



Local students join National Electric Cooperative Youth Tour



Eight students from across Southside Electric Cooperative's (SEC) service area recently enjoyed an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., as part of the 52nd annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Sponsored by SEC, these rising high school seniors joined 1,700 students from around the country:

Ashley Chipman of Skipwith;
Melanie Leonard of Powhatan;
Colton Baldrige of Rustburg;
Brandi Mitchell of Evington;
Julia Russell of Amelia;
Hannah Smith of Blackstone;
Katie Moise of Pamplin; and
Joel Thomas of Prospect.

During their visit to Capitol Hill, SEC's Youth Tour delegates met U.S. Rep. Robert Hurt and enjoyed a guided tour of the U.S. Capitol. They also visited a variety of historical and cultural sites in the nation's capital, including Arlington National Cemetery, the Pentagon and the Newseum. Program participants enjoyed a twilight cruise on the Potomac River and attended a Washington Nationals baseball game.



Youth Tour delegates visiting Capitol Hill (L-R) back row: Katie Moise, Colton Baldridge, Joel Thomas and Hannah Smith. Front row: Julia Russell, Ashley Chipman, Melanie Leonard and Brandi Mitchell.

As part of NRECA-sponsored National Youth Day on June 13, youth delegates from around the country listened to several inspirational speakers. This year's agenda included Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic medalist and two-time world champion in wheelchair basketball. Schlappi shared his inspiring message of "Just because you can't stand up doesn't mean you can't stand out!"

Ashley Chipman, who was chosen to represent SEC as well as Virginia's other

electric cooperatives on NRECA's Youth Leadership Council (YLC), returned to Washington, D.C., in July for a workshop to develop her public-speaking skills. YLC is composed of one student from each state selected by chaperones and peers to play an active role in NRECA's annual meeting the following spring.



Youth Tour delegates enjoy the many monuments and museums in our nation's capital, including the Newseum, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, Lincoln Memorial and the National Museum of the Marine Corps, as well as a Washington Nationals baseball game and a twilight cruise on the Potomac River.

The students described Youth Tour as amazing. Chipman added, “It was a great opportunity to meet our elected officials and experience our government firsthand. We also made new friends from nearly every state and toured some amazing locations throughout our nation’s capital. It is an experience I will never forget.”

Since 1964, the nation’s electric cooperatives have sponsored more than 60,000 high school juniors and seniors to visit their U.S. congressional delegations, learn from energy and grassroots government-education sessions and sightsee in Washington, D.C. NRECA is the national-service organization representing the nation’s more than 900 consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives, which provide electric service to 42 million people in 47 states.

For more information about the Youth Tour program, visit [www.sec.coop /YouthTour](http://www.sec.coop/YouthTour). To learn how you can participate in next year’s trip to Washington, D.C., or to request that an SEC representative speak about the program at your high school, contact SEC’s Public and Member Relations Department by calling 1-800-552-2118 or emailing public.relations@sec.coop.

**SEC Youth
Tour
delegates
pose for a
“selfie” in
front of the
Capitol
building.**



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