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**NATIONAL CO-OP YOUTH TOUR MEANS EDUCATION
AND FUN FOR TWO LOCAL STUDENTS**

Kelly Peterson of Blooming Prairie, MN and Brooke Kinney of Adams, MN were among the nearly 1,500 high school students from across the country, 34 of them from Minnesota, who participated in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour held June 13-18, 2009, in Washington, D.C. The trip was sponsored by Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services.

Each year in June, an action-filled week provides high school students several opportunities to learn first-hand what it is like to be involved in politics, community service and today's pressing issues. Highlights included meeting with their elected representatives in the U.S. House and Senate to discuss the process of government and issues of the day, and increasing their knowledge of cooperative electric utilities and American history.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been a joint effort of local electric co-ops, such as Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services, their statewide co-op associations, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Arlington, Virginia for more than 43 years.

“The Washington D.C. trip was absolutely amazing! There were 34 students from Minnesota and everyone got along with each other, which added to the whole experience,” reported an enthusiastic Brooke. “We became fast friends and shared many memories and laughs. I can’t even name my favorite part of the trip because everything was so much fun.” Kelly echoed these sentiments, adding “The trip was a rewarding experience. I’d be happy to promote the tour next year to interested students.”

The fast-paced program incorporated time for the students to experience government at work. Participants were encouraged to talk to Congressmen about the issues that are of importance to them, now and as they plan their future. Many of the participants will be old enough to vote within the next year or two. Many felt empowered by this, knowing that their opinions will count. Discussion topics included the nation’s economy, energy choices, and issues of climate change and energy affordability. Both students agreed that what they learned on the Youth Tour made them proud to be an American and to show that America’s young people are involved and care about this country and our communities.

In addition to taking in the sights and sounds of the nation’s capital, all the state groups convened for National Youth Day to learn from public figures and other inspirational speakers. This year’s Youth Day agenda included Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic Medalist and two-time world Champion Wheelchair Basketball champion. Mr. Schlappi shares his inspiring message for every American, young or old: “Just because you can’t stand up, doesn’t mean you can’t stand out.” As president of Mike Schlappi Communications, he spreads that word to audiences ranging from students

to chief executive officers, from rookies to Olympic champions, and from small gatherings to major conventions.

Since 1964, the nation's cooperative electric utilities have sponsored more than 40,000 high school juniors and seniors for visits to their U.S. congressional delegations, energy and grassroots government education sessions, and sightseeing in Washington, D.C. NRECA is the national service organization representing the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit member-owned electric cooperatives, which provide electric service to 39 million people in 47 states. For more information, please go to

<http://www.youthtour.coop/>



Freeborn Mower Cooperative Services is a member-owned and member-controlled electric cooperative celebrating 72 years of delivering retail electric power and energy solutions to its nearly 6,000 member-owners in Freeborn and Mower Counties. We are a Touchstone Energy® cooperative and a member-owner in the Dairyland Power system of electric cooperatives that generates and transmits reliable electric power in 62 counties of four states (Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois). Dairyland Power Cooperative of La Crosse, Wisconsin has been in operation for more than 64 years.