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Electric News

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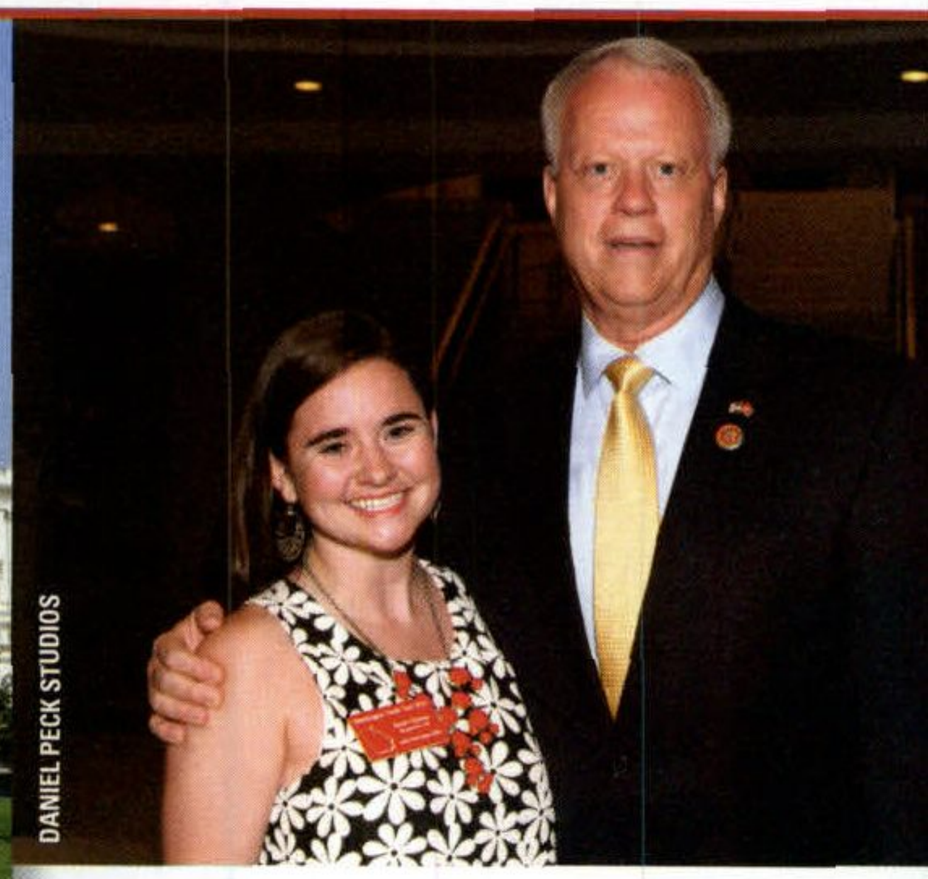
Washington Youth Tour Builds Bonds That Last

LOUIS TONSMEIRE / PHOTO ILLUSTRATION by GAYLE HARTMAN



DANIEL PECK STUDIOS

Top left: Sarah Thomas, of West Laurens High School, represented Little Ocmulgee EMC on the 2014 Washington Youth Tour. ***Above:*** U.S. Rep. Paul Broun greets Sarah Thomas during a visit to the U.S. Capitol.

Washington Youth Tour (WYT) delegates get so much out of the weeklong experience—visits to many historic locations, lessons in leadership and team-building opportunities, not to mention an all-expenses-paid trip to the nation's capital.

Above: At the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, visitors remember the fallen heroes who sacrificed their lives for their country. ***Right:*** Enjoying an evening cruise down the Potomac River are, from left, Lindsey Thomas (Planters EMC), Sarah Thomas (Little Ocmulgee EMC) and Meredith McGlamory (Middle Georgia EMC).

Although they cherish the memories, one thing that often stays with the delegates longer is the close bonds they develop.

"When you don't know anybody, you make friends fast," says Courtney Bearrentine, a 2012 delegate from Grady EMC in Cairo. "Fast friends are not always forever friends, but with WYT, somehow they are. It's the common experience that creates those strong bonds."

Ashley Thompson (2008 Snapping Shoals EMC, Covington) recalls fearing she'd be lost in the shuffle when she moved into her dorm to begin her freshman year at the University of Georgia in Athens. "I was incredibly blessed that Lindsay (Peavy) Drew, (Ocmulgee EMC, Eastman) was randomly assigned to the dorm room next to me. What started out as friendship on the tour turned into a lifelong bond. I'm grateful that the Youth Tour gave me that connection to spark a friendship in a place where I knew very few people."

Two other 2012 delegates developed more than a friendship. Tyler Day (Rayle EMC, Washington) and Sarah Kate Miles (Satilla REMC, Alma), who met on the tour, are engaged. Day attends UGA while Miles is a student at South Georgia State College in Waycross, so the odds of them ever meeting otherwise are remote. Their wedding is planned for spring 2017.

Youth Tour Applications Available

Applications for consideration in the 2015 Washington Youth Tour are being accepted from local high school juniors and seniors who reside in a home served by Little Ocmulgee EMC (LOEMC). The contest winner will join more than 100 youth from Georgia and represent our state during the tour, scheduled for June 11-18, 2015.

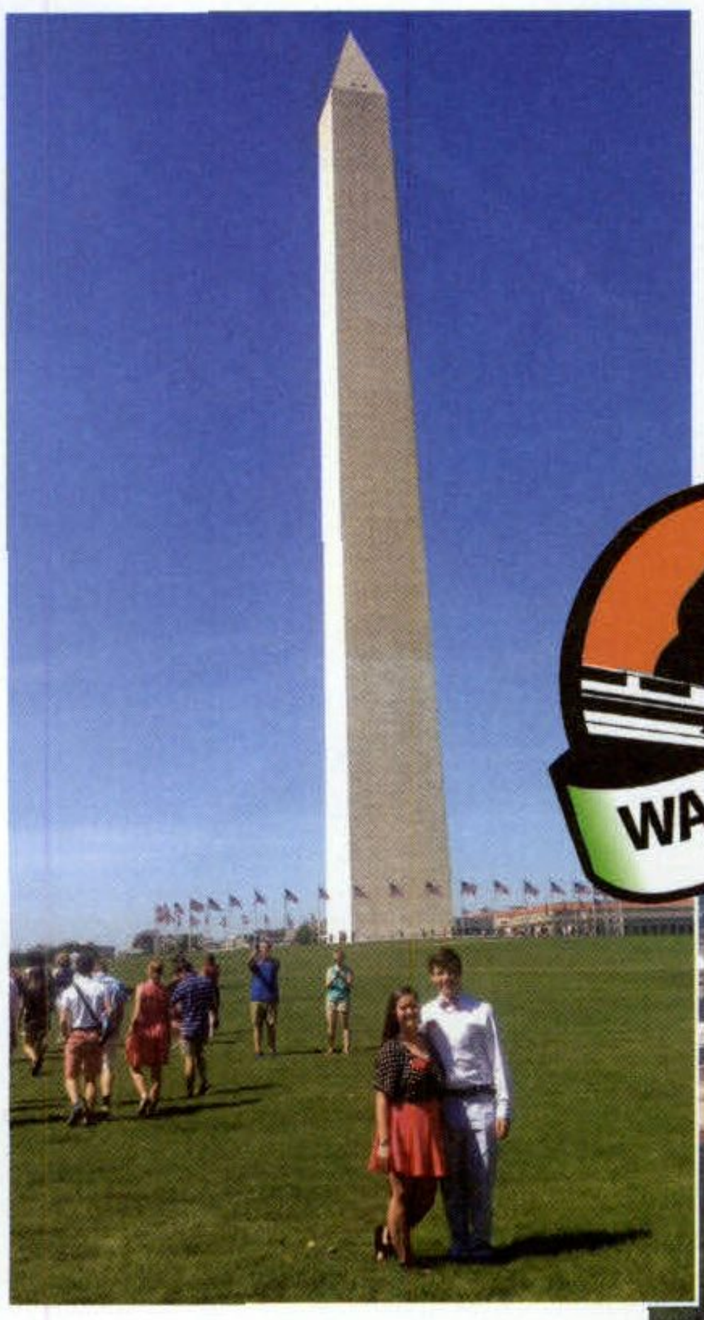
The winner of an essay-writing and interview contest will be awarded the trip, which begins with a banquet in Atlanta before a day in Georgia and continues with a weeklong exploration of Washington, D.C. Students must be 16 years of age by June 11 and attend either Wheeler County High School in Alamo, Telfair County High School in McRae or West Laurens High School in Dexter.

Participants are required to submit a 500- to 750-word essay on a preselected topic. The essays will be judged on knowledge of subject, originality, composition, neatness and grammar. The essay deadline to LOEMC is **noon Friday, Feb. 13, 2015**; four finalists will be chosen to appear for an interview by a committee of judges on **March 11, 2015**. A winner will be selected after the interviews, and prizes awarded to the runners-up.

Students interested in developing their leadership skills and making friendships that will last a lifetime, while taking a pilgrimage to the nation's capital, should contact their high school English department or call LOEMC's Gary L. Selph at (800) 342-1290, Ext. 217, to obtain an application or more information. **Relatives of LOEMC employees and directors are prohibited from entering the local contest and are required to apply in a separate statewide contest (see LOEMC for details).**

BYRON McCOMBS

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Little White House in Warm Springs was one of the stops for Sarah Thomas and the other 2014 Washington Youth Tour delegates.



Above, Washington Youth Tour delegates Sarah Thomas (Little Ocmulgee EMC) and Drew Belflower (Ocmulgee EMC) stand before the Washington Monument. ***Right:*** The view from the top of the Washington Monument shows the National Mall, with the U.S. Capitol in the distance.

Annual Meeting Celebrates 76 Years

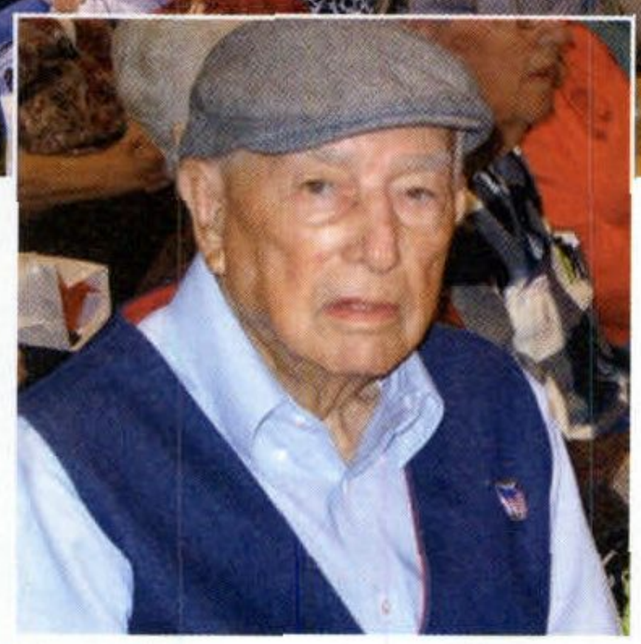
Little Ocmulgee EMC celebrated its 76th Annual Meeting on Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2014, at the Wheeler County High School gym. The members enjoyed entertainment provided by the Glory Road Trio. Members sent a message to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) by signing more than 250 *Action.Coop* cards voicing their displeasure concerning the EPA's proposed rule that would increase power costs to the American consumer.

Directors Fred Gilder, Jim Knight and Jimmy Grimes were re-elected by acclamation to the board for new three-year terms. Bylaw amendments were approved by the membership. General Manager Lewis Sheffield reported that the Co-op is in a strong financial position and that members will be receiving more than $450,000 in capital credit refunds.

Dewitt Phagan, of the Cedar Grove community, was recognized as both the oldest member and oldest veteran present.

Prizes were awarded to members holding lucky tickets.

The EMC wishes to thank all the vendors and health fair participants who make our Annual Meeting such a great success.



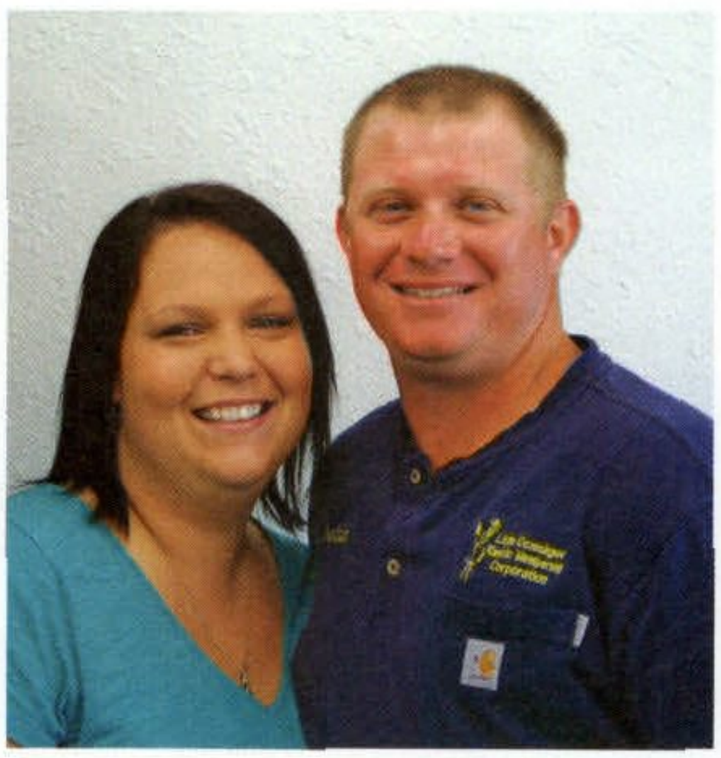
Dewitt Phagan was honored both as the oldest member and oldest veteran.

Floyds Attend Couples Conference

Jordan and Meri Floyd, of Glenwood, recently had the opportunity to network with cooperative leaders from Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia at the 2014 Co-op Education Conference for Couples, at The Ridges Resort and Marina in Hiawassee, Ga.

For nearly three decades, the conference has brought couples together to learn the cooperative way of business, to differentiate between cooperatives and corporations and to exchange experiences and ideas with other couples and cooperative leaders.

"Attendees were educated on the various forms of cooperatives and their respective business activities," says Gale Cutler, President of the Georgia Co-op Council board and Public Relations Coordinator with Georgia EMC.



Meri and Jordan Floyd

The three-day event allowed couples to engage in encounter sessions, where they gained an in-depth look at the inner workings of several cooperatives. "It was a privilege for us to attend the conference. We met people from different states while learning the meaning of co-ops, how they work and their involvement in the community," state Meri and Jordan Floyd.

Meri is employed with Job Training Unlimited as a Resource Specialist at the Lower Oconee Transition Center in Alamo. Her husband, Jordan, has been employed with Little Ocmulgee EMC for nine years and is a First-class Lineman.