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Clinton County Connection

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"Youth to Washington" Celebrates 55 Years

At the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Annual Meeting in Chicago in 1957, Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson addressed the crowd stating, "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." Soon thereafter, Illinois sent a busload of young people to Washington in hopes of giving the youth a chance to visit their congressmen and to see all the beautiful sights our nation's capital has to offer.

In 1959 Clinton County Electric Cooperative was able to say they had representation. From 1959 thru 1963 CCECI sent one student to Washington, but in 1964 it was decided the cooperative would send two students on the all-expense paid trip to Washington. Fifty-five years later CCECI has sent 87 young people to Washington D.C. and will send 2 more later this month.

Writing an essay centered on rural electricity was once the requirement for this trip. If your essay was chosen as the best, a spot on the bus to D.C. was yours. However, as of late interested sophomores and juniors simply submit an application and get the honor of traveling to Springfield, IL for Youth Day where they interview for their opportunity of a lifetime.

For those students who travel to Springfield, but are not chosen for the trip to Washington, they still have the opportunity to go to D.C as a "Willie" student. "Willie"

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The students in this photograph represent the first students from Illinois to participate in the "Youth to Washington" tour in 1959. Among the group is Carol Grasher who represented Clinton County Electric.

CCECI Sponsored Youth Day in Springfield

The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives sponsored the "2014 Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day" on April 2, 2014 in Springfield, IL.

Courtney Deiters, Chelsey Deiters, Elizabeth Medlin, Emily Detmer, Courtney Fisher, Alexis Voyles, and Brady Weis all children of Clinton County Electric Cooperative members, were selected based on their applications to attend Youth Day in Springfield. They joined more than 200 high school students from around the state for the day's activities which included touring the Capitol Building, Illinois State Museum, Old State Capitol Building and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. While at the Capitol Building, the students were privileged to meet with State Senator Kyle McCarter along with State Representatives Charles Meier and John Cavaletto. Various speakers throughout the day included Lt. Governor Sheila Simon and Secretary of State Jesse White.

Two of the students in attendance were chosen by a panel of judges to participate in the "Youth to Washington" tour. This is an all expense paid, week-long trip to Washington D.C. taking place this month. The 2014 winners of the Washington D.C. trip from Clinton County Electric were Courtney Deiters, daughter of Wayne & Ginny Deiters of Breese and Elizabeth Medlin, daughter of Everett & Patricia Medlin of Aviston. Chelsey Deiters, also daughter of Wayne & Ginny Deiters of Breese will be attending as a "Willie" student. A "Willie" student is one who attended Youth Day in Springfield, was not chosen for the all-expense paid trip to Washington, but has the option to pay their own way. Courtney, Elizabeth and Chelsey will be outstanding representatives for Clinton County Electric as they travel to Washington D.C. this month with approximately 80 other students representing cooperatives throughout Illinois.

Children of cooperative members

▲ *Sen. Kyle McCarter met with students representing Clinton County Electric Cooperative. Pictured front row left to right are: Courtney Fisher, Elizabeth Medlin, Alexis Voyles and Mike Johnson. Back row left to right: Brady Weis, Courtney Deiters, Emily Detmer, Chelsey Deiters, Sen. Kyle McCarter and Carrie Trame.*

Rep. John Cavaletto ▶ and Rep. Charlie Meier met with students representing Clinton County Electric Cooperative. Pictured front row left to right are: Elizabeth Medlin, Alexis Voyles, Courtney Fisher, Emily Detmer, Courtney Deiters, Chelsey Deiters, Mike Johnson and Brady Weis. Back row left to right: Rep. Charlie Meier, Rep. John Cavaletto and Carrie Trame.

who are sophomores or juniors in high school are eligible to apply for the Youth Day in Springfield, giving them a chance to participate in the annual "Youth to Washington" trip. For more information, visit our website at www.cceci.com or watch for information in our December and January issues of this newsletter.

▲ *Youth Day participant Brady Weis shaking hands with President Lincoln at the Illinois State Museum.*

▲ *Pictured outside the Lincoln Museum front row left to right are: Chelsey Deiters, Elizabeth Medlin, Alexis Voyles, Courtney Fisher and Emily Detmer. Back row left to right are: Brady Weis, Clinton County Electric Customer Service Representative Carrie Trame and Courtney Deiters.*

The Clinton County Electric Cooperative group ▶ *took time out to pose for a photo with the wax figures of the Lincoln family at the Lincoln Museum. Seated in front, left to right are: Elizabeth Medlin and Emily Detmer. Pictured in back from left to right are: Courtney Fisher, Courtney Deiters, Clinton County Electric Customer Service Representative Carrie Trame, Brady Weis, Clinton County Electric President Mike Johnson, Chelsey Deiters and Alexis Voyles.*

▲ *Lieutenant Governor Sheila Simon addressed students and chaperones and challenged them to take an interest in the political process and encouraged them to talk to their state senators and representatives about issues that interest them.*

▲ *Secretary of State Jesse White addressed the Youth Day students from the top of his desk.*

The Cooperative Office will be closed Friday, July 4th in observance of Independence Day and Monday, September 1st in observance of Labor Day.

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students are encouraged to request financial assistance from local organizations such as Rotary Clubs, Knights of Columbus, Lions Club, etc., or they can simply pay their own way. Over the years there has been 8 "Willie" students who have represented Clinton County Electric Cooperative and there will be 1 more this year.

Though the requirements for earning a spot on the "Youth to Washington" tour have changed a bit over the past 55 years, the purpose of the trip remains the same. The tour is designed to provide an opportunity for outstanding rural young people to better understand the value of rural electrification. It familiarizes Illinois youth with the historic and political environment of our nation's capital through first-hand looks at monuments, government buildings, and cooperative organizations. The tour provides an opportunity for recognizing the accomplishments of outstanding young people from rural communities.

Children of cooperative members who are sophomores or juniors in high school are eligible to apply for the Youth Day in Springfield, giving them a chance to participate in the annual "Youth to Washington" trip. For more information, visit our website at www.cceci.com or watch for information in our December and January issues of this newsletter.

Kathleen Haas (left) and Roger Boyd (far right) were the two students chosen to represent Clinton County Electric Cooperative on the "Youth to Washington" tour back in 1966. Also pictured is Tom Moore, General Manager of the AIEC in 1966.

In 1989, Dave Tucker (left) and Angie Obermeier (middle) represented Clinton County Electric on the annual "Youth to Washington" tour. Also in the photo is John Freitag, tour director for the AIEC.

Lori Sprengel (left) and Terri Weinheimer (middle) were among 49 outstanding high school students from Illinois touring Washington D.C. as part of the annual "Youth to Washington" tour in 1977. Also pictured is Bob Patton AIEC tour director in 1977.

Michelle Richter and Cathy Schuetz were among the student touring Washington D.C. in 1981. During the "Youth to Washington" tour Michelle was elected by her peers as Illinois representative to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Consulting Board. Her duties included attending the NRECA annual meeting that was held in Atlanta, GA. Pictured left to right, Clinton County Electric employee Harry Buller, Michelle, Cathy, and Gary Buller AIEC tour director in 1981.