



# Connection

Communicating local energy news to Four County Electric members

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

inside  
Four County  
Connection



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## Get the Scoop



### Memorial Day

Four County offices  
will be closed  
Monday, May 28, in  
observance of  
Memorial Day.

Have a safe and  
happy holiday.

## Bright Ideas Grant Brings Learning to Classroom

### What is Your Bright Idea?

An increasing number of distractions are competing for our students' time and attention, making the already difficult task of keeping them engaged and excited about learning even more complicated. That's why the Bright Ideas education grant program is more important than ever as it provides funding for creative, engaging hands-on classroom projects.



This school year, Four County EMC awarded \$19,860 to educators at local schools. And since the Bright Ideas program began in 1994, more than \$11.5 million in grant funding has been awarded statewide, making possible approximately 11,000 Bright Ideas projects, inspiring more than 2.2 million North Carolina students. Locally, Four County EMC has awarded over \$400,000 since the program began.

Amy Blessing, Kindergarten teacher at Malpass Corner Elementary school in Pender County, is one local educator who is helping bring learning to life.

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*Ms. Blessing conducts classroom time outside in the Learning Environment (playground) area. This project aims to create an outdoor learning environment that invites children outdoors to discover the natural world.*

**Bright Ideas Grant**

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Her project entitled “Outdoor Learning—Connecting Kids with Nature” was selected by Four County EMC for a 2017–18 Bright Ideas grant.

“Scientific research shows that children’s social, psychological, academic and physical health is positively impacted when they have daily contact with nature. The goal for my project is to provide opportunities for our children to benefit from the positive impacts of con-

necting with nature and help make our outdoor learning environment an extension of our classroom,” explained Ms. Blessing.

“This project is a great example of the unique learning experiences the Bright Ideas program makes possible in local classrooms every year,” said Gay Johnson of Four County EMC. “We commend Ms. Blessing for developing this creative idea and congratulate her on winning a grant to fund the project

and make a meaningful and lasting impact on students.”

Four County EMC is currently accepting grant applications for the 2018–19 school year. Teachers who submit their applications by the Aug. 15 early bird deadline will be entered into a drawing for one of five \$100 Visa gift cards. The final application deadline is Sept. 28. Grants are available for all subjects, and educators can apply individually or as a team. Learn more and apply at [www.NCBrightIdeas.com](http://www.NCBrightIdeas.com).

## Congratulations on “50 Years” of Service



Congratulations to R. W. Blanchard, Jr. on reaching a milestone of 50 years of service on Four County EMC’s Board of Directors!

Over the years, he has witnessed much progress and development as well as many changes in the electric industry, from how setting a pole has advanced to the ever changing technology that we know today.

Mr. Blanchard began serving on Four County EMC’s Board of Directors on March 15, 1968, and continues to serve as representative for the East Sampson County Directorate District. During his tenure, Mr. Blanchard served as



*Blanchard’s family joined Four County EMC board members and staff at the celebration. (Family, pictured left to right): Michele Houston; Donna Blanchard; R.W. Blanchard, Jr., and wife Shelby; Gayla Johnson; and John Blanchard.*

the Cooperative’s Board President for 21 years, from 1983–2004, and continues his service on the Board as a representative of Four County EMC with various affiliated organizations. “We thank Mr. Blanchard

for his many years of service and dedication to help make our Mission, Vision and Values come true for our members,” commented CEO Mitch Keel.



### Energy Tip of the Month

When streaming online content, use the smallest device that makes sense for the number of people watching. Avoid streaming on game consoles, which use 10 times more power than streaming through a tablet or laptop.

*Source: energy.gov*



# Local Students Attend Four County EMC Youth Leadership Camp

**F**our County EMC held its 11th Annual Youth Leadership Weekend at Camp Bowers in White Oak on March 16–18. Eighteen area high school juniors attended this year.

Students were taught the cooperative business model as well as what makes Four County different from other electricity providers. After that, they participated in an introductory session and initiation games.

Students experienced a full day of leadership training on Saturday that involved many various team building exercises as well as individual exercises. The students learned and applied the seven C.O.P.E. goals: teamwork, communication, trust, leadership, decision making, problem solving and self-esteem. C.O.P.E. is an acronym for “Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience.”

Tawana Williams, “The Hope Coach,” motivated

the group by delivering her message of hope by discussing the obstacles that she has overcome in her life as she was born without arms and impaired use of her legs. She also performed demonstrations of how she utilizes her feet and toes to perform daily tasks such as putting on socks, tying shoes and even how she fed and changed her daughter’s diaper when she was a baby. Everyone in attendance felt inspired to conquer whatever hurdles that may be in front of them after hearing her phenomenal message.

At the conclusion of the weekend, the students reflected back over the two-day camp and shared what they learned.



*Bottom row left to right... Isa Lu (Topsail), Cameron Baker (Union), Hunter Cooper (Trask), Robbie Cooley (East Bladen)*

*Middle row left to right... Leah Spearman (Union), Amber Strong (Pender Early College), Jacelyn “Jacy” Matthias (Pender), Allison Buckner (Trask), Makayla Newberne (James Kenan), Ashley Hardin (East Bladen), Paige Hardison (Harrells)*

*Top row left to right... Michael Allen (Topsail), Sarah Pearl Farrow (Wallace-Rose Hill), Alfredo Espinal (Wallace-Rose Hill), Callie Lewis (West Bladen), Trenton Lyons (West Bladen), Denisse Sada Romero (Hobbs), Elian Baltazar (James Kenan)*

Paige Hardison from Harrells Christian Academy said “This weekend immensely surpassed all of my expectations. I made a lot of new friends and we did a lot of new things. Leadership was the main focus but that wasn’t the only thing that we learned. We also learned a lot about trust through leadership and that we can do a lot of good things as a team that we can’t do alone.”

Isa Lu from Topsail High School said, “This weekend was more than I expected. I got to meet a lot of new friends and really hone in on my leader-

ship skills and teamwork. I’m really happy that I got to challenge myself on the high ropes course because usually I’m always a very shy and timid person. I think in the end, it was all worth it.”

“Watching someone overcome their fear of heights through the support of all of their peers cheering for them is something that will never get old. This program is teaching young adults how to become better leaders in their schools and communities,” said Youth Leadership Weekend Coordinator,

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## Winning Recipe

from the editor



### Crust

- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ sticks of butter
- ½ cup chopped pecans
- Pinch of salt

Mix and press into greased 9" x 13" pan or a 12-14 inch pizza pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until crust is brown. Cool.

### Filling

- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 2 cups of cool whip

Cream together confectioners' sugar and cream cheese. Fold in cool whip. Spread over cooled crust.

### Strawberry Pizza



### Topping

- 1 pt. chopped strawberries
- ¾ cup sugar
- 6 drops of red food coloring
- 2 Tablespoons cornstarch
- ½ cup of water

Cook until thick, cool and pour over filling. Chill before serving. Enjoy!

### Youth Leadership Camp

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Jeremy Dewberry. "The vital skills they learn and develop over the course of the weekend are something they will carry with them the rest of their lives and will prove to be very beneficial in all of their future endeavors."

Each year, students vote on which male and female students they consider to be the best leaders of the weekend. This year's winners were Cameron Baker from Union High School and Isa Lu from Topsail High School. Four County offered to sponsor both of them to represent Four County EMC at Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., this June.

In addition to learning leadership skills and overcoming challenges, the students will also have an opportunity to write an essay about the experience for a chance to win one of two \$1,000 college scholarships. The winners will be announced in late May and will receive the scholarships once enrolled in college.

For more photos and to see a video of the weekend camp, check out Four County EMC's Facebook page.

### Four County Electric

#### Our Mission

To provide highly reliable electric service, innovative energy solutions and outstanding service to our Members and Communities.

#### Our Values

- Respect
- Integrity
- Trust
- Teamwork
- Commitment
- Excellence

#### Our Vision

To be an advocate for our Members by:

- Exceeding members' expectations
- Utilizing well trained, motivated employees
- Achieving excellence
- Operating efficiently
- Maintaining hometown values

### Four County Connection

Gay Johnson, Editor

Published monthly by Four County Electric Membership Corporation, P.O. Box 667, Burgaw, NC 28425, as a service to our members like:



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Currie, NC

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