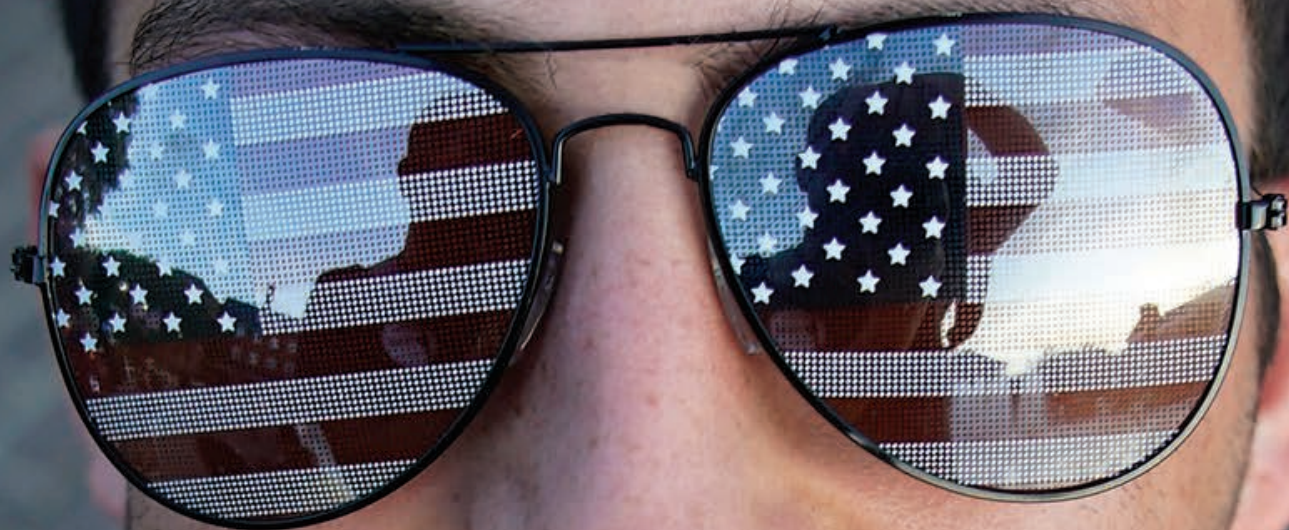


TEXAS YOUTH TOUR | VOLUME 6

# Y = T YOUR



**TAKE THE  
TRIP OF A  
LIFETIME**

**TRAVEL WITH  
OTHER TEXAS TEENS  
FROM AUSTIN TO  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**



## WELCOME

**IN 1965, TEXAS' ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES** joined forces to send 58 deserving teens to Washington, D.C. There they joined their peers from across Co-op Country to explore the capital, meet with their congressional representatives and broaden their view of the world.

More than half a century later, electric cooperatives carry on the legacy of that first Government-in-Action Youth Tour and continue to empower young people through the life-changing trip to Washington. After a two-year hiatus, Youth Tour is back, and more than 100 young Texans will once again make the journey to our nation's capital to represent their hometown cooperatives and answer then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson's call in 1957 to "see what the flag stands for and represents."

If you are among those fortunate enough to have attended Youth Tour in past years, then you are well aware of the trip's transformative power. If you are considering applying, I encourage you to do so—it will change your life.

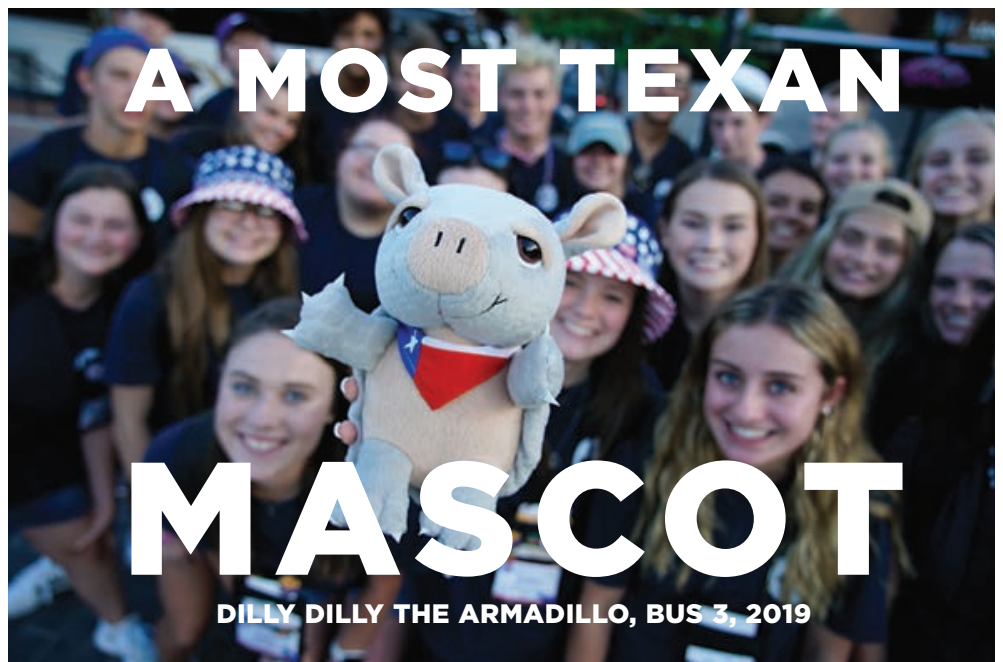


Best Regards,

Mike Williams  
President/CEO  
Texas Electric Cooperatives

# YOUR Moment

**YOUTH TOUR** is more than a whirlwind tour of the capital's many monuments and museums. It's about sharing meaningful experiences and unforgettable moments—big and small, somber and silly—that will leave a lasting impression for years to come. But don't just take our word for it. These recent alumni can tell you what the trip is all about.



### GOVERNMENT IN ACTION

***"If it weren't for Youth Tour, I would have never known that I had a hidden passion for politics."***

—KALEIGH BLASCHKE, FAYETTE EC, 2017

### YOUR TOUR | TEXAS YOUTH TOUR

**TEXAS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** Chair Gary Raybon, El Campo • Vice Chair Kelly Lankford, San Angelo • Secretary-Treasurer Neil Hesse, Muenster • Board Members Greg Henley, Tahoka • Julie Parsley, Johnson City • Doug Turk, Livingston • Brandon Young, McGregor  
**PRESIDENT/CEO:** Mike Williams, Austin **COMMUNICATIONS & MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE:** Matt Bentke, Bastrop • Marty Haught, Burleson • Ron Hughes, Sinton • Gary Miller, Bryan • Zac Perkins, Hooker, Oklahoma • John Ed Shinpaugh, Bonham • Rob Walker, Gilmer • Buff Whitten, Eldorado  
**YOUR TOUR STAFF:** Vice President, Communications & Member Services Martin Bevins; Editor Travis Hill; Copy Editor Chris Burrows; Proofreader Alex Dal Santo; Youth Tour Coordinator Esther Dominguez; Creative Manager Andy Doughty; Production Manager Karen Nejtek; Copy Editor Jessica Ridge; Senior Designer Jane Sharpe; Copy Editor Tom Widlowski

VOLUME 6, June 2022. © Copyright 2022 Texas Electric Cooperatives Inc. Reproduction of this issue or any portion of it is expressly prohibited without written permission. PHOTOS: CHRIS SALAZAR | TEC

COVER: DYLAN MARTIN, TAYLOR EC, 2019



SING IT LOUD, SING IT PROUD  
**'TEXAS'**

"It all began in Austin, and when you are with about 150 Texans in the capital of Texas, you are obliged to sing *Deep in the Heart of Texas* with your loudest and proudest voice. Not only did we sing Texas' theme song, but we also yelled 'yeehaw!' at least 50 times a day." —REBEKAH HALEPASKA, SAN PATRICIO EC, 2018

**THE PERKS**

"We get to hang out in really nice hotels—for free. We get to eat food that we didn't pay for. We get to go to D.C. and look at all that stuff for free. What's not to love?"

—ANNA WILLITS, TAYLOR EC, 2019

**WORDS OF ADVICE**

"Don't worry if you don't know anyone going. By the end of the trip, you will feel like you have known these people all your life."

—LOGAN PAETZOLD, DEAF SMITH EC, 2019

**HOPE FOR THE FUTURE**

"Seeing how Americans, through all of the good and bad in our history, have come together to forge this great nation through blood, iron and willpower is amazing. This fills me with pride for both my homeland and my people and gives me hope for the future."

—TIM BOGAN, TRINITY VALLEY EC, 2019



**BEST BED HEAD**



EMILY McCLENDON, NUECES EC, 2019, LEFT  
 ALYSSA RODRIGUEZ, NUECES EC, 2019, RIGHT



**YOUTH  
TOUR**

**ADVENTURE  
STARTS HERE**

# PICTURE YOURSELF IN WASHINGTON, D.C.





**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.

Join more than 100 other Texas teens on this 10-day summer adventure jampacked with splendid sights and memories in the making.

Youth Tour is sure to be the trip of a lifetime.

**WANT TO GO?**

**GO TO**

**TEXASYOUTHTOUR.COM  
TO FIND YOUR CO-OP**

**WATCH THE YOUTH TOUR  
VIDEO AT TEXAS-EC.ORG**

Abby Day, left, Deep East Texas EC, and Brian Peña, Magic Valley EC, at the Lincoln Memorial in 2019.



## Where Memories Are Made To Last

**FOR MANY TEENS,** Youth Tour might seem like a daunting adventure. You join up with more than 100 other high school students—most or all of whom you’ve never met—to travel to a far-away city for a week of nonstop activity. As the trip approaches, worries can start to bubble to the surface: “How am I going to make friends?” you may ask yourself. “Is this really going to be as much fun as everyone keeps telling me?”

And you wouldn’t be the first to feel that way. But talk to anyone who has taken the plunge, and they’ll tell you those feelings fade on the very first day, deep in the heart of Texas.

“Going into this trip, I was nervous like everyone else,” says Brooke Walser, sponsored by North Plains Electric Cooperative on the 2019 trip. “The idea of not knowing anyone is a little intimidating. Though once we landed in Austin and got checked into the hotel, I instantly became friends with my roommates.”

While the heart of Youth Tour is in Washington, D.C., the excitement really begins in Austin. Friendships form effortlessly, and in those first two days, participants and chaperones get to know one another even better at a welcome dinner and as they walk through the Texas State Cemetery, tour the state Capitol, have a picnic lunch on the Capitol grounds and visit the Bullock Texas State History Museum.

It’s a training session for the whirlwind week that follows, when Texas’ Youth Tour delegation takes in the sights of the nation’s capital.

While in D.C., participants continue forming lasting bonds as they visit national monuments and historic sites, tour Smithsonian museums, go on a Potomac River cruise, and meet their congressional representatives.

After six inspiring days, they return to Austin—exhausted, elated and sad to see the trip come to an end. But before they say their final good-byes, they get one last hurrah at the farewell celebration dinner, talent show and dance. Surrounded by family and newfound friends, participants reminisce about the week that just was, its heartwarming highlights and life-altering lessons that they’ll carry with them for years to come.



During their first full day in Austin, students take a break in the shade on the Capitol lawn in 2019.



Kade McAdams was selected as the 2020 Youth Tour national spokesperson.

## Q&A | Kade McAdams, Tri-County EC, 2019

**KADE MCADAMS** was just one of the 157 teens that made up Texas' Youth Tour delegation in 2019. But McAdams, sponsored by Tri-County Electric Cooperative, quickly distinguished himself when he was chosen by the trip's chaperones to represent Texas on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Leadership Council. Then, several months later, the Seymour High School senior was selected to be the YLC's national spokesperson from among the more than 1,800 teens who went on the trip that summer—the first Texan in about a quarter century to be named to the position.

We recently caught up with McAdams to ask him about his Youth Tour experience.

**Your Tour: Once you found out you were going on Youth Tour, what were your thoughts as the date of the trip approached?**

**Kade McAdams:** I was extremely nervous about the trip. I had all kinds of doubts running through my head: Would I be that one kid that had no friends on a trip full of kids? Would I be too homesick to even enjoy the 10-day getaway? I also had been told that I was a finalist for the Youth Leadership Council and thus had a lot of anxiety about obtaining the Texas delegate position.

**YT: What were your favorite parts of the trip?**

**KM:** My favorite part was visiting the Museum of the Bible—although the late-night Target runs were a close second.

**YT: How were you selected as Texas' YLC delegate?**

**KM:** The first night of Youth Tour, when we were still in Austin, I and a handful of other finalists were interviewed by a panel of chaperones, who then observed us for the remainder of the trip and took note of how we interacted with the other youths and exhibited leadership abilities.

**YT: How you were chosen as the YLC national spokesperson, and what does that position entail?**

**KM:** On a second trip back to D.C., the youth representative from each state was required to present a speech before a panel of judges about what inspired them during their Youth Tour trip. I never believed, not even once, that I would be chosen as the national spokesperson, so I was speechless and shocked when my name was called.

As the YLC spokesperson, I presented my speech in March 2020 at the NRECA Annual Meeting in New Orleans. I prepared for the role by practicing my speech with my sponsoring co-op and a speech coach.

**YT: How did Youth Tour and your YLC experience affect you?**

**KM:** When you are on a 10-day trip with complete strangers, you are forced to make friends—it's a sink-or-swim scenario. I can say that the strangers I met on day one and two are now some of my closest friends. It has encouraged me to frequently go out of my comfort zone in my "regular life" because as scary as it may be, incredible outcomes are a possibility.

My mom says the experience has changed my self-confidence for the better. Before being chosen as the YLC spokesperson, I never fully believed in any of my abilities. Sure, I have received a lot of blue ribbons and stand out from the crowd every now and then, but I just always credited it to not having a large number to compete against since I am from a small community. Being chosen as the Texas delegate and then the YLC national spokesperson has proven to me that I can shine in an even bigger galaxy of stars than my own. Most importantly, I am now more confident in my abilities.



# JOIN US NEXT YEAR!

ASK YOUR  
ELECTRIC CO-OP  
HOW TO APPLY  
FOR THE  
JUNE TRIP

“Don’t trick yourself into believing it’s like other trips you may have been on. This is such a unique experience that is sure to blow you away.”

—TANNER DAVID,  
SAN BERNARD EC, 2019

“The people were my favorite part. Yes, the monuments and museums were cool and all, but the friendships and connections I made are what made it the trip of a lifetime.”

—DYLAN MARTIN,  
TAYLOR EC, 2019

“It’s astonishing how many things you can do in Washington, D.C., in just one day.”

—EVAN HERCHEK,  
SAN BERNARD EC, 2019

“I took away a lot of life lessons. Being able to step out of your comfort zone was a big one when meeting new people.”

—MONICA HERNANDEZ,  
JACKSON EC, 2019

FROM LEFT: Harley Brents, South Plains EC; Tutu Bodede, Trinity Valley EC; and Trey Galvan, San Patricio EC, at the Washington Monument in 2019.

