

Youth Tour students attend Leadership Conference

Twenty-seven local high school students gathered in Baton Rouge on March 28-30 to attend a Cooperative Youth Leadership Conference, meet with state officials and learn more about Louisiana's electric cooperative system.

All participants were winners of the annual statewide Youth Tour Essay Contest. In addition to this conference, the students will embark on an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., on June 15-22. Each year the national "Government in Action" Youth Tour event attracts over 1,500 students to Washington from 36 states.

Representing SLECA at the state and national conferences this year are James Bollinger and Treva Johnson. Also serving as chaperones on the trip are SLECA employee Jackie Jones and her husband, Joe. Their granddaughter, Kaylen, will also participate in the trip. (Acct. No. 8976401)

"We're proud to be able to sponsor these outstanding students and to support both the educational and cultural development of our local youth," said SLECA Manager Joe Ticheli. "Part of our mission as a locally-owned electric cooperative is to do whatever we can to improve the quality of life and expand opportunities for our members and the community."

The meeting in Baton Rouge was hosted by the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with eight of its member Louisiana electric distribution cooperatives from around the state, including SLECA.

During their time in Baton Rouge, the local delegates spent two days meeting their fellow Youth Tour Essay Contest winners, touring the old State Capitol and new State Capitol, touring the NRG power generation plants in New Roads, visiting with their elected officials and learning more about the cooperative business model.

While in Washington this summer, the Youth Tour delegates will visit the offices of Louisiana's representatives and senators, the U.S. Capitol, the Smithsonian Institution, Arlington National Cemetery and other historical and government sites.

SLECA adds digit to account number

SLECA announces that member account numbers will change beginning with the May billing cycle.

One digit will be added to the two digits that appear after the dash in the member account number. The number to the right of the dash indicates how many SLECA accounts the member has with the cooperative.

Adding a third number enables SLECA to accommodate greater growth in the future.

Holiday office hours

In honor of the men and women who have protected our freedom, SLECA will be closed Monday, May 28 in observance of Memorial Day. A dispatcher and crews will be on duty for emergencies or interruption of service.

Have a safe and happy Memorial Day!

SLECA News



Joe Ticheli, General Manager
Alexander Doyle, President
South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Assn.
P.O. Box 4037, Houma, LA 70361 (876-6880)



2012 Annual Meeting theme: Low rates. High expectations.

Low rates. High expectations.

That's SLECA's time-honored slogan, which also emerged as the central theme at the organization's 74th annual membership meeting held at the Houma-Terrebonne Civic Center in April.

General Manager Joe Ticheli, who took the reins after replacing long-time manager Mike Guidry in January, told the crowd of roughly 1,800 members and their guests that SLECA's board representatives and employees take the slogan seriously and it's more than just a motto.

"This is a pledge and an oath that we take to heart every day when we come in to work, to provide low rates and exceed the expectations placed on us," Ticheli said. "The backbone of the organization is the employees and they work very hard for the members and I want to personally thank them for that."

Preceding Ticheli at the podium was Public Service Commissioner Jimmy Field, who attested to the outstanding performance of the cooperative both in terms of rates and service.

"In our office we looked back and over the past five years we've gotten about 3,000 complaints. Only 14 of them came from SLECA members," Field said. "You're paying some of the lowest rates in the entire country and getting excellent service." (Acct. No. 7576402)

Field offered congratulations to Ticheli in his new post and commended SLECA's board on Ticheli's promotion from his previous position of Manager of Member Services and Communications.

"I think they have made a good pick and they saw there was no reason to do a national search when you have so much talent right here in front of you and someone who knows the system and has done such a fine job," Field said.

During his address, Ticheli acknowl-



Clockwise from top, left: Tammy Chaisson paints a fleur de lis; members were treated to a night balloon glow and tethered rides in the Touchstone Energy balloon; Kami Ellender performs a patriotic medley; Clerk of Court Bobby Boudreaux swears in SLECA directors Roger Dale DeHart, David Luke and Alexander Doyle.

ed Guidry and his wife, Candy, who were both in attendance. He also noted that while Guidry had recently entered retirement, he still has one more year in office as president of the board of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in Washington.

Ticheli said that in his new role he hopes to continue the success the cooperative has experienced under Guidry's leadership over the past two decades.

"SLECA has been well-run because of the board, the management and the employees," Ticheli said. "My goal is to continue on that course while continuing

to live within our means and keeping our financial house in order."

Ticheli explained that in January a Formula Rate Plan approved by the Louisiana Public Service Commission took effect and resulted in a \$3.53 increase per 1,000 kWh.

"In addition, since we have not quite reached our goal of where we need to be to satisfy our lenders, the May bills will see an increase of 5 cents or less per kWh. This is based on the Formula Rate Plan annual report we filed in January and that was approved at the April Public Service Commission meeting."

Ticheli reminded members that SLECA has not had a rate increase in 28 years and with this modest adjustment would still be well below competing utilities in the state.

He also noted that over the course of the past five years SLECA members have paid rates up to nearly 40 percent lower than other ratepayers across the state and that has resulted in SLECA members pocketing hundreds of dollars.

"Over the last five years our average bill for 1,000 kWh was \$72 while Entergy's was \$97 and Cleco's was \$114," Ticheli said. That means that if you were a SLECA member during those five years, you saved between \$1,660 and \$2,500 to buy food and groceries or whatever you need besides electricity."

Ticheli concluded his remarks by promising members to always keep an open line of communication and to be forthright and honest about the status of their cooperative.

SLECA members were entertained by vocalist Kami Ellender, who sang a patriotic medley. Cajun humorist Black Guidry also entertained the crowd with his Cajun novelty songs. Prior to the annual meeting, local magician David LeBoeuf performed for the children while Frank and Tammy Chaisson created balloon sculptures and made face-paintings.

Members were also treated to a health fair, community information booths, safety demonstrations and door prizes for each registered member. The meeting opened with an invocation by The Rev. Joseph Chacko of St. Andrew Catholic Church in Amelia.

Clerk of Court Bobby Boudreaux also officiated in a swearing-in ceremony for SLECA directors David Luke, Roger Dale DeHart and Alexander Doyle, who were returned to their positions unopposed.

Slight increase takes effect on May bills

Because SLECA is required to meet certain financial benchmarks set by both the Louisiana Public Service Commission and the cooperative's lenders, a modest rate adjustment will be seen on the May billing cycle.

The rate adjustment will amount to 5 cents or less for those SLECA members using an average of 1,000 kWh of power the previous month.

The adjustment is part of the Formula Rate Plan approved by the Louisiana Public Service Commission last year, which requires SLECA to file an annual report each year for three years.

Across the Board

March 13, 2012

Present were directors Alexander Doyle, president; David Luke, vice-president; Brian Rivet, secretary; Terry Trahan, treasurer; Tracy Duval, J. D. Boudreaux, Eroy Acosta, Roger Dale DeHart, Larry J. Daigle and Lloyd Gibson, advisor. Also attending were Joseph Ticheli, interim general manager, James Funderburk, attorney, and Elaine Robertson, member services supervisor.

After the invocation and pledge, the board approved the minutes and summary of the February 6th regular board meeting, 129 new members and the ALEC Report.

The financial report, approved by the board, highlighted interest earnings, cash on hand, rate comparison showing SLECA having the lowest rates compared to other area utilities, line loss, kilowatt hour sales for the month, cumulative sales to date, cost of service, equity, TIER and electric and total revenue verses cost per kilowatt hour. (Acct. No. 9260801)

Following an update on upcoming schools, meetings and events, Mr. Ticheli reported on the following: (1) SLECA continues to have the lowest rates in the area; (2) Federal regulators approved the nation's first new nuclear power plant since 1978; (3) The district meetings hosted by Mr. Doyle, Mr. Luke and Mr. DeHart were very successful; (4) A change had to be made in the Formula Rate Plan Annual Report that will result in a rate adjustment less than previously thought; (5) A meeting was held with officials of La Gen to discuss the impact on SLECA of the proposed contract between DEMCO and CLECO. The officials said SLECA would not be affected, though environmental costs could change but this is not certain at this time; (6) The 2012 Youth Tour winners are James Bollinger and Treva Monet Johnson; (7) A safety supper will be held March 14 to recognize employees for having worked another quarter year without a lost time accident; (8) Fault indicators will be installed on many of SLECA's main feeders in areas difficult to see and not accessible to vehicles. This will greatly reduce the amount of time it takes to find problems on a line thus providing better service to members; (9) SLECA had the highest score in the nation with a 90% on the National Survey on Cooperative Difference that was conducted last fall; (10) A marsh fire in the Grand Pass area burned down one SLECA pole resulting in a power outage to the Grand Pass camps. Camp owners were notified and power was restored to the camps prior to the weekend; (11) There were no known NERC/SERC violations this period; and (12) February 22 was the last day for construction contractors in the Houma office and May 31 will be the last day for the contractors in the Amelia office. Several new employees have been hired to replace them. To implement the plan fully, SLECA will need a backup digger truck of which the board agreed to lease purchase one for the remainder of the year, using funds already in this year's budget that were originally allocated to purchase a used digger truck.

The board then passed a resolution approving and reviewing Safety and Loss Control Policy No. 28 as required for safety accreditation, a resolution and incumbency certificate on several Co-Bank documents, the manager's report and the safety report showing employees have worked 2,509,417 hours without a lost time accident since December, 1996 and a resolution requested by Mr. Funderburk authorizing Mr. Doyle or Mr. Ticheli to sign any and all documents regarding the transfers of water and waste water that have been negotiated with Aqua America and to seek partial release of mortgage from Co Bank.

The board then approved the attorney's report and fees. Following Mr. Daigle's brief overview of the NRECA Annual Meeting, Mr. Doyle brought up the issue of capital credits. Following a discussion, Mr. Funderburk suggested the board study the situation and the board asked Mr. Ticheli to look into the matter.

The meeting was then adjourned.

You may obtain copies of the minutes by contacting SLECA, P.O. Box 4037, Houma, LA 70361 or by calling (985) 876-6880 or 1-800-256-8826.

Congratulations to scholarship winners

As part of SLECA's continuing efforts to enhance higher educational opportunities, four local students have won scholarships for the 2012-2013 fall and spring semesters at Nicholls State or L.E. Fletcher Community College. The scholarships, valued at \$1,000 each, were offered to graduating high school seniors to help with the costs of tuition, room and board, or books.

The scholarship winners are: (Acct. No. 6109302)

- Tess Champagne of Houma. She is a senior at Vanderbilt Catholic High School. Tess will study biology at Nicholls State University.
- Matthew D. Hymel of Houma. He is also a senior at Vanderbilt Catholic High School and he plans on majoring in chemistry at Nicholls.
- Amanda Henry of Gray. She is a senior at Central Lafourche High School and plans to major in biology/science/physical therapy.
- Angela Dugas of Houma. She is a senior at H.L. Bourgeois High School and plans to study secondary education/English at Nicholls.

As part of its commitment to local communities, SLECA has offered scholarships to local students seeking to become tomorrow's doctors, lawyers, engineers and other professionals for nearly two decades to enhance economic opportunities for our members and their children.

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South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Assn., P.O. Box 4037, Houma, LA 70361

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High School



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