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WISCONSIN ENERGY *Cooperative* NEWS

September 2018

ALL HANDS ON DECK

Leadership congress
taps into teamwork



TAYLOR ELECTRIC
Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



ARE YOU READY FOR AN EMERGENCY?

September is National Preparedness Month



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



How prepared are you and your family for disasters or emergencies? The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) designates National Preparedness Month as the time to assess and prepare for a number of possible situations: floods, wildfires, severe storms like tornados and hurricanes, and prolonged power outages from natural disasters.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), less than half—only about 46 percent of people—think a natural disaster is likely to happen within their community. The reality is that most people will experience the impacts of some natural event year to year.

“Understand the most likely natural disasters for your area, and take steps in advance to weather them safely,” says Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council. “Prepare by assembling an emergency kit with essentials. Monitor news and weather for impending events. Be prepared to take cover or evacuate when appropriate. Stay engaged online with related websites and social media pages during a disaster.”

Be prepared for prolonged loss of power. If you have a portable generator, make sure you know how to use it safely. Place it safely away from the home. Never run a generator inside or near windows.

Floods and power outages can affect local water supplies, so keep at least three days of drinking water in your emergency kit. Your supplies should also include non-

perishable food and any needed openers, a radio or weather radio, and flashlight with extra batteries. Don't forget first aid and other medical essentials, and depending on season, extra blankets and seasonal items.

Once your kit has been assembled, it's time to create or review your family's emergency communication plan. Know how each of you will stay safe and get in touch if you're

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not together when disaster strikes. Establish a meeting place if separated during a disaster. Include measures for pets in your emergency plans.

Keep up-to-date with current public health and safety emergency plans in your community. Keep a list

of emergency services phone numbers. Consider getting involved with community programs that help others prepare to stay safe.

“Since natural disasters can quickly and seriously impact quality of life and health, proper planning and preparation is key to staying safe,” Hall concludes. “Impacts on drinking water and air quality, environmental contamination, are all considerations when it comes to being ready before disaster strikes.”

For more information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Keep an emergency kit handy so you're ready if a severe storm or natural disaster should occur.





EXPLORING THE CO-OP DIFFERENCE

Taylor Electric sponsors three students to 55th Youth Leadership Congress

More than 100 students from around the state learned about cooperatives and the art of cooperation at WECA's 55th annual Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) at UW-River Falls July 25–27. Three area students were sponsored by Taylor Electric Cooperative: Julia Pester, Medford; Mark Brugger, Rib Lake; and Oliver Robisch, Rib Lake.

Students engaged in interactive games like Cooperative Bingo and other team-building activities. They also learned about the cooperative form of business as well as co-op careers at hands-on sessions taught by co-op employees.

Students also heard from renowned youth motivational speaker Craig Hillier, who challenged them to make a difference in their schools and communities in his dynamic “Breakthrough Leadership” presentation.

Also speaking was YLC alum Tessa Otto who went on to represent Wisconsin on the NRECA Youth Leadership Council and win NRECA's prestigious Glenn English scholarship. Serving a summer internship at Harley Davidson, Otto rode in on a motorcycle to deliver her message.

While at YLC, all students have the opportunity to run for one of six spots on the Youth Board, which helps plan and implement the following year's YLC. Youth Board members also have the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., in June as part of the national Electric Youth Tour.



Representing Taylor Electric Cooperative at the Youth Leadership Congress July 25–27 were, left to right: Mark Brugger, Rib Lake; Oliver Robisch, Rib Lake; and Julia Pester, Medford.

Youth Leadership Congress is open to high school students whose families are members of Taylor Electric Cooperative. Watch this magazine and Taylor Electric's website, www.taylorlectric.org, next spring for information about next summer's Youth Leadership Congress.





Students engage in team-building activities and interactive games like Co-op Bingo at Youth Leadership Congress.

Left: Taylor Electric youth delegates (left to right) Julia Pester, Mark Brugger, and Oliver Robisch dressed up for the etiquette dinner, where students are taught the finer points of formal dining.



Dear Taylor Electric,

I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for sending me to the Youth Leadership Congress. I really enjoyed it and I cannot thank you enough. I think I learned a lot and think this will help me to become a better leader in the future. The activities there were super fun and the presentations were actually more interesting than I thought they would be. All together, thank you for the experience and all the fun time I had there.

Oliver Robisch

MY CO-OP



TEACHING THE IMPORTANT LESSON OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Electronic and mobile devices, TVs, 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.

The Why 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!).

Less tangible, but just as important, using less energy means running your home more efficiently, conserving natural resources, and helping the environment.

Learning by Doing 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, 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.

Rewards 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 to be more energy efficient and can instill good habits that will benefit your child long into adulthood.

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