



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Franklin County couple joins other young leaders in Nashville Annual conference focuses on cooperatives, agricultural issues



Ben and Lela Boggess of Franklin County were selected by Duck River Electric Membership Corporation to attend the 2010 Young Leaders Conference Feb. 12-14 at the Music City Sheraton in Nashville.

DREMC President and CEO Jim Allison expressed his appreciation to the Boggesses for accepting the cooperative's invitation to attend the conference. "It is through young couples like the Boggesses that we can continue to educate our up and coming leaders on the value and benefits of the cooperative business model," he said.

They and their children, Noah and Katelyn, joined more than 200 others from across the state for the annual conference, an educational and motivational event that brings young people together to develop leadership skills and learn about cooperatives and agricultural issues.

"If these young people can go home with one or two ideas that they can implement, then we have made a big difference in their lives," said Charles Curtis, director of special programs for Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation (TFBF) and president of the Tennessee

Council of Cooperatives (TCC). “This conference also gives them a chance to learn from each other and gain confidence to become more involved in their communities.”

TCC, which co-sponsors the conference with Farm Bureau’s Young Farmers and Ranchers (YF&R), is composed of a variety of cooperatives, including farm credit banks, TFBF, and dairy, farm supply, telephone, electric, and tobacco co-ops. YF&R is an organization for men and women ages 18 to 35 with an interest in agriculture.

With the theme “Communicating Leadership Cooperatively,” the program covered such timely topics as social media networking, value-added ventures, and the Tennessee Biofuels Initiative. In addition, a trade show gave participants a chance to learn more about the sponsoring organizations.

Attendees also had the option of touring Tennessee Farmers Cooperative’s LaVergne facilities on the afternoon of Feb. 12. Bart Krisle, TFC’s chief executive officer, welcomed the nearly 50 participants for the tour and later spoke at that night’s banquet, which TFC sponsored.

“Thank you for investing your time to improve your skills as leaders and increase your knowledge of co- op advantages,” said Krisle. “You represent the future of rural America and the future of cooperatives.”