

Norris Electric *News*

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Norris Electric Cooperative

8543 N St Hwy 130
Newton, IL 62448

Phone: 618-783-8765
or **Toll-Free:**
1-877-783-8765

Report an Outage:
1-877-783-3221

Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday
7 a.m. – 5 p.m.

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Youth Tour opens minds and builds leaders *Local students represent Norris Electric in D.C.*

Every June, a select group of high school students from across Illinois leave their rural communities to spend a week taking in the historic sights and bustling energy of the nation's capital.

This year, 48 students sponsored by 25 Illinois electric and telephone cooperatives took part in the 2025 Youth Tour to visit Washington, D.C., held June 16 to 23, for an immersive weeklong experience designed to educate and inspire the next generation of cooperative and civic leaders.

Norris Electric Cooperative sponsored two students within its service territory. These students included Anna Probst and Eva Mette. In addition, Owen Ulm, son of Norris Electric's Payroll/HR Specialist Keri Ulm, attended Youth Tour through the Tootie Holmes Memorial Fund. Every year, the fund sponsors a child of an electric or telephone cooperative employee. The three joined more than 2,000 students representing 44 states for the annual event.

"This trip is so much more than sight-seeing," said Brooke Gross, member services manager and facilitator of youth programs at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. "It's about building relationships, learning leadership and showing that they have the power to shape their communities and futures."

Learning by doing

Central to the Youth Tour experience is the formation of a mock student-run cooperative called Chip 'n' Pop Co-op. Students began their journey at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) headquartered in Springfield, where the students selected a co-op board. The board later interviewed and selected a co-op manager.

Throughout the week, the co-op handled snack sales, decision-making and budgeting — giving participants a hands-on look at how cooperatives operate.

"Being part of a co-op helps students understand what makes a co-op

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Youth Tour continued from 18A

different,” said Gross. “It’s all about working together and making decisions that serve everyone — not just one person or company.”

From sobering visits to the Holocaust Memorial Museum and the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial to moments of laughter at the Museum of Illusions and team-building at Beat

are to live in America with the rights we have,” Mette said.

A trip that lasts a lifetime

An important component to the trip — the students voted for one of their peers to represent Illinois on the Youth Leadership Council (YLC). Those interested in becoming Illinois’ YLC representative filled out an application, and five were selected to give a speech in front of their peers.

Adams Telephone Co-Operative’s Micah Anderson was selected as the 2025-2026 YLC representative for Illinois. He will represent the state at national and state meetings and events in the year ahead.

The week concluded with a farewell dinner and dance, and by the time students returned home on June 23, many said they felt changed by the experience.

“My favorite part of Youth Tour was meeting new people and making lifelong friends,” Mette said. “I would like to say thank Norris Electric so much for sending me to D.C. It was an amazing experience.”

High school students who live within the service area of Norris Electric are eligible to participate in the annual program. To learn more about Youth Tour, go to youthtour.coop or facebook.com/ILYouthTour.



A full week of history

Over the course of the week, students visited historic landmarks including Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery and, for the first time in many years, had the opportunity to tour the White House, where the students caught a glimpse of President Donald Trump. They also toured the U.S. Capitol, strolled the National Mall, stood at the steps of the Supreme Court and explored the Smithsonian museums.

Midweek, students took part in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s Youth Day, where they joined hundreds of other teens from across the country to hear from national leaders and learn how to use their voices back home.

the Bomb, the Youth Tour experience was unforgettable.

“During my trip to D.C., I learned a lot about American history, and it gave me a reminder of how lucky we



Farm Progress Show returns to Decatur Aug. 26-28



The Farm Progress Show is back in Illinois this year, and we want to invite you there! The nation's largest outdoor farm event will once again be held at Progress City in Decatur Aug. 26-28. Look for the Illinois Touchstone Energy® Cooperative's exhibit located at "Lot 217" on Second Street, between Central Progress and East Progress Avenue, near Gates 7 and 8. Look for the big American flag hanging between two 60-foot electric poles.

Representatives from Norris Electric Cooperative and several other Illinois electric cooperatives will be on hand to share information



about cooperatives, safety, energy efficiency and much more. Be sure to catch Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Live Line Safety Demo and learn how electricity gets to your home, farm or business, and how to stay safe around electrical equipment. There will also be linemen on hand doing pole-climbing demonstrations on a 60-foot pole.

Stop by the booth and register for a chance to win a Lectric electric bike and climb in a bucket for a photo-op. Cooperative members who present their Co-op Connections card or show the Co-op Connections app on their device will receive a special gift.



Weather permitting, the Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon will be flying the American flag the first two mornings of the show.

For over 70 years, the Farm Progress Show has celebrated agriculture by bringing tradition and businesses together from all over. It is where people come to gather, meet, observe and learn. Major manufacturers roll out their newest offerings, and it is the best place to see what's next for agriculture. The show rotates annually between Decatur, Ill., and Boone, Iowa.

Alerts & Reminders

Norris Electric offers many ways to pay your bill, but did you know there are numerous ways to receive notifications regarding your account? Through the Alerts & Reminders option, you can receive a text or email for:

- ✓ Due Date Reminder
- ✓ Past Due Date Reminder
- ✓ Account Profile Change
- ✓ Returned Check Alert
- ✓ Payment Confirmation
- ✓ High Energy Usage Alert
- ✓ Outage Declared Alert
- ✓ Outage Restored Alert

Call our office to get set up to start receiving your alerts and reminders today!
877-783-8765

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Delete deceptive emails. If you receive an email that appears to be from your electric utility but you are unsure about it, delete it. Never click on a link, open an attachment or send a reply to an untrusted source. When in doubt, contact your utility directly to report suspected email scams.

Source: Utilities United Against Scams





Why is the power out?

Reasons for outages are not always obvious

Sometimes we might be left in the dark, literally and figuratively, when the power goes out. Often, the reason is obvious, when there is a storm, but other times, an outage may come out of the blue.

The length of time it takes to restore power will vary by the cause. Here are some of the most common causes your co-op might be facing.

- **Weather** — The most frequent culprit in power outages is Mother Nature. A heavy build-up of ice and snow on power lines, poles and equipment can bring them down. Wind also causes widespread damage, as do lightning strikes that damage equipment, transmission towers, wires and poles. Even hot weather can cause issues.
- **Trees** — During high winds, snow and ice, tree limbs can snap or entire trees can topple onto power lines.
- **Accidents** — A vehicle hitting a utility pole can break the pole and knock lines from their overhead perch. Excavation work can disturb buried electric service lines, so always call 811 before any gardening or digging project.
- **Animals** — Squirrels, snakes and other small animals and birds can climb on poles and electrical equipment, which may cause a short circuit or equipment to shut down.
- **Vandalism** — People shooting at insulators and transformers can cause power outages in rural areas. Thieves also steal copper wire and other pieces of electrical equipment. Both acts of vandalism can be extremely costly, even deadly.
- **Planned outages** — If an electric cooperative is performing maintenance or upgrading its equipment, it may need to temporarily turn off the power. The cooperative will usually try to notify consumers. This is why it's always a good idea to make sure your cooperative has your updated contact information. If you experience an outage, alert your co-op.

Not a good time to talk

When there's a power outage and you can see electric cooperative crews working nearby, it may be tempting to go out and ask about the outage and get repair estimates straight from the crew repairing the lines and restoring power to you or your neighbors.

But, stopping your car or truck on roads, or even walking to nearby electric cooperative crews is hazardous, especially when road conditions may already be treacherous with ice, snow or debris.

That advice also pertains to owners of property on which cooperative employees may be restoring power. It may be a natural tendency to approach the scene, but it makes it harder for crews to get their work done.

Source: Indiana Electric Cooperatives