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GEMC

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MAGAZINE

January 2016



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Little Ocmulgee EMC  
on the Washington Youth Tour

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# Electric News

Published for Members of the Little Ocmulgee EMC

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## 77 Years and Counting!

Little Ocmulgee EMC (LOEMC) held its 77th Annual Meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 11, 2015, at the Wheeler County High School gym. The 175 registered members enjoyed entertainment by the gospel group Higher Praise, a health fair and vendor booths. At the close of the meeting, prizes were awarded to members holding lucky tickets.

Directors Benny Evans, George Best and Grant Rowe were re-elected to the LOEMC board by acclamation for new three-year terms. General Manager Lewis Sheffield reported the co-op is in a strong financial



Oldest Member  
Mildred Taylor, 93 years



Oldest Veteran  
W.E. Browning, 88 years

position, discussed a new power sales agreement and told members they will receive capital credit refund checks for 1985.

In recognition of Veterans Day, the oldest veteran in attendance honor went to W.E. Browning, of Glenwood. Mildred Taylor, of Cadwell,

was recognized as the oldest member at the meeting.

Little Ocmulgee EMC wishes to thank all our members, as well as the vendors and health fair participants, who make your Annual Meeting such a great success.

## \$1,000 Scholarship Applications Available to Little Ocmulgee EMC Members

Little Ocmulgee EMC is accepting applications for the 2016 Walter Harrison Scholarship, sponsored by Georgia's 41 electric cooperatives. Scholarships will be awarded to 10 students statewide who demonstrate exceptional academic performance.

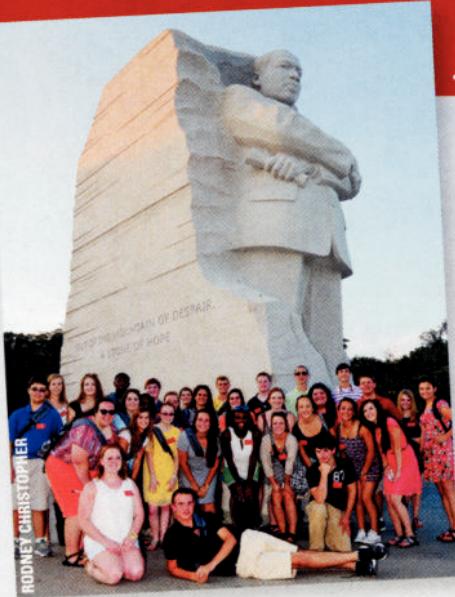
Each \$1,000 scholarship can be applied to academic expenses at any accredited two- or four-year university, college or vocational-technical institute in Georgia. Interested students must complete an application and write an autobiographical sketch that provides a preview of their plans. Other factors for consideration include grade-point average, SAT scores, academic standing, scholastic honors, community involvement and financial need.

The applicant's primary residence must be the household of a Little Ocmulgee EMC member, employee or director. To receive an application,

contact LOEMC at 1 (800) 342-1290 or visit one of our three locations—Alamo, Dublin or McRae. **Completed applications are due Jan. 15, 2016.**

Created in 1985 by the Board of Directors of Georgia EMC, the scholarship pays tribute to the late Walter Harrison, a pioneer in the rural electric movement and a leader at local, state and national levels in the electric cooperative program. Since then, Georgia's electric cooperatives have awarded more than \$171,000 to students through the Walter Harrison Scholarship program. LOEMC General Manager Lewis Sheffield says, "Our goal is to provide some measure of financial relief for students who otherwise would not be able to pursue their academic dreams."





RODNEY CHRISTOPHER

**C**ream of the crop. The best and brightest. Upper echelon. High achievers. Just about any superlative fits each year's group of Georgia delegates for the Washington Youth Tour (WYT), sponsored by the state's electric membership corporations, including Georgia EMC.

Every delegate's accomplishments and interests are highlighted during the kickoff banquet each year, before the high school students begin their whirlwind week of team-building, traveling, sightseeing, learning and bonding. There are some common themes: Not only are these young people very smart—and polite—but they also do *a lot*. Active

## Add to the Success Stories:

# Be a Part of the WASHINGTON YOUTH TOUR

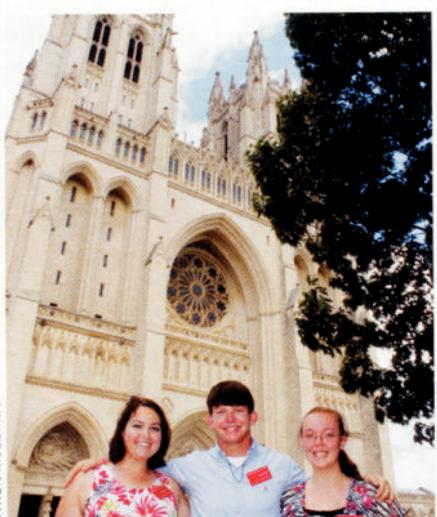


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in their churches. Busy with volunteer work. Gifted athletes. Beta Club. National Honor Society. Eagle Scouts. The list goes on and on.

Considering the rigorous application process (which varies by EMC), it's not surprising that the students chosen as WYT delegates have such impressive backgrounds. Some EMCs test applicants on their knowledge of electric cooperative history. Others receive recommendations from school counselors. Many co-ops conduct in-person interviews with the best candidates.

A big reason why these delegates—who begin Washington Youth Tour week as strangers—bond so quickly and develop lasting friendships is that they are all driven to succeed. Those biographies shown at the kickoff banquet list the delegates' college plans and career aspirations, and it's clear that all set the bar high



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**Above:** A tour favorite, the Washington National Cathedral draws hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. It is the sixth-largest cathedral in the world, the second largest in the United States and the fourth-tallest structure in Washington, D.C. **Right:** Arlington, Va., is the home of the Marine Corps War Memorial. Depicting the flag raising on Iwo Jima, the memorial is dedicated to all Marine Corps personnel who have died in defense of the United States.



**Far left:** Several members of the Georgia delegation stand before the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, which opened to the public in 2011 and stands more than 30 feet tall.

**Left:** Mount Vernon, home of George Washington, provides the backdrop for, from left, Little Ocmulgee EMC delegates Morgan White and Drew Williams and statewide delegate Kerri Cheek as they tour the grounds on the banks of the Potomac River.

for themselves.

Ready to count yourself among the success stories? The 2016 Washington Youth Tour will be held June 9-16. For information, contact your local electric cooperative.

Are you a Washington Youth Tour alumna or alumnus? If so, we would love to hear from you! Fill out a quick survey at [goo.gl/forms/eQM7kt6RT7](http://goo.gl/forms/eQM7kt6RT7).

## Washington Youth Tour 2016 tentative itinerary

**June 9:** Kickoff banquet, Atlanta

**June 10:** Team-building activities; flight to Washington, D.C.

### Dates TBD for the following activities:

- Tour and lunch at Mount Vernon; dinner at Union Station; evening guided tour of memorials; photo op of White House
- Guided tour of Lincoln, Korean War and Vietnam Veterans memorials; Arlington National Cemetery guided tour; dinner performance of "Peter Pan" at Toby's Dinner Theatre in Columbia, Md.
- All States assembly; tour Smithsonian museums; cruise on Potomac River
- Tour Supreme Court, U.S. Capitol and Washington National Cathedral; Sunset Parade at U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima statue)
- Meet with Georgia's congressional delegation; tour Newseum and Madame Tussauds Wax Museum; All States farewell event

**June 16:** Return flight to Atlanta

*Note: Itinerary subject to change*



LOUIS TONSMERIE / PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GAYLE HARTMAN

## WYT Delegates—in Their Own Words

**Above:** The Washington Youth Tour always has a strong FFA contingent, which includes Little Ocmulgee EMC representatives (starting from left) Drew Williams and Morgan White. Delegates on the 2015 tour who are active in FFA gather outside the U.S. Capitol with Katrina Jones, center, Executive Director of the Georgia FFA Foundation and a tour chaperone.

**Left:** Statewide delegates representing Georgia EMC were Kerri Cheek, of Lumber City, daughter of Little Ocmulgee EMC employee Kevin Cheek and wife Sonya, and Matt Tucker, of Pelham, Ga.

BYRON MCCOMBS

### What lesson did you learn from the Washington Youth Tour that you think will serve you best in life?



**Kirsten Farmer**, *Diverse Power, LaGrange*. The improved skill of communication will serve me throughout my life. At the beginning of the week, you're introduced to total strangers, but through communication, you feel like one huge family by the end of the week. [Like](#) 



**Sinead O'Bryant**, *Habersham EMC, Clarkesville*. Apart from rising to a new level of patriotism for the USA, one of the most practical lessons I have learned is to meet new people "right"—to seek out connections with each person and to become excellent at quickly attaching names to faces. 



**Kristen Atkins**, *Hart EMC, Hartwell*. I learned from one of my fellow delegates that we each have a small candle, but when joined together, we shine so bright. [Like](#) 



**Rosie Simpkins**, *Planters EMC, Millen*. When you're taken away from everyone you know and thrown into the arms of the leaders, chaperones and 110 other like-minded individuals, you will learn, you will grow, you will love, you will ache and you will cry all kinds of tears. I learned indescribable lessons from my experience with these people. 



**Min Lim**, *Coweta-Fayette EMC, Palmetto*. Out of numerous lessons, I have learned to give interminable respect and gratitude to the ones who have fought for what we take advantage of today—freedom. [Like](#) 



**Jacob Duke**, *Irwin EMC, Oella*. To cherish every moment with your friends. The Youth Tour opened great opportunities to meet new people around the country and showed me I'm not the only one interested in a specific subject, such as law and other degrees. [Like](#) 

### Do you think the Washington Youth Tour will help you become a better leader? Why?



**Chris Larkins**, *Jackson EMC, Jefferson*. The Youth Tour has tremendously helped me turn into the leader I have always wanted to be. I had always known I had potential to become an extraordinary leader, but on this trip I discovered what was missing: passion. [Like](#) 



**Meredith Gunter**, *Rayle EMC, Washington*. Yes, because it gave me the opportunity to be with 110 other leaders from all over Georgia. I got to see how they were successful leaders, so I could expand on my leadership abilities. [Like](#) 



**Caroline Sweat**, *Washington EMC, Sandersville*. Growing up, I always struggled with being shy. However, this trip forces you to constantly go outside your comfort zone, which I sincerely appreciated. This trip pushed me to do more and become more, which is what being a leader is all about. 



**Greg McKenzie**, *Altamaha EMC, Lyons*. The people around me on the Youth Tour gave off a sense of drive in their lives, and you just knew that a majority of them will be successful later in life. Being around people like this motivated me to work harder and be the leader in my community that I know I can be. [Like](#) 



**Carrianna Simmons**, *Central Georgia EMC, Jackson*. From the tour, I learned that it's so important to be kind and accepting to everyone, no matter their backgrounds or opinions. This skill will help gain the respect of your peers and those you are trying to lead. [Like](#) 



**Kerri Cheek**, *Georgia EMC, Tucker*. Yes, because it showed me that I can stand up for what I believe and what I think is right without people thinking I'm weird or stupid. That doesn't matter in being a leader, and the tour has helped me see that in a different light. [Like](#) 



BYRON MCCOMBS

Michael Smith, Georgia's 2014 Youth Leadership Council representative, mans the selfie stick as 2015 Washington Youth Tour delegates, chaperones and leaders converge for a group photo during team-building exercises in Atlanta. Smith was a delegate from Jackson EMC.

### What one piece of advice would you give to potential Washington Youth Tour delegates?



**Kaleb Todd, Canoochee EMC, Reidsville.** If you are chosen, do every last thing you can to enjoy the trip. You may think a week with strangers is a long time, but after the second day, those strangers will be family, and family time is like lightning! It strikes rarely, but when it does, it's always a rush of energy! [Like](#)



**Mary Beth McDermitt, Carroll EMC, Carrollton.** Talk to everyone, but be yourself! Even if you don't think that you will be friends with someone because of how different you are, go talk to them. [Like](#)



**Kirtan Parekh, Jackson EMC, Jefferson.** Make the most of the people who surround you, not necessarily the things. Yes, while in the nation's capital, take advantage of that, but those monuments will be there forever. The people that you're with, they won't necessarily be there with you for more than a week. Make sure to embrace that and really learn every person's story.



**Kaitlin Giddens, Ocmulgee EMC, Eastman.** Definitely don't be afraid to talk to everyone. The people on this tour are the best of the best and won't judge you for anything you do. [Like](#)



**Jake Williams, Oconee EMC, Dudley.** The biggest impact on my life from this trip has been through the people I met from Georgia. I've never been an emotional person, but I cried after leaving the airport in Atlanta when it was over. It seems strange to think that spending only a week with these people has left me with friends that will last a lifetime.



**Connor Poole, Jefferson Energy, Wrens.** Get ready for the most jam-packed, activity-filled, fun week of your life, while running on four and a half hours of sleep every night. Also, be ready to develop lifelong friendships.

## ★ Youth Tour ★ Applications Available

Applications for consideration in the 2016 Washington Youth Tour are being accepted from high school juniors and seniors who reside in a home served by Little Ocmulgee EMC (LOEMC). The contest winner will join more than 100 delegates from Georgia who represent our state during the tour, scheduled for June 9-16, 2016.

The winner of an essay-writing and interview contest will be awarded the trip, which begins in Atlanta with a kickoff banquet and team-building exercises and continues with a weeklong exploration of Washington, D.C. Students must be 16 years old by June 9 and attend either Wheeler County High School in Alamo, Telfair County High School in McRae or West Laurens High School in Dexter.

Participants are required to submit a 500- to 750-word essay on a preselected topic. The essays will be judged on knowledge of subject, originality, composition, neatness and grammar. The essay deadline to LOEMC is **noon Friday, Feb. 12, 2016**. Four finalists will be chosen to appear for an interview by a committee of judges on **March 9, 2016**. A winner will then be selected and prizes awarded to the runners-up.

Students interested in developing their leadership skills and making friendships that will last a lifetime, while taking a pilgrimage to the nation's capital, should contact their high school English Department or Gary L. Selph at LOEMC. For an application or more information, call 1 (800) 342-1290.

**Relatives of LOEMC employees and directors are prohibited from entering the local contest and are required to apply in a separate statewide contest. Contact LOEMC for details.**



BETH MCCANN

Tour photographer Byron McCombs, center, enjoys a rare moment in front of the camera with a group of 2015 Washington Youth Tour delegates.