

Visit to nation's capital inspires Youth Tour students



(Front row) Allyson, Gabby, Alana, Courtney; (Back row) Arrow, Brian and Sarah stopped at the Marine Corps War Memorial to see the massive bronze statue that recaptures the iconic moment when Marine soldiers raised the American flag on the island of Iwo Jima during World War II.

Each year, Central Electric Power Association sponsors high school juniors in its service territory on a tour of the nation's capital. The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has brought high school students to Washington, D.C., every June since the late 1950s, and more than 50,000 students from across America have experienced this unique opportunity. The Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi (ECM) has participated in the program for 32 years.

The tour gives the students an up close view of the political process on a national level and connects them with like-minded students from across the state and nation. The relationships made on Youth Tour have proven to be beneficial throughout their lives. The Youth Tour is supported locally by Central Electric, organized statewide by ECM and nationally by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

More than 1,800 students from 42 states participate annually.

This year, Wallace Bass, Sarah Burns, Gabby Caldwell, Allyson Crocker,

"Experiencing our nation's capital for the first time has been the trip of a lifetime."

- Sarah Burns

Courtney Gill, Brian Pace, Alana Patterson and Arrow Scott represented Central Electric. They joined 67 of Mississippi's brightest juniors on the tour. They were chosen through an application and interview process.

Wallace is the son of Tracie Bass of Carthage. He will be a senior at Leake County High School. Sarah will be a senior at Leake Central High School and is the daughter of Sheila and Bruce Burns of Carthage. Gabby is the daughter of Dr. David and Kathy Caldwell of Brandon. She will be a senior at Northwest Rankin High School. Allyson will be a senior at Leake Central High School and is the daughter of Leigh Ann and Ray Magee of Carthage. Courtney is the daughter of Stephanie and Robert Gill of Carthage. She will be a senior at Leake Academy. Brian will be a senior at Neshoba Central High School and is the son of Patty and Derek Pace of Collinsville. Alana is the daughter of Jessica and Neil Patterson of Carthage. She will be a senior at Leake Academy. Arrow will be a senior at Choctaw Central High School and is the son of Tina and Rodney Scott of Walnut Grove.

On the week-long trip, the students visited historical and cultural sites and a variety of monuments and memorials, such as the World War II Memorial, Korean War Memorial, FDR Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Air Force Memorial, Jefferson Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

"I can genuinely say that this trip has changed my life," said Allyson. "Being here has opened my eyes to the world of politics, and the possibility of working in federal government. I am extremely grateful for everyone who made this possible."

One of the first stops on the tour was the Marine Corps War Memorial, informally known as the Iwo Jima, followed by visits to other monuments and memorials.

The students visited



Above: Allyson, Arrow, Courtney, Alana, Wallace and Sarah visited with Rep. Bennie Thompson in his Washington, D.C., office. Right: Gabby and Brian visited with Rep. Gregg Harper in his office during Youth Tour.



Wallace Bass, Alana Patterson, Landes Purnell (representing ECM), Brian Pace, Sarah Burns, Courtney Gill, Allyson Crocker, Gabby Caldwell and Arrow Scott visit the Air Force Memorial near the Pentagon.

numerous museums, such as the Newseum, a seven floor, interactive museum dedicated to the first amendment rights and journalism throughout American history. A new addition to the tour this year, was a visit to the Holocaust Museum. The museum is a somber reflection of those who were lost during the Nazi regime. They also spent a day touring the Smithsonian Museums of Air and Space, American History, Natural History and the National Gallery of Art.

Another popular event of the tour was a Major League Baseball game at Nationals Park. The students watched as the Washington Nationals took on the San Francisco Giants.

After a drive down Massachusetts Avenue, unofficially known as Embassy Row, the students were taken on a guided tour of the Washington National Cathedral, the second largest cathedral in the U.S.

In addition to sightseeing, the students also spent a day on Capitol Hill, which began with a special tour of the U.S. House Floor graciously hosted by Rep. Gregg Harper. While in the Capitol building, the students enjoyed a panoramic view of Washington, D.C., from the speaker's balcony. Many of the students were able to meet House Speaker Paul Ryan, and Rep. Kevin McCarthy (CA). McCarthy spoke to the group after a news interview in the Capitol Rotunda. After the tour, Wallace, Sarah, Allyson, Courtney, Alana and Arrow joined a smaller group to visit with Rep. Bennie Thompson in his D.C. office, while Gabby and Brian visited with Rep. Gregg Harper in his office. The congressmen spoke to both groups about what it takes to be a leader and the

importance of setting goals and striving to achieve them. During the visit to Capitol Hill, students also had the opportunity to meet with Sen. Roger Wicker and Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith.

"The 2018 Youth Tour has made a major impact on my life by first building my confidence that I can be a leader. Next, by learning about the different types of government, and learning my about my co-op, as well as other co-ops," said Brian. "Youth Tour has allowed me to make many new friends, and for that I am eternally grateful."

Central Electric congratulates these students on their accomplishments.



The students stopped to get their photo in front of the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue.



Central Electric congratulates Wallace Bass
for being named 2019 NRECA spokesperson!
See page 7 for more information.
Central Electric and ECM applaud Wallace on this distinguished honor.

