

Dear Foster Hildreth:

My name is Anthony Kaskurs, a 17-year-old high school student that recently had the privilege of attending the Idaho Consumer-Owned Utilities Association Youth Rally about a week ago. In order to attend I had to write a short essay and appear in front of an interview board from OPALCO. I was selected to go as one of 5 delegates to Caldwell, Idaho where we would attend classes about electricity, the types of power companies, and what certain jobs were available in the power industry. I have to say I had a ton of fun.

One the first day we arrived at Anacortes to meet the other delegates that were selected to go from the San Juan's. Right from the get-go we hit it off as a group. Each delegate was funny, smart, caring, and amiable –people who really reflected the values of our small island communities. As we arrived at the rally in Idaho, we were immediately taken to the bowling alley where we started to get to know one another. It was a little strange being thrown into a pot of new faces, but after a while, we started to relax and talk to others as if we had know them all our lives.

Throughout the week we had dances, went to a waterpark, and roller-skated, but the most interesting part of the week was the time spent learning about the various utilities of the Pacific Northwest. One class taught us how electricity is transferred from Bonneville Power Administration, the company where OPALCO purchases its power, to our home appliances. It was a really awesome and informative class. We learned about the different types of distributors such as Co-ops, MUNI's, and IUO's, and how each operated and distributed their revenues. On the last day, awards were handed out, I was fortunate enough to receive a \$300 scholarship, and we began to say goodbye to all the friends that we made. Tears were shed, people were hugged, hands were shook, and many of us stayed up until 3 am, talking to the other delegates, sharing snapchats, and discussing our future plans. I, no doubt, made many friends at the rally that I will try to stay in contact with for years to come.

I have taken so much away from this rally experience and will continue to push for more and more juniors to apply for this opportunity. In as little time as one week I believe I have become a more caring, open individual, and have learned that it only takes a little courage at one moment in time to make friends and build relationships that will last a lifetime. Thank you again for offering this phenomenal trip and life altering adventure.

Anthony Kaskurs  
Orcas Island