

Blair and Vernon students named youth tour winners

Noelle Fernandez of Vernon High School and Payton Morris of Blair High School have been named winners of Southwest Rural Electric Association's 2017 Youth Tour Contest.

As Youth Tour winners, Noelle and Payton will receive all-expense-paid trips to Washington, D.C. this summer with delegations of other co-op students from their respective states.

Noelle is the daughter of Lesley De La Cruz of Vernon. Payton is the son of Chris and Lori Morris of Martha.

During their trip to Washington, D.C., the two Texoma youth will visit the U.S. Capitol, Mount Vernon, the capital city's many memorials and museums, and Arlington National Cemetery. They will also have the opportunity to visit with numerous elected officials.

Runners-up in the contest are Molly Biggs, Frederick High School, and Lane Whitman, Vernon High School. Molly is the daughter of Randy and Jill Biggs, Frederick. Lane is the son of Brian and Paula Whitman, Crowell.

As runners-up, Molly and Lane will have the opportunity to represent SWRE at the 2018 high school Touchstone Leadership Summit to be held next January in Oklahoma City.

Other 2017 contest finalists were Emri Baumann, Northside High School, daughter of Gillian Lindsay and Rickey Baumann; Brett Haight, Tipton High School, son of Eddie and Beth Haight; Dax Kieschnick, Vernon High School, son of Devin and Sandra Kieschnick; Ryan Oden, Altus High School, son of Tyrone and Christina Oden; and Wyatt Weaver, Navajo High School, son of Richard and Amy Weaver.



Nine Texoma students participated as finalists in Southwest Rural Electric Association's 2017 Youth Tour Essay Contest. Students are (front, l to r): **Lane Whitman**, Vernon High School, Texas runner-up; **Noelle Fernandez**, Vernon High School, Texas contest winner; **Payton Morris**, Blair High School, Oklahoma contest winner; and **Molly Biggs**, Frederick High School, Oklahoma runner-up. Also (back row, l to r) **Brett Haight**, Tipton High School; **Wyatt Weaver**, Navajo High School; **Ryan Oden**, Altus High School; **Dax Kieschnick**, Vernon High School, and **Emri Baughman**, Northside High School.

All finalists received certificates and \$250 cash prizes. The SWRE Youth Tour Contest is open each year to all 11th grade students who live or attend school in the SWRE service area.

Students were required to write a 500-750-word essay on the topic "Powering Homes of the Future." Nine contest finalists were chosen based on their essays. The nine presented their essays as extemporaneous speeches at a dinner held Tuesday evening, March 21, at SWRE headquarters in Tipton. A panel of judges determined contest winners based on the presentations.

The annual SWRE Youth Tour Essay Contest for high school juniors is a tradition that began in 1964. Contest essays were received this year from students in seven Texoma schools.

SWRE Manager's Report

Phone line function expands

Business as usual isn't good enough at SWRE. As a cooperative, the organization is always looking for strategies that will benefit members, improve service, and help to operate more efficiently.

I can cite many examples – development of the SWRE app, installation of smart meters, system-wide mapping and inventory, establishing a presence on Facebook, developing of our online outage map, building our own community solar fields, and much more. It's a long list of innovations that have all come to our co-op in recent years.

As a business organization, SWRE isn't sitting still. We are continually moving forward, looking for new ways to better serve members.

Automated Phone Line for Paying Bills

In a recent newsletter SWRE announced that a new automated phone line has been established that members may use to pay bills at any time, 24 hours a day. Members may call **1-855-980-6821** night or day to pay their bills with a credit card, pre-paid card, or debit card. Making payments at the automated line is easy and secure. The payments are processed immediately and quickly posted to the proper account.

Of course, members who don't wish to use the automated line can still call the co-op's traditional number – **1-800-256-7973** – to speak to someone live.

Since the automated number was established in March, many SWRE members have used it to pay their bills and their feedback has been positive. We've heard from many people who love using the new automated line to pay their bills.

NEW! Auto Phone Line for Outages

I'm pleased to tell you that a great NEW function has also been added to the automated phone line. Members may now call that same auto phone line (**1-855-980-6821**) to report outages.

When the automated voice answers, it asks for an account number. It then provides prompts for paying a bill OR reporting an outage.

To report an outage, the member will need the account number that is associated with the meter that is being reported for outage. Many SWRE members have more than one meter, and it's essential that the outage management system knows which meter location is being reported as out of service.

Of course, members may still report outages in the traditional way, by calling SWRE's regular number (**1-800-256-7973**) to speak to a real person.

**Automated Phone Line
for Bill Pay or Reporting Outages**

1-855-980-6821

Traditional Voice Phone Line

1-800-256-7973

Benefits of Using the Auto Phone Line

There will likely be times when members may want to use the automated number.

For instance, during widespread outages when many members are without electricity, getting through to SWRE on the regular line can be frustrating. Storms, transmission line failures, or damages to substations can affect many accounts. It isn't unusual in those circumstances for hundreds of people to be calling at the same time, and even when all co-op phone lines are open, only a few can get through at once.

The automated phone line, though, can take a large number of calls at the same time, processing all outage reports into the system and letting callers know that their outage notification has been received.

At SWRE, we know that most people don't like "talking" to automated voices or computers. We don't, either. SWRE has always taken pride in the fact that when one calls the co-op, a live person answers, and we still do.

The automated phone line, though, presents another option for our members. They can still call the regular line (**1-800-256-7973**) to speak to a live person, or they may pay their bills or report outages with the SWRE app for smart phones and tablets. They now have the choice, though, to call the automated line (**1-855-980-6821**) to pay their bill or report an outage directly into the system.

Providing that choice is what SWRE service is all about. It's just one more example of SWRE "Safety, Service, Satisfaction... One Member at a Time".

Kenneth E. Simmons

Be “electricity aware” for farm safety

Spring in Texoma is a time for planting of crops. SWRE reminds farmers to be particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. Operating large equipment near these lines is one of the often overlooked, yet potentially deadly, hazards of working on a farm.

Start by making sure everyone knows to maintain a 10-foot clearance minimum from power lines.

Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds. Many tractors now have tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Avoid raising the arms of planters or cultivators near power lines, and never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.

Simply working too close to a power line is dangerous as electricity can arc or “jump” to conducting objects, such as a ladder, pole or truck. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tires, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.

If your equipment does come into contact with power lines, stay in the cab and call SWRE for help. If the



power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground. Even if a line has landed on the ground, there is still potential for the area to be energized. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until help arrives.

If exiting the cab is absolutely necessary because of fire, the proper action is to jump—not step—with both feet together, hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

For more tips and information on how to stay safe, visit www.SafeElectricity.org. Safe Electricity is the safety outreach program of the Energy Education Council, a non-profit organization with more than 400 electric cooperative members and many others who share the mission of educating the public about electrical safety and energy efficiency.

What’s Cookin’ in the SWRE Kitchen

An easy traditional recipe from Oklahoma Living’s *Prairie Flavors Cookbook*.

Sausage and Rice Casserole

- 1 pound sausage
- 3 cups water
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 cup uncooked long grain rice
- 1 small package slivered almonds
- 1 package chicken noodle soup mix, such as Lipton

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Brown the sausage and drain.
3. Add the water, onion, bell pepper, and celery, then bring to a boil.
4. Add the rice, almonds, and soup mix.
5. Simmer for 30 minutes.
6. Transfer to a baking dish, sprinkle breadcrumbs on top, and bake until the crumbs are browned.

NOTE: This and many more great recipes submitted by Oklahoma electric cooperative cooks are available in a great cookbook. Cost is \$19.95 and shipping is free! To order it, go to Oklahoma Living’s online store at <https://www.okl.coop/store/prairie-flavors-cookbook>. Payment can be made by check or PayPal.

**24-Hour
Dispatching
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1-800-256-7973**

Payments can be made at SWRE, 700 North Broadway, Tipton, OK 73570.

Online payments can be made at www.swre.com or utilizing the SWRE app for phones and tablets. Payments may be made by telephone at 1-855-980-6821.

Payments may also be made at the following area banking institutions:

Oklahoma

Altus – Frazer Bank, National Bank of Commerce

Blair – Peoples State Bank

Snyder – All American Bank

Frederick – BancFirst, Frazer Bank

Texas

Chillicothe – American National Bank

Crowell – State Bank

Electra – Waggoner National Bank

Vernon – Herring Bank, Waggoner Bank, Bank of the West

NOTE: When paying at a bank, allow 10 days prior to the bill’s due date.

SWRE News

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SWRE News is published monthly for distribution to members of Southwest Rural Electric Association.

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Ads are online for 45 days & updated daily at www.swre.com

For Sale: Purebred Great Pyrenees puppies. Six weeks old. Six females. \$100. Call 580-305-2654

For Sale: 2014 Forest River Clipper 17BH travel trailer. Sleeps six. The King tailgater. Fully automatic. \$15,500. Call 580-649-0780

For Sale: 1981 15-ft Kingfisher boat and motor. 35 hp Johnson. Runs good. Brand new wireless trolling motor w/ foot control. New batteries. Drive-on trailer. Fish finder. Steering wheel. Live well w/ new pumps. New bilge pump. Extra boat motor and stand. \$2,995. Call 580-649-0780

For Sale: Great Pyrenees puppies. Vet checked, wormed, 1st shots. Call 580-301-0253

Closeout of Cake Decorating Hobby. For Sale: Kopyrite projector, pan sets, character pans, wedding cake stands, instruction books, Wilton yearbooks, new frosting bags, decorating tips and couplers. E-mail rffieldhouse@yahoo.com for further information and telephone numbers

For Sale: 2010 Gulfstream Innsbruck Lite travel trailer. \$8,950 – 27-ft bumper pull, one slide-out, sleeps 8-9. Call or text 580-919-0967

For Sale: Three Longhorn heifers and two steers from WR branded parents. Calm yearlings, trained to hot wire and cow cubes. Call or text 580-919-0967

For Sale: Bulls for sale. Angus, Polled Hereford and

Angus-Gelbvieh. Chillicothe. Call 940-852-5181 or (cell) 940-839-5551

For Sale: 2000 Airstream. 19-ft Bambi. \$15,500. Call 940-839-9094

FREE PUPPIES AND DOGS: Border collie mix puppies. Four black and white males. One red and white female. Also have free adult mixes to give away. Adults are one black and white Pointer-looking male; one black and white Pit looking female w/ one blue eye; two black/white/tan Border Collie mix (one male and one female); one black and white Border Collie mix, female; two black/tan/white German Shepherd mixes (one male, one female). Really need to give them away to good homes. Call 580-471-7182 or 580-471-7183

For Sale: 13-ft. John Deere tandem disc plow; 13-ft. John Deere 8300 grain drill; 12-ft. Craus chisel plow; John Deere 705 power rake; 12-ft. New Holland swather; New Holland 664 baler; 10-ft. Mohawk shredder; 2013 Massey Ferguson 4609L tractor w/ brushhog loader. 200 hours. Like new. Call 940-357-9677. Email for prices and pictures: cbmi7766@sbcglobal.net

For Sale: Commercial building in Tipton on four corner lots with a 20'x48' warehouse. For more information, call 580-667-5466 or 580-305-0904

NOTE: To be included in the print issue of SWRE News, ads should be received by the 10th of the previous month.

FREE classified non-commercial ads available for SWRE members only
MAIL ADS TO JOE WYNN AT P.O. BOX 310 TIPTON, OK 73570. E-MAIL THEM TO JOEW@SWRE.COM, OR CALL 1-800-256-7973.