

TEXAS YOUTH TOUR | VOLUME 8

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**JOIN THE
YOUTH TOUR
ADVENTURE**

**Travel with your new best
friends to Washington, DC**



WELCOME

SINCE 1965, Texas' electric cooperatives have sent students from across Co-op Country to our nation's capital in order to educate and inspire the next generation of leaders. The idea came from then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson who envisioned a program that would help young people "see what the flag stands for and represents."

This tradition has carried on year after year, and once again this year, students are answering Johnson's call by traveling to Washington, D.C. More than 150 distinguished teens will visit museums and monuments, meet with their congressional leaders, and learn about the cooperative way.

Those who have gone on the trip know that it's an unforgettable experience that can create opportunities beyond the week. I encourage those of you who haven't been to apply—it really is the trip of a lifetime.



Best Regards,

Mike Williams
President/CEO
Texas Electric Cooperatives



"Do everything. If anybody comes up and says, 'Oh they're doing something downstairs,' or 'We're going to walk over here and see this,' always say yes. Let yes be your answer all week."

—MEG RIDENS,
SOUTH PLAINS EC, 2023



YOUR TOUR | TEXAS YOUTH TOUR

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ALL YOUTH TOUR PHOTOS: CAYTLYN CALHOUN | TEC



Greatness Runs in the Family



LAYTON MCADAMS
2023



KADE MCADAMS
2019

BY SAMANTHA BRYANT

Layton and Kade McAdams' parents have joked that the only thing the brothers have in common is their last name. Layton, 17, is outgoing and laid-back, while his older brother, Kade, 22, is more reserved and a Type A personality.

However, Tri-County Electric Cooperative saw leadership and communications abilities in both and selected them for the Government-in-Action Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C., in June—Layton in 2023 and Kade in 2019.

"We're similar where it counts," said Kade, pointing to a strong work ethic, good values and sense of compassion instilled in the brothers by their family and public speaking skills gained at Seymour High School, about 50 miles southwest of Wichita Falls.

Layton and Kade also were each selected from among more than 150 of their peers to represent Texas on the nationwide Youth Leadership Council, a prestigious opportunity for Youth Tour participants to learn about public speaking, the energy industry and the cooperative business model.

"I was completely shocked," Layton said about being chosen by the selection committee after giving his speech. "The other two finalists were amazing, and I never dreamed I stood a chance against them."

As a part of YLC, Layton returned to Washington in July 2023 with delegates from 44 other states, and he represented Texas at the nationwide gathering for electric cooperatives in San Antonio the following March.

"Attending Youth Tour and being chosen as the YLC has made me more confident in myself as well as a better communicator and leader," Layton said. "I know this will make me better at everything I do in the future."

Layton plans to attend Texas Tech University to study natural resources management or agribusiness. Kade is also heading to Texas Tech this summer to pursue his interest in rural medicine after graduating from Texas A&M University with a business degree.

Kade said Youth Tour gave him the confidence boost he needed to know he could succeed at a large university. "I 100% give credit to YLC and the Youth Tour for getting me to the point where, once I did get into college, I did go after a lot of leadership positions and a lot of different organizations and programs," he said.

YOUTH TOUR by the Numbers



**“Everything that we’ve
done, every day, has
been AMAZING.”**

—SARAH BUTLER, SAN BERNARD EC, 2023



“JUST JUMP IN feet first and enjoy it to the fullest. Don’t be afraid to do anything.”

—SAMANTHA HATCHER, JASPER-NEWTON EC, 2023

150 TEXAS TEENS 7 DAYS IN D.C. 0 DOLLARS

Museums. Memorials. The U.S. Capitol. Supreme Court. All this and more on an all-expenses-paid adventure in June.

There’s something for everyone, and you’re guaranteed to find inspiration in Washington, D.C.

Youth Tour is sure to be the trip of a lifetime.

WANT TO GO?

LEARN MORE AT
TEXASYOUTHTOUR.COM



HOW TO APPLY



SEE THE VIDEO

YOUTH TOUR

Takes Co-op Teens Far

Alums use DC experiences to leverage opportunities

BY CLAIRE STEVENS

YOUTH TOUR participants pack a lot into one week—visits to museums and monuments, meetings with congressional representatives, a cruise on the Potomac River, wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, and performance at the Kennedy Center. But the impact of Youth Tour extends well beyond that very busy week.

Alumni of the Government-in-Action Youth Tour often go on to pursue exciting and impactful careers, bringing with them the experiences, connections and knowledge they gain on the trip.

Madelon Clark's first trip to Washington, D.C., and first encounter with government were in 2018 when she represented Southwest Texas Electric Cooperative on Youth Tour. She knew right away that she wanted to return to D.C.

"The trip as a whole made me interested in pursuing a career in government or public service," she says.

That interest led to an internship on Capitol Hill during college. After graduation, that internship turned into a job in D.C. doing communications for Rep. August Pfluger, who represents her hometown of Menard.

"I am forever thankful for Youth Tour exposing me to Washington and the hustle and bustle of the city," Clark says. "Youth Tour is not only a trip, but it can be a transformative experience for your professional or personal career."

Emily Farmer also walked away from Youth Tour feeling transformed.

"It has quite literally changed my life," says Farmer, who attended in 2023. "I saw and experienced so many things in such a short time that will stay with me as long as I live."

But Farmer left with so much more than memories. Her roommate on the trip, Mallika Jade, had already graduated high school and told her about opportunities available after graduation.

"She encouraged me to not limit myself to just what I could obtain locally in Texas but to push outside of that," says Farmer, who was sponsored by Houston County EC.

Jade, who represented Pedernales EC, encouraged Farmer to apply to a program that connects students with top colleges. Farmer received a full scholarship and was accepted to Brown University, where she plans to study

public health or social science.

"Without Youth Tour, I wouldn't have even applied to Brown University," she says. "It's weird to think all of it happened because I decided to apply to [Youth Tour] at the last minute."

In addition to the memories and opportunities Farmer gained, she also left Youth Tour with lasting friendships. She still keeps in touch with Jade, and she and another friend she made on Youth Tour went to the Houston rodeo during spring break.

"Not only did it leave me with lasting memories, but it has also left me with friendships and a new perspective on life," Farmer says.

Another Youth Tour alumni that left D.C. with a new outlook is **Ria Bhasin**, who represented CoServ in 2018.

"I remember learning about all the opportunities in advocacy and policy during Youth Tour through all our trips to the museums, national monuments and through the speakers we had," Bhasin says. "That made me so excited."

To document the trip of a lifetime, one of the trip's chaperones gave her a journal. At the end of the trip, she wrote in her journal that she wanted to return to D.C. "It impacted me that much," she says.

In college, Bhasin returned to the capital to intern at the Alliance for Health Policy.

"The most surreal moment for me was being able to work adjacent to the Capitol," Bhasin says. "It was a full-circle moment."

Now Bhasin is a first-year medical student at the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth, where she's working to become a pediatrician and work in preventative medicine policy.

"I really am grateful for the opportunity Youth Tour gave me when I was in high school," Bhasin says. "It set the tone for my career."

Ask any of these alums, and they'll tell you the worst thing a student can do is not apply and miss a fantastic opportunity.

"Not only will you make friends that will last you a lifetime, but you'll also have experiences beyond anything you could have ever anticipated," Farmer says. "Youth Tour was more than I could have ever dreamed of."



“Youth Tour is not only a trip, but it can be a transformative experience for your professional or personal career.”

—MADELON CLARK,
SOUTHWEST TEXAS EC, 2018



MADELON CLARK
2018



EMILY FARMER
2023



RIA BHASIN
2018



**“You make
so many good
friends and
memories here.
It’s just an
unbelievable
trip.”**

**—ALBERT GARCIA,
MAGIC VALLEY EC, 2023**

JOIN US NEXT YEAR

**Ask your electric co-op how
to apply for Youth Tour 2025**