

Brief history of the Washington Youth Tour

The Washington Youth Tour has been a part of Tennessee's history since 1964 when our statewide electric organization, the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association, took its first group of students to Washington, DC. That year, 62 students visited our nation's capitol to learn about our country's history and to see our national government in action.

Fayetteville Public Utilities began participating in the Washington Youth Tour in 1985. Fayetteville Public Utilities sponsored two students, Lanelsa Sumners and Barry Winsett, and also a teacher, Mr. Jack Allen Jean, on the tour.

Today, the Washington Youth Tour has grown so that we now sponsor nearly 160 students each year from across the state. These students live in rural communities like yours and have all participated in the writing contest as a way of winning an opportunity to attend the Youth Tour.

Students all across Tennessee are given presentations, educational materials and assistance with the electric cooperative writing contest. The contest winners receive local prizes in addition to being awarded the week-long tour of Washington, DC.

The Washington Youth Tour is always held in mid-June and includes all the historical sites, monuments and museums in DC. The tour is both educational and entertaining. Some of the most popular sites included in the tour are the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, The Jefferson Memorial, FDR Memorial, the Vietnam War, Korean War and World War II Memorials. Students tour their choice Smithsonian Museums, spending several hours viewing historical artifacts from our nation and abroad. The tour also includes visits to Monticello and Mt. Vernon, homes of Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, respectfully. For entertainment, the students sometimes visit the Hard Rock Café for lunch, the Madame Tussauds Wax Museum, and more. One day of the tour is set aside for our visits with members of Congress. Each year students meet with Tennessee's Senators and State Representatives at the US Capitol.

The Washington Youth Tour is truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for many of these students to visit the nations' capitol and experience history and government in ways that only the Youth Tour can offer.

The Washington Youth Tour is sponsored by electric cooperatives across the nation who want to have an impact on the education of today's youth. Unlike other trips of its kind, the Youth Tour expenses are paid for by the Tennessee Electric Cooperative Association and its member electric systems, including Fayetteville Public Utilities.