



Kaden Cullen wins a prize provided by Copper Valley Electric Association for best electrical project in the 2008 Valdez Science Fair.

Working For the Community

*Your electric utility
and its employees make
a difference through their
endless service to others*

By Pam Blair

Commitment to community is a founding principle of electric cooperatives, but it is more than just talk.

It describes the motivation of publicly owned utilities. It explains why staff time is donated to assist communities served by the utilities, and money is donated to local causes.

It also explains the employees'

participation in local activities. They have a stake in the communities they serve, because they live there, too.

As a local business, staffed by your friends and neighbors, publicly owned utilities look for ways to make a difference—and beyond delivering electricity.

Here is a look at just some of the ways utilities in Alaska are helping their communities.

Copper Valley Electric Association Glennallen, Alaska

Children and safety are important to CVEA. In November, the co-op launched its community foundation by bringing Rachel's Challenge—a nationwide school outreach program

for the prevention of teen violence—to Valdez and Copper River schools.

Each year, the co-op donates to the Valdez High School senior class graduation celebration, intended to keep youth off the streets.

In 2008, CVEA gave \$9,500 in scholarships to students in Valdez and the Copper Basin. Awards included general, electrical industry and first-time community college scholarships for members attending Prince William Sound Community College (PWSCC).

The co-op also sent sophomores and juniors to the Idaho Youth Rally leadership camp during the summer.

Chris Botulinski, CVEA's engineering manager, volunteers as

a judge for the Valdez Science Fair. The co-op offers a prize for best electrical project during the fair.

As in the past, CVEA supported the annual Copper River Emergency Medical Services (CREMS) auction. Run almost entirely by volunteers, the organization provides emergency medical services to residents in the Copper Valley. The auction raises funds for a much-needed ambulance.

Each year during National Cooperative Month in October, CVEA employees volunteer their time to process paper and cans at Recycling Our Areas Resources (ROAR) in the Copper Valley.

This year, it also partnered with Copper Valley Telephone, Rotary and Connecting Ties on a canned food, clothing and blanket drive to help members heading into winter.

The co-op made a cash donation to the Kenny Lake Public Library to help fund upgrades. It provides energy credits for holiday food baskets, and donated gifts, door prizes and auction items for various events and activities, including cleanup day in the native village of Tazlina, the Gakona Village Council Youth Environmental Day Camp, the Copper Basin 300, Ducks Unlimited, the PWSCC Scholarship Fundraiser, the Glennallen PTO Auction and the Valdez Consortium Library Book Basket Auction.

CVEA sponsored and participated in the Valdez Relay for Life, joining with the telephone co-op to raise more than \$2,600 for the American Cancer Society.

Golden Valley Electric Association Fairbanks, Alaska

The co-op is a founding sponsor of the Alaska Green Star Program, which encourages businesses to practice waste reduction, energy conservation and pollution prevention.

Line crews helped the North Pole Lions Foundation with its Cruis'n with Santa Classic Car Show and Street Fair, setting poles and hanging a screen for its drive-in movie event.

The co-op gave away one Energy Saver Basket each day of the Tanana Valley State Fair. Valued at more



Above, co-op staff, families and a board member volunteer at the Recycling Our Areas Resources center in Glennallen. Right, Lillian Wood of Valdez drops off cold weather clothing for the Co-op Month clothing drive.

than \$200, baskets included a power strip with surge protection, a Kill A Watt energy use monitor, a vacancy sensor with LED nightlight and LED votive candles.

Kotzebue Electric Association Kotzebue, Alaska

The co-op helped start a Boys and Girls Club, and that club has helped start other clubs at Selawik, Kiana, Kivalina and Noorvik.

It donated a solar installation to a technical school and works with the students. It hosted international visitors from the Arctic Energy Summit and the Utility Wind Integration Group. Engineers from across the country visited the co-op's renewable energy project.

Nushagak Cooperative Dillingham, Alaska

The cooperative donates money to sponsor Tony's Run, honoring Dillingham police Officer Anthony Jones, who was killed while on duty.



It honors his commitment to teens in need of positive role models and increases public awareness of the devastating effects of violence.

At the Beaver Roundup, employees volunteer their time to set up sound systems, and sell items to raise money for prizes and festivities.

They cooked and served hot dogs at the Safe and Fear-free Environment weekly community cookouts, and helped serve food and drinks at the Chamber of Commerce's Fourth of July Salmon Bake. ■