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**Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives sponsor
flight for World War II vets**

WINCHESTER, Ky. — They manned anti-aircraft guns at Pearl Harbor, slogged ashore under devastating fire at Normandy and fought their way inch-by-inch up Mount Suribachi on Iwo Jima, then modestly returned home to resume their civilian lives as farmers and teachers.

Today, veterans fortunate enough to have survived World War II's carnage are in their 80s or 90s. Many will never get a chance to see the memorial their grateful nation erected in 2004 to honor them—unless folks like us help.

That's why Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives have joined with the Bluegrass Chapter of the Honor Flight Network to sponsor an Honor Flight for these veterans this Saturday, Oct. 22, 2011. Winchester-based East Kentucky Power Cooperative (EKPC) and its 16 member systems together are known as Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.

The co-ops will pay to fly 35 World War II vets, including one from each of the EKPC system's 16 member cooperatives, from Louisville to Washington, D.C., to visit the World War II Memorial.

The trip is free to the veterans. Volunteers representing Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives will accompany the vets as guardians and provide assistance if needed.

“If you think about all that this generation of veterans accomplished, you realize that Europe, America and the Pacific are free to this day because of what they did,” said Tony Campbell, EKPC's president and CEO. “This flight is one small way of saying thanks for their service during World War II.”

The World War II Memorial pays tribute to the 16 million who served in the United States Armed Forces during the war, the 400,000-plus who died and all who supported the war effort on the home front. The memorial is flanked by the Washington Monument to the east and the Lincoln Memorial to the west.

While in Washington, the veterans also will visit other U.S. war memorials and be greeted by various government officials. They will be transported around the city on chartered buses.

The Honor Flight sponsored by Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives is part of a larger national network that has 106 hubs, or chapters, in 38 states. The inaugural Honor Flight took place in May 2005, when six small planes flew out of Springfield, Ohio, taking 12 veterans. The network was conceived by Earl Morse, a physician assistant and retired Air Force captain, who wanted to honor the veterans he had taken care of.

In May 2008, Southwest Airlines stepped up by donating thousands of tickets, and was named the network's official commercial carrier. The EKPC flight will use Southwest as its carrier.

"The memorial is breath taking and represents freedom for America and the world," said Mary Beth Nance, director of Member Services at Fleming-Mason Energy in Flemingsburg, Ky., which is one of the trip's co-sponsors. "We've all been tremendously moved as we've worked to transport the veterans to their memorial."

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EKPC is a not-for-profit organization providing wholesale electricity to 16 distribution cooperatives that serve 500,000 Kentucky homes, farms, businesses and industries across 87 counties. EKPC provides power through plants located in Mason, Clark and Pulaski counties, renewable energy plants in Boone, Laurel, Greenup, Hardin, Mason and Pendleton counties, along with gas peaking units, hydro power and more than 2,800 miles of transmission lines. Nearly 6 percent of EKPC's generating capacity comes from renewable sources. Together, EKPC and the member cooperatives are known as Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.

For more information, contact:

Mary Beth Nance, co-chair
Director of Member Services
Fleming-Mason Energy Cooperative
Flemingsburg, Ky.
(606) 845-2661 (office)
mbnance@fme.coop

Roberta Skinner, co-chair
Audio/Video Resource Specialist
East Kentucky Power Cooperative
Winchester, Ky.
(859) 744-4812, ext. 620 (office)
roberta.skinner@ekpc.coop