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A Dozen Science Teachers Attend Award-winning TMRA Teacher Workshop Program to Learn the True Story of Texas Mining



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TMRA Teacher Workshop Program to Learn the True Story of Texas Mining

CHRISTINE, Texas [June 30, 2022] – The San Miguel Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SMECI) hosted a unique and award-winning educational program that has the potential to change the lives of Texas teachers and students alike. Twelve science educators attended the Texas Mining & Reclamation Association's (TMRA) week-long Teacher Workshop, held from June 19 - 24 at SMECI's power plant and lignite mine, to learn the true story of Texas mining. Located in Christine, Texas, SMECI produces 391 net megawatts of affordable, reliable electricity for nine member cooperatives across 47 South Texas counties.

"Meeting the regular, everyday people who make sure our mines run safely and smoothly gave me a new perspective," said Kristina Swanson, a Floresville ISD science teacher. "I cannot wait to show my students all the science careers that are filled with people just like them and their families. Plus, the classroom activities will be great additions to my teaching toolkit."

Each summer, elementary, middle/junior high and high school science teachers attend the educational camps to learn firsthand about Texas' proud history of lignite, uranium and industrial minerals mining to fuel the Texas energy grid and provide the state's essential infrastructure materials.

"Being able to look at San Miguel's lignite mining operation as a whole and learn all the things the mine does from start to finish was eye-opening and informational," said Stephanie Kirtland, a science teacher at Floresville ISD.

During TMRA's week-long sessions, teachers tour mines and power plant facilities, visit reclamation areas and participate in hands-on labs. Following the workshops, which are free to teachers, educators return to their classrooms with earth science facts and real-world, problem-solving activities that encourage students to use critical thinking skills.

During the San Miguel mine tour, SMECI Reclamation Supervisor Margarito Birones showed teachers the heavy equipment involved in the mining process – including the mammoth Marion 8200 Dragline. They also had the opportunity to collect coal samples from an active mine pit. Following the mine tour, SMECI Engineering Manager Eric Halfmann gave a bus tour around the power plant, explaining the various processes involved in producing energy from lignite coal.



Texas science teachers pose in a mining bucket at the San Miguel Electric Cooperative, Inc. mine and power plant during TMRA's Teacher Workshop from June 19-24, 2022.

Teachers were also shown post-mine reclamation areas to learn about the reclamation processes SMECI uses to restore the land and return it to the landowners for the beneficial use of generations to come.

Texas science teachers learn the importance of soil sampling during and after mine operations as part of TMRA's Teacher Workshop from June 19-24, 2022.



"We are very pleased to share with our educators the true story of Texas mining, which includes SMECI's dedication to delivering the safe, reliable and affordable energy that thousands of South Texas residents and businesses rely on," said SMECI General Manager/CEO Nathan Brown.

Through TMRA's Teacher Workshops, more than 1.5 million students so far have now heard the true story of Texas mining and reclamation. The program is recognized by the Governor's Conference on Math, Science and Technology, and is certified by the Texas Environmental Education Advisory Council. It is designated a professional development provider by the State Board of Education Certification.

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About San Miguel Electric Cooperative, Inc.

The San Miguel Electric Cooperative, Inc. is a member-owned mining and power generation cooperative that serves the people of Texas' rural communities, working and living in partnership with its members. Through integrity, hard work and a commitment to safety, San Miguel maintains a dependable power supply at the lowest possible and competitive cost. Visit [San Miguel Electric Cooperative, Inc.](#) for more information.

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