

News Release



**Electric Cooperatives
of Arkansas**

Poyen Public Schools teacher named Arkansas Rural Teacher of the Year

Little Rock, Ark. — July 14, 2014 — Ouida Newton, a math teacher with the Poyen Public Schools, has been named as the 2014 Arkansas Rural Teacher of the Year by the by the Arkansas Rural Education Association and the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, who sponsor the annual award.

A resident of Leola, she holds a Bachelor of Science degree in education from Henderson State University and a Master of library and informational science degree from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She has taught at the Poyen Public Schools since 1979.

“My responsibility as an educator is to prepare students to be able to flourish in their future,” she said. “Not only do I have to teach math skills, but I also must teach students how to be problem solvers and lifelong learners.”

According to Newton, community expectations are high in rural schools. Parents and other community members expect a student who attends a rural school to perform better than students who attend larger schools, she said.

“Whatever it takes to reach children is what educators do,” said Newton, a third-generation teacher. “A small school allows teachers to adjust instruction based on a student’s need. I believe that teachers can touch lives and communities for a lifetime.”

The Rural Teacher of the Year Award winner is selected based on the quality and depth of answers to questions in the following categories: professional biography, educational history, professional development, community involvement, teaching philosophy, education issues and the teaching profession.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas comprise 17 electric distribution cooperatives; Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI), a Little Rock-based cooperative that provides services to the distribution cooperatives; and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corp. (AECC), a generation and transmission cooperative. The distribution cooperatives provide electricity to approximately 500,000 homes, farms and businesses in Arkansas and surrounding states.

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