



WHITE RIVER VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

News Release

Contact:

Jamie Dopp, Manager of Marketing and Communications

O: (417) 335-9216, C: (417) 425-8739

jdopp@whiteriver.org

For immediate release:

White River Valley Electric Cooperative Youth Tour Winners Receive Scholarship

Branson, Missouri – White River Valley Electric Cooperative (WRVEC) is proud to announce the winners of the 2024 Youth Tour essay competition in which three area students will represent WRVEC and travel to Washington, D.C.

The 2024 winners are Bridgette Fitzpatrick (School of the Ozarks), Aven Goodnight (Nixa High School), and Gretchen House (Chadwick High School). The winners were chosen from a group of eleven finalists during WRVEC's annual Youth Tour banquet held on April 12 at the College of the Ozarks.

The other finalists were Katelyn Allen (Gainesville), Emily Burton (Forsyth), Alexis Combs (Bradleyville), Clara Dean (Branson), Alexander Merrell (Forsyth), Linnea Payne (Lutie), Harley Viall (Hollister), and Asa Wells (Ozark).

High school juniors from participating schools in White River Valley Electric Cooperative's five-county service area submitted an essay or video that answered the question, "How will the Cooperative Power my Future?" At the banquet, finalists took a quiz about electric cooperatives followed by a presentation of their essays in front of friends, family, and a panel of judges.

"We were so impressed by the caliber of the students who applied to be a part of this year's Youth Tour program," said Nathan Stearns, community programs coordinator. "The level of preparation was evident, and I am excited to see what the future holds for these young people as they venture out into the professional world."



Pictured Left to Right: 2024 Youth Tour Winners, Aven Goodnight (Nixa), Gretchen House (Chadwick), and Bridgette Fitzpatrick (School of the Ozarks)

The three finalists will join more than 2,000 other winners from electric cooperatives across the United States at the Youth Tour taking place in Washington, D.C. from June 14-20. Fitzpatrick, Goodnight, and House will each receive an all-expenses paid trip to the Nation's Capital which includes touring national monuments, visiting elected officials, and experiencing the government in action. In addition, they will receive a \$1,500 scholarship from the Operation Round Up Trust Board and an invitation to attend WRVEC's annual meeting.

The annual Youth Tour contest is open to students who live and attend school in White River Valley Electric Cooperative's service area, or who have WRVEC service in their homes. Submissions for the 2025 program will begin next spring. For more information about the Youth Tour program,

visit <https://www.whiteriver.org/community/youth-programs/youth-tour/>



2024 Youth Tour Finalists Pictured Left to Right
Front: Aven Goodnight, Gretchen House, Bridgette Fitzpatrick, Clara Dean, Emily Burton. **Back:** Asa Wells, Harley Viall, Alexis Combs, Alexander Merrell, Linnea Payne, and Katelyn Allen

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[White River Valley Electric Cooperative](#) is a [Touchstone Energy Cooperative](#) dedicated to ensuring our members receive safe and reliable service in their homes and businesses across five southwest Missouri counties including Ozark, Taney, Stone, Christian and Douglas.