

June 3, 2011

4-H CITIZENSHIP TRIP PLANS

If everything goes as planned, our 4-H flight to Washington, D.C. left at 6:45 a.m. in the morning of Friday, June 3rd with 54 strong and we are now in the middle of an 11 day trip. Nineteen school age 4-H'ers from Saline, 19 Gage County 4-H'ers and 10 4-H'ers from Jefferson County are on the trip. Paul Hay, myself, and four other adults are sponsors with a bus load of 54.

A new sponsor volunteer, Kyle Steinkuhler, a history teacher at Dorchester High School, will be seeing Washington, D.C. venues for the first time and that has the potential to enrich his classroom in future years. Former Tri-County teacher David Rosenbaum will host our group at the National Archives where he continues to be employed. He reports that visitor and bus traffic are already more than last year, so maybe that means the economy is changing.

The 4-H Discover Washington Trip that we plan ourselves, has been an icon special trip for 4-H'ers in the three counties. Many 4-H'ers in Saline County have worked since sixth grade at the county fair foodstand, Czech Days parade route and food sales to earn their way. Some have earned the total trip cost of the \$1,500 on the 11 day trip. We continue to be active in facilitating activities that help 4-H members raise funds to make the trip more affordable to 4-H families.

Key stops will include Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Gettysburg National Park, Washington, D.C. memorials and museums, Capitol Hill, Mount Vernon, Montpelier, Monticello, Williamsburg, Norfolk Harbor, Virginia Beach, the Military Base at Virginia Beach, Yorktown Battlefield and Jamestown. Evening activities are all planned out to take full advantage of the learning experience.

Past surveys have shown that 98 percent of the participants feel the Discover Washington trip was one of the highlights of their 4-H experience. Most had not been to Washington, D.C. before this trip. As a result of the Discover Washington trip experience, 94 percent of the participants had a better understanding of our nation's history while 87 percent had a better understanding of how our government functions. Seventy-five percent of the participants had a better understanding of their civic responsibility and 69 percent will take more seriously their civic responsibilities. Eighty-two percent of the participants increased their knowledge of government processes. Eighty-one percent of the participants increased their commitment to serve others. Seventy-one percent of the participants felt they were more likely to vote while 59 percent were more likely to take an active role in government in the future.

It will be a great experience for youth from the heartland. I will return back on Tuesday, the 14th, very tired but very happy, if everyone is all back safely.

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