



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives  
*The power of human connections®*

# HOT AIR BALLOON PROGRAM

## OUR STORY

When the idea to fly the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives logo on a hot air balloon came to fruition in 1999, few knew the extent to which that idea would grow. Twenty years later, that idea has grown into a program of multiple hot air balloons and pilots traveling the country, promoting the founding values of Touchstone Energy: integrity, accountability, innovation, and commitment to community.

## THE BEGINNING

In 1999, several electric cooperatives sponsored a balloon flown by pilot Cheri White at the National Hot Air Balloon Championship held in Rantoul, Illinois. For their sponsorship, Cheri attached a Touchstone Energy banner to her personal balloon and won the women's division. Publicity of her win took hold and the Touchstone Energy brand was noticed. As several electric cooperative managers put their heads together, the idea of a balloon program emerged.

As support grew, the final number totaled 10 cooperative entities who would financially back the idea. In February 2000, official state documents were signed and the Cooperative Balloon Associates, LLC was formed. Governing entities include: Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative, Cornbelt Energy Corporation, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, Jo-Carroll Energy, McDonough Power Cooperative, Norris Electric Cooperative, Prairie Power Inc, Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, Shelby Electric Cooperative, and Southern Illinois Power Cooperative.

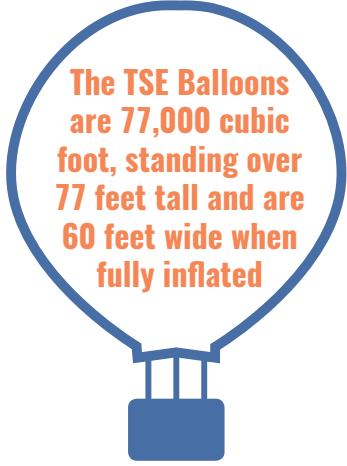
## THE IMPACT

Our balloons have flown at more than 650 national competitions and special events around the country including balloon festivals, farm and technology shows, county fairs, community events, cooperative annual meetings and more! Touchstone Energy was one of the fifteen featured balloons in the 2001 Guinness Book of World Records balloon flight over the continental divide.

At the conclusion of each event, philanthropic donations are sent to organizations designated by the sponsoring electric cooperative or organization. This act of giving has been the cornerstone of the balloon program and has occurred since the first flight. As of 2019, more than \$320,000 has been given back to local communities in philanthropic donations.

## PILOTS OVER THE YEARS

Cheri White, Sam Edwards, Byron Denhart, Dave Champion, Bob Scobee, Johnny Petrehn, Joe Ritchie, Scott Wooge, Mark Sullivan, Taylor Aldous among others



The TSE Balloons are 77,000 cubic foot, standing over 77 feet tall and are 60 feet wide when fully inflated



10

Touchstone Energy Balloon Envelopes in existence



2nd longest standing branded balloon program in existence next to ReMax



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