



# THE ALABAMA FFA REPORTER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA FFA ASSOCIATION

Volume 42

Winter 2016

NO. 1

[www.alabamaffa.org](http://www.alabamaffa.org)



## 2016-2017 Alabama State Officer Team

Sierra Goodwin, President; Ethan Mobley, Vice-President; Ben Castleberry, Secretary;  
Becky Hawkins, Treasurer; Hannah Black, Reporter; Torran Smith, Sentinel





by **Becky Hawkins**  
Treasurer

# Living to Serve

Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, and Living to Serve. These words

come close to mind when we think about the National FFA Organization. The four lines create what is known as our motto. Maybe our advisor makes us recite it every year, it's seen upon a banner, or in the classic FFA history notes we take each year. Whatever the case, they hold meaning to you. As we learn through agriculture education, work in our greenhouse, and develop an outstanding SAE, we as FFA members have the responsibility to serve through our homes and communities. Service is simply defined by the action of helping or doing work for someone, yet those actions are worth more value than one meets the eye. As we dive into November, I cannot help to think about the Iron Bowl, sharing a turkey with my family, preserving our wildlife, and the warmth of Christmas morning. Traditions play a large role in the activities taking place in our family, as well as your FFA chapter. Begin this season with the acts of service towards your communities.

The Eufaula FFA chapter works through their local DHR program, Christmas Angel, during the holiday season. The chapter adopts two children to give them the Christmas morning they have never had. The coordinator at the local office will assign your group a little boy or girl. They will give you a list of gifts the respective child asked 'Santa' for. The list will be given in advance for your team to plan out a budget needed to make the purchase of the gifts. The money to purchase the gifts can be obtained in several ways from chapter funds, fundraising, or simply asking each FFA member to donate a routine number to equal the needed amount. The Eufaula chapter fundraises in which best works for their chapter: cookout. As most will account to this, food is a great option to raise money. The barbeque lunch plates are sold to the faculty, staff, and the FFA members for a set price, generally around \$6. If fundraising in this way, be sure to take into count the cost of the gifts combined and the cost of the food you are providing. The committee of the Christmas Angel project will purchase the needed presents and often is able to buy extra due to donations of others. As the chapter Christmas party is held, one item on the agenda is always to wrap the presents for their adopted children for that year. As they have not met the boy or girl, their hearts are

filled with joy knowing that they were able to make someone's Christmas morning better. "It opens your eyes. We don't realize that there are children out there who aren't given the same Christmas morning that we take for granted. It gives you a feeling of joy knowing that you get to play a part in giving a child a Christmas they may not have ever had." – *Whitney Watson, Eufaula Chapter- Vice President.*

Chapters across the state work with their local food banks during Thanksgiving. During the month of November, members bring in nonperishable foods to be donated. The project can be done in the classroom, competing against each other or spreading the challenge. Your chapter can bring in other organizations and departments of your school to participate in the food drive. Making a competition often brings in more as well! Placing an Alabama and Auburn symbol on a box drives those fans to fill their sport's team box! Either way, the act is done through kindness. Being able to give to others is what we should be thankful for.

Holiday season brings hope to many while sharing memories with their loved ones. We often get wrapped up in the act of receiving instead of giving. No gesture is small, all are gracious. We rise by lifting others up. This season, let's find happiness in giving. Let's find joy in serving.





# Announcements

By Sierra Goodwin  
President

## October

**Oct. 28- Nov. 8, 2016:** Alabama National Fair in Montgomery

## November

**Nov. 4-13, 2016:** National Peanut Festival in Dothan

**Nov. 10, 2016:** North District Land CDE (Cullman County)

**Nov. 10, 2016:** Our State Treasurer, the amazing Ms. Becky Hawkins, turns 18!

## December

**Dec. 3, 2016:** Swine Field Day in Anniston

## January

**Jan. 7, 2017:** Alabama Youth Swine Expo in Wedowee

**Jan. 31, 2017:** Envirothon registration deadline



## February

**Feb. 14-15, 2017:** AU FFA Spring Judging Clinics

**Feb. 15, 2017:** Chapter Public Speaking Manuscripts due to County Chairman.

**Feb. 15, 2017:** State FFA Degrees due to District Specialist

**Feb. 15, 2017:** M.K. Heath Animal Health Essays due

**Feb. 15, 2017:** Proficiency Award Applications due

**Feb. 18-25, 2017:** National FFA Week!

**Feb. 28- March 2, 2017:** Agriscience Education Spring Regional Seminars.

## General Announcements

**FFA Tops:** This is a new way for members to obtain activities above the chapter level for their state degrees and for students to increase their involvement and participation at the local level. Chapters collect the pull tabs on coke cans and collect them all the way until they are turned in at the state convention. The tops will go to a charity, and the chapter with the most, in pounds, pull tabs will win. Start collecting the pull tabs now!

**BOAC:** Building of Alabama Communities: If a chapter already helps their local community, then they can document what the chapter did, and this will also count as an activity above the chapter level for the state degree.

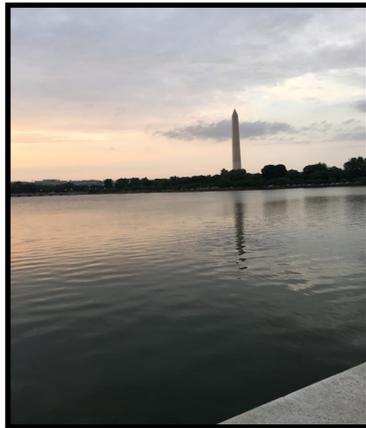




By Hannah Black  
Reporter

# Impacting Members – One Summer at a Time

The Washington Leadership Conference is a seven week, five day, conference for FFA members across the nation. These students gather together in Washington D.C. to improve themselves, their chapters, and their communities. The best way to have a true grasp of what WLC is all about is to looking at an advisor, a facilitator, and a student's perspective.



Albertville High School advisor, Mr. Gary Aycock attended WLC this year and was asked about his participation throughout the years. He states, *"I have attended Washington Leadership Conference (WLC) thirteen times in my twenty years of teaching. I have taken state officers, district FFA officers, chapter officers, and members from various chapters throughout Alabama. I have always looked for FFA members who have the drive and dedication to improve. Although the expense is high to attend many FFA members have returned confirming that WLC is a more rewarding experience than National FFA Convention Trip."*

*"The conference is built on the four themes of self-awareness, diversity, advocacy and service. WLC is not just a conference, and it is not just a tour of Washington, D.C. Participants learn what servant leadership is all about by diving into our nation's history and exploring the lives of our founding fathers. If you enjoy helping others and have a talent for leadership, Washington Leadership Conference would be a great opportunity for any FFA member. WLC is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for FFA Members to explore our nation's capital, make friends from across the country, and serve others."*

*"FFA members always come back stating WLC is a conference unlike anything they have ever experienced– a conference that will challenge their thoughts, words and actions and entice them to grow into a better person, leader, and servant. FFA members come home wanting to improve their*

*chapter, community, and themselves. During the WLC conference, participants visit the U.S. Capitol, tour the museums, observe the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery, tour national monuments, and spend the final day of the conference serving the community."*

Pell City advisor, Mrs. Brittney Hill, was a WLC facilitator during her college years and knows more than anyone the ends and outs of the conference. She recalls, *"After serving on the nominating committee that selects national officers, FFA staff mentioned that the applications were available and encouraged us to apply. I had a friend from my chapter who was also interested and we agreed that we would both apply. It was unusual that we were both selected since we were from the same school. I thought that working for National FFA, all expenses paid, living in our nation's capital for a summer, and getting to positively influence FFA members from across the country was a once in a lifetime opportunity."*

*"It's so hard to pick a favorite part; there are memories of each week that stand out in my mind! In particular, on the final night of the conference each week, students in our "community groups" could share their personal highlights of the week, how they feel they had grown as a leader, etc. It was awesome to see students who were quiet or unexcited at the beginning of the week come out of their shells or realize their purpose. As facilitators, being able to see the difference that the experience made in our students each week helped us to know that God had placed us at WLC for a reason."*



*"I didn't really have any expectations about what I would gain from being a WLC facilitator. It wasn't until the summer was over that I realized how impactful the experience had been. Meeting students from across the country that were united by a passion for FFA and living to serve gave me hope for the next generation of leaders. Our weekly service projects involved picking up trash along the Potomac, gleaning from fields of corn or kale for food banks, or cleaning up former homeless dwellings. This experience opened my eyes to what the world was like outside of my little college town or hometown and helped me to be more compassionate to those who are truly in need. As I began teaching, I was able to use the facilitation skills that I learned before and during WLC. Helping a group of 30 teenagers navigate the city and subway system, along with teaching the curriculum, prepared me for the classroom more than any education class I took in college."*

*"I wanted the students in my group to leave the conference more aware of their purpose in FFA, more prepared to be a leader in their home communities, and more willing to serve the needs of those around them. In addition to that, they left the conference with friends that they still keep in touch with over 7 years later."*

Arab High School senior, Lauren Whisenant, was able to attend this year's conference and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. She shared, *"I attended Week 7 of the Washington Leadership Conference this past summer. As a senior in high school and FFA member, I can confidently say WLC has been the most impactful part of The National FFA Organization."* She continues, *"This year our conference was centered around citizenship. What a great theme to be in our Nation's Capitol! Throughout the week we defined diversity, advocacy, and how our purpose can better our communities. Diversity day was my favorite part of WLC. On this day, we looked at how different we all are and got to live like people in an underprivileged country. This experience was incredibly eye opening, making each one of us realize how blessed we truly are and how we need to make a difference for those outside the US."*

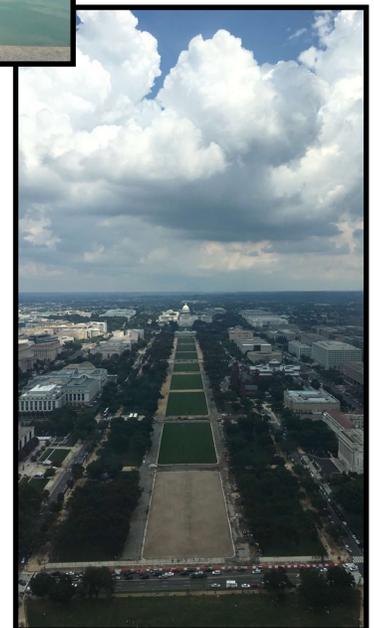
*"Another amazing part of WLC was the people I had the honor to meet. My Roommates were from Kentucky, Ohio, and Texas. It was so cool getting to see how they run their chapters and how each state does things different. I met FFA members from Utah, Colorado, North Dakota, California, New York, and the list goes on."*

*"WLC also allowed me to explore Washington, D. C., a place this small town girl had never been before. We toured Arlington National Cemetery, the Capitol, the Monuments and Memorials, and experienced the Newseum. My advisor and the 3 of us from the Arab chapter got to go to the top of Washington Monument and also the Holocaust Museum."*

*"WLC was life changing. I am so blessed*

*and ecstatic that I had the privilege to attend this conference. I love telling our Ag students about my experience and getting them fired up for FFA this year. For any members that are thinking about going or have the opportunity to, don't let an amazing experience like this pass you by. Your life will be forever changed. I have friends that will last a lifetime and I have memories I will never forget."*

As you can see the Washington Leadership Conference is a truly life altering experience that anyone involved with FFA can benefit from. No matter age, gender, or lifestyle WLC is growing the future leaders of FFA and of the world. Now, who's ready to go to WLC this summer?





by Ethan Mobley  
Vice President

Each year, every state association in the National FFA Organization sends two representatives to the annual State Presidents Conference in Washington D.C. Alabama FFA consistently sends the President and Vice President from its officer team. This year, your President, Sierra Goodwin, along with myself had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to attend.

Being the unique individuals that both of us are, Sierra and I had a very interesting time on the trip. I racked up credit card debt for a month to pay for the tickets, and learned to love driving across the state to the airport in Atlanta. We both learned how to use the very complex



D.C. Metro interface to purchase metro cards, how to navigate colored rail lines, and run on a split second to catch a train; without ACTUALLY losing any limbs. We both met dozens of unique leaders with their own stories and futures. We listened to unbelievable FFA stories, and SAE projects. We saw huge egos, and humble hearts.

The five-day conference held extensive leadership training and productive toil each time we met the Sun. From learning to facilitate discussions with sponsors and partners, to advocating for agriculture in a global network. Following our preparation, we created the six committees that conducted our annual delegate business. Those committees held a ton of excitement, and developed even stronger bonds among the leaders within.

Finally, we were given the opportunity to meet with the legislative assistants behind our State Senator, Jeff Sessions, and two agricultural Representatives in our National governing body. We were able to advocate for a new piece of legislation that would make the first five-thousand dollars earned from every FFA or 4-H students SAE project in America tax-free.

The return trip for both of us was equally eventful. We had an unusual option during the ticket purchase of our trip to have a four-hour layover in Philadelphia, PA at no additional expense. After arriving and exiting the PHL airport, Sierra and I were able to shortly see one of the keystones of American culture. We took one of our first taxi rides to a small misplaced neighborhood away from the beaten path. The neighborhood was the home of the two greatest Philly Cheesesteak gurus in the world, and their reputations preceded them. We both paid about twelve dollars for our zany sandwiches, and made our way down the way. We concluded our trip with pictures in front of the liberty bell, plenty of souvenirs, and one more long journey home.

