

Something New is Coming!

We hope you'll sign up now to receive the new e-newsletter

To build relationships and stay connected with our members, it's important that we offer communication styles to meet all of our different members' expectations. So we've recently added an electronic newsletter to our communications mix.

This new e-newsletter will allow us to add links to news articles, videos and other online content for a more dynamic and interactive experience. This e-newsletter also offers flexibility with timing, and it will give us the ability to reach out quickly to our members, if need be.

Our e-newsletter will include industry updates, information about contests, scholarships and prizes, and energy-saving ideas and safety tips.

One important note: If you sign up for the newsletter, please know that we will never sell or share your contact information.

To start, the newsletter will go to all of the email addresses that we already have on file. For other members, signup is easy. To receive it, just go to wcec.org and click the signup link (located just above the Community Calendar, Energy Savings Center and Safety Tips tabs). Once you get it, also feel free to share it. There will be a link included in every email that others can click to sign up, too.

We plan to send the e-newsletter out on the first of every month, and we hope it will be something our members value.



We Are Moving!

WCEC's moving day is just around the corner. After a year of planning and construction, we expect the new WCEC headquarters to be open for business in mid-February. Even though it's just next door and at the same 501 S. Main St. address in Quitman, we can't wait to greet the first members in our new lobby. The opening of our new state-of-the-art headquarters also marks the closing and demolition of the last remaining portions of our old building.

Once we have moved, we'll close the existing single-lane drive-through window for the very last time. Demolition of the old WCEC headquarters will begin immediately, making room for the construction of the new double service lanes. We expect the construction to take about two months, so for a short time we'll be without a drive-through.

We apologize for any inconvenience this will cause, but we are confident that these growing pains will add significant benefits for years to come. For example, the new two-lane drive-through, in addition to allowing much quicker service, will also relieve congestion on Highway 37 with the new entrance from Horton Street.

In the interim, we'll have a drop box located in the new parking lot for payments. Payments can also be made in our office, at the Mobile Convenience Center, online at wcec.org or with our mobile bill-paying app. And SmartPower cards can be revalued at any of our nine kiosks and inside the new headquarters.

Thank you for your patience, and we look forward to continuing to serve you.



**Wishing all
WCEC members
an abundant,
healthy and
contented 2013.**

WCEC Announces \$4,000 Youth Video Contest

Wood County Electric Cooperative, in conjunction with Texas Co-op Power, announces the launch of the 2013 Co-op Teens Power Texas video contest. For the fourth consecutive year, Texas Co-op Power will award up to \$4,000 in cash prizes for winners of the competition.

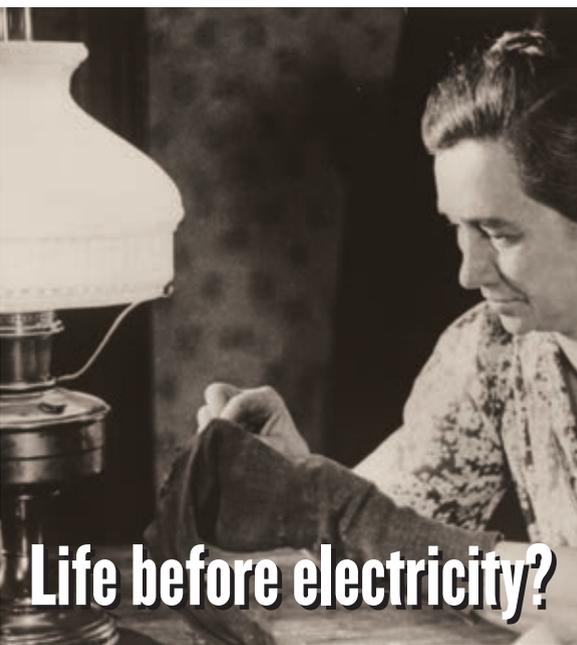
Students in grades six through 12 whose parents or legal guardians are current members of an electric cooperative in Texas can participate.

This year, students are asked to create a 5- to 10-minute video, interviewing someone who remembers the era of “when the lights came on” and when electricity was first connected to their home. The video will serve as an oral history of the time before the interviewee received electricity and how life was changed afterwards. All videos have the potential to be included in a full-length documentary to be produced by Texas Co-op Power at a later date.

The grand prizewinner will receive \$1,500 and will be profiled in Texas Co-op Power. If a school is involved as a sponsor of the first-place winner, it will be awarded \$1,000. The second-place winner, determined by the number of YouTube views, will receive \$500. Four runners-up will each receive \$250 for best performance in one of four judging categories: creativity, educational value, video editing and technical quality.

The contest deadline is April 1. Winners will be announced April 23.

For full contest rules and entry forms, go to TexasCoopPower.com, scroll down and click on the Co-op Teens Power Texas button on the right side of the page. See last year’s winning videos at youtube.com/TXCOOPOWER. For contest updates and tips, “Like” Texas Co-op Power on Facebook or follow on Twitter @Texas CoopPower.



Shoot an interview with someone who remembers those days. You could win

\$1500

TEXAS CO-OP POWER
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Life before electricity?

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The Beauty of a **Global Cause and Effect**

The theme of the 2012 GLOBE Science Festival in New Delhi, India, was, ‘Don’t just read about Science ... Do Science!’ Because the sixth-graders of Hawkins Middle School, led by their science teacher, Audra Edwards, embraced this attitude, a chain reaction of events led to an incredible adventure for four Hawkins High School students.



Freshmen Allyson Edwards and Madison Jaco, junior Lauren Haney and senior Elijah Turner recently had the honor of being the first team—and only team, thus far—to represent the United States at the science festival, where they met with students from India and Thailand to share data gathered in the process of conducting research for projects under GLOBE (Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment).

Audra Edwards explains how this trip of a lifetime transpired, saying it actually started with a recommendation from Assistant Superintendent Debi Crawford, who told her about the GLOBE Program and asked her to go to the initial training.

“I was very excited about it and it was a great opportunity for our school,” Edwards said. “The training was a week-

long event held on the University of Texas at Tyler campus as part of a larger initiative called “From Learning to Research,” funded by an Innovative Technology Experiences for Students and Teachers grant written in 2009 by Dr. Michael Odell from UT Tyler and Dr. Teresa Kennedy, International Division Director of the GLOBE Program Office in Boulder, Colorado. One of the benefits of this program is that for the students it offers lots of hands-on learning instead of just reading about science.”

After the training, she said, “The GLOBE Program partnership, coordinated by the Ingenuity Center at the UT Tyler, provided scientific equipment and it did not cost the school anything. We received two instrument shelters, a rain gauge, a global positioning system and other materials.”

Edwards incorporated the program into her 2011 sixth-grade class curriculum, where the students began using this equipment to collect data and readings relative to “bud bursting,” the phenomenon of leaves emerging at the beginning of the growing season. This work carried over into the 2012 school year, where students Harlie Conover, MaKayla Beene and MarKayla Lester continued the research. When asked about the project, Harlie said they studied the leaves on trees to “see how the colors are changing and when they are changing each month. And then we report to the international GLOBE database created by NASA.”

“We go outside and we get the temperatures for the last couple of days, and we check the rain gauge, and, we also check the clouds and the contrails,” MaKayla added.

“The kids can tell NASA scientists if the images they are seeing on their satellite images are actually clouds or contrails (trails left by jets), because their [NASA’s] photographs do not distinguish between the two,” Edwards further explained.

This is important information to

NASA because the way the contrails disperse relays information indicative of wind patterns at different elevations. This course of study, Edwards says, is also extremely beneficial to the kids in the classroom because they must use their observation skills and then discuss exactly what it is they are seeing before they can come to a conclusion and consensus to make the report.

Another important aspect of the study is its usefulness to GLOBE students and NASA scientists conducting research. “They have to stay with it and get the data regularly; because if they do not, it disappears,” Edwards said. “We don’t want to miss information.”

Once the data are gathered, the students upload it into the GLOBE database where they can also view visualizations and graphs. So year after year the database grows, and in the future, they will see an even better picture indicating exactly how rain or the lack thereof, temperatures, cloud cover and other factors affect bud bursting.

What’s significant is that there are thousands of students across the nation and the world who are all taking part in GLOBE. They work separately and then in collaboration as their data feeds into central databases, producing relevant information about the Earth’s dynamic environment that can be used for study by everyone around the world.

“I’m learning about things that I did not know before,” MarKayla said. “Also, I feel more grown-up because I get to work with the older kids.”

While the initial project was a sixth-grade endeavor, the older students were pulled in to expand the activities and participate in an even larger GLOBE initiative. They completed an abstract and a research paper and also participated in a webinar and provided video. Beyond participating in the Learning to Research Initiative, they were also hoping they would be invited to a science conference in Minnesota. But, Edwards said, that conference came



From left, MarKayla Lester, teacher Audra Edwards, Madison Jaco, Allyson Edwards, MaKayla Beene and Harlie Conover discuss the work they’ve done on bud bursting that led to their data sharing and ultimately, school representation in India at a global science forum.

and went without an invitation.

However, in August, Crawford called with the news that Kennedy, now located at UT Tyler, had helped to secure funding from the U.S. Embassy in Delhi for a delegation from Hawkins ISD to attend the science festival in India through the GLOBE Center. The all-expense-paid trip was for four high school students, along with a teacher, to attend the conference. In addition, it covered the expenses for Nandini McClurg, a GLOBE trainer and research associate at UT Tyler, to escort the delegation on their trip.

In preparation for the trip, Hawkins students participated in a video conference with Dr. Elena Sparrow and Martha Kopplin, GLOBE scientists at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks, and learned about the connection between bud burst, emergence of leaves and vegetation, as well as the animal life that depends on it.

And that's how high school students from East Texas stepped off of a plane onto the opposite side of the globe to learn of banyan trees, history, henna tattoos, rickshaws, saris, a culture that recycles most everything ... and, of course, science.

Escorted by McClurg, who is from India and has lived in the United States since 1978, the students were able to experience India in detail. Both the students and Edwards said that "The Great Nandini [which is their fun-loving nickname for her] did an incredible job!" They also said she was the perfect person to have on their trip, and "We all

fell in love with her."

The students were in India for and because of their science, but it's apparent that the trip was so much more meaningful than that.

"We went for the science," Lauren said, "but the culture was amazing! Since the trip I've done a lot of studies over religion, history and even holidays."

"I learned a lot from the people I met and also about how proud they are of their history, and also about how they look up to America," Allyson said. "Also, they know so much about our history, and we know so little about theirs."

All the students went on to say how amazed they were when the Indian students not only knew about the United States, but were very aware of the different states and their ecosystems and cultures.

Madison also talked about how easy it was to understand the students from India. She said that just about as soon as they enter school, the Indian students are learning English and Hindi simultaneously, so they have a great command of the English language. The students they met from Thailand also spoke Eng-

lish, but since they don't start learning English until later grades, it was harder to understand them. But still, it gave the students a great appreciation of what their peers are accomplishing in South-east Asia.

Another thing all of the students said is that while in India they felt very welcome everywhere they went. They were met with flower garlands and performances of native dances. They were also very impressed with a recycling program they were shown. In one school, the paper was shredded in a studio and then turned into pulp and dried and used for many different types of art projects. They showed off some examples of painted paper canvas and handmade folders.

In reflecting on the trip a few days after their return, the students were still glowing from their experiences and they said they've since been communicating with some of the friends they met. With the time difference, they say they now have "regular Facebook time" and "Indian Facebook time," where they communicate with their friends from New Delhi. They were also planning to

RIGHT: The Hawkins Hawks, decked out in their school colors, pose with some of their Indian counterparts at the GLOBE science festival in New Delhi, India. Lauren Haney and teacher Audra Edwards are at left; Elijah Turner stands at the back; Madison Jaco and Allyson Edwards are at far right.

FAR RIGHT: The Hawkins students stand in awe of the white marble Taj Mahal while their guide, GLOBE's Nandini McClurg, explains some of its significance and history.



use Skype video conferencing software later in the week with one of the Indian students who was working on a Model UN project that studies how the United Nations operates.

While they all say they are glad to be home, both Allyson and Madison say they would have loved to stay longer—but they had a qualifier: “If we’d had American food, we would have stayed.”

Another great appreciation for the United States, and East Texas in particular, included a newfound appreciation for the clear East Texas air. The streets in New Delhi were very congested with traffic, and there is a layer of smog that allowed the students to look directly at the sun without hurting their eyes. The students were pretty amazed by that.

Exploring science in a different culture, along with individuals with so many perspectives, offered an abundantly rich experience. It also allowed the East Texas students to teach the other students more about our culture and ecosystem.

For example, for the trip, Elijah shot and edited a short documentary about Hawkins. He interviewed other

Hawkins students as well as older citizens of Hawkins and then showed that video at the conference. And while he enjoyed showing them his project, Elijah said the new perspectives were what he most appreciated about the trip. He said, “I like experiencing something different—and mostly, I like to walk in others’ shoes.”

The GLOBE Program has been a vehicle for cross-cultural sharing for several years now, as well as for its primary purpose of significant data collecting and sharing by GLOBE students. This work assists researchers in better understanding our Earth by measuring the global environment, and it allows students to contribute in meaningful ways as they learn. The data they collect now will allow those studies and comparisons of trends to continue.

In all, the Hawkins students have learned significant aspects of science. They’ve learned specifically about how bud bursts occur earlier in years when the temperatures are warmer and also when there is higher precipitation. They also have studied scientific work, which indicates that bud bursting is

occurring 10 to 12 days earlier than it was a century ago.

For Hawkins ISD, Edwards is talking of expanding the GLOBE projects to possibly include a study of Lake Hawkins and the effects of hydrilla, a non-native aquatic plant that has invaded Texas waterways. This, in part, was inspired by some of the projects they saw at the conference, and in particular, research that some of the students from Thailand were conducting on their native coral reefs.

In all, the trip was about science, and science was shared in a meaningful and effective way. The trip served to also inspire the Hawkins students to expand their research projects. But in summary, Edwards said, the trip was also valuable in the teachings of the human spirit.

“There are so many things we have in common,” she said. “They were very welcoming and kind. There is more that we have in common than what separates us. The people we met were truly beautiful.”

To learn more about the GLOBE Program, in existence since 1995, visit globe.gov.

