

15 Montana students to get close up civics lesson

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Stillwater Mining, Norilsk Nickel partner on student trip to nation's capitol

BILLINGS, Mont. - Fifteen high school students, all children of Stillwater Mining Company employees, will travel to Washington, D.C., on a Close Up Foundation program from March 25-31 to experience U.S. government and policymaking first-hand, Frank McAllister, Stillwater Mining's chief executive officer, announced today. All expenses for the trip were provided by Norilsk Nickel, which made a majority investment in Stillwater almost four years ago.

"This is a unique opportunity for students in Montana to learn close up the importance of civic participation in our political process," McAllister said.

"We are always looking for ways to demonstrate our commitment to the mine and the people of Montana, and we see this as just one more way of doing that," Sergey Chernitsyn, Norilsk Nickel's director of public relations, said.

Russia-based Norilsk Nickel holds a 55.4 percent stake in Stillwater, the sole producer of platinum group metals in the United States. Norilsk's contribution to the U.S. market began with the Stillwater investment, which was the first Russian majority investment in a Western publicly traded company. The Close Up Foundation, the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan citizenship education organization, was founded in 1970 to promote informed civic participation through educational programs and organized tours to Washington, D.C.

The goal of the excursion is to expose students to basic concepts of government and citizenship. In addition to engaging in workshops and discussions with peers and policy analysts, the students will visit memorials and explore D.C.'s neighborhoods and landmarks. The students will spend Thursday, March 29, on Capitol Hill meeting with their senators and representative.

More than 20,000 students, teachers, and others take part in Close Up's programs in Washington, D.C., each year. Since 1971, nearly 650,000 students, educators, and others have participated in Close Up programs.

The students making the trip are: Aubrey Carter, Absarokee High; Daniel Wiemals, Billings Senior High; Kylie Potter, Billings West High; Cameron Ruttenbur, Laurel High; Jessica Cady, Park City High; Kenny Pratten, Reed Point High; Macey McClennen, Big Timber High; Tim Baker and Luke Epperson, Columbus High; Stacy Rieb and Travis Songstad, Joliet High; Hanna Gertiser and Kynsi Berg, Park Senior High; and Chelsea Lynde and Jacob Gavrielides, Red Lodge High.

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