

# Youth Tour Provides Road to Self-Discovery



## MESSAGE FROM GENERAL MANAGER CLINT GARDNER

**FOR MANY TEENS, THE GOVERNMENT-IN-Action Youth Tour is full of firsts. It may be the first time they leave the state, fly on a plane, visit the nation's capital or travel away from their families for an extended period of time. They will see and experience the larger world through their own eyes, rather than through their**

**nation's capital, where they learn about the country and the world by visiting museums, monuments, memorials and more.**

The program has grown exponentially since its inception; last year's tour saw more than 1,800 high school students participate from co-ops in 46 states. Texas sent a delegation of 147 students.

Youth Tour is one of the most important programs that Coleman County Electric Cooperative undertakes. I am consistently impressed by the caliber of students that our co-op sponsors.

The week is interspersed with visits to important D.C. sites, including Capitol Hill. Activities with Youth Tour delegations from across the country enable teens to meet a broad spectrum of co-op kids. The program creates a safe space for teens to discover the adults they are striving to be. Teens leave behind their hometown identities and venture forward with a fresh slate. Students are encouraged to stretch themselves by talking to people they ordinarily wouldn't.

A highlight of Youth Tour is a meeting with congressional delegates. Teens learn firsthand that their elected officials work for their hometown communities. Students often have the opportunity to discuss issues with legislators, and our chaperones always are impressed with the interactions and questions asked by our students.

Youth Tour culminates in a farewell evening that centers on challenging and inspiring teens to go forward from the tour and make an impact in their communities. As conversations evolve, so do the teens' worldviews. Their definition of "community" often changes from their hometown to a broader meaning.

I can say that nearly all teens who have participated in our Youth Tour program look back with fond memories of an educational, interesting and eventful week. Many make lifelong friends. For a few, Youth Tour is a transformational experience. Parents often remark how their children return noticeably different—more mature, more confident, with bigger goals and aspirations; they have a sense of purpose.

Our teens are our future, and it's looking brighter every day. I hope you will consider urging your teen to "take the leap" by applying for the next Youth Tour delegation.

For more information about Youth Tour, visit [colemanelectric.org](http://colemanelectric.org).

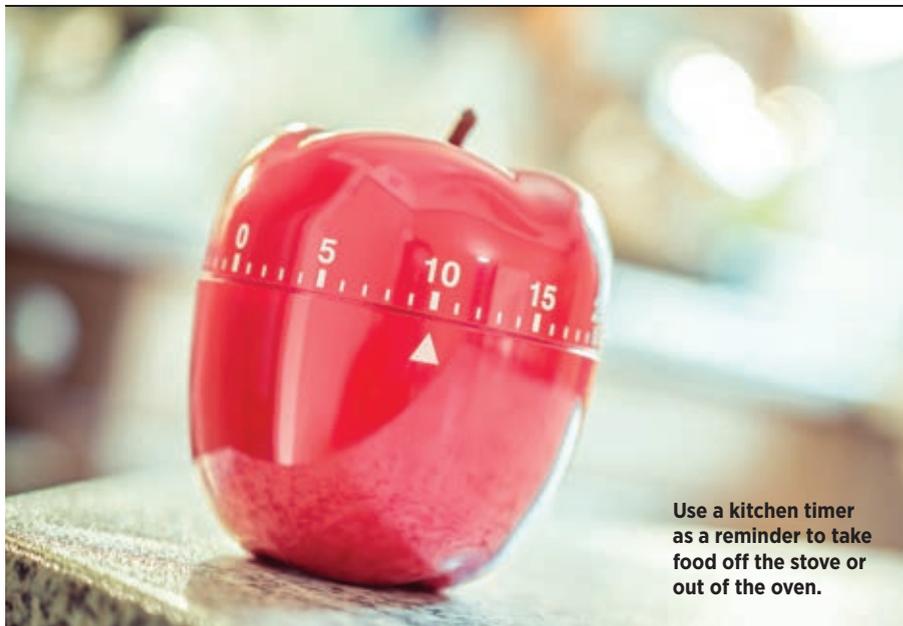


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parents' perspectives—that's the most important first, as it's truly a leap to their next phase, where their journey to adulthood begins.

In preparation for Youth Tour, teens learn about cooperatives, our history and grassroots advocacy. Youth Tour sprang from a suggestion of then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson to a national gathering of co-ops. Johnson believed youths from rural areas would benefit from visiting Washington, D.C., to see firsthand how government works and gain a wider perspective through the experience.

From this idea, Youth Tour formed. Every year, high school students from around the country are selected by their respective electric co-ops to participate in a weeklong trip to the



Use a kitchen timer as a reminder to take food off the stove or out of the oven.

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# Cold Weather Safety

**IN COLDER WEATHER, A RISE IN ELECTRICAL APPLIANCE USE INCREASES THE OCCURRENCE** of electrical fires, electrocutions, carbon monoxide poisoning and other weather-related injuries. Keep in mind the following tips to stay safe.

## Heating the House

Space heaters are a common way to keep warm, but they require caution and close attention for safe use. Read manufacturer’s instructions and warning labels carefully. Inspect the cord for cracked plugs or loose connections. Don’t let pets or children play close to the unit, and turn it off when you’re leaving the room or going to sleep.

Keep heaters on level, flat surfaces at least 3 feet away from anything flammable, including papers, clothing, bedding and rugs. Place heaters out of high-traffic areas and doorways where they could trip passersby. Plug a heater directly into a wall outlet with no other electrical devices, and always unplug and safely store it after use.

## In the Bedroom

Electric blankets and heating pads often are used for supplemental heat. Look for charred or frayed spots on their surfaces, or cracks or frays in the electric cords. Never fold or tuck in an electric blanket and do not allow anything to rest on top of it—including other blankets or pets—when in use.

## In the Kitchen

Cooking fires and electric shock also are common during winter months. Never cook if you’re sleepy or have been drinking alcohol. Use a timer to remind you to check on food on the stove or in the oven. Double-check that oven burners and appliances are off once you are done cooking. Use outlets protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters for countertop appliances, especially near water.

## In Case of Outage

Portable generators are used often after winter storm-related power outages. Be sure to locate your generator outside, away from windows and doors. Install carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area; test the alarms monthly; and replace batteries at least annually.



## Coleman County Electric Cooperative

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*Operating in Brown, Callahan, Coke, Coleman, Concho, Runnels, Taylor and Tom Green counties*

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### FIND US ON THE WEB

**colemanelectric.org**



## Power Tip

Turn off outdoor lighting during daylight hours when it’s not needed. If you can, replace existing outdoor lights with solar-powered options for even greater savings.

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