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## Youth Leadership Congress Highlights the Cooperative Difference

Understanding the cooperative difference and identifying traits of leaders highlighted the 46<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association (WECA) Youth Leadership Congress (YLC), which is sponsored by the WECA Division of Cooperative Network and co-sponsored by Wisconsin's electric cooperatives and the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Barron Electric Cooperative sponsored five area high school students to the conference which was held on the UW-River Falls campus. Participant Michelle Smith of Trego commented, "This conference was a fun, educational experience for me, and one I would recommend to others."

Featured at this year's YLC was nationally acclaimed speaker Craig Hillier. As a part of his presentation, Hillier enlightened students about being leaders, stretching their creativity and discovering the value of cooperation. Other sessions focused on how and why cooperatives operate and the benefits they provide members. Sessions on alternative energy, careers in electric cooperatives, and credit unions were also presented.

The YLC is a fun, educational and unique event that is planned by and for teens. For 46 years, Wisconsin electric cooperatives and UW-River Falls have co-sponsored this event to demonstrate to high school students the basics of cooperatives and how they can apply the ideals and philosophies of cooperation directly to their lives.

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*Caption for photo: Barron Electric sponsored Brett Gill, Michelle Smith, Jack Burdick, Val Rucinski, and Jon Timblin to the Youth Leadership Congress.*

