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Students Bound for Washington, D.C.

Four juniors from area high schools are winners of VVEC's annual Youth Tour essay competition. Two students will spend a week touring Washington, D.C., while the remaining two have won scholarships.

Winners were selected at a banquet March 24 at the VVEC pavilion.

Lisbeth Haddox, South Coffeyville High School, and Juliana Shinn, Claremore High School, will join more than 70 high school juniors from across Oklahoma, for an all-expense paid week of site-seeing in the nation's capitol in June. Sun Vue and Amanda Myers, both students at Oologah-Talala High School, have each won \$500 scholarships.

This is VVEC's 48th year to be a sponsor of the Youth Tour program.

Haddox is the daughter of Clemo and Berneta Haddox, while Shinn is the daughter of Greg and Margaret Shinn. Vue is the son of Mor Vue and Chang Lao, and Myers is the daughter of Jim and Robin Stratton.

The annual Youth Tour contest is open to juniors attending high school in VVEC's service territory. They are invited to write an essay on a specific cooperative-related topic. Once submitted, the essays are judged on strength of ideas, style, and writing convention and grammar. The four highest scoring essays advance to the final stage of the competition.

At a banquet in their honor at VVEC headquarters, the finalists give oral presentations of their essays before a panel of judges knowledgeable about electric cooperatives and

the specific topic. The judges then determine which two finalists win the trip to Washington D.C. The two runners-up each receive \$500 scholarships, and will represent VVEC on the Washington trip if one of the winners is unable to attend.

"We are proud to have such outstanding students representing VVEC in this program," says VVEC Youth Tour Coordinator Paula Lanni.



Youth Tour finalists are (left to right) Sun Vue and Amanda Myers, both of Oologah-Talala High School; Juliana Shinn, Claremore High School; and Lisbeth Haddox, South Coffeyville High School.

"Their essays indicate they researched the topic and each provided a unique perspective. We thank them for participating, and their teachers for their continued support of the students and this program." 



Energy Camp Winners

Owasso 8th graders (left to right) Mason Keesling and Jackson Running wrote the winning essay in VVEC's YouthPower Energy Camp contest this year.

Mason is the son of Mark and Deann Keesling, and Jackson is the son of Joe Running.

Students are given the choice of entering the competition as individuals or as a two-student team.

Energy Camp is May 31 through June 3 at Camp Canyon near Hinton, OK.

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Editor - Kay Rabbitt-Brower

VVEC offices will be closed Monday, May 31 in recognition of Memorial Day. Call (918) 371-2584 or 1-800-870-5948 to report an outage.

Summer Residential Rates

April through September usage,
May through October billing

Customer Charge \$20.00

Energy Charge

1st 2,000 kWh \$0.0801/kWh
Over 2,000 kWh \$0.0851/kWh

A power cost adjustment (PCA) will be applied to all bills when the actual cost of power purchased exceeds or is less than 55.993 mills per kWh.

In addition, a gross receipts tax of 2% of revenue will be included, plus additional taxes if applicable.

Include the Co-op Connections[®] Card in Your Summer Plans

You don't have to be a student to be excited about summer break. For most people, summer means anticipated time away from the office spent with family and friends. No matter if your summer plans involve a two-week road trip, or a few lazy days at home, you will want to include your Co-op Connections Card in your summer plans.

Family visits are always fun, but not if you don't have room for overnight company. **Andersonville Cottage Bed and Breakfast** can help. Buy one night at this lovely location and get the second night free. **Country Inn Bed and Breakfast**, also in Claremore, is affordable with 20-percent off weekdays and 10-percent off weekend stays. (No holidays or special events.) Your guests will find Claremore's **Super 8** motel to be as comfy as home. The motel will take 10 percent off the regular rate.

Time at the lake is one of the best ways to beat the Oklahoma heat. **Crystal Bay Marina**, Skiatook, is giving \$60 off each cabin rental booked online. Call 918-396-4240, ext. 201 for the discount code and Web site address.

On your way to the lake, don't forget to stop by **Charlotte's Country Spirits** in Skiatook, and **McFerron Quality Meats** in Nowata, where you will enjoy a 10 percent discount on your purchases.

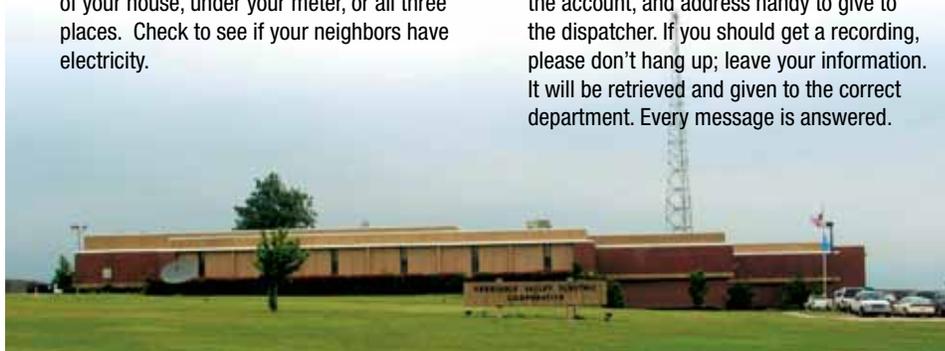
Before hitting the road, you want to make sure your vehicle or RV is in good shape. **Accurate Automotive**, Bartlesville, offers 10 percent off labor (\$50 maximum discount.) **Chapman Auto**, Skiatook, also offers a 10-percent discount. **Tate Boys Tire & Service**, Bartlesville, offers 10 percent off service, and 5 percent off tires, while **Robertson Tire Co.**, and **Thomas Kwik Kar**, in Owasso, also offer a 10-percent discount.

Get the roof on your RV inspected free at **Green Country RV Doctor** in Collinsville. At **Route 66 RVs**, Claremore, get a 10-percent discount on in-stock parts, and the RV rental base rate.

For more Co-op Connections Card specials, visit our Web site at www.vvec.com. 

What to do if Your Power Goes Off

1. Check your fuses or circuit breakers. Every service is different. You may have fuses or circuit breakers in your house, on the side of your house, under your meter, or all three places. Check to see if your neighbors have electricity.
2. Call the Co-op at 371-2584, or 1-800-870-5948 if the call is long distance for you. Have your account number, name as it appears on the account, and address handy to give to the dispatcher. If you should get a recording, please don't hang up; leave your information. It will be retrieved and given to the correct department. Every message is answered.



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Who Ya Gonna Call?

Customer Services Section is Co-op's Information Central

The official name is consumer services, but it could just as easily be called 'Information Central.'

That is because VVEC's consumer service representatives have to be knowledgeable about numerous areas of the cooperative in order to provide good customer service to the membership.

"You name it, we do it," says Billing coordinator Lori Prock, smiling. "We are who members call when they have questions about their bills, want to report that their security light isn't working, or request a disconnect or to transfer service, along with a variety of other situations.

"We are an entry point for the cooperative. Most member phone calls or office visits start with our section."

Consumer service representatives also help members when they have questions about charges on their monthly electric bills, along with discussing the many variables that affect electric usage. They work with members to collect unpaid or delinquent accounts, make payment arrangements, coordinate energy assistance payments from agencies such as DHS and Community Action, in addition to helping members when they want to begin participating in the co-op's budget billing and automatic funds transfer programs.

"We are an entry point for the cooperative. Most member phone calls or office visits start with our section."

*Lori Prock,
Billing Coordinator*



Available to help members in the office or on the phone are (standing left to right) Consumer Service Representatives Carolyn Blakeman, Debbie Riley, Misti Frazier, Kathy Calico, and Mary Edgecombe. Seated (left to right) are Vivian Rabbit and Billing Coordinator Lori Prock. (Not pictured is Kay Rabbitt-Brower.)

The eight-member employee group is a section of the office services department, and has more than 50 years of cooperative experience between them.

"We work with other areas of the cooperative regarding member accounts and services, too" Prock says. "We work with the linemen when a member moves from one location to another, or needs to have a service disconnected. We also work with data processing and engineering.

"When prospective members come to the co-op to sign-up for electric service, we realize we could be their first impression of VVEC. We take that seriously, and want to be capable and professional while letting them know we're glad they're going to be members of the cooperative," says Prock.

In addition to being knowledgeable of the co-op's policies and procedures, consumer service reps also know about the services VVEC offers.

"We know about such services as E-bill and Choice Pay, which give members ways to pay their bills other than coming to the office, or mailing us their payments. We explain the fees required to get electric service, and can discuss our rebate program. We are also trained to use I-Vue, which is software used by many cooperatives throughout the nation.

"There are numerous questions members need answered, and a variety of situations they need help with," says Prock. "They look to us for the answers and helping them is our first priority.

"If you notice, at the end of several articles in Power Circuit, you will be directed to call our consumer service representatives for assistance or formore information. There's a reason for that," she says, smiling. 

VVEC's Unique Mascot

She has her own office, but she prefers to sprawl lazily on top of a desk, or nap in the warmth of the afternoon sun.

Sounds like nice work, if you can get it. And VVEC's resident mascot Electra has the job.

Electra is a tabby cat who lives at the co-op. Just shy of being 2 years old, she has her own office in the member services department, but she doesn't have a desk, office chair or telephone. Instead, her office has an elevated, carpeted bed and a variety of cat toys.

The desktop where she enjoys spending time, and the chair she naps in, belong to Member Services Secretary Jane Van Sickle.

Van Sickle is a long-time animal lover and activist, whose soft heart was touched when the young cat showed up a little over a year ago.

"She came to our employee break room door in late February. It was cold outside and she was a skinny little thing," Van Sickle says. "The employees



paid to have her spayed, examined by a veterinarian, and vaccinated."

Electra became the co-op's resident mascot. She wanders the halls, visiting employees throughout the day, and even graces members with her presence when they are in the consumer services section.

"We learned she had been hanging around the (co-op) mechanic's shop for a while before she wandered up to our offices. They had been calling her Carlos. We think the indignity of being mistaken for a male cat is what may have prompted her to leave and find us," laughs Van Sickle. 



RECIPE

Pecan Cherry Crunch

- 2 cans cherry (or any fruit) pie filling
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 yellow cake mix
- Pecans
- 2 sticks butter, melted

Spray a 9 x 13-inch pan with vegetable spray. Layer ingredients (in order listed above) in pan.

Bake at 350-degrees for 45 minutes to one hour, or until brown on top.

NOTE: Delicious topped with cherry-vanilla ice cream.