

## **TIDELAND ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORP.**

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### **Tideland EMC Energizes Local Classrooms**

**PANTEGO, NC** – For the sixteenth consecutive year, Tideland Electric Membership Corporation has honored outstanding local teachers with Bright Ideas grants. In a surprise visit to 10 classrooms in Beaufort, Washington, Pamlico and Craven counties, the electric cooperative notified winning teachers of their selection in sharing over \$11,500 to fund creative, educational projects.

Local winners were John C. Tayloe Elementary's Alida Sawyer, Pungo Christian Academy's Crystal Swindell, Washington High School's Marie Swann and Ginger Wescott, Snowden Elementary's Joy McCracken and Plymouth High School's Nicholas McIntosh.

The win represented the ninth such award for Sawyer who teaches special needs children. Her project, "Math: Good Enough to Eat," will incorporate food items to help students comprehend measurements and various mathematical operations.

Swindell received a grant for the purchase of 10 compound light microscopes, 24 preserved specimens and 5 student dissection surveys. Students will examine plant and animal life including various insects, leaves and even local crops like cotton. Students will also dissect 6 different organisms and prepare tissue slides for observation. By viewing life at the cellular level, students will gain an appreciation for the microscopic intricacies that make life possible.

Swann, who teaches chemistry, has received funds to purchase a document camera which can display almost anything placed under its lens including transparencies, paper documents and three dimensional objects. Swann will use the camera to display laboratory experiments so all students can follow along during the step by step activities.

Wescott's project, "Unwinding the Mysteries of DNA," will provide hands on learning for students in their exploration of the human genome and careers in biotechnology. One such experiment will involve a taste test of phenylthiocarbamide (PTC), an organic compound that, depending on an individual's genetic makeup, either tastes very bitter or is virtually tasteless.

McCracken and four other Snowden educators have teamed up to outfit the school with a web-based weather station and equip the school's greenhouse with necessary supplies. In a project called "Earth and Sky," the students will collect and analyze weather station data and produce podcasts detailing their progress.

Plymouth High School teachers Charlene Evans, Patricia Moye, Christi Rogerson and Connie Smith are members of a grant writing team led by fellow teacher Nicholas McIntosh. They received funds to purchase 16 Texas Instruments TI-84 graphing calculators for classroom use. The calculators will be invaluable to pupils studying algebra, geometry, pre-calculus and advanced functions and modeling. While students would ideally purchase their own graphing calculators, at \$120 per device, cost can be a real obstacle.

McIntosh got an extra surprise when he was named grand prize winner during a dinner held in Greenville to honor Bright Ideas recipients from six electric cooperatives. McIntosh will receive an all expense paid scholarship to attend a week long seminar at the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT). With campuses at Ocracoke and Cullowhee, NCCAT provides public school teachers with intensive cross-disciplinary seminars in the sciences, arts, humanities, technology, leadership and communication. The goal of NCCAT is to advance teaching as an art and profession so good educators will be encouraged to continue teaching.

Teachers interested in applying for the next round of Bright Ideas funding may do so online in the spring of 2011 by visiting [www.ncbrightideas.com](http://www.ncbrightideas.com).

Tideland EMC is a not-for-profit electric cooperative serving 22,600 accounts in Beaufort, Pamlico, Hyde, Craven, Washington and Dare counties.

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Photos: Washington High School teachers Marie Swann and Ginger Wescott landed in the winners' circle when they were selected by Tideland EMC to receive Bright Ideas classroom grants.