



Learning, Leadership, and Lasting Memories

Student Perspective: Ava Meinders Shares Her Youth Tour Experience

Are you a high school sophomore or junior who is interested in learning more about cooperatives, U.S. history, and government? What about making friends with diverse perspectives and traveling to our Nation's capital? This past June, I was given the opportunity to attend Iowa's Youth Tour, where all of these interests became a reality. In just one week, I was able to connect with many people from Iowa and other states, while also learning from professionals in various fields. Even if you have visited Washington, D.C. before, you will greatly benefit from this opportunity in knowledge, memories, and more!



Written by Ava Meinders (center) of rural Buffalo Center.

Electric cooperatives from all over the United States sponsor high school students to go on NRECA's Youth Tour, including many cooperatives in Iowa. This means that, if you go on Youth Tour, you will have the chance to make friends with people from all over Iowa and the United States. When I went on Youth Tour, we spent the first night getting to know each other and finding out the many characteristics we share. While on Youth Tour, we were also able to attend a dinner cruise, Camp Co-op, and a farewell dinner/dance with high school students from other states. Camp Co-op is an opportunity to meet and trade state pins with others in the hotel that is shared by many states. Although these specific experiences may have jump-started our

friendships, I was able to grow closer to new friends throughout the whole trip.

While on Youth Tour, I was able to visit government buildings, museums, and monuments, along with meeting experienced people. I got the chance to visit Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery, the National Museum of the U.S. Army, the Pentagon 9/11 Memorial, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Capitol Building, and more. I also got to watch the U.S. Marines Sunset Parade and ride on the Capital Wheel. We were able to have breakfast with Capitol interns from Iowa and have a meeting with Congressional Staffers and a Federal Lobbyist. Additionally, we met with both of Iowa's Senators and were given the chance to ask any questions we had. Visiting these places and listening to these speakers allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of our nation's history and government.

Since I went on Iowa's Youth Tour, I was also given the opportunity to apply to represent the state of Iowa on NRECA's Youth Leadership Council. Because I was chosen, I was able to participate in another trip to Washington, D.C. this past July, and I am completing monthly Zoom check-ins. Additionally, I will be taking a trip to Nashville next March with delegates from other states. I am also completing a service project and a speech, which will allow me to compete to become the National Spokesperson.

The application can be found on Heartland Power Cooperative's website and must be submitted by March 2, 2026. Email energy@heartlandpower.com or call 641-584-2251 with questions or for more information. If you are selected, going on the Iowa Youth Tour will be a trip of a lifetime!



Providing members with safe, reliable, affordable electricity and enhancing the quality of life for members and their local communities.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Office Hours 7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. M-Th
Office: 641.584.2251
Toll Free: 800.349.2832

Thompson 216 Jackson St. | P.O. Box 65
Thompson, IA 50478

St. Ansgar 110 Industrial Park Dr. | P.O. Box 70
St. Ansgar, IA 50472

Outage Reporting Thompson: 641.584.2200
St. Ansgar: 641.713.4646
System Wide: 888.417.3007

Secure Payment Phone Line 833.890.4830
Digging & Line Location Call 811

Website www.heartlandpower.com
Email energy@heartlandpower.com
Facebook facebook.com/heartlandpower
Twitter twitter.com/heartland_power
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CEO/GENERAL MANAGER Jon Leerar

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MONTHLY QUIZ

\$25 BILL CREDIT WINNER

Daniel Schmitt & Stephanie Gonigam,
Charles City

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION

How long has it been since Heartland Power has had a general rate increase?

QUIZ GUIDELINES

Each member who sends in the correct answer by the 20th of the month will be entered in a drawing for a \$25 bill credit. Mail or email quiz answers to energy@heartlandpower.com.

Facility Charge Increase Effective January 1

The Heartland Power Cooperative Board of Directors recently approved an increase in facility charges for rural residential, farm, and small commercial rate classes. The decision was based on a thorough cost-of-service study conducted by the cooperative's rate consultant.

The new facility charges will take effect on January 1, 2026. For rural residential, farm, and small commercial members, the facility charge will rise by \$3. Specifically, single-phase charges will increase from \$47 to \$50, while three-phase charges will go from \$67 to \$70.

What is a Facility Charge?

Your monthly electric bill consists of two charges: the facility charge and the energy charge. Your *energy charge* varies each month, reflecting your actual electricity consumption. The *facility charge* is a monthly investment that helps the cooperative manage the expenses associated with maintaining the electric system. You can think of it this way: the energy charge is the electricity you use. The facility charge is how we get that energy to you.

This covers the maintenance of poles, wires, substations, and other infrastructure that require ongoing planning and resources. It also funds the staff, equipment, and cybersecurity measures necessary to ensure safe and reliable electric service. The facility charge is a fixed monthly cost since delivering electricity to your home or business costs the same whether you use a little or a lot.

As a not-for-profit cooperative, we believe that operational costs should be fairly and equitably spread among all members, regardless of their level of electricity use. Through this monthly investment, all members benefit equally in access to safe, reliable power when they need it.

We recognize that many aspects of daily life have seen significant cost increases, particularly in recent years, and the costs associated with maintaining our electric infrastructure are no exception. Even so, electricity remains a great value.

Stable Rates, Reliable Service

While our facility charge has gradually increased over time to better reflect the true cost of delivering electricity, did you know we have not had a general rate increase since 2014? At Heartland Power, the price you paid for electricity a decade ago is the same price you pay today - that's almost unheard of, in any industry!

Even though electricity powers more of our lives than ever before, the cost remains remarkably stable. You can count on us to continue working to make electricity one of the best values for your dollar!

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

Although inflation has led to increasing costs in many areas of our lives, the cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common goods.



GASOLINE
6.1%



BUTTER
6.1%



MILK
5.6%



BREAD
5.5%



ELECTRICITY
4.6%

Average Annual Price Increase 2017-2022 | Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Price Index