

News Release



Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas

Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, Clinton School chronicle history of electrification in state

Little Rock, Ark. — Aug. 20, 2018 — The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas recently completed an oral history video project to chronicle the state's electric cooperatives' efforts to provide electricity to those who otherwise would not have been served.

The project was undertaken by graduate students from the Clinton School of Public Service, who partnered with the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, to collect the stories of people who remembered and were positively affected by rural electrification.

Video link: <https://vimeo.com/user18626233/review/285147960/aced935b3a>

"Electricity is an essential public service often taken for granted," said Duane Highley, president and CEO of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas. "For rural Arkansans in the early-to-mid 20th century, electrification changed their lives and transformed their communities."

The Clinton School team (Amie Alexander, Paxton Richardson, Fiona O'Leary Sloan, Emily Smith, and Josh Snyder) and electric cooperative employees conducted nearly 50 interviews during several months across rural Arkansas to document this important piece of Arkansas' history.

"The results of this project will educate generations to come about the importance of cooperatives and electrification," said Lori L. Burrows, vice president and general counsel for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, who led the project. "Capturing this oral history in a video format ensures that this important part of our state's history is preserved in a meaningful and accessible manner."

Highley added that as the state's electric cooperatives continue to evolve and provide electricity and other services, it is important to remember the efforts of past generations.

"We work diligently to improve the quality of life for the present and future generations of electric cooperative consumers, just like the electric cooperative pioneers," he said. "Our heritage of service is a testament to our pledge to continue our mission."

Arkansas' 17 local electric cooperative distribution systems, statewide association and generation and transmission cooperative serve approximately 500,000 members in 74 of the state's 75 counties. The cooperatives are member-owned utilities established to provide reliable, affordable electric service to farms, homes, schools, churches, businesses and other establishments across the state in a responsible manner.

The distribution cooperatives own and govern Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI), a service association for the electric cooperatives, as well as Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation, a generation and transmission cooperative, which provides wholesale power to the distribution cooperatives.

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