essay contest. This year's essay topic is "What would your day be like without electricity?" Applications and essays are due to our office by November 30, 2018.



VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Paying Your Winter Heating Bill

As the season changes, the reality of winter sets in. While there are those that relish in winter activities, there are many who view winter with much trepidation. For low-income families, winter utilities can be an overwhelming financial burden, but there are organizations that can help.

For those meeting eligibility requirements, the state of Montana administers two federal programs aimed at helping people in need. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) pays for part of winter energy bills and the **Weatherization Program** helps improve the heating efficiency of low-income homes.

The LIEAP guidelines and contact information are presented to the right. The application period is October 1, 2018, to April 30, 2019. Eligibility is based on family size and total household income. If you think you qualify, call for an application. Each office serves specific counties, so contact the office nearest you.

Vigilante Electric also provides assistance to qualified members to aid in winter heating. Applications will be available on October 1st by contacting our Dillon office, and must be returned by November 16, 2018. However, the funding levels for our program are very limited so we strongly recommend applying for the programs offered by the state of Montana.

Another source of help is Energy Share of Montana — a private nonprofit organization whose primary purpose is to help Montanans faced with energy emergencies meet their needs and move toward self-reliance. Requests for this assistance can also be made through the state offices to the right.

Family Size	Income Limits
1	23,876
2	31,223
3	38,569
4	45,916
5	53,263
6	60,609
7	61,987
8	63,570
9	70,050
10	76,530
11	83,010
12	89,490

Action Inc., Butte, (800) 382-1325, (406) 533-6855
 Rocky Mountain Development Council
Rocky Mountain Development Council - Helena
 (800) 356-6544, (406) 447-1625
District IX HRDC, Bozeman
 (800) 332-2796, (406) 587-4486

Affordable. Innovative. Member Focused.

It's hard to predict the future, but one thing seems certain—**new government regulations will increase the cost of electricity.**

We want to work with you to keep your electric bills **AFFORDABLE**. We're controlling costs and no matter what the future holds we'll continue to put you, our members, **FIRST**.



Vigilante Electric Cooperative

Find out how we're *Looking Out for You* at www.vec.coop

Looking Out
for You



Co-op Connections

Prescription Savings

As a member of Vigilante Electric Cooperative you have access to a broad array of product and service discounts through Touchstone Energy's Co-op Connections program. The flagship of these offerings is the prescription savings program. If you are a member and do not have some form of prescription drug coverage, you should give this serious consideration.

Using the Co-op Connections card, members have access to prescription drug discounts at more than 60,000 participating pharmacies nationwide, and potential discounts ranging from 10 percent to 85 percent. To date, Vigilante Electric members have saved approximately \$25,000 on prescriptions, a savings of 43 percent.

To locate a participating pharmacy go to www.connections.coop. After creating an account, go to the "Healthy Savings" screen, then click on "Locate Provider." In the drop-down window under "benefit type" select "pharmacy," then input your zip code. This should provide a list of pharmacies within your search radius. If you don't see one, increase the search distance.

If you are not Internet savvy, you can call 800-800-7616, Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. MST and 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday. Representatives from the program administrator, New Benefits, are available to help. At some point you may need to provide your member number; it is on the back of the Co-op Connections card, or you can contact our office for this information.

You can also get price quotes on this site. On the "Healthy Savings" page go to the link "Rx Price Comparison." Type in the name of a drug you are taking, input your zip code, indicate your search radius and answer a few questions regarding the prescription. This should provide a list of the pharmacies within your search radius and an estimated prescription cost.

One thing to remember is this is NOT insurance, and it is not intended to be used as a substitute for or in conjunction with insurance. Prescription savings benefits are negotiated discounts. If you have questions regarding this or any of the Co-op Connections program offerings, call us or check it out online at www.connections.coop.



Join us at the Polls on November 6



By Dan Riedinger

Our co-op's number one priority is providing our members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. But doing this job requires a lot more than stringing and maintaining power lines throughout our service territory. It requires political engagement. That may seem far removed from our core mission, but it's absolutely essential to serving you, our members.

That's why we're participating in a national program of America's electric cooperatives, called Co-ops Vote.

Co-ops Vote encourages all co-op members to participate in national, state and local elections while educating political candidates and elected officials about the important role played by electric cooperatives in their communities.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the service organization representing the nation's electric co-ops, launched Co-ops Vote in 2016. Co-ops Vote started as a national non-partisan get-out-the-vote initiative that helped drive rural voter turnout in the 2016 presidential election.

Through this program, electric co-ops realized they had a unique advantage: As co-ops, the civic virtue of voting is in our DNA. We show concern for community — one of the seven cooperative principles — through participation in our democracy.

Co-ops have another advantage. Elected officials and decision-makers across the political spectrum trust us because of the work the electric cooperative family has put into political engagement. When we all get involved, we can make things happen politically and in our local communities.

Our participation in Co-ops Vote helps to ensure that rural issues remain part of the national discussion — and are supported by our elected officials. But Co-ops Vote isn't just for co-ops. It's for co-op members just like you.

You can participate by registering to vote and committing to cast your ballot on November 6. If you're interested in getting more involved, just give us a call or visit www.vote.coop to learn more about the upcoming elections and access online tools that can help you participate. We look forward to seeing you at the polls on Election Day!

Teaching Youngsters the Important Lesson of Energy Efficiency

By Anne Prince

Electronic and mobile devices, ETVs, computers and gaming stations have become ubiquitous fixtures in our homes, particularly those with children. Consumer electronics coupled with the proliferation of smart home appliances, technology and electric vehicles have slowly but steadily changed our homes and lifestyles.

This ever-connected world is the modern environment in which children are growing up. And with lifestyles increasingly reliant on technology and, in turn, energy consumption, teaching youngsters to save energy is an important life lesson.

But before parents can teach their children how to save energy, they must first answer the question, “what’s in it for me?” As most parents can attest, convincing kids to care about energy efficiency is a hard sell. Parents need to explain why it’s important to save energy and how it benefits the child — otherwise they will not understand the need to change their habits and will be less motivated to do so. In the simplest terms, less money spent on an electric bill can mean more money used for fun activities (that’s something children can relate to!).

Because “saving energy” is an abstract concept for children, be specific about energy-efficiency actions and set an example. We know that children learn by observing what their parents do. Even if they don’t say anything, children are processing your actions. When you turn off the lights when leaving a room or unplug the phone charger once the device is fully charged, they will notice.

Learning about energy efficiency doesn’t have to be a boring lecture. Make it fun for greater impact.

For younger kids, turn energy efficiency into a “treasure hunt” game to locate all the things in your home that use electricity. Depending on the age of the children, challenge them to count and group the items into categories: electronics, appliances, lights, etc. If age appropriate, have them create a list. Ask which gadgets and appliances could be turned off or unplugged to save power every day.

For older children, show them how to program the smart thermostat and appliances. Shop with them for LED lights and discuss ENERGY STAR-rated appliances. Show them the electric bill so they can see the costs and energy use, and how their actions impact the bill.

Kids of all ages can learn a few simple energy-saving habits that can last a lifetime:

- Turn off lights, devices, computers and video consoles when not in use.



- Open blinds and curtains during winter days to let warm sunlight in, and close them during summer days to keep your home cooler.

- If your children are old enough to run the dishwasher or wash their own clothes, teach them to run these appliances only with a full load and during off-peak energy hours.

- Offer rewards for agreed upon milestones. Rewards provide positive reinforcement on energy-saving actions. The idea is to create a habit of being energy efficient. And for parents, this could mean less nagging about turning off the lights!

Teaching your children about saving energy is not only a creative way to spend time with them; it helps your home be more energy efficient, and can instill good habits that will benefit your child long into adulthood.



VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Vigilante Safety Roundup Tracker

Participating members: 141
Total Contributions: \$1,237.39

To apply contact our office at (800) 221-8271 or 683-2327. An online application is available at www.vec.coop.