

## Shimkus visits Shelby Solar Farm

U.S. Congressman John Shimkus recently met with local cooperative leaders at Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) Headquarters in Shelbyville. He discussed rural broadband Internet issues and various energy related topics. Following the meeting at the cooperative, Congressman Shimkus was given a tour of the Shelby Solar Farm, which became operational in the fall of 2015.

“I serve a district that is very rural and is served by electric and telephone cooperatives. These co-ops supply much needed services to areas that would be left behind

without them,” said Shimkus.

“As we debate carbon and clean energy, it is good to see them having a diversified energy portfolio. I believe we need an all-of-the-above approach to our energy future and that not only includes renewables but also coal and other fossil fuels.”

Shimkus remarked he has visited other places with solar panels but not the size of the Shelby Solar Farm.

Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI) owns and operates the 500kWh solar plant located on SEC property that also houses Shelby Energy’s bulk LP gas storage tanks. It sits on four

acres and has over 2,050 panels that soak up the sun’s energy. PPI also constructed a similar solar farm in Canton, Ill. Combined, the two solar farms will produce enough electricity each year to meet the needs of 120 homes using an average of 1,200 kilowatt-hours of electricity each month.

PPI is a Springfield, Ill. based generation and transmission cooperative providing wholesale power to ten electric distribution cooperatives across the state. SEC is served by PPI.



*U.S. Congressman John Shimkus toured the Shelby Solar Farm and met with several local cooperative leaders. Also on the tour were, pictured left to right, Josh Shallenberger, President/CEO of Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC); John Scott, SEC Board Member; Kim Leftwich, President/CEO of Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative; Congressman Shimkus; Robert Reynolds, Vice President-Member Cooperative Services of Prairie Power, Inc.; Robert Hunzinger, President/CEO of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative; Duane Noland, President/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives; and Jim Matlock, COO of SEC.*

# Three 2016 academic scholarships up for grabs

**S**helby Electric Cooperative (SEC) has announced it will once again be awarding three academic scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each. Scholarships are awarded to a son or daughter of a current SEC member who is receiving electric service from the cooperative at the time the scholarship application is submitted.

In 2015 the winners were Benjamin Curtin of Stonington, Joshua Harmon of Moweaqua and Benjamin Houska of Shelbyville. “We are pleased to be able to provide these students with an opportunity to be awarded a scholarship as a way to give back to the communities we serve,” said Heidi Hall, who coordinates the program for the cooperative.

High school seniors pursuing a college education in the United States are eligible to participate in the program. Scholarships may be used for educational costs at any two- or four-year accredited college or university, including vocational/technical schools.



*2015 scholarship winners were, pictured from left, Benjamin Curtin of Stonington, Joshua Harmon of Moweaqua and Benjamin Houska of Shelbyville. Also pictured is Shelby Electric Cooperative board member John Scott.*

Candidates are chosen based on academic and community accomplishments, character and financial need as demonstrated in the application and essay. Friday, March 11, is the deadline for receipt of completed applications for 2016 graduates. Scholarship winners will be notified in June.

Applications can be obtained by visiting SEC’s website,

[shelbyelectric.coop](http://shelbyelectric.coop) and clicking on the “Our Community” menu tab or by calling Heidi Hall. Applications are also available from area high school guidance counselors. Please call the cooperative at 217-774-3986 or 1-800-677-2612 if you would like more information about this scholarship opportunity.



**P.O. BOX 560**  
**Shelbyville, IL 62565**  
**Phone: 217-774-3986**  
**or 1-800-677-2612**  
**[www.shelbyelectric.coop](http://www.shelbyelectric.coop)**  
**[twitter.com/YourCoop](https://twitter.com/YourCoop)**  
**[facebook.com/YourCoop](https://facebook.com/YourCoop)**

**Office Hours:**  
**7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Fighting winter chills? A crackling fire in the hearth warms the house, but don’t let it heat up your electric bill. To cool energy costs, keep the fireplace damper closed when not in use. Caulk around the fireplace hearth. Double up on wood-earned warmth by lowering the thermostat setting to between 50 degrees and 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Learn more at [www.energysaver.gov](http://www.energysaver.gov).

*Source: U.S. Department of Energy*

# Shelby Electric Cooperative is looking for the next generation of leaders

**W**hat do 1,500 high school students, our nation's capital and electric cooperatives have in common? The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, of course!

Youth Tour was established with one thought in mind – to inspire our next generation of leaders. Since 1964, more than 50,000 young Americans have taken advantage of this special opportunity offered by their electric cooperatives. Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) has participated in this program since 1967.

It takes place in June, when hundreds of electric co-ops across the country send participants to Washington, D.C. for a chance to learn about the cooperative business model, meet area legislators and enjoy a week of sightseeing.

While in D.C., participants have a chance to meet with their elected officials and discuss the issues that are important back home. Without a doubt, Youth Tour has grown into an invaluable program, giving young Americans an experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

In April, SEC starts the process by sending area high school students to Springfield as part of the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperative's Youth Day. Following Youth Day students will begin an interview process to select who will attend the Youth to Washington Tour in June. Two students will be chosen for a trip to Washington, D.C. compliments of your

cooperative. Two alternates are also chosen at this time.

If you are a high school junior interested in traveling to Springfield with the chance of earning a trip to Washington, D.C. please contact your school counselor or SEC.

Youth Day and Youth Tour is so much more than a sightseeing trip. Students have repeatedly shared that this experience has helped them grow into successful professionals. It has also benefited local communities. Youth Tour participants return home with a deeper understanding and skill set of what it takes to be a leader, and as a result, they put

these skills to use right here in our community.

Help us find the next generation of leaders by sharing the Youth Tour experience with a promising student. For more information about SEC's Youth Tour program, call toll free 1-800-677-2612.

Be on the lookout for more information about Youth Day and Youth Tour in future issues of Shelby News and on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/YourCoop](http://www.facebook.com/YourCoop).



*Brayton Wooters from Shelbyville and Samantha Degenhardt from Findlay represented Shelby Electric Cooperative in the 2015 Youth Tour. They joined 63 other students from Illinois and 1,660 young leaders from 44 states in the nation's capital and had the opportunity to visit with Congressman John Shimkus during the tour.*

**Shelby Energy Company**

**1-217-774-2311**

24-hours-a-day

**PWR-net Broadband Internet**

**1-877-994-2323**

7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Please leave a message after hours

**Shelby Electric Cooperative**

**1-800-677-2612**

**1-217-774-3986**

24-hours-a-day

# How the global energy market could shift in 2016

**A**fter a year where oil prices dominated the national news you might think the same issues will drive this year's energy stories. If you just concentrate on oil prices you will miss the larger picture for 2016. We rely on oil for transportation and petro chemicals but it is not the only game in town any more.

As our reliance on oil shrinks we will not turn to just one source of energy but several. This is different than what happened in the past; previously one form of energy was superseded by another.

In the 19th Century our reliance on wood gave way to coal and in the 20th Century that yielded to oil. In the 21st Century the next step will not be an orderly progression from one fuel to the next, it could be a free for all. Which source stands the best chance?

Let us get the easy answer out of the way first. Even though many electric cooperatives get their electricity from coal power plants, coal will not be the only option. Even though China and Japan will continue to open up new coal plants, United States consumption of coal

has gone down 17 percent since 2005. Unless something changes, coal will continue to get slammed by EPA regulations and climate change discussions.

Nuclear energy continues to create interest but not in a positive way. Since Fukushima, several U.S. aging plants have been closed. Many other countries are planning on phasing out nuclear all together including Germany, Japan and Taiwan.

Natural gas has been one of the big success stories in the past few years pouring out of U.S. fracking projects and undercutting coal as a cheap source of energy. U.S. natural gas production is up 45 percent since 2005.

Wind power is as cheap as coal in Germany and the United Kingdom.

The demand for solar is the highest it has ever been which may be the reason the price of solar panels has dropped 95 percent since 2008.

In spite of all this, oil still stands at the top. It is our greatest power source and will not change in the near future. Between high U.S. output, Iran probably resuming its exports and Saudi Arabia

low-balling to maintain market share, oil prices are likely to stay low for a while. This means less incentive to find an alternative.

The important part about oil that many fail to realize is that it does not compete with other forms of energy directly. Oil mostly powers cars, ships and planes whereas the others (coal, nuclear, natural gas and renewables) mostly generate electricity. The wild card for oil in 2016 and beyond will be how fast automobiles might start to run on electricity instead of gasoline or diesel. If and when we see a big shift, it may signal the true end of the oil age. However, it will not be replaced solely by the solar age or the bio-fuel age or the wind age, it will be replaced by all of them. Even coal and nuclear energy will play a role in the United States energy future.

*(This is an edited transcription by Shelby Electric Cooperative from a Bloomberg video titled Power Struggle: How the Energy Market Could Shift in 2016 Published on 11/11/2015 <http://bloomberg.com/news/videos/2015-11-11/power-struggle-how-the-energy-market-could-shift-in-2016>)*



*The production of electric cars could play a big role in the shift of the energy markets in the near future. Tesla charging stations are starting to pop up around the country; is this a sign of the future? Scheels' parking lot in Springfield, Illinois is home to several Tesla charging stations.*