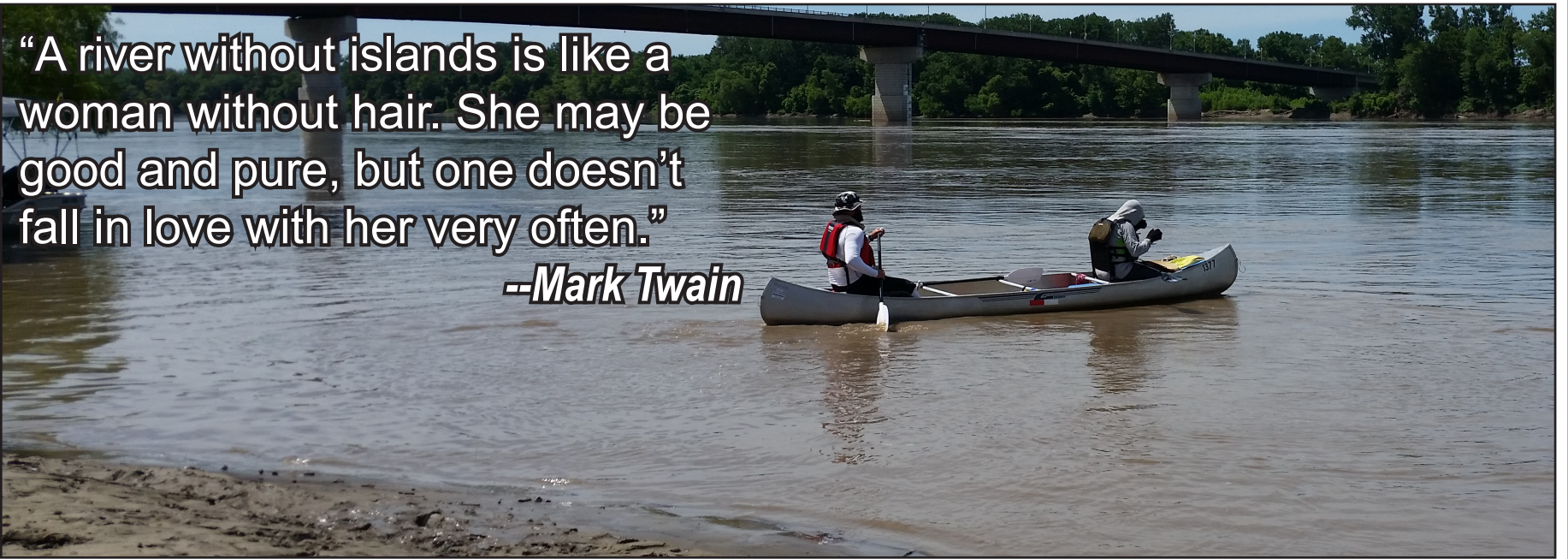




ElectricNews

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“A river without islands is like a woman without hair. She may be good and pure, but one doesn't fall in love with her very often.”

--Mark Twain

A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT...WCE Lineman Brandon Heck (left) and Operations Clerk Wes Schloman head out on the next leg of the Missouri American Water MR 340, the world's longest non-stop river race, in July. The two tackled the Mighty Missouri and finished in just over 2 1/2 days in 129th place out of 431 registered competitors. (Additional coverage on page 3.)

Missouri's Youth Tour delegation is 98 strong

What makes electric cooperatives different from other utilities is that “giving something back to the community” is part of their business plan. Why do electric cooperatives bring high school students to Washington, D.C.? Because it is important to learn about the political process to interact with your government. Students walk away from this week a better leader and with a sense that they can make a difference.

“Participating in the Youth Tour made the ‘idea’ of our government into a real thing for me,” Santa Fe High School senior Kylie Limback said.

She was joined on the trip by fellow delegates Britnee Morris and Daphanie Parks, both seniors at Chilhowee High School.

“For me, the whole trip was just quite surreal,” Chilhowee High School delegate Britnee Morris said. “The history books in class certainly don't do Washington, D.C. any justice. You can look at these memorials and things in history books all you want, but it really gives you a different feeling when you



WCE's delegates on the 2015 Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. (l-r) Daphanie Parks of Chilhowee High School, Kylie Limback of Santa Fe High School and Britnee Morris of Chilhowee High School, visit the United States Capitol Building. They were part of Missouri's 98-member delegation on the 52nd annual Youth Tour.

are up close looking right at them.”

The three were part of a 98-member delegation from across Missouri, making up one of the biggest state delegations on the tour, which brings together more than 1,600 youth from around the country.

Year after year, students use the same phrase to describe their experience on the Youth Tour, and this one was no dif-

ferent.

“Before going to Washington, D.C., everyone told me this was the trip of a lifetime, but there are no words to describe how true that statement was,” Parks said. “Getting to see our nation's capital first-hand was a spectacular experience.”

More than 50,000 students from rural areas and small towns across America

have participated in this unique program, with participants going on to become doctors, teachers, aircraft designers and even top legislators in the U.S. Senate. Delegates also return with a new appreciation of America and her history.

“My favorite thing was definitely the Lincoln Memorial, hands down,”

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(L-r) Brandon Heck and Wes Schloman get ready to shove off again under the watchful eye of fellow WCE lineman Pete Nelson and another competitor who stopped near the team for a break.

A mere 340 miles of river is no match for sheer determination

“No pain, no gain.”
 “Never give up.”
 “Aim for the stars.”
 “Don’t bite off more than you can chew.”

Chose your cliché. They don’t mean anything to Brandon Heck and Wes Schloman. For two guys, an old canoe, and no Plan B, facing the Missouri River was about more than finding motivation -- or being shook to their senses -- by a few choice words.

They didn’t need anyone to tell them they could make it, or that they were crazy. They already knew both of these.

Wes, a 65-year-old grandfather and meticulous planner, who is the operations clerk at the cooperative, and Brandon, a lineman and young father with toddlers at home who has just enough grit to prove you wrong or die trying, really didn’t picture themselves as ferocious river race competitors.

“It was early in February and we were filling up our work trucks at the gas pump,” Wes said.

“I had seen a sticker on the back of some guy’s truck and asked Wes what it was,” Brandon said. “He told me and I said, ‘Cool. Let’s do that.’”

They began talking about it, and within days, “Team Keep Moving” was registered in the 2015 Missouri American Water MR 340.

“I figured we had to do it then, because he told everyone,” Brandon said of his paddling partner.

Did they ever plan to not finish?

“No,” Brandon said.

Preparation

Nearly every day between registration and the race, somebody asked one of them if they were really going to do it, or what they were doing to get ready.

“I can’t believe we kept getting asked that,” Wes said. “You’d be surprised how many times we got asked that. You just kind of mumble and walk off.”

So how did they prepare? The question draws belly laughter from all three, (fellow lineman Pete Nelson was the team’s support system at each checkpoint along the way).

“We didn’t practice at all,” Brandon said. “Wes paddled his kayak and I went to the gym.”

“We were only in the canoe twice for about 10 minutes at a time before we took off,” Wes said.

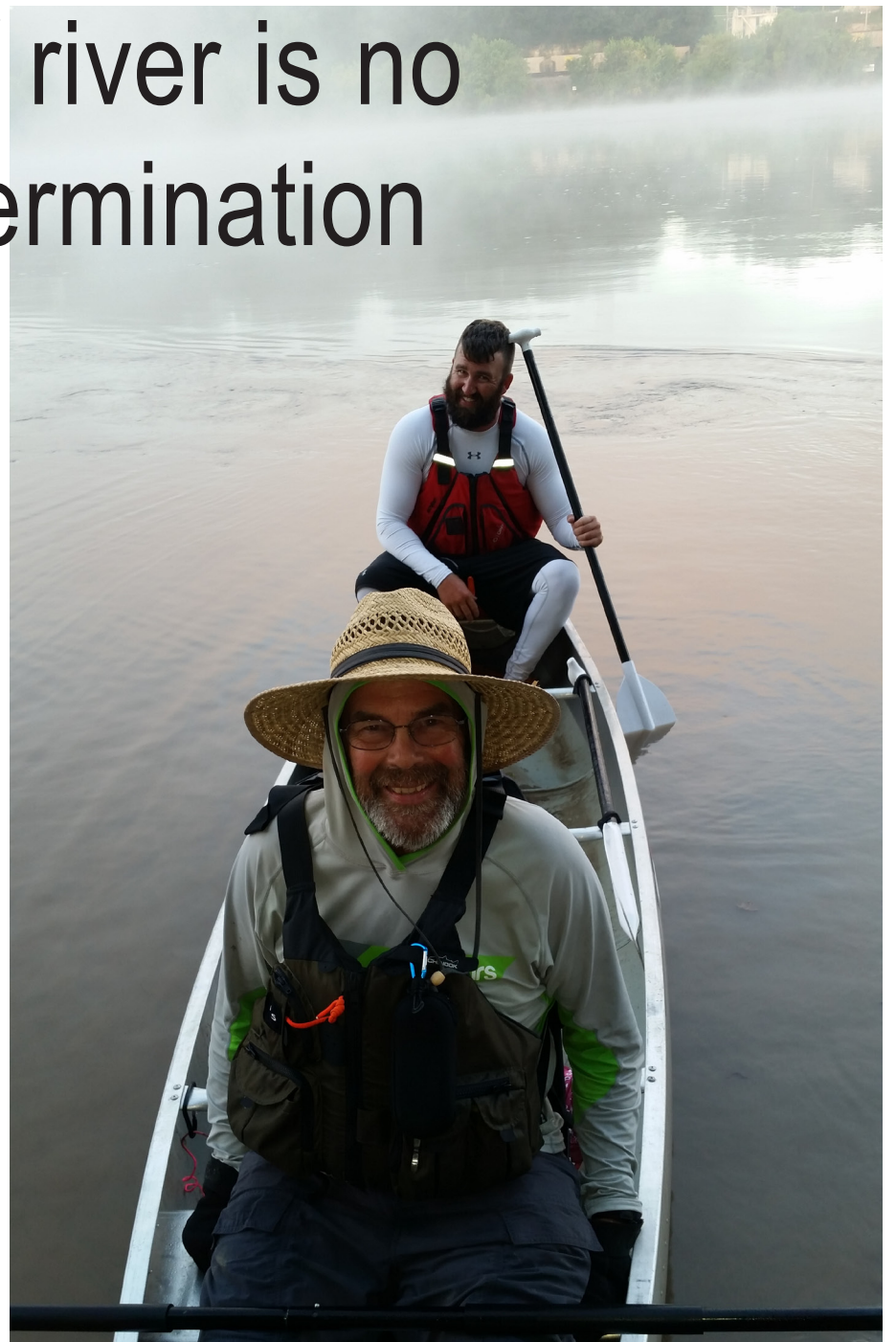
When did it dawn on them that this was real?

“It was that morning when we were putting the boat in,” Wes said. “I thought, ‘This is really going to happen.’”

Reality Hits

On Tuesday, July 28, the two launched their canoe from the starting dock at Kaw Point in Kansas City. Little did they know just how hard the tests they would face over the next 2 1/2 days would be. There was not much in their favor. They had no training. They had no practice. They had little knowledge of the river, and they had no experience. To many, that was a recipe for failure; so much that a good-natured pool had

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Wes Schloman (front) and Brandon Heck prepare to take on a foggy river after shoving off from Jefferson City on their second day of the Missouri American Water MR340.

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Stan Rhodes, Asst. Sect.
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Sandra Streit, Director
Jeremy Ahmann, Director

Grit, heart and spirit, 340 miles of it...

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developed at the co-op as to when they would drop out.

"It was really hard," Brandon said. "At night, you saw things that weren't there. Your body ached. It was tough."

"It was the most brutal thing I have ever done to myself," Wes said. "I've run 50K trail races, and they don't even hold a match to this."

The journey was not without its obstacles. Not only was the river up from a wet spring and early summer, but physical obstacles plagued Wes on Day 1 when the heat was nearly unbearable.

"I started to dehydrate and my hands locked up. I couldn't make them open up. I could feel it start to go through my whole body," he said.

The two stopped for him to cool off, drink some water and take some salt tablets.

"I slowly started coming back around, and we took off again," he said.

Then came the storms. But, they made it through Day 1. Knowing their ally Pete was waiting at the next checkpoint with fresh supplies and food made the grueling task bearable.

"We never could have done this without Pete," Wes said. "He was so important to us finishing."

Although he wasn't the one paddling, the race took a toll on Pete as well. He spent his days driving from checkpoint to checkpoint, watching for his team to appear, helping them haul the canoe out, having food and supplies ready, setting up camp when they needed a few hours of sleep, and playing the role of public relations specialist. He tried to sleep when they did, but it was nearly impossible.

"I burned up my phone," he said. "There was not much sleeping because I was getting so many texts from people checking on them. It was amazing. At first, all the texts coming in yet were, 'Have they quit yet?' and then later on, it turned into real, genuine support."

"They were trying to figure out who was going to win the lottery on when we were bailing out," Wes laughed.

There wasn't much laughing early the second morning, however. The team arrived at their checkpoint in Jefferson City about 3:45 a.m. for a couple of hours of sleep. When they woke up, you could cut the fog with a knife, and the dangerously hot weather from the day before had been replaced with a summer chill.

"Brandon and I were sleeping in my wife's truck, and Wes was sleeping in a tent," Pete said. "I went to the tent where he was sleeping on his air mat

tress and said, 'Hey, Wes, it's time to get up.' There was no movement, nothing. So I unzipped the tent and gave him a little shake. His whole body moved and he was stiff as a board. I seriously thought he was dead.

"I shook him some more, and he finally groaned and looked over at me as innocent as can be and said, 'What'er we doin'?' I said, 'Well, Wes, we're going to paddle up the river,' Pete said.

Still in a daze, Wes said he didn't understand.

"I was starting to get mad, and I thought, 'I'm not paddling anywhere!'" he said. "I still didn't understand why Pete woke me up. I got up and went to get in line for the restroom and after a little while, it dawned on me. 'I know why I've got to paddle!'"

Seeing the light at the end of the tunnel

With less heat than the first day, and knowing they were closing in on the finish line, the second day was a success. They were also gaining respect from the people back home.

"Every time we'd stop, Pete would tell us or we would see that a lot of people had sent texts, so that was a good motivator. Family and friends were showing up. That was cool, too," Brandon said.

After 340 miles and 64 hours, 20 minutes, the team arrived at the finish line in St. Charles, just after midnight. They had made it to the end of what is described by the MR340 organization as an event that "ain't no mama's boy float trip." Participants are allowed exactly 88 hours to complete the course, which this year, only three-fourths of the participants were able to do. And, they did it with a good enough time to place 129th. How did they do it?

"Well, Brandon is strong," Wes said. "I'm endurance. We had both decided we were going to finish. I knew we were going to get so much grief if we didn't that it was a big motivator. And, when it got rough, I had my bag of cookies."

Pete has his own opinion.

"They are a couple of strong-willed, Christian men," he said, matter-of-factly.

"We had talked about what we would do if one wanted to quit," Wes said. "We fully expected to get angry and yell at one another, but we never did."

Pete has his own opinion on that, too.

"They would never yell at each other, but I would talk to one guy and he would (grumble), and I would talk to the other guy, and he would (grumble). I just tried to make it all nicey-nicey," he said.



Wes Schloman (front) and Brandon Heck congratulate each other at the finish line of the Missouri American Water MR340 in St. Charles. The two took 64 hours and 20 minutes to paddle their canoe from Kaw Point in Kansas City, Mo. to St. Charles, Mo. in what is hailed as the world's longest non-stop river race.

Add counselor to his repertoire.

A look in the rear-view mirror

Now that the dust has settled and they have had time to reflect on just what they accomplished in the face of some pretty big adversities, the burning question is, will they do it again?

"Yes, I'd like to," Brandon said quickly.

"I want to," Wes echoed at the same time.

They laugh.

"Well, actually, I'm praying about it right now," Wes said. "It might take some divine intervention, but I want to."

What will they do differently?

Definitely invest in a GPS so they can detect the river channel and learn how to navigate the currents. Oh, and get a new, lighter, non-"heavy metal" canoe.

"The canoe had a new home before the race was over," Wes said. "My son now owns it. I promised myself I would never paddle it again."

Brandon's quote had to be censored.

From the Boardroom...

Regular meeting of the Board of Directors held May 28, 2015

The meeting was called to order by President Densil Allen, Jr. Robert Simmons, secretary of the cooperative, caused the minutes of the meeting to be kept. The following Directors were present: Densil Allen, Jr., Clark Bredehoeft, Max Swisegood, Dale Jarman, Robert Simmons, Sandra Streit, Jeremy Ahmann and Stan Rhodes and Richard Strobel. Also present were General Manager Mike Gray, and General Counsel Shawn Battagler.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

After discussion, the agenda was approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The unapproved minutes of the regular meeting of the board of directors held April 23, 2015 were approved.

REVIEW OF EXPENDITURES FOR APRIL

An itemized list of expenditures for April was presented to the board, and the payment of the bills was ratified.

APPROVAL OF REPORTS

The following April 2015 reports were approved: Operating Report (RUS Form 7) and Comparative Operating Statement including the Financial Statistical Report with month and budget comparisons and statistical data pertaining to operating revenue, expenses, margins, assets, liabilities, and KWH sales; Treasurer's Report and the written monthly Construction, Retirement, Maintenance and Operations Report.

MEMBERSHIPS

The applications submitted for membership in the cooperative were accepted and approved. Directors reviewed a list of requests for termination of membership in the cooperative which, along with their requests that their billings be deducted from their deposits and the remainder, if any, be refunded to them, were accepted and approved.

N.W. ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE, INC. REPORT

Gray and Swisegood reported on their attendance at the N.W. meeting. Highlights included a Platte-Clay Electric Solar Farm tour, staffing at N.C., power quality issues, ACEI wind farm issues, the election of an ACEI board representative from NW, and District 1 elections.

REVISED SERVICE RULES AND REGULATIONS 1-7

Directors approved modifications to the cooperative's rules and regulations as presented by management.

ANNUAL MEETING

A ballot summary for the bylaw change proposals was approved by the board.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Gray provided his Manager's Report for the month which included membership concerns, an IRS notice, discussion regarding the annual audit report, an NRECA report on regulatory issues, AMEC Fish Fry for state legislators, Emmanuel Cleaver's annual barbecue invitation, NRECA board election, cooperative international projects, strategic planning, ACEI annual meeting and a distributed generation committee report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Strobel raised the issue of preparing a survey for members to complete at the annual meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Strobel reported on highlights of the NRECA Directors' Conference.

MEETING ADJOURNED



WCE delegate Kylie Limback (front right) and several of her new friends wait for the busses to the airport terminal to begin their Youth Tour journey.

Missouri's Youth Tour delegation is 98 strong

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Morris said. "I have enjoyed studying the Lincoln family and the Civil War since I was little, so that was a big deal for me."

WCE has sent 52 area students to our nation's capital since reestablishing the Youth Tour program at the cooperative in 1992.

"On top of everything I was able to see and experience, meeting new people from around the state of Missouri was another great experience," Parks said. "I have friends that I know I'm going to have for a lifetime. Thank you to West

Central Electric for sending me on this amazing trip."

In addition to meeting new people, Limback says the Youth Toru has changed how she views the government process.

"I saw how anyone can be involved in some level of government if they choose," she said. "I plan on being an active citizen in our government."

Morris agreed.

"I thought it was a lot of fun, and a good way to get the youth of America to the center of everything that happens in our country," Morris said.



WCE delegate Daphanie Parks of Chilhowee High School participates in orientation before embarking on the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

FINANCIAL REPORT • Statement of Operations • April 2015

	This month	YTD 2015	YTD 2014
Revenue	1,737,002	9,609,828	10,254,328
Power Bill Expense	1,177,897	5,672,542	5,768,986
Operation & Maint. Expense	507,618	2,120,007	1,864,328
Depreciation Expense	158,476	628,879	604,324
Interest Expense	111,641	448,776	393,246
Total cost of Srvc. (Total Expense)	1,955,632	8,870,204	8,630,884
Operating Margins (Revenue less Expenses)	(218,865)	738,975	1,621,654
Other Margins	19,970	83,751	70,070
TOTAL MARGINS	(198,895)	822,726	1,691,724