2007 State FFA Convention a Success!

The 78th Annual Alabama FFA Convention was held June 6-8, 2007, on the campus of Auburn University. The opening session began at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, June 6. Mr. Jordan Hamilton, 2005-2006 State President, delivered the invocation. The Past State Officers Alumni recognized the 2007 Wall of Honor recipients. Parliamentary Procedure Career Development Event (CDE) and the Prepared Public Speaking awards were given to the winning teams and/or participants. Gary Claxton, the “Mouth of the South,” was the keynote speaker for this session. He entertained the crowd with his country humor.

The second session began at 7:30 p.m. on June 6. National Chapter Award recipients were recognized along with the Top Five Chapters in the state. The State FFA Officers honored their parents and advisors. William Brandon Smith from the Slocomb Chapter was named as the Future Farmer/Agribusinessman of the Year. His Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) included beef cattle and horses. Joshua Melson from the Danville Chapter was named the recipient of the Mindy Stringer Memorial Scholarship worth $1,000. Jennifer Himburg, National FFA Southern Region Vice President from Ariton, Alabama, addressed the convention. Awards were also presented for the String Band competition. The convention was privileged to hear the sounds of the Enterprise FFA String Band, winner of the 2007 String Band competition.

June 7, at 8:30 a.m., marked the opening of the third session. The Crime Prevention awards were distributed recognizing the top chapters in the state that have crime prevention activities included in their program of activities. Chapters which had...
100 percent chapter membership were also recognized. CDE awards were given for the following areas: Agricultural Construction & Maintenance, Agricultural Mechanics, Creed Speaking, Extemporaneous Speaking, Floriculture, Forestry, Land, Livestock, Nursery & Landscape, Poultry, Safe Tractor Driving, and Small Engines. Proficiency Awards were given for Agricultural Mechanics, Agricultural Sales and/or Service, Beef Production, Diversified Crop Production, Environmental Science and Natural Resources Management, Equine Science, Floriculture, Forest Management, Fruit/Vegetable Production, Landscape Management, Nursery Operations, Poultry Production, Sheep Production, Specialty Animal Production, Swine Production, Turf Grass Management, and Wildlife Management. On Thursday afternoon, students also had an opportunity to attend one of many tours sponsored by the Auburn University College of Agriculture, and six quartets vied for the top awards in that category as well.

The fourth general session began promptly at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 7. This session boasted a keynote address from Dr. Larry Case, National FFA Advisory. Dr. Case encouraged the members to consider the field of agriscience education. The members in attendance applauded Dr. Case as he filled in for Mr. Newton by reciting the advisor’s part of the opening ceremony. The Star Farmers of Alabama were brought on stage and James Paul Bailey from the Sand Rock FFA Chapter was named the Star Farmer of Alabama. His SAE included beef cattle, ferns, market hogs, watermelons, tomatoes, and goats. Next, the Honorary State FFA Degree was bestowed on some well-deserved supporters of our program. Elizabeth Grimes, Miss Alabama Agriculture, delivered a message on the importance of agriculture to the assembly. Awards were then given to the top four quartets in the quartet competition. The convention was also privileged to hear the harmony of the state winning quartet from the Oak Grove FFA Chapter. There was an FFA dance at the close of the fourth session for members to enjoy.

The fifth general session began at
9 a.m. on Friday, June 8. Salora Wright, 2006-2007 State FFA President, delivered her retiring address. Then the State Officers gave their end-of-the-year report. About 150 FFA members from across the state received their State FFA Degrees during the State FFA Degree Ceremony. The convention closed with the installation of the 2007-2008 State FFA Officers. The state officers were assisted with the announcement of the new slate of officers by the Nominating Committee Chairman, Gary Aycock, who is one of the agriscience teachers at Pell City High School. The new State FFA Officers for the 2007-2008 school year are: President – James Paul Bailey from the Sand Rock Chapter; Vice President – McKenzie Crabtree from the East Limestone Chapter; Secretary – Brendon Boyd from the Marbury Chapter; Treasurer – Scottie Hunter from the Billingsley Chapter; Reporter – Melody Murrell from the Red Bay Chapter; and Sentinel – Leah Blalock from the Daphne Chapter.

The new State Officer Team will be participating during the summer in two training workshops. The first is Blast Off. This is a leadership workshop that was held in Montgomery on June 12–14, 2007, at the Drury Inn and Suites. This is an FFA-sanctioned training workshop, but Alabama includes

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all Career/Tech Student Organizations (CTSOs) in the training: FFA, FCCLA, HOSA, TSA, SkillsUSA, FBLA, and DECA. During the Blast Off conference, the officers will learn items such as: dinner etiquette, speech development and delivery, how to address a group, and various other leadership activities. The State FFA Officers will then travel to Helen, Georgia, to attend the National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLCSO). They will be involved with a four-day training program conducted by two of the National FFA Officers. They will then be trained and ready to conduct and assist with the District Officers’ Leadership Conference and the Chapter Officer Leadership workshops held in the three districts across this state. They will also have opportunities to meet with various public officials and become spokespersons for FFA and agriculture in the state of Alabama.

The Marbury FFA Parliamentary Procedure Team placed first in state competition and will represent Alabama in national competition at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana, this October. John Colquitt is the Advisor for the Marbury Chapter.

Twenty-one individuals were present during the 2007 State FFA Convention to receive the highest honor that the Alabama State FFA Association can bestow upon its members, the Honorary State FFA Convention. The recipients were: Gary Aycock, Pell City HS Agriscience Teacher; Darin Baldwin, Chambers County C/T Director; Jim Bannon, AU Faculty Advisor-AGR; Mark Bond, Alabama River Woodlands; Larry Case, National FFA Advisor; Phillip Carroll, Berry HS Agriscience Teacher; Frederick Ford, Dadeville HS Agriscience Teacher; Tony Frazier, State Veterinarian; Lee Hayes, Chambers Co. CTC Agriscience Teacher; Houston Gibbons, Interstate Oil Co.; Richard Guthrie, Dean, AU College of Agriculture; Dick Martin, AU School of Forestry; Joseph B. Morton, State Superintendent of Education; Ronnie Murphy, Alabama Department of Agriculture; Rick Oates, Alabama Pulp and Paper Council; Thomas B. Paulk, Alabama Farmers Cooperative; Darryl Ray, Alabama Farmers Federation; Barry Reed, Chevron/Texaco Companies; Ben Scheierman, Alabama Dept. of Education; and Ashley Smith, Mead Westvaco.

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