

CROCKETT STUDENTS SHINE IN GIBSON ELECTRIC ESSAY CONTEST AND LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



Above: GEMC Creating Writing Winner Ayden Anderson. (Photo by Beth Crider)

By Ron Barry

One of the things that Beth Crider loves about teaching her English III (honors) class at Crockett County High School is the variety of personalities that her students possess, and that there's no "one checklist fits all" in assessing how those personalities relate to performance.

Crider received a significant reminder of that fact when the Gibson Electric Membership Corporation released the names of the winners of its short story contest in which students across its membership area were asked to write about how an electric membership corporation is beneficial to its region and communities.

CCHS actually had three winners in the contest, according to GEMC Member Services Specialist Sarah Williams. Sophie Hatcher was the winner for the high school itself among students who are members of Gibson Electric; Ayden Anderson was selected as the overall winner of the group of students who are not members of GEC; and Preston Lambert won a drawing for a \$500 scholarship for those whose stories weren't submitted for the national contest in Washington, D.C.

Hatcher and Anderson will receive all-expense paid trips to the nation's capital this summer for their outstanding efforts. They'll both get a chance to see the Capitol Building. (See? One of the perks of taking an English honors class is learning the difference in how to use "capital" and "capitol"!)

All three CCHS winners will be featured in The Tennessee Magazine and in Kentucky Living magazine. Gibson Electric serves customers in both much of West Tennessee and southwestern Kentucky. "It's exciting to have this many winners from CCHS," Crider said. "This school is amazing!"

The GEMC contest is open to high school juniors in Tennessee's 2024 "Cooperative Creating Writing Competition," in which they write 900-word essays about the importance of electric cooperatives. Winners spend a week in the summer exploring Washington, D.C., learning about government and cooperatives and also developing their leadership skills. Gibson Electric and the Tennessee Elective Cooperative Association award a total of \$16,000 in scholarships as well.

For Crider, each of the three CCHS students selected as contest winners presents a unique teaching experience to her.

"Sophie Hatcher is the student every teacher wants," Crider said. "She is organized, intelligent, sweet, and dependable. She is a deeply thoughtful student who definitely reads between the lines in order to discern the depth of the literature being studied. Her writing is equally impressive as she makes certain to include everything that is being asked by the prompt rather than writing just enough to get by. Her answers are contemplative and show a depth of understanding."

Anderson, by contrast, flips the script on Crider at times.

"Ayden Anderson is the polar opposite of Sophie personality-wise. Where Sophie is quiet and enjoys her small group of friends, Ayden is ebullient, working about the classroom and making friends with everyone.

Along with his outgoing personality, Ayden is an excellent student. He can discuss a myriad of topics and often sees deep into the literature as well. His writing - while extremely difficult to read... (Crider pauses to smile) - is insightful and contains a depth of knowledge that is surprising when compared to his playful attitude," she said.

Then there's Preston Lambert, the fun-loving athlete who doesn't always wish to display how smart he actually is.

"Preston Lambert is, well, Preston!" Crider laughs. "He is quite the enigma, lively and fun to the point that you wonder if he can do anything but play sports. But then he comes out with responses in class that show how intelligent he really is. He is fun to discuss things with because of his life experiences and the lessons he has absorbed in previous classes."

Crider is understandably proud of each of these students.

"All three of these kiddos are good students in their own unique ways," she said.

Another Crockett student - junior George Goldsby - also benefitted from a Gibson Electric program when he represented the Cavaliers at the 2024 Youth Leadership Summit in Nashville.

While there, delegates visited the State Capitol Building where they were welcomed by Secretary of State Tre Hargett and members of the Tennessee General Assembly. Students heard from leaders in the electric industry including NRECA Youth Programs and Training Manager Beth Knudson, as well as leadership speaker and entrepreneur Amy Gallimore.

The Youth Leadership Summit also included a day of leadership training at the Joe C. Davis YMCA Outdoor Center, a tour of the Country Music Hall of Fame, and a Nashville Predators game.



Above: GEMC Youth Leadership Summit representative George Goldsby (left), along with State Senator Ed Jackson and Obion County rep Hope Baker. (Photo courtesy of GEMC)



Above: GEMC Creative Writing Winners Preston Lambert and Sophie Hatcher. (Photo by Ron Barry)