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### Local students represent EnerStar Electric Cooperative during Youth Tour

Each year, hundreds of high school students from across the United States embark on an educational and inspirational journey to the nation's capital city. Sponsored by Illinois' electric and telephone cooperatives, 54 students departed Springfield, Ill., by bus on June 14 to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong trip of a lifetime.

EnerStar Electric Cooperative sponsored two students within its service territory. These students included Carly Foley and Turner Graham, both of Marshall.

Youth Tour began in 1964, after President Lyndon B. Johnson inspired the nation's electric cooperatives to sponsor youths to go to D.C. to educate young people about the role of electric co-ops and the significance of the legislative process. It became an annual tradition.

"Youth Tour is more than just a trip," said EnerStar's Angela Griffin "It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that empowers future leaders to become informed, engaged and active citizens. Many Youth Tour alumni go on to become leaders in their communities, inspired by this experience."

The event offers a unique opportunity for students to explore the nation's capital, meet their peers from across the state and beyond, and engage



with the political process. Youth Tour not only highlights the importance of electric cooperatives but also fosters civic engagement and leadership skills.

The itinerary for the Youth Tour was packed with both educational and cultural experiences. The students visited major landmarks such as Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery, the U.S. Capitol and the National Mall. They also visited several museums, including the Smithsonian, Air and Space

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# 2024 Annual Meeting Recap

As members gathered for the Annual Meeting of Members on Saturday, June 1, the meeting demonstrated the cooperative difference and celebrated 85 years of committed service to the local communities.

## Cooperative history

“Strong Foundation, Bright Future” was the theme of the meeting. The cooperative’s first electrification project was initiated in July 1939 near Route 1 and High School Road on the north edge of Paris, marking the beginning of a long and fruitful journey.

## Financial update

Board Secretary-Treasurer Greg Robinson presented the treasurer’s report, revealing a significant \$2 million debt reduction since 2019. This accomplishment demonstrates the co-op’s dedication to maintaining the cooperative’s and its members’ rate stability.

“The co-op’s biggest expense, and one that we have minimal control over, is the cost of wholesale power. For every dollar we collect, 54 cents go towards the cost of power,” stated Robinson. “What we can control is the actual cost to deliver power to your home. The co-op board and leadership staff closely monitor and control these expenses. Even with inflation, we have kept these costs relatively stable for the last few years.”



## CEO update

EnerStar CEO Dave Clinton presented the CEO report, emphasizing the cooperative’s resilience in the face of challenges such as rising materials and power costs. He underscored the cooperative’s proactive measures, instilling a sense of reassurance in the members about our commitment to financial stability.

Clinton informed members that the co-op has experienced a 14% rise in wholesale power over the past two years. This increase was the primary factor leading to the cooperative’s decision to raise their electric rates by 18% over the same two-year period. “We do not take any rate increase lightly. However, to remain

financially stable, an increase was necessary. If there is any good news in this, it is that due to the co-op’s focus on careful spending, EnerStar’s rate increase is lower than increases across the Midwest and the national average.”

At closing, Clinton discussed a recent NERC report raising concerns about electric availability during peak load periods.

Clinton explained that the co-op could either take a “wait and see” approach, becoming victims of whatever the future brings or proactively take an active role in determining future power costs. Clinton says, “Our co-op is not sitting back

to see what happens but taking an active role in determining future costs.”

The cooperative is designing a rate structure better suited for the changing industry, giving members more control and choice of how and when they use electricity and what those costs may be. The co-op is also working with its power supplier, Wabash Valley Power, to develop further incentives for members wanting to reduce their energy costs.

## Incumbent directors reelected

Rob Anderson of Anderson Law Office, the cooperative corporate attorney, gave the director election results. All incumbent candidates ran unopposed and were elected to new 3-year terms: Kevin Julian (Voting District A, Representative District 2), Darin Griffin (Voting District B, Representative District 4), and Julie Higginbotham (Voting District C, Representative District 7).

## Proposed bylaw changes approved by co-op membership

The first change dealt with the election process when only one candidate runs for a director’s position. Instead of mailing ballots to members within the voting district, unopposed candidates will be presented as a verbal vote during the annual meeting. The regular mail-in ballot process will be used if the election is contested. In the case of a tie between two candidates, language was added to draw lots to determine the winner.

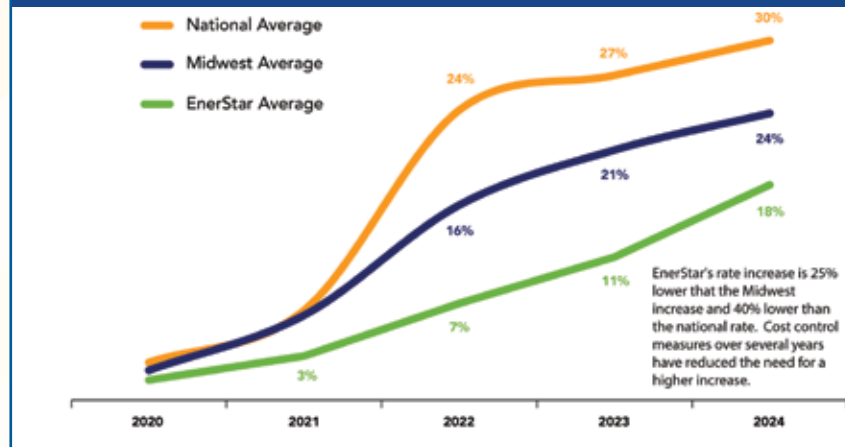
The second bylaw proposal clarified language regarding the board of directors issuing a general retirement on capital credits from more recent years. Both proposals were approved.



## Hope to see you next year!

As always, the meeting closed with the always popular door prize drawing. This year, the prizes were bill credits, which seemed highly appreciated by the membership. All members receive a \$25 bill credit for attending the meeting. We appreciate all who came this year and the wonderful compliments. We hope to see you again! And, if you didn't make it, we hope to see you next year!

## Rate Increase 2024



## Getting to know your co-op employees

As part of our ongoing series to introduce you to our co-op employees this month, we highlight three of our highly skilled Journeyman Lineman. Left to right is Chad Cornwell, a graduate of Northwest Iowa Community College (NICC), who joined the co-op in 1999. He serves as our Maintenance Crew Leader. Scott Newlin, also an NICC graduate, joined the co-op family in 2001. You can often find Scott working on the construction crews. The newest team member is Chandler Milbourn, who joined the co-op family in 2023. He graduated from Southeast Lineman Training Center and worked for an electrical contractor before joining the co-op. All three men play a crucial role in providing reliable power to the membership. And



Left to right: Chad Cornwell, Scott Newlin and Chandler Milbourn

if a power outage should occur, you can count on them to work diligently to restore power as soon as possible.

Thank you, Chad, Scott and Chandler, for your dedication to our electric co-op!

### Youth Tour

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Museum, and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

"There's a lot more to Youth Tour than sightseeing," Griffin said. "It also provides students with a deeper understanding of American history and government and the role electric and telephone cooperatives play in the communities they serve."

One way the students learned about cooperatives was by forming one themselves. The Chip 'n' Pop Co-op is an engaging way to provide the Youth Tour participants

with experience in understanding the fundamentals of the cooperative business model.

"This hands-on activity emphasizes the importance of teamwork," Griffin said. "The students gained practical business skills and a deeper appreciation for cooperatives."

"The impact of Youth Tour goes far beyond Washington, D.C.," Griffin added. "One of the most impactful parts of Youth Tour is the relationships that students build with their peers from different parts

of the state and country. These connections often turn into lifelong friendships."

High school students who live within the service area of EnerStar Electric are eligible to participate. Applications for the 2025 tour will be available later this year.

To learn more about Youth Tour, go to [youthtour.coop](http://youthtour.coop) or [facebook.com/ILYouthTour](https://facebook.com/ILYouthTour).

## EnerStar Co-op Board Appreciation



The EnerStar board held its yearly reorganizational meeting following the recent annual meeting. The board members, who are also co-op members, dedicate their time to ensuring the smooth operation of our co-op. For the coming year, the board officers are as follows: Jeff Murphy from Marshall as Chairman, Jeff Zimmerman from Oakland as Vice Chairman, Greg Robinson from Marshall as Secretary-Treasurer, and Julie Higginbotham as Assistant Secretary-Treasurer. We appreciate your dedication and service to the co-op.

EnerStar board member Danny Gard of West Union, who joined the board in 2000, recently completed 12 years of service as the Board Chairman. Danny has also served on the Wabash Valley Power Alliance board, representing EnerStar at our co-op's wholesale power supplier. He is a Credentialed Certified Director, having completed additional training for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Thank you, Danny, for your continued dedication to the co-op. We appreciate you!



## Years of Service Appreciation



Several employees and one director received years of service awards at the recent annual meeting. Greg Robinson, from Marshall, has served on the board of directors for 5 years. The employees who received awards were Britta Baker (5 years), Russ Camp (15 years), Chad Cornwell (25 years), and Angela Griffin (35 years).



### ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Placing heat sources, such as lamps, computers or TVs, near your thermostat can result in false temperature readings, increased energy use and inconsistent cooling/heating. Make sure your thermostat is installed in an area clear of obstructions, electronic devices, direct sunlight and drafts.

Ensuring your thermostat is free from these types of interferences optimizes energy efficiency, improves indoor comfort and reduces wear and tear on your cooling/heating system.

*Source: energy.gov*