



FOUNDATION FOR RURAL  
EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

## 2004 Leadership Through Learning Youth Program Sponsored by NECA

For the third year in a row, [NECA](#) sponsored the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) **Leadership Through Learning Youth Program**. From April 18 to April 24, 2004, 15 high school juniors who live in or attend school in an OPASTCO member's service area were in Washington, D.C., on this all-expense-paid trip. The students hailed from all parts of the country— from Massachusetts to Oregon and Louisiana to Minnesota!

### 2004 Leadership Through Learning Program Participants and Nominating Telephone Companies

Veronica Alvarado, Kansas  
nominated by *Pioneer Communications*

Angela Pitkin, Nebraska  
nominated by *Great Plains Communications Inc.*

Mandi Beyer, Oregon  
nominated by *Mt. Angel Telephone Company*

Matthew Stensberg, Wisconsin  
nominated by *Wood County Telephone Company*

Emma Davenport, Minnesota  
nominated by *East Otter Tail Telephone Company*

Elizabeth Texeira, Massachusetts  
nominated by *Granby Telephone & Telegraph Company*

Kevin Duda, Oregon  
nominated by *Mt. Angel Telephone Company*

Clayton Usery, Alabama  
nominated by *Ardmore Telephone Company*

Jackie Keller, Ohio  
nominated by *Sycamore Telephone Company*

Holly Whitworth, Tennessee  
nominated by *United Telephone Company*

Valerie Kraucunas, Nebraska  
nominated by *HunTel Systems Inc.*

Abby Wolf, Oklahoma  
nominated by *Salina Spavinaw Telephone Company Inc.*

Britney Levron, Louisiana  
nominated by *Lafourche Telephone Company, LLC*

Kelly Wolf, Illinois  
nominated by *Geneseo Telephone Company*

Cord McLean, Tennessee  
nominated by *United Telephone Company*

**Alternate**  
Anna Berning, Oregon  
nominated by *Mt. Angel Telephone Company*

Each student was required to submit an application and was then selected from a pool of close to 30 applicants. They were chosen based on the strength of their essay, their letters of nomination and their community and school involvement. All students selected to participate in the program were from rural areas and were nominated by a local telephone company that is a member of the Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of

Small Telecommunications Companies (OPASTCO), a national trade association located in Washington, D.C.



### **On the Move!**

Throughout the week, students were on the go from morning to night. They visited the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, the Vietnam War Memorial, the African American Civil War Memorial, the Iwo Jima Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery and the Jefferson Memorial.



### **More Than Just a Tour**

In addition to learning about these national landmarks and the events or people they honor, the students also attended daily workshops, debates and lectures on current topics that included international relations, the war in Iraq, the media, the judiciary system and lobbying.



### **Capitol Hill Day**

A highlight of the week included a visit to Capitol Hill on Thursday to meet with congressional representatives. Students also attended a lecture at the Supreme Court and toured the Library of Congress.



### **An Introduction to Rural Telecom**

On Friday, April 23, the students attended a workshop at the OPASTCO offices that focused on rural telecommunications. John Rose, president of OPASTCO joined the group and spoke about the role OPASTCO plays within FCC and Congress to help local rural telecommunications companies like those that nominated the students to participate in LTL. Dave Lauerman and Joe Douglas of NECA also presented information about rural telecommunications and the role NECA plays in the industry.