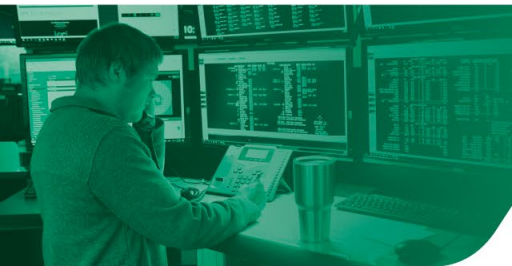




Iowa Association of
Electric Cooperatives

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

TOGETHER WE POWER ON



2021 Iowa Youth Leadership Academy
Rural Iowa Advocacy

Agenda

- Basics of advocacy
- The REC Method
- How to get involved
- Why to get involved



Tell me in the chat...

- What is an issue you care about in your community?



What is Advocacy?

- “Activity to influence decisions”
- Getting involved on issues you care about to achieve a particular outcome
 - Passing a bill, raising awareness, etc.
- Communicating with elected officials/candidates/media, sharing your story, voting
- Peer-to-peer efforts
- Opportunity to be a community leader



Communicating and Relationship Building

- Communicating
 - In-person meetings/events
 - Phone/email/social media/virtual meetings
 - Communication is a two-way street
 - What do your lawmakers care about?
- Relationship building
 - Don't just show up when you need something
 - Get to know people
 - Become a trusted resource
 - Authenticity is important and makes people care



Storytelling

- Data is important, but stories are memorable
- Invoking an emotional response makes the brain take note
- “Elevator pitch”



Electric Co-op Advocacy

- Iowa Rural Power – “Green Shirt Army”
- Nonpartisan
- State and federal
- Political and legislative
- In-person and online
- Co-op staff, directors, Youth Tour students, member-consumers, or anyone who cares about rural Iowa!
- Concern for community, reliable & affordable power
 - Energy, agriculture, economic development, safety, taxes, labor



Example... Rural Economic Development

- Federal funding for rural communities, funding was recently increased
- Spec buildings, hospital expansions, non-profit projects, business start-ups, grocery stores, daycares, anything the community may need!
- Broadband service – (MiEnergy, ACEC, MVEC)



Iowa Youth Tour

- Meeting elected officials in Washington, DC
- Learning about government
- See first-hand the results of advocacy
 - Meet with entire delegation, run with Sen. Grassley



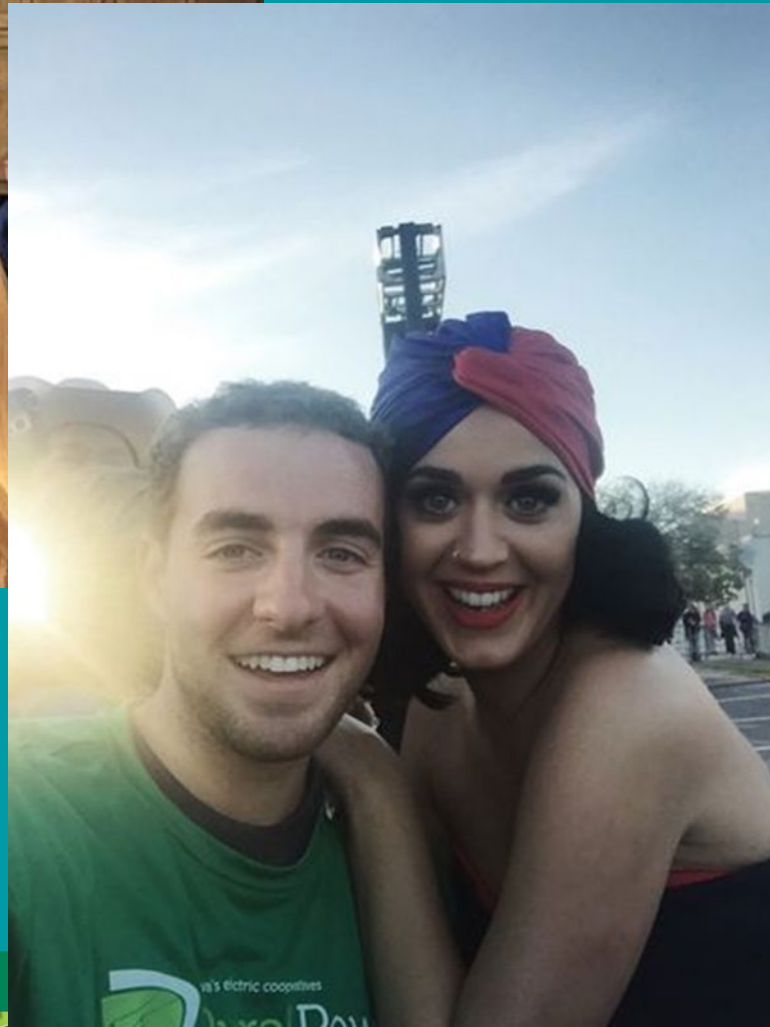
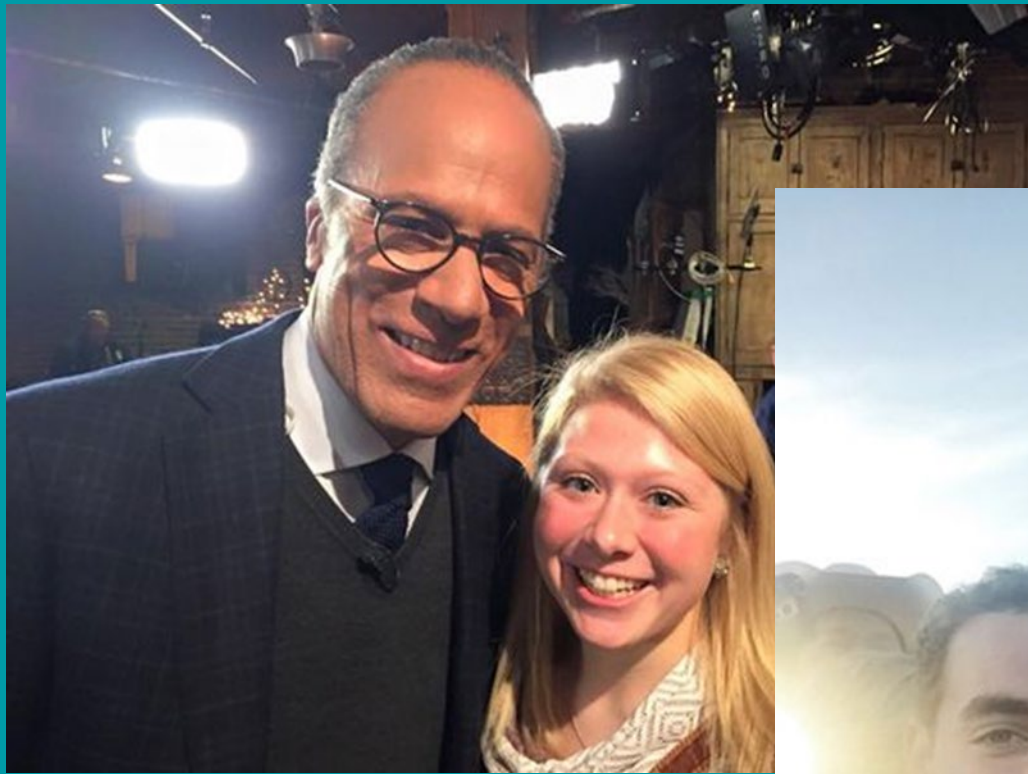


After the trip...

- Attend events in Iowa
 - Caucus
 - Congressional
 - Fundraisers
 - State Capitol







Poll Time

- Do you plan on voting someday?



Co-ops Vote

- Initiative that encourages rural residents to get out the vote
- Non-partisan
 - *“We don’t care who you vote for... we just care that you vote!”*
- Voting age is 18... but it’s never too early to care about voting



Your vote matters

- You have a unique perspective – voting is an important way to share it
- Especially important for rural communities
- Congressional race in Iowa in 2020 was decided by 6 votes



Example... Student Voter Drive

- Collin Moseley from Illinois
- Partnered with his electric co-op to host a voter registration booth at a community festival
- Face painting for kids, voter registration forms for adults
- Over 100 people took information on how to vote
- 18 new voter registrations (mostly high school students)



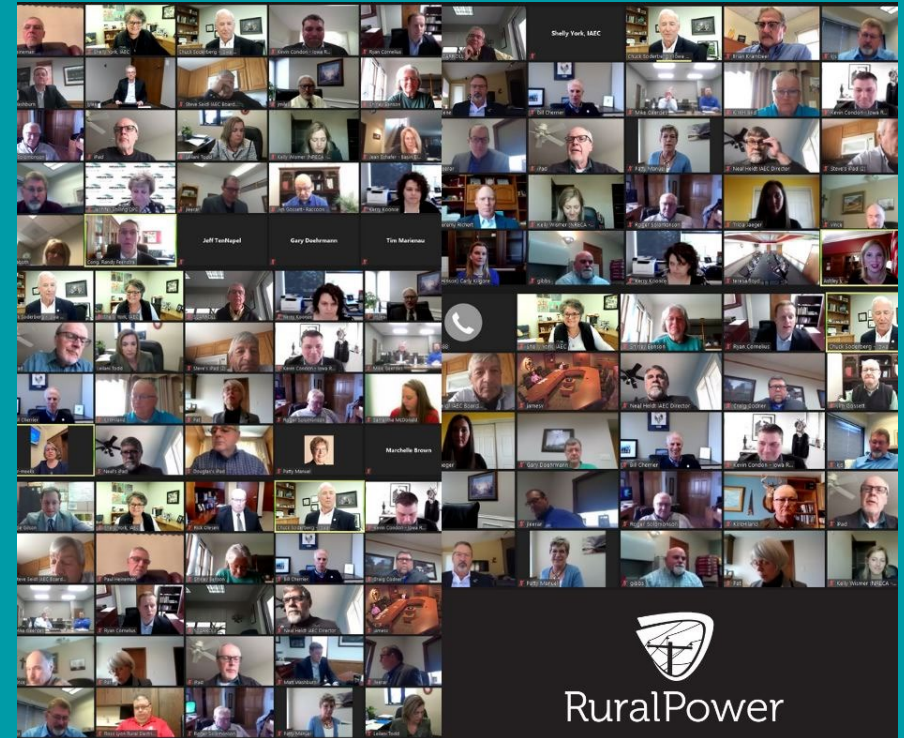
Poll Time

- What is your favorite social media platform?



Online Advocacy

- Email and social media are important tools for reaching lawmakers
- Think about your target audience... on what platform can you reach them?
 - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat



Find Your Audience

- Facebook
 - Mostly older audiences, legislators
- Twitter
 - Media, legislators
- TikTok
 - Ads are banned, but plenty of organic advocacy
- Instagram
 - Legislators, younger audiences



Overall Tips

- Work with everybody... you never know who will care about a particular issue!
- Peer-to-peer outreach: find teammates
- Be open and honest
- Be consistent and present
- Be informed
- Tell stories



Think back to what you shared at the start...

- Using what you've learned today, how can you advocate on the issue you care about?
- Raise your hand and share!



Thank You!



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