TEXAS YOUTH TOUR MAGAZINE 2018







CONTENTS

YOUR MOMENT
The Trip
of a Lifetime

6 YOUR IMPACT
The Reach of the
Co-op Family

8 YOUR GUIDE Youth Tour Highlights

10 YOUR ALUMNI Youth Tour Changes Lives

14 YOUR VOICES Youth Tour in Their Own Words

In 1965,

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES across
Texas joined forces to send a busload of youths to Washington, D.C.
There the teens met with President
Lyndon B. Johnson, explored the
capital, and forged memories and
friendships to last a lifetime.

Fifty-three years later, the

cooperative spirit that birthed the
Government-in-Action Youth Tour
continues to grow this trip
of a lifetime. Some 150 youths
will this summer answer Johnson's call to
"see what the flag stands for and represents" by expanding

their circles, knowledge and horizons in Washington.

They're the future leaders of our communities and our nation, and electric cooperatives continue to ensure our

youths are given every tool they need to succeed. Improving

the lives of members is tradition. It's the cooperative way.
In this magazine, you'll read about civic leaders and thinkers from different backgrounds, generations and parts of Texas. They all cite Youth Tour as pivotal on their path to success. If you've been on the trip, then you know why. If you haven't, I encourage you to apply and find out.

Best Regards,

Mike Williams President/CEO

Texas Electric Cooperatives

millauran

YOU'RE

On the cover: AT MOUNT VERNON From left: Klayton House, Trinity Valley EC; Laryssa Garcia, Magic Valley EC; and J.B. McWhirter. Lea County EC

Left: AT THE NATIONAL MALL From left: Margo Cruz, Mid-South Synergy; Lauryn Jones, CoServ; and Mary Robinson, Taylor EC

YOUR TOUR | TEXAS YOUTH TOUR

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He lived at the highest point in his town. She set a record for running the most miles in a season of crosscountry. Nearly 18 years after sharing those icebreakers on the first day of Youth Tour in 2000, Chase and Sarah Paxton still can recite the other's fun fact.

During a stop on their way to Washington, D.C., they happened to be in line together for food. "I said, 'Oh, you're the guy who lives at the top of the hill!' " Sarah says. After that, Chase says, they were inseparable the rest of the trip.

After Youth Tour, Chase returned to Levelland and Sarah went home to Dale. In the days before widespread rural internet, they lost touch. But during his freshman year at Texas Tech University, Chase emailed runnerbabe 01@hotmail.com.

"Luckily it was an email account she still checked," Chase said. "We communicated pretty nonstop for about two months." Soon Chase and Sarah, who was attending Texas A&M University, were dating long distance. "Luckily gas was like a dollar a gallon back then."

They married in October 2006 and now live in Irving with their two kids.

"When you explain to somebody that you met on a trip because of an essay contest, people are just looking at you like 'What?' " Sarah says. "It's such a fun, unique story."

your Moment

LOUD AND PROUD



Braden Huggins emboldened Texas' 2017 Youth Tour delegation of 147—the largest to that point and the biggest of any state that year.

"Every chance you get, when you talk to someone else from another state, make sure they know that Texas is the largest state," Huggins, a 2016 alum from HILCO Electric Cooperative, told the green group at the start of the 2017 trip. "You gotta let 'em know."

You don't have to tell Texans.

The group carried Texas flags, belted *Deep in the Heart of Texas* and proudly represented their home state, garnering photo ops, stares and maybe even a little jealousy.

"The whole week we had people coming up and saying 'Y'all are from Texas aren't you?' " said Josh Myers, a delegate from South Plains Electric Cooperative. "They were amazed that we could get that excited about where we're from."

Allison Flowers, an attendee from Alabama, was impressed: "Even though it was a big group, they made everyone feel welcome, even people from different states!"





Top of the PACK



Most would feel intimidated by a Secret Service agent standing guard outside the White House, especially one accompanied by a dog.

Not the intrepid Caroline Wakefield, a 2017 Youth Tour attendee.

"A group of us decided to go speak to the Secret Service agent as he was standing along the fence," said Wakefield, sponsored by Houston County Electric Cooperative. "Mainly we went over to see the dog that was with him."

They found out the Labrador, Toppi, had been trained by and belonged to the agent, and that the K-9s protecting the White House are switched out every 30 minutes to promote focus and alertness.

The teens asked the agent if he'd be willing to pay the ultimate price to protect the president. His reply? "It would be an honor."

4 Your Tour 2018 Texas Youth Tour.com





your Impact

BY CHRIS BURROWS

Youth Tour—Then Hurricane Harvey—Reveal Reach of Cooperative Spirit

LOGAN GODINO

NORTH PLAINS EC

Canadian High School still planned to hold classes Monday, January 16, 2017, after a weekend storm caked tree limbs, buildings and power lines in ice up to an inch thick. Then, Monday morning, the

ice began to melt, fall to the ground, and snap utility poles and tree branches. The school lost power and canceled classes for the day.

Logan Godino, a senior at the school, didn't sprawl across the family couch the way many of his classmates probably did. He set to work.

His coveralls and coat needed to be dried after he had run them through the wash that morning, thinking he still was going to school. But now, after working as a groundman late Saturday until late Sunday on North Plains Electric Cooperative's devastated grid, he was on the phone with his foreman preparing to head back out into the frigid cold.

With a co-op lineman for a father, it's what Godino always has known.

"The co-op is basically the other side of my family," he said.

It only seemed natural, then, that after Hurricane Harvey ravaged electric grids along the Texas coast in August 2017, the lineman in training and Youth Tour alum got permission from his teachers at Texas State Technical College in Waco to miss his first week of lineman classes for hands-on restoration work on the front lines. Many Youth Tour alumni go on to work for co-ops after the trip to Washington, D.C., but a rare few have the guts to pursue the grueling and dangerous field of line work.

"He's determined and driven," said Randy Mahannah, North Plains EC general manager. "It's unusual that you have somebody that from the age of 16 or 17 knows what they want to do and then they work toward that goal."

With the blessing of his teachers, Godino headed south, meeting a North Plains EC crew in Sinton, where their specialized equipment was an asset as they helped San Patricio Electric Cooperative restore power to some 7,000 members.

"We could get into the marshes, swamps and areas that were still really flooded—areas you couldn't get a truck into," Godino said. "It was hot, miserable, humid and lots of mosquitoes."

While working in the hurricane-battered town of Refugio, Godino met a woman who was instantly moved when he told her where he was from. Canadian High School had defeated Refugio High School in the state football championship in 2015. After the hurricane, Canadian collected supplies to send to her town.

"She just looked at me and tears filled her eyes. She gave me



the biggest hug," Godino said. "But people were grateful just to see us running down the highway, putting lines back in the air."

Growing up in a co-op family, Godino always knew how co-op folks took care of each other, especially during disasters, but it wasn't until he went on Youth Tour in June 2017, between the ice storm and Harvey, that he learned the cooperative spirit wasn't unique to the Texas Panhandle.

"I thought maybe it was just our co-op that was more housed around family," Godino said, "but I \dots realized they're really all based around rural life and family-oriented."

A highlight of the trip for Godino was meeting U.S. Rep. Mac Thornberry in his Capitol Hill office. While most kids asked the congressman about day-to-day life or making big decisions, Godino wanted to know why the government couldn't do more to help with costs incurred by the ice storm. Thornberry didn't offer much, but Godino was enamored all the same.

"He's from a small town right down the road from us in Clarendon, Texas, where I have tons of friends," Godino said. "To talk to somebody in Washington, D.C., who knows what it's like to be from a small town was neat."

While Godino isn't quite sure where he'll end up after lineman school, he intends to work for a co-op—because now he knows how high and far it can take him.

Mahannah would be glad to have him back in Canadian.

"He's got a standing offer from North Plains Electric to come to work."

Oh, the places you'll go on YOUTH TOUR

You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. Don't wait until college to become a part of something bigger than you. Commit to Youth Tour now and find out why generations of Texas teens have called this 10-day adventure the trip of a lifetime. You'll be invigorated, challenged and moved to tears by the end. The 2019 Youth Tour is June 12-21. You know what you know, now see where you'll go.

GO TO TEXASYOUTHTOUR.COM TO FIND YOUR CO-OP AND APPLY!



"All of the photos and videos I took wouldn't even compare to seeing it with your own eyes."

—Margo Cruz, Mid-South Synergy, 2017

TOUR MEMORABLE MONUMENTS AND SEE YOUR GOVERNMENT AT WORK

You'll be awed by historic buildings, artifacts and statues barely resembling the things you've seen on coins and in history books.

And you'll get face time with your congressional representative on Capitol Hill.

"It was breathtaking to realize how blessed we are to have such an amazing country and God worth fighting for."

> —Ashley Scott, Bailey County EC, 2017



EXPAND YOUR PERSPECTIVEAT MUSEUMS AND HISTORIC SITES

You'll see, touch and experience history, science, art and culture up close, as you can nowhere else on Earth. You'll see what George Washington saw through the windows of his home and get chills of reverence at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

"Youth Tour was my chance to become friends with some of the brightest, most charismatic and driven people."

—Ambika Kapil (right), CoServ, 2017

GAIN LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

You'll have the chance to prove yourself as a leader. Any participant can apply to be on the national Youth Leadership Council; one Texas delegate will be chosen to return to D.C. for a leadership workshop.

GROW YOUR CIRCLE OF FRIENDS

You'll laugh until you can't breathe and cry when it's time to part ways with the new friends you'll have from all over Texas—and beyond.



DESTINATIONS

DAY 1

Meet in Austin

DAY 2

Zilker Botanical Garden
Texas State Cemetery
Texas Capitol
Bullock Texas State History
Museum

DAY 3

Arrive in Washington Newseum Pentagon City Mall

DAY 4

Museum of the Bible Arlington National Cemetery Tomb of the Unknown Soldier Kennedy Center

DAY 5

Old Town Alexandria Mount Vernon Potomac River Cruise

DAY 6

Photos at the White House American History Museum National Museum of Natural History National Museum of the American Indian National Air and Space Museum American Art Museum National Archives FDR Memorial

DAY 7

Meet congressional representatives Supreme Court Library of Congress Photos on Capitol Hill Night Capitol tour

Jefferson Memorial

DAY 8

National Cathedral Lincoln Memorial Vietnam Veterans Memorial Korean War Veterans Memorial National World War II Memorial Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Holocaust Memorial Museum

DAY 9

Return to Austin Farewell Celebration

DAY 10 HOME!

YOUR Alumni

BY TRAVIS HILL

Youth Tour may be the trip of a lifetime, but for many, it's also a leap into the unknown. That was definitely the case for these alumni. Years removed from their trips, they still remember the initial butterflies that ultimately gave way to life-changing experiences.

MARLENE PHILLIPS COOKE COUNTY EC

1992

Most adults would be hard-pressed to name a lone episode that defined the course of their lives. Not Marlene Phillips. She traces her trajectory back to one pivotal experience 26 years ago—one that

only Youth Tour could provide.

"Everything that has happened in my life through now is because of Youth Tour," says Phillips, whose impressive career has taken her from small-town Texas to Capitol Hill and farflung corners of the world.

It all goes back to the day she met her congressman on Youth Tour in 1992 as a delegate of Cooke County Electric Cooperative. While other participants met in groups with their representatives, Phillips was the only student to meet with then-U.S. Rep. Ralph Hall.

She remembers the encounter as if it were yesterday.

"I remember standing in front of these massive wood doors that are the entrance to every congressional office in the Rayburn Building and being kind of confused," she says, adding that she didn't know whether to knock or walk right in. "Just mustering up the courage to open that door was a big deal."

Once inside, her sense of awe swelled. "It all just seemed kind of surreal," she says. Hall seemed to know everything and everyone in Muenster, Phillips' hometown. "I just felt so fortunate to be there with him." As the visit was wrapping up, the congressman invited Phillips to lunch, a meal she recalls down to its mundane details. "I ordered a club sandwich, and he ordered soup."

Congressional visits are a highlight for many who attend Youth Tour, but the experience stayed with Phillips. After she returned



home from the trip, Hall stayed in touch with her and ultimately asked if she'd like to intern for him in Washington, D.C.

She worked for the congressman the summer after she graduated from Muenster High School, then again while she attended Texas Tech University. After earning a degree in communication studies, she went to work for Hall full time. Though she realized Capitol Hill wasn't her ultimate calling, she credits Youth Tour for broadening her horizons: "My eyes were completely opened to the opportunities that exist in the world."

Phillips went on to work for the American Red Cross, the Peace Corps in Namibia, and the Foreign Service in Mexico, Ecuador and France. Today, she's back in Texas, just 15 miles from where she grew up and still a Cooke County EC member, working as the director of grants at North Central Texas College.

Phillips says Youth Tour not only set her on a path of service but also taught her how to meet people and make friends. "That's a confidence builder, to go



AT CAPITOL HILL Marlene Phillips visits with U.S. Rep. Ralph Hall, right, whom she later worked for. through that, to put yourself in a situation that has all the potential to be really uncomfortable and challenging and to come through it," she says. "Plus, I remember a whole lot of songs from our songbook, so I can really sing some random hokey, folksy songs."



10 Your Tour 2018 TexasYouthTour.com

MACIE THOMPSON

wood county ec

Macie Thompson has always been a gogetter. As a high school and college student, she competed on athletic and academic teams and benefited from all the opportunities Wood County Electric

Cooperative offered to young people, from scholarships and leadership camps to summer internships.

Yet she says it was her trip to Washington on the 2006 Youth Tour that allowed her to truly do something independently.

"Youth Tour was the first thing I really stepped out and did on my own," says Thompson, now assistant principal at Lindale High School. "I didn't have a friend going with me or applying with me. I think I was a little bit nervous to do it, but once I got accepted and was down to go, there was no turning back."

She fondly remembers visiting the Lincoln Memorial with her peers and gazing across the National Mall. But the most memorable episode of the trip for Thompson was getting to meet her congressman, U.S. Rep. Jeb Hensarling—an experience, she says, that made our representative democracy come to life.

"After Youth Tour, I went on to decide that I wanted to study

political science and history and communications," she says. And at Texas A&M University, that's what she did. After graduating in 2011 and briefly working for the communications departments at Wood County EC and a bank, she became a government and economics teacher at Weatherford High School.

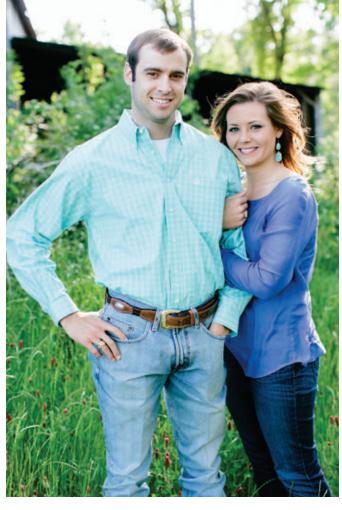
As a teacher, Thompson drew on sto-

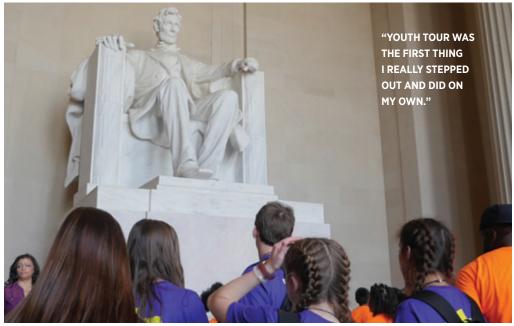
ries from Youth Tour to impart lessons to her students. Today, as a high school administrator, her memories of that trip to the nation's capital continue to fuel her commitment to young people in her community.

"I am very passionate about making sure that rural students, people in these rural communities, have the same opportunities as students from elsewhere," she says. "And I think that Youth Tour helped me. As a rural student myself and someone from a small community, it helped me see that there was more to the world, and it was just one other experience that tapped into my ambition and my potential."



AT THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL The 19-foot-tall Lincoln statue leaves a lasting impression.





TexasYouthTour.com 2018 Your Tour 1



YOUR Alumni



AT THE MARINE CORPS WAR MEMORIAL Youth Tour allowed Daniel Tilley to step beyond the familiar.

DANIEL TILLEY

RUSK COUNTY EC

Daniel Tilley likes a good challenge.

"I love to always try new things," he says. "I like to get myself out there."

It's that spirit that has carried him through a number of difficult undertakings, from overcoming a childhood illness and earning a degree in aerospace engineering from Texas A&M University to his current task: training to become a nuclear machinist in the U.S. Navy.

Among those challenges that became formative for him, Tilley also counts Youth Tour.

"It definitely lets you get out of your comfort zone," he says.

Tilley was selected by Rusk County Electric Cooperative to participate in the 2010 Youth Tour for receiving high scores at a leadership camp the previous year. But to earn that spot on the trip, he first had to give a speech at a local co-op meeting—something he had done previously only in front of friends and classmates.

"That was my first time actually giving a presentation in front of people I really didn't know," he says. "It was a new challenge."

He visited the National Mall, Lincoln Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery and other sites of national importance through Youth Tour. For Tilley, though, it was meeting other students from across Texas and around the country that had the biggest impact.

"It definitely gave me more perspective," he says, "[that] it's not that insane to go out and talk to people and make new friends, to go out in the middle of somewhere completely foreign and just start something up right there."

As he trains in South Carolina to work on nuclear-powered vessels, Tilley says Youth Tour broadened his view of community beyond his hometown of Carthage in far East Texas—a mindset he hopes other students gain from the trip.

"They're actually really close to their county, to their electric co-op, to their state, to their nation," he says. "And going to D.C. with everybody helped [show] you do have something in common with people 500 miles away that you've never known, just like you have something in common with someone 10 miles down the road. It showed how interconnected we all are."



IT WAS MEETING OTHER STUDENTS FROM ACROSS TEXAS AND AROUND THE COUNTRY THAT HAD THE BIGGEST IMPACT.

TexasYouthTour.com 2018 **Your Tour** 13

YOUR Voices

BY MASON EWING

'A Big Bowl of Texas Queso'—Participant Puts Youth Tour in His Own Words



MASON EWING

GRAYSON-COLLIN EC **2017**

For most of us who were lucky enough to be chosen for this jour-

ney, this point in our life is filled with many first times and last times. For better and worse, Youth Tour turned out to be both at the same time. I advocate

for this rare opportunity because I know that no matter the person, it will create monumental memories the size of Texas.

I would fill this article with my best memories and the trademark traits of Youth Tour (e.g., backpack-shaped sweat marks on every T-shirt), but I don't want to spoil the special surprises of the memorable elements for those who will participate in the future.

Aside from "yee-haw," the most repeated phrase throughout the trip is, "It's the trip of a lifetime." And that is the only way to accurately describe it, in as few words as possible.

In the days prior to the trip, you will be anxious, excited and even a little intimidated, worrying that it will turn out to be just another high school field trip. However, Youth Tour is in a category all its own, especially when it comes to bonding with your peers. You get to experience exciting and intriguing adventures with complete strangers who quickly turn into close friends—becoming like family.

It begins the first night in Austin when everyone is in the hotel courtyard, playing icebreakers to make friends and have fun. You begin to realize that this isn't a school-like experience; nobody can be left out because everyone is in the same boat. It's a group of unique people and personalities that melt together to create something great—like a big bowl of Texas queso. Now take this Texan blend of new friends and drop them in our nation's capital. Something fun and interesting is bound to happen.

There is truly nothing that could mentally prepare you for the events to come. Exploring the vast capital city of countless monuments, museums and historical attractions will be exhausting and downright indescribable. You will understand that the people you share this experience with and the lifelong friendships you develop are more important than the places you visit.

There is a harmonic sense of home and adventure in the same instant. Thinking that days before, this close-knit group of teenagers were complete strangers becomes almost unbelievable. Youth Tour



AT CAPITOL HILL Mason Ewing speaks with his representative in Congress, Rep. John Ratcliffe.

offers a once-in-a-lifetime experience that should be more than desired by anyone. I can say with complete candor that this journey and participation changed my outlook, my understanding and me as a person. I hope that all participants and chaperones share this feeling as well as a grand appreciation for Esther Dominguez, of Texas Electric Cooperatives, and everyone who makes this entire experience possible.

Thanks to this incredible congregation of amazing people, I will always have these monumental memories.

Mason Ewing of Van Alstyne is attending Grayson College with plans to study business at the University of Arkansas.

THERE IS A HARMONIC SENSE OF HOME AND ADVENTURE IN THE SAME INSTANT.

14 Your Tour 2018 TexasYouthTour.com

3 on 3

Want more reasons why you should apply to Youth Tour? We asked three participants to answer these questions:

> 1. What's a Youth Tour moment you won't forget?

2. How did Youth Tour affect you?

3. What advice would you give Youth Tour participants?



Jana (Harlan) VanderTook Lea County EC 1987

Every day was filled with incredible moments in our nation's capital. Thirty years later, I have a better appreciation for my visit with my state's senator.

Youth Tour broadened my worldview through learning about cooperatives and our government, meeting new people and seeing the sights of Washington.

Take advantage of every moment to connect with people—fellow travelers, Youth Tour participants and people in D.C.



Matt Gholson Rusk County EC 1992

Sitting in Congress while they were in session. To actually see our government in action in person was amazing!

It allowed me to make friends with some people I would go to college with and expand my horizons before going to college.

Enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Make friends. Soak it all in. This will be something you'll talk about for years!



Jennifer Garcia Comanche EC 2012

I won't forget touring the monuments, the cruise down the Potomac, the farewell dance, exchanging patches with individuals from other states, and Washington, D.C., itself.

Youth Tour made history come alive. You read about the government and our nation's history but appreciate and embrace it when you are actually there.

Make the most of each day in D.C. The week goes by really quickly! Make sure your camera or phone has enough space for all the pictures!



