

Along these **LINES**

MAY/JUNE 2022



2022 Essay Contest Results

DEMCO selected 11 finalists in the 2022 Essay Contest. Front row from left are Mollie Bennett, Elisabeth Hong, Haley Drago, Winsome Brass, Alexandra Fertitta and Gregory Crain. Back row from left are Emillie' Williams, Victor Costa, Kennedy Hughes, Shelly Jones and Victoria Winter. *Story on page 21.*

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Investing in Tomorrow's Leaders Today

Most have heard the message about how electric cooperatives brought power to rural America. It changed lives forever.



Addie Armato

Rural electrification saved women time when it came to doing mundane chores and housekeeping. It provided opportunities for education and efficiencies, liberating those tied to the daily task of keeping the farm running.

But that happened 90 years ago. What makes cooperatives relevant today?

Today's average member-consumer is not interested in success stories from days of old. Instead, they want to know, "What's in it for me?"

They want to know the lights will come on when they flip the switch. They expect us to be good stewards of our communities and environment, provide affordable power, assist them with saving money on their energy bills, and ensure safety for them and their loved ones.

Our Louisiana electric cooperatives

work every day to provide affordable, reliable, safe electricity. We also recognize the importance of investing in our future.

Your Louisiana electric cooperatives care about their communities and the people they serve. Today's youth are tomorrow's home and business owners, employees, directors and elected officials.

That is why our Louisiana electric cooperatives offer numerous youth educational programs such as mini-grants, scholarships, sponsoring 4-H and FFA, and our marquee program: the Louisiana Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Since 1957, electric cooperatives across the United States have sent more than 50,000 high school juniors to our nation's capital to see our government in action.

After a two-year hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Louisiana electric cooperatives are excited about the return of the trip. Students from across the state will participate in a weeklong leadership training while sightseeing in our nation's capital this summer. While in Washington, D.C., they will meet up with almost 2,000 other electric cooperative delegates.

Some of our greatest success stories from Youth Tour have been delegates who ran for office, become directors at

their local electric cooperatives, or were accepted into one of the United States military academies and now serve our great nation. We have had students become educators, journalists, business leaders, inventors and medical professionals.

In this issue of our magazine, we highlight one of the newest youth programs created to reach high school freshmen and sophomores. The DEMCO Youth Cooperative Ambassador Program is in its inaugural year, but has the potential to be a model for youth leadership across the state.

Every electric cooperative believes in providing educational opportunities for students in their service areas. While each cooperative offers a variety of programs, all fundamentally support creating well-educated, cooperative-minded, community service-oriented citizens.

Louisiana electric cooperatives are proud to foster leadership and learning opportunities for our young members. We are not only giving back to those we serve, but are investing in tomorrow's leaders.

We hope to instill cooperative values in our youth and have students build upon those values, with a goal of one day having them return to our communities as the next generation of leaders. ■

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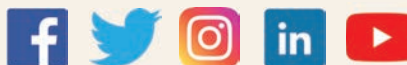
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Reaching Our Future Leaders

Youth ambassadors learn about the heart and soul of co-ops

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Mission

DEMCO is focused on enhancing the quality of life for members by providing safe, reliable and competitively priced energy services.

Volume 37, Issue 3

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Manager's Report

Randy Pierce
CEO & General Manager

I've written about the Seven Cooperative Principles before, and I want to highlight two in particular: Education and Concern for Community.

The principle of education has many facets. DEMCO not only provides ongoing professional training and development for our employees, but we also provide a range of programs for the youth in the communities we serve. DEMCO employees have a heart for service. That's why we do what we do.

During the school year, we provide bucket truck and "Fire in the Wire" demonstrations as well as an electric safety magic show. We offer two scholarship opportunities for 12th-grade students (page 8), host an annual essay contest for 11th-grade students (pages 20-21), and this year we started a new program for 9th and 10th-grade students—the DEMCO Youth Cooperative Ambassadors Program (page 12).

Whenever we invest in our youth, we invest in our future. I hope you enjoy learning more about these programs in this issue.

The other principle I want to highlight is Concern for Community. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, any margins of the co-op are invested back into the co-op or into the communities we serve. We do not pay shareholders like for-profit companies.

Another nonprofit arm of the co-op, the DEMCO Foundation, was established in 1997 to help members in need. I'm so pleased to report the DEMCO Foundation reached a new milestone in March, granting over \$6 million to assist DEMCO members through hardship situations. DEMCO takes great pride in the DEMCO Foundation, as it provides a mechanism to give back to the community. DEMCO members are eligible to apply for funding of up to \$2,500 per calendar year. Visit DEMCO.org/Community to learn more.

DEMCO takes pride in being locally owned and operated. We know that investing in our employees and our community means we are developing our own—in fact, 60% of DEMCO employees are DEMCO members. Another important distinction is that we are managed by a group of members elected by the membership to represent them (page 5).

Local service, local direction, local representation. DEMCO values the importance of educating our own and continually showing up for the ones we serve—not only by providing electricity but also by investing time and energy into our people and communities.

Annual Meeting DEMCO Headquarters

16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, LA 70739

Saturday, May 14, 10 a.m.

For more information, visit DEMCO.org.



Daniel Berthelot



Glenn DeLee



Kevin Beauchamp



Melissa Dufreche



Randy Lorio

DEMCO Board Representatives Reelected to Serve Members

Five incumbent DEMCO directors were reelected to three-year terms.

Danny Berthelot was elected to the DEMCO Board of Directors in 1989, representing Livingston parish district 9. He serves as Board President, and as such, he is the principal executive officer of DEMCO and ex-officio member on all DEMCO board committees. Berthelot also serves as a board director for DEMCO Energy Services, DEMCO Foundation, and Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives; and as Louisiana director to NRECA board, March 2022–2024.

Glenn DeLee was appointed to the DEMCO Board of Directors in August 2010, representing East Feliciana parish district 6. He is currently a member of the Purchasing Committee.

Kevin Beauchamp was elected to the DEMCO Board of Directors in May 2019, representing West Feliciana parish. He serves on the Finance Committee.

Melissa Milton Dufreche was appointed to the DEMCO Board of Directors in July 2019, representing Tangipahoa parish district 12. She serves on the Operations Committee.

Randy Lorio was appointed to the DEMCO Board of Directors in 1994, representing East Baton Rouge parish district 3. He currently serves as vice president of the board, chairperson of the purchasing committee, and member of the board governance committee.

Each expressed their gratitude to the cooperative’s members for their support. ■



Official Notice: Annual Meeting

In accordance with the provisions of Article III, section 3.03 of the Bylaws of DEMCO, notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the members of the corporation will be held at DEMCO’s Headquarters Facility, 16262 Wax Road, Greenwell Springs, Louisiana, Saturday, May 14, 2022.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. In accordance with Article IV, section 4.05 of the corporation Bylaws, notice is hereby given that the following persons have been nominated by the official nominating committee to fill the five positions on the Board of Directors in which vacancies occur this year.

By Nomination:
Randy Lorio, District 3
Glenn DeLee, District 6
Daniel Berthelot, District 9
Melissa Dufreche, District 12
Kevin Beauchamp, District 13

Mike Guidry, Former Louisiana Co-op CEO and NRECA President, Dies at 73

By Derrill Holly

Mike Guidry, a passionate advocate for affordable and reliable electricity who built a global reputation as a leader, mentor and teacher of electric cooperative executives, died March 31 after a long battle with cancer. He was 73.

Guidry, who spent more than two decades as CEO of South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association, served 14 years on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association board, holding the post of president in 2011-2012.

“Mike’s leadership and impact on the cooperative network was far-reaching and is sustained to this day,” said Jim Matheson, NRECA’s CEO. “His personality and ability to connect with people of all walks was the foundation of his success and will be his legacy for many in our membership.”

While Guidry spent decades working on behalf of SLECA and the co-ops of Louisiana, his influence on electric co-ops nationally and globally were hallmarks of his long career.

“Mike always saw electric co-ops as being more about the people they serve than the power they provide,” said Mel Coleman, CEO of North Arkansas Electric Cooperative and a past president of NRECA. “He always put members first in every decision he was involved in making. He was behind formation of the resolution review committee, which still ensures that every resolution guiding electric co-ops and their national organization supports and reflects the goals and desires of our members.”

Guidry, a Louisiana native, spent 23 years with Houma-based SLECA. In that role, he helped guide the co-op through rebuilding portions of its system after numerous hurricanes.

“During Hurricane Gustav in 2009, he ran out in 130 mph winds to inspect the damage to our fueling station in the rear of our building because the canopy had blown off. You couldn’t hold him back,” said Joe Ticheli, current SLECA manager and a former staffer at the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives.

Ticheli first met Guidry in the 1980s.

Working together on state and regional co-op issues, the two developed a lasting friendship. When SLECA needed to fill a member services post, Guidry offered Ticheli the job.

“Someone asked me why I was moving from Baton Rouge to a small town like Houma, and I responded with two words: ‘Mike Guidry,’” Ticheli said.

Guidry’s people skills and proud Cajun heritage were part of his professional and personal style. He would speak in French to old Cajuns who dropped into co-op offices and once delivered part of an opening statement at a congressional hearing on behalf of NRECA in Cajun French, mesmerizing House committee members.

In his travels abroad representing NRECA in Latin America



Louisiana’s Mike Guidry, center, accepts the Clyde T. Ellis Award at the 2018 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association annual meeting from NRECA CEO Jim Matheson, left, and Phil Carson, then-president of NRECA. The award honors individuals for exemplary contributions that promote the principles and progress of rural electrification and the development and use of national resources. PHOTO BY NRECA

and Asia, he easily transitioned from working with foreign dignitaries to getting out and meeting ordinary people.

“We were sitting on the veranda of our hotel room overlooking a plaza,” recalled Martin Lowery, a former NRECA senior executive vice president who accompanied Guidry on a visit to Managua, Nicaragua. “Mike decided that his combination of Spanish and Cajun French was good enough for conversation. Mike walked into the plaza and spent at least an hour talking to folks.”

Lowery said Guidry’s devotion to international cooperative development will be a hallmark of his legacy. When Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines in 2013, NRECA International helped raise funds, assisting 10 co-ops with recovery and reconstruction. The two visited the storm ravaged nation.

“Mike and I toured the devastated areas and at the end of the tour we stood at a church where entire families had been buried in mass graves,” Lowery said. “It was an intense experience. Mike was moved by it as a man of faith who had great empathy for people.”

Guidry’s enthusiasm for the co-op network helped forge lasting relationships with younger staffers who benefited from his mentoring.

“Mike lived the cooperative principles every day,” said Addie Armato, CEO of the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives. “He was especially committed to the education principle, whether it be Youth Tour, safety training or, as we saw after his retirement, director and employee training.”

Armato first learned of Guidry’s commitment to community when she escorted the Louisiana Electric Youth Tour delegation

to Washington as a young staffer from New Roads-based Pointe Coupee Electric Membership Corp. in 2004.

“He would call us every year to check on us, regularly,” Armato remembers. “He wanted to know how the trip was going, and he would ask about the weather in D.C.”

Guidry was NRECA’s Louisiana director when hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated the region in 2005. He was vocal, visible and active during the lengthy recovery period that followed.

“He made sure that everyone knew we were going to build back better and stronger but, more importantly, we had not lost our ‘joie de vie’ (joy of life),” Armato said. “Throughout his life he served his cooperative, the great state of Louisiana and our cooperative nation well.”

Cooperation among cooperatives and collaboration with co-op leaders made Guidry popular with co-op executives, elected directors and industry association staff.

“Mike had the ability to listen, and because he loved people, he was always willing to hear all sides,” said Wally Wolski, who preceded Guidry as NRECA president.

Wolski, who represented Wyoming throughout their shared years on the NRECA board, called Guidry his “best friend.” When illness prevented Guidry from attending NRECA’s PowerXchange with his wife in March, Wolski arranged a virtual session for Guidry with 30 of the meeting’s attendees.

“Mike was a teacher who continued to lead director and executive training sessions for NRECA even after he left the board,” Wolski said. “His instruction and commitment to the cooperative business model will continue to have an impact on our program for years to come.”

Guidry will be remembered as one of the outstanding leaders of the electric cooperative program, said Glenn English, former NRECA CEO.

“One of his greatest talents was his ability to bridge the gap that sometimes exists between managing directors and elected directors to pursue benefits for co-op members,” English said.

He cited Guidry’s ability to work with diverse groups and relate to varied interests and priorities as factors of his successful leadership as board president.

“Mike understood that the foundation of our program is mainly the members,” English said. “His willingness to focus on the needs of those last families at the end of the line really mattered to him, and he made sure it mattered to all of us.”

Guidry took co-op business seriously, but he was also gregarious, outgoing and known for his good humor and having fun. His love of LSU football and the NFL’s New Orleans Saints sparked spirited debates with other directors, and his appreciation for Cajun cooking prompted pop-up buffets at several co-op gatherings distant from Louisiana over the years.

“Mike not only loved a good burger, but he also loved a great road show and sharing his Cajun heritage was something we all enjoyed,” English said.

Guidry is survived by his wife of 50 years, Candace Ann Bush Guidry, and a daughter, Lindsey A. Guidry. ■

Working for Our Members



ALEC’s Addie Armato, left, and Aaron Graham, right, teamed up with Edward O’Brien of the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, center, to discuss disaster response and available state resources during the Fractured Freeze Disaster Response Exercise in Arlington, Virginia.



ALEC’s Aaron Graham spoke about mutual aid, emergency response and disaster recovery during Texas Electric Cooperative’s 76th Annual Loss Control Conference and Exhibit Show.



Louisiana electric cooperative representatives recently attended the National Rural Electric Cooperative’s PowerXchange in Tennessee. They heard from NRECA CEO Jim Matheson and other speakers about how to provide reliable electricity in today’s ever-changing market while navigating global issues such as workforce development, climate change initiatives, material shortages and supply chain issues.

What is the DEMCO Scholarship Program? →

One-year scholarships of \$1,250 for each of two consecutive semesters awarded to member-students in a random drawing at the DEMCO annual membership meeting each May.



For eligibility requirements and to enter, visit DEMCO.org.
DEADLINE is May 9, 2022

[/DEMCOLouisiana](https://www.facebook.com/DEMCOLouisiana)



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Scholarship Program

The DEMCO Foundation will award several scholarships in the amount of \$1,250.

Deadline to submit applications is June 16, 2022

For eligibility requirements and to enter visit DEMCO.org/Community/DEMCO-Foundation-Scholarship-Program

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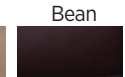
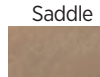
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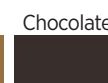
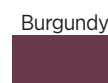
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It's About Staying Local



Shalisa Roland

By Cheré Coen

When Shalisa Roland starts cooking, it's all about the ingredients.

"I love to cook, always loved to cook," said Shalisa, director of public relations at Visit Lake Charles. "I start with good ingredients. I love fresh farm-to-table meals. It can really make a dynamic meal excel, and you're contributing to your community."

The Nacogdoches native recently moved to Lake Charles to begin work for the tourism agency. Before that, she spent a few years "up north" as the public relations and digital content manager and 20x49.com blogger for the Shreveport-Bossier Convention and Tourist Bureau.

"I haven't had time to discover everything in Lake Charles, but I can't wait," Shalisa says. "I'm having fun diving into these local plates."

Her favorite dish is a Southern standard—one that hails from Charleston, South Carolina, and the low country. But it was in Shreveport she first tasted grits and fell in love with shrimp and grits.

"I'm embarrassed to say it was at the Waffle House," Shalisa says of her first grits experience. "I thought, 'These are so good, but I can make it better.'"

She began sampling shrimp and grits dishes from across the Shreveport-Bossier

City area, namely Abby Singer Bistro at the Robinson Film Center, Another Broken Egg Café and Marilyn's Place, among others.

When it was time to create her version, she knew where to look: locally, of course.

Shalisa starts with stone-ground grits from Whole Foods, since she couldn't find similar grits from a local vendor. She uses whipping cream and pepperjack cheese from Morell Dairy Farms in Mooringsport—a family farm run by Randy and Ann Morell.

"Randy went to LSU and taught there, too," Shalisa says. "He's more like a dairy chemist. Plus, I pick up his milk. So creamy, so good."

In olive oil, she pan sautées jumbo Gulf shrimp—acquired at farmers markets—and the "holy trinity" of celery, onions and green peppers.

She incorporates a little garlic, salt, pepper and a dash of Slap Yo' Mama.

It's ready when the shrimp turn pink.

Shalisa's shrimp and grits comes with an extra layer, however. She likes to incorporate mustard and turnip greens from Chef Hardette Harris of Us Up North Kitchen in Shreveport—a dish so delicious it was named North Louisiana's official meal and is one of only two official state meals designated in the United States. ■

ADOBE STOCK PHOTO BY COOPERR

Shrimp N' Grits With a North Louisiana Kick

Grits

- 2½ cups water
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 cup yellow stone-ground grits
- 2 tablespoons Morell's Dairy Farm butter
- 2 cups Morell's Dairy Farm milk
- ¾ cup pepperjack cheese
- Ground pepper

Shrimp

- Two pounds shelled, deveined shrimp with tail off, frozen
- ½ yellow onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 tablespoons Morell's Dairy Farm butter
- Everything Seasoning from RNL Cookery Corner
- Ground pepper
- Cayenne pepper (optional)

Extra Layer

- 1 quart of frozen old-fashioned greens prepared by Chef Hardette Harris at Us Up North Kitchen

Bring a medium sauce pot filled with 2½ cups of water to a boil. Gradually whisk in the grits. Continue to whisk until pot content thickens. Turn heat to low to simmer; add milk and butter. Cover with the lid slightly askew. Cook, stirring



often, for about an hour until desired consistency is achieved. Grits tend to stick to the bottom of the pan in the beginning, so check and stir often. If more liquid is needed, add up to ½ cup more milk.

While the grits are cooking, thaw shrimp in a large bowl under a trickle of cold running water. Shrimp should be

completely thawed after approximately 10 minutes.

In a large saucepan, melt butter and combine onion and garlic. Cook on low heat until tender. Add shrimp, Everything Seasoning, ground pepper and cayenne pepper. Cook just until shrimp are pink with a golden edge, one to two minutes per side. Once shrimp is cooked, remove it from the stove to prevent overcooking.

In a large saucepan, add vegetable broth and bring to a boil, then lower to low-medium heat. Add frozen greens to the broth and cover with lid until greens are completely thawed and come to a boil. Turn off the stove.

Fold cheese into grits. Add salt and pepper to desired taste. Layer a spoonful of grits into a shallow bowl and top with greens, then shrimp. Drizzle a ladleful of juices from the greens over the bowl. Serve immediately.

Chef Hardette Harris's Mustard and Turnip Greens

- 6 pounds or 4 bunches fresh mustard/turnip greens mix
- 4 cups water
- 1 to 2 large ham hocks, smoked
- 3 medium neck bones, smoked
- 4 ounces salt pork, cut into ¼-inch pieces
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tablespoons seasoned salt
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cover smoked meats with water and boil until the neck bone is tender but not falling apart, about 45 to 50 minutes.

Remove the thick part of the stem and roughly cut or tear



the leaves into 2-inch pieces. Wash thoroughly three times in saltwater and drain.

Remove meats from water and set aside. If desired, trim fat from the ham hocks and discard. Skim water for excess fat and add washed greens, onions and garlic.

Boil greens for about 20 minutes, then add all meat. Reduce heat and cook on low for 20 to 25 minutes to desired tenderness.

Add spices and adjust seasonings, if necessary.

* If using collard greens, adjust total cooking time to 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Photo and recipe posted at <http://louisianafirstfoundation.com> and reprinted with permission.

Reaching Future Leaders

Youth ambassadors learn about the heart and soul of co-ops

By Pamela A. Keene

At age 14, DeVone Holiday Jr. is already thinking about his future. He is dual-enrolled at Northshore Technical College in Greensburg and serves as president of his ninth grade class at St. Helena College and Career Academy, maintaining a 4.0 GPA.

As the oldest child of DeVone Sr. and Kimberly Holiday, he aspires to become a mechanical engineer.

“My great-aunt, Katrina Holiday, who is a safety analyst for the Federal Aviation Administration in Washington, has always encouraged me to believe that I can do anything I set my mind to,” DeVone says. “The Youth Cooperative Ambassador Program is another opportunity to learn leadership, contribute to the community and have a voice for young people.”

Ninth grader Abrielle Steele, the daughter of Lori and Mike Steele of Denham Springs, has a heart to help people. During the 2016 floods in Livingston Parish, she used her own money to buy gently used doll clothes for other children. Five years later, she supported emergency personnel by babysitting the children of law enforcement and volunteers who joined forces to restore power during Hurricane Ida.

Abrielle, 14, continues to embrace chances to learn about service to others. She is considering becoming an attorney.

“Being part of the Youth Cooperative Ambassador Program has given me a different perspective of people’s lives,



especially in light of emergencies,” says Abrielle, a student at Live Oak High School. “The youth ambassador program has given me even more insight into ways to help people and learn more about what DEMCO does for the community.”

DeVone and Abrielle are two of the seven-member inaugural class of the Youth Cooperative Ambassador Program, sponsored by DEMCO for high school freshmen and sophomores. Others are Shawn Comminey II, Dutchtown High School; Yu’Toria Jones, Zachary High School; Aaron Kelley and Brennan Michelli, Central High School; and London Sanford, Northeast High School.

“We received many outstanding applications from students in our seven-parish service area, and the selection was very competitive,” says Chanon Martin, DEMCO community relations specialist and ambassador program manager. “Workshops, seminars, peer group activities and a community service project help enhance leadership, problem-solving skills and interpersonal relationships.”

The leadership and education initiative is free to participants, chosen from written applications and letters of recommendation by members of the community.

Several themes for the weekly meetings helped students learn about the co-op business model and governance, co-op employment and types of jobs, plus

community involvement.

“A cooperative does more than provide electricity,” says Addie Armato, CEO of the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives. “We truly power the communities we serve, and these youth ambassadors learn that through their participation in this program.”

At the first meeting, each student received a program-branded shirt to wear to each session. The introduction packet included instructions for a virtual scavenger hunt. During subsequent evening meetings, interactive and icebreaking activities helped students quickly learn about each other.

At one gathering, students met with DEMCO employees for speed meetings. These brief face-to-face sessions gave students a chance to dig deeper into the roles of co-op jobs and possible future employment opportunities.

Students also took a behind-the-scenes look at the co-op, touring the call center, control room, engineering and mapping departments.

The final two sessions focused on community service and emergency preparedness—an underlying theme of the Youth Cooperative Ambassadors Program.

“Being prepared for any emergency is critical and it is everyone’s responsibility,” says David Latona, vice president of communications and governmental affairs. “We all need to do our part. Including sessions



ABOVE: Youth Cooperative Ambassador Program students visit DEMCO's control room to observe how the co-op monitors systemwide outages and restoration progress. **LEFT:** Students and their family members watch an electrical safety demonstration. PHOTOS BY JAMES MACIAS

about the importance of emergency preparedness helps our youth ambassadors understand how they can play a role in helping in times of crisis.”

Students assembled first-aid/disaster kits for community members. Each package contained a flashlight and extra batteries, a container for medications, a prescription list and a compilation of emergency phone numbers. During the final week, they distributed the kits.

“The hands-on activities really resonated with these ninth and 10th graders,” Addie says. “They learned meaningful

ways to connect with the community, build teamwork and increase their leadership abilities.”

For DEMCO, the Youth Cooperative Ambassador Program is part of a larger initiative that begins with kindergartners and continues through high school.

The co-op provides books to children from birth through age 5 in St. Helena Parish from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and offers safety education, beginning in preschool.

Through an essay contest, high school juniors are selected for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour. High school seniors are eligible for academic scholarships.

“Enrichment programs and scholarships target the next generation of co-op leaders,” says Randy Pierce, DEMCO CEO and general manager. “We know that when we invest in youth, we invest in our future.” ■

Meet the Ambassadors



**Shawn Comminey II,
Baton Rouge**

Dutchtown High School, 10th grade. Student council; class historian; DE&I; Kappa League; basketball team; Project Excel with 100 Black Men. Plans to major in sports medicine.



**DeVone Holiday Jr.,
Greensburg**

St. Helena College and Career Academy, ninth grade. 4-H; St. Helena HYPE Youth Coalition; class president; football team. Aspires to become a mechanical engineer.



**Yu'Toria Jones,
Zachary**

Zachary High School, ninth grade. Liturgical dance team co-captain; makes jewelry. Aspires to become an OB/GYN.



Aaron Kelley, Pride

Central High School, ninth grade. Youth group leader at Journey Church; golf. Plans to become a mechanical engineer.



**Brennan Michelli,
Greenwell Springs**

Central High School, ninth grade. Sports media/broadcasting and lighthouse teams. Plans to study engineering.



**London Sanford,
Zachary**

Northeast High School, ninth grade. Junior ROTC; Greater Philadelphia Baptist Church volunteer. Plans to attend Southern University and A&M College.



**Abrielle Steele,
Denham Springs**

Live Oak High School, ninth grade. Reach Club; LOPA volunteer; Sheriff's Christmas Crusade. College choice undetermined.

Feeding Co-op Relationships

Members of the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives showed their appreciation for Louisiana legislators and elected officials by cooking signature dishes for the Taste of Louisiana Cookout at the Pentagon Barracks on March 28.

ALEC co-op members and elected officials look forward to the annual event, which features signature dishes from each electric cooperative:

- Crawfish etouffee with rice and pecan pies, Beaugard Electric.
- Boiled crawfish, corn and potatoes, DEMCO.
- Fried shrimp and frog legs, Jeff Davis Electric.
- Boiled shrimp with dipping sauce and raw oysters with crackers, SLECA.
- Fried catfish, coleslaw and hushpuppies, Washington-St. Tammany Electric.
- Pastalaya and dessert trays, ALEC.

The cooperatives highlighted positive things happening now.

“We recently negotiated the 1803 Cooperatives wholesale power contract,” says WSTE CEO Charles Hill. “This new deal is going to provide lower rates for our consumer-members as well as bring jobs to the state of Louisiana. We cannot do this kind of work without the support of our elected officials.”



WSTE’s Johnny Bruhl, left, who serves on ALEC’s Government Affairs Committee, and WSTE Director Glenn Magee, speak with Sen. Sharon Hewitt.

Louisiana’s electric cooperatives discussed key issues with legislators—namely, storm season reimbursement funds. SLECA directors Roger Dale DeHart and Brian Rivet touted the importance of Hurricane Ida recovery efforts and the need for Federal Emergency Management Agency-funded reimbursement.

“Our members were some of the hardest hit,” DeHart said. “They have lost homes and businesses. Now is not the time to forget about them.”

ALEC appreciates the time and effort its electric coopera-



Cooperative general managers gather during a break in the Taste of Louisiana Cookout. From left are Mike Heinen, Jeff Davis Electric; Randy Pierce, DEMCO; CEO Addie Armato, Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives; Charles Hill, Washington-St. Tammany; and Kevin Turner, Beaugard Electric.

tive members dedicated to make this event a success, and the elected officials who take time out of their busy schedules to attend the Taste of Louisiana appreciation dinner.

“Our partnership with our legislators is essential as we work together on the challenges that face our great state,” says ALEC President and BECi Director J.R. Hickman. “Our common goal is to make Louisiana the best it can be.” ■



WSTE employees Dalton Sumrall, Joe Wilson and Chad Angelo prepare fried fish.



Enjoying the event are, from left, Emily Romero, wife of Rep. Troy Romero; Dennis Glass, ALEC vice president and WSTE director; Mike Strain, commissioner of agriculture and forestry; Teddy Welch, former ALEC and BECi director; J.R. Hickman, ALEC president and BECi director; and Addie Armato, ALEC CEO.



ALEC’s Addie Armato, left, Sen. Beth Mizell and ALEC’s Keli Williams visit.



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ADOBE STOCK PHOTO BY SOLID PHOTOS

Living in the South is the best; ask anyone. The people are great, and the food is fantastic. But we do have a very long storm season.

In the spring, we experience severe weather systems that bring strong gusty winds, rain and the threat of tornadoes. And then there's hurricane season. Every year from June through November, we watch, wait, hope and pray to escape the impact of another hurricane.

Being inundated with storms means it is possible to begin to take for granted when a storm hit isn't severe or direct. We may become complacent, and taking chances when it comes to severe weather can have tremendous negative impacts.

Assemble a storm kit, and you'll be

prepared year-round. Include a battery-powered radio, flashlight, first-aid kit, battery-powered or wind-up clock, extra batteries, special needs items, an insulated cooler, and a list of important and emergency phone numbers.

Prepare for potential power outages and take action before the storm:

- If you or someone you know uses life-support equipment that requires electricity to operate, charge the battery before the storm, identify a location with emergency power capabilities and plan to go there during a prolonged outage. Contact your local health department or emergency management offices about shelters that can assist you during a prolonged outage. If you have a medical

emergency, call 911 or go to the hospital.

- Have an adequate supply of prescription medicines and any necessary infant supplies on hand.
- Develop an evacuation plan in case it's needed. Communicate the plan to your family. Include pets or livestock in your plan.
- Fuel your vehicles before the storm as a loss of power could affect gas stations.
- Consider having supplies handy for your propane or charcoal grill. Be sure to grill outdoors in well-ventilated areas for safety.
- Protect electronics by unplugging sensitive electronics. Use surge protectors. ■

For additional preparedness and safety resources, visit DEMCO.org/member-services/storm-center.

HURRICANE PREPARATION CHECKLIST



- 3-day supply of water & non-perishable food
- Spare clothing, blankets and pillows
- Toiletries, first-aid kit and prescription medicines
- Special items/food for babies and the elderly
- Special items for your pet including vaccination records, toys, food and a cage/crate
- Flashlights, portable radio and extra batteries
- Extra set of car keys, credit cards and cash
- Important documents kept in a waterproof container or watertight plastic bag
 - Identification, copy of birth certificate, marriage certificate and Social Security card
 - Insurance documents and medical records
 - Bank account numbers, online passwords and log-in information
 - Emergency contact list
- Emergency tools

Auto Pay Winners

DEMCO members enrolled in the Auto Pay Program are eligible to win a \$50 gift card!

To be eligible, sign up in your MyDEMCO account portal to Auto Pay your bill by bank draft, e-check, debit or credit card.

Four members are randomly selected and announced in the DEMCO Along these LINES magazine, published six times a year.

Congratulations to these members: Mary H., Rachel M., Nicholas T. and Virginia W.



Bad to the Bone

Full tang stainless steel blade with natural bone handle —now **ONLY \$79!**

The very best hunting knives possess a perfect balance of form and function. They're carefully constructed from fine materials, but also have that little something extra to connect the owner with nature.

If you're on the hunt for a knife that combines impeccable craftsmanship with a sense of wonder, the \$79 *Huntsman Blade* is the trophy you're looking for.

The blade is full tang, meaning it doesn't stop at the handle but extends to the length of the grip for the ultimate in strength. The blade is made from 420 surgical steel, famed for its sharpness and its resistance to corrosion.

The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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ADOBE STOCK IMAGE BY UNDREY



Victoria Winter, Haley Drago, Kennedy Hughes, Victor Costa, Alexandra Fertitta and Winsome Brass won the 45th annual DEMCO essay contest held earlier this year and will join the Louisiana contingent on the Youth Tour trip this summer.

Six Students Win Trip to D.C.

Six local high school students were announced as the 45th annual DEMCO essay contest winners: Victoria Winter, Haley Drago, Kennedy Hughes, Victor Costa, Alexandra Fertitta and Winsome Brass.

Each wins an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., this summer, where they will serve as DEMCO delegates at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour.

The students will join about 1,500 other Youth Tour participants from 43 states to learn more about electric cooperatives and gain insight into how their national government operates.

More than 300 students participated in the 2022 DEMCO essay contest representing schools in DEMCO's seven-parish service area: Ascension, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Livingston, St.

Helena, Tangipahoa and West Feliciana.

Winsome, Haley and Alexandra attend Central High School. Victor and Kennedy attend Zachary High School, and Victoria attends Winter Classical Academy Homeschool.

The five other finalists were Mollie Bennett of St. Amant High School, Gregory Crain of Denham Springs High School, and Elisabeth Hong, Shelly Jones and Emillie' Williams of West Feliciana High School.

"DEMCO prides itself on being a good citizen, and the annual essay contest is a great example of how we support area youth in the communities we serve," says DEMCO CEO and General Manager Randy Pierce.

During their summer visit to Washington, DEMCO student delegates

will join other Louisiana Youth Tour participants as they visit the U.S. Senate, U.S. House of Representatives, Supreme Court, National Archives, Arlington Cemetery, and many other historically significant buildings and landmarks.

"The essay contest provides so many learning opportunities for participating students to gain a better understanding of electric cooperatives as well as insight into how their national government operates," Randy says. "It's a wonderful annual event that demonstrates our commitment to co-op members, in education, and to the communities we serve."

DEMCO pioneered Louisiana's participation in the Rural Electric Youth Tour in 1978 when it sent the first students from Louisiana to Washington, D.C. ■

STATEWIDE NEWS



Jeff Davis Electric Cooperative Line Superintendent Kain Miller demonstrates his chain saw skills at the Louisiana Right-of-Way School in Baton Rouge.

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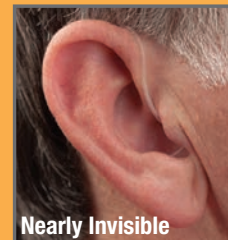
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