

# You can win a Youth Tour EXPERIENCE!

Two local SLECA students will have the opportunity to be winners of the 2014 SLECA Youth Tour Contest and spend a week with about two dozen other students from across Louisiana on a "Government in Action" Youth Tour of Washington, D.C.

The trip to Washington, D.C., has been described as "the experience of a lifetime" by past winners, offering an opportunity to learn about our government and meet many important figures while making a lot of cool, new friends.

For over 31 years, SLECA has reached out to local students, offering them the opportunity to participate in the Youth Tour Program. If you are interested, this is what you need to know:

#### Eligibility Requirements

- High school sophomores and juniors are eligible.
- Electricity to your residence or parent's business must be provided by SLECA.

#### Youth Tour Contest Guidelines

1. Students must write a letter approximately 500 words long to an elected official. The entry must be submitted in the proper letter format to be eligible.
2. The students should voice their opinion (positive or negative) to the respective local, state or federal official in a letter format on any issue, problem or matter they believe to be critical to South Louisiana.
3. The topic of concern should be stated and thoroughly discussed and the letter should be addressed to the official the student has selected.
4. On a separate sheet attached to the essay, the student must write his/her name, Social Security Number, name of school and grade level, parents' names, address, and telephone number.
5. All entries must include a current photo with their submission for use in news releases at the conclusion of the contest.

Entries should be mailed to Youth Tour Essay Contest, c/o SLECA, P.O. Box 4037, Houma, LA 70361, or delivered to SLECA's main office at 2028 Coteau Road, Highway 660, Houma, LA, or SLECA's branch office in Amelia, 2903 Lake Palourde Rd., Morgan City, LA 70380; P.O. Box 1126, Amelia, LA 70340.

All letters become the property of South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Association. ENTRIES MUST BE POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN Feb. 1, 2014. A judging committee will select two top letters and one alternate. Letters are judged on knowledge of subject, originality, composition, neatness and grammar. For more information, contact SLECA at 876-6880 or 1-800-256-8826.

## Across the Board

August 5, 2013

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 Advisor to the Board, Lloyd Gibson. Also attending were Joseph Ticheli, general manager, Kathryn Richard, attorney, and Elaine Robertson, member services supervisor.

After the invocation and pledge, the board approved minutes and summary of the July 1, 2013, meeting, the ALEC minutes and 148 new members

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. 67718003)

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) SLECA's offices will be closed on Monday, September 2, in observance of Labor Day; (3) The board was asked to continue authorizing their contributions to the ACRE campaign; (4) SLECA received a partial reimbursement check from FEMA in the amount of \$122,075 for Hurricane Isaac; (5) SLECA customers have been alerted in Louisiana Country about a new utility scam; (6) A \$40 million wind farm has been proposed to be built on coastal land in the Port of West St. Mary Parish; (7) SLECA received a dividend check from Federated Insurance in the amount of \$29,925 for being a member of the Louisiana Electric Cooperatives Workers' Compensation Group Retention Program; and (8) SLECA has won its appeal with FERC who ordered SERC to immediately de-register SLECA but NERC will probably seek a re-hearing from FERC.

The board then selected a voting delegate and alternate to vote at the upcoming NRECA Region VIII meeting; accepted the low bid received from Cintas for new uniforms for the outside employees; and the safety report showing employees have worked 2,743,083 hours without a lost time accident since December, 1996. The board then approved the attorney's report and fees.

Following executive session, the meeting was 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.

# SLECA News



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



## Bricks 4 Kidz and Challenge Island programs make learning fun for local students

Most teachers would prefer that their students sit down and stay quiet.

Robin Bergeron and Leslie Thibodaux actually encourage their students to move around and speak up.

Bergeron and Thibodaux are partners in Bricks 4 Kidz and Challenge Island, two unique academic programs designed to teach children – and adults, too – a wide range of skills including mathematics, geometry, physics, leadership, collaboration and much more.

Bricks 4 Kids employs the popular Lego brand construction sets as learning tools while Challenge Island is carried out similar to the highly rated Survivor television series. (Acct. No. 72101002)

Sessions are held at the base facility on Corporate Dr., but the programs are also designed to be brought to schools and other meeting areas.

Both programs are endorsed by the Terrebonne and Lafourche parish school systems and local private schools, and hundreds of students each week receive instruction by Bergeron, Thibodaux or one of their program representatives who are also retired teachers.

"This concept is really catching fire and we're maxing out our capacity to meet the huge and growing demand," Bergeron said. "The kids get so into it, they don't even realize they're learning. They just think it's fun playtime."

The local business was created after Bergeron decided to retire from teaching after 22 years in the classroom. Tired and frustrated over the mounting paperwork and bureaucracy of the profession, Bergeron looked at becoming a Bricks 4 Kidz franchisee.

She found the perfect partner in Thibodaux. Though some would suggest it's not advisable to go into business with a good friend - assuming you intend to continue being good friends - the two knew each other well after growing up in the same neighborhood, attending Nicholls University together and teaching gifted-and-talented students across the hall from each other at Bourg Elementary.

"I never would have jumped into something like this with just anybody," Bergeron said. "But our personalities and skill sets really compliment each other. Leslie is more left brain and I'm more right brain. And I knew her and knew how hard she worked and how trustworthy she was. Teachers are the hardest working people around. We put in hours and hours that people never see."

The business was launched on June 11, 2012 as manager Kathy Williams and a cast of helpful friends and family worked feverishly to prepare the teaching facility on Corporate Drive with work tables and chairs, shelves, colorful murals and many, many Lego bins.

The headquarters facility hosts regular learning sessions during the summer, after school and in the evenings. There are parents-night-out events, special parties and site visits to the schools. There have even been par-



Above, Manager Kathy Williams plays a key role in the Bricks 4 Kidz and Challenge Island programs as she oversees the operation at the facility on Corporate Dr.



ties for adults who grew up playing with Legos. A special Halloween Night Out will be held on Oct. 25 from 6 to 8 p.m., including a costume contest, games and other adventures.

Bergeron said the thing she probably enjoys most about the program is the flexibility, creativity and freedom to formulate a customized curriculum for students in a way that wasn't possible while teaching in a traditional classroom setting.

She tells of special needs children – such as those with Downs Syndrome or Autism - who have benefitted from the learning method and how the Legos building activities and Challenge Island projects excite the students and spark their imagination.

"The creativity is something I really loved when I was in the classroom," Bergeron recalled, "but it got to the point there wasn't much creativity because there was so much to cover and so much paperwork to be done."

Added Thibodaux: "When you see them follow the action plan and work together to solve a problem or create some kind of machine or a motorized alligator and they plug it in and it actually works, their eyes just light up and it's the most spectacular moment for them."

Bergeron explained that Challenge Island is a new program that will enable her and her team to reach more students. She said the program is based on the TV show Survivor. Groups are divided into tribes and individuals

receive face paint, bandanas and necklaces. Groups are issued a challenge such as creating a roller coaster or a boat out of recycled materials and compete to determine which group performed the best.

"It really brings the kids together to work as a team," Bergeron said. "A lot of kids don't have much to do and don't have much interaction with their peers if they're not into dancing, karate or sports. This is something anyone can do as long as they apply themselves."

She added that a program has also been designed for home-school students.

"We have home-schooled children who maybe don't get as much socialization opportunities and we have monthly gatherings for them to learn with their peers. We have a lesson and then we have a time just for the kids and parents to meet and talk with one another. It really helps kids come out of their shell," she said.

SLECA General Manager Joe Ticheli said the locally-owned cooperative is proud to serve the facility and to have the business as a member/owner.

"We think this is a great program for the community," Ticheli said. "SLECA has always been supportive of educating our young people through initiatives such as our academic scholarship program, the Washington Youth Tour, safety demonstrations and more."

For more information on the program, visit [www.bricks4kidz.com/houma](http://www.bricks4kidz.com/houma) or call 872-2772.

## Enter SLECA's Christmas Lighting Contest

Light up your home this Christmas and win a \$100 Cash Prize! Entries will be accepted through December 13, 2013.

#### RULES:

1. Contest open to SLECA residential members only.
2. SLECA directors, employees, retired employees and/or their families are not eligible to win.
3. Electricity is required. Outdoor lighting only.
4. Suggested themes: Religious, Contemporary, Novelty.
5. Entries must be received at SLECA by December 13, 2013. Judging to be held December 16.
6. Winners will be notified by telephone.
7. 2011 winners are ineligible.
8. Cash Prizes (\$100 in each of SLECA's nine member districts) will be awarded. (Acct. No. 105757001)

To enter, complete this form and return by December 14, 2012, to SLECA, P.O. Box 4037, Houma, La 70361.

### SLECA's Christmas Lighting Contest

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Account No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Or simply call SLECA's office in Houma, 876-6880, 1-800-256-8826; or Amelia 631-3605, 1-800-256-8836.

## KIDS...Christmas is almost here Draw a picture and win a prize!

We're having a Christmas contest for kids. And the prize is a \$50 Christmas gift certificate. All you have to do to win is draw a picture of your favorite Christmas activity. It can be anything you like to do at Christmas time, such as decorating the tree, wrapping gifts, Christmas shopping or going caroling...Anything!

In addition to winning the gift certificate, the winning picture will be featured in the December issue of Louisiana Country. And this is not all. Your picture will be prominently displayed on an outdoor billboard courtesy of SLECA and Lamar Outdoor Advertising for all your friends and family to see.

Here is what you need to know:

- You must be 10 years old or younger.
- Contest is open to SLECA members only.
- Entries must be submitted on one 8-1/2 x 11-inch sheet of paper.
- Any medium (crayons, markers, watercolors, etc.) may be used to draw your picture, but the picture MUST be in color.
- The entry form must be attached to the back of your drawing.
- Previous winners are ineligible.
- Employees of SLECA will judge all entries.
- You should mail your entry to SLECA, P.O. Box 4037, Houma, LA 70361, or you can drop it off at the Houma office at 2028 Coteau Rd. in Houma or at the Amelia office. (Acct. No. 57765001)
- Deadline to receive entries is November 15, 2013.

#### ENTRY FOR Attach this form to the back of entry.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
SLECA Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_



Your Cooperative Connection

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