



Contact:
Lindsay Scherer
Phone: 763-477-3111
Fax: 763-477-3054
E-mail: lscherer@whe.org

News Release

WRIGHT-HENNEPIN AWARDS \$28,700 IN SCHOLARSHIPS TO LOCAL STUDENTS

Rockford, Minn. (May 25, 2011) — Twenty-one local students received scholarships from Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association (WH) this year, totaling \$28,700. This 2011 contribution raised the amount the cooperative has awarded to \$518,000 since its scholarship program began in 1988.

WH awarded the scholarships during a banquet at its headquarters in Rockford, Minn. on May 19. The scholarships are funded through donations from WH's diversified non-electric businesses – WH Security, WH Services, HeatMyFloors.com, WH Generation and WH International Response Center – under the umbrella of the WH Holding Company. By using this funding method, WH's education program is not financed through members' electric rates.

“The value of a good education in today's competitive world cannot be understated,” said Mark Vogt, WH president and CEO. “We're pleased to help get these young men and women off to a solid start toward their educational goals.”

Tom Mach, WH Holding Company board chair, echoed those sentiments.

“You will be impressed by what you hear from these students tonight,” Mach said. “You will know that the world will be in good hands.”

WH Local Schools Scholarship

WH awards one scholarship per school district in its service area to outstanding students pursuing higher education.

The following recipients were chosen to receive a Local Schools Scholarship:

Justine Bauer, Annandale High School
Samantha Kramer, Buffalo High School
Nicole Dallman, Dassel-Cokato High School
Shelby Streachek, Delano HS
Sabrina Kieser, Howard Lake-Waverly High School
Megan Johnston, Maple Grove High School
Ashley Hertwig, Maple Lake High School
Laura Hoberg, Monticello High School
Mackenzie Skatter, Orono High School
Justine Simon, Osseo Sr. High School
Brian Volkenant, Rockford High School
Benjamin Burney, Rogers High School
Elise Weber, St. Michael-Albertville Sr. High School
Alexander Phearman, Watertown-Mayer High School
Hannah Bergeson, Wayzata High School
Becca Sytsma, St. Cloud Technical High School – at-large

Edward R. Slebiska Memorial Line Worker Scholarship

Line workers make up a large percentage of WH's work force and possess a critical skill set that is in short supply in the electric utility industry. That is why WH offers two scholarships for this trade. This scholarship is awarded in memory of Ed Slebiska who co-founded WH in 1937 and became its first CEO, holding that position until his retirement in 1977. During that time, Slebiska helped lead the cooperative in bringing reliable and accessible electricity to rural Wright County and western Hennepin County.

This year's recipients of the Edward R. Slebiska Memorial Lineworker Scholarship are: **Joseph Chap**, Cokato, Minn., and **Garret Ernhart**, Buffalo, Minn.

Elwyn and Hazel Knickerbocker Memorial Line Worker Scholarship

Long-time WH members Doris and Ron Horswell of Annandale, Minn., created this scholarship in 2005 to honor the memory of Doris' parents, Elwyn and Hazel

Knickerbocker, who played crucial roles in bringing electricity to rural homes and farms in Wright and Hennepin counties. Elwyn served on WH's board of directors, representing District 1 – near Annandale, Clearwater and Maple Lake – for 53 years. At that time, he was the longest serving electric cooperative director in the nation. Hazel was a tireless champion of rural electrification, offering a clear voice of support during early efforts to organize the cooperative.

Joshua Jerde, Buffalo, Minn. received the Elwyn and Hazel Knickerbocker Memorial Line Worker Scholarship. The Horswells personally presented the scholarship to Jerde at the banquet.

“We are grateful to the entire Knickerbocker family for making this scholarship available to WH's program,” WH Board Chair Chris Lantto said.

WH has gone on to hire a number of the Slebiska and Knickerbocker scholarship winners after the recipients have completed line-worker training. A number of other WH employees have been recipients of various WH scholarships over the years as well.

“It's turned into a great feeder system of local talent,” Vogt said.

Basin Electric Scholarships

Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin) – one of WH's wholesale power suppliers – headquartered in Bismarck, N.D., annually awards a scholarship to its distribution cooperative members and to an employee's descendent. **Andrew Zipp**, St. Michael, Minn., and **Michelle Hansmann**, Hamel, Minn., each received a \$1,000 scholarship from WH, courtesy of Basin. Andrew is the son of WH Accounting Supervisor Scott Zipp and his wife Lisa.

WH is a member-owned non-profit electric utility that provides electric power to Wright County and the western part of Hennepin County. The cooperative has been a corporate citizen in this area since 1937 and currently serves more than 46,000 electric accounts. The utility started its security division in 1989 that provides local home security solutions as well as monitors alarm systems for more than 50,000 customers in 32 states and three Canadian provinces.

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