



FOUNDATION FOR RURAL
EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

2007 Leadership Through Learning Youth Program Sponsored by NECA

For the sixth year in a row, [NECA](#) sponsored the Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) **Leadership Through Learning Youth Program**. From March 18 to March 24, 2007, 15 high school juniors and seniors who live in or attend school in an OPASTCO member's service area will travel to Washington, D.C., on this all-expense-paid trip. The students hailed from all parts of the country— from Vermont to Montana!

2007 Leadership Through Learning Program Participants and Nominating Telephone Companies

Bonnie Evans, Alabama
nominated by *Ardmore Telephone Company*

David Elliot, Kansas
nominated by *Rural Telephone Service Company, Inc.*

Shannon Miller, Minnesota
nominated by *Arvig Communications*

Alison Reitter, Wisconsin
nominated by *Solarus*

Kara Robertson, Ontario
nominated by *Bruce Telecom*

Leanne Westfall, New York
nominated by *TDS Deposit*

Kayla Bowden, Oklahoma
nominated by *Canadian Valley Telephone Company*

Robin Hart, Vermont
nominated by *Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom*

Kathryne Killen, Tennessee
nominated by *Loretto Telephone Company*

Ashton Archer, Kansas
nominated by *Wilson Telephone Company, Inc.*

Whitney Brown, New York
nominated by *The Middleburgh Telephone Company*

Megan Sjostrom, Minnesota
nominated by *Winthrop Telephone Company*

Maxwell Meadows, New York
nominated by *The Middleburgh Telephone Company*

Alternates
Caitlin Adorni, Montana
nominated by *Mid-Rivers Cooperative*

Aaron Maus, Montana
nominated by *Mid-Rivers Cooperative*

Laurelee Holmes, Kansas
nominated by *Rural Telephone Service Company, Inc.*

Kristy Stevenson, Kansas
nominated by *Pioneer Communications*



The students arrived in Washington, DC on Sunday, March 18, 2007 and were quickly initiated into the fast paced life that the city has to offer.



On Monday, students participated in a live discussion with soldiers who were currently stationed in Iraq. The panelists were video conferencing live from the Green Zone. The students then had lunch with FRED and NECA staff, followed by an advocacy meeting in the OPASTCO office.



On Tuesday, students headed to the U.S. Department of State for a seminar on U.S. Foreign Policy. Following the seminar, they headed to the Embassy of Austria where they learned about the relationship between the U.S. and Austria, plus received a taste of authentic Austria cuisine.



On Wednesday, students departed the hotel early to visit the Floor of the House of Representatives, where Rep. W. Todd Akin, from Missouri. The students then met with the offices of their Representatives and Senators.



On Thursday, the students once again started off their morning with a seminar. Major Robert J. Miceli presented information regarding Challenging the Leaders of Tomorrow. To cap off the evening, they enjoyed the comedic entertainment of the Capitol Steps, a group that takes a humorous look at serious issues while providing a nationwide laugh for millions. Students also had the chance to take in some of the D.C. monuments at night, they visited the Lincoln Memorial Vietnam War Veterans' Memorial Korean War Memorial while under the moonlight.



Friday started with a seminar on “Role of the Judiciary” given by The Honorable Marian Blank Horn, Judge, U.S. Court of Federal Claims. The students then finished up touring through the city by visiting the Smithsonian and Arlington National Cemetery, where representatives participated in the Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns. To round out the day, the students attended the closing banquet where they were entertained with speeches and performances by fellow classmates. Students then danced into the night before having to say goodbye to one another and heading home the following morning.