

UPDATE

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Education

LATEST NEWS FROM FFA

National Officer Candidate Submissions Now Open for Approved State Staff

Visit ffa.org to submit your national officer candidate. Log in to MyFFA and click on NomCom State Staff Dashboard in your MyFFA menu. There you will see instructions for submitting your candidate. If you don't have a MyFFA account, you will need to register. Your candidate must also have a MyFFA account, so encourage him or her to sign up as soon as possible. Once your candidate's information has been submitted, he or she will be contacted to finish the application. Applications must be submitted and approved by state staff by Aug. 1, 2008. Contact Josh Bledsoe, jbledsoe@ffa.org.

Nominating Committee Nominations Now Open

Want to nominate a student to serve on this year's Nominating Committee?

Visit ffa.org and log in to MyFFA. Once logged in you will see a link to Nominating Committee in your MyFFA menu. Simply click on the link and fill out the form to nominate a state officer for the Nominating Committee. Nominations are due Aug. 1, 2008. Contact Josh Bledsoe, jbledsoe@ffa.org.

New Look for the Annual FFA Report

The Annual FFA Report will feature a new look this year. Seven states are currently piloting an online version of the report. Currently it takes several months to collect the Excel version of the annual report. By implementing the new process, we can:

- reduce staff time needed to complete the report
- reduce errors resulting from manual transfer of data
- produce detailed reports in a timely manner so that state staff can compare a multitude of agricultural education criteria

[Click here](#) to view the complete 2008 Annual Report questionnaire.

Watch the April Episode of FFA Today!

If you missed the RFD-TV broadcast of *FFA Today!* April 24, don't despair! The show is posted online at ffa.org, along with [previous episodes](#) and other great video stories. Want to know when we've added something new? Then sign up for our [FFA video feed](#) or subscribe via [iTunes](#).

Calling All Wannabe Movie Directors

Encourage your state's chapters to enter the Chapter Video Contest! Each month, a winner will be featured on the *FFA Today!* Television show and on ffa.org. Members can show why their chapter is special or make a video promoting FFA. They can even create a segment educating others about an

DATES TO REMEMBER

May 15: FFA Alumni membership deadline

June 13: State Presidents' Conference (SPC) registration forms due

June 15: Application deadline for American Degree, Honorary American Degree-Teacher and Honorary American Degree- Other

Application deadline for Stars Over America

Application deadline for Distinguished Service and VIP programs (applications must be received at the National FFA Center by the

important issue like environmental awareness or childhood obesity. Winners will be chosen based on quality of content, quality of video and adherence to guidelines. For past winners visit ffatoday.ffa.org.

CONVENTION

Lucas Oil Stadium Replaces the RCA Dome

FFA is excited to use Lucas Oil Stadium, the brand-new home of the Indianapolis Colts, for the following 2008 National FFA Convention events:

- State Photos
- Concerts
- Food Court
- Stars Over America and American Degree Recognition
- And more

You won't want to miss these events in this state-of-the-art facility!

Stars Over America Recognition Moves to Session 8 (Saturday Morning)

Those, who have attended previous conventions know, the Stars recognition has been held on Thursday evening. In 2008, the Stars Over America Pageant will move to Saturday morning and held in conjunction with the American FFA Degree ceremony.

This move has several advantages. The 16 Star finalists are chosen from this year's American FFA Degree recipients, will now be honored among their peers. Given that approximately 20,000 people will be in the stands when this recognition is held, more people can witness and celebrate when the Stars are named. FFA will also show video segments on each of the 16 Star finalists during Thursday evening's session so they may be seen by general session attendees as well.

National Band, Chorus and Talent Applications Now Available

Do you have students with musical abilities? The National FFA Band, Chorus and Talent programs are great ways for members to showcase their creative side while participating in the national convention. If you know someone who is interested, have them tune their horns, exercise their vocal chords or put on their dancing shoes and audition. It is an exhilarating experience they will never forget. Applications can be downloaded [here](#) and are due, July 1. Contact Dianne Kincaid, 317 802-4312 or dkincaid@ffa.org.

EDUCATOR NEWS

New Agricultural Education Video Available on NAAE Website

The National FFA Organization has produced a fantastic video designed to lead viewers through the many components of agricultural education, including the classroom element, experiential learning, leadership development and partnerships. It's called "Broad Fields, Bright Futures. This is Agricultural Education," and it is available now on the NAAE website, www.naae.org. or [click here](#) to access the video. This video is made possible through the sponsorship of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service.

STATE STAFF NEWS

State Presidents Conference Coming in July

This year's State Presidents Conference will be held on July 22-26, 2008, in Washington, D.C. [Click here](#) to find information on the conference and registration forms. Forms must be received by June 13. States that will not elect officers until after the registration deadline should, contact Shane Jacques, (317) 802-4315 or sjacques@ffa.org.

deadline date, not merely postmarked)

2008 Delegate Process applications due

June 30: H.O. Sargent Award applications due

July 1: Local Program Support Grant and Alumni Award applications due

National Band, Chorus and Talent applications due

July 15: Agriscience Teacher of the Year applications due

Agriscience Student of the Year applications due

Proficiency applications due

Application deadline for the Agri-Entrepreneurs hip program

July 15-20: Washington, D.C. FFA Alumni State Leaders

Got Issues? Delegates Want to Know!

The 2008 delegate process kicks off at the State Presidents Conference (SPC) this summer. State associations, may submit issues, they wish to be considered by SPC participants. Information on submitting issues is located on the [National FFA delegate webpage](#). The deadline for issues is June 15, and they, should be submitted to Tina Paris, tparis@ffa.org. The delegate webpage also has information regarding proposed constitutional amendments and membership dues increase to be considered by delegates at the 81st National FFA Convention this October.

MERCHANDISING

T-shirt Winners Announced

We are pleased to announce the winners of the Seventh Annual T-shirt Design Contest. More than 200 chapters from around the country submitted outstanding designs. Here are the winners are:

“Wears the Blue/Earns the Gold” from Big Foot FFA – Walworth, WI

“You in the Blue” from North Shelby FFA – Shelbyville, MO

“I Want His Jacket” from Marianna FFA – Marianna, FL

“Bright Future/I Believe” from Lindsay FFA – Lindsay, OK

“If Life is a Highway” from LaSalle FFA – Olla, LA

These chapters will receive 50 percent of the profits from the first year’s sales. This contest is a fun and challenging activity in which the entire chapter can participate and an excellent way to earn money. Congratulations to the winners!

Make Money for Your State!

The 2008 State Convention Merchandise Sales Program is a great opportunity to make extra money for your state association and play a key role in your state’s convention by providing FFA merchandise to those who attend. If you are interested in this sales program or have questions, contact Dawn Sharp, 317-802-4271 or dsharp@ffa.org.

Remember Blue and Gold

Banquet season is here! Think of the Blue and Gold catalogs when planning your banquet or state conventions. The Blue and Gold catalogs have everything you need: cups, plates, crepe paper, napkins, placemats, plaques, trophies, gifts...the list goes on. Shop www.ffaunlimited.org or contact a customer service representative, 888-332-2668.

Save and Relax with Wyndham Hotel Group

The Wyndham Hotel Group, featuring 10 hotel brands representing more than 6,500 hotels on six continents, is now offering a 10 percent discount off the “Best Available Rate” to FFA advisors, members, families and alumni. To obtain this discount through the [Wyndham Hotel FFA Discount Program](#), make your reservation online at www.Wyndham.com or call 877-670-7088 and provide the FFA corporate discount number 1000005345 at the time of booking. Note: If your hotel choice is a Wyndham Hotel or Resort, you must make reservations by phone to qualify for the discount.

Stay and Play With Wyndham Extra Holidays and Endless Vacation

Conference

2008 CDE Deadlines

June 1: Team Declaration Forms due

July 7: Team Certification Forms due (postmarked)

CDE Special Needs Requests due

Student Waiver Forms due (postmarked)

State Assistants Forms due (postmarked)

State Speaking Judges Forms due (postmarked)

Aug. 15: Prepared Public Speaking Manuscripts due

Aug. 15: Agriscience Fair Forms due

Sept. 15: Agricultural Communications Portfolios due

Agricultural Issues Portfolios due

Job Interview Portfolios due

Program

In addition to its hotel discount program, Wyndham is also offering a 10 percent discount on vacation accommodations and resort rentals. Check out locations and availability by visiting Extra Holidays, www.extraholidays.com, or Endless Vacation Rentals, www.EVRentals.com. When you are ready to make a reservation, call 877-670-7088 and listen for the prompts (#3 = Endless Vacation Rentals; #4 = Extra Holidays). Make sure to provide the FFA promotion code 100005345 at the time of booking to qualify for the discount.

ALUMNI

FFA Alumni Membership Deadline is May 15

All FFA Alumni membership rosters and dues must be submitted to the National FFA Alumni Office postmarked no later than May 15, 2008, to qualify for grants, awards and delegate counts. Contact 317-802-4332 or alumni@ffa.org with questions.

Are you Ready for the FFA Alumni State Leaders Conference?

The National FFA Alumni Association invites all FFA Alumni members to attend the 2008 State Leaders Conference, July 15-20, in Washington D.C. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet and discuss issues facing FFA and FFA Alumni with members from across the country. Participants will strengthen their affiliates and FFA chapters through workshops, congressional visits, speakers and group activities while at the same time taking in the sights and history of D.C. Visit www.ffa.org/alumni for more information. Note: Each state receives one grant to cover half the cost of the conference for an official state representative. Contact your state FFA Alumni leaders regarding the availability of this grant for your state.

Local Program Support Grant and Alumni Award Applications Due July 1

FFA chapters wishing to apply for one of the twenty, \$1,000 grants offered by the National FFA Alumni and Tractor Supply Company must submit applications postmarked by July 1, 2008. FFA chapters with an active, local FFA Alumni affiliate are eligible to apply for the grants. Click here to download the [application](#). The following FFA Alumni awards are due postmarked to National FFA by July 1, 2008: Outstanding/Pioneer Affiliate, Outstanding State Affiliate, Outstanding Achievement, National Distinguished Contributor and Scrapbooks. Visit www.ffa.org/alumni to download all award applications.

Can Hunger—Million-Can Challenge!

Kicking off its second year, the Toyota/National FFA Alumni Can Hunger—Million-Can Challenge will select 12 states by May 1 to host food drives. Watch for further announcements on whether your state is selected and how you can get involved, get rewarded and assist in the fight against hunger!

2008 National FFA Alumni Benefit Auctions

To raise funds for Washington Leadership Conference and collegiate scholarships, the National FFA Alumni will be holding:

- A timed online benefit auction (more details to come regarding dates and website)
- A silent benefit auction at the 2008 National FFA Convention
- A live benefit auction at the 2008 National FFA Convention, which will simultaneously broadcast via the internet for people at home to participate

Donations for the benefit auctions are currently being accepted! FFA Alumni

Marketing Plan
Portfolios due

Oct. 8:
Add/Delete
Forms due (by
5 p.m. EST)

**SHOP FFA
Marketplace
and FFA
Unlimited!**

would love to have outstanding student projects donated to the auction as a feature of the skills being taught in our Ag Ed programs. Click here to download the [donation form](#).

PREVIOUSLY REPORTED

Chapter Housing is Now Open

Advisors seeking housing for the national FFA convention should log in to MyFFA for Hotel Listings and the Chapter Housing Request Form. For details or questions, contact Ellen Williams, ewilliams@ffa.org.

Convention Registration Alert

As previously reported, the National FFA Board of Directors has set the 2008 National FFA Convention registration fee at \$40 for those who have pre-registered using the housing block. The registration fee will be \$50 for all others, including those who register on site or drive in daily.

During the past five years, FFA has seen a steady increase in the convention's operational costs as the convention has continued to evolve into a larger, more dynamic event. At the same time, sponsorship and other revenue have helped offset convention costs – up to a point. It's important to note that convention registration fees still cover only 22 percent of the overall cost of the convention.

As in the past, National FFA staff will continue to trim expenses and maximize the convention opportunity to ensure FFA members are provided a tremendous convention experience at the most affordable price possible.

Order FFA New Horizons for Your Classroom

We all know each issue of *FFA New Horizons* is packed with informative articles that prepare FFA members for an education and career in agriculture, so why not make the magazine a must-have for your classroom with an *FFA New Horizons* Class Pack? The National FFA Organization is now selling supplemental classroom sets of its award-winning bimonthly member magazine for only \$90 per year. Each set includes 30 copies of each issue of the magazine. You can receive and keep them, in your classroom as the perfect companion for your daily agricultural instruction. Give these issues away to prospective members or share them with school administrators and important visitors. You decide how to use them. Sign up now through Aug. 15 for a 2008/2009 school year set that begins with the September/October issue. For more information, contact Julie Woodard, 317-802-4310 or jwoodard@ffa.org.

Got a Head for Business?

The Agri-Entrepreneurship Education Program honors FFA members who have discovered market opportunities overlooked by others and have implemented a business or developed a business plan to take advantage of those opportunities. States should send all applications for national judging (and awarding of chapter-level checks), not just state winners. Award amounts have been increased this year at the state and chapter level. State awards are now \$250. Chapter level awards are now \$150 with no matching funds requirement. If a state does not have a state level competition, chapters may send applications directly to the national FFA. The national level award is still \$1,000 with an additional \$500 going to the winning student's chapter to develop agricultural entrepreneurship. [Click here](#) for application forms. The deadline is July 15. This program is sponsored by, USDA Rural Development as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. Contact Deborah Sellers, 317 802-4302 or dsellers@ffa.org.

New Resources Available for SAE and Skills, Competencies and Knowledge

Looking for an idea for a Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project? Visit the

[SAE homepage](#), and check out a new resource that will help teachers and students with SAE project ideas. On the same website are examples of skills, competencies and knowledge of past applicants for the proficiency awards along with an explanation of how to apply for various proficiency awards. Contact Rosalie Hunsinger, 317-802-4255 or rhunsinger@ffa.org.

New Grants and Cash Award, Through Living to Serve (LTS) Programs

The Living to Serve Program will provide more than \$130,000 in grants and awards to chapters or members nationwide. Grant applications for the next round of LTS project funding are now being accepted. The grants are provided by the National FFA Organization with grant funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Visit www.ffa.org/Itsgrants or click "Apply for Grants" on ffa.org.

LTS grants are available for the following FFA programs: Washington Leadership Conference (WLC), Partners in Active Learning Support (PALS), National Days of Service (NDoS) and the H.O. Sargent Award. In addition, the Million Hour Challenge program now offers more chapter awards for different service categories. Find out more about these great opportunities and the LTS state grants. Visit the website, or contact the LTS program staff, 317-802-4413 or lts@ffa.org.

Distinguished Service and VIP programs

FFA chapters! If you know of any individuals or organizations that deserve recognition under either the Distinguished Service or VIP programs, the application period is now open. To obtain an application form, [click here](#). Applications must be received at the National FFA Center (not just postmarked) by June 15. Contact Tyler Easton, 317-802-4335 or teaston@ffa.org.

State Officers Contact Information Needed

As we enter the state convention season, we ask that you submit contact information for your newly elected state officers. The submission of this information will ensure that each member of your officer team receives the *Bright Ideas* newsletter as well as access to the state officer website. This website will feature exciting new content beginning this spring. Your state office information can be submitted on this [form](#). If you have additional questions, contact Shane Jacques, sjacques@ffa.org.

American Degree Updates

The American Degree certification form (located on the state guide) has been reformatted to model the order the chapter roster information is submitted. This will allow states to copy and paste most of the certification fields. Submit the certification form electronically by e-mailing rhunsinger@ffa.org.

The e-mail address for the American Degree recipients is required for the OCR registration process. Make sure that all applications carry an e-mail address. Questions? Contact Rosalie Hunsinger, 317-802-4255 or rhunsinger@ffa.org.

Agri-Entrepreneurship Program

The Agri-Entrepreneurship program honors FFA members who have recognized market opportunities overlooked by others and implemented a

business or developed a business plan to make use of these opportunities. States should send all applications for national judging (and awarding of chapter level checks), not just state winners. Award amounts have been increased this year at the state and chapter level. State awards are now \$250. Chapter level awards are now \$150 with no matching funds requirement. If a state does not have a state level competition, chapters may send applications directly to the National FFA. The national level award is still \$1,000 with an additional \$500 going to the winning student's chapter to develop agricultural entrepreneurship.

[Application forms are available here.](#) The deadline for the Agri-Entrepreneurship program is July 15, 2008. This program is sponsored by the USDA Rural Development as a special project of the National FFA Foundation. Contact Deborah Sellers, 317-802-4302 or dsellers@ffa.org.

WLC Scholarships Awarded

The National FFA Alumni annually awards Washington Leadership Conference (WLC) Scholarships to local and state FFA Alumni affiliates based on their membership.

Scholarship packets were mailed to designated state alumni leaders Jan. 31, 2008

to be awarded to FFA members for the summer of 2008. For a list of scholarship amounts per state and the contact person, visit www.ffa.org/alumni. Once awarded, each scholarship has a special identifier that is to be entered in the online registration process in order to redeem the scholarship. The balance is due at the time of registration. For details on WLC and registration visit ffa.org.

Have You Signed up for WLC?

It's time to start planning for the 2008 Washington Leadership Conference (WLC). The 2008 conference dates are June 3-8, June 10-15, June 17-22, July 8-13, July 15-20 and July 22-27. New registration prices are Student \$600, Advisor Double \$635, Advisor Single \$830, Advisor Guest \$1,025 and Room Only \$525. Also new for 2008: The WLC registration process is online. Visit ffa.org today to register. Contact Crystal Hart, 317-802-4321 or chart@ffa.org, for registration questions.

Wanted: Award Judges

The National FFA is accepting nominations for judges for the Agricultural Proficiency Awards, Agriscience Awards and National Chapter Awards at the 2008 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis. The Agricultural Proficiency Awards judging will take place on Thursday, Oct. 23. All judges will be invited to attend the awards luncheon that day. The Agriscience Fair judging and Student Scholarship and Recognition Awards will be judged Wednesday, Oct. 22 and Thursday, Oct. 23. National Chapter Awards will be judged on Wednesday, Oct. 22. We are not able to cover any expenses for the judges. **Click [here](#)** for the nomination form. Fill it out and mail it to Rosalie Hunsinger, National FFA Organization, and P.O. Box 68960, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960 or fax it to her, 317-802-5255.

Indianapolis 500 Tickets Available

In Indy, the first sounds of spring come with the sound of engines as the city gets ready for the Indianapolis 500. The Indianapolis Motor Speedway is offering discounts to all FFA members who would like to attend the Indianapolis 500 and the Allstate 400 at the Brickyard. For details go to [FFA Marketplace](#).

The FFA Mission

FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.

The Agricultural Education Mission Agricultural Education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, and fiber and natural resources systems.

The National FFA Organization is a resource and support organization that does not select, control or supervise state association, local chapter or individual member activities. Educational materials are developed by FFA in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education as a service to state and local agricultural education agencies.

The National FFA Organization affirms its belief in the value of all human beings and seeks diversity in its membership, leadership and staff as an equal opportunity employer.

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Visit ffa.org for more information