

## Casting more than lures

By Debra Gibson Isaacs

Gathering around the campfire on a balmy summer evening is a group of men, most of whom have never met before.

Some are veterans of the war in Vietnam, the Gulf, Iraq, Afghanistan. Others were first responders—firefighters, police officers, paramedics. All have been wounded in the line of duty. They have experienced hard realities the rest of us will never have to know.

They come to this Kentucky Wounded Heroes (KWH) event to test their fishing skills on vast Lake Erie, to enjoy some time on the water and the great outdoors. At 5 a.m. each day, they head out in boats and throw lines into the water until each catches his limit. As they wait for fish, they talk and listen.

On the final day, they are driven to a special dinner in their honor while grateful people line the street cheering for them.

Tim Mullins is among them. Both a veteran and a first responder, Mullins did tours of duty with the Army in both Iraq and Afghanistan. For over 20 years, he was a trooper with the Kentucky State Police. Today this member of Blue Grass Energy is president of the Kentucky State Police Professional Association (KSPPA).

Mullins is also a volunteer with Kentucky Wounded Heroes, an organization created to give back to veterans and first responders hurt in the line of duty.

“Our program is different from others,” says Chuck Reed, founder and president of Kentucky Wounded Heroes. “We introduce folks who were once part of a team, but are now no longer able to serve. They uplift one another. It is so gratifying to see.”

Most of the healing takes place outdoors, according to Reed.

“We try to arrange hunting and fishing trips, get folks together on a riverboat or a canoe. We let Mother Nature do her healing.”

Organizations frequently partner with Kentucky Wounded Heroes. On this three-day fishing trip, Travis Long, a 25-year employee with BGEnergy, volunteered to represent the cooperative.

Long found plenty of ways to help, starting with listening to the men’s riveting and traumatic life stories.

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The 10th Annual Walleye Fishing trip took place on Lake Erie where 35 participants spent quiet time in nature. Together they caught more than 2,100 walleye. Photo: Chuck Reed

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Rachel Settles, Editor



This institution is an equal opportunity  
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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

# School is back in session

Another school year has kicked off and kids of all ages are ready for a new year of learning. From kindergarten through college, students attend school to gain knowledge about a broad variety of subjects and learn new skills that prepare them for the future. In a similar vein, Blue Grass Energy is continually learning in order to advance technology that improves your electric service reliability, which is making life better, the cooperative way for the members we serve.

Blue Grass Energy keeps current on the constant changes within our industry. We know our members are looking for additional ways to manage their cost and energy use with smart technologies. One way to do that is by using our smart phone app where members can track their daily usage and receive alerts when consumption is abnormal.

Members expect more convenient payment methods—whether through automatic bill pay, prepay, online or in person. Because we listen to what you want, we offer seven different ways for you to pay your Blue Grass Energy bill.

Members' interest in renewable energy is growing. This interest led to our partnership with Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives in the creation of Cooperative Solar. This partnership offers members the opportunity to license solar panels in the 63-acre solar farm and receive the production value on their Blue Grass Energy bill. You can find more information at [cooperativesolar.com](http://cooperativesolar.com). Another option for renewable energy is Envirowatts—a renewable energy program where you choose the power source: biomass, solar, wind and hydro. Visit [envirowattsky.com](http://envirowattsky.com) for more details about this program.

Whether it's examining renewable energy options or exploring how emerging technologies can better serve you, for Blue Grass Energy, our "school year" is never over. We will keep learning from our members about their priorities for the future, and we will continue to be here making life better, the cooperative way.

By President/CEO  
Michael I. Williams







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“I got to hear what they went through as they told their stories,” Long says. “One person was a state trooper shot in the line of duty. I have the utmost respect for him after listening to his battle to overcome his injury and rejoin the force. I saw firsthand how much this trip meant to them.”

The employees of Blue Grass Energy chose Kentucky Wounded Heroes as their charity for 2019. Each year, the cooperative partners with a single organization and helps that charity in numerous ways

**Below from left, KWH Jimmy Cantrell with 16-pound catfish; almost every KWH caught their walleye limit on June 20; KWH Lester Broyles with a 17-pound catfish.**

throughout the year. Focusing on one organization each year allows BGEnergy to make a significant difference. This year will culminate with a check for Kentucky Wounded Heroes from an array of employee-led fundraising efforts. The cooperative’s sixth annual silent auction already raised \$2,390 for the organization.

“Blue Grass Energy is great about choosing a charity and everyone working for that charity all year long,” Long says. “I am blessed because they make it so easy to volunteer.”

Back at the campfire, the conversations and the healing continue. The men caught a record

**Above, from left, Kentucky Wounded Heroes’ Bruce Ashley catches a 20-pound catfish; a group of fishermen including Travis Long with the Reel Easy captain, Mark Todman, in red; KWH Dan Wright with his award-winning catch of the day. Photos: Chuck Reed**

amount of fish this time—more than 2,100 walleye. The fish are filleted and bagged for the men to take home—just another way to say thank you for their service.

To make a donation to support those who have served us and our communities, visit [kentuckywoundedheroes.net](http://kentuckywoundedheroes.net).



**CHARITY PARTNER**

## KENTUCKY WOUNDED HEROES

Kentucky Wounded Heroes wants to identify more people that can benefit from its programs. The group serves military members as well as community first-responders; including police officers, firefighters and EMS personnel.

If you have a relative, friend or neighbor that was wounded in action

or has a service-related disability, tell them about the Kentucky Wounded Heroes.

All programs are provided at no cost to the participants.

Find more information at [kentuckywoundedheroes.net](http://kentuckywoundedheroes.net) or call (502) 235-4262.



*Each year, Blue Grass Energy chooses a charity to work with for the year. We partner with a local nonprofit organization that benefits the communities in which we live and serve. Our fundraising efforts for the entire year go to that cause. This year, we are partnering with the Kentucky Wounded Heroes.*



## Honoring Those Who Served

Proudly supporting our nation's veterans with Honor Flight Kentucky.

Join us Sept. 21st at 7:30 p.m. for the Welcome Home Celebration at Lexington's Blue Grass Airport.



Our offices will be closed Monday, September 2 for Labor Day.