



Kentucky's
Touchstone Energy
Cooperatives®

Press Release

For Immediate Release: Sept. 17, 2019

Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Sponsor Veterans for Honor Flight

Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are joining with Honor Flight Kentucky to sponsor a flight this week for veterans from Kentucky who served during World War II, the Korean War or the Vietnam War. The cooperative-sponsored flight to Washington, D.C., takes place Saturday, Sept. 21.

The co-ops are sponsoring 72 veterans on the trip. This is the ninth consecutive year Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are sponsoring the all-expenses paid trip for veterans to see their memorials.

"The veterans we've sponsored often tell us this is one of the greatest days of their lives," said Joe Settles, Manager of Member Services for East Kentucky Power Cooperative, one of Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives. "These are people who served and often suffered for our freedom. It's an honor to express our appreciation."

The 2019 contingent includes 99-year-old World War II Army veteran Henry C. Ledford of Clay County, who will turn 100 the day after he returns from Washington, D.C. The flight Saturday will be his first time ever traveling by air and the first time he's seen the World War II Memorial honoring the 16 million Americans who served during the war.

"A lot of them didn't get home," Ledford said, fighting back tears.

One of the greatest things that Ledford's 411th Infantry Regiment did was to liberate prisoners from a concentration camp near Landsberg, Germany. "They were skin and bones and came out and grabbed us, hugged us and kissed us," he said. "They were starved to death."

Others participating in this year's Honor Flight include:

- Joel Peyton, a 77-year-old, decorated Army veteran from Corbin who served as a medic in Vietnam. When he gets to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, he will find the names of buddies he's never forgotten who were killed in action.
- Julia Martin, an 86-year-old Air Force veteran from Lexington who served during the Korean War. She was inducted into the Kentucky Veterans Hall of Fame.
- Maysville native Donald "Frank" Ring who worked at Vietnam's Da Nang Air Base, where he was a crew chief responsible for aircraft maintenance.

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For more information, contact:

Sha Phillips, Marketing & Brand Supervisor
Office (direct): (859) 745-9216
Mobile: (859) 595-9851
Sha.phillips@ekpc.coop

- Lexington resident Charles “Rusty” Hembree, a 94-year-old Army Air Corps veteran who served during World War II. He grew up on a Tennessee farm that the federal government bought and used to build the first atomic bomb. Coincidentally, Hembree served on Tinian, the island where the bomb was hidden before being dropped.
- George Atwood, a 70-year-old Vietnam veteran from Versailles who served in the Navy and was stationed on the Mekong River near the Cambodian border. On Saturday, he will be accompanied by his brother Jerry, an Army veteran.

Kentucky’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are inviting families, friends and supporters to gather at Blue Grass Airport by 7:30 p.m. to greet the veterans when their flight arrives from Washington. There will be additional parking available at the airport to accommodate the crowd.

“Come help us make this one of the best days ever for these veterans,” urged Phil Pittman, Director of Honor Flight Kentucky. “It’s a small way of paying our respects to these Kentucky heroes.”

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Kentucky’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives include 17 not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperatives that serve more than 1 million Kentucky residents across 87 Kentucky counties.

They include:

- Big Sandy RECC, Paintsville, Ky.
- Blue Grass Energy, Nicholasville, Ky.
- Clark Energy Cooperative, Winchester, Ky.
- Cumberland Valley Electric, Gray, Ky.
- Farmers RECC, Glasgow, Ky.
- Fleming-Mason Energy, Flemingsburg, Ky.
- Grayson RECC, Grayson, Ky.
- Inter-County Energy Cooperative, Danville, Ky.
- Jackson Energy Cooperative, McKee, Ky.
- Licking Valley RECC, West Liberty, Ky.
- Nolin RECC, Elizabethtown, Ky.
- Owen Electric Cooperative, Owenton, Ky.
- Salt River Electric, Bardstown, Ky.
- Shelby Energy Cooperative, Shelbyville, Ky.
- South Kentucky RECC, Somerset Ky.
- Taylor County RECC, Campbellsville, Ky.
- East Kentucky Power Cooperative

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