

SEMCO NEWS

Official Member Newsletter

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January 2023

Sumter EMC offers leadership lessons with Washington Youth Tour

Each year, Sumter EMC sponsors an educational, fun-filled trip to our nation's capital for two students from high schools in our service territory. Electric co-ops sponsor the trip to help students develop leadership skills, get a firsthand look at our government at work, and learn the history of rural electrification.

The Washington Youth Tour (WYT) is Georgia's oldest leadership program for teens. Since 1964, nearly 50,000 students from rural areas have participated in the WYT.

Sumter EMC is proud to sponsor outstanding students like Cole Reynolds of Leesburg on the WYT. Every summer, students from across the state attend a weeklong leadership experience sponsored by Sumter EMC and other electric cooperatives in Georgia.

From June 17-23, Cole joined accomplished and ambitious peers in Washington, D.C., to understand the importance of civic engagement, tour national historic sites, and learn valuable leadership lessons they can utilize in their communities back home. The lessons learned by students cannot be replicated in the classroom.

Sumter EMC believes that this carefully chaperoned tour of the nation's



KATHRYN GREEN, SOUTHERN RIVERS ENERGY

Georgia's 2022 Youth Tour delegation tours Roosevelt's Little White House in Warm Springs on June 17, 2022.

capital, full of our national treasures, provides an opportunity for an enriched history lesson and a unique experience that includes interactive exhibits and firsthand accounts. Cole was one of four delegates selected to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. Considering his father's military background with the U.S. Marines, laying the wreath was a highlight of Cole's trip and an experience that meant the world to him.

In Georgia, last year's contingent included student delegates,

chaperones, and tour directors who attended a kickoff banquet in Atlanta for the student delegates and their families before departing the next day for Washington, D.C., for the remainder of the trip.

"The students watch history come to life as they walk and talk in the same places where people have helped shape our country," says Andrea Walker, Vice President of Marketing and Administration with Sumter EMC. "They also meet delegates from across the country with different backgrounds,

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Happy New Year!

The offices of Sumter EMC will be closed Monday, January 2, 2023.

Washington Youth Tour through my eyes

BY COLE REYNOLDS

To wrap up my junior year of high school last year, I was selected to go to Washington, D.C., for the 2022 Washington Youth Tour with other students from all across Georgia. This trip was a great experience, from going to the Little White House in Warm Springs to the wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, and even meeting with Georgia's senators. I met so many people that I continue to talk to daily. These people made the trip fun, from karaoke on the bus to talking about our hometowns.

One of my favorite stops was going to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington, Va. I got the chance to lay a wreath at the tomb. It was a very solemn but life-changing moment and taught me not to take the freedoms in our country for granted because we wouldn't have them without the soldiers who sacrificed their time and life to ensure we can have the freedom we have today. Before laying the wreath, I also saw the guard chang-



KATHRYN GREEN

2022 Georgia Youth Tour delegates in front of the White House.

ing, which was an awesome moment. Every movement had to be sharp and on time. Being the theater kid I am, walking on the stage at the Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Amphitheater was incredible. The stage was made of marble, with a big chair centered downstage.



KATHRYN GREEN

Sumter EMC Youth Tour delegate Cole Reynolds at the Lincoln Memorial.



2022 Washington Youth Tour delegates, including Cole Reynolds, show respect during the wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery.

Another stop on the tour that was so cool to see was former President George Washington's house and the land where he lived. The land he lived on was huge; if no signs had pointed out where to go, I would have gotten lost. Washington's father built the bottom of the house, and Washington decided to finish and expand the house with many guest rooms themed in different colors. My favorite room was the blue and white room, because of how the sun shined through the room. Incredibly, the house was kept the

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Through my eyes, *Continued from page 22B*

same as it was since Washington left. To future delegates, this was a trip of a lifetime that I will never forget. From meeting the people on the trip to the people in Washington, D.C., you will love every person you meet. You will also like all the stops you go to and be intrigued with every single piece of art you visit at the museums. I hope you enjoy the trip as much as I did!

I want to thank everyone at

Sumter EMC for helping make this happen, and I would like to thank my chaperone on the trip, Ro, and the group (Ro's bros). Also, thank you to our tour coordinators, Beth McMillan and Rachael Young, and WYT Director Kaleb Frady. And a huge thank you to my U.S. history teacher Melanie Dale for nominating me to go on this trip. The trip was so much fun, and I will forever cherish the memories I made.



Sumter EMC Youth Tour delegate Cole Reynolds at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial.

Washington Youth Tour, *Continued from page 22A*

life experiences, and walks of life to give them a broader perspective and deeper appreciation of the world at large.”

With a firm commitment to enriching the future, the purpose of the Youth Tour is to help EMCs develop our state's most precious resource—our youth.

While in Washington, D.C., stops included Mount Vernon, Arlington National Cemetery, the U.S. Capitol, Washington National Cathedral, and the Smithsonian Institution. Students also toured the revered Jefferson,

Lincoln, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr., World War II, Vietnam War, and Korean War memorials.

In addition to taking in the sights of the nation's capital, students gained perspective on some of today's critical issues and their role as involved citizens. Everyone had the opportunity to engage with staff and members of Georgia's congressional delegation, as well as a visit with U.S. Sens. Raphael Warnock and John Ossoff.

More than 50,000 students from

rural areas and small towns across America

have participated in this program. Some Youth Tour alumni have gone on to design airplanes, lead companies, and serve in the highest ranks of government, including the U.S. Senate; and many more are serving in some roles in state and local government.



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Earn a FREE weeklong leadership trip to Washington, D.C.

- ★ Boost your team-building and leadership skills.
- ★ Visit historic monuments and museums in Washington, D.C.

TO LEARN MORE AND APPLY ONLINE:
sumteremc.com/washington-youth-tour



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **Deadline to apply: January 20, 2023** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



2023 Walter Harrison Scholarship

Deadline to apply is January 13, 2023.




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