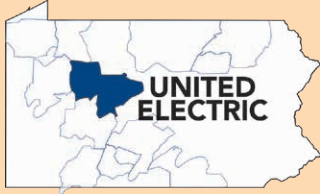




United Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

UNITED ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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Guest Column

Students Find Themselves at 2025 NRECA Youth Tour



KRISTY SMITH

"THIS EXPERIENCE TAUGHT ME to just be myself"

More than once and from different students, I heard this same statement. Eighty high school juniors from rural electric cooperatives across Pennsylvania and New Jersey traveled with chaperones to Washington, D.C., for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Youth Tour. In our nation's capital, we came together with nearly 1,700 of rural America's outstanding high school students from 44 other states.

That week, June 16 to 21, seemed like too little time for most students, including the six who United Electric Cooperative selected to attend: Tyler Hanzely (DuBois), Adisen Jackson (Clarion-Limestone), Jacob Kauffman (Purchase Line), Kamden Means, Olivia Miller, and Emma Wilson (all Brookville).

NRECA agenda

Upon our arrival, NRECA "blue shirts" (past Youth Tour attendees) greeted students and helped set the tone for the week at the Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center in National Harbor, Md.

"As we head into our 61st year, we want delegates to connect with each other, American democracy and, most importantly, with electric cooperatives and NRECA," NRECA Youth Programs Manager Cale McCall said.

Several events were hosted throughout the week, including Co-op 101 and advocacy sessions, an awe-inspiring Youth Day program filled with engaging speakers, and a Co-op Connections Night, including job fair booths and activities.

Youth Day kicked off with various states in one room, each competing to be the loudest and biggest voice. Chants were created and magic happened, which sometimes included NRECA employees like CEO Jim Matheson, who joined in a few chants before taking the stage. Next up was Youth Leadership Council spokesperson Maggie Martin, who represented 4-County Electric Power in Mississippi. Her speech, "Who Says?," was an emotionally moving story about her own personal struggles with mental health.

"No matter what my own mind tried to tell me, I was never too imperfect to just be thrown away," she said.

Also on stage this year for Youth Day was a career panel featuring several Youth Tour alumni: Anneliese Taggart, a Vatican correspondent; Sara Schafer, editor of *Rural Missouri* magazine, published by the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives; and Pennsylvania state Rep. Jeremy Shaffer (R-Allegheny). After the panel, students heard from two-time Paralympian medalist Mike Schlappi, a wheelchair basketball player and motivational speaker who appeared in four consecutive Paralympic Games.

"You matter," he said to students. "Everything you do matters. ... Even if you can't stand up, you can stand out."

Networking with pins

Pin trading is always a favorite tradition during group events; even chaperones participate.

Each state has its own pin or item that students can trade with each other. There's

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GUEST COLUMN

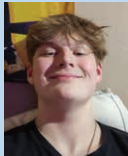
Continued from page 16A

everything from the ever-popular corn necklace from Iowa to the coveted Alaska pin (Alaska traditionally only sends one student). Trading is a way for students to meet each other and become excited about what the week has to offer.

Pennsylvania and New Jersey students had a selection of pins as well as a limited number of friendship bracelets

to trade. Fun stickers were also handed out, including the elusive gold star sticker from the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA), which coordinated the trip for the Pennsylvania and New Jersey cooperatives.

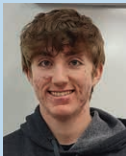
MEET THE STUDENTS



Tyler Hanzely, son of Megan and Timothy Hanzely of DuBois, attends DuBois Area High School. Tyler participates in varsity track and field and football. He aspires to be a family physician and continued his family's tradition of attending Youth Tour.



Adisen Jackson, daughter of Tiffany and David Jackson of Sigel, attends Clarion-Limestone High School. Adisen is a cross-country medalist and track and field district qualifier. She also participates in student council and art club. Adisen wants to run cross-country and track at the collegiate level and is interested in the medical field. Adisen, as the oldest sibling, hopes to start a Youth Tour tradition for her family.



Jacob Kauffman, son of Raymond and Jodie Kauffman of Mahaffey, attends Purchase Line High School. Jacob is captain of the cross-country team and president of his school's Student Technology Association. He also participates in marching band, musicals, and track and field. Jacob is interested in furthering his education in the sciences with a career in wildlife land management. Jacob ends a tradition of Kauffman siblings selected for Youth Tour.



Kamden Means, son of Michelle and Robert Means of Brookville, attends Brookville Area Junior/Senior High School. Kamden engages in youth and government, his borough council, and various community service projects. He is interested in pursuing a degree in biology or political science with the intention of helping people through psychiatry or law.



Olivia Miller, daughter of Michelle and Eric Miller of Brookville, attends Brookville Area Junior/Senior High School. Olivia participates in youth and government programs and in the business aspects of the school's musicals. She also helps lead the reading competition. She would like to pursue a degree in business to use her organizational and leadership skills in a professional environment.



Emma Wilson, daughter of Jamie Wilson of Sigel, attends Brookville Area Junior/Senior High School. Emma is a member of student council and Jefferson County 4-H, and she has a passion and has a passion for horse riding and showing. She would like to study biology with the intention of becoming a radiologic technologist.

PREA agenda

In between all the activities NRECA provides, Pennsylvania and New Jersey students went on their own group excursions, which included tours of Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian museums, the Holocaust Museum, the Udvar-Hazy Space Center, and various monuments and memorials. Also on the itinerary were visits to the National Zoo, the Capital Wheel and the U.S. Capitol.

United Electric students met with Legislative Assistant Connor Rose of U.S. Rep. Glenn "GT" Thompson's (R-15th) office to discuss energy policy, technology and school programs. Discussions ranged from college expenses to rural facility closures, including schools and health care providers.

Students and chaperones also visited 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. and enjoyed an unscripted, impromptu dance circle with a famous social media influencer, #dancingmaninfrontofthewhitehouse. Many students said this was one of their favorite memories from the trip.

Opening doors since 1964

To date, more than 58,000 students from rural America have participated in NRECA's Youth Tour program, established by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964 (then a U.S. senator) to educate young minds about cooperatives and their principles.

Participating students are eligible to apply for educational funding, including the PREA Scholarship Trust Fund in Memory William H. Matson, PREA's Jody Loudenslager Memorial Scholarship as well as United Electric's Shine the Light and the Brenda L. Swartzlander scholarships. Youth Tour instills the importance of electric cooperatives and the values they represent in the next generation of leaders. 🇺🇸

KRISTY SMITH

MANAGER OF MARKETING & MEMBER SERVICES

Office Closing
United Electric Cooperative's office will be closed Monday, Sept. 1, in observance of Labor Day.



RURAL ELECTRIFICATION: United Electric Cooperative students visit the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial at the beginning of the trip. Shown, from left, are: Emma Wilson, Adisen Jackson, Olivia Miller, Kamden Means, Tyler Hanzely and Jacob Kauffman.



TOURING THE NATION'S CAPITAL: United Electric Cooperative students saw a number of sites in Washington, D.C. and surrounding areas, including the National Zoo, the U.S. Capitol and the Holocaust Museum. Shown, from left, are: Emma Wilson, Jacob Kauffman, Tyler Hanzely, Kamden Means, Olivia Miller and Adisen Jackson.



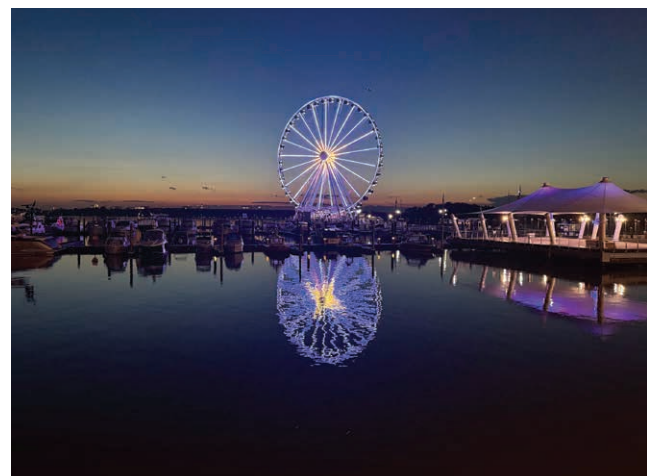
DANCE CIRCLE: Students and chaperones dance with the famous #dancingmaninfrontofthewhitehouse.



ULTIMATE SACRIFICE: A sentimental trinket sits atop a gravestone at Arlington National Cemetery, a place where people learn freedom is not free.



YOUTH DAY: Pennsylvania and New Jersey students chant and dance during Youth Day. United Electric Cooperative's Kamden Means started the chant.



CAPITAL WHEEL NIGHT: Students ride the Capital Wheel in the National Harbor as a fun activity.

The Tastes of Summer

GLENN SCHUCKERS

WHEN IT COMES TO AUGUST, two things come to mind: peaches and sweet corn. I have been thinking about peaches in August ever since some favorites showed up in stores years ago. They were called “Chambersburg peaches” even though there is no such variety. When I was a young man, my dad had a peach orchard, and we had a few varieties, including Elberta, Golden Jubilee, and Hale Haven — and even one with white flesh called Belle of Georgia.

Chambersburg peaches are grown near that Franklin County borough. For years, that area has been known for this wonderful fruit. The varieties have changed a lot, and I don’t know if these days I could even find any Hale Haven, Golden Jubilee or Elberta peaches.

Just peachy

Today, there are varieties like Harmony, Sun-Hi, Reliance and Contender. A few heirloom nurseries still sell Elberta. Since peach trees start bearing fruit at about age 5 and start to decline in vigor at about age 10, most orchards today rely on the latest and best varieties, and there is a rapid turnover of trees.

Nurseries always grow the trees that are most popular with their customers, and the customers who buy young trees by the hundreds and thousands are usually the ones who determine which varieties are chosen. They sometimes want the ones that ship well, are attractive in stores and have sturdy skins that won’t break when shipped. Taste is not always the most important quality.

The latest variety we had also happened to be the one we liked the most. It was called Harmony. These peaches stay firm when ripe and even when canned. They also have a great sweet taste. But last year, we were unable to find any of them at local stands or farm markets. They reminded me of Golden Jubilees. I can still remember the taste of a Golden Jubilee, but it had a very short season, bruised easily and

tended to get soft the day after it was ripe. It is probably no longer grown on any commercial orchards.

I had two peach trees in our dwarf orchard — one named Reliance and the other was a Belle of Georgia. Judging by its name, Reliance was supposed to be hardy in northern areas, and I bought the Belle of Georgia just because I remembered the sweet flavor it had. The Reliance died after the first winter, but the Belle of Georgia is still there, even though it has only two branches left. It blossoms every year. This year, there are peaches clinging to one of the branches.

In addition to having about 200 more varieties to choose from, there are probably just as many ways to enjoy the fruit. There are peach cobblers, peach marmalades, peach jellies, peach pancakes, peach smoothies and peach pies (my favorite). I could make a whole meal out of a freshly baked peach pie with a bowl of milk and sugar or maybe even a dollop of whipped cream. Canned peaches are just as delicious. I have a neighbor who says he can eat a whole quart of canned peaches all by himself, and his wife will back up his claim.

Peaches in this quantity may not be great for our diet, but because they contain nothing harmful, I see nothing wrong with eating them however I want, starting with just biting into one and letting the juice run down over my chin. That is one of the things I look forward to most in August.

Sweet, sweet corn

If the biggest treat in August is a fresh peach, the next biggest is freshly picked sweet corn. Like almost everything else, there used to be three varieties of sweet corn: early, midseason and late. Now, just as in the case of peaches, there are hundreds of varieties from which you can choose.

While there may not be hundreds of ways to prepare them, each one has its stalwart audience. For perhaps the first 60 years of my life, I knew of only one way to prepare sweet corn. We would pull off the husks, break off the long stems at the bottom of the ear and douse it in boiling water.

A few years ago, I either read or heard that I could grill sweet corn. I think there may be a whole chapter in a cookbook devoted to grilling it, but I have given up reading about it. I have adopted a sort of hybrid approach: I boil the corn for a few minutes and then put it on the grill until it looks “done.” It tastes pretty good that way, and no one has complained.

Treats like a warm peach pie or buttered fresh, sweet corn won’t last all year, so now is the time to indulge and enjoy. Get a few pounds of peaches and a dozen or two ears of sweet corn and eat them however you wish. 🍑

GLENN SCHUCKERS



PEACHES FOR ME: There are lots of summer treats, but for my money, it’s hard to beat a fresh peach pie made with ripe August peaches. It’s a dessert that cannot be beat.