Electric News

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It's All About the Youth

Leadership Event Unites Students in Washington, D.C.

When 1,700 of America's best and brightest students recently gathered for one week in the nation's capital, they overwhelmingly agreed it was the experience of a lifetime. They sang the praises of the 2015 Washington Youth Tour (WYT), a leadership event in which electric membership cooperatives in Georgia and across the U.S. sent hundreds of deserving high school students to Washington, D.C., including 111 delegates from Georgia.

Little Ocmulgee EMC (LOEMC) was represented on the 2015 WYT by delegates Morgan T. White and Drew Williams. Kerri Cheek, whose father, Kevin, is employed by LOEMC, went as a statewide representative of Georgia EMC (GEMC).

LOEMC's delegates, with highlights from their trip, will be featured in the January/February 2016 issue of *GEORGIA Magazine*.

Kerri Cheek, right, Georgia EMC statewide contest winner, is joined by parents Sonya and Kevin Cheek, of Lumber City.

LOEMC delegate Morgan White, right, enjoys the Washington Youth Tour kickoff banquet with her parents, Wayne and Teresa White, of Dexter.

Little Ocmulgee EMC has participated for the past 33 of the program's 50 years, sending a total of 51 delegates. Of those 51, eight have been GEMC statewide contest winners and three others have represented Georgia on the national level for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Held June 11-18 this year, the Youth Tour is an annual event sponsored by 38 of the EMCs in Georgia, including Little Ocmulgee EMC. It stands as Georgia's oldest leadership program for teens to applaud them for leading the way in their local communities. The tour provides

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them a chance to see history come to life and gives them a rare opportunity to connect with peers from across the country.

"Youth Tour is our way of saying, 'Thank you for choosing to be a leader.' As we know, in today's world, it is sometimes difficult to stand up for the right things, and these students do that every day," says Gale Cutler, Georgia EMC's Washington Youth Tour Director. "We're delighted to give them this amazing opportunity."

Little Ocmulgee EMC General Manager Lewis Sheffield says the Youth Tour is a natural extension of EMCs' role as major contributors to the state as a whole, providing leadership in education, school and youth programs, charitable giving and community support. In fact, this year, Little Ocmulgee EMC and other electric co-ops in Georgia celebrated 50 years of sponsoring students for the prestigious leadership event. The first Washington Youth Tour for teens in Georgia took place in 1965 and involved a dozen students with an invitation from President Lyndon Johnson to a Rose Garden reception at the White House.

"Electric co-ops do much more than provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity," says Sheffield. "We're dedicated to improving the future of students in our community because we know they are next in line to lead the way."

The students visited historic landmarks and national treasures such as Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian museums, Holocaust Memorial Museum, Mount Vernon, Supreme Court, U.S. Capitol, Washington Monument and the MLK, FDR, Jefferson, World War II, Korean War Veterans and Lincoln memorials. For the first time this year, they visited the new American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.

Drew Williams, son of Douglas and Tammy Williams, of Milan, enjoys WYT festivities with his uncle, Michael Henderson, and cousin, Carlin Henderson, also of Milan.

The students also gained perspective on some of today's important issues and their role as involved citizens during discussions with staff and/or members of Georgia's congressional delegation, including personal visits and photos with U.S. Sens. David Perdue and Johnny Isakson and U.S. Reps. Buddy Carter, Doug Collins, Jody Hice, Barry Loudermilk, Austin Scott, Lynn Westmoreland and Rob Woodall.

Co-op Conference Inspires Young Leaders

Cooperatives across the state, including Little Ocmulgee Electric Membership Corp. (LOEMC), recently hosted the 31st annual Georgia Cooperative Council Youth Leadership Conference at the Georgia FFA-FCCLA Center in Covington. The conference was sponsored by the Georgia Cooperative Council, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development and participating electric membership corporations in Georgia.

To qualify to attend the Youth Leadership Conference, students must exhibit leadership potential, complete at least their freshman year of high school, apply as a first-time attendee and attend as a guest of their local cooperative. Campers representing LOEMC were Andrea Molle', daughter of Vincent and Teresa Molle', of Helena; Ayanna M. Smith, daughter of Kishana Collins, of Dublin; and Lindsey Johnson, daughter of Crystal and Bobby Johnson, of Alamo. These campers were among the 51 teens who gathered to build and enhance their leadership skills and learn about cooperatives and the role they play in communities across the state.

Aside from networking and forming friendships, the camp promoted teamwork through a series of exercises, training and presentations, including a field trip to Snapping Shoals EMC in Covington and Godfrey Dairy Farm in Madison. Other outdoor adventures included the center's challenging low/high ropes and mud courses to encourage personal development and teambuilding skills. Indoors, students participated in a personality assessment seminar as well as a Congressional Insight workshop run by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). The latter provided a view of the skills needed to be an effective member of Congress and provided examples of the variety of legislators' responsibilities—from managing staff, responding to media inquiries, monitoring legislation, to attending round-the-clock meetings with constituents, lobbyists and colleagues.

From left, Lindsey Johnson, Ayanna Smith and Andrea Molle' represented Little Ocmulgee EMC at the 31st Annual Georgia Co-op Council Youth Leadership Conference at the Georgia FFA/FCCLA Center in Covington.

Gale Cutler, Chair of the Georgia Co-op Council Board of Directors and Public Relations Coordinator at Georgia Electric Membership Corp., says attendees leave with a greater awareness of how co-ops operate and the impact co-ops have on their communities and nation. "These students will likely become leaders within their communities, so we feel a responsibility to teach them the principles upon which cooperatives were founded and operate today and how co-ops differ from other business models," she says.

For example, the conference included a discussion of the diversity of industries represented by co-ops. According to Cutler, cooperatives include a broad collection of industries such as agriculture, health care, electric, housing, food, purchasing, finance and insurance, education and child care, and telecommunications and technology. Examples include Land O' Lakes, Ocean Spray, Nationwide Insurance, Ace Hardware and REI. To gain perspectives from other co-ops, the group heard presentations from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, NRECA, Farm Credit Associations, Southern States, Dairy Farmers of America and the EMCs of Georgia.

Thompson Retires After 36 Years of Service

Longtime Little Ocmulgee EMC employee Donna Thompson retired on Friday, July 24, 2015, after 36 years of service. Donna, who began her LOEMC career on Nov. 12, 1979, held many titles over the years. She started as an Office Trainee, then Secretary, Administrative Secretary, Data Processing Clerk, Work Order Clerk, Cost Accounting Supervisor and Supervisor of Office Services and Cost Accounting.

Donna Thompson

Over the course of her career, Donna has been an integral part of many changes and improvements implemented by the co-op to better serve the members. She well remembers the days before computers and today's advanced technology, when inventory items were accounted for using a ledger and a calculator. Donna oversaw the daily operations of Little Ocmulgee Service Corp., accounted for equipment and plant inventory and directed personnel for the offices in Alamo, Dublin and McRae.

Donna says she will miss her co-op family. "Mama" Donna has always been there, cooking for the linemen and answering phone calls from members reporting their lights were out during storms. Many times, when major outages lasted for days, she was able to catch only a few hours' sleep on the floor. Two of her most famous dishes she fed her EMC family through the years are Sante Fe Soup and big pots of chicken and dumplings.

Donna has been a major part of the backbone of the EMC family for 36 years. All the employees at Little Ocmulgee will miss her, but we wish her well in her retirement. She plans on spending more time with her children and grandchildren and having some "Donna time."

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Looking for an easy efficiency upgrade? Additional insulation can make a difference! The Department of Energy estimates you can reduce heating and cooling needs up to 30 percent by properly insulating and weatherizing your home.

—Source: energy.gov

Labor Day Closing

Our offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 7, 2015, in observance of the Labor Day holiday. In case of an electrical emergency, please call (912) 568-7171 or toll free in Georgia (800) 342-1290.

For your convenience, night deposit boxes are available at our main office in Alamo and the Dublin branch office or you can pay your bill online at *www.loemc.com*.

Dates to Remember

Labor Day	Sept. 7
Patriot Day	Sept. 11
First day of fall	Sept. 23
Columbus Day	Oct. 12
National Boss' Day	Oct. 16
United Nations Day	Oct. 24
Halloween	Oct. 31