

History Comes Alive

Washington Youth Tour offers a new perspective of the capital and politics

American history and government came to life this summer for 2008 Washington Youth Tour delegates Ethan McRae of Thatcher High School; Kara Bryce and Jamie Claridge of Pima High School; and chaperones Clint Woods, a meter reader for Graham County Electric Cooperative, and his wife, Tiffany.

Never again will names and places such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, the White

House, the Capitol, Fort McHenry, Arlington National Cemetery, the Holocaust and Iwo Jima be just words in history books.

When Kara received her government book on her first day back to school, she saw a picture of the U.S. Capitol on the cover and exclaimed, "I've been there!"

Former Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson gave birth to the idea of electric cooperatives providing an avenue for rural high school students to visit our nation's capital. He thought if they experienced it first hand, young people would return home with a reverence for the nation and those who helped establish and maintain the freedoms we enjoy, and have a desire to give back by being role models to their peers and possibly tomorrow's great leaders.

For Kara, the daughter of Michael and Kathleen Bryce, the tour provided a series of new experiences from the time she boarded the plane for her first flight.

Her love for American history was invigorated as she visited places where so much history was made.

Kara excels academically and athletically. She was honored as an all-tournament player in basketball last year. She is student body president and has served as National Honor Society president and student body secretary/historian; is a member of the school's show choir, X-Tempo; and was in Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) for a year.

An active member of her church youth group, Kara earned the "Young Womanhood Recognition" and strives to live her life with honesty, integrity and hard work.

Although unsure about a career choice, she is considering a degree in dietetics, with a goal of some day being a good mom.



Ethan, the son of Jill and Gary McRae, had a special interest in visiting with Rep. Rick Renzi's aide during congressional visits. He plans a career in politics after completing a two-year church mission and law school.

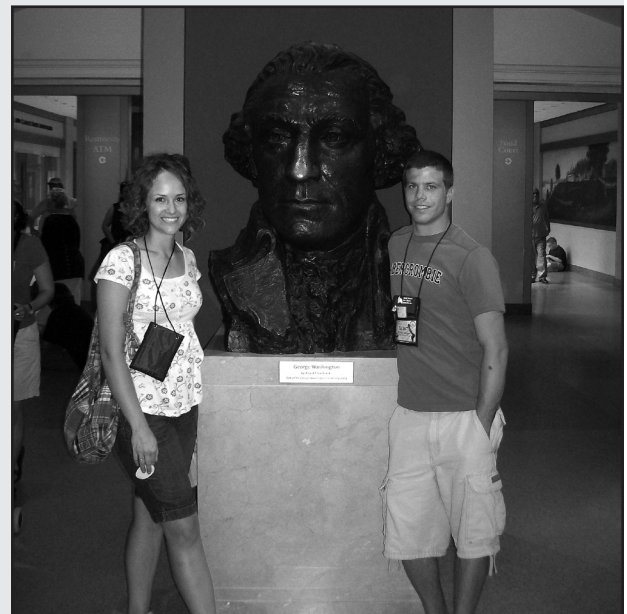
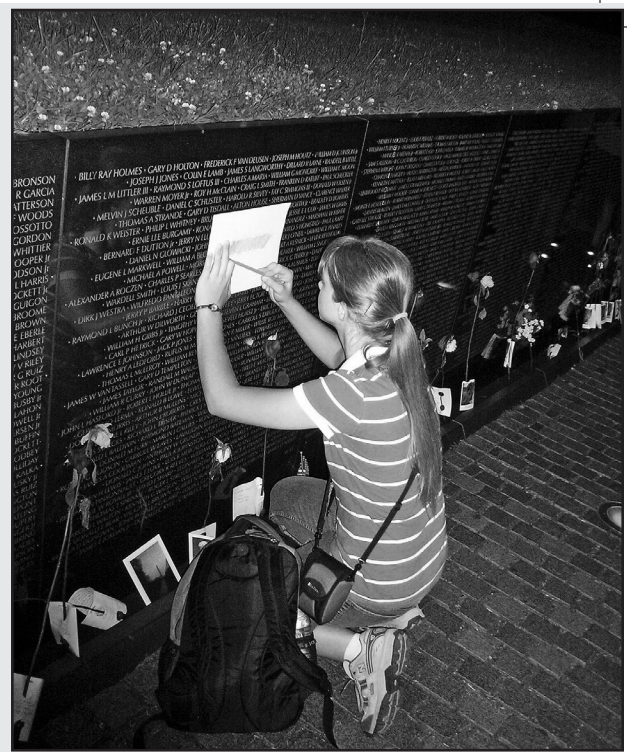
An experienced leader, Ethan serves as student body president and was class president his sophomore and junior years. A youth leader for his church, Ethan has served as seminary president and achieved the rank of Eagle Scout.

He competed at the national FBLA event in Atlanta this summer, earning the right by winning first place in business law at the state level. Ethan also is an accomplished pianist, and is ranked in the top 10 percent of his class.

David Henson, Biology Department chairman at Eastern Arizona College, where Ethan is a student, describes him as "the whole package, possessing trademarks of honesty and integrity that set him apart."



The Graham County Electric Cooperative contingent at the U.S. Capitol. From left, Jamie Claridge, Kara Bryce, Tiffany Woods, Clint Woods and Ethan McRae.



Above, Ethan McRae goes face to face with J. Edgar Hoover at Madame Tussauds Wax Museum. Right, from top: Jamie Claridge traces a name from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial wall; Kara Bryce is dwarfed by the column at the Jefferson Memorial; Tiffany and Clint Woods pose with a bust of George Washington in the gift shop at Mount Vernon.

Jamie, the daughter of Tom and Shelly Claridge, excels not only in the classroom, but on the basketball court. She was named to the all-tournament team at the Eastern Arizona holiday tournament last year.

“Jamie embodies everything our school and community could hope to produce in a student/athlete,” said Brad Hemphill, her basketball coach. He describes Jamie as a tireless worker, with an irrepressibly kind and positive attitude whose unrelenting hard work has made her a terrific basketball player.

A member of student council and the National Honor Society, Jamie has served as secretary, vice president and acting president of her class, and is FBLA president this year.

As a member of FBLA, she placed at the local, state and national levels

in accounting and business.

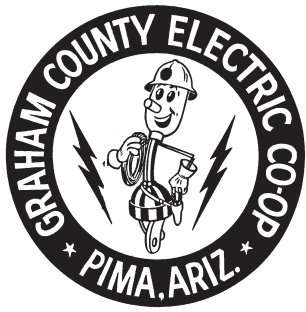
An accomplished musician, Jamie plays piano, violin and guitar.

She also earned the “Young Womanhood Recognition” in her church.

Jamie is considering a career in business or medicine. She is looking for something challenging that involves diverse activities and opportunities, with the flexibility to spend time with family.

Clint and Tiffany summed up the tour, describing it as “absolutely fantastic.” ■

Jamie and Kara were first- and second-place winners, respectively, in an essay contest following the tour. You can read their essays on pages 8 and 26.

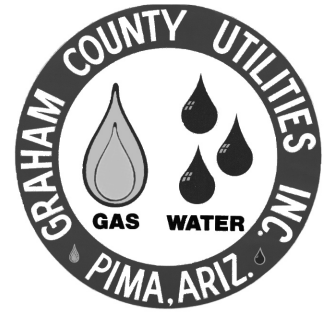


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From the Manager's Desk

Recently, we sent notices to our natural gas customers preparing them for higher winter natural gas bills, which we anticipate will increase by about 24 percent from last year's bills for the average household.

Because some of your electricity is generated by natural gas-fired turbines, the high cost of natural gas increases generation costs, which are passed through to the consumer.

Our rates are set by the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC), with a provision for variances in the cost of purchased power. Since the base cost fluctuates with market prices, the ACC allows the co-op to pass on this difference in the cost of both electricity and natural gas to the consumer through a fuel adjustment. The current fuel adjustment to your electric rate is 1 cent per kilowatt-hour.

High utility rates do not appear to be short term. The U.S. Energy Information Administration predicts national average residential electricity prices to increase 5.2 percent in 2008 and 9.9 percent in 2009.

The best advice we can give you is take energy-saving measures. A home energy audit can be done with a simple walk-through assessment. Areas that can make a big difference in your utility bills are eliminating air leaks around doors and windows, adding insulation, changing air filters, avoiding the use of space heaters and conserving energy.

While a lot of good ideas are out there, misconceptions linger.

One of those myths is computers, monitors and other office equipment will use less energy and last longer if they are left running all of the time.

Turning equipment off overnight does not shorten the life, and the small surge of power that occurs when some devices are turned on is insignificant compared with the energy used by running equipment when it is not needed. In fact, leaving computers and other office equipment on overnight and on weekends wastes significant amounts of energy and adds to wear and tear on the equipment.

A myth associated with thermostats is that a furnace or air-conditioning unit works harder to warm or cool a space back to a comfortable temperature after the thermostat has been set back, resulting in little or no savings. This has been dispelled by years of research and numerous studies.

The energy required to reheat or cool a building to a comfortable temperature is roughly equal to the energy saved as the temperature drops or increases. You save energy between the time the temperature stabilizes and the next time heating or cooling is needed. So, the longer your house remains higher or lower than the desirable temperature, the more energy you save.

For more information on these and other energy-efficiency topics, visit the Touchstone Energy Web site, www.touchstoneenergy.com, the U.S. Department of Energy's Web site, www.eere.energy.gov/consumer, or contact us at (928) 485-2451, (800) 577-9266 or our office in Pima.

—Steve Lines

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