



## Media Release

**For Immediate Release** August 1, 2018

**Contact Person:** Kurt Brautigam  
**Phone:** 601.731.7831

*Originally published in Today in Mississippi*

### **Youth Tour students experience Washington, D.C.**

Each year, Pearl River Valley Electric Power Association sponsors two high school juniors on a youth 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 42 states participate annually.

This year, Thomas Hahn and Katie Norris represented Pearl River Valley Electric. They joined 73 of Mississippi's brightest juniors on the tour and were chosen through an application and interview process. Thomas is the son of Angela and Lawrence Hahn of Columbia and will be a senior at Columbia High School. Katie will be a senior at West Marion High School and is the daughter of Patricia and Kevin Norris of Foxworth.

The weeklong trip featured visits to many of the city's popular monuments and memorials, including the World War II Memorial, FDR Memorial, Martin Luther King Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial and Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The students also visited numerous museums, including the Newseum, a seven floor, interactive museum dedicated to the first amendment rights and journalism throughout American history, as well as the Smithsonian Museums of Air and Space, American History, Natural History and the National Gallery of Art. A new addition to the tour this year was a visit to the Holocaust Museum, which offers a somber, thought-provoking reflection about the victims of the Nazi regime.

"This is a life-changing experience that I will never forget! I have made so many new friends," said Katie. "I never thought that I would ever get to experience a tour as great as this one. There is so much to see in Washington, D.C."

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, many of the students were able to meet House Speaker Paul Ryan and Rep. Kevin McCarthy (CA), another top House leader. McCarthy spoke to the group after a news interview in the Capitol Rotunda.

After the Capitol tour, Thomas and Katie 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 the opportunity to meet with Sen. Roger Wicker and Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith.

"The 2018 Youth Tour was a true American adventure and an amazing way to experience our nation's capital," said Thomas. "The tour is a great experience for young leaders, possibly the best experience, provided by electric cooperatives. It's a great way to see democracy in its true form."

“This experience 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](http://www.PRVEPA.com).

# # #