



Media Release

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Youth Tour offers unique view of Washington, D.C.

Each year, Pearl River Valley Electric Power Association sponsors two high school juniors on a tour of Washington, D.C., in June. They join other students representing hundreds of cooperatives from Mississippi and across the United States. The delegates are all like-minded students who are motivated to succeed and become leaders in their communities. More than 1,800 students from 44 states participate annually.

This year, Kori Miles and Ally Ratliff joined 68 of Mississippi's brightest young students. They were chosen through an application and interview process. Kori is the daughter of Latashia and Derrick Owens of Columbia and will be a senior at Columbia High School. Ally will be a senior at Forrest County Agricultural High School and is the daughter of John Ratliff and Thelma Keith of Hattiesburg.

The weeklong trip featured visits to the major monuments and memorials, including the World War II Memorial, FDR Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

"I didn't believe them when they said my life would change," said Kori, "but I have grown, I've changed, and I will never be the same."

A trip to the Marine Corps War Memorial was one of the first stops on the tour, followed by a trip to the Air Force Memorial on the grounds of Fort Myer near The Pentagon. Later in the week, the students attended the popular Sunset Parade at the Marine Corps War Memorial and enjoyed a performance by the U.S. Marine Forces Reserve Band. While visiting Arlington National Cemetery, the students watched the changing of the guard and visited the gravesite of President John F. Kennedy.

The participants were able to visit the Smithsonian Museums, including the museums of Air and Space, American History, Natural History and the National Gallery of Art. Other popular events on the tour were stops at the Newseum, Madame Tussauds Wax Museum and an evening cruise down the Potomac River.

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 the Mall from the speaker's balcony. After the tour, Kori and Ally joined a smaller group to visit with Rep. Steven Palazzo in his D.C. office. The congressman spoke to the group 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 an opportunity to meet with Sen. Roger Wicker.

"The 2017 Youth Tour was not only an amazing learning opportunity, but it was also an opportunity for us kids to see that our community supports us and encourages us," said Ally. "I am forever thankful."

"This tour is memorable, not only because these young people are able to visit their nation's capital, but they also make life-long friendships that benefit them well into their adult years," General Manager

Randy Wallace said. "We are proud to take part in this program, which not only gives students an opportunity to learn about the cooperative business model and our nation's history, but also helps to instill leadership in the students and impresses upon them the importance of participating in their government."

High school juniors living in PRVEPA's service area can apply to participate in next year's program beginning in October. More information can be found at www.PRVEPA.com.

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