

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation

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Mission Statement

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is committed to meeting the needs of our membership by delivering safe, affordable and reliable services the cooperative way.

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Between the Lines

News from your local leadership

A strong co-op. A strong community.

In just a few months, the coronavirus has challenged our communities, nation and world in unprecedented ways. Both a public health and financial crisis, it seems the impacts of COVID-19 will be with us for some time.

I am incredibly proud of the way our team at Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation has responded to the virus. Even in the face of difficult restrictions designed to protect their health and the communities they serve, our people have met the challenges they faced with incredible resolve and determination to serve their friends and neighbors.

Likewise, it is uplifting to see the communities we serve rally to overcome our current difficulties. Local leaders, teachers, medical professionals, ministry leaders and others have stepped up to the plate, made the tough calls and provided compassion to those in need. When things needed to be done, you stepped up and did what was right.

Strong co-ops and strong communities have a few things in common.

We adapt. The challenges of the last few months are unlike anything most of us can remember. Businesses, schools, churches and factories all closed to keep people safe from the virus, and creativity was infectious. Small businesses provided new options. Teachers modified their curriculum and mailed it to their students. Ministers moved their church services online. Even the co-op had to



By Chris A. Davis
General Manager,
Cumberland Electric
Membership
Corporation

find new ways to provide the services our communities depend on. We are strong because we adapt to overcome the challenges we face.

We care. One of the unexpected blessings of the pandemic has been an outpouring of goodwill. Whether it was sewing masks for essential workers, providing meals for hospital workers or delivering groceries to the elderly, we have witnessed countless individuals, ministries and businesses throughout our communities answering the call to serve. At CEMC, we have also seen an increase in Project Help contributions from our members during this time of uncertainty. (Read more about Project Help and how you can help on page 24.) We are strong because we care about the people around us.

We power on. Our communities are resilient. The people who live here are resilient. The employees of your co-op are resilient. When things are difficult or even frightening, we don't quit. We don't sit down and give up. We do the things that need to be done. We persevere. We power on.

Regardless of the challenges we face, I am confident that the people of Middle Tennessee will find ways to adapt, demonstrate boundless compassion and, above all, power on. A strong co-op. A strong community.

Washington Youth Tour Writing Contest winners

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is pleased to recognize the 2020 Washington Youth Tour Writing Contest Winners. Each of these students wrote winning short stories titled “Electric Cooperatives: The Power to Be” describing how electric co-ops give their members the “power to be” connected, engaged, productive, healthy, educated, etc.

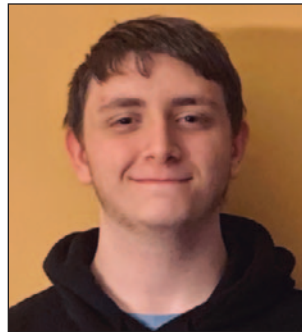
Unfortunately, this year’s trip to Washington, D.C., was cancelled due to concerns of COVID-19.

“It is truly heartbreaking that these very deserving students will not get to experience this once-in-a-lifetime trip to our nation’s capital,” says CEMC Community Relations Coordinator and Youth Tour chaperone Stephanie Lobdell. “However, their safety is our top priority.”

In lieu of the trip, each of this year’s winners will receive a \$1,000 college scholarship. Winners will also have the opportunity to compete for additional college scholarships.



*Alexandria Anderson
Stewart County
High School*



*Jakob Burchett
Stewart County
High School*



*Avery Cranford
Portland High School*



*Tilman Goins
Portland High School*



*Blake Hinkle
Greenbrier High School*



*Autumn Johnson
Montgomery Central
High School*



*Elizabeth Martin
Stewart County
High School*



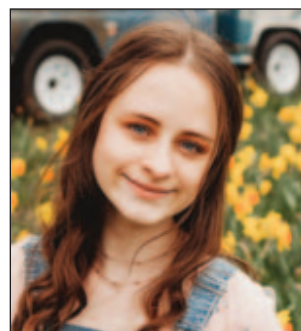
*Gabe Matherley
Greenbrier High School*



*Brittany Meadows
Portland High School*



*Rylie Morris
Portland High School*



*Kaylee Wilson
Greenbrier High School*



*Matthew Worsham
Greenbrier High School*

Electric Cooperatives: The Power to Be

By Autumn Johnson, Montgomery Central High School

Lilly Smith walked down the street to the bus stop on a cloudy Monday morning. She swerved around a truck that was working on an electric line in her neighbor's yard. Lilly didn't understand that much about what her local electric co-op did for her. She had gotten ready in the dark that morning. Even though the lights normally came on in the next hour or so, Lilly couldn't submit her English paper that was due this morning.

As Lilly strolled into her sixth-grade science class, a wave of disappointment hit her. She remembered that today was the day that their teacher, Mrs. Linden, was so excited about. A lady from their town's local electric cooperative was coming to speak to the class today. Well, Lilly decided today was the day she would discover what all her local electric co-op did for her and her community and why they were so important. At least she could submit her paper at school, although it would probably take a while since the internet was so slow in the whole town.

Mrs. Walker stepped in front of the class to welcome the students. Mrs. Linden introduced her, and Lilly closed her computer after turning in her paper. Mrs. Walker started by asking the class, "Do any of you know anything about electric cooperatives?" Hunter raised his hand. "They supply electricity to all of us." She smiled, "Yes, of course, but as long as you all are in the service area." Sawyer's dad worked for the town's local electric cooperative as a lineman, and he exclaimed, "They're the people that bring our power back when the electricity goes out." "That's correct! Do we know why that's important?" Mrs. Walker asked. One of Lilly's friends, Addison, raised her hand. "So we can do our hair." The class laughed.

Lilly spoke up, "Are you guys part of the reason I couldn't submit my paper this morning?" Mrs. Walker's smile turned sympathetic. "You cannot have internet without electricity, so, yes; however, we are not the people who make your internet slow." She turned to the class. "How many of you know what your local electric cooperative wants to do in the future?" No one in the class had any idea. Mrs. Walker smiled, "Well, let me start from a while back. In the 1930s, there was no power in rural Tennessee. The farmers and homeowners of the area came together to create a co-op, or cooperative, to bring power to their areas. Now, of course, there have been many changes made to how Tennessee electric co-ops run. They now use technology to operate on a larger, more advanced grid, but their mission is still the same: to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to their neighbors. You are the very people who own the co-op."

Lilly had never thought about the mission of her local electric co-op. Addison raised her hand. "Our local electric co-op brings power to us, but besides giving us lights, how does that impact us?" Mrs. Walker's face lit up with the passion of the topic, "We strive to give you the power to be engaged, productive, heard and educated!" "How?" Lilly asked.

"Well, we give you the power of being productive by providing electricity. When there is affordable electricity and your family doesn't have to worry about where it is coming from, it gives you and your family the ability to be productive at home, at work and at school." The class looked like they were understanding, so Mrs. Walker continued, "We give you all the power to be heard and educated."

Now the class did not understand that, but Mrs. Walker wasn't done. "Currently, we are not the people who provide internet to you yet, but without electricity, how much less education would you receive? Our purpose is greater than the lights; we make education more possible in the communities we serve. We want to prepare all of you to be the next leaders and give you all the opportunities to do so. One example of this is that your very own Tennessee electric co-op supplies you with things like 4-H Camp, Youth Leadership Summit and Washington Youth Tour, which is something you all can participate in when you are juniors in high school. You get the opportunity to go to Washington, D.C., to tour and learn all about different parts of history and our government. Opportunities like these are what we want to provide to you: chances to be educated and heard."

Lilly was still a little confused. She raised her hand. "What did you mean when you said you guys weren't the people that provide internet to us yet?" Mrs. Walker smiled. "That's even more exciting! Tennessee's electric co-ops already provide electricity to 1.1 million homes, farms and businesses, but we want to do more. We want to provide high-speed internet to you all in the future so you can be better educated and your internet won't crash randomly during the day." That got the class excited for the future.

Mrs. Linden announced that Mrs. Walker had to leave. The whole class thanked her, and even Lilly thought about all the cool things that were coming in the future and all her local electric co-op did for her. They give her and everyone else in their community the power to be more.

CEMC awards 12 senior scholarships

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation is pleased to announce the winners of its 2020 Senior Scholarship Program. Each of these students has been awarded a \$1,000 college scholarship that can be used toward freshman year expenses such as tuition, textbooks and lab fees.

Allison Beard of Greenbrier. Allison is a graduate of Springfield High School and will attend the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Bailey Coleman of Clarksville. Bailey is a graduate of Clarksville Academy and will attend Belmont University.

Addison Dorris of Portland. Addison is a graduate of Portland High School and will attend the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Kayla Hernandez of Springfield. Kayla is a graduate of East Robertson High School and will attend Tennessee Technological University.

Madisen Hodges of Clarksville. Madisen is a graduate of Montgomery Central High School and will attend Motlow State Community College.

Bracey Hughes of Pleasant View. Bracey is a graduate of Sycamore High School and will attend Austin Peay State University.

Randall Nolen of Dover. Randall is a graduate of Stewart County High School and will attend the University of Tennessee, Martin.

Presley Rochelle of Pleasant View. Presley is a graduate of Sycamore High School and will attend Austin Peay State University.

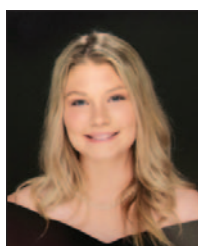
Petra Sellars of Pleasant View. Petra is a graduate of Sycamore High School and will attend the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Benjamin Smith of Adams. Benjamin is a graduate of Jo Byrns High School and will attend Tennessee Technological University.

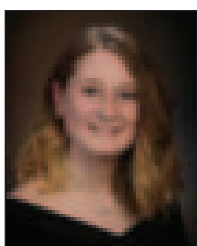
Dylanie Tippit of Dover. Dylanie is a graduate of Stewart County High School and will attend Union University.

Lexie Van Liere of White House. Lexie is a graduate of White House High School and will attend Volunteer State Community College.

To qualify for the award, students were required to complete applications, each including two letters of recommendation, and write 300-word essays describing what they look forward to most about attending college and how scholarships, in terms of financial assistance, will help them complete their educational goals. The applications were judged by a panel of retired teachers.



Allison Beard



Bailey Coleman



Addison Dorris



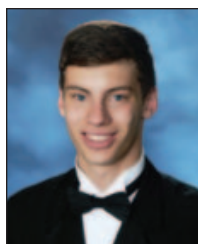
Kayla Hernandez



Madisen Hodges



Bracey Hughes



Randall Nolen



Presley Rochelle



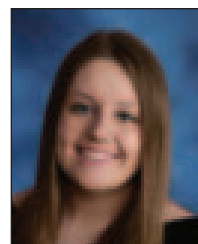
Petra Sellars



Benjamin Smith



Dylanie Tippit



Lexie Van Liere

Head earns Power Play Scholarship

Anna Kate Head of Cedar Hill has been awarded a \$4,000 scholarship through a program made possible by Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation and other local power companies across the Tennessee Valley Authority's seven-state service area.

Anna Kate, daughter of CEMC Supervisor of Protective Equipment Testing Lab **Jason Head** and his wife, Katie, is among the 30 recipients of this year's Power Play Scholarship provided by the Power Play Scholarship Association to recognize outstanding aca-



*Anna Kate Head
Springfield High School*

demical performance and a commitment to community service among high school seniors whose parents are employed by local power companies.

A graduate of Springfield High School, Anna Kate will attend the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Since the program was established in 1995, a total of 638 Power Play scholarships have been awarded through contributions and fund-raising efforts by the Power Play Association and its members. In 2020, 143 applications were received from across the Tennessee Valley.

Trimming trees now keeps the power on later

Reliable energy is important to Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation and to the homes and businesses we serve. Keeping trees and other vegetation safely away from power lines is a crucial part of our ongoing system maintenance. While some power outages are out of our control — things such as car accidents or lightning — many outages can be prevented by making sure trees and other vegetation are kept well away from the lines.

Each year, CEMC and our tree-trimming contractors clear limbs and brush and in some cases remove entire trees that are too close to the lines or near other electrical equipment. They carefully follow guidelines and best practices provided by the International Society of Arboriculture.

“It’s pretty simple,” says Jimmy Luffman, CEMC right-of-way supervisor. “When trees and other vegetation get too close to the lines, it will result in a power outage. One tree could knock out the power for 100 homes. Keeping them away from the lines is necessary to keep the lights on.”

Proper right-of-way maintenance is a good investment that keeps the lights on for our consumer-members. “To keep everyone in our community safe, our distribution system is designed

to cut the power when it detects a contact with the power line,” says Luffman. “We can’t tell if the contact is from a child flying a kite, a car accident or a limb brushing against the line. This means that trees and limbs can knock out the power even if they don’t actually break the lines. If they do break the lines, the outage can last even longer. That’s why it is so important to keep vegetation away from the lines.”

Co-op members can help maintain a reliable flow of electricity in your community by reporting any potential problems you see. It’s also important to be understanding when tree-trimming crews are working on or near your property. The work they are doing impacts you and your neighbors alike. Though co-ops like CEMC have the right to inspect and maintain power lines without the consent of property owners, we make every effort to meet with owners to discuss the work ahead of time.

From homes to hospitals and farms to factories, much of our lives depend on reliable energy. Power is essential to maintain health, safety, comfort, productivity and connection, and CEMC is passionate about fulfilling our responsibility and meeting your expectations.

Help a neighbor, contribute to Project Help

Cumberland Electric Membership Corporation, in cooperation with local energy assistance agencies, offers a program in which members who choose to participate can donate \$1 or more each month to help provide some relief to individuals who are struggling to pay their utility bills.

The program, Project Help, allows members to contribute an additional \$1 on their electric bills each month to help pay the utility bills of the elderly, disabled and/or those who are not economically self-sufficient. Project Help is a voluntary program. All money collected from Project Help goes to energy assistance agencies in our communities that determine how these special funds are distributed.

Here's how the Project Help Program works:

Who is eligible to receive Project Help funds?

To qualify, Project Help recipients must contact the local energy assistance agencies. They will be required to provide proof that they are unable to bear the cost of heating their homes and that they do not exceed the annual income limit established for the assistance program.

How are the funds administered?

When CEMC receives your Project Help donation, 100 percent of the money goes directly to the assistance agency that administers the program in

your county. The agency distributes the assistance based on qualifying needs.

Who contributes to Project Help?

Everyone can contribute to CEMC's Project Help program. The minimum donation is \$1 per month.

How long do I donate to Project Help?

You are billed each month on your CEMC statement for the amount you wish to donate. You will continue to be billed each month until you notify CEMC that you would like to discontinue your donation.

How will I know I am donating each month?

You will see a separate line on your CEMC statement to show your Project Help donation.

How do I sign up?

If you would like to donate \$1 or more each month to Project Help, you can do so by marking the box on your bill stub and completing the Project Help section on the back of your bill. Or contact CEMC's Customer Service by phone at 1-800-987-2362.

By donating to Project Help, you can make a difference for someone in need. Please consider contributing to Project Help to help provide some relief to individuals who are struggling to pay their utility bills. A dollar a month can truly make a difference.



WE'RE WORKING FOR YOU



Have you heard?
Cumberland Connect
officially launched
CCFiber on May 1, 2020!

To learn more about
launch, CCFiber services
and what to expect moving forward,
log in to SmartHub or visit
Cumberland Connect online at
www.CumberlandConnect.org.