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PRAIRIE LAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NEWS

Scholarship Winners

Normally this is the time of year when we're announcing which high school juniors in our service territory will be taking the trip of a lifetime. Prairie Land has sponsored students for the annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., since 1968, and the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, since 1977.

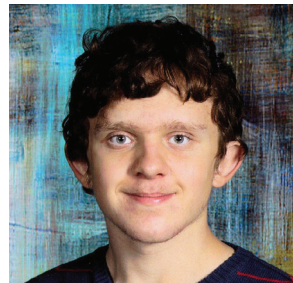
Like so many things over the past year, these trips were canceled due to COVID-19. As an alternative, the Prairie Land board of trustees and management team offered applicants an opportunity to earn scholarships instead.

Applicants were asked to submit a 500-1,000-word essay on one of three topics. The first and second place essays were awarded \$1,500. Third and fourth place were awarded \$1,000, and up to nine more were awarded \$500.

The winners are: **JAMES NOBERT** of Clyde, **PHILLIP SHIRKEY** of Concordia, **LEAH LINDENMAN** of Morland, and **TREVOR JOHNSON** of Stuttgart. You can read the winning essay on the next page. Congratulations to our young writers!



James Nobert
First Place — \$1,500



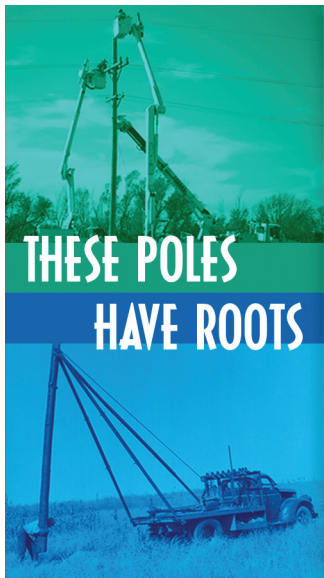
Phillip Shirkey
Second place — \$1,500



Leah Lindenman
Third place — \$1,000



Trevor Johnson
Fourth place — \$1,000



2021 ANNUAL MEETING

TWO LOCATIONS:

- 📍 Norton Headquarters
14935 US Highway 36
- 📍 Live video feed at
Concordia American Legion
506 Washington



Due to COVID, there will be no meal served and appropriate social distancing measures will be required.

MAY 4, 2021 • 2:00 P.M.

Making Your Voice Heard

BY JAMES NOBERT



James Nobert

There are around 74.2 million people in the United States that are under the age of 18. Of that 74.2 million, 15.4 million are high school students. This is a tremendous amount of people who cannot participate in local, state, and national elections. It is a

common misconception that because we cannot cast a ballot we have no voice, no way to state our opinions and beliefs.

This in fact is not true. One of the biggest tools that high school students have at our disposal is the internet. We are the first generation born completely into digital technology. It is amazing how many people just one person can reach and bring together. A young adult, like myself, is fully capable of creating youth groups, and organizing events with friends, family, and community members with a push of a button. These events can be as simple as attending a school board or town hall meeting with members from our school and addressing issues in our community.

Another thing we need to do is stay educated. Some of the uttermost important texts to read are informational about our country and our world. When a person is uninformed about a matter, they become unable to persuade any person. Educated individuals have the ability to look at things from another perspective and have their voices heard. Some of the greatest influential figures in the world do hours of research on topics that are important to them, and gather outside opinions to better their arguments. We must stay aware, however, and gather our information from trustworthy sources. It has become a big task to decipher factual information from fiction. Our generation needs to show others how we can do a better job at this, and I believe we can.

One more thing we can do is write local and state representatives. Every city in Kansas has a mayor and a city council. Any age of person can write them at any time about issues concerning them and their city. The state of Kansas has four congressmen and has two senators. These people were chosen



Former Youth Tour winners view the Washington Monument from the Tidal Basin of West Potomac Park in D.C.

by legal age voters to represent all residents of Kansas, not just those over 18. Each one receives many letters and emails every day on matters that are affecting their supporters. When writing a representative, a handwritten letter will always mean more and show how much we care about the matter. The one downfall of this is it can take up to three weeks to travel through the shipping and clearance process before reaching the intended recipient. Another method of communication is email. This is our best option when we would like our voices heard regarding a specific issue in an upcoming vote. We must always remember to address these men and women with respect, even if we have differing opinions.

The world is changing, and the young people of America who can't vote now will soon be active citizens in society. It's a frightening concept for most adults and it definitely is for us too, but with fresh minds comes fresh ideas and new concepts. Just because we are not there yet doesn't mean we can't start contributing now. Around the country there are millions of youth ready to help unite our country and make the world a better place. We have so much to offer. With these tools and the determination to work hard we can

become successful. Older generations may not think teens have been paying attention to the events in our world, but we are watching, listening, and learning. Our day is coming soon when we can impact change in bigger ways. When it does, we'll be ready.



BUILT by our community. **SHAPED** by our community. **LED** by our community.
We're proud to power your life.

Congratulations to Anna Foley

On March 1, 2021, **ANNA FOLEY**, member services assistant for Prairie Land, retired after 27 years of service to the cooperative.

Foley began her career with Norton-Decatur on Aug. 18, 1994, as a customer service representative.

In 2002, she joined the member services department and became the Youth Tour coordinator and editor of the centerspread for *Kansas Country Living*.

“Working in member services has been the most rewarding position for me at Prairie Land,” Foley said. “It has been a privilege to serve our members the past 27 years, work with our youth through the Youth Tour and the Safety Poster Contest and belong to some outstanding cooperative organizations throughout Kansas.”

Foley and her husband, Craig, have two grown children and three grandsons. Foley’s retirement plans include moving closer to her grandkids and traveling, once it is safe. Congratulations, Anna! We will miss you!



Office staff surprised Anna with treats on the day of her last board meeting to coordinate.

Hays Completes 35 Years of Service



LeRoy Hays
35 years

LEROY HAYS began his career with Norton-Decatur on April 1, 1986, as a lineman for the Phillipsburg area. In 1997, he was promoted to crew foreman and in 2007 he advanced to foreman in Phillipsburg, the position he currently holds.

LeRoy and his wife, Debbie, have two adult children, Kadie and Rylan. In his spare time, he enjoys visiting Kadie and her husband, Cort, in Ark City, riding horses with his family, hunting, attending sporting events and judging high school and youth rodeos.



To our heroes in hard hats, thank you for keeping the lights on.

#ThankALineworker

KILOWATT'S TIPS

Know What's Below

As the ground thaws out and plants begin to sprout, you may be anxious to fire up the backhoe or grab a shovel to start a project.

STOP. Before you break ground, Prairie Land Electric reminds you to call 811 to request that buried electric, gas, cable and other live lines in or near your yard be marked. The service is free, but digging in an unmarked yard may not be.

The 811 “Call Before You Dig” number routes you to your local utility locating service. Tell the operator where, when and what type of work you will be doing. Then wait a few business days for a professional to come mark your public utilities with flags or spray paint.

Digging without locating underground utilities, even the smallest digging projects, could leave neighborhoods in the dark, cause thousands of dollars in damages, or cause severe electrical shock. Don't forget — Call 811!

You can also submit a request online at Call811.com. The site also lists the advance notice required for marking services, which is usually two days, not including the day you call.

As Call811.com says, “know what's below,” then, dig safely. For more about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Did You Know?

There are different colors of paint and flags that mark the underground utilities, and each color is universal to what utility is buried.

- ▶ **RED** – Electric
- ▶ **ORANGE** – Communications, Telephone/CATV
- ▶ **BLUE** – Potable Water
- ▶ **GREEN** – Sewer/Drainage
- ▶ **YELLOW** – Gas/Petroleum Pipe Line
- ▶ **PURPLE** – Reclaimed Water
- ▶ **WHITE** — Pre-mark site of intended excavation

KILOWATT was adopted by Prairie Land after the December 2006 ice storm. She now brings you energy and safety tips each month.



Thank a Lineworker on April 12

If asked to associate an image or a person with Prairie Land, many members would picture a lineworker. One of the most visible employees of the co-op, lineworkers work tirelessly to ensure uninterrupted power 24/7.

“Lineworker” is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S. This is understandable as they perform detailed tasks near high-voltage power lines. Regardless of the time of day, stormy weather or other challenging conditions, lineworkers must climb 40 feet in the air, often carrying heavy equipment to get the job done.

Being a lineworker is not a glamorous or easy profession. It takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, dedication, and equally important, a sense of service and commitment. How else can you explain the willingness to leave the comfort of your home to tackle a challenging job in difficult conditions, when most are sheltering comfortably at home? This dedication and sense of service to the community is truly what sets them apart. That’s why we set aside the second Monday in April to celebrate and recognize the men and women who work around the clock to keep the lights on.

While lineworkers may be the most visible employees at Prairie Land, it’s important to note that there is a team of highly skilled professionals working behind the scenes. Engineers provide ongoing expertise and guidance on the operations side of the co-op. Customer service representatives are always standing by to take your calls and questions. Our information technology experts are continuously monitoring our system to help safeguard sensitive data. And these are just a few of the folks who work together to ensure we can deliver the service and reliability you expect and deserve. Without them, our lineworkers wouldn’t be able to “bring the light” to our community.

Our dedicated and beloved lineworkers are proud to represent Prairie Land, and they deserve all the appreciation and accolades that come their way on Lineworker Appreciation Day. On April 12, and any time you see a lineworker, we hope you’ll join us in thanking them for their exceptional service.

ELECTRICAL LINEWORKERS

Lineworkers install and maintain overhead and underground electrical systems. We rely on their expertise to power our world.

They must commit to safety above all else for the benefit of those they serve (you!), fellow crew members and themselves.

WHAT THEY WEAR

Protective clothing is required to shield lineworkers since they work around high voltages. Gear can vary depending on pole structure (wood or steel) and weighs up to 45 pounds.

