



THE ALABAMA FFA REPORTER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ALABAMA FFA ASSOCIATION

Volume 46

Summer Issue

NO. 1

www.alabamaffa.org



2017-2018 Alabama State Officer Team with the North, Central, and South District FFA Officers during District Officer Leadership Conference



Alabama FFA State Officers attend the final NLCSO (National Leadership Conference for State Officers) in Raymond, Mississippi with state officers from Mississippi and Louisiana.



Beneath the Rising Sun

by Cameron
Catrett
President

It has been a whirlwind of a summer since the close of the 89th Alabama FFA State Convention. Our state officer team has participated in numerous events representing Alabama FFA throughout June and July. Recently, Vice-President John Crawford and I returned from the State Presidents' Conference (SPC). This is the third experience in the state FFA officer training series. SPC is an advanced leadership training that builds on the first two components of the state FFA officer leadership continuum, Blast Off and NLC SO. The 2017 State Presidents' Conference was held July 24-29, 2017 at the Hilton Crystal City in Arlington, Va. At State Presidents' Conference, two officers from each state association travel to Washington, D.C. to begin the delegate committee process and share ideas among all state FFA associations. Against the backdrop of our nation's capital, state officers also learn the importance of advocacy by "telling their story" of agriculture, agricultural education, career technical education, and FFA.

We worked long days at SPC, but also found time to connect with our nation's rich history and fellow FFA officers. On Monday and Tuesday, we learned about advocacy and lobbying. We heard delegate proposals and began determining which proposals would become the framework for committee discussions at the 90th National FFA Convention and Expo. On Wednesday, we started the day with a breakfast at the USDA where we witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding by USDA Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and National FFA CEO Mark Poeschl to support the youth and prepare tomorrow's agricultural workforce. Wednesday afternoon was spent on Capitol Hill lobbying for H.R. 1626 - Agriculture Student Protection Act and S. 671 - Agriculture Student EARN (Encourage, Acknowledge, Reward, Nurture) Act. John and I had the pleasure of lobbying in the offices of Alabama Representatives Martha Roby, Mike Rogers, and Terri Sewell. We also met with Alabama Senators Richard Shelby and Luther Strange. Between visiting with lawmakers, we sat in on a meeting of the

House Ag Committee. On Thursday, our work continued and committees for national convention were announced. The evening was filled with a night tour of historical sites including the WWII Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Vietnam Wall, Korean War Monument, and memorials for Franklin D. Roosevelt, Martin Luther King Jr., and Thomas Jefferson. Committee work concluded on Friday before we were released to explore D.C. on our own. John and I visited the Holocaust Museum, Library of Congress, and the Smithsonian with our friends from Arkansas and Georgia. We returned back to the SPC headquarters for a block party full of line dancing, mechanical bulls, arcade games, and swing dancing to end the busy week. SPC was a whirlwind for us much like the weeks leading up to it!

As summer comes to a close, "let us be diligent in our labor, just in our dealings, courteous to everyone, and above all, honest and fair in the game of life."

Serve always,
Cameron



State FFA President Cameron Catrett and State FFA Vice President John Crawford with Representative Martha Roby in Washington D.C. as part of the State FFA Officer leadership training.



Back to Our Roots



By Gracen Sims
Secretary

The State Officers participate in many training sessions prior to the Chapter Officer Leadership Workshop (COLW). We attended The Alabama CTSO Leadership Summit first, where we met with the State Officers from other Career Tech organizations. We learned about leadership and really began to bond as a team. The following week, we were so excited to attend The National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLC SO) in Raymond, Mississippi at the Mississippi FFA Association Camp. The Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi FFA Associations learned from awesome facilitators about building up our State Officer team, how to develop a workshop, and facilitation techniques. We had a great time building lasting friendships with the other state associations!

Soon after NLC SO, the team traveled to Auburn for our Blast Off conference facilitated by Past National Officer Joenelle Futrell (2012-2013 Eastern Region Vice President). We learned about our personal strengths and weaknesses, leadership levels, influences, and accountability.



One of the highlights from this conference was being able to go back to our roots and really reflect on our personal strengths and weaknesses. We learned how we would use them to our advantage. One of my favorite activities from Blast Off was the Joy Jars we made. Throughout the week we wrote encouraging

notes to each other and at the end of the week we opened our jars and read all the encouraging and positive letters from our teammates to keep with us throughout our year of service. Next, we got to try out all our newly developed skills at the District Officer Leadership Conference (DOLC) in Columbiana at the 4-H Center. We could not wait to meet all the 2017-2018 District Officer teams. Here we each led workshops, group activities, made new friendships with these awesome officers, and prepared for the 2017 COLW!

COLW was held on July 17th and 18th at six locations across Alabama. Here, the District officers conducted workshops for Chapter officers so they can learn how to run efficient and effective meetings. We helped create Programs of Activities and Chapter Constitutions, we demonstrated parliamentary procedure, facilitation techniques, leadership, teamwork, and numerous other beneficial skills for Chapter officers to possess. The State Officers were very excited to play a role at COLW. We led and facilitated workshops, met amazing FFA Chapters and officers, and set up many Chapter visit dates!



The Chapter officers were given the opportunity to break into workshop groups with members from other chapters and counties. They shared ideas for the upcoming year for their chapters and built lasting friendships. The State Officers learned so many valuable tools and ideas from the prior trainings, workshops, conferences,



Back to Our Roots Continued...



By Gracen Sims
Secretary

and summits that we attended this summer. Through these conferences, we learned how to go back to our roots to grow and build upon our chapters! FFA membership on a national level is made up of 649,355 student members in seventh grade to twelfth grade. These student members all belong to one of the 7,859 local FFA chapters throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Local FFA Chapters are the roots in our organization. The State Officers are so excited to go back to our roots and meet each Chapter this year to grow the Alabama FFA Association!

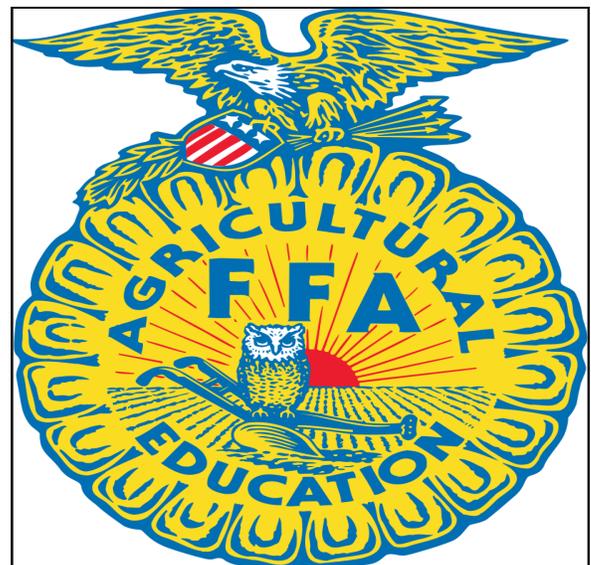




By Bryce Hendricks
Sentinel

National Leadership Conference for State Officers

Throughout the summer state officers are exposed to several trainings. The first conference that we attended was the National Leadership Conference for State Officers. This summer state officers from Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi all united for this year's NLCSO at the FFA center in Raymond, Mississippi. At this conference, we were able to learn about how to identify our strengths and weaknesses as a group, learn advanced interpersonal communication strategies, and workshop development techniques. Once we arrived at the FFA center we were greeted by our fellow state officers from Mississippi and were able to meet our distinguished staff of current National President David Townsend, Former National President Brian Walsh, and Former Washington State Treasurer Hannah Nelson. Being able to network with these individuals is an experience that we will never forget. The lessons that we learned and the relationships that we built will be beneficial to our state officer team for the upcoming year.





District Officer Leadership Conference

by Jasey Black
Treasurer

For the past thirty-two years, the state and district officer teams have met at the 4-H Center in Columbiana in order to get to know each other and prepare for the Chapter Officer Leadership Workshops. Our theme for this year's District Officer's Leadership Conference was *Cars*. The state officers led us farther down the "highway" with each workshop. In the first session, we heard opening ceremonies given by the state officers and Mr. Chamness laid the ground rules and expectations. Once the state officers presented closing ceremonies, we dismissed and began our next session.

The next stop on our road was with the state Sentinel, Bryce Hendricks. Our session was opened with the South district officers. Bryce's workshop was called *Mapping Your Own Route* and centered around personal growth. The district officers participated in multiple activities including a chalk talk that let them identify what it really means for them to serve their districts. We concluded with the South district officers giving the closing ceremonies and then moved on to a group activity, which we called Pit Stops.

In the third session our North district officers presented the opening and closing ceremonies. The title of this session was *The Pit Crew* and was led by Jasey Black. The workshop was centered around team development and built on some of the personal discoveries they made in the previous workshop. The district officers took a test to determine their conflict management style and then discussed how they can use the differences in these to the team's advantage. They also learned about the five stages of team development and why it is important for each group to be able to identify each stage in order to have an effective team. After this session we concluded our first day and had Reflections from our National Officer Candidate, Jordan Stowe.

The second day began with our state officers performing flag ceremonies. Then, the group went on a team building ropes course with employees from the 4-H Center. This was a great way for us to learn how to work together and it allowed us to follow right in to our fourth session. This workshop was entitled *Where the Rubber Meets the Road* and was facilitated by the state Secretary, Gracen Sims. The District officers discovered

what it means to be an advocate in the agriculture industry. We learned some ways of how one can be an "advocate", some successful strategies of doing so, and why it's important to #SpeakAg! The opening and closing ceremonies of this session were presented by the Central district officers.

Our fifth workshop was presented by our state President, Cameron Catrett and was entitled *Rust-Eze*. Her facilitation was focused on the promotion of the National FFA Organization and how we can use our actions and appearances to represent it. Before this session began, the state officers chose a district officer from their respective office and this group of six which consisted of two officers representing each district was asked to give the ceremonies.

Our sixth session's ceremonies were presented by the state officers. The workshop was called *Life is a Highway* and was given by our state Vice President, John Crawford. John focused his workshop on helping the District officers develop their team vision, values, and mission statement. His activities included the officers building glasses that would help them "see" their vision and we also saw them present their team values and mission which they made a pledge within their team to follow.

The seventh and final session was called *Rotating the Tires*. State Reporter Will Jordan was the facilitator. This session was completely dedicated to workshop development. Will introduced the officers to the "Magic Formula" of workshop development. This formula puts each part of a workshop into a step-by-step process. He used multiple examples from sessions all throughout the week in order to explain what each step could look like.

That night we had Reflections led by the State officers. The group heard from the team and then was split up into their respective districts led by two State officers from a different district. Reflections are a time for a group to be completely honest with each other. They reflect on what they have done well together as a team and then discuss things they need to improve on.

Our last day began with a flag raising ceremony presented by Jordan Stowe. Then, Jordan helped the officers review the week and evaluate each workshop. The rest of the time was spent allowing the districts to split up and plan for their Chapter Officer Leadership Workshops which were held the next week all across the state. We have a wonderful group of District officers this year. I am so glad to have the chance to work with them as we strive to improve the Alabama FFA Association!



Summer 2017 State FFA Q&A

by John Crawford, Vice President

Q: “Becoming a State FFA Officer requires a very high level of dedication. In the midst of your coursework and agricultural activities, why did you choose to pursue this position?”

“In addition to learning area specific content in Ag class, I have also learned the value of serving others. Hearing past national officer, Jackson Harris, deliver his keynote address at my first state convention inspired me to run for district and state office. When you shine your light, you unconsciously give others the permission to do so. Throughout my year of service, I hope to inspire members, much like others have inspired me over the years.” – Cameron Catrett, State President

“The beautiful thing about the National FFA Organization is that it promotes passion in every individual that it comes in contact with. I chose to pursue this position because I love to see others find their place and their purpose and ultimately walk away transformed and changed by this leadership based and agriculturally founded organization. All-in-all, my sole desire in becoming a State Officer is to give back to something that has given so much to me.” – John Crawford, State Vice President

“I chose to pursue a State Officer position because I have a passion for serving others, and I believe a great way to serve others is through the FFA. The FFA is service oriented and not only presents the opportunity to gain qualities, but reinforces them. I love meeting FFA members from across the state and learning from them and their chapter. I can’t wait to serve Alabama FFA this year as State Secretary.” – Gracen Sims, State Secretary

“It was a big decision for me to run, but my family was very supportive. The encouragement I received from them when I was preparing was amazing. They let me know that if I was elected, they would be there to help me in every way possible and they have. This summer has been one of the busiest I have ever had, but it also has been the most fun! With the support from my friends and family, I was able to pursue this amazing opportunity and I am so happy I did!” – Jasey Black, State Treasurer

“I have always wanted to serve Alabama FFA as a State Officer and as my pastor says, ‘the privilege is greater than the responsibility.’ The impact I can have, inspiring FFA members, is worth the hard work.” – Will Jordan, State Reporter

“Following my dreams is something that I have always been encouraged to do. Becoming a State Officer was one of those dreams. Ever since I enrolled into my first agriscience class I knew that becoming a State Officer was something that I wanted to pursue. At the time, my father was my FFA advisor and he encouraged me to get involved in the FFA by joining a CDE team. From that moment on, I continued to diversify myself within the FFA and grow as a leader. I applied to run for a State Officer position because I wanted to have the same impact on FFA members that my father had on me.” – Bryce Hendrix, State Sentinel

Alabama FFA, we are honored to serve you this year!

Alabama State Department of Education, Ed Richardson, Interim State Superintendent of Education

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