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hotel, ate meals together and toured the various areas of renown inside the District of

Columbia during their multi-day journey.

As only six of eight

sole commissioners currently serving, the men bonded over the course of the trip, sharing



Commissioner Paris with Towns County Sole Commissioner Cliff Bradshaw in front of the White House.

ideas and struggles unique to their elected office.

And though every county in Georgia faces its own population-specific issues, each sole commissioner stands to benefit in forging relationships with his or her peers, especially in an office of such uncommon status.

The group arrived in Washington D.C. on Sunday, Dec. 3, and returned on Wednesday, Dec. 6, and filled all the time in between.

While there, the sole commissioners met with U.S. Reps. Doug Collins and Tom Graves, both from Georgia, and also visited former Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue, who is now the Secretary of Agriculture in the Trump administration.

Unfortunately, the men did not get to meet or see the president, but they did see Vice President Mike Pence up close and personal, as he was a featured speaker in a scheduled meeting for Georgia commissioners.

U.S. Sen. David Perdue, another legislator from Georgia, also spoke to their group,

and the sole commissioners enjoyed hearing from a wide panel of Trump administration officials and department heads that gladly shared their contact information.

“It makes me feel good to know there’s people we can call, and they know who we are when we need help or we expect them to do something for us,” said Bradshaw. “We’ll put them to the test in time as needed.”

Continued Bradshaw: “It was a very, very good learning experience for me, very good contacts that I’ve made and friends that I’ve made, that I’ve got their phone numbers and I can call them at any time.

“If there’s something that comes up that you kind of scratch your head and say, well, I’m really not sure how to handle this, I can call somebody who’s been there before. And it doesn’t mean we’re going to do what they say or what they recommend, but we get more options that way.”

Bradshaw was elected in 2016, and is about to

complete his first full year as sole commissioner of Towns County. Paris has been commissioner since 2000, and is one year into his fifth term as sole commissioner of Union County.

Despite their differences in experience, Paris and Bradshaw understand the other’s job better than others could, including most Georgia commissioners, simply because there are only eight people doing what they do.

“What made it nice that the sole commissioners went together, No. 1, we’ve got a unique governing system that’s a great system that works wonderfully,” said Paris. “The counties that have it love it, and nobody seems to want to change it.

“At the same time, we have a different job description than anybody else in Georgia, because we are the commissioner board and the county manager, all rolled into one. That’s why, when we get together and talk, we have different issues than everybody else does. It’s a big job, but we all love it.”