



Hereford Youth Visit Nation's Capital

NJHA members left Washington, D.C., proud to be Americans and proud to be future leaders of the Hereford breed.

Story by **Amy Cowan**

Photos by **Amy Cowan and Holli Parke**

Hereford youth from across the country experienced the opportunity of a lifetime when they walked in the footsteps of our nation's leaders in Washington, D.C. Eighty-five National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) members visited the nation's capital, July 31-Aug. 2, during the annual Program for Reaching Individuals Determined to Excel (PRIDE) Convention. Hereford youth learned about our country's unique history and got an up close look at the national attractions that portray the stories of America's past.

From the rotunda in the U.S. Capitol to the corridors of the White House, junior members saw where our national leaders work each day to shape the lives of all Americans. During a twilight tour of the national monuments and a visit to the tomb of the unknown soldier and changing of the guard at Arlington Cemetery, NJHA members paid their respects to the nation's war heroes, who fought so hard for our freedom and who continue to stand on the front lines to make America a safer place to live.

"Visiting D.C. was an eye-opening experience for the Hereford youth, exposing them to America's rich history and giving them a chance to remember and honor our nation's forefathers and fallen soldiers who have defended the United States of America," says Chris Stephens, American Hereford Association director of youth activities. "It was especially memorable for them with this being a presidential election year, and touring the White House and Capitol Hill brought the election close to home for our future Hereford leaders."

Retiring NJHA board members related their experiences serving on the board to those experiences of some of America's first leaders. Kara Eschbach, Skiatook, Okla., addressed the group on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial,

reflecting on the steps the junior board had taken during her tenure to put their personal preferences aside and be united on decisions that would better the entire organization.

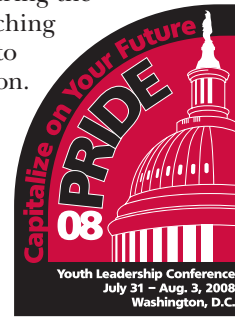
During the conference, the young leaders stayed at the National 4-H Center and enjoyed a leadership seminar and keynote address from Matt and Andrea Lohr, Broadway, Va. The couple used knowledge from their FFA leadership roles and Matt's experiences serving in the Virginia State Legislature to deliver a powerful message to the PRIDE delegation. The Lohrs challenged youth to look for every opportunity to tell the agriculture story, while embracing life with tremendous determination and overcoming whatever obstacles get in the way.

After the tours in Washington, D.C., the group visited local Hereford operations. Mullinix Bros., Woodbine, Md., was the first stop. Gene Mullinix addressed the group, telling them that agriculture is changing, especially on the East coast, and encouraging the young leaders to embrace the changing industry by producing genetics that are efficient in all facets of the beef chain. Mullinix introduced attendees to Kosher Beef, a marketing practice they use on their farm to capture a niche market.

Katelyn Howes, retired NJHA board member, and her family hosted an evening meal and dance for the youth at their Foggy Bottom Farm, Taneytown, Md.

On the final morning of the four-day conference, the NJHA board led a leadership driven vespers ceremony that encouraged the juniors to set goals for their future and to work hard to achieve them.

The week concluded with many new friendships and a deep pride in America that will help to shape the future leaders of the Hereford breed.





From left, Jeremy Workman, Dalton Cleveland and Maurice Workman all of Pottsboro, Texas, get a view of the city from Capitol Hill with the Washington Monument in the background.



Andrea and Matt Lohr, Broadway, Va., shared a captivating message with Hereford youth focusing on leadership and making a difference in the lives of people around them. Andrea told of her battle with breast cancer saying, "even if things change on the outside, you have to remain true to the person you are on the inside." She encouraged the juniors to wake up everyday and to ask themselves how they can live their lives that day to make a difference.



The NJHA board opened the PRIDE Convention with their version of Hollywood Squares, which was a real crowd pleaser as they portrayed Hereford staff and other Hereford celebrities.



Kara Eschbach, retiring NJHA board member from Skiatook, Okla., enjoys getting to know and mentoring the younger junior members during one of the ice-breaker activities.



From left, Ray, Katlyn, Karey and Cyndi Howes, Foggy Bottom Farm, Taneytown, Md., showed the group a wonderful evening of hospitality, complete with a delicious meal and an entertaining evening of dancing and karaoke.



Newman Berrett, Melba, Idaho, traveled all the way across the U.S. to attend his first PRIDE Convention. He met many new friends and can't wait to come back to PRIDE next year.



PRIDE delegation walks to the top of Capitol Hill.



Gene Mullinix, Woodbine, Md., welcomed the PRIDE delegation to Mullinix Bros., and gave some of his perspectives on the beef industry, motivating the junior members to work hard to improve the genetics in their young herds to compete in the changing industry.



From left, NJHA board members: Justin Bacon, Prairie Grove, Ark.; Rossie Blinson, Buies Creek, N.C.; Roxane Gebhart, Claremore, Okla., and Danielle Starr, Manawa, Wis., light a candle and share an inspiring quote in the vespers ceremony that concluded the exciting week in Washington, D.C.



The changing of the guard at the tomb of the unknown soldier was looked on with much respect and admiration from the young Hereford leaders. **HW**

