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THE 2012 ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR

you can win a week long trip to  
**WASHINGTON DC**  
 June 2012

[www.youthtour.coop](http://www.youthtour.coop)

IT'S A WEEK YOU'LL NEVER FORGET

VISIT HISTORIC MONUMENTS & MUSEUMS

MEET YOUR U.S. REPRESENTATIVES & SENATORS

MEET HUNDREDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
 WRITE OR CALL

Wiregrass Electric Cooperative  
 ATTN: Cary Hatcher  
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 1-800-239-4602  
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## What is Youth Tour?

The Rural Electric Youth Tour is a group of more than 1,000 high school students who visit Washington, D.C., every June, year after year, from all over America. They come because their electric cooperatives think education is important — education about electric cooperatives and education about America.

Senator Lyndon Johnson inspired the Youth Tour when he addressed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Annual Meeting in Chicago in 1957. The senator declared, “If one thing goes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents.” Then, beginning in 1957, some of the Texas electric cooperatives sent groups of young people to Washington to work during the summer in Senator Johnson’s office and learn more about government in action.

In 1958, electric cooperatives in Iowa sponsored the first group of 34 young people on a week-long study tour of the nation’s capital. Later that same year, another busload of students went to Washington, D.C., from Illinois. The idea grew, and other states sent busloads of young people throughout the summer. By 1959, the Youth Tour had grown to 130 students.

In 1964, NRECA began to coordinate the program and suggested that cooperative representatives from each state arrange to be in Washington, D.C., during Youth Tour Week. The first year of the coordinated tour included approximately 400 young people from 12 states. The idea has continued to grow, and today more than 1,000 young people and chaperones participate in the Youth Tour each year.

Goals of the tour are to provide the opportunity for outstanding young people to:

- increase their understanding of the value of rural electrification;
- become more familiar with the historical and political environment of the nation’s capital through visits to monuments, government buildings and cooperative organizations; and
- visit elected officials to increase their knowledge of how the federal government works.

## Am I eligible to compete?

High school juniors who have one parent or guardian that is a member and receives electric service from Wiregrass Electric

Cooperative are eligible to participate in the competition. Primary counties served by WEC include Houston and Geneva Counties and portions of Covington, Coffee, and Dale.

## How are the participants selected?

Those individuals interested in participating are required to complete an application and return by Jan. 15. All entries will be reviewed for eligibility and up to ten top applicants will be selected to participate in the Montgomery portion of Youth Tour in March. Following the Montgomery tour, participants will be asked to come to the office of Wiregrass Electric Cooperative to be interviewed by an independent panel of judges. Two top candidates will be selected to represent WEC in the Washington DC portion of Youth Tour in June.

## When is Youth Tour?

The Montgomery Youth Tour is March 6-8, 2012. The Washington Youth Tour is in June 16-21, 2012.

## What is Wiregrass Electric Cooperative?

Wiregrass Electric Cooperative (WEC) is an electric distribution cooperative headquartered in Hartford, Ala., and with offices in Ashford, Dothan and Samson. The cooperative was organized in September 1939, and its first substation was energized in June 1940. Today, WEC has over 23,000 member-owners and serves over 3,600 miles of line.

## What is PowerSouth Energy Cooperative?

PowerSouth Energy Cooperative is a \$1 billion generation and transmission cooperative headquartered in Andalusia, Ala. Its member owners include 16 distribution cooperatives in south and central Alabama and northwest Florida, and the Alabama municipalities of Andalusia, Brundidge, Elba and Opp. PowerSouth’s 20 member owners, including Wiregrass Electric Cooperative, distribute energy to residential, commercial and industrial customers in 39 counties in Alabama and 10 counties in northwest Florida.

## What is AREA?

The Alabama Rural Electric Association (AREA) is an association formed by the trustees of nearly all electric cooperatives in Alabama so they can discuss common problems, share the benefits of their experience and work together to protect cooperatives from outside groups who may not have the member-owners’ best interest in mind.

AREA assists with the publication of Alabama Living magazine, which is sent to cooperative member-owners across the state. It also conducts meetings and workshops for cooperative trustees and employees, works closely with the state legislature and other agencies on matters that affect electric cooperatives, and coordinates the Youth Tour program.

## A brief history of the REA

The Rural Electrification Administration (REA), a former agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, administered loan programs for electrification and telephone service in rural areas. The REA was created (1935) by executive order as an independent federal bureau, authorized by the Congress in 1936, and later (1939) reorganized as a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The REA undertook the task to provide farms with affordable electric lighting and power. To implement those goals, the administration made long-term, low-interest loans to state and local governments, to farmers’ cooperatives and to nonprofit organizations. No loans were made directly to consumers. In 1949, the REA was authorized to make loans for telephone improvements, and 1988, REA was permitted to give interest-free loans for job creation and rural electric systems. By the early 1970s, about 98 percent of all farms in the United States had electric service, a demonstration of REA’s success. When REA was created, only about 10 percent of all farms had electricity. The administration was abolished in 1994 and its functions assumed by the Rural Utilities Service (RUS).

## What is NRECA?

NRECA is a service organization representing more than 1,000 rural electric systems in 46 states. Through NRECA, member systems provide themselves services which would be unavailable or too expensive if each system, individually, attempted to provide these services by itself. By working together through NRECA, member systems are able to provide better services to their members at the lowest possible cost. NRECA is not supported by government funds nor is it an agency of the Federal government.

## What is a cooperative?

A cooperative is a business enterprise which is jointly owned and equally controlled by those who use it. It is a form of business more interested in service to people than in making dollars, though it must, of course, take in enough money to pay its way.

## How does WEC operate?

The CEO, Michael S. McWaters, makes the day to day business decisions for the cooperative. The members elect a board of trustees at the annual meeting each year. The nine trustees are the policy making and supervisory branch of the cooperative. They make sure the cooperative is run correctly and in the best interest of the members. Current members of the Board of Trustees are: Nolan Laird (president), Kip Justice (vice president), Debra E. Baxley (secretary), Greg McCullough, Donna Parrish, John Clark Jr., Danny McNeil, Tracy Reeder and Donald Ray Wilks.

## How is a cooperative non-profit?

After all expenses are paid at the end of the year, any excess revenue (margins) are assigned on the cooperative books to the patrons who used the services on a prorated basis. The cooperative retains these funds, called capital credits, to use as operating funds. As the funds increase to the point that the cooperative has more than the amount needed for operation, a portion of the capital credits are refunded to the members on a first-in, first-out basis.

## Do cooperatives pay taxes?

Yes, rural electric cooperatives pay taxes on the same basis as other businesses. The only tax cooperatives do not pay is income tax. There is no profit, so there is no income tax to pay.

## For more information

Additional information on Wiregrass Electric Cooperative, cooperatives and rural electrification is available through our website at <http://www.wiregrass.coop>. Other sites of interest include:

[www.nreca.org](http://www.nreca.org)      [www.areaapower.com](http://www.areaapower.com)  
[www.powersouth.com](http://www.powersouth.com)      [www.usda.gov/rus/](http://www.usda.gov/rus/)

## When are applications due?

Applications must be received by January 15, 2012. You will be notified by February 1 if you are selected to attend the Montgomery Youth Tour. Applications should be sent to: Wiregrass Electric Cooperative  
ATTN: Cary Hatcher  
P.O. Box 158  
Hartford, AL 36344

WEC’s Youth Tour Coordinator can be contacted by calling 334-944-7115 or 800-239-4602. You can also reach us by email at [wec@wiregrass.coop](mailto:wec@wiregrass.coop) or fax at 334-588-0683.