Wisconsin FFA Alumni Convention Highlights

Over 300 Wisconsin FFA Alumni members and supporters traveled to Waukesha for the 40th Wisconsin FFA Alumni Convention. The theme was “Vision + Leadership = Reality” and the group had plenty to celebrate about. Award winners, educational workshops and tours, and the updates from National FFA Alumni encouraged the members that their role in supporting agricultural education, the FFA, and local agriculture education instructors has been instrumental in the success of FFA members and the agricultural industry and is critical in the future of agriculture.

A highlight to start the weekend was a tour and fish fry dinner at Milwaukee Vincent High School’s agriculture education department. Members toured the department and then enjoyed the meal featuring fish and other food grown by the students and prepared by the culinary department. An online auction, raffle for sportsmen items or cash, live auction, silent auction, dessert dash and basket sales helped raise funds for the organization and its FFA support at this biggest fundraiser of the year for the Wisconsin FFA Alumni. The group also celebrated the 40th anniversary with a display and presentation featuring past Wisconsin FFA Alumni Presidents.

A workshop was given by the Wisconsin FFA State Officers on saving money on communications with social media use. Other workshops included Vincent HS Agriculture Department, Strengthening your Local FFA Program by coaching CDE’s/LED’s, How far can ag education take you? FFA Resources online at the state and national level, Working with your local FFA Advisors, How to be an effective local leader, Recruiting young, active members and Teaming up for Trivia! Speakers included Shelley Jurewicz, FaB Wisconsin Executive Director and Allie Ellis, National FFA Alumni Development Specialist. The event concluded with entertainment by SongBlast Dueling Guitars.

The business session included bylaw changes and resolutions, approving new council members and a moment of silence for those departed members. The financial health of the organization is strong. Team Ag Ed reports all expressed their appreciation of local, state and national FFA Alumni support of the Wisconsin FFA Center and FFA Association, FFA Foundation, Wisconsin Association of Agriculture Educators, and Department of Public Instruction. The Wisconsin FFA State Officers participated in all aspects of the convention including a Reflection Program, hosting workshops, and assisting in many volunteer roles.
Greetings From Your New President!

What an honor it is to serve as your Wisconsin State FFA Alumni President. My family operated a large Wisconsin Dairy farm in Green County with a herd of registered Holstein cows. My experiences of exhibiting cattle in 4-H, being a member of the state champion dairy judging team, and receiving an American Farmer Degree in FFA helped me get a job with Select Sires. After employment with Select Sires for 30 years, I became a property management company owner for 15 years.

My wife, Judy, and I have been blessed with four sons and five grandchildren. We enjoy exploring the back roads and small towns of Wisconsin. Since my retirement, we feel this is an opportunity to travel and learn more about our great state. My plan is to try to attend as many section meetings as possible. We welcome your local FFA Alumni Chapters to invite us to be included in your activities as you serve your members and communities.

One of the State Council’s goals for this year is to encourage open communication between the state council and chapters. Your Section Reps are a great resource, so please feel free in contacting them for help, advice, or if you have any questions. By working together and sharing new ideas, we can better serve our FFA Chapters and Ag Instructors.

Awards Recognition at Convention

♦ National Outstanding Chapter Award: Stoughton FFA Alumni State Winner and Denmark FFA Alumni 2nd. Both will advance to national level competition.

♦ State Level Outstanding Chapter Award Winners:
  *Small Chapter - Weyauwega-Fremont FFA Alumni
  *Medium Chapter - Waupaca FFA Alumni
  *Large Chapter - Pulaski FFA Alumni

♦ Newsletter Award Winner: Pulaski FFA Alumni

♦ Agriculture Instructor Recognition Program: Five Wisconsin instructors were recognized. They include:
  *Lucas VanEgtern - Dodgeland
  *Walter Taylor - Oconto Falls
  *Daniel Robinson - Lomira
  *Mariah Markhardt - Oconto Falls

♦ Mary Handrich - Denmark, who was also named the state winner.

♦ Outstanding Achievement Award:
  *Candie Lehto, Oconto Falls was named the state winner and national nominee.
  *Mark Nelsen, Denmark was also honored.

♦ Team Ag Ed-Distinguished Contributor Award:
  Jon Anderson, Vice President-Filament

♦ Wisconsin FFA Alumni Chapter Support Grants were awarded to:
  *Brillion FFA Alumni
  *Lakeside Lutheran FFA Alumni

♦ New Chapter Charters were presented to:
  *Beaver Dam FFA Alumni & Supporters
  *Wisconsin Dells FFA Alumni & Supporters
  *UW Madison Collegiate FFA Alumni & Supporters

♦ Reactivated Chapters Recognized were:
  *Coleman FFA Alumni
  *Hillsboro FFA Alumni

♦ National FFA Alumni Local Program Grants recipients were:
  *Ellsworth FFA Alumni
  *Badger FFA Alumni
  *Randolph FFA Alumni
  *Sauk Prairie FFA Alumni
  *Lodi FFA Alumni
  *Adams-Friendship FFA Alumni

♦ Dr. V.O. Martinson Award: Lakeside Lutheran FFA Alumni

♦ Ann Martinson Award: Janesville FFA Alumni

♦ Eagle Award: Argyle FFA Alumni

National Outstanding Chapter Applicants Denmark and Stoughton will now represent Wisconsin at the National competition this fall.
Candie Lehto will represent Wisconsin in the National Outstanding Achievement Award area this fall.

2020-21 Council Members
The convention delegates elected Terri Wilfert as Vice President. All other Executive Committee members were moved up to their next positions. The 2020 Executive Committee includes President-Rudy Kaderly; President Elect-Nate Zimdars; Vice President-Terri Wilfert; Past President-Cari Sabel; and Executive Director Cheryl Steinbach.

Retiring FFA Alumni Council Members Mark Ladsten, Amy Penterman and Jacob Stukenberg were also recognized for their service at convention.

Serving this year as Section Representatives are:
1 - Jerry Larsen & Dave Clausen
2 - Caleb Green & Brenda Franklin
3 - Chris Blank & Derek Trescher
4 - Nick Huffman & Joseph Lyne
5 - Jack Ellickson & Nick Lowe
6 - Matt Damm & Bobbi Jo Kunz
7 - Gary Eibergen & Cindi Freidhof
8 - Grant Staszak & Bobbie Jo Montgomery
9 - Sara Bertram & To Be Appointed
10 - Gene Hetebrueg & Amy Voigt

Thank You For Your Support
We have completed two online auctions this fall and winter, as well as, two live auctions and one silent auction at convention. Thank you to everyone who made purchases. Thank you also to everyone who purchased raffle tickets. Your support of our fundraising efforts is greatly appreciated.

National FFA Alumni Changes
Last month all registered leaders at the local level were sent an email from the National FFA, but in order to ensure a smooth transition and unified organization, we are notifying all members of the changes, via this newsletter, as well.

In February 2018, the National FFA Board of Directors voted to change the name of the National FFA Alumni Association to National FFA Alumni and Supporters. At that time, they retired the alumni shield logo in favor of using the FFA emblem. The goal is to provide a clear, consistent brand image for all forms of FFA membership.

Nationals has allowed local chapters and states the ability to use either the shield logo or the emblem for the past two years. However, in support of the updated organizational brand guidelines, starting January 2020, the National FFA Organization will no longer approve the use of the former alumni shield logo for the production of any new materials, signage or items. They recommend the use of the FFA emblem or FFA Alumni and Supporters wordmark in its place on any new materials. They understand logo changes can be costly, so they recognize there is a necessary grace period to allow chapters and state associations to use up existing materials.

Each Chapter has their own logo that has been designed at the national level and we have them for you at the state level. Since convention, numerous chapters have already contacted us to get theirs. In the upcoming months we will be sending them via email to the registered local leaders, but in the meantime, if you need yours sooner, please contact execdir@wisconsinffalumni.org. The new logo will look like ours on the front page, but it will instead be personalized for each individual Alumni chapter.

Please begin the process of replacing the shield at your local levels and implement it as you develop ads for fundraisers, utilize social media, etc.

Be Sure to Follow us on Facebook
Wisconsin FFA Alumni Association has expanded it’s use of social media to inform members. Be sure to like the page and you will see many opportunities to support FFA Alumni chapters all throughout Wisconsin. You can also like National FFA Alumni and Supporters to learn of their opportunities.
Wisconsin FFA Foundation Golf Outing Options for Alumni Chapters

The annual Foundation Gold Outings have been set and there is a special offer for Alumni chapters and members to get involved and support the Foundation.

The dates and locations include:

Northwest - July 13 at Wild Ridge Golf Course in Eau Claire. 18-Hole, 9 AM shotgun start.


Southern - July 27 at Pleasant View Golf Course in Middleton. 18-Hole, 9 AM shotgun start,

For $500 at Northwest or Southern events, and $400 at Northeast, FFA Alumni chapters can be an Exclusive Regional Hole sponsor. You will also receive a registration for a foursome at the course of your choice. The Foundation recommends sponsoring a hole and using the registration as a gift for some of your chapter’s outstanding volunteers.

For more information, contact the Foundation at info@wisconsinffafoundation.org or 608-831-5058.

Perkins Funding Review Time

It is once again time for the discussion of Perkins funding. These are funds provided to the district specifically for Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses. Agriculture Education is included in this option and we are encouraging local Alumni members to reach out to their agriculture instructors to see how you can assist with the local needs assessment process. Agriculture pathways will need to have local business and industry speak up about the importance of your program at the local level so as Alumni members you could help make those connections.. If you have any questions we suggest contacting Agriculture Education Consultant Jeff Hicken at jeffrey.hicken@dpi.wi.gov

We Need Your Help

Wisconsin FFA Alumni membership is growing and we want to be sure to have informed and active members. We currently have over 26,000 members but we only have 8500 valid email addresses.

Both the state and national organizations rely on electronic media for all of their communications now, so it is vital that we get those emails updated. Also, please note that if someone unsubscribes from the email, they will lose touch with both organizations.

Please help your local leaders get the rosters updated. Share with your members and friends that we want to include them in our mailings.

In addition, if you know of some lifetime members in your community that may not be utilizing the computer for resources, please feel free to print a copy of the newsletter and share with them.

Resources

As the state website update is now complete, we continue to work out the bugs. We will be starting to update and modify all of the forms, applications and resources to be more readily available for our members and chapters. Be sure to check it regularly for updates and current information as well.

The website is https://wisconsinged.org/ and look for the Alumni and Support tab at the top.

As always, feel free to contact our Executive Director if you need additional assistance or have questions, at execdir@wisconsinffaalumni.org.. If there is something you would like to see on the website and it is not there, please let us know.

Additional Resources

If your chapter is looking for licensed FFA Alumni apparel please check out Fox Stamp, Sign, & Specialty, formerly Brenda’s Custom Creations. They offer a wide variety of selections and will custom create an order for you and your chapter. They provide a portion of their proceeds to Wisconsin FFA Alumni. Their website is: https://stores.inksoft.com/wi_ffa_alumni/shop/home

One of our convention sponsors, Youth Livestock, also has contacted us about contributing a portion of their sales this year to Wisconsin FFA Alumni. They feature fundraising options for quality gloves (the same ones that were sold in our auctions) and other FFA themed items. Feel free to contact Craig Henderson at 262-707-4112 or check out their website www.youthlivestock.com.
National FFA Alumni Updates

1. The National Regional Development Conferences (RDC) are leadership training events for local FFA Alumni leaders and members. This is a great chance to network with other Alumni throughout the region and the conferences are free. All you need to do is provide your transportation and hotel rooms if you choose. Friday evenings are designed specifically for officers and Saturday all day is for any members and officers.

Registration will close Feb. 23 for the Loveland, Colorado RDC to be held March 6-7. Registration will be open May 18-June 28 for the RDC in Lincoln, Nebraska July 10-11. More RDC info is available at www.ffa.org/gotordc.

2. The first round of 2020 grant applications are due March 2 (www.ffa.org/alumnigrants.) The other two grant deadlines are June 1 and Sept. 1. These are the grants that are available to any Alumni chapter in good standing and they range from $500 to $5000. Wisconsin has had several chapters win grants this past couple of years. We certainly recommend that you look into this option for funding.

3. National FFA is also offering a travel program each year for the Alumni members. This year the group will be participating in a tour through Northern California May 30-June 7, 2020. March 1 is the deadline to register and put a deposit on the Northern California Agriculture Travel Program. Check out www.ffa.org/alumnibenefits for more information. Next year they are planning to go to Spain.

There are also many other outstanding offers of discounts and benefits for FFA Alumni members throughout the nation. Be sure to check them out at the benefits link as well.

Spring Section Meetings

Wisconsin FFA Alumni Council Members are busy preparing for their spring section meetings. This is a great chance to be informed of state and section events, as well as, network with other members in your section. Each section will have the same business agendas regarding state activities, but the section information will vary according to their own needs. The schedule of meetings at this point includes:

- Section 1 - Sunday, March 29th, 2 PM at the Cameron Cafe in Cameron
- Section 2 - Thursday, April 23, 6 PM at UW River Falls campus
- Section 3 - To Be Determined
- Section 4 - To Be Determined

- Section 5 - Sunday, April 19th, 2 PM at Deforest High School.
- Section 6 - To Be Determined
- Section 7 - April 4th. social hour at 6:30 PM, followed by dinner and auction at Colby Lions Shelter.
- Section 8 - Thursday, March 26, 6 PM Social hour, 7:15 PM buffet dinner, meeting to follow at Northwoods in Marion, $15.00. Reservations due March 19 to Bobbie Jo Montgomery (715) 281-4625 or section8ffaalumni@gmail.com
- Section 9 - To Be Determined
- Section 10 - Thursday April 2, 7 PM at Pizza Ranch in Watertown

Please contact your local section reps if you have additional questions and watch the website and Facebook for updates. The events will be updated weekly at https://wisconsinaged.org/alumni/events/

Mark Your Calendars

Make plans now to attend the 41st Wisconsin FFA Alumni Convention, February 12-13, 2021 at the Hyatt Regency in Green Bay.

Calendar of Events

- Feb. 22-29 - National FFA Week
- Feb. 23 - RDC at Colorado Registration Deadline
- March 1 - Deadline to Register for California Trip
- March 2 - National Grant Applications Due
- March 3 - 4 - Eau Claire Farm Show
- March 3 - WLC Registration officially opens. Is your chapter going to sponsor anyone?
- March 6 - 7 - Loveland, Colorado RDC
- March 20 - 22 - Wisconsin FFA Alumni Council Retreat and Council Meeting
- March 28 - 2021 Convention Planning Meeting 9 AM
- March 31 - April 2 - WPS Farm Show @ Oshkosh
- April 16 - Kewaskum FFA Alumni Wine and Beer Tasting event at The Hitching Post, Kohlsville, WI
- May 18 - Registration opens for Lincoln, Nebraska RDC
- May 30 - June 7 - California Exchange Trip
- June 15 - 18 - Wisconsin FFA Convention in Madison.
Thank You to Our Sponsors

Our convention would not be nearly as successful as it is without the generous donations and contributions to our sponsors. Please help us thank the following for their donations:

**Diamond Sponsors - $2500 +**

Wisconsin State FFA Officer Team

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