

MORE THAN A TOUR: A JOURNEY OF LEARNING, LEADERSHIP AND LASTING MEMORIES

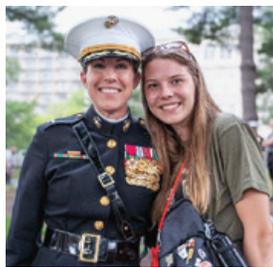
Beltrami Electric's Youth Tour participant reflects on a once-in-a-lifetime experience



I am very grateful for this opportunity that Beltrami Electric Cooperative granted me. Throughout the trip, I learned about different cultures, electric cooperatives and the system of our government. I was able to have the pleasure of meeting people from all over the U.S and connecting with them!

One of my favorite parts of the trip was pin trading. Youth Tour students were given pins representing their state for the trip. Whether it was the nights all of the youth met up or when we passed another Youth Tour group from a different state on the road, we would trade pins while exchanging our names and home state. This was a super fun way to meet new people, learn about different regions of the U.S., and also take home life-lasting memories and souvenirs. I met a lot of people I still stay in contact with today from pin trading! I now have friends in Texas (because

WOW, they had a big group!), but I also met people from Hawaii, New Mexico, even Alaska! Pin trading was more than just a few words exchanged (and a hard decision if you wanted to keep the California pin or trade it for Colorado); it was about making connections and getting out of your comfort zone.



Another fond memory I have is the Military Parade, which I believe everybody should go see at some point! I knew the Marines were intense in their camps and their program; however, I had no idea they were intense when it comes to music, too! Many groups gathered around to see the parade, so before the parade, we were able to interact with each other and trade pins! When the show started, everyone settled down to watch the magic happen. Towards the end of the parade, I was talking to one of our chaperones brainstorming interesting questions to ask the Marines, like, "Are the shoes uncomfortable?" and "How long does it take the soldiers to master the walk?" After the chaperone and I finally worked up the courage to speak to one of the Marines nearby, we ended up talking to the Commanding Officer! While she did offer us the answers to our questions, she also spoke to us about her role as a CO and how her journey to that position and title worked.

I am very thankful for Beltrami Electric for providing me with this trip and opportunity. This experience provided me with the chance to learn about our nation's capitol, speak to people about electric cooperatives and their role in our everyday lives, meet with the Minnesota Senators (Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith), learn the skill of networking, and make life-long memories and friends. – Anika Harmsen



WELCOME SHAWN O'BRIEN, APPRENTICE LINeworker



BEC is pleased to welcome Shawn O'Brien as our new apprentice lineworker. A familiar face to many, Shawn worked as a seasonal apprentice with BEC in 2024 before accepting the full-time position. Shawn grew up in Tenstrike and is a graduate of Blackduck High School. He went on to earn his Associate of Applied Science degree in Electrical Lineworker Technology from Minnesota State Community and Technical College in Wadena. He brings two years of experience from his time with Legacy Power Line and is excited to continue his career close to home. He currently lives in Blackduck and outside of work, Shawn enjoys fishing and playing cornhole. Please join us in welcoming Shawn to the BEC team!

AYLA KRANZ NAMED CO-OP RISING STAR



Beltrami Electric's own Ayla Kranz, business development coordinator, has been named one of Rural Electric Magazine's 2025 Co-op Rising Stars, an honor recognizing 20 emerging leaders across the nation's electric cooperatives. Kranz began her career at BEC in 2015 as a receptionist and member services representative, where she quickly earned a reputation for her approachable demeanor, strong work ethic and genuine commitment to serving others. Today, she continues that legacy by building strong relationships with both residential and commercial members, as well as local contractors, helping them connect to cooperative programs. Her work includes launching the co-op's first member focus group, organizing BEC's annual electric vehicle show and representing BEC as a Bemidji Chamber of Commerce ambassador. Certified as a key accounts executive, Kranz plays a vital role in strengthening the co-op's presence in the community. "Ayla brings energy, insight and a strong sense of purpose to every conversation and connection she makes," says Bob Gregg, business development manager. "She is truly a rising star." To read more about the 2025 Co-op Rising Stars and view the full list of honorees, please scan this QR code.

