

Youth Leadership Congress Teaches Cooperation, Leadership

Clark Electric Cooperative sponsored five students to this year's 51st Youth Leadership Congress (YLC), held at UW–River Falls July 16–18. Aaron Lindner, Greenwood; Derek Anding, Granton; Austin Naedler, Granton; Stewart Braun, Abbotsford; and Casey Krueger, Colby joined nearly 150 students from Wisconsin to learn more about the cooperative business model and improve their leadership skills. The YLC is designed to provide today's youth with stronger leadership and team-building skills, as well as a broader understanding of cooperatives.

Through a mix of workshop sessions, hands-on activities, and team-building experiences, participants were exposed to a variety of real-life issues and given the opportunity to identify and explore their leadership potential. Sessions related to the importance of setting goals and how determination, hard work, and persistence pay off, and how to step up as a leader whether you are in a leadership position or not. The students also established relationships with other students from across Wisconsin throughout the three-day event.

These are a few of the comments received from the students who represented CEC:

"The conference was a great experience and I learned many new things. I learned how cooperatives work and about safety around electricity. I also learned different ways to be a leader."

"The conference was a very fun and educational experience."

"I learned a lot about cooperatives and to how get



Representing Clark Electric at the 2014 Youth Leadership Congress were, left to right, Casey Krueger, Stewart Braun, Austin Naedler, Derek Anding, and Aaron Lindner.

out of my comfort zone and participate in group activities. This will help me to achieve my goals in the future."

"The animated illusionist was amazing and really funny."

Wisconsin's electric cooperatives and UW–River Falls have co-sponsored this event for 51 years to demonstrate to high school students the basics of cooperatives and how they can apply the ideals and philosophies of cooperation directly to their lives. Students who attend the congress improve their ability to interact with their peers and demonstrate their desire to be leaders.

The delegates left the conference with valuable leadership skills they can use both in school and in their community activities. Each spring Clark Electric Cooperative contacts schools in our service area asking for students to represent the cooperative at the YLC. This is a great opportunity for students entering 10th or 11th grade. ■



Left: All 146 YLC delegates pose for a group photo. Above: Students try to untangle themselves in one of the many team-building exercises.