



# The high price of energy

Gasoline prices soar to \$4 per gallon and more. The cost of groceries, including essentials like milk and bread, keeps climbing as well. The effects of world-wide energy costs hit a little harder each day as Americans are forced to pay more for everyday necessities. It reminds me of the comment one old-timer made on the weather — everybody's talking about it, but nobody's doing anything!

Nearly half of electricity generation in our nation comes from coal-fired power plants. But mounting pressures to lower greenhouse gas emissions have made it more difficult and costly to build coal-fired facilities. Nuclear power doesn't emit greenhouse gases, but strong political and philosophical opposition makes building new plants very difficult. In fact, the first nuclear plants in nearly 30 years are just getting started.

Additionally, rising costs of fossil fuels to produce electricity and power plant construction materials like steel, concrete and copper make the industry's ability to bring sufficient generation on-line more difficult. As a result, natural gas has become the "bridge" fuel of choice for keeping the lights on, at least until new low-emissions technologies are developed on a large scale.

Natural gas plants are usually smaller than coal-fired or nuclear plants, can be built faster and typically face less public opposition than other power generation options, making them a convenient alternative. Simple gas-fired turbines — similar to jet engines on blocks — can be built in approximately 18 months; a combined-cycle unit that creates steam for extra generation can be up and running in just two years. But natural gas also has its drawbacks.

The price of natural gas has tripled since 2002 and jumped 93 percent since August 2007. These fluctuations, combined with limited domestic reserves and a greater reliance on imports, make natural gas prices highly volatile. As more natural gas is used for electricity, we're likely to see electric bills increase as well.



**Larry Elkins**  
General Manager  
Holston Electric  
Cooperative

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, if natural gas consumption continues at its current rate without an increase in imports, national reserves will be tapped out within 10 years. And by adding more gas-fired power plants, the nation's 300,000 miles of natural gas pipelines — already operating close to capacity — will come under further strain. If you use natural gas for heating and cooking, those costs will significantly increase, too, as more supply is used for power generation.

At Holston Electric Cooperative, it has been our ongoing mission to provide you with reliable and affordable electricity. To ensure that we can continue to meet your energy needs at prices you can afford, we have joined with other electric co-ops across the country in a grassroots campaign called "Our Energy, Our Future: A Dialogue With America." Unlike the weather, there is something we can all do to help keep energy affordable for us all.

This campaign seeks to engage national policy makers on critical energy questions such as how to balance growing electricity needs and environmental goals and how much of all this will increase electric bills. Please visit [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) to get the conversation started. Or, if you don't have computer access, please watch for mailing instructions in your upcoming electric bill.

**Our Energy, Our Future**  
A Dialogue With America

A Dialogue With America



Serving more than 30,000 customers in Hawkins and Hamblen counties.



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**To report an outage or electrical emergency, call 272-8821 or 235-6811 day or night.**



## Save energy in five quick steps

**E**nergy bills are on the rise. Here are five ways to take control:

**Keep the heat out.** Half of all the heat that enters your home comes in through the windows. Invest in a thick shade or window film to block out the summer sun. Save up to 15 percent on your cooling bill by shading west-facing windows, which absorb the most afternoon sun. For the hottest parts of your house, consider installing an awning or planting trees in front of the window to shade the house.

**Change the filters.** A filter for your air-conditioning system costs only dollars (about \$5 for a high-quality, pleated model) but can save you much more if you change it every month during the summer. Dirty air-conditioning filters prevent airflow and make the air-conditioning system work harder. That means a higher bill.

**Crank up the thermostat.** For every degree you turn your thermostat up during air-conditioning season, you'll save

up to 2 percent on your cooling costs. Try setting your thermostat at 78 degrees and turning on a ceiling fan to help circulate the air.

**Install ceiling fans.** Fans don't cool the air, but they make the air feel cooler by moving it around the room and against your skin, which creates a sort of "wind chill" effect. When the fan is running, you can move your thermostat three to four degrees higher without noticing a difference in your comfort level.

**Turn it on.** Replace every light bulb in your house with a compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL). They cost more initially than incandescent bulbs, but they use 75 percent less energy. They pay for themselves and then some over their lifetime — in fact, you can save \$30 by replacing just one incandescent with a CFL. Plus, CFLs emit less heat than incandescent bulbs, so they don't add heat to your home's air or make the air conditioner work harder.



## When your car comes in contact with a power line

**I**f your car comes in contact with a power line, a state of panic may set in. Try to stay calm and follow these tips:

- You should remain inside your vehicle. If you are in your car, you are not part of electricity's path, which always looks for the shortest way to the ground. Honk your horn to alert passersby.
- If someone stops to help, roll down the window and warn them not to touch the car or the power line. Ask them to phone 911 and contact the local electric utility immediately.
- Wait in your car until qualified electrical workers turn the power off and tell you it's safe to leave the car.
- If you have to leave the car because of fire or other danger, open the door and jump away from the vehicle so no part of your body touches the vehicle and the ground at the same time. Make sure to jump with both feet together so that your feet land on the ground at the same time.



- After you land with both feet together, shuffle away, keeping both feet in contact with the ground constantly.
- Do not try to help someone from the vehicle. If you do, you may become a path for electricity and be injured or killed.



## Area students participate in Washington Youth Tour

Six students from Hawkins and Hamblen counties were among the more than 1,500 high school students from across the country who participated in the 2008 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour held June 14-19 in Washington, D.C. An annual tradition for more than four decades, the Youth Tour is a weeklong event packed with opportunities to learn firsthand what it is like to be involved in politics, community service and today's pressing issues.

The 2008 Washington Youth Tour participants from Holston EC included Michael Sandidge, son of Scott and Cathy Sandidge of Rogersville; Elisha Wilder, daughter of Lonnie and Glenda Wilder of Bulls Gap; Emily Banks, daughter of Aaron and Katrina Banks of Rogersville; Heather Fultz, daughter of Tom and Brenda Fultz of Church Hill; Amanda West, daughter of Kipp and Judy West of Church Hill; and Kayla Williams, daughter of David and Melody Williams of Russellville.

Students won spots on the expense-paid tour for writing the best short stories in their cooperatives' service areas. Each wrote a story titled "Energizing our Communities." The contest provides an opportunity for the high schoolers to discover how their member-owned electric co-ops provide more than just electricity to their communities.

Each year in June, students board buses and planes bound for Washington, D.C. The action-filled agenda affords countless opportunities to explore the vibrant capital city, from its grand memorials, museums and monuments to the political figures charged with running the federal government. Highlights include meeting with their elected representatives in the U.S. House and Senate to discuss the process of government and issues of the day and increasing their knowledge of cooperative electric utilities and American history.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been a joint effort of local electric co-ops such as Holston Electric Cooperative, the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association for more than 40 years.

Being selected for the Washington Youth Tour is an eye-opening experience for the contest winners. "You have no idea how

much I appreciate this wonderful trip," said Elisha Wilder of Bulls Gap. "Going to Washington really changed my perspective on life!"

Michael Sandidge of Rogersville said, "I was honored to have been selected from Cherokee High School and excited about the opportunity to participate in Youth Tour. Like many people have said before, it truly was the trip of a lifetime and one I will never forget."

Even experienced travelers like Volunteer High School teacher Ramona Invidiato were amazed at the opportunities included in Youth Tour. "I still can't believe how terrific the kids were, how wonderful the cooperative personnel were and how productive and constructive this whole experience was," she stated.



**First District Congressman David Davis meets with his young constituents while they were in Washington on the Youth Tour. From left are Holston EC Member Services Director Jenny Lawson, Michael Sandidge, Emily Banks, Kayla Williams, Rep. Davis, Elisha Wilder, Heather Fultz, Amanda West and Volunteer High School teacher Ramona Invidiato. Davis applauded the students for their achievements in the writing competition and further encouraged them to get involved in their hometowns and to be positive influences in their communities.**

### ON THE COVER

From left are Jenny Lawson, Amanda West, Kayla Williams, Michael Sandidge, Elisha Wilder, Heather Fultz, Emily Banks and Ramona Invidiato.



**The opportunity to fly home from Washington, D.C., is an exciting new experience for many of the contest winners. From left are Emily Banks, Elisha Wilder, Kayla Williams, Heather Fultz, Amanda West, Michael Sandidge and Ramona Invidiato.**



**Thomas Jefferson's home, Monticello, located near Charlottesville, Va., is the first site the Youth Tour participants get to visit. Students always rate the estate tour as one of their favorite activities. From left are Jenny Lawson, Holston EC member services director; students Elisha Wilder, Heather Fultz, Kayla Williams, Emily Banks, Amanda West and Michael Sandidge; and Ramona Invidiato, Volunteer High School teacher.**

While in Washington, Tennessee's group saw historic monuments and memorials, explored the museums of the Smithsonian Institution and toured the homes of former presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Other stops included Arlington National Cemetery, where the group laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns, the Washington National Cathedral and the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Students also enjoyed seeing a performance of "Shear Madness" at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Later in the tour, Tennessee's Youth Tour contingent posed for photos with Sens. Lamar Alexander and Bob Corker on the steps of the Capitol, which was followed by a breakfast with Tennessee's House representatives in the Rayburn House Office Building where they discussed political issues and current events.

In addition to taking in the sights and sounds of the nation's capital, all the state groups convened for National Youth Day on June 16 to learn from public figures and other inspirational speakers. This year's Youth Day agenda included Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic medalist and two-time wheelchair basketball world champion. Schlappi shares his inspiring message for every American, young or old: "Just because you can't stand up doesn't mean you can't stand out." As president of Mike Schlappi Communications, he spreads that word to audiences ranging from students to chief executive officers, from rookies to Olympic champions and from small gatherings to major conventions.

The students were also treated to an amazing portrayal of a very influential United States Senator who authored the laws creating the Ten-



**From left are Ramona Invidiato, Emily Banks, Kayla Williams, Michael Sandidge, Heather Fultz, Elisha Wilder, Amanda West and Jenny Lawson in front of the Washington National Cathedral. Each year, students take hundreds of photos there, trying to capture the beauty and magnificence of this immense treasure.**



**Standing on the steps of the Supreme Court Building gives students the opportunity to reflect on some of the decisions handed down by the court justices over the past 200 years. From left are Amanda West, Kayla Williams, Michael Sandidge, Emily Banks, Elisha Wilder and Heather Fultz.**

nessee Valley Authority and Rural Electrification Act in the early 1930s. Former Nebraska State Sen. David Landis tells the story of the late U.S. Sen. George W. Norris of Nebraska, in character, explaining the formation of and the politics surrounding the creation of electric cooperatives and the Rural Electrification Act.

Since 1964, the nation's cooperative electric utilities have sponsored more than 40,000 high school juniors and seniors for visits to their U.S. congressional delegations, energy and grassroots government education sessions and sightseeing in Washington. NRECA is the national service organization representing the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provide electric service to 42 million people in 47 states. For more information, please go to <http://www.youthtour.coop>.



# 'Electric Cooperatives: Energizing Our Communities'

Holston Electric Cooperative's 2008 Washington Youth Tour grand prize-winning short story

By Katie Styke, Cherokee High School

Playing games is a Friday night tradition at the Hook house, and Wyatt and Lindsay were playing "Hometown Life" with their father, Brian.

"Study for exams; miss next turn.' Not again," whined 10-year-old Wyatt after counting his spaces. "Why do I always lose turns?"

"Because you love to help me win," Lindsay, Wyatt's 7-year-old sister, said as she leaned over to give him a hug.

"You're really weird," Wyatt answered while pushing her away.

"Wyatt, that wasn't very nice. Apologize to your sister, please," said their father.

"I'm sorry, Lindsay," Wyatt said with an insincere tone. The argument ended abruptly because Lindsay impatiently rolled the dice.

"Look, Daddy, my card says 'Just married.' I think I'll name my new husband Connor," Lindsay said.

"Why's that?" her father asked.

"Because Connor's my boyfriend, silly." Brian laughed at his daughter's remark as he rolled the dice for his turn. After moving the 11 spaces, he became the leader in the game.

"Daddy, you can't be in front of me. Remember," Lindsay said authoritatively.

"Yes, I can because I want to beat you," Brian replied.

"You can, but only if you land on something important. What did you land on, Daddy?" asked Lindsay.

Brian read his chosen card: "'Help the local cooperative energize the community by conducting safety programs in area schools. Community service requires that all players donate \$10,000 to your cause.'"

"Daddy, that's not important. Go back."

"Lindsay, the cooperative is very important. It does a lot for our community. It sponsors the lake cleanup, recruits new businesses and even sponsors an annual meeting and barbecue."

"But, Daddy, I don't even know what a co-op-er-at-ive is."

"Well, when your grandparents were kids, just like you, electricity was only available in the big cities because privately owned electric companies could not expect big profits in rural areas. Then, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Tennessee Valley Authority Act and later established the Rural Electrification Administration, which gave farmers the chance to bring electricity to their areas at a lower cost."

"Wow, that's a lot of information to take in," Wyatt said.

"I know," said Brian, "but the important part is that these farmers organized cooperatives all over Tennessee's rural areas."

"Farmers knew how to do that?"

"Sure, they just applied the same principles connected to their local farmers' cooperatives. Each cooperative is owned by its cus-

tomers and is not-for-profit. The business only charges what is necessary to pay the energy supplier, maintain its equipment and pay employees. Just as important as getting electricity to homes and businesses, however, electric cooperatives are known for giving back to the community."

"How?" Lindsay asked inquisitively.

"The cooperative provides a free meal and entertainment for all its customers at the annual meeting and helps the 4-H Club by paying them to serve the food. The cooperative also has a Project Help Fund that helps families who get into financial difficulty and cannot pay their electric bill."

"Wow! They really do a lot. How do you know all this stuff?"

"Each month we get a magazine that the cooperatives put together. It has all the recent news and events of the cooperative."

Lindsay left the room and returned shortly with something in her hands. "Is this it, Daddy?" Lind-

say asked.

"Yes, it is. Come here and let me read something to you." He opened the magazine and turned to the photo of the creative writing contest winner.

"What did he win?"

"A free, weeklong trip to Washington, D.C."

"But who paid for it?" Lindsay asked.

"The cooperative did."

"Is that one way they give back?"

"Yes, it is, Lindsay."

"Now that you see how important a cooperative is and all it does to energize the community, can I stay in front of you?"

"OK, Daddy. You're right. The cooperative really is important."

The game continued. Wyatt and Lindsay began arguing over who would buy what property, but Brian didn't care. He enjoyed spending time with his family. As he watched them bicker and fight, a smile appeared on his face.

"Why are you smiling, Dad?" asked Wyatt, who had quit fighting with his sister long enough to see the odd expression on his father's face.

"You guys just make me laugh," Brian said.

"Oh, OK," Wyatt said hesitantly.

"It looks like it's your turn, Wyatt."

Wyatt rolled the dice and the game continued until Lindsay finally had her win. Then it was off to bed for the kids.

When Brian finally laid down for bed that night, an overwhelming sense of accomplishment flooded over him, and his smile re-emerged. He was glad he had the opportunity to teach his kids about the cooperative that not only energizes homes but also energizes our community.



Katie Styke