

New VISIONS



The Official Newsletter of the National FFA Alumni Association

Volume 11, Issue 1 • March 2006

National Inservice Offers Inaugural Sessions for Alumni Leaders

The 2006 National Ag Ed Inservice was held February 2-5 in Indianapolis, Ind., assembling local, state, and national Team Ag Ed leaders in support of agricultural education. The inservice historically has offered educational tracks for state supervisors, executive secretaries, NAAE teacher leaders, teacher educators, and state camp directors. For the first time ever, the event provided sessions for Alumni leaders:

- building relationships with policy makers
- working with the media
- building community support
- introduction to effective training program for volunteer development
- risk management issues

The inservice offered a perfect forum for Alumni to interact with fellow Team Ag Ed leaders within their states and attend workshops pertaining to the FFA Alumni and agricultural education.



Alumni members are encouraged to speak with FFA state staff if they are interested in having a representative attend the 2007 inservice. For more information, contact J. Frank Saldaña at fsaldana@ffa.org or 317-812-4292.

Council Discusses National Issues

The National FFA Alumni Council also met during the inservice to discuss issues related to the affairs of the national association. The Council is researching several initiatives:

- liability insurance for affiliates
- new Alumni membership ceremony (similar to a greenhand or state degree ceremony)
- replacing paper rosters with an Excel format
- online volunteer training
- Alumni member survey: demographic information for future funding opportunities
- legislative advocacy action centers
- Alumni association name change

Council members and national Alumni staff would appreciate input on these issues. Members are asked to direct their questions, comments, and concerns to J. Frank Saldaña at fsaldana@ffa.org or 317-812-4292.

2006 National FFA Alumni Benefit Auctions

"Come join us. We don't want to hog all the fun!"

Indianapolis, Indiana

Silent Auction: Wednesday–Friday, October 25-27

Live Auction: Friday, October 27

Participants generated more than \$97,000 at last year's benefit auctions for both Washington Leadership Conference and collegiate scholarships!

You can make the 2006 auctions an even

greater success and impact even more student lives by donating to the event. Additional information and donation forms are available by visiting

www.ffa.org/alumni/ or by contacting Amber Smyer at 317-802-4294 or asmeyer@ffa.org.



Calendar 2006

Dates listed are when items must be postmarked to the National Office

May 15

Rosters due to qualify for grants, awards, and delegate counts

May 15

Legion of Merit applications

June 1

State Leaders Conference registration

July 1

Local Program Support Grant applications

Outstanding/Pioneer Affiliate, Outstanding State Affiliate, Outstanding Achievement, and National Distinguished Contributor Nomination applications; and Scrapbooks

National Alumni Council nominations

July 15

Auction donation forms for items to appear in catalog

July 11-16

State Leaders Conference, Nashville, TN

October 25-27

Alumni Silent Auction, Indianapolis, IN

October 26-27

Alumni Convention, Indianapolis, IN

October 27

Alumni Live Auction, Indianapolis, IN

Visit our website at www.ffa.org/alumni/ to download updated award applications. Send requests for forms to bhaig@ffa.org or phone 317-802-4293 to have forms mailed via the U.S. Postal Service.

ROUND TABLE

National FFA Alumni Association Commits \$100,000 to Fund Money to assist Ag Ed community address strategic opportunities and challenges

Over the next eight years, the National FFA Alumni Association plans to contribute \$100,000 to a fund created to address the broader strategic challenges of the agricultural education community. The National FFA Organization established the new Strategic Ag Ed Opportunities Fund because current operational funds and resources do not provide the wherewithal to address future strategic opportunities and challenges.



J. Frank Saldaña

A target of \$5 million was set, beginning with a \$1 million donation from accumulated reserves of the National FFA Foundation. All investment earnings, including a set-aside fee, will be restricted to building the fund until the \$5 million target level is reached. Individual project applications will be limited to amounts ranging in size from \$50,000-\$500,000. Projects will only be authorized when the fund balance exceeds \$1.5 million.

The fund will be restricted to paying the major expenditures required to create new program areas, review and overhaul existing program areas, serve new customer groups, build partnerships, match major sponsor contributions for programs, serve as seed money for grant applications, or invest in opportunities for agricultural education. The fund will not be used for organizational operating expenses, for replacement capital spending, or as an operating reserve to assist organizations. It will only be used for large developmental projects that provide long-term value for every facet of the agricultural education community.

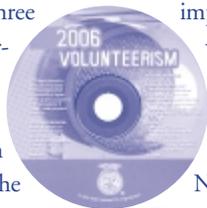
The National Council for Agricultural Education will oversee the application process. Agricultural education related organizations eligible for Foundation funding are encouraged to submit proposals. For more information, contact the Council at **800-772-0939**.

New Resource Assists with Volunteer Development

The National FFA Alumni Association, in cooperation with Purdue University's Youth Development and Agricultural Education Department, has produced a new CD-ROM featuring ten training modules that cover a wide range of volunteerism topics. The training modules have been adapted for three different audiences: preservice, inservice, and a special volunteer mode for training FFA Alumni members.

The new resource offers users an easy-to-navigate screen that presents the answers to questions and timely information for agricultural educators and volunteers. Each module includes the following components:

- One lesson plan and PowerPoint®
- Supplemental materials and editable forms



Modules contain information and materials that can be presented to groups of volunteers in various workshop settings or to individuals. Modules include forms and resources that can be edited to meet a chapter or affiliate's specific needs and to ensure the implementation of a safe and successful volunteer program.

Training sessions on volunteerism will be available at the State Leaders Conference and National FFA Alumni Convention.

The CD-ROMs will be distributed during these workshops. Individuals and Alumni affiliates may also access these modules online at www.ffa.org/alumni/. For additional information, contact **317-802-4292**.



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Please contact Council members directly if you are interested in having them give a presentation or attend local and state FFA Alumni functions.

State Leaders Conference Promotes Building Partnerships

The National FFA Alumni Association invites all members to attend the 2006 State Leaders Conference (SLC) July 11-16 in Nashville, Tenn. The conference theme is the "Power of Partnership," and participants will explore how to build partnerships through workshops, speakers, and group activities.

Conference Details, Costs

Registrants will receive conference supplies, local transportation, five nights/six days of hotel stay (double occupancy), and the majority of their meals. The total cost of the conference is

\$400 (a \$150 registration fee, plus a \$250 conference fee). Each state association may send one official representative, who will only have to pay the \$150 registration fee. The official state representative's conference fee will be covered by a \$250 SLC grant awarded by the National FFA Alumni Association. Additional Alumni members are welcome to attend. Participants must submit their registration fee of \$150 to National FFA Alumni Association **postmarked no later than June 1**. The balance due may be paid with the registration or during the conference check-in on July 11 in Nashville. In addition, spouses

and family members are welcome to attend for a special fee, which will include lodging, tours, group meals, and social activities.

For details and registration forms, contact your state Alumni leaders or visit the Alumni website at www.ffa.org/alumni/.



NEWS

you can USE

“News You Can Use” is a new column designed to keep Alumni members and volunteers informed of valuable and timely information that can be used to support their local agricultural education programs.

National Convention Judges Needed

The National FFA Organization is accepting nominations for volunteer judges for the agricultural proficiency awards, stars, agriscience awards, and national chapter awards at the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Ind., this fall. **Nominations are due June 1.** Nominees will receive official invitations mid-summer and judging packets in mid-September. Judging will occur on Wednesday, October 25 and Thursday, October 26, 2006. Expenses for the judges will not be covered. Nominations can be submitted on forms available online by visiting www.ffa.org/statestaff/documents/conv_judgenomform.pdf, or by contacting Rosalie Hunsinger at **317-802-4255** or rhunsinger@ffa.org. Forms should be mailed to Rosalie Hunsinger, National FFA Organization, P.O. Box 68960, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960, or faxed to her at 317-802-5255.

Alumni Convention Moves to Indianapolis

Indianapolis, Ind., is eagerly awaiting the arrival of the National FFA and FFA Alumni Conventions in 2006 and the city is already bubbling with anticipation and excitement.

Indianapolis is a popular, award-winning destination for meetings and events for a number of very good reasons. The downtown convention district is connected, clean, safe, and easy to navigate. The National FFA Organization headquartered on the city's northwest side is a valuable member of the local community and an important city partner. Indianapolis has pledged to provide convention participants with a welcome and spirited experience in support of the organization's goals of developing premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. For information on the area's tourist activities, housing, and more, visit www.ffa.org/indymove/index.htm.

Fundraiser Good for the Environment, FFA Chapters, Alumni Affiliates

FFA Recycles is a great program not only for raising money, but also for reinforcing the role of FFA and Alumni members as good community stewards of the land. New marketing materials sport attractive, bold graphics designed to get consumers' attention and participation. The marketing kit, located at www.ffa-recycles.com/marketing.asp, includes a poster, sell sheet, press release, and a complete step-by-step guide. And the best part is that it is free, simple, and profitable!

Visit www.ffa-recycles.com to get the facts on e-waste, to learn about the opportunities in remanufacturing, and to learn how easy it will be for chapters and affiliates to raise money throughout the year.



“Agriculture in America” Essay Contest (for high school juniors)

Archer Daniels Midland Company (ADM) and *American Heritage Magazine* recognize the importance of preparing our nation's youth for their roles as tomorrow's leaders. As such, ADM is announcing the second year of the “Ag in America” scholarship contest, which requires students to submit a short essay on the importance of agriculture. Grand prize is a \$2,000 government bond (current value) for use towards education. The winning essay may be published in *American Heritage* magazine. For full contest rules, contact Jennifer Walker at Jennifer_Walker@admworld.com, 217-424-7465, or www.admworld.com.

Television Program Offers Air Time to Promote FFA

The producer of a new one-hour agricultural television program entitled “This Week in Agribusiness” has invited FFA officers and advisors to promote their chapters. The segment “FFA Chapter Tribute” will feature a new FFA chapter weekly for about 60-90 seconds. Submissions can include anything about the chapter and 4-6 (and no more than 10) digital photos, which will appear on-screen as famed farm broadcaster Max Armstrong presents information about the featured chapter. The segment is free and requires only minutes to submit information. Visit the show's website at www.agbizweek.com/html/contact.htm and complete the “Chapter Tribute” form located under the “Contact Us” section. Contact Tracy Steffen at **815-695-5273** or tracyjoe@sbcglobal.net with questions.

The segment airs on a first-come, first-serve basis. Chapters will receive a confirmation upon receipt of their information, including the weekend their chapter will appear on the show. The show airs on RFDtv four times a weekend and is hosted by Armstrong and celebrated farm broadcaster Orion Samuelson. The show is located at Channel 9409 on the Dish Network or Channel 379 on DirecTV, and airs at 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Saturday, 5 p.m. on Sunday, and 8 a.m. on Monday (all Central Time).



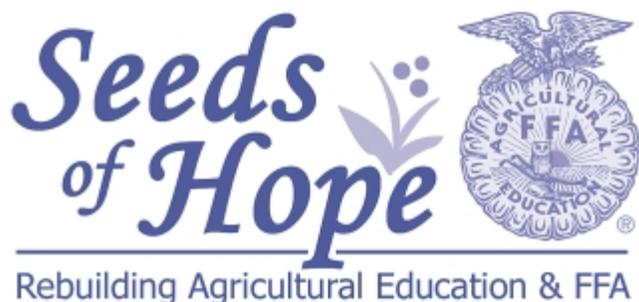
National FFA Alumni Supports NAAE Legislative Action Center

The National FFA Alumni Association continues to sponsor the National Association of Agricultural Educators Legislative Action Center by providing partial funding for its advocacy efforts. Alumni members can visit the NAAE website (www.naae.org), where they can contact state legislators, congressional members, and the White House. The site also provides information on legislation, candidates, and a media guide.



“Seeds of Hope” Campaign to Rebuild the Gulf Coast

During 2005, the National FFA Organization created a fundraising campaign to rebuild agricultural education and FFA programs in the hurricane-stricken states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. An estimated 120 FFA chapters and schools, more than 5,000 FFA members and their families, and 150 agricultural education teachers experienced severe damage or total destruction to their homes, facilities, and school projects, including human and personal property loss. Visit www.ffa.org to learn more details or to contribute online.



The National FFA Alumni Association, represented by Sonny Deke (at far left), contributed \$10,000 to the campaign during the first session of the 2005 National FFA Convention.

On behalf of the people of Mississippi, I express my heartfelt thanks for all of the donations of materials, clothing, food, time, manpower, and finances that FFA and FFA Alumni members have given to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. I especially thank those who contributed to the FFA “Seeds of Hope” program for their generosity in helping their fellowman during a time of adversity. We have been touched by the tremendous outpouring of generosity, love, prayers, and concerns shown to the people of Mississippi. Your compassion has lifted the hearts and spirits of so many people. You will always have a warm spot in our hearts.

Monte Ladner
Mississippi FFA Alumni Association

Guidelines, Costs for Inserts to *New Visions*

Rates:

- A price of \$43 will be assessed per 1,000 state newsletters folded and inserted into *New Visions* (e.g., 2,000 inserts, \$86).
- A fee of \$40 per 1,000 state newsletters for postal form processing will be assessed per issue (e.g., 2,000 inserts, \$80).
- Cost for duplication per 1,000 inserts is listed below. (If this service is needed, please notice deadlines at bottom right.) Inserts will be produced only on 20# white bond paper with black ink.

Quantity	1-sided	2-sided
1,000	\$25.00	\$40.00
2,000	\$50.00	\$80.00
3,000	\$75.00	\$120.00
4,000	\$100.00	\$160.00
5,000	\$125.00	\$200.00

NEW 2006 Production Specifications:

- Final pre-printed page size: **8” x 10 3/8”** (with or without bleeds).
- If duplication is needed, camera ready art will be accepted in hard copy form only (line screen is 133 to 150 lpi, 600 dpi minimum). Art submitted in any other format will require additional work and incur additional charges.
- Art containing colors other than black will also incur additional art charges.

Deadlines for 2006 editions of *New Visions*:

Send art for duplication or preprinted newsletters to Hands on Mailing, Binding and Fulfillment, 943 Woodley Road, Dayton, Ohio, 45403, c/o Mark Kuns. Ph: 937-254-9174.

Issue	Preprinted	Duplication Needed
April-June	May 1	April 24
July-September	August 14	August 7
October-December	November 8	November 1

Farm Show Raises Funds for Greenhouse

Event builds goodwill around a common goal

In 2003, Wilber-Clatonia, Neb., FFA Alumni members began to search for ways to construct a greenhouse for the agricultural education program. One way for members to make this dream a reality was to cooperate with school administrators and leaders. As part of the collaborative venture, Alumni pledged to raise \$10,000 and provide the labor for construction. Little did they know the greenhouse project would lead to the creation of a unique fundraiser, which in turn would strengthen member morale and teamwork.

Raising Funds Fast

This commitment presented the affiliate with a difficult challenge of raising a lot of money over a short period of time. Previously, Alumni fundraisers consisted of activities that only produced a few hundred dollars, which meant it could take several years before the affiliate could raise enough funds to build the greenhouse.

In December 2003, members initially began soliciting agribusinesses for donations to help with the greenhouse project. Results were mixed. Some members and agriculture instructor Dennis Kenning struggled with the notion of asking area business leaders and owners for sizable donations, without providing them with something in return for their generosity. This situation was only compounded by the fact that many early business donations consisted of product instead of cash.

"This made a lot of sense for business owners since they wanted to put the product in customer hands," Kenning explained. "One business donated 30 bags of corn seed."

This situation left members with a second challenge of marketing the donated product.

Solution Found

It was the affiliate president who suggested a solution to both dilemmas—host a farm show

with a silent auction. At first, Kenning was reluctant to support the idea because he didn't want to divide local members. While teaching at another school, he had proposed to reinstitute a young farmer agribusiness banquet. The proposal unintentionally pitted Alumni members against each other. Earlier failed attempts by newspapers and radio stations to hold a farm show also caused Kenning to be more cautious.

"Contrary to my experience, Alumni were supportive of the farm show concept because we needed to raise funds quickly," Kenning said. "It provided a venue to market donated items."

The difference between this effort and previous ones was that it consisted of Alumni



Promises Kept. Alumni members successfully raised the needed \$10,000 from the farm show (see top photo), and kept their pledge to provide the labor for the greenhouse construction (bottom photo).

(farmers and agribusiness owners) who would host the farm show. "This made a lot of sense since farmers know what farmers want in an agricultural show," Kenning added.

The show was scheduled for February 2004, during a time when most members could devote energy to planning and organizing it. Alumni formed committees around the show's various needs: exhibitor sales, lunch, door prizes, silent auction, and educational programs, which were offered twice daily.

"The activity allowed members to work together as a group and with me as local advisor," Kenning said. "Each member had a job to do and a reason for doing it. They prepared well for the event, and that's why it was successful. They even did extra things to make the show a success."

For example, members provided orange juice, coffee, and rolls to exhibitors every morning before the show opened. They baked homemade cookies for lunch and provided entertain-

ment, which consisted of a two-piece polka band comprised of the school's superintendent and head custodian.

The response on behalf of business owners was overwhelming. Tables and exhibitor space sold quickly, leaving no place for more displays. As a result, several exhibitors took advantage of the outdoor space to display their wares. Wilber-Clatonia Alumni members generated \$10,000 with the farm show event, which fulfilled their financial obligation to the greenhouse project.

Hindsight Offers Lessons

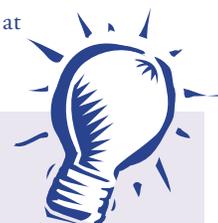
In looking back on the experience, Kenning realizes the farm show served as a vehicle for promoting the local program and the school system. Media coverage for the event was exceptional with reporters from one television station, three radio stations, and four major newspapers in attendance.

"It was a super public relations activity. The show theme, 'Celebrating Agriculture 2004,' served as a great headline to the success and importance of area agriculture," Kenning noted. "The show connected buyers with sellers, improved agribusiness-farmer relations, and ultimately increased agribusiness trade in the area."

Post-event surveys revealed that vendors were extremely positive about the farm show. Immediately following the 2004 show, an additional six businesses requested to participate in the 2005 event.

What this project did for the local Alumni affiliate is even more incredible, Kenning insists: "Alumni seemed to enjoy the work and the challenge. Membership increased because people became aware of our purpose and wanted to become supporters. Besides a real sense of accomplishment, we created a very positive image of the Alumni, our school, and our community. The project challenged my Alumni to be creative, to dream, and to obtain their goal."

For more information about the show, contact Dennis Kenning at dkenning@esu6.org or Lloyd Bell, associate professor at the University of Nebraska at lbell@unlnotes.unl.edu.



New Visions staff are interested in obtaining and featuring any activities used locally to build successful Alumni affiliates and agricultural education programs. Send ideas or activities to the National FFA Alumni Association at P.O. Box 68960, Indianapolis, IN 46268-0960, via fax at 317-802-5292, or via e-mail at fsaldana@ffa.org.

Grant Strengthens Instruction with Laptop Computers Purchase

Today computers are an integral part of instruction at the Agricultural and Food Sciences Academy (AFSA) of Vadnais Heights, Minn. Less than six months ago, the academy owned *no* laptop computers, an impediment to AFSA's heavy emphasis on off campus research based agriscience projects. To complicate matters, record books were stored on the academy's computer, making it difficult for students to access them outside of class time.

To remedy the situation, the AFSA FFA Chapter applied for a National FFA Alumni Local Program Success Grant. The goal was to purchase laptop computers to permit students, chapter competitive teams, and advisors to work more efficiently both on and off campus. AFSA received a

\$1,000 grant toward the cost of two refurbished laptops, a move that extended the academy's purchasing power. Affiliate and chapter funds covered the remainder of the laptop purchase price.

AFSA's successful application listed five specific goals, which its writers maintained could be achieved by acquiring two laptop computers:

Goal 1: To improve student SAE (supervised agricultural education program) records.

In AFSA's grant application, instructor Nathan Russell contended the "quality of SAE records would greatly increase" because students with home access to laptop computers could conduct and record research from their agriscience SAEs. Instructors work with the school's 160 students to conduct many types of projects, such as comparing irrigation systems. "Students will now be able to conduct 'mobil' research by utilizing the computers," he adds.

Russell predicts a laptop loan program will boost the number of students applying for proficiency award and degrees. Eligible students who don't own a computer or have class time to work on their record books can now complete them at home. He asserts the program will allow students to track their SAE progress, maintain better records, and use this information to complete applications successfully.

Goal 2: To enhance student access to technology for competitive events.

Career development events permit students to showcase the skills they have developed through team presentation. Many students competing in these events use presentation software like PowerPoint®, programs that require a laptop or projector to operate.

"With access to a laptop, students can use software to give professional presentations and develop life skills employers are seeking," Russell says.

Goal 3: To provide access to a laptop for recruitment, Food for America, and school presentations.

AFSA is a charter high school, and recruitment is essential to keep the academy's enrollment at healthy levels. Staff and current students use PowerPoint to display pictures to explain AFSA's curriculum and activities to prospective students. Students use laptops to accentuate Food for America presentations, a major component of the chapter's program of activities.

Goal 4: To allow access to a laptop for off campus activities (officer retreats and similar activities).

In 2005, AFSA was named the Minnesota winner of the National Chapter Award and the national winner of the award's community development area. To remain competitive for this award, the FFA chapter needs to maintain a program of activities that demands a great deal of planning. "Laptop computers will allow us to take advantage of offsite planning meetings like officer retreats," Russell explains. "A great deal of planning and reflection takes place at these meetings. Recording information quickly and in an efficient manner will assist in future planning."

Goal 5: To support the efficient management of a school-based business. In 2005, AFSA launched a student-run hydroponics lettuce and tomato business. Russell says the two laptop computers are used to track production practices and expenses, to make educated decisions from the collected data, and to establish and build markets for produce.

The laptop loan procedure is still being refined. Students and parents sign a computer waiver form before receiving a laptop. Computer privileges are revoked for misbehavior in class and school activities.

Russell says the purchase of the two laptops has given more students access to technology. "With current budgets, the purchase of these computers would not have been possible without the grant," he says.

For more information on the program contact Nathan Russell at 651-259-4965 or nrussell@agacademy.com.



LPS Grant



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NEWSLETTER



Building quality programs and putting school-to-career in action

7 Keys to Success in Agricultural Education

Program Planning

3 Components	3 Strategies
Instruction	Partnerships
SAE	Marketing
FFA	Professional Growth

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GRAB LIFE BY THE HORNS 
DODGE



**FARMS ARE PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.
BUT DAD'S KEEPING THE RAM.**

DODGE. PROUD SPONSOR OF THE FFA. For over 50 years, our commitment to the FFA and its scholarships and educational programs has helped keep many a farm "in the family." But if Dad's keeping the Ram, don't worry, we've got a set of keys waiting for you. For more information about our vehicles, visit dodge.com or call 800-4ADODGE.