

## **WCTEL, FRS award more \$15,500 in youth scholarships**

Abbeville, SC – May 25, 2023 – West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative (WCTEL) recently honored the recipients of the WCTEL & Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) 2023 college scholarships, totaling \$15,500 in funds to help local youth pursue further learning.

All scholarship applications are mailed to FRS and independently judged in Washington, DC, by a panel of judges selected by FRS.

The WCTEL scholarship for \$8,000, issued over four years at \$2,000 per year, was awarded to Neely Bell of Due West, SC. Bell plans to attend Anderson University.

Each year, FRS awards 42 scholarships to students across the United States. This year, FRS received over 1,100 applications, and Bell also received the \$2,500 FRS Regional Scholarship. With both scholarships, Bell received a total of \$10,500 in scholarship funds to support and advance her education.

This year, FRS also awarded the Good Neighbor Scholarship to Emily Blackwell of Starr, SC. A graduate of Crescent High School, Iva, SC, Blackwell plans to attend North Greenville University.

The Good Neighbor Scholarship is awarded to students who demonstrate what it means to be a “good neighbor” through humanitarianism, inclusion, and kindness to others. Additionally, they must have demonstrated the ability to think bigger than themselves by supporting others within their community. While the academic achievements of the selected students are important, this scholarship will focus almost exclusively on youth who are working to make a difference in their rural communities and who strive to help others

In addition to these community scholarships, The WCTEL Family Scholarship offers a \$1,000 scholarship to every dependent of WCTEL employees. Started by an anonymous donor and sustained by WCTEL family members, the program recognized the following graduates:

Jackson McCall, Dixie High School; Ashton Crocker, Dixie High School; Bailey Seawright, Abbeville High School; and Grace Miller, Century High School (Bismarck, ND).

“The board and employees of West Carolina Tel are delighted to help area youth pursue their future education,” said Jeff Wilson, CEO of WCTEL. “These students are a shining light, and each one represents a bright future. We wish these students well as they enter the next stage in life. Maybe one day they will return to our area to raise their families and pursue their career dreams.”

“It’s always a good day when we can come together and celebrate these outstanding students,” said Wes McAllister, WCTEL board chairman. “They embody grit, perseverance, commitment, and optimism. I can’t wait to see what they do next.”

### **About WCTEL**

West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative, Inc. was formed in 1952. Since its beginning, West Carolina Tel has not only met its primary goal of providing basic telephone service to the rural areas of Abbeville and McCormick counties and the Starr and Iva areas of Anderson County, but has also been able to provide the enhanced services others have come to expect in metropolitan areas of the United States. As new services were being developed, West Carolina Tel renewed its commitment to giving customers access to the latest in advanced technologies, including overbuilding its network with fiber to stay ahead of the demand for more bandwidth and advanced communications. To learn more, visit [www.wctel.com](http://www.wctel.com).

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