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BASS

*earns national title
and serves as
state ambassador*



Bass was announced as Mississippi's Youth Leadership Council member at the 2018 Youth Leadership workshop in Jackson. He is pictured receiving an award from Ron Stewart, senior vice president of communications, Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi.

By Elissa Fulton

The Youth Leadership Program is an opportunity that Central Electric Power Association is proud to offer high school juniors each year. Coordinated by the Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi (ECM), this statewide program is sponsored by 20 participating electric cooperatives across Mississippi. It is also a part of a national network of 42 other participating states. The participants selected to go through this program are exemplary students who excel in academics, extracurricular activities and community service.

Central Electric opens up the application process to schools in the service area each September. Information is sent to the high schools and interested students who meet the qualifications can apply to be



Bass represented Central Electric Power Association at the annual workshop. He is pictured with his peers from representing the cooperative. From left: Allyson Crocker, Alana Patterson, Arrow Scott, Wallace Bass, Sarah Burns, Gabby Caldwell, Courtney Gill and Brian Pace.

interviewed with industry representatives at Central Electric's headquarters office in Carthage in mid-October. After interviews, the participants selected attend a three-day workshop in Jackson in February and a seven-day Youth Tour of Washington, D.C., in June.

This year, students from across Mississippi were selected and participated in the Youth Leadership Program. These students also have the opportunity to apply for financial scholarships as program participants.

Ten students are selected at the workshop in Jackson to win one of three scholarships. The student who comes in first place has the distinct honor to represent Mississippi for a year-long term on the national Youth Leadership Council (YLC). During the 2018 Youth Leadership Workshop in Jackson, Wallace Bass, a senior at Leake County High School, was proudly selected as Mississippi's YLC. Bass went on to represent Mississippi on the Youth Tour in

Washington, D.C., in June 2018. He returned to Washington, D.C., in July 2018 to attend the YLC Conference coordinated by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), where he competed for and was named the National Youth Spokesperson for cooperatives nationwide.

As part of his YLC responsibilities, Bass attended the ECM Annual Meeting in Biloxi, Miss., in September 2018, and the NRECA Annual Meeting in Orlando, Fla., in March 2019. He will also return to Washington, D.C., this summer to speak to the 2019 Youth Tour participants as well as act as an NRECA student ambassador for the week.

Bass has achieved much praise nationwide for his representation of electric cooperatives, and we wanted to share his year-long – and impressive – experience with our members and readers.

★ 2018 Central Electric interview, Central Electric Office, Carthage

On October 22, 2018, Bass arrived at Central Electric's office not knowing what would be in store for him over the next year. He had some idea of what the program would entail, as his older brother had interviewed and earned a spot in the 2016 program.

"I was nervous when I interviewed at Central," said Bass. "I was excited at the same time, because I knew what the program had to offer because of my brother. I really was just hoping I would have the opportunity to experience it. The interview process went well, so I was confident; but when I got the call that I had made it, I was totally overwhelmed."

Bass decided to take the next step and apply for the Youth Leadership Council, which required him to write an essay and interview for a second time in Jackson.

★ 2018 Youth Leadership Workshop, Jackson

The Youth Leadership Workshop is a three-day youth conference designed to enhance the students' already present leadership abilities. They are able to visit one-on-one with Mississippi's legislators,



Central Electric's representatives had breakfast with Rep. Scott Bounds at the 2018 workshop before visiting the Mississippi State Capitol.

participate in team-building exercises and listen to motivational and encouraging speakers, including Gov. Phil Bryant and Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves, who are always supportive of the program.

"The workshop in Jackson was amazing," Bass said. "I was able to meet so many people and it was a great experience. I had been accustomed to meeting new people, but no club in school can compare to this experience. You meet all types of people from different parts of Mississippi. We all keep in touch every single day and still meet up from time-to-time."

It was in Jackson that Bass interviewed for the scholarship opportunities and the chance to be named Mississippi's YLC. He competed against nine other participants who were also selected to interview based on their participation throughout the workshop. The judges were industry professionals from ECM, Cooperative Energy and Tennessee Valley Authority.

During the award ceremony at the end of the program, the 10 finalists were announced, the two runners-up were revealed and Bass was named the 2018 YLC. Along with this prestigious honor, he will receive a \$1,000 scholarship that will be awarded during his high school Senior Awards evening May 13.

"I knew my interview went well, but when I first heard my name called I was shocked," said Bass. "I wanted to cry, but I was able to remain cool and calm. It was a wonderful feeling, and I immediately began giving thanks to God. It gave me a different type of confidence than I had ever experienced. I knew I could do anything!"

★ 2018 Youth Tour, Washington, D.C.

In mid-June, the group flew to Washington, D.C.,

to attend the Youth Tour. When Bass arrived at the airport on Saturday, June 9, he was a little nervous, as he had never been on an airplane before. It was all worth it when he arrived in the nation's capital and began experiencing what he calls "one of the best weeks" of his life with 75 of his new best friends.

In addition to visiting historical sites and museums, Wallace's YLC responsibilities also began that week. That Sunday evening, he attended the first meeting along with the other 42 YLC representatives from across the country.

"When I walked in that meeting room, I just immediately felt like everyone there looked really important," he said. "Everyone was on their A-game with their game faces on and I was a little nervous. We were all introducing ourselves and the NRECA representatives gave us the information on the YLC program. We were all strangers at that point. Though we wanted to be friends, we knew we were competing against each other also."

During the Youth Tour's Youth Day rally, Bass



The student representatives visited Washington, D.C., in June 2018 for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. They were given an exclusive tour of the United States Capitol building by Rep. Gregg Harper.

seized the opportunity to introduce himself as Mississippi's representative on stage in front of nearly 1,800 participants on that Monday morning.

Bass soon discovered that he was captivated with our nation's capital, so much so that he began to wonder how he could combine his dream of becoming an engineer with his newfound passion for politics.

"My favorite part of being in D.C. was standing in front of the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue," he said. "Many Americans don't get to say that they even saw the White House, so for me to be able to stand in front of it was incredible. The feeling I got

just inspired me so much and I thought to myself that perhaps I could sit in the Oval Office one day.”

One of Bass’s favorite days on the tour was Capitol Hill Day. Congressman Gregg Harper, while in office then, gave an incredible tour of the historic building, providing students with the opportunity to visit the House floor and the Speaker’s balcony. Each year, this tour is always the highlight of the trip; but for Bass, it struck a personal passion he didn’t realize he had.

“It made me feel like I could be a part of history,” said Bass. “Perhaps I could inspire a monument or a statue. I saw all of these monuments and I was



While on the Youth Tour, Bass was able to visit the White House with his peers. While standing in front of the North Lawn on Pennsylvania Avenue, he was inspired to serve the nation in his future.

learning even more things about the history of our nation. I thought about the roles those individuals played in our history, and I instilled in myself that I want to be a part of that. Being at the Capitol was amazing because some of the greatest leaders of our country were in there and I walked the same hallways and the same steps as some of the greats. It was a feeling of awe.”

Youth Tour was an incredible experience for Bass and the other participants that attended. For most of the students, Youth Tour is the conclusion of the program... but Bass and the other 42 YLC state representatives were just getting started.

★ 2018 Youth Leadership Council Conference, Washington, D.C.

When Wallace returned from Youth Tour, he had only four weeks to prepare a stand-out speech about his experience that he would deliver in July at the YLC Conference in front of his YLC peers and NRECA representatives. Ultimately, the content and delivery of this presentation could earn the title of NRECA’s YLC.

“I began preparing my speech as soon as I got home from Youth Tour,” he said. “I sat down and I

had a clean slate, but it wouldn’t come to me. I enlisted the help of my mom, my brother and my grandmother, who is a retired English teacher. I told my mom I wanted to win and she told me to pray and that God would give it to me. I prayed for the perfect speech and nothing would come. One morning at 4 a.m., I had not been to bed and I was frustrated and I was crying and all of a sudden out of nowhere, it came to me and I just started typing. When I finally finished and read over it, I was totally amazed and just began thanking God. I knew I had something good.”

Bass did his research on the history of electric cooperatives and the history of the Youth Tour program and he tied it all in with his own journey, giving him what he hoped was a dynamic speech. When he arrived at the YLC conference on July 14, he had memorized his speech and was confident it would set him apart from his competitors.

Bass delivered his powerful and passionate speech on the final day. He wowed the judges with his words. He was proudly named the national spokesperson for the NRECA that day.

“The YLC Conference was an incredible experience,” said Bass. “When they called my name as the winner, I think I jumped in the air. It was just truly amazing.”

The conference lasted for five days. The YLCs were also able to visit the NRECA headquarters office and the Cooperative Finance Corporation in Arlington, Va. “It was fun learning about all the different organizations that work together for the nation’s electric cooperatives,” he said. “There is literally a job for everyone when it comes to co-ops.”

★ ECM Annual Meeting, Biloxi

When Bass triumphantly returned home from the YLC Conference, he had yet another engagement scheduled in September where he would speak to more than 600 industry professionals from the south-east at ECM’s Annual Meeting at the Beau Rivage in Biloxi. Bass and his mother, Tracy, were invited as guests of ECM. On Tuesday, September 11, Wallace delivered an eloquent speech to CEOs, board members and executives.

Somehow Bass managed to write an incredible speech that wove his family history, his life, his aspirations for the future and the history of electric cooperatives all together in one beautiful recollection of what the Youth Leadership Program has meant to him. Bass truly hit a “grand slam” with his speech, and he received many praises from cooperative leaders and most importantly, his mother.

“My mom was incredibly proud of me, and it



Bass is pictured with Central Electric General Manager Brian Long (left), his mother Tracy Bass (center) and Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi CEO Michael Callahan (right). He was presented a \$1,000 scholarship for his outstanding achievements.

meant a lot to me that she was able to see me,” said Bass. “She just kept telling me how proud she was. And of course, I thanked her for all of her sacrifices. I let her know that if it wasn’t for her, I wouldn’t be there at that moment.”

Delivering a speech in front of 600 people was just practice for his final speech.

★ 2019 NRECA Annual Meeting, Orlando, Fla.

On March 9, Bass traveled to Orlando, Fla., for his final YLC obligation. He was tasked with delivering his speech to more than 9,000 cooperative leaders from around the country. For a teenager from Carthage, this was an enormous responsibility that he took very seriously.

As he stepped on the stage, he felt his nerves, but they soon subsided when he began delivering that same powerful speech, which ensued an emphatic standing ovation.

“It’s a feeling I will always remember and I’ll always hold on to,” he said. “It made me feel like a rockstar. It was like nothing I had ever experienced before, and it’s something I want to do forever. I like the attention and speaking, and I want to share that with other people.”

The reaction to Bass’s incredible presentation by industry professionals was overwhelming, and he made a powerful and lasting impact on a lot of people. Beth Knudson, NRECA Youth Tour Director said, “In a program full of stand-outs ... Wallace Bass stands out. When we chose him to deliver the YLC speech at NRECA’s Annual Meeting this year in Orlando, we were confident he would do a great job. However, he surpassed everyone’s expectations and brought down the house. From his incredible speech to his humble and down-to-earth demeanor, Wallace Bass is an exceptional young man. It will continue to be a privilege to watch him shine!”

“Watching Wallace Bass deliver a speech filled with such passion and inspiration was an absolutely

incredible experience,” said Ron Stewart, senior vice president, ECM. “His command of the stage and his message were so spectacular that he brought an audience of nearly 600 people to their feet in applause. It was a moment I’m sure neither he nor I will ever forget!”

★ 2019 Youth Tour, Washington, D.C.

Each year when Youth Tour has concluded, students say how much they would love the opportunity to go back to Washington, D.C. Bass is getting that opportunity again this year when he returns in June as the YLC representative and NRECA Ambassador. He will deliver his now famous speech a final time, and he will have the rare opportunity to look on as the students this year experience what he has over the past year. Bass will soon be passing the torch to the next YLC.

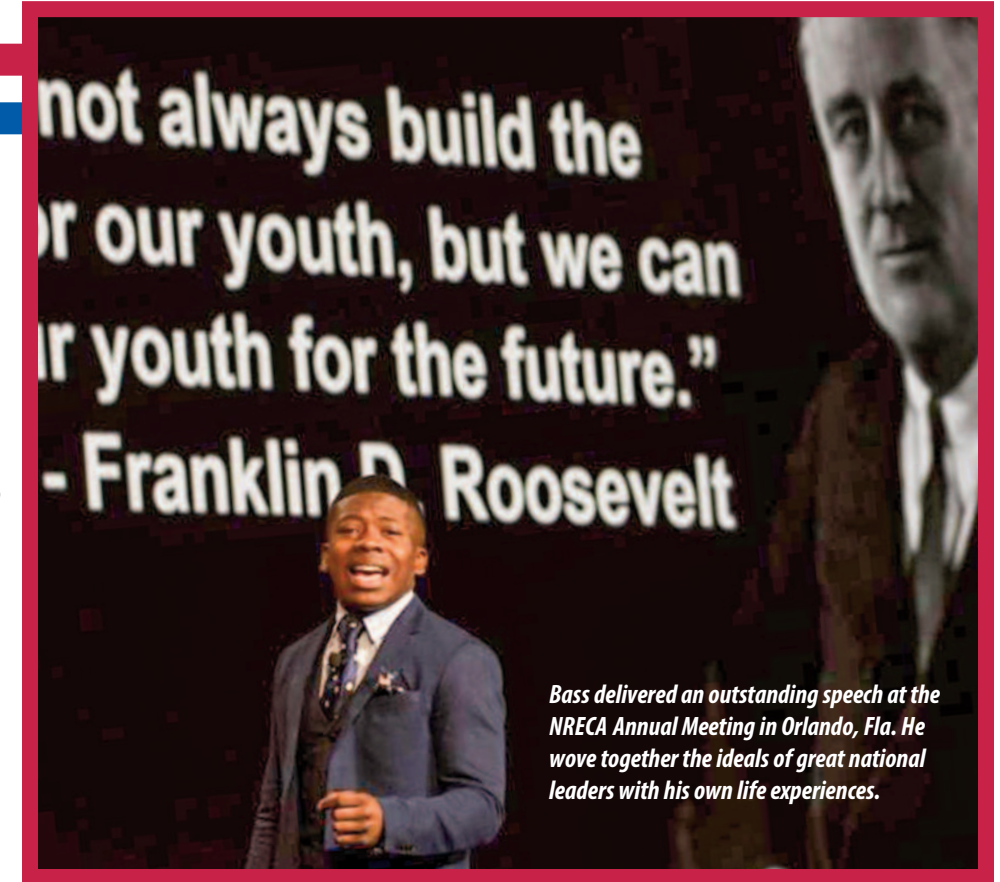
★ Plans for the future

As an exceptional student, Bass has many plans for his future. He will be attending Tuskegee University in the fall, where he will double-major in mechanical engineering and political science. His plans include the Air Force ROTC program and then joining the

U.S. Air Force after college.

“I’m really wanting to take advantage of everything the military has to offer,” he said. “I believe it will help my political ambitions, and I really want to travel. The military will also give me a great start to the engineering aspect of my career.”

When asked to sum up what the Youth Leadership Program has meant to him, Bass said, “Life changing! It has given me a whole new outlook on life. I already had a plan and I knew what I wanted to do, but I didn’t know I would be interested in politics. It showed me that electric cooperatives could be a home for me going forward. This is an incredible opportunity and there are so many other opportunities within this one opportunity. Central Electric, ECM and NRECA are a family to me now. I don’t know what God put in



Bass delivered an outstanding speech at the NRECA Annual Meeting in Orlando, Fla. He wove together the ideals of great national leaders with his own life experiences.

me, but he wants to use me to continue to spread His Word and do good for other people.”

In addition to Bass’s YLC duties, he’s also been active in his school, church and community throughout his high school career. He is also an entrepreneur and started a not-for-profit organization to help the less fortunate in Leake County. The board, management and employees

at Central Electric, ECM and NRECA are so proud of him and more than ever confident in the Youth Leadership Program and what it is doing for our youth.

“Throughout his journey in the Youth Leadership Program, Wallace Bass could not have been a finer representative of Central Electric Power Association of Mississippi,” said Brian Long, Central

Electric general manager. “He is an incredible young man with an incredible future ahead of him. Join me in congratulating him on a job well done!”

For more information on the Youth Leadership Program, contact Jessica Patterson at Central Electric. To watch Wallace’s award-winning speech, visit: <http://www.centralepa.com/youth-leadership>.



Bass gave an award-winning speech to more than 9,000 cooperative leaders in Orlando, Fla. His passion and stage presence brought the crowd to their feet with an overwhelming standing ovation.



Bass represented Mississippi and the nation at the NRECA Annual Meeting. He carried the Mississippi state flag during the welcoming ceremonies.

Safety tips that can save your life

Central Electric Power Associations' top priority is always to provide safe, reliable, affordable energy to our members. Your well-being and that of the larger communities we serve are of paramount concern.

The month of May not only means spring storms and potentially severe weather, it also heralds the beginning of the celebration season for many high school students, especially seniors. Proms, graduation parties and other social gatherings are often associated with this time of year.

While we naturally focus on the sunny aspects this season brings, we also sometimes hear about preventable tragedies involving young people and car accidents. This brings us to the topic at hand: electrical safety.

Does your teen or loved one know what to do in the event of a collision with a utility pole resulting in a downed power line? Do your loved ones know what to do if they come upon an accident with a downed power line? This month, we'd like to share a few safety tips that we hope you never have to use. But if you do, they could save a life.

Life-saving tips

If your car collides with a utility pole, the vehicle may be charged with electricity. Anyone exiting the car could come in contact with thousands of volts of electricity from the downed line. In essence, when you step out of the car, you become part of the electricity's path to the ground and could be electrocuted. It's critical to stay in the vehicle and tell others to do the same until emergency crews have told you it's safe to exit the car. If the vehicle is on fire or you must exit for other safety reasons, jump clear of the vehicle. Do not let any part of your body or clothing touch the vehicle and ground at the same time. Land with your feet together and shuffle away (in small steps with your feet still together) to avoid electric shock. Keep moving away until you are at least 40 feet from the vehicle.

If you come upon a car accident involving a utility

pole and downed power lines, keep your distance. A downed power line can energize the ground up to 35 feet away. While your natural instinct may be to rush to the car to help, instead pause. Do not approach the car or scene of the accident. Tell others to stay away. While you may be concerned about injuries to those involved, the best action you can take is to alert emergency officials, who will in turn coordinate with the power provider. For the same reasons described above, never drive over a downed power line or through water that is touching a downed power line.

If you have a downed power line on your property as a result of a fallen tree, storm or other circumstance, do not go near the power line. Assume that the downed line is energized and dangerous. Never try to move the power line even if you think it's not energized or if you are using a non-conductive material. We recognize that you may be anxious to clear your property of tree limbs or other debris near the downed line, but please wait until after an electric cooperative crew or emergency officials have confirmed that it is safe to do so.

May is Electrical Safety Month

May is a time where we are even more mindful of safety because it is Electrical Safety Month. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured and electrocuted as a result of electrical fires, accidents and electrocution in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable.

We know first-hand how dangerous electricity is because Mississippi's electric cooperatives work with it all day, every day. Safety is more than a catch phrase. We view it as our duty and responsibility to keep cooperative employees safe and to help keep our communities safe.

Contact your us for additional electrical safety tips. It is no accident that safety is our top priority.

Tip of the Month



Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the A/C to run longer than necessary.

Source: energy.gov

May is Electrical Safety Month.
Safety starts with YOU!

#ElectricalSafetyMonth

AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

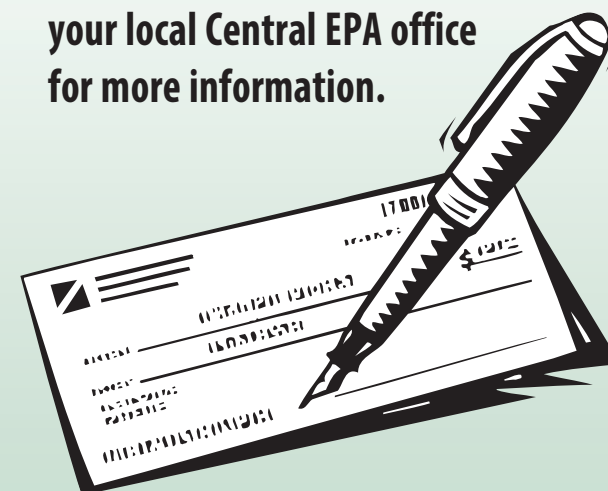
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Your bank can electronically transfer funds to us each month to pay your electric bill. We will mail your bill to you every month as usual, and on your bill's due date we will draft your account. Complete the authorization form and submit to CEPA or call your local Central EPA office for more information.



Authorization agreement for automatic payments

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Name as appears on account _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Primary phone _____

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Financial institution _____

Name as appears on bank account _____

Bank account No. _____

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Routing No. _____

***** **ONLY ONE ACCOUNT PER FORM** *****

I hereby authorize the financial institution named above to pay my monthly electric bill by charging each payment to my account and to make that deduction payable to the order of Central Electric Power Association. I agree that each payment shall be the same as if it were an instrument signed by me. This authority is to remain in effect until revoked by me in writing. In addition, I have the right to stop payment of a charge by timely notification to my financial institution prior to charging my account. I understand, however, that both the financial institution and Central Electric Power Association reserve the right to terminate this plan (or my participation therein).

Signature _____

Date _____

Our business office will be closed

Monday, May 27 in observance of Memorial Day.

Dispatchers will remain on duty and crews will be on call throughout the holiday weekend.

Call 601-267-5671 or 601-267-3043 to report a power outage.

