



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pineland Announces FRS Washington Youth Tour Representatives

Eight years ago, Pineland Telephone Cooperative, Inc. joined other rural telecommunications companies across the nation by sponsoring highly recommended students from the Pineland service area to visit Washington, DC during the early summer. Since 1995, FRS has hosted the Youth Tour to thousands of high school students from across rural America, allowing them to visit our nation's capital, see our government in action, and learn about rural telecommunications. The tour provides a forum for teens to meet and interact with their peers from other rural communities, as well as key legislative, regulatory, and government figures.

Pineland is excited to announce that it will sponsor two student representatives for the 2023 FRS Youth Tour - Jaxson Wiggins and Abigail Durden. Jaxson, a sophomore at David Emanuel Academy, is the son of Tadd & Beth Wiggins. Jaxson has committed his time to multiple clubs and organizations including 4-H, Beta Club, and WINGS, is currently a participant of Candler Youth Leadership, and plays on DEA's varsity football, baseball, and tennis teams. Additionally, he is employed at Pine Hollow Nursery and Custom Furniture and has volunteered for multiple community service events. Jaxton is the recipient of the American Citizenship Award and the Academic Excellence Award. His hobbies include hunting and playing outdoor sports.

Abigail, a junior at Metter High School, is the daughter of Dustin and Sherrie Durden. Abigail is the recipient of the 2022-2023 Studio South Dancer of the Year Award and placed first in the 4-H Southeast District Project Achievement Award for Dance. She is a graduate of the 2021-2022 Candler Youth Leadership Class, is a current member of Future Business Leaders of America, Family Career and Community Leaders of America, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and serves as a Senior Board Member for Candler County 4-H. In addition to her academic activities, Abigail participates on the Studio South Dance Competition Team, is an apprentice teacher at Studio South Dance Academy, is a member of Cedar Street Baptist Church Youth, and serves as a babysitter for local families.

"As emerging leaders in our area, Jaxson and Abigail exhibit qualities that Pineland is proud to recognize and award," says Dustin Durden, Chief Executive Officer of the cooperative. "Although we have great events and sites to experience in rural Georgia, the FRS Youth Tour will expose these students to varying opinions, new educational opportunities, and historic venues that many in our service area may not see. We look forward to the accomplishments Jaxson and Abigail will earn over their formidable years."

The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS) was established in 1994 as a non-profit 501(c)(3) by NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association and plays a unique role within the telecommunications industry by supporting rural telecom companies, consumers and policymakers with educational information, products, and programming.

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Pineland serves over 1,300 square miles with its traditional Phone and Internet services in all or parts of ten counties in South Georgia. In its 71st year, 100% of Pineland's Phone and Internet customers receive their services via a dedicated Fiber-to-the-Home network offering Gigabit enabled broadband connections. Pineland's mission is to offer an outstanding customer experience through the efficient delivery of progressive technology solutions in the markets served. We will achieve this mission by applying our Core Values of Excellence, Integrity, Innovation, and a Servant's Heart in everything we do.

The Foundation for Rural Service (FRS), the philanthropic arm of NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association and its members, seeks to sustain and enhance the quality of life in rural America by advancing an understanding of rural issues. Through scholarships, grants, and a variety of educational programs, FRS focuses on educating rural youth, encouraging community development, and introducing policymakers to challenges unique to rural communities. Visit us at www.frs.org.

NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association is the premier association representing nearly 850 independent, community-based telecommunications companies that are leading innovation in rural and small-town America. In an era of transformative technological advancements, regulatory challenges and marketplace competition, NTCA members are leading the technological evolution for rural consumers, delivering robust and high-quality services over future-proof networks that make rural communities vibrant places in which to live and do business. Because of their efforts, rural America is fertile ground for innovation in economic development, e-commerce, health care, agriculture and education, and it contributes billions of dollars to the U.S. economy each year. Visit us at www.ntca.org.



L to R: Jaxson Wiggins and Abigail Durden, 2023 FRS Youth Tour Representatives.

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