

DISCOVERING SOUTH KENTUCKY

www.skrecc.com • MARCH 2024

Bo Rowe: “I give lung cancer a face”

Sitting in the kitchen of his childhood home, Boyd Rowe, then a teacher, husband and father well short of his 42nd birthday, was told that he needed to get his affairs in order because he had stage four terminal lung cancer and he’d be dead in six months. He’d never been a smoker.

“I had a small cough and it wouldn’t go away. I had a CT done and we found out I had 12 liver lesions. And then we went on to the Markey Cancer Center in Lexington and we found out that I had stage 4 lung cancer,” Rowe says. “They said they would keep me comfortable for as long as they could.”

But Bo, his nickname since childhood, didn’t prepare for death. He fought to live. And in the midst of fighting for his life, he helped to reform Kentucky’s laws on insurance and genetic testing for other patients like him.

Recently, South Kentucky RECC member Bo Rowe was named Kentucky’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives’ Who Powers You contest second place winner and received \$500.

“I’d like to thank Kentucky’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives and South Kentucky RECC for this award, and remind everyone that if you have a lung, you could be diagnosed with lung cancer,” Rowe says.

Rowe’s fight with the terminal

diagnosis began in 2021 with getting genetic bio marker testing to help him fight his specific type of cancer, ALK-positive lung cancer, which was not covered by his insurance. He got the testing anyway at a very high cost, and figured out that common chemotherapy wouldn’t effectively treat his cancer, but immunotherapy would. And it worked.

Two years after his diagnosis, the multiple tumors that had infected his liver, lungs, spine and brain are gone, and treatments that Rowe says “tricks his body” have so far been successful.

Then he took his fight for cancer survivors like him to Frankfort.

“On the Cancer Action Day last year we went to Frankfort and lobbied for House Bill 180, the biomarker testing bill. Biomarker testing was what allowed doctors to actually know the DNA of my cancer,” Rowe says. “The bill was passed with no nay votes. Now insurance has to pay for the biomarker testing. They used to say it was exploratory and we’re not going to pay for it,” Rowe says.

Rowe has appeared on WYMT to promote early cancer screenings. “I give lung cancer a face. This is not someone who is dying. I try to give people hope that there are other treatments out there like the targeted therapies. So that’s why I go out and advocate,” Rowe says. Relay for Life and a Facebook ad campaign for screenings have also been part of his advocacy. “Research is the thing, and we have to have research to find new medications to treat my disease,” he says.



TIM WEBB

Rowe had to give up a 20-year career as a teacher in McCreary County because of difficult side effects from the medications he takes. And he knows that those medications could stop working at any time, and his tumors could reappear. It’s already happened with one medication, which forced a switch to another, which has his cancer in remission again.

“My records still say stage 4 lung cancer. So you just go out and enjoy the day. You wake up. You see the sun rise. You enjoy nature. My son says I’m kind of like the Tim McGraw song ‘Live like you were dying,’” Rowe says.

But he made a promise to his wife, that he would live like he was living, and fight all the way. And he’s doing just that, not just for himself, but for anyone with a lung. “We enjoy the day, and we thank God for a new day.”



South Kentucky RECC sponsors Frankfort Youth Tour

Nearly 100 high school students representing Kentucky's electric cooperatives gathered at the Kentucky Capitol on February 21 for the Frankfort Youth Tour, a program designed to offer rising young leaders a personal understanding of Kentucky history, civic engagement and their role as citizens and members of electric cooperatives.

South Kentucky RECC is proud to have sponsored seven of the young leaders on the tour.

Students were welcomed by Rocky Adkins, senior advisor to the governor, before touring the Capitol and attending meetings of the Senate Health Services and Senate Natural Resource and Energy committees. Throughout the busy day, students interacted with legislators and elected officials in the hallways and heard from Gov. Andy Beshear and Rep. Samara Heavrin about their legislative priorities and issues facing Kentuckians. In June, many



From back left, Tobias Misinay and Alex Hancock. From front left, Jaiden Campos, Iris Vazquez, Karen Pineda, Anahi Mendoza and Rebecca New. Photo: Tim Webb

of these students will travel to our nation's capital during the Washington Youth Tour.

Since the inception of the youth

tour program, co-ops have sponsored more than 1,800 Kentucky high school students in Washington, D.C., and thousands more in Frankfort.

SOUTH KENTUCKY RECC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DAYS



WADE HARRIS



WADE HARRIS



MORGHAN BLEVINS



MORGHAN BLEVINS

June 11, 2024
Wayne and McCreary county offices

June 12, 2024
Russell and Clinton county offices

June 13, 2024
Somerset office

7 AM-6 PM
All times are local

South Kentucky RECC celebrates National Lineworker Appreciation Day

All of us at South Kentucky RECC are dedicated to improving the quality of life in the communities we serve, and no one works harder toward that goal than our co-op lineworkers.

It's a marvel of this era that electricity is a given. Thanks to co-op leaders of previous generations, we have a system in place to serve you. Our lineworkers play a critical role in making sure South Kentucky RECC's infrastructure is built and maintained so that we can consistently provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity for our members.

America's electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of each April as National Lineworker Appreciation Day, and on April 8, South Kentucky RECC will honor these hardworking individuals who often face challenging conditions to keep the lights on. We are proud to recognize the 48 lineworkers who maintain more than 7,000 miles of power lines in our service territory.

Our lineworkers' efforts and sacrifice are plain to see, but you may not realize the amount of training and study it takes just to become a lineworker. It's about a four-year process to advance from an apprentice to journeyman lineworker. Apprentices work alongside veterans, learning best practices and gaining valuable knowledge on the job.

We stress safety every day at South Kentucky RECC. When working with electricity, diligence and professionalism are absolute necessities. That's why the lineworkers who work to restore and maintain your power never stop training. In conjunction with our statewide association, Kentucky Electric Cooperatives, lineworkers are always learning and are held to professional standards to keep everyone safe.

Whether they're restoring power after a major storm or



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maintaining infrastructure that's critical to our electric system, lineworkers are South Kentucky RECC first responders, and they're always ready to get the job done, day or night.

In honor of National Lineworker Appreciation Day, we invite you to take a moment to thank lineworkers for everything they do.



South Kentucky RECC Safety and Loss Control Manager Eric Chumbley and Construction Lead Line Technician Nick Jones share an electrical safety demonstration with the Eli Volunteer Fire Department. Safety is the top priority at SKRECC and our goal is to provide valuable knowledge to help prevent emergencies before they happen. Photos: Brandon Wesley

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Visit www.skrecc.applicantpro.com/jobs/ to explore exciting career opportunities with the South Kentucky RECC Team.

South Kentucky RECC is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Visit www.skrecc.com to pay your bill online, to visit our outage center, or for more information about the Co-op Connections Program.

To report an outage 24/7/365, please call your local office, (800) 264-5112, or set up your account to be able to text outages. Please do not report outages via social media.

Plug into South Kentucky RECC. Follow us on social media:



AVOID DOWNED POWER LINES

If you see a downed power line, move away from it.

Keep a distance of at least 35 feet, as the ground around downed power lines may be energized.

ADDITIONAL TIPS:

- **Don't touch anything touching downed power lines.**
- **Assume ALL downed power lines are live.** They don't have to be arcing, sparking or humming; they can be as quiet as they usually are.
- **If you see someone in direct or indirect contact with a downed line, DO NOT touch him or her.** You could become energized as well. Call 911 for assistance.



WIRE Scholarships for Kentucky College Students

From Kentucky's electric cooperatives

**APPLY
TODAY.
DEADLINE
JUNE 5,
2024**



For an application form, go to www.kyelectric.coop and search "WIRE," or contact South Kentucky RECC.