



# The Alabama FFA REPORTER

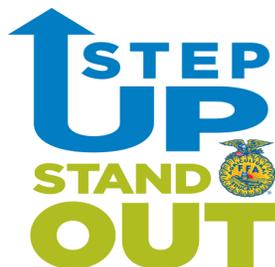
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**Zachary Jones**  
State President

“Your 2008-2009 State President from the North District is Mr. Zachary Jones!” I worked years to hear those words, and I still get chills every time I think about that exciting day. Those words were just the beginning of the amazing journey of being an FFA state officer.

This past summer, I had the opportunity to attend the most exciting programs and conferences that the National FFA Organization has to offer. I became close friends with some of the coolest people from across the country, and while these were all truly great experiences, they were all leading up to the one thing I was looking forward to more than anything else, State Presidents’ Conference (SPC).

On July 22 State FFA Secretary Michelle Vashbinder and I met at the Atlanta Airport and boarded a plane to Washington, D.C., for SPC. There is only one word that describes my experience in our nation’s capitol: EMPOWERING!! We were empowered by our nation’s leaders; Secretary of Education, Ms. Margret Spellings; and Secretary of



The Alabama FFA District Officers’ Leadership Conference (DOLC) was held in Columbiana, Alabama, at the Alabama 4-H Center, on June 27-28, 2008. Pictured above are the District and State Officers of the Alabama FFA Association present for the leadership conference. 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.

Agriculture, Mr. Ed Schafer, addressed us in a meeting at the United States Department of Agriculture. We also had the opportunity to meet President George W. Bush in the White House. We empowered progress through meetings with senators and congressmen and encouraged them to continue to support agricultural education and the National FFA Organization. We empowered others by meeting with the public in many different activities, such as touring the city, laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, attending a Baltimore Orioles game, witnessing the Sunset Parade at the Marine Corps Memorial, and at an FFA Alumni Dinner at our hotel. The most important event of the week was empowering FFA by starting the delegate process for National Convention.

I look forward to the upcoming year, and to meeting many of you. It would be my honor to come visit some of your chapters. My contact information, as well as all the State Officer Teams, is on the Web site. Also, Facebook users, there is an Alabama

Association Group that we are using as another way of providing news, stories, ideas, and anything else out there for everyone to see. We encourage you to join this group and use it as a resource.



**Brandy Feltman**  
State Vice President

What do you think about when I say FFA? Do you think of thousands who have a love for agriculture or do you think of many who promote premier leadership, personal growth, and career success? When I think of FFA, a lot of hopes, dreams, and ambitions come to my mind. Where else is there to start than right in your own school? Well, let me rephrase that, in your own FFA chapter. FFA has opened up a lot of

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## STATE OFFICERS 2008-2009

President ..... **Zachary Jones**  
Spring Garden Chapter  
Vice President..... **Brandy Feltman**  
Oakman Chapter  
Secretary ..... **Michelle Vasbinder**  
Enterprise Chapter  
Treasurer ..... **Raven Buchanan**  
Wilcox Central Chapter  
Reporter ..... **Clifford Brown**  
Marbury Chapter  
Sentinel ..... **Anna Leigh Peek**  
West Limestone Chapter

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State Advisor ..... **Mickey Humphries**  
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### Alabama Department of Education

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

opportunities for me as well as millions of others. It has inspired many and taught them to never give up. FFA teaches you about yourself and your limits as a person. "The biggest adventure you will ever take in life is to live the life of your dreams," Oprah Winfrey once said. This is what I am now experiencing as a state officer and what you as an individual could as well. The 81<sup>st</sup> National FFA Convention theme for this year is "Step Up and Stand Out." This is something each of us need to do in every aspect of life. FFA is based on three core components: Instruction, FFA, and SAE; and not only that but it is filled with experiences that will last a lifetime. The national organization has over half a million in membership, and I believe that Alabama can inspire more to get involved and become a part of something as remarkable as the FFA. Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much." This is so true with agriculture and our lives in general. Our goal is to have at least 16,000 members this year, and I truly believe we can exceed this mark. I, however, know that there are many ways and accomplishments of agriculture for students. It discovers your potential, and sets a standard for you in life. I challenge you to become involved and live to give, whether it being in your home, community, state, or even our great nation.



### Michelle Vasbinder State Secretary

A very important part of an FFA chapter is chapter meetings. These meetings keep members informed, plan for future events, and allow members' opinions to be expressed formally. In order to have effective chapter meetings, we must first have an effective chapter. In order to do so, we must follow the ten essentials of a successful chapter.

The first essential is FFA knowledge. Members and advisors must have an understanding of opportunities and functions that accompany FFA. Second is diversity of membership. FFA membership should reflect the diversity of the student body. This allows a

broader spectrum of service, support, and creativity in the program. Third, all members should share responsibilities. All members should be active. This allows the whole chapter to benefit. Leadership should come from everyone, not just officers. Having a Program of Activities allows members to know their specific responsibilities. Next, a chapter needs capable officers. Officers must have the talent and dedication to lead chapter members. Officers should act as role models at all times. Also, a chapter needs a challenging Program of Activities. This allows a chapter to plan goals and activities that utilize the maximum of the members' talents. These goals should also meet the needs of the community. Another essential is to have a workable constitution and bylaws. These should provide enough structure to give the chapter a firm foundation but flexible enough for progress. All decisions should be based upon these. Next, all chapters should have proper equipment and records. These records should reflect the financial, historical, and membership aspects of the chapter. Also, each chapter needs well-planned meetings. These should occur regularly in order to conduct business and inform members. Next, a chapter should have adequate financing. Finally, each chapter should have the support of their school and community. Many activities are based on local support.

Now that we know how to have a successful chapter, let's discuss chapter



The State FFA Officer Team pictured at BLAST OFF. The BLAST OFF training was held at the Drury Inn & Suites in Montgomery on June 10-12, 2008.

meetings. Chapter meetings should be enjoyable and very informative. Meetings may even include entertainment, guest speakers, or refreshments. Differing things from meeting to meeting leads to increased member attendance. Planning is definitely a key to a successful meeting. An agenda should be known to all participants. Opening and closing ceremonies should be used at all meetings. Officers participating should know their part prior to participation. The meeting should reflect the goals in the Program of Activities. All committee reports and responsibilities should be finished within acceptable time prior to the meeting. Proper parliamentary procedure should be used. This allows business to be transacted properly. Also, members' opinions and concerns can be voiced in a fair way. The meeting room should be arranged neat and should feel welcoming to members and guests. Station markers should be present and in the correct places. The American flag should be prominently displayed. Proper rules governing the usage of the American flag should be used.

All of these aspects are important to have an effective chapter meeting. Hosting these meetings properly can help prepare the chapter for a chapter banquet to highlight the entire year. Please look to your Official FFA Manual or [ffa.org](http://ffa.org) for more information about chapter meetings or banquets.



**Raven Buchanan  
State Treasurer**

The week of June 9th was a truly exciting week for the newly elected 2008-2009 Alabama FFA Association State Officers. We participated in our first official training activities in Montgomery, Alabama, at the Drury Inn & Suites. This training is called BLAST-OFF, which stands for: Building Leaders and Strong Teams of Officers. This was a joint training with the DECA, FBLA, FCCLA, SkillsUSA, JAG, and TSA state officers. The two presenters, Kerry Priest

and Josie Noah, presented workshops on Leadership, Responsibilities, Relationships, and Speech Development. During our free time, we bonded and became better acquainted through bowling, ice skating, making leadership raps, and going out to eat. These activities were a true "BLAST-OFF" to a great year of service, friendship, and teamwork!



**Clifford Brown  
State Reporter**

Your 2008-2009 Alabama State FFA Reporter is . . . My heart was just pounding! There were so many emotions that were going on in my head at that time it was unreal! When I heard Anna Leigh's name called out that was it. I knew it; my chance was blown for state office. But, I was wrong, and what a ride it has been. It has been one of the most amazing opportunities that has ever crossed my

path. Spending time with five other unique and amazing individuals with the same passion for FFA as you is amazing. Being involved in so many workshops and conferences this summer was amazing. One conference that sticks out in my mind the most is National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLC SO).

NLC SO was the first time that our team was able to really collaborate with other FFA members. It was held in Raymond, Mississippi, just ten days after State Convention. Other states involved in our NLC SO included: Mississippi, Louisiana, and Puerto Rico. Zach and I roomed with the Louisiana boys; and, I must say, it was a learning experience. I have never been shot with an air soft gun at such short range. From Tony Chachere's seasoning, to "corn," to duct taping their State President at two in the morning, it was still an amazing experience. Not only were the people great but the two National Officers that were there to facilitate the conference were some of the most genuinely nice people you can ever meet. Morgan Parker, the National Central Region Vice-President; and Becky Sullivan, the National Secretary, were the two that were there. When I first met them both, I just felt something like they truly cared about what they were doing and legitimately cared about others and the FFA. I learned so much that week from them both that I will



**The 2007-2008 State FFA Officer Team pictured with National FFA Officers: Becky Sullivan and Morgan Parker during the National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLC SO) in Raymond, Mississippi, on June 16-20, 2008.**

continue to remember for the rest of my life.

I learned how to have constructive conflict instead of destructive conflict. I learned how to effectively plan workshops. I learned how to successfully deliver a speech. I learned many things that I believe made me a better officer and a better person. But most of all, we all learned how to be a team, and that is the point. We learned how to perform. I hope that one day you will be able to experience something like I did that will change your outlook on life. I really hope you can. Thank you, and I hope you have a blessed day.



**Anna Leigh Peek  
State Sentinel**

In July all the chapter officers in the state of Alabama were eligible to attend Chapter Officer Leadership Workshops (COLWs). The North had two workshops, and the Central and South Districts each had one. I realize that all chapters may have not had their officer teams chosen or even been able to come, but the ones who were able to come did have an advantage. The COLWs are put on by the district officers who had been working hard to prepare for COLWs.

The purpose of COLWs is to get the chapter officers together and let them start working on plans for the year ahead. The day is full of leadership activities, team-building activities, and many other things that are helpful for chapter officer teams. This day should have been very beneficial to the chapter officers if they took advantage of the opportunity to attend.

I attended the COLWs in the North District and was amazed at the enthusiasm that most of the kids there had. I had never been to one of these workshops before, and it was a great experience. The zeal and pride that some

students have for this organization amazes me (we need more students like this). We had some students who could hardly contain their excitement throughout the day. Most of the students had one goal in mind, to make their chapter the best it could possibly be!

Due to the fact that the average student today does not want to step up and lead, this responsibility falls to the chapter officer. If our chapter officers start out with the younger members by teaching and training them to be outstanding leaders, by their third or fourth year in FFA they will have developed their leadership abilities to a further extent. COLWs are a great way to get the chapter officers informed about ways of getting their chapter involved in activities. COLWs really allow you to see how your chapter needs to run. It is also a great opportunity to get to know other chapter officers just like you. Many shared concerns and difficulties that they have in their chapter as well as many ideas for projects and activities. I got many great ideas for my own chapter from many of you; I have put many of them to use, thanks!

COLWs are just one of several workshops that we as state officers help put on throughout the year. We also do JLCD which is held in Montgomery in September. If you



**Kimberly Henderson, 2005-2006  
State FFA Sentinel, will serve as the  
Alabama FFA Association's  
National Officer Candidate to the  
81st National FFA Convention in  
Indianapolis, Indiana, on  
October 19-25, 2008.**

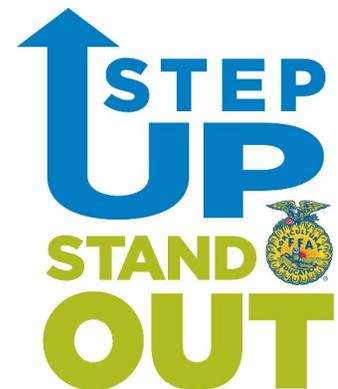
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would like for some of the state officers to come to your chapter and do a workshop just for you, contact us and let us know. Do not forget your chapter officers; they are often times overlooked when chapter members are needing advice. A lot of times people go straight to the district or state officers, which is fine, but most of the time your chapter officers are perfectly capable of helping you with your problems or when you need advice. It will make them feel good when they help you.

To those of you who attended a COLW, I hope you made new friends and learned many new things that will help you in your year of service to your chapter. I wish I could have gone to all the COLWs and met all the chapter officers who attended; but I will hope to meet the rest of you sometime this year, whether it be that I come to your chapter, at National Convention, Ag Expo, or even if you happen to see me in Wal-Mart, come up and introduce yourself to me. I look forward to meeting you. If there is anything I can ever do for you, please feel free to email me at [alpeek@alabamaffa.org](mailto:alpeek@alabamaffa.org).



**No person shall be denied employment, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any program or activity on the basis of disability, sex, race, religion, national origin, color, or age. Ref: Sec. 1983, Civil Rights Act, 42 U.S.C.; Title VI and VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964; Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Sec. 504; Age Discrimination in Employment Act; Equal Pay Act of 1963; Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972: Title IX Coordinator, P.O. Box 302101, Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2101 or call (334) 242-8444.**