



Vigilante Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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2022 YOUTH TOUR

Reflections from this year's participants

GAVIN GARRISON

2022 YOUTH TOUR PARTICIPANT

LAST month, I received the opportunity of a lifetime to make the 2022 youth tour trip to Washington, D.C. Our large group of students from across Montana and North Dakota stayed for the week, building relationships and taking a look at some of our nation's most iconic landmarks. We were able to see places like the White House, U.S. Capitol, Naval Academy and even the national archives, which houses the Declaration of Independence. We watched a baseball game and visited the Smithsonian. We were also able to meet some amazing people along the way like Steve Daines, Matt Rosendale and Jon Tester and even see Ted Cruz. While these people and places are all very important to our nation and its success, it was the lessons we learned along the way that are the most important.

After a long walk from the Capitol, we decided to stop and eat at the Reagan Food Court before returning to the rest of our day's activities. I decided to get a sandwich from a small shop at the end of the food court where the line was fairly short. In front of me there was a man attempting to order a steak and cheese

Read about Taryn Martinell's Youth Tour experience inside [/Page 7](#)



Gavin Garrison and Taryn Martinell were the 2022 Youth Tour participants from Vigilante Electric. | **COURTESY PHOTO**

sandwich but it was obvious his English was not great. The cashier started to yell at the man for not having his order ready when it was his turn. When the cashier sent the man to the back of the line to

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Vigilante Safety Roundup Tracker

Participating members: 716

Total Contributions: \$14,427.19

To apply, contact our office at
(800) 221-8271 or 683-2327

An online application is available at www.vec.coop.

GARRISON

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help another customer, I did my best to help him get his order sorted out and I helped him order his food. He then explained that he was from Sweden and was on a family vacation to the United States. He and his five kids and wife lived in a small town filled with local dairies. He hauled freight including livestock, food and industrial supplies for a living, and liked to go camping in his free time. D.C. was definitely a culture shock for the both of us. In his town, everyone knew everyone and we agreed that Montana communities were similar to Sweden in this way. This was when I understood how lucky we are to live where we do. While DC has all sorts of fun things to do, the small-town communities of Montana are irreplaceable. In Dillon we know where our food, water and electricity comes from and the same cannot be said about life in D.C. We have neighbors to call when we need help, and people really do care about each other. While D.C. was definitely a great place to visit, it made me appreciate life in Dillon a lot more.

Another lesson I learned on this trip was how important our representation in government really is. During the trip, we were able to speak to our congressman and senators about the importance of hydropower in



Gavin Garrison stands with Sen. Steve Daines in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda. As part of the Youth Tour, the Montana participants spent a day on Capitol Hill. Not only did they meet with Senator Daines, but met with Sen. Jon Tester and Rep. Matt Rosendale. | COURTESY PHOTO

Montana. Each Montana elected official was very knowledgeable on this topic and happy to support our local electric cooperatives in protecting our power. I was also able to meet many locals in D.C. and other people on visiting trips. They would always ask where we were from and how we were able to go on this trip. I was astonished at how many of them hadn't even heard of an electric cooperative. Many also had no basic knowledge of industries in Montana that are essential, like agriculture. It then struck me how important electing knowledgeable officials in any position is to the success of our state. Laws affecting Montana can be passed by officials from other places who don't understand or represent our state. Our Montana senators and congressman explained to us that much of their job is helping other

elected officials understand Montana's values and how things work before voting.

My favorite place visited on this trip was the United States Marine Corps Museum. It had a tour starting at the creation of the Marine Corps through both world wars, Korea, Vietnam, and the War on Terror. It was impressive to see the commitment that the Marines have had to our country throughout our history. Many had given their lives, and this museum is there to remember their sacrifice. It also had a huge collection of historical firearms, vehicles and weapons that was extremely interesting to see.

In conclusion, our D.C. trip was valuable to each and every student, and taught us more about electric cooperatives, communication, public speaking and government. I was able to meet new people and learn how different parts of our nation are compared to Montana. I would like to thank Vigilante Electric not only for sponsoring me on this trip, but for being such an important part of the Dillon community. Vigilante Electric supplies many of us with power and has an amazing staff. I would also like to thank all of our chaperones and anyone who helped make the trip possible. This was an excellent opportunity to grow and learn, and it has given me many new friends and role models. It truly was an amazing visit. RM

Garrison chosen for Youth Leadership Council

During the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., each state selects an individual to represent their state on the NRECA Youth Leadership Council (YLC). This year, Vigilante Electric Cooperative representative Gavin Garrison was selected to represent the great state of Montana.

Members of the YLC play an important role during NRECA's Annual Meeting. Not only are the YLC members recognized on stage, they have a hands-on experience with virtually every facet of the meeting, including the resolutions process and helping our members communicate with their legislators. Members will also make presentations at their statewide and local cooperative annual meetings.

We would like to congratulate Gavin on his selection and thank him for being an outstanding representative for our organization.



The hallowed grounds of Arlington National Cemetery. | COURTESY PHOTO



Out of hundreds of applicants, electric cooperatives from across Montana chose 26 students to participate in the Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C. The Montana delegation also included five chaperones. | COURTESY PHOTO

TARYN MARTINELL
2022 YOUTH TOUR PARTICIPANT

I received the privilege and honor to represent Vigilante Electric Co-op on an amazing trip to Washington, D.C! I had many favorite sites that we visited but I really enjoyed all of the monuments that each told a special story about why they were placed there and the meaning that they represent. The Arlington National Cemetery was a definite eye opener for me, I never realized how much land it covered until we were walking upon it and still didn't see it all. Speaking of eye openers, I think the people and city itself played a major role in having an impact on me just by how differently people live from day to day. The smoggy, hot, humid air was something I wouldn't strive to live in every-day, but it definitely played a role in experiencing the trip.

We got the opportunity to see so many things, but one of my personal favorites was the Gettysburg Museum and battlefield. While touring the museum, I got to see a giant oil painting that was a re-enactment of the battle. I know how hard art can be, and for that painting to be done 100 years ago with such immaculate detail was amazing and left an impression on me! The battlefield was away from the city so the air was clean, and it gave a sense of home but we also experienced what it was like to be in the battle, which gave me a better understanding and connection of how the battle took place.

I will have to say that my most favorite part of the trip was getting to meet new friends and all of the memories that we made that I will cherish forever. I know that I will



A painting of the Battle of Gettysburg found in the Gettysburg Museum. | PHOTO COURTESY OF TARYN MARTINELL

run into these friends along other life adventures and have those connections that will last a lifetime! I would encourage any youth that are eligible to apply for this trip. It truly is an experience of a lifetime and definitely had an impact on my life. I am so thankful for getting the opportunity and would like to extend a huge thank you to Vigilante Electric for making it possible. REM

Congrats to Ella Begger

W^E would like to congratulate Ella Begger, daughter of Vigilante Electric lineman Clint Begger, on winning the pole-bending title at the Montana State High School Rodeo Finals this June in Great Falls.

Clint commented that, “Ella loves what she does; she is committed to the sport and works very hard at it.”

It is easy to tell that Clint is one proud papa, and that he and his wife Jada are committed to the success of their kids. The fall spring high school rodeo season represent about four and a half months in which the family is traveling almost every weekend.

Ella will next compete in the National High School Rodeo finals in Gillette, Wyoming. We wish her the best of luck, and continued safe travels for the Begger family. RM



Nate Thompson joins the Vigilante family

V^IGILANTE Electric Cooperative would like to take this opportunity to introduce our newest employee, Nate Thompson.

Nate is a native Montanan, having spent his early days in Wibaux before his family moved to Columbia Falls, where he graduated high school.

However, Nate’s family ties to southwestern Montana run deep. According to Nate, “My wife, parents, grandparents, etc., are all from Butte. My dad graduated from the Western with a teaching degree. I grew up hunting and fishing around Melrose, because that is where my dad hunted and fished when he was growing up.”

Nate went to Montana Tech, where he played football and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering. He is now a licensed professional engineer and will be working out of our Dillon office.

Nate’s family includes his wife, Hailey, daughter Quinn and dogs Wilson and Browning. Nate states that he enjoys many activities, but most of his free time now goes to “trying to wear out my little girl and the dogs.”

We would like to welcome Nate to our organization and look forward to a long, productive relationship. RM



Safety demos bring electrical hazards to life

IN 2019, Vigilante Electric built a high voltage safety trailer to help us demonstrate the dangers of high voltage electricity in an environment that we control. Our goal is to do these demonstrations in front of as many people as possible, and we are always looking for more opportunities to present this information.

The trailer is a model of a single-phase overhead distribution system. There are real poles, real wires and the same components that you would see on our system. We also use the same voltage (7,200 volts) that is used in the field.

Over the course of the demonstration, our linemen explain how our system works and go through different scenarios that can lead to harm, such as flying a kite near power lines or climbing a tree that has grown around power lines. They also discuss the dangers of moving irrigation hand



line near power lines, and what to do if you are in a car wreck that involves a power line.

While all of this could be explained in a classroom setting, the demonstration brings it to life. You see what an electrical arc looks and sounds like, and smell a burning tire that has been ignited by the arc.

Part of the demonstration involves passing arcs through various food items like hotdogs, grapefruit, and pineapples. After we have run some electricity through these items, our linemen cut them open so spectators can see how the electricity tracks through it and feel the residual heat created by the arc. Spectators then get to ask questions and may try on and handle some of the personal protective gear used by our linemen if they wish.

This trailer is the perfect instrument for learning. Kids especially absorb information presented in this manner. We have participated in this type of demonstration for years and the main reaction that we get is, “WOW.” If you are part of a civic organization, first responder group, or school, and would like to have a safety demonstration for your group, please give us a call. RM