

Sanders makes memories during Youth Tour



Mike Schlappi, four-time Paralympic medalist who was a keynote speaker during Youth Tour, visits with **Hunter Sanders**.

Last June, Hunter Sanders, a senior at Savage High School, had the opportunity to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. This weeklong experience gives the students the opportunity to see their nation's capital, learn about the lawmaking process and interact with the Montana congressional delegation. It also helps them better understand American history and the role electric cooperatives have and continue to play in shaping

rural America.

One of the highlights during the Youth Tour for Hunter was the opportunity to meet new people from across the country, all while enjoying the sites and educational tours.

"I brought home with me not only many great memories, but we also traded state pins with other students, and I was able to collect almost 30 different states," Hunter says.

The most impactful place Hunter visited while on the Youth Tour was the Holocaust Memorial Museum.

"The information and how they displayed the Holocaust made it gut-wrenching," Hunter says.

His favorite memory from the trip was the giant dance with all the other states in attendance.

"I'm not much of a dancer or at least I wasn't until then," he says.

"I want to recognize the chaperones who watched over us throughout the trip. They made every moment something to remember, and it wouldn't have been the same without them. I would like to thank Lower Yellowstone Electric for giving me the opportunity to participate in this experience. The friends I met and the things I was able to do were a once-in-a-lifetime experience," Hunter says.

Hunter was one of the 32 students from Montana who attended the 2024 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has brought high school students to Washington, D.C., for over 60 years. The Youth Tour is a powerful example of how programs like these can inspire the next generation of leaders. ■

Need heating assistance?

If you are having difficulty paying your heating bill, there is help. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is accepting applications. This program helps with heating bills through the winter months.

Eligibility is based on household income and resources. If you reside in Montana, you can contact Energy Share at 800-227-0703. If you live in North Dakota, you can contact Community Action at 701-572-8191. You may also download an application at www.lyrec.coop or call Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative for more information. ■



Cybersecurity tips for a safer digital world

Did you know the average household with internet access owns about 17 connected devices? That figure covers a wide range of electronics, including smartphones, computers, streaming devices, smart speakers, home assistants and more. Given our increasing reliance on internet-connected technologies, the likelihood of new cyber threats is ever-present.

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative is deeply committed to ensuring our local system is safe and secure. We routinely monitor and manage cyber risks, and we work together with other co-ops to share the latest advancements in cybersecurity measures that make us stronger. But you can help, too.

When we all work together to stay safe online, we lower the risk of cyber threats to our systems, online accounts and sensitive data.

October is National Cybersecurity Month. While good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round, we'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips to help you bolster your online safety.

- **Learn how to spot and report phishing attempts.**

Phishing occurs when criminals use phony emails, direct messages or other types of digital communications that lure you to click a bad link or download a malicious attachment. If you receive a suspicious email or message that includes urgent language, offers that seem too good to be true, generic greetings, poor grammar or an unusual sender address, it could be a phishing attempt. If you spot one, report it as soon as possible, and

don't forget to block the sender. (If you receive a suspicious work email, report it to the appropriate IT contact. Suspicious messages delivered to your personal email or social media accounts can also be reported.)

- **Create strong, unique passwords.** When it comes to passwords, remember length trumps complexity. Strong passwords contain at least 12 characters and include a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Create unique passwords for each online account you manage and use phrases you can easily remember.
- **Enable multi-factor authentication when available.** Multi-factor authentication (also known as two-factor authentication) adds an extra layer of security to your online accounts. These extra security steps can include facial recognition, fingerprint access or one-time codes sent to your email or phone.
- **Update software regularly.** Software and internet-connected devices, including personal computers, smartphones and tablets, should always be current on updates to reduce the risk of infection from ransomware and malware. When possible, configure devices to automatically update or notify you when an update is available.

Let's all do our part to stay cyber smart and create a safer digital world for all. Visit www.staysafeonline.org to learn about additional cybersecurity tips. ■

Be fire-prevention smart: Don't get burned!

Electricity makes life easier by powering appliances, gadgets and electronics we use for entertainment. However, that same electricity contains the potential to destroy homes and take lives. Electric fires are more destructive than any other type of fire, and they are twice as deadly.

Check out the following tips to help you keep your electric system safe.

- Consider getting an electrical inspection of your home, especially if it is an older home or if you have never had an inspection.
- If an electrical fire starts in your home, do not use water to extinguish it. Water conducts electricity, and you could get an electric shock. Use an extinguisher approved for use on electric fires.
- Flickering lights and warm, cracked or sparking outlets all indicate electrical problems.
- If circuits trip, fuses blow or someone gets a shock,

your home has an electrical problem. Get an electrical inspection.

- Do not overload outlets, use an extension cord as a permanent wiring solution or use light bulbs that are not rated for the socket.
- Contact an electrician about installing an arc-fault circuit interrupter (AFCI). An AFCI monitors the flow of electricity in your home. If the flow of electricity is irregular and could cause a fire, the AFCI shuts off electricity. An AFCI costs around \$35, plus the cost of a professional installation. The cost also depends on the size of your home and how many circuit breakers you have.
- Inspect electric plugs and cords annually. If they are frayed or cracked, repair or replace them. Do not place cords under rugs, or staple or nail them to a wall. ■

APPLY FOR A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

WHAT IS YOUTH TOUR?

- All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. paid for by Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative.
- A week of visiting historic monuments, meeting elected officials and learning about cooperatives.
- Developing lifelong friendships from across the country.



JUNE 14-21, 2025

AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

ESSAY QUESTION

What was the most important event to have occurred in our nation during your lifetime? How did it affect you?

HOW TO APPLY

- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school, and your parent or guardian must be served by Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative.
- Email entries to scholarships@lyrec.coop or mail to: LYREC, P.O. Box 1047, Sidney, MT 59270.
- The deadline is Dec. 2, 2024.

LEARN MORE AT LYREC.COM

Rau school enhances learning environment

The Rau Elementary School recently completed a major upgrade by replacing the old fluorescent lighting with light-emitting diode (LED) lighting, thanks to funding from Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) through Universal Systems Benefits (USB) funds. This initiative marks a significant step toward improving energy efficiency, reducing operational costs and enhancing the overall learning environment for students.

The Rau School has been committed to providing a safe and conducive learning environment for its students. However, the aging fluorescent lighting system was not only inefficient, but also costly to maintain. Recognizing the need for a modern, energy-efficient solution, the school administration applied for the funding from LYREC, which offers USB funds to support community energy efficiency projects.

USB funds are allocated by electric cooperatives to support projects that benefit public institutions, including schools, by improving energy efficiency and reducing environmental impact. The Rau School was awarded \$17,992 from these funds, enabling



Prairie Electric installs new LED lights in the gym at the Rau school, thanks to funding from Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative through Universal Systems Benefits funds.

the school to replace all its old lights with LEDs.

The successful completion of the LED lighting upgrade at the Rau School exemplifies how strategic investments in energy efficiency can lead to substantial benefits to the school. The school has not only enhanced its learning environment, but also set a positive example of sustainability in the community. ■



Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative purchased a steer from **Greyson Gordier** and a goat from **Cayla Hanson** at the Richland County 4-H sale.



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