

Sun River Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



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Ripples

AUGUST 2025

YOUTH TOUR 2025

SREC student participants talk trip highlights

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., is a seven-day all-expense-paid trip to our nation's capital with 29 high school students representing 20 Montana electric cooperatives. This year the Sun River Electric representatives were Makenzie Kujava from Conrad, and Conor Barrett from Augusta. They met kids from co-ops all across the United States, learned about cooperatives, met with Montana state legislators, toured the Capitol, visited monuments, museums, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Naval Academy, Gettysburg and even took in a Nationals baseball game!

When the kids returned home, they were asked a couple questions about the trip. Here is what they had to say:

Makenzie:

What was the best part of the trip that will leave a lasting memory with you?

The best part of the trip for me was getting the opportunity to meet our legislators and their aides. I have never really been interested in politics, but I liked hearing how they felt about certain topics. I was able to talk to



This year Makenzie Kujava from Conrad and Conor Barrett represented Sun River Electric Cooperative on this year's Youth Tour.

Senator Steve Daines and I learned that he had family connections to the Conrad area where I live, and that was really cool. The legislative aides told us about how a day in their life

goes, and how to get involved if we are interested. This made me want to learn more about politics, and how to decide what to do in certain situations.

Why would you recommend the trip to other students?

I learned more about electric cooperatives and the importance of them in rural areas. I loved getting to see all of the monuments and memorials. It was fun meeting new people and I accumulated quite a pin collection from students from all over the United States who also attended. The visit to the Naval Academy was another incredible thing, we had an awesome tour guide. I realized how much you can learn from visiting new and different places. This was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I would recommend to any sophomore or junior who is an electric cooperative member.

Conor:

What was the best part of the trip that will leave a lasting memory with you?

I think that the best part of the trip that will leave a lasting memory with me is the trip to Gettysburg. The battlefield was huge, and we had an amazing

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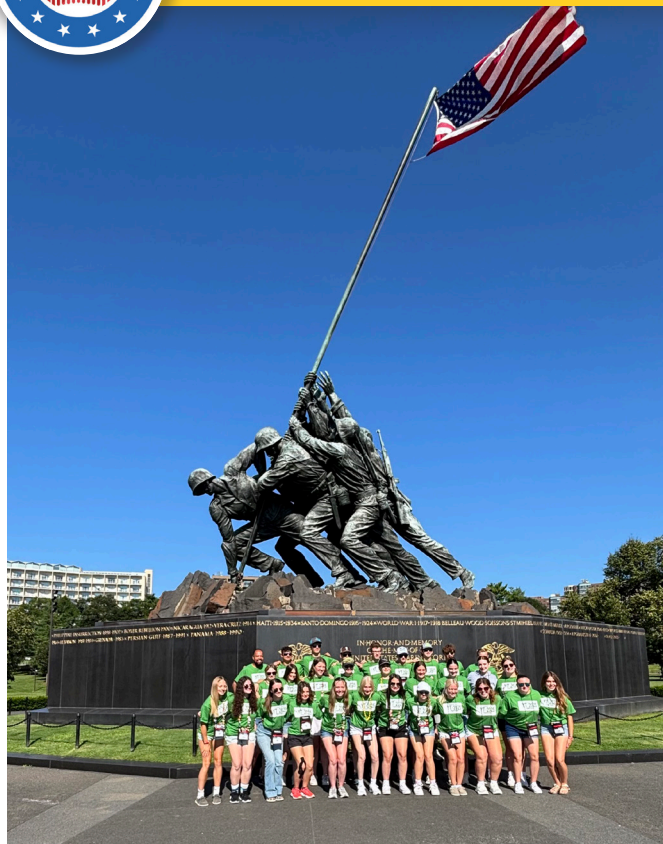
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YOUTH TOUR



tour guide who knew almost everything to know about the battle.

Why would you recommend the trip to other students?

This was a great trip, I would tell other students that it is definitely worth applying. I think that one of the main things that made this trip fun is that everyone on it was fun to be around and really seemed like they wanted to be there.

Makenzie and Conor will join us at the SREC Annual Meeting next March and share some stories about their adventure to Washington, D.C. **RM**

August | 2025



MECA Tech School a great opportunity

You can read books and watch videos about it, you can even listen to someone tell stories about it, but if you truly want to be good at something you need to “get your hands dirty,” so to speak. This was the idea behind Montana Electric Cooperatives’ Association (MECA) hosting the 1st Annual Tech School. It involved a portion of time in the classroom, but also had one day dedicated to linemen working in the field, as well as hands-on drone training.

Sun River Electric had a particular stretch of three-phase line that could be de-energized for the day, and that also had a variety of different pole structures for linemen to do hands-on training.

MECA safety instructors were on hand to observe and cook a delicious steak lunch served on-site. RESCO was gracious enough to provide steaks. The Sun River Electric linemen and staff helped set up the training area, provided trucks and equipment, and provided a spot for everyone to sit in the shade and enjoy lunch. Seasoned linemen from other co-ops throughout the state were on hand to give instruction and share ideas about how electric co-ops work every day. **220615**

Altec had staff on hand to go over truck inspections and walk-arounds. Gen Pac sent out an UAS operations specialist, along with a variety of drones to demo and fly the electric lines. It is always valuable to get a group like this together.

Small ideas and suggestions lead to bigger conversations that in turn help the Montana electric co-ops work safer and more efficiently. The turnout was great, with more than 50 people participating to make the day a success. **RM**

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