



# The Alabama FFA REPORTER

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**James Paul Bailey**  
State President

YOUR 2007-2008 STATE FFA PRESIDENT...FROM THE NORTH DISTRICT...MR. JAMES PAUL BAILEY! Wow! Those were words I had wanted to hear my whole life; and on June 8, 2007, I heard them. You see I have been an FFA member since the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, but I have been a part of FFA my whole life. The other day I heard a new acronym for what I am: ATK (Ag. Teacher's Kid). Since I am an ATK, I have dreamed of becoming a state officer for most of my life. What an honor it has been to finally fulfill my dream!

Let me begin by telling you a little bit about myself. I am a senior at Sand Rock High School in Cherokee County (high atop Lookout Mountain). My parents are Barry and Jill Bailey, and I have two brothers: Wiley and Cliff. My interests have and will probably always be in agriculture. I plan to attend Auburn University next fall and pursue a degree in veterinary medicine. Most importantly though, I hope that I will always be found living for my Lord and Savior: Jesus Christ.

This past summer, I was given the amazing opportunity to attend some of the most exciting programs and conferences provided by the FFA! I became friends with some of the coolest students from across the nation.



**The FFA State Presidents' Conference (SPC) was held in Washington, D. C., on July 24-28, 2007. Pictured above are the state presidents and secretaries from the 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands with President George W. Bush during a visit to the White House. The conference is held each year to promote advocacy and begin the delegate process by discussing the issues to be voted on by the delegates to the National FFA Convention in October.**

One of the many highlights of my summer came at the end of July when the State FFA Secretary, Brendon Boyd, and I flew to our nation's capitol to attend SPC (State Presidents' Conference). During that week, we were treated to many pleasurable experiences such as touring the city, attending a Baltimore Orioles/New York Yankees game, and visiting the White House to be addressed by the President of the United States of America. Most importantly, however, we spent the week discussing the National FFA delegate business for the 80<sup>th</sup> Annual National FFA Convention.

I look forward to the following year and the opportunity to meet many of you at various FFA events. It would be my honor to have the opportunity to visit some of your chapters. You may contact me at (256) 484-7474 or by e-mail at [jpbailey@alabamaffa.org](mailto:jpbailey@alabamaffa.org)



**McKenzie Crabtree**  
State Vice President

The week after we were elected as the 2007-2008 Alabama FFA Association's State Officer Team, we met in Montgomery for our first round of training: Building Leaders And Strong Teams Of Officers (BLAST Off). This training was held in conjunction with all of the other career/technical student organizations' state officer teams.

As our first training tools were delivered, along with our degree chains, we

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## STATE OFFICERS 2007-2008

President ..... **James Paul Bailey**  
Sand Rock Chapter  
Vice President ..... **McKenzie Crabtree**  
East Limestone Chapter  
Secretary ..... **Brendon Boyd**  
Marbury Chapter  
Treasurer ..... **Scottie Hunter**  
Billingsley Chapter  
Reporter ..... **Melody Murrell**  
Red Bay Chapter  
Sentinel ..... **Leah Blalock**  
Daphne Chapter



### Staff

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### Alabama Department of Education

State Superintendent... **Joseph B. Morton**  
Deputy Superintendent. **Eddie R. Johnson**  
Career/Tech Director ..... **Sherry A. Key**

grew closer as a team during these vital days. These were the days that could make or break our state FFA officer team. We finally had the opportunity to see the chemistry we have going for us or against us.

The six of us had an opportunity to get to know the other candidates that were running for a state FFA office during the strenuous three days of interviews. The time between interviews allowed some time for friendly chat, but it was difficult to truly get to know another person in such a short period of time. At BLAST OFF,



The State FFA Officer Team pictured with BLAST OFF trainers Alyson Johnson from Alabama, and Wes Crawford from Oregon. The BLAST OFF training was held at the Drury Inn & Suites in Montgomery on June 12-14, 2007.

we found things we liked, disliked, and loved in all of our teammates and began to share that certain closeness that few teams are able to find.

BLAST Off provided us with all of the basics that officers need to have a truly great year. We practiced giving and writing speeches, learned how to effectively manage our time using the Franklin Covey system, and learned a great deal about ourselves. It is surprising how little a person knows about himself/herself until it comes down to crunch time. I have a hard time telling anyone positive or negative things about myself. Our BLAST Off facilitators taught us the importance of knowing ourselves and being able to share who we are to our team so that our team will grow stronger as a whole.

We were pushed to our limits during the BLAST OFF conference. We had to write speeches in 30 minutes, something that usually takes me about three days to complete. We were forced out of our protective shell of shyness. The first five minutes in that room with everyone else to me was the scariest part. I had to step out of my comfort zone and do something I have never done before in public, sing. Granted it was only five minutes that was used for us to introduce ourselves to the room full of our newest friends that we showed our true personalities.

Our team was lucky enough to receive the privilege of being introduced to the other organizations across the state. Their officers did an amazing job of relating back to our team how their specific organization functions and deals with certain situations, which has come in handy over the past couple of months.

The most important thing that we came home with was a better understanding of ourselves. We focused a lot on our strengths and were given all the basics needed to be effective during our year together as a team of officers, to better serve you, the members of our great organization.



**Brendon Boyd**  
State Secretary

Teamwork. When the six Alabama State FFA Officers were elected in early June, we knew that the success of our year in service relied heavily on teamwork. To build teamwork among new teams of state officers, the National FFA Organization hosts the National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSSO) in various states throughout the country.

This year the Alabama team joined the state officers from Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina in Helen, Georgia, for a week-long adventure designed to focus on the year ahead and bring us closer together as teammates. National officers Janette Barnard from Arizona and Coty Back from Kentucky conducted the conference with an enthusiasm and passion for our organization matched by few.

The theme of NLCSSO was the secret recipe, and that's exactly what we found. From learning about conducting more efficient workshops to discussing important agriculture issues in our respective states, this conference gave us a better understanding of the advocate roles we play as state officers. More importantly, through the long hours spent together learning about one another, NLCSSO transformed a group of state officers into a state officer team.



**Scottie Hunter**  
State Treasurer

Greetings Alabama FFA! I am Scottie Hunter, your 2007-2008 Alabama State FFA Treasurer. It is an honor and a privilege to serve you. I hope that you are having a productive year so far, and I

look forward to working with you throughout the year. There have been some issues brought to the attention of the State Officer Team that we would like to address this year. Those issues involve dress at the State FFA Convention.

First is dress during the convention sessions. Please keep in mind that the Alabama State FFA Convention is a time when we all come together from across the state to honor the accomplishments of various students throughout the year. This is a time to be very professional. But, in recent years, this has not been exhibited by the dress of some of the members in attendance. The State Officers and I ask that all students attending the Alabama FFA Convention be dressed professionally. This means that there should be no clothing that is too tight, too short, and/or too revealing. We hope that all students that attend will keep this in mind when packing for this event in the future.

Next is official dress at the Convention. We know that this is a huge feat to accomplish, but the State Officers do not suggest that students should have to wear official dress during the entire convention; however, if they would like to, that is fine as well. We ask that members **do** wear official dress for at least the **first session** of the convention. Just think of how awe-inspiring it would be if, for the first session of the Alabama State FFA Convention, all students were in official dress. This might be asking a lot for some, but I am confident that FFA members of our great state of Alabama can accomplish this.

Finally, the State Officers and I ask that advisors encourage their students who will be in the winners' circle or make a stage appearance at **any session** of the Alabama State FFA Convention to be in official dress. This would show the dedication and pride of all participants and set a standard for how those in the winners' circle or making a stage appearance should be dressed. I ask that you please consider these small requests as you embark on this upcoming year, which I'm sure will be successful. Once again, I look forward to working with each and every one of you this year.



### Melody Murrell State Reporter

On July 6, after learning how to effectively plan and present workshops at NLC SO, the State Officers arrived at the 4-H Center in Columbiana to conduct the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual District Officer Leadership Conference (DOLC). While there for the two-day conference, the State Officers conducted workshops concerning officer duties, parliamentary procedure, team development, Maxwell's five levels of leadership, developing personal mission statements, and communication.

During the officer duties workshop, District Officers learned their specific duties and how they can contribute to the progress of their officer team. They were then taught the basics of parliamentary procedure, which will be useful in their year of service. In the team development workshop, the officers learned the importance of bonding as a team. They also engaged in discussion about some of the difficulties they will face

together during the year. Essential communication skills were taught during the communication workshop, and district officers learned Maxwell's five levels of becoming an effective leader. They also developed a personal mission statement, which will help encourage them during the year as they serve.

The District Officer teams worked together during different activities throughout the weekend to help form bonds to perform as a team. Most of the teams had not gotten to know each other prior to the conference. DOLC gave them the opportunity to spend time together as a team and come up with ideas that they would like to implement throughout the next year. The different officer teams also began planning their Chapter Officer Leadership Workshops (COLWs), at which the district officers teach chapter officers much of what they learned at DOLC.

Not only did the District Officers spend time bonding with their own officer teams during the conference, they also spent the weekend getting to know the other District Officer teams and the state officers. Keeping in contact throughout the year with every district will be vital for the success of the entire state.

This year's DOLC was a wonderful success. We have some great leaders on the district teams. There is a lot in store for the future of our state with students building character and leadership skills during conferences such as DOLC.



The 2007-2008 State FFA Officer Team pictured with National FFA Officers: Coty Back and Janette Barnard during the National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLC SO) in Helen, Georgia, on June 26-30, 2007.



**Leah Blalock  
State Sentinel**

The Alabama FFA Association isn't all about the state officers. Without the help of our district and chapter officers, we would be extremely helpless. But, as state officers, we need a team of knowledgeable officers behind us to make sure things run smoothly, which is where the Chapter Officer Leadership Workshops (COLWs) come in handy.

Our chapter officers are just as important as the state and district officers. They all have the potential to become amazing officers as their year progresses. The purpose of the COLWs is to teach the chapter officers how to smoothly run their chapters, knowledge of parliamentary procedure, teamwork skills, public speaking skills, and leadership skills.

The officers all get together at a location within their district and spend the day working with the district officers as well as the state officers from that district. The day is filled with workshops, ice breakers, and much more.

In my opinion, it was amazing to see how many people are interested in making their chapter to be the best possible. I know how they feel because I've been there. I wanted to know how to make my chapter better and my school didn't attend our district's COLW. I think that going to COLW really opens your eyes on how to efficiently run your chapter. I, as a state officer, learned things from the district officers on leadership and teamwork.

It's great to see that FFA has so many people involved. COLW is just one of the many workshops that we put on throughout the year. Many people have a tendency to forget about the chapter officers and just look to the district and state officers for advice.

Without our chapter officers, none of us would be where we are today. We've all gone through our years as chapter officers. I can say from my perspective that I loved serving as a chapter officer. It is just as much of an honor to serve as a chapter officer as it is serving as state officer.

So, to everyone that came to your district's COLW, I know you walked away with a lot of knowledge

and many new friends. I'm so proud to say that I am a part of your state team because its people like you that keep us in office and get us excited for the year. I look forward to meeting all of you throughout the year and at the convention. Thanks for having such an interest in FFA. I hope you keep pushing towards greater things in this organization!



**Pictured above are the State and District Officers of the Alabama FFA Association attending the District Officers Leadership Conference (DOLC) in Columbiana on July 6 - 7, 2007. DOLC is a leadership development conference conducted by the State FFA Officers each year for the District FFA Officers to enhance their leadership and presentation skills for their year of service to the association and the district they represent.**



**Matt Barton, 2004-2005 State FFA President, will serve as the Alabama FFA Association's National Officer Candidate to the 80th National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 24-27, 2007.**

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