

TEXAS YOUTH TOUR MAGAZINE 2019

YOUTH TOUR

**YOUTH TOUR
CHANGES LIVES!**

JOIN THE TRIP
FROM AUSTIN TO
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Y=OUR



Jake Schriver, Tri-County EC, snaps a selfie with friends at Mount Vernon.



ON THE COVER

“I made some great friends who I still keep in contact with, and they’re some of the best people I’ve ever met.”

—JESSY VILLAGOMEZ,
BIG COUNTRY EC, 2018

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SINCE THEIR FOUNDING MORE THAN 80 YEARS AGO, electric cooperatives across Texas have been committed to empowering the communities they serve. It’s what they do best. They not only provide power to homes and businesses but also invest time, energy and compassion into improving the quality of life in their communities. A sense of purpose has guided co-ops throughout their existence.

That same sense of purpose is what gave rise to the Government-in-Action Youth Tour. In 1965, Texas’ electric cooperatives joined forces to send a group of 58 deserving teens from across the state to Washington, D.C. There they joined their peers from across Co-op Country and met with their congressional representatives to discuss important issues and broaden their view of the world.

More than five decades later, electric cooperatives carry on the legacy of that first Youth Tour and continue to empower young people through the life-changing trip to Washington.

This year, a record 157 young Texans will make the journey to our nation’s capital to represent their hometown cooperatives and experience what then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson described in 1957 as an opportunity to “see what the flag stands for and represents.”

If you are an alum reading this magazine, you are well aware of the momentous adventure that awaits these young people. If you are considering applying, I encourage you to do so—and to flip through these pages for a glimpse into the transformative power of what generations of Texas teens have called the trip of a lifetime.



Best Regards,

Mike Williams
President/CEO
Texas Electric Cooperatives

YOUR TOUR | TEXAS YOUTH TOUR

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MARTIN BEVINS | TEC, FRONT & BACK COVER PHOTOS: TRAVIS HILL, ITEC

SOUND BITES



"It is impossible to go to Washington, D.C., and stand among the beautiful architecture of our country's history and not feel a profound patriotism."

—JORDAN PYATT, VICTORIA EC, 2017



"I realized the importance of participating in our government that so many have fought and died to preserve and maintain."

—AVERY BEHRENS, FAYETTE EC, 2013



"One of the biggest takeaways for me was looking at how big an impact co-ops have on our local communities and seeing how involved they are."

—ANJALI SHASHIDHAR, COSERV, 2018



"When you apply, you just think it is a trip, but once it's over, you realize how much more it is."

—RORI PHILLIPS, LAMB COUNTY EC, 2018

YOUR Moment



Soaring TO NEW HEIGHTS

IT WASN'T UNTIL 2004 that Texas Youth Tour participants first took to the air. Though that plane ride marked the end of extended bonding sessions aboard buses traversing the American countryside, it also meant the students would gain more time in Washington to soak up all the city's wonders.

And for some participants, like Stacey Kovar Kuskie, the flight represented a momentous personal experience: their first airplane ride.

"I was already anticipating a memorable trip once in D.C., but flying made it even more unforgettable," said Kovar Kuskie, a 2004 Fayette Electric Cooperative representative.

This year, participants will have even more to remember. Not only is the delegation the largest in the state's history, but the 170-plus students and chaperones will travel in their own, private charter plane—sparing fellow travelers the vibrant chorus of Texas' rural youths.

For Esther Dominguez, director for Texas' Youth Tour, the charter flight is just part of the evolution of this trip of a lifetime.

"We are on the road to bigger and better," she said.



LONE STAR Memento

Timothy Holub felt a twinge of anxiety as he left his home in La Salle, near the Gulf, to embark on the 10-day tour.

"On the first day of Youth Tour, I was very excited and a little nervous about the trip because I was gonna meet a lot of people I didn't know at all," said Holub, a 2018 alum from Victoria Electric Cooperative.

As it happened, he didn't have any trouble making friends. Sporting a cowboy hat and boasting a boisterous, crowd-piercing "yee-haw," Holub became the de facto mascot and head cheerleader of the Texas delega-

tion. He even won the talent show with his singular rendition of Aerosmith's *Dream On*.

But that wasn't the high point of his Youth Tour experience.

While in Washington, D.C., Holub noticed a Texas flag being passed among his fellow participants. He asked chaperone Lari Samford, who brought the flag on the trip, if he could buy it.

"I had an idea for this flag that when we get back to Austin, everyone who attended the trip, including chaperones, would sign the flag, and I would hang it on the wall," Holub said.

Samford had only borrowed the flag from San Bernard Electric Cooperative, where she is member service communications specialist, and planned to return it. But after getting approval from the co-op office, she gifted the flag to Holub.

"I will never forget the excitement on his face while he asked everyone to sign his flag," she said.

Today, Holub proudly hangs that memento of all the friends he made on his bedroom wall. "I got to take home a little of everyone," he said.

FINDING **Common Ground**

She identified as conservative. He described himself as left of center. In these divisive times, their political differences might have seemed like a recipe for enmity. But taken by the spirit of fellowship that permeates Youth Tour, Emily Heitschmidt and Adrian Nanez forged a bond grounded in those differences—not in spite of them.

Heitschmidt and Nanez come from the same corner of the Texas Panhandle, in Deaf Smith Electric Cooperative's territory, but their friendship began on the 2018 trip to Washington, D.C., where nearly every scene was infused with political significance that sparked earnest conversation.

"That's where my whole respect for his viewpoint started," Heitschmidt said of

Nanez. "I think being able to discuss your views with somebody who differs but is just as open as you are is extremely important."

At the Newseum, they considered Supreme Court cases. They debated gun policy outside the White House. All the while, their respect for each other grew.

"He ended up becoming one of my closest friends on the whole trip," Heitschmidt said.

It was that chance to bridge the divide, to find common ground, that made Youth Tour so special, Nanez said. "There are people of different political beliefs, religious beliefs, but we all have one common thing, and that's that we love Texas and



we love the United States."

For Heitschmidt, the experience was one of personal growth. "Whenever I heard of this trip before, I always thought it's just a fun week where you get to meet a lot of friends," she said. "But it's so much more than that. It's you shaping who you are as a person. It's becoming more open-minded, a better thinker, knowing what you want out of life."

THEN & NOW

A lot has changed throughout Texas Youth Tour's 55-year history.

COST OF YOUTH TOUR FOR PARTICIPANTS

1965 \$ 0 2019

<p>YOUTH TOUR TRAVEL</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <p>In 1967, Youth Tour participants piled into 3 buses for a 3.5-day ride from Texas to Washington, D.C.</p> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>In 2019, they will fill 1 plane for a 3-hour flight to the capital city.</p> </div>	<p>TEXAS POPULATION</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <p>URBAN 1980 11.8 million 2017 25.2 million</p> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>RURAL 1980 2.5 million 2017 3.1 million</p> </div>	<p>NUMBER OF TEXAS YOUTH TOUR PARTICIPANTS</p> <p>1965 </p> <p>2019 58</p>
<p>NUMBER OF TEXAS CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>1965 23 2019 36</p> </div>	<p>PRICE OF A CELLPHONE</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <p>In 1983, a Motorola DynaTAC, the first commercially available hand-held cellphone, could store 30 numbers, took 10 hours to recharge and cost \$3,995—about \$10,000 today.</p> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>In 2019, a 64-gigabyte iPhone Xs, which weighs less than half a pound, retails for about \$1,000.</p> </div>	<p>VISITORS TO D.C.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <p>2005 15.4 million visitors spent \$5 BILLION</p> </div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>2017 22.8 million visitors spent \$7.5 BILLION</p> </div>
<p>COST OF A GALLON OF GASOLINE</p> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>1965 31¢ 2018 \$2.81</p> </div>	<p>EVOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL MALL</p> <p>As many as 16 notable structures have been added to the National Mall since 1965, most recently the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Others include the National Air and Space Museum and National Museum of the American Indian as well as the Vietnam Veterans, Korean War Veterans, World War II and Martin Luther King Jr. memorials.</p>	

A photograph of two young women, Hannah Franklin and Emilee Bethke, smiling and posing for a photo. They are wearing dark green t-shirts with a circular logo on the left chest that reads "2019 YOUTH TOUR TEXAS". They are standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. The Lincoln Memorial statue is visible in the background, slightly out of focus. A yellow circular graphic in the top right corner contains the text "HUGE STATE, SMALL WORLD: YOUTH TOUR ALUMS STAY CONNECTED ACROSS WIDE EXPANSES".

**HUGE STATE,
SMALL WORLD:
YOUTH TOUR ALUMS STAY
CONNECTED ACROSS
WIDE EXPANSES**

Hannah Franklin, right,
South Plains EC, with
Emilee Bethke, Victoria
EC, at the Lincoln
Memorial.

YOUR Family

BY CHRIS BURROWS

IT'S SAID THAT GOV. ANN RICHARDS

once quipped, “I thought I knew Texas pretty well, but I had no notion of its size until I campaigned it.”

The size of 173 Rhode Islands and with more people than all of Australia, Texas is vast.

But for two multigenerational Youth Tour families, it sometimes doesn't feel that way.

Curtis Franklin went on the trip in 1987 and today lives just down the road from a fellow alum, whom he still keeps in touch with. Curtis' daughter, Hannah, who went on the trip in 2018, met an alum by chance at her college's library; he introduced Hannah to a 2017 alum.

Danielle Granville still keeps up with a friend of 29 years whom she bonded with when she went on the trip in 1990 and who now lives a few towns away. Danielle's daughter, Morgyn, met up with Youth Tour alums from across Texas in College Station last summer after going on the trip, and Hannah Franklin was part of a similar Youth Tour meetup in San Marcos.

It seems Youth Tour alums can find kinship anywhere in the state. It makes Texas feel smaller.

“I knew that I'd make friends, but I wasn't really sure of what it would look like,” Hannah said. “I formed this little friend group. We immediately became extremely close. ... What are the odds of all of us meeting? We're living in all different parts of Texas.”

It's those connections, formed in tight-knit groups from among the more than 4,300 alums of Texas' Youth Tour and galvanized by its electricity, that encouraged Hannah and Morgyn to follow in their parents' footsteps and apply for the trip.

“My mom talked about, of course, making her friends that she still talks to, and I was like, ‘That's not really going to happen,’” said Morgyn, who lives in Fredericksburg and was sponsored by Central Texas Electric Cooperative. “It was way beyond. There's even people from other states in the U.S. that I still talk to. ... Getting to meet everybody and spend 10 days with them in D.C. was beyond what I ever imagined.”

And while their experiences changed with the times—the dayslong bus trip from Austin to Washington, D.C., since shunned for air travel, was a highlight for Danielle—the Granvilles point to the friends that they made as the capstone of the experience.

“We played games and sang songs and slept, and I remember sleeping anywhere you could find a space [on the bus],” Danielle said. “That's really where we bonded. ... It's a life-changing lifetime experience.”

Hannah—who hails from Lubbock, was sponsored by South Plains EC and now is studying journalism at West Texas A&M University—compared notes with her father after her trip.

“I think one of the biggest differences was, nowadays, everyone has a phone, so they're taking a bazillion pictures all the time,” Curtis said. “I looked back at some of the pictures we shared with each other back in the '80s, and it was like, ‘Well, that one's kind of blurry—why did someone send that to me?’”

Curtis got to visit Ford's Theatre and see Congress in session; Hannah toured the Museum of the Bible and the Newseum—newer attractions. But, again, it was the people that made the trip.

“What a blessing the Youth Tour was, not only for giving us this amazing experience to see Washington and getting to see all



Morgyn Granville, Central Texas EC, atop the Newseum with the U.S. Capitol in the background.

these national sites but also to walk away with lifetime friends,” Hannah said. “The people made it 10 times greater.”

After Morgyn returned from Youth Tour, she didn't compare notes with her mom, Danielle said. Instead, there was a quiet understanding between them.

“You know, it did have a little bit of that mom filter to it,” Danielle said. “And then she came back and was like, ‘Thank you so much for pushing me to go.’”

Curtis and Danielle both still have stacks of letters from their Youth Tour pals. Hannah and Morgyn have group chats and selfies to treasure. Each has connections statewide.

“There's definitely legacy that has been established,” Curtis said. “It just shows the ongoing support that the Youth Tour has provided for many families, and, in turn, the blessing that it's provided. It challenges and develops.”

SEE ALL There Is To See in WASHINGTON, D.C.

YOUTH | JUNE
TOUR | 12-21
2019

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 12 ► ARRIVE IN AUSTIN

13 THURSDAY



TEXAS CAPITOL

Texas State Cemetery
Zilker Botanical Garden
Bullock Texas State History Museum
Dinner at SoCo food trailers

14 FRIDAY



ARRIVE IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

National Museum
of American History
Pentagon City Mall

15 SATURDAY



ARLINGTON NATIONAL
CEMETERY

Wreath-laying ceremony at the
Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
Museum of the Bible
Dinner in Old Town Alexandria

16 SUNDAY



GEORGE WASHINGTON'S
MOUNT VERNON

Potomac River cruise,
dinner and dance

17 MONDAY



PHOTOS AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Smithsonian Institution museums
FDR Memorial
Jefferson Memorial
NRECA Youth Day ceremony

18 TUESDAY



MEET CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Supreme Court
Library of Congress
Photos on Capitol Hill

19 WEDNESDAY



WASHINGTON MONUMENT

National Cathedral
Lincoln Memorial
Vietnam Veterans Memorial
Korean War Veterans Memorial
World War II Memorial
Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial
Holocaust Memorial Museum
NRECA Night at the Newseum

20 THURSDAY



RETURN TO AUSTIN

Farewell celebration

APPLY NOW!

FRIDAY, JUNE 21 ► HOME!

FROM MUSEUMS AND MEMORIALS to the majestic U.S. Capitol and Supreme Court, there's a little bit of something for everyone in Washington, D.C. But regardless of which national treasures capture your fascination, Youth Tour is guaranteed to be the trip of a lifetime. Join more than 150 other Texas teens on this 10-day adventure jam-packed with splendid sites and memories in the making. The 2020 Youth Tour is June 17-26. Mark your calendar so you don't miss out!

GO TO TEXASYOUTHTOUR.COM TO FIND YOUR CO-OP | WATCH THE YOUTH TOUR VIDEO AT TEXAS-EC.ORG

YOUR Alumni

YOUTH TOUR
CAN CHANGE
THE COURSE
OF A LIFE

BY JESSICA RIDGE

FOR EVERY TEEN WHO HAS MADE THE TRIP, there's a moment that crystallizes its impact. Whether by exploring the cultural cornerstones of a big city, cementing a family tradition, confronting a dark chapter in history or flying for the first time, each of these alumni emerged from the trip with horizons broadened and dreams uncovered.



Youth Tour participants have been inspired by the Newseum for years.



A visit to the Newseum motivated Skiles to pursue a journalism career.

Blane Skiles

TRINITY VALLEY EC, 2011

Blane Skiles had never been on an airplane before he attended Youth Tour. He'd been to Disney World, but that was as far as he'd traveled from his small northeast Texas town of Trinidad, a place with "one stoplight, a Dairy Queen and a gas station," as he describes it.

Skiles prepared meticulously for the 2011 trip, sponsored by Trinity Valley Electric Cooperative, poring over the Youth Tour participant guide and noting attendees who were from nearby towns. "I remember being excited and intrigued about all the people I would get to meet and wanting to make friends out of it," he says.

His diligent approach paid off, and his time in Washington didn't disappoint. Not only did Skiles make friends on Youth Tour, but the Texas contingent's visit to the Newseum stoked his burgeoning interest in politics and latent aspiration to become a journalist. A quote on the museum's wall especially resonated with him. "There are three kinds of people who run toward disaster, not away: cops, firemen and reporters," he recalls it reading. "I remember leaving and knowing that I probably wanted to be a journalist, in whatever capacity."

Skiles has achieved that goal as multiplatform content manager for KSLA News in Shreveport, Louisiana, where he strategizes story coverage across the station's online and TV platforms. "I'm so lucky," he says. "I love my job. I hate to tell my managers this, but I do—that I would do it for free."

A lot has changed for Skiles since his visit to the Newseum eight years ago. In addition to his work in broadcast journalism, he's an adjunct professor of mass communications—not to mention a husband and a father. And through all those years, he still realizes the profound impact Youth Tour can have on those who attend.

That's why he encourages high schoolers today to take the leap.

"Do it. Apply," he says. "It's a privilege and an important experience that you're getting to be a part of."

NEWSEUM: TRAVIS HILL | TEC: SKILES: COURTESY BLANE SKILES, CALDERON: COURTESY ANNETTE CALDERON

Annette Calderon

COMANCHE EC, NRECA YOUTH
LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, 2017

Annette Calderon vividly recalls the cramped confines of a Holocaust Memorial Museum elevator meant to evoke the claustrophobia of a gas chamber. “It was crazy how close we were together in that little elevator,” she says. Her group exited into a hall lined with thousands of shoes of Holocaust victims. The stark portrait of genocide brought history to life for Calderon in a way her studies had not.

The visceral intensity of that experience was tempered by the support Calderon found among friends on Youth Tour who cured her brief bouts of homesickness. “They would make me laugh so much that I would kind of forget about missing home,” she says.

Calderon, a freshman at Texas A&M University, plans to pursue a career in biomedical science. In her breaks from school, though, she’s back at Comanche Electric Cooperative, which sponsored her on Youth Tour. As a scanning and filing clerk, she archives co-op documents, sometimes finding herself awestruck by their historic nature. “It’s actually really neat to see how the documents from 1935 represent the foundation of our co-op, how it started,” she says.

Calderon credits Youth Tour with developing a more mature version of herself. It’s an opportunity she encourages others to take advantage of, in spite of any trepidation or traces of self-doubt. “No matter if you think you have a chance or not—I didn’t think I had a chance—I would always tell someone to do it, no matter what.”



CALDERON, A
FRESHMAN AT TEXAS
A&M UNIVERSITY, PLANS
TO PURSUE A CAREER IN
BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE.

YOUR Alumni

DUENSING IS AN ELECTRA HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADER AND TUTOR IN MATH, SCIENCE AND ENGLISH.



Deanna Duensing SOUTHWEST RURAL EA, 2018

Despite being an accomplished public speaker, Deanna Duensing worried she wouldn't find anyone to talk to on Youth Tour. The University Interscholastic League speech competitor's butterflies evaporated quickly, though. Youth Tour attendees bonded so much by the trip's end that "nobody actually really wanted to leave," she says.

An Electra High School cheerleader and tutor in math, science and English, Duensing had previously visited Washington, D.C. But this trip required a new self-reliance and encouraged an autonomy she enjoyed, such as deciding which Smithsonian museums to explore and budgeting time at each. "It was really self-paced," she says. "You could go to any of them—you just had to have a buddy system."

But for Duensing, who was sponsored by Southwest Rural Electric Association, Youth Tour wasn't just about the destinations or gaining a little independence. It also helped her to branch out and discover who she is and what she wants to do. She plans to study social work and hopes to work with emotional support animals in a children's hospital. "Youth Tour just reinforced the fact that I really want to work with people on a day-to-day basis and play a part in their life," she says.

It's a transformative experience she wishes for future Youth Tour attendees but one that she says requires they immerse themselves in the adventure. "Don't be nervous, and try to stay off your electronics. You can talk to anyone back home as soon as you get back, but the people there—you have to build a bond with them because you might not get a chance to afterwards."

Developing those real-world relationships, Duensing says, provides a learning opportunity like none other.

"We can read a book or learn something off TV or the internet, but until you're talking to people and learning about their experiences, that's when you actually make real connections with the world."



Jordan Cochran
NORTH PLAINS EC, 2018

As Jordan Cochran stood on the steps above the Tomb of the Unknown soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, she readied for her role in a wreath-laying ceremony. She knew she was about to follow in the footsteps of her grandfather, Navy veteran Warren Rivers, who took part in the solemn ritual a decade earlier. She had no idea, however, that her mom would make a surprise appearance to see her reprise the nascent family legacy.

“I was actually a little bit nervous because I had never done something so special and important,” Cochran says. “I was really missing my mom and home when I saw her. It was a really great surprise.”

As welcome and emotional as the reunion was, Cochran knew she had to maintain her composure. “I wanted to cry, but I didn’t want any makeup to be smeared for the ceremony,” she remembers, laughing about that humid summer day of Youth Tour in 2018.

Of all the experiences Cochran enjoyed on the

trip to Washington, the wreath-laying ceremony and a visit to the newly opened Museum of the Bible were among the most personally meaningful for her. But she’s still amazed by all she saw in those chock-full days in D.C. When she looks back at the itinerary—a copy of which she has held on to as a keepsake—she’s almost incredulous. “I don’t understand how we did that in so little time. It’s crazy,” says Cochran, who was sponsored by North Plains Electric Cooperative.

As she negotiates the transition to college, juggling her job as a barista and work as a library aide, the former Canadian High School basketball player attributes a newfound self-assurance to her time on Youth Tour.

“It’s made me more of an independent woman,” she says. “I’ve had a few times where I’ve had to do college things, like talking to admissions counselors, and I’ve done it on my own. I feel more confident.”

TOP LEFT: Jordan Cochran, left, with her mother. **ABOVE:** Wreath-laying ceremony participants, from left, Riley Carter, Hallie Richardson, Cochran and Caleb Miller.

YOUR Voice

SOUTH TEXAS TEEN RECOUNTS MAGICAL TRIP TO DC—Where *‘the Air Was Different’*



Fatima Figueroa was awed by Washington, D.C., and all the history and opportunity it represents.

BY FATIMA FIGUEROA, MAGIC VALLEY EC, NRECA YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, 2018

THEY SAY HINDSIGHT IS 20/20, and when it comes to my experience on Youth Tour, it truly was.

If you would have told me that I was to make some of the best friends I have ever had, see the United States Constitution, become Texas' Youth Leadership Council representative, visit the Library of Congress and get a tour of the Capitol all within 10 days, never would I have believed you. Nevertheless, it happened.

As I was packing, I remember thinking there was no way that this trip could have the impact that everybody had mentioned. They said that this was a trip of a lifetime and that nothing else would compare to the profound influence those 10 days I was about to spend with complete strangers could have on my future. Yet, I was not a believer in the power of Youth Tour, but when I arrived in Austin on that first day of the trip, things started to change. Although terrified by what I had gotten myself into, all I could think about was my desire to stand on the United States Senate floor.

Austin was an amazing experience full of buzzing new faces that were eager to create memories, and I am grateful for every moment I experienced (especially Home Slice Pizza), but Washington, D.C., was magical. Waking up at 3 a.m. to catch a plane to our nation's capital required many alarm clocks, but it was worth every one of them. When I got off the plane, I disembarked to the very same streets where 45 presidents, hundreds of senators and countless trailblazers have set foot—leaders such as John F.

Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr., Sandra Day O'Connor and others who became the backbone of our great nation. The air was different. It held their power. The city represents opportunity, change and freedom. It serves as a symbol of our country—and there I was.

Every minute became my favorite, from visiting the Smithsonian in the company of new, lifelong friends to exploring just a fraction of the Library of Congress' 838 miles of bookshelves to parading the streets alongside the Washington Capitals as they celebrated their Stanley Cup victory—not to mention far surpassing my goal of 10,000 steps each day.

My time in D.C. was incomparable to anything I had ever experienced.

The opportunity I had to stand in the Senate chamber was beyond my comprehension; I was speechless, and my eyes filled with tears. I come from a small city in the Rio Grande Valley, where opportunity is scarce, but at that moment, nothing else mattered. I was there, standing on the same floor as some of my political heroes, in a room where history is made and where I, too, hope to make history someday. I felt the power to change the world within my bones. I became a better person because of this journey, and I am confident its impact will stay with me for many years to come.

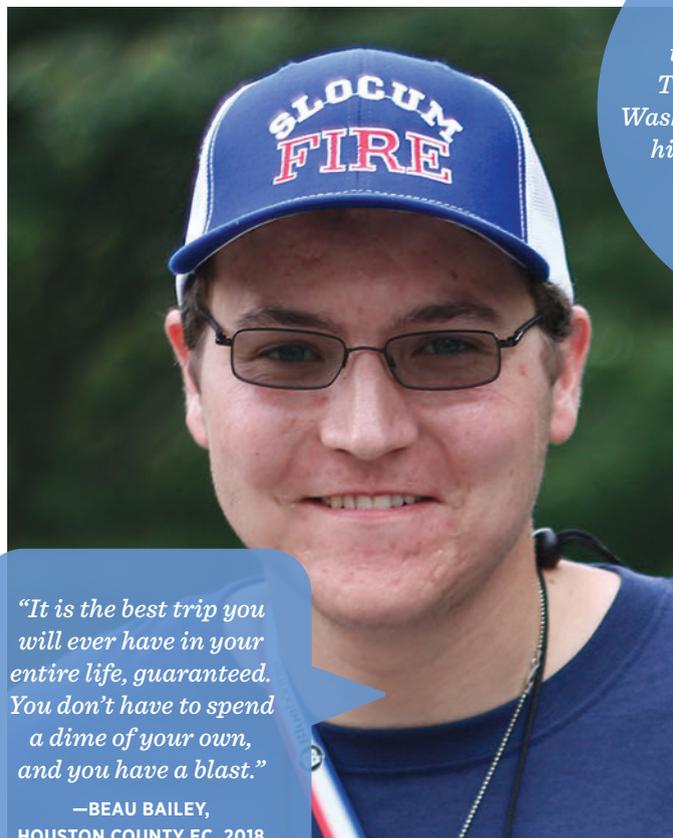
I can recount my every memory of Youth Tour, but if you are among those lucky enough to be selected for this journey, I will leave you to make your own. Youth Tour was nothing short of a trip of a lifetime with every second surpassing the last. Yet, none of it would be possible if not for my local co-op, Magic Valley Electric Cooperative, and Texas Electric Cooperatives. I am eternally grateful for the seed they planted in me and hope that you have an even better adventure. For now, I leave you with the words of American author H. Jackson Brown Jr.: “Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.”

So, make the most of your time there because it, too, will one day be history.

Fatima Figueroa of Edinburg attends Robert Vela High School and hopes to one day become a U.S. senator.

YOUR Notes

ALUMS SUM UP THE TRIP

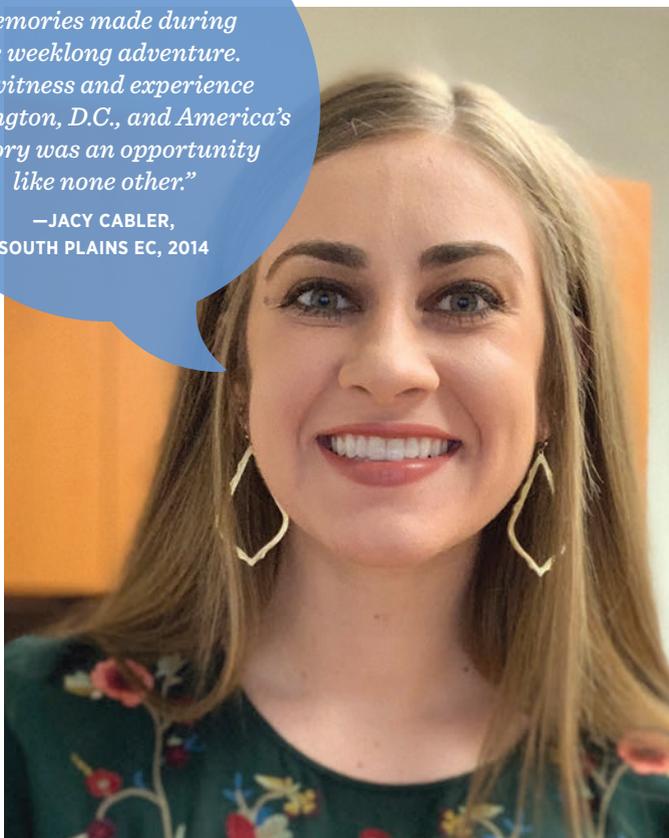


"It is the best trip you will ever have in your entire life, guaranteed. You don't have to spend a dime of your own, and you have a blast."

—BEAU BAILEY,
HOUSTON COUNTY EC, 2018

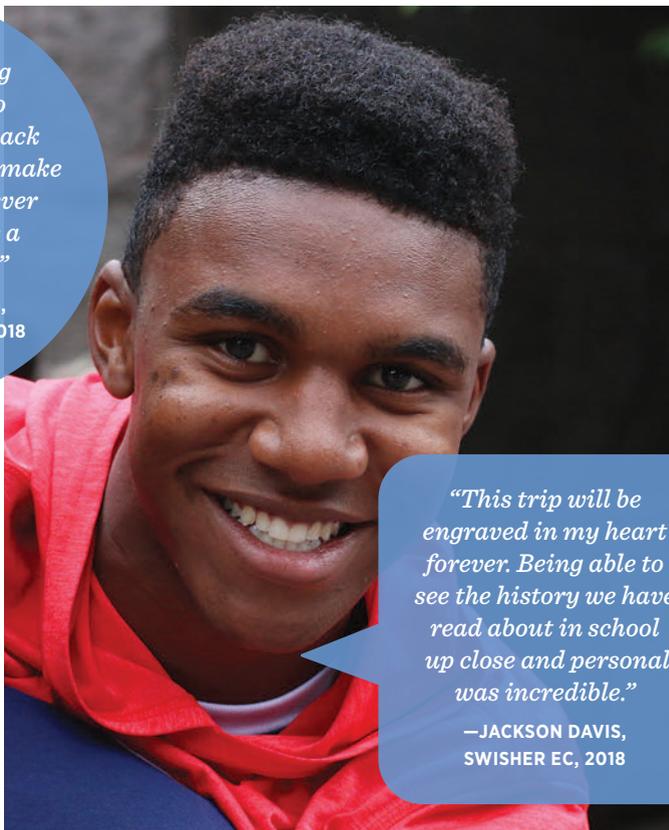
"I cherish the countless memories made during the weeklong adventure. To witness and experience Washington, D.C., and America's history was an opportunity like none other."

—JACY CABLER,
SOUTH PLAINS EC, 2014



"If you're thinking about applying to Youth Tour, do not back out. Write that essay, make that video, do whatever you have to do. It's a free trip. Let's go."

—JESSIKA FAIRBANKS,
MID-SOUTH SYNERGY, 2018



"This trip will be engraved in my heart forever. Being able to see the history we have read about in school up close and personal was incredible."

—JACKSON DAVIS,
SWISHER EC, 2018

**JOIN US
NEXT YEAR!**

JUNE 17-26, 2020

**APPLY THROUGH
YOUR ELECTRIC
CO-OP**



Mikayla Merigan,
Bailey County EC,
says Youth Tour
pushed her to be
more confident.