



La Plata Electric Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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# NEWS

## **Area high school students to visit Washington DC courtesy of LPEA** *Juniors Chloe Ciotti, Chandler Jackson, Regan Richardson and Becca Schaldach selected*

DURANGO, Colo. – Area high school students Chloe Ciotti and Rebecca (Becca) Schaldach of Durango, Chandler Jackson of Bayfield, and Regan Richardson of Pagosa Springs have been selected to represent La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) as part of the National Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington D.C. scheduled for June 12-18, 2015.

“This trip is a tremendous opportunity for our area juniors,” said Mike Dreyspring, LPEA CEO. “Our communities, as well as the country and the world are facing many challenges in the energy arena, and the industry is changing, so it’s important that our next generation gain an understanding about energy policy development at the federal level. We are pleased to be able to further that education.”

Students completed an application and penned a 500-word essay covering an aspect of the electric industry of their choosing. Excerpts of the winning students’ essays are included below.

LPEA’s student representatives will join juniors from the cooperative’s sister electric co-ops across Colorado for this once-in-a-lifetime experience. The schedule includes an intimate look at the nation’s capitol and the government from the inside, including discussion of current concerns with national and state Congressional representatives. Tours of Washington D.C.’s monuments and museums, plus social activities, are also part of the agenda.

In her essay, Durango High School junior Chloe Ciotti, addressed the need for solar energy: “The electricity industries are managing to change the course of energy distribution. Not only are there now solar panels available for houses or businesses, the energy generated from the solar panels is transmitted back to the grid and the families get that money deducted... Without renewable resources, not having fossil fuels will inevitably cause us to live in darkness once again.”

Chandler Jackson, a junior at Bayfield High School addressed wind as a renewable resource: “Wind turbines are innovative structures that make use of an abundant natural resource, wind, to produce electricity. It’s environmentally friendly, and reasonably inexpensive. Wind power technology was a major development in the electric utility industry, and will become a significant and integral source of electricity production in years to come.”

Pagosa Springs High School junior Regan Richardson reviewed the evolution and importance of the discovery of electricity: “Many people think that Benjamin Franklin discovered electricity when he flew his kite in a thunderstorm. This story is the first account of electricity in 1752. But, in 1800, Alessandro Volta, an Italian physicist, discovered that particular chemical reactions could produce electricity. He later invented a type of electric battery that produced a steady current. He was the first to harness and create a steady electric flow. His name is where we get the word voltage from.”

The importance of electricity was discussed by junior Becca Schaldach of Animas High School: “Due to Durango’s cold winters and geographic isolation, dependence on electricity shows no sign of slowing down. As we increasingly turn to technology, electricity becomes even more essential. Aside from simply heating our homes and lighting our communities, electricity fosters modern society. It now powers cars, transmits signals from other planets, gives the world unlimited access to information, and is essentially the basis for our lifestyle.”

The opportunity to participate in the D.C. Youth Tour is open to all current high school juniors, including home-schooled students, who receive their electric power from La Plata Electric Association. LPEA annually underwrites the cost of the trip for up to four students within its service territory – one from each school district. No applications for the 2015 trip were received from Ignacio.

Applications for the 2016 Washington D.C. Youth Tour will be available in November 2015 at LPEA’s offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs, through area high school counselors, or on the web, [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).

LPEA, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative established in 1939, provides to its more than 30,000 members, with in excess of 42,000 meters, safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost, while being environmentally responsible.

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