A Word from Collin

The Major State Officers spent the start of the year busy in the office and on the road announcing the district Golden Owl winners, meeting with industry friends, preparing for State FFA Convention, working on designing shirts and buttons, lining up workshop presenters and so much more!

A new year is an opportunity to grow, learn a new skill or just try something new. In the upcoming year, FFA members have many chances to get involved with National FFA Week by posting about their experiences in FFA. Record Book season comes with many long hours in the agriculture room working hard to prepare for State and American FFA Degree interviews and Proficiency Awards this spring.

March also brings two of the Majors favorite events of the year: Ag. Legislative Day and Banquet Season! Ag. Legislative Day allows members from all over the state to meet with their legislators and talk about what FFA and agriculture education means to them at the state capital in the second largest gathering of Illinois FFA members of the year! During banquet season, Majors will travel to all corners of state at local chapter banquets to give speeches and recognize members achievements at the local level.

We look forward to seeing members this year at Ag. Legislative Day, during chapter banquets, and especially at State FFA Convention! I hope everyone’s year is off to a great start as we Envision 2020!
Illinois FFA has many generous sponsors all across the state that support Illinois Foundation FFA. These donations and sponsorships help provide opportunities to members to compete in career and leadership development events and allow the Illinois FFA Center in Springfield, to continue to serve the state Association. These donations also help the Illinois FFA State Officer team travel around the state and serve the members. Our supporters and sponsors are pivotal to the success of Illinois Association FFA. We are grateful for the contributions that these companies and organizations make in order to support students as they develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success.

**Bronze Sponsors $6,000 - $9,999**

**Illinois Corn Growers:** If you saw the E85 Corn Van around the state this year, that is thanks to the Illinois Corn Growers! In addition to sponsoring one of the five FFA fleet vehicles, the Illinois Corn Growers and Illinois Corn Marketing Board summer sponsor a trip for the State Officer team to go to Washington D.C., where they learn about National Corn Growers during their annual meeting, learn about the nation’s history and meet with legislators to talk about agricultural issues facing Illinois Farmers.

**Vincennes University:** Indiana’s first college, Vincennes has been a long-time supporter of Illinois FFA at State Convention and sponsoring Convention Sessions for many years.
**5 STAR SPONSORS $5,000 - $5,999**

**Becks Hybrids:** Becks supports Illinois FFA as a convention sponsor for award winner meal functions.

**Southern Illinois University:** College of Agricultural Sciences - In the summer, SIUC sponsors a state officer meeting in Carbondale. Their contribution includes all the housing and activities during that meeting. SIUC also co-sponsors the State Convention t-shirts.

---

**4 STAR SPONSORS $4,000 - $4,999**

**Farm Credit Illinois:** Sponsors the Diversified Agricultural Production Proficiency Award Area and the Farm Credit NewsRoom at State Convention.

**United Animal Health:** Sponsors the Beef Production Entrepreneur and Swine Production Entrepreneur Proficiency Award Areas.

**Blain’s Supply, Inc:** Programmatic support for Illinois FFA in a variety of areas.

---

**3 STAR SPONSORS $3,000 - $3,999**

**Mycogen Seeds:** Programmatic support for Illinois FFA in a variety of areas.

**CSX:** Transportation is important to keep the agricultural industry moving and successful. CSX is vital to keep the Illinois FFA service project going. CSX this year sponsored many National FFA service grants that allowed Illinois FFA to purchase supplies for “Illinois FFA has your Back.” They sponsor the Safety Proficiency Award Area.

---

**2 STAR SPONSORS $2,000 - $2,999**

**Illinois Soybean Association:** Fiber &/or Oil Proficiency Award Area Sponsor

**Illinois Specialty Grower Association:** Specialty Crop Production Proficiency Award Area Sponsor

**The Maschhoffs:** Home and Community Development Proficiency Award Area Sponsor

**United Prairie:** Agronomy CDE Sponsor

**Illinois Agri-women, Inc:** Agricultural Communications CDE Sponsor

**Illinois Ag in the Classroom:** Agricultural Education Proficiency Award Area Sponsor

**Illinois Farmer Today:** Agricultural Communication Summit Sponsor

**Illinois Nutrient Research and Education:** Environmental and Natural Resources Proficiency Award Area Sponsor

**Illinois Pork Producers Association:** Swine Production Placement Proficiency Award Area Sponsor
1 STAR SPONSORS
$1,000 - $1,999

1986-87 State Officer Team
A-C Central FFA Chapter
Albert K. Krause, Jr. Family Trust
Betty Polley
Boone County Fair Association
Bureau Valley FFA Chapter
Carlinville FFA Chapter
Central - Camp Point FFA Chapter
Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences
David Catron
David Maurer
Decatur Convention & Visitors Bureau
Eathington Angus
Edwards County FFA Chapter
Friends of the Scales Mound FFA
Grain Systems Division of the GSI Group
Iroquois West FFA Chapter
Jeff Speer
Jesse, Mary, Ava & Eli Faber
Land of Lincoln Purebred Livestock Association
Macomb FFA Alumni Association
Mark & Mindy Bunselmeyer
Mendota FFA Alumni
Milford FFA Alumni
Putnam County FFA Alumni
Stephen & Erin Jeschke
Stillman Valley FFA Chapter
Stockton FFA Alumni
Sycamore FFA Chapter
Taylorville FFA Chapter
Todd & Stephanie Shively
Tri-Point FFA Alumni
Watseka FFA Alumni Association

Thanks to the incredible support of donors to Illinois Foundation FFA, members across the state are building the leadership skills to be the future leaders of our state, nation and world. Your support is building extraordinary opportunities that engage students in experiential learning opportunities that provide them the skills for personal and professional success. We invite you to join us at the 92nd Illinois FFA State Convention, June 9-11, 2020 to celebrate student achievements and thank you for your incredible support.
In the middle of the third largest city in the United States, many miles from the nearest corn or bean field and not a single cow anywhere in sight, farmers and industry professionals met to discuss policy and direct their organization at the 2019 Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. The theme of the meeting was “Stronger Together” to highlight Illinois farmer’s strength and resilience during the previous growing season full of rain. During this four day conference at the Palmer House in Chicago, members were able to attend General Sessions; listen to Micro and Macro talks, which are TED talk style settings on large and small agricultural topics from new herbicide resistance in waterhemp to mental health awareness and how to spot those signs; and watch young leaders debate in discussion meets. During policy meetings, Farm Bureau members voted and discussed bills such as the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, the Renewable Fuel Standard, global climate change, pesticide labels and elected new District Board of Director Representatives.

While Farm Bureau members were busy discussing policy, the Illinois FFA State Officers and 4-H youth representatives were learning more about Illinois Farm Bureau and maintaining their Youth Education in Agriculture Committee (YEA) duties. Once the YEA Committee arrived at the Palmer House their work began. During the Opening General Session, the FFA Officers and 4-H representatives carried in the flags for the National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance. Following the National Anthem, Illinois Association FFA State Reporter, Brodee McCormick, delivered remarks about his perspective on the meeting theme and FFA’s relationship with Illinois Farm Bureau. The following days, Majors sat in on General Sessions and watched discussion meets.

Following the Conference, the Majors met with industry friends: ADM and Allendale. ADM is a global food processing and commodities trading corporation and Illinois FFA sponsor. Allendale, Inc. is a broker and market strategies resource for farmers to better their family farm and manage their finances. During this trip Majors were able to make valuable industry connections, network and spread the work of Illinois FFA and agriculture education.
What’s your favorite holiday? Christmas? Thanksgiving? Easter? Halloween? While all of those holidays are great, our favorite holiday is FFA Week! What better way to celebrate this life-changing organization than with a whole week of festivities! Kicking off on February 22 and finishing out on February 29, there will be events going on all week long at the chapter, state and national levels.

Everyone, and I mean EVERYONE, is encouraged to participate in the daily Illinois FFA Social Media Challenge that highlights your FFA career and journey. On Saturday, February 22, 2020, a profile picture filter will be available to use on Facebook to show your support for FFA.

The excitement doesn’t stop at the Social Media Challenge. During FFA week, Gage, Brodee and Emma will be completing the final week of chapter visits for the year in Section 8! After not traveling on the road for the past couple of months, they are ready to get back out and continue teaching Illinois FFA members the importance of perspectives and setting life long goals!

FFA Week Social Media Challenge

- **Startin’ Off Sunday:** Post a picture of you wearing your FFA jacket for the first time or a picture of you at your first FFA event.
- **Make a Difference Monday:** Share a time that you or your chapter made a difference in the lives of others.
- **Tradition Tuesday:** Tell the tale about an FFA tradition that you and your chapter have.
- **Who’s Your Owl Wednesday:** Share who your FFA advisors are and why they’re so important to you.
- **Thankful Thursday:** Recognize all the things that you’re thankful for. Such as but not limited to your parents, mentors, supporters, family, and friends.
- **Future Friday:** Share what your future plans are and what you’re hoping to accomplish.
- **Snapshot Saturday:** Look back through all of your old pictures and find a “snapshot” of your favorite FFA week memory or FFA memory in general.
While those three are visiting Section 8, Lane and Collin will be traveling all over the state attending FFA Week events. Is your chapter having an FFA Week event and would like a Major State Officer to attend? If so, request them! During FFA Week, Illinois Foundation FFA covers the costs of the state officers’ attendance so the chapter doesn’t have to. Whether it’s a chapter game night or a dinner, we would love to attend!

The final exciting piece about FFA week is the Illinois Foundation FFA Collection Drive. Throughout the year there have been various drives conducted to raise funds for the Foundation. The Illinois Foundation FFA provides members all across the state with awards, scholarships, leadership experiences and opportunities for growth. We greatly appreciate all that Foundation does for us and all that they give back. It is now our turn to give back to them. Check Facebook throughout the week for the various opportunities to give back to Illinois Foundation FFA!
By: Gage Miller

As we go into the start of the new decade, many may wonder where 2020 will take us. As we look forward, we may have to make some important decisions that could affect us for the rest of our lives. Some may have to decide where we want to attend college, while others might be looking for their dream job. Whatever “success” may look like to you, we all are going to have to start Envisioning what we want our lives to look like in the next decade.

While American farmers could be looking back on the dreaded 2019 planting and harvest season, they are focused on the present and looking ahead. Envisioning success can be as simple as preparing for the next crop that will feed the world. They don’t know what the 2020 season will bring, but they can be prepared and optimistic.

Along with American farmers, the National FFA Organization and Illinois Association FFA are Envisioning the future of 2020 and beyond. Illinois FFA has grown with 35 new chapters and membership has grown 8% over the past 10 years. Our states membership recently exceeded 19,000 and is now sitting at a record 353 FFA chapters. Could we be at 25,000 members in another 10 years? It’s clear that improvement is not just about an increase in membership, as we have seen a lot of expansion throughout the years.

Improved agriculture curriculum in the classroom, more participation in FFA competitions and agriculture programs switching to two educators instead of one are just a few of the impactful changes being made. I know my teammates and I made it our personal goal to leave FFA members with the mindset of valuing diverse perspectives. We developed our chapter visit to recognize our diverse perspectives within agriculture and how they all have a place within this industry. 2020 will most definitely include highs and lows, it’s on us to do what we can, with what we have, where we are.

"As I look back on our past years I can only Envision the many great things yet to come."
-Collin E. White

"More chapters, more members, more opportunities."
-Brodee McCormick
It’s the most wonderful time of the year, record book season! Each active FFA member is required to maintain record books during their Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). Also, throughout a student’s time in FFA, they have the opportunity to obtain five different degrees; Discovery, Greenhand, Chapter, State and American. FFA members must meet various requirements to qualify for each degree. Completing a SAE record book, and obtaining each degree during your time in FFA requires a lot of hard work and dedication. Many members also participate in proficiency interviews where they compete against other students with projects in the same category as their own. Completing a record book and being interviewed can be daunting, so keep reading for tips and tricks on how to be a successful proficiency competitor.

FFA members learn valuable skills from their SAE. They gain real-world experiences and extensive knowledge of their project area. They also learn communication skills that help prepare them for job interviews and careers in the future. Good luck to all FFA members competing this record book season!

**Top 5 Tips for Record Keeping and Interviewing:**
1. Keep up with records. It can be easy to get busy, but students who stay on top of entering information into their book thank themselves later!
2. Use a method that makes sense. When setting up your record book, be sure it is easy to navigate and understand.
3. When you enter the interview, start by introducing yourself with a firm handshake and keep good posture. How you present and hold yourself is a key component of your interview success.
4. Practice, Practice, Practice. When preparing for proficiency interviews, find alumni or community members willing to conduct a practice interview to prepare.
5. Take pride in the project, and be confident. “You are the only one who truly knows your book, so go into the interview confident. Show the judges how passionate you are,” Gage Miller 2018 National Proficiency Finalist.
Illinois FFA is deeply appreciative of its sponsors and supporters. All donations and sponsorships benefit students state-wide and provide them opportunities to learn and grow as leaders. There are different tiers of support, with the highest being a Gold Sponsor which is a title only a few companies hold. Corteva Agriscience is one of them.

Corteva Agriscience is a worldwide agriscience company dedicated to agriculture in over 140 countries. They are also composed of DuPont Pioneer, DuPont Crop Protection and Dow AgroSciences. Corteva Agriscience works in many aspects of the agricultural world. Help farmers with:

- Seed technology and crop protection
- Protecting livestock through pasture management
- Assisting homeowners with urban pest control

Corteva seeks to enrich the lives of all people; those who produce as well as those who consume. This ensures progress for generations to come. They believe it’s important to help others, while upholding a commitment to enhancing lives, create bold ethical leaders, foster curiosity, teamwork, and safety. These values Corteva Agriscience embody closely resemble the values of Illinois FFA, which is why the Illinois Association FFA is grateful to have the support and sponsorship of this innovative company. Corteva AgriScience sponsors polos for the full state officer team of 30 people and two vehicles the state officers use as they travel across the state during their year of service. For years they have also played a vital role in putting on the Illinois FFA State Convention by sponsoring a session. Make sure to attend the 92nd Illinois FFA State Convention, June 9-11, to help thank Corteva AgriScience for their continued support of Illinois Association FFA!
GOLDEN OWL

Illinois Association FFA is grateful for our outstanding agriculture educators!

By: Lane Harvey

Presented by Nationwide, Illinois Farm Credit, Compeer, Illinois FFA and Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers (or IAVAT), this annual award recognizes Illinois agriculture educators for their tremendous contributions in preparing the next generation of young people for successful careers in agriculture.

From July 1 - Nov. 16, 2019, we asked students, faculty and community members to nominate a deserving teacher. This award generated 202 nominations for 76 teachers. Following the nomination period, a committee selected the Golden Owl Award finalists. The Golden Owl Award allows Illinois Association FFA and our sponsors to show support to agricultural educators who devote countless hours, and often their own resources, to positively impact the lives of their students.
In its first year, the Golden Owl Award recognized outstanding agriculture educators in two states: IA and OH. This year, the award was expanded to include: California, Iowa, Illinois, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Next year, the 2020-2021 Golden Owl Award is expanding to additional states to highlight all the incredible agricultural teachers across the country. Nationwide supports the future of the agricultural community through meaningful sponsorships of national and local organizations.

Along with Illinois Farm Credit, they recognize that agricultural education is crucial for the future of our agricultural community and are proud to support Illinois FFA and its many members. One honoree from California, Illinois, Iowa, Ohio and Pennsylvania will be chosen as the grand prize winner based on additional review by each state’s selection committee. Each grand prize winner will receive the coveted Golden Owl Award trophy, designation as their state’s Agricultural Educator of the Year and a $3,000 Nationwide-funded award designed to support continuing education efforts. Listed below are the Golden Owl Nominees from each section for the Golden Owl Award. Teachers listed in bold are district winners and finalists for the Illinois Golden Owl Award, which will be announced in June at the Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers Conference.

Our 2020 Golden Owl Finalists are:

- Ed Curry - District 1 Winner
- Diana Loschen - District 2 Winner
- Jody Heavener - District 3 Winner
- Don Lockwood - District 4 Winner
- Jennifer Timm - District 5 Winner

We are very excited to see who our 2020 Golden Owl Award Winner will be!

- Section 1: Ed Curry, River Ridge – District 1 Winner
- Section 2: Lauren Worely, Stillman Valley
- Section 3: Trent Taber, Cambridge
- Section 4: Scott Riden, United
- Section 5: Scott Zehr, Brimfield
- Section 6: Kara Poynter, Sycamore
- Section 7: Joe Steffen, Newark
- Section 8: Noelle Coronado, Chicago H S for Ag Sciences
- Section 9: Liz Harris, Normal
- Section 10: Diana Loschen, Tri-Point – District II Winner
- Section 11: Chris Miller, Brown County
- Section 12: Miles Allen, Illini Central
- Section 13: Jody Heavner, Pittsfield – District III Winner
- Section 14: Mike Butler, Athens
- Section 15: Kaci McAfee, Southwestern
- Section 16: Don Lockwood, Sullivan – District IV Winner
- Section 17: Jennifer Wherley, Mahomet-Seymour
- Section 18: Amy DeGolyer, Bismark-Henning-Rossville-Alvin
- Section 19: Mandy Totten, Vandalia
- Section 20: Kristalynn Howard, Hutsonville
- Section 21: Julie Bond-Ledford, Nashville
- Section 22: Tim McDermott, Waterloo
- Section 23: Jennifer Timm, Cisne – District V Winner
- Section 24: Brent Miller, Century
- Section 25: John Hall, Hardin County
A DAY WITH COMPEER FINANCIAL

By: Gage Miller

Here at Illinois FFA, there are countless companies we are able to work with whose leadership and support shape our organization. One of those companies is Compeer Financial.

If you experienced a chapter visit this year, you are probably carrying around a key piece of the visit brought to you by this amazing company, Goal Cards! If you look at this year’s “Envision” Goal Card, you can find the Compeer logo at the bottom of the inside cover. They made our goal cards possible and we were able to provide one for every student enrolled in an agricultural class. Students had the opportunity to fill out three personal goals on these cards that fall under different categories:

- short term goal (0 - 6 months)
- midterm goal (6 months -1 year)
- long term goal (1 year - and out)

Once students fill out their goal card, it can be folded in half and put somewhere safe.

Compeer Financial generously supports transportation and travel for chapter visits for the entire year. Illinois FFA has five fleet vehicles, one of which is sponsored by Compeer and can be seen below with its impressive white barnwood wrap, plastered with FFA emblems and Compeer logos. The Major’s have traveled 16,673 miles, visited 309 chapters and presented to 7,197 students during chapter visits, and that would not be possible without the financial support Compeer provides with gas and the vehicle itself.

The Major’s also visited one of the Compeer Financial offices in Bloomington on January 21. The Officers toured the facility and then sat down with a variety of employees who held positions from accounting to crop instructors. The discussion covered Illinois FFA, agriculture education, and how pivotal their support is to Illinois Association FFA. Whether it was their financial assistance with Proficiencies, State Chorus, PAS Conference, 1st year teacher mentor program, or the Illinois FFA Center’s board room renovations, Illinois FFA values this amazing relationship. The day was then wrapped up with hearing about their unique personal journey to Compeer Financial and why they took the career path they did. It was very refreshing to hear each of their unique stories and appreciate the different ways they ended up with the company.

Compeer Financial has been an amazing industry friend to Illinois FFA and we look forward to maintaining this relationship in the future.
COUNTRY FINANCIAL, GROWMARK, ADM

The State Officers have been busy connecting with agriculturalists around the state. Learn more about 3 of our sponsors below!

By: Brodee McCormick

While the first half of the year was full of chapter visits, state officer meetings and State Fair, the second half of the year kicked off with business and industry visits. The Major State Officer team was able to visit and meet with the various sponsors and supporters of Illinois Association FFA and Illinois Foundation FFA. These visits allowed the team to extend appreciation and gratitude for all that they do for us, as well as learn more about the company’s history, its employees and opportunities in their organizations.

One company that the team visited was Country Financial. At the headquarters in Bloomington, the team sat down with Carrie Corson and Lindsey Rinkenberger whose roles were Public Relations Project Manager and Agribusiness Operations Director. We discussed possible internship opportunities and what support Illinois FFA needs. The team discussed possible service projects that can be implemented throughout the state thanked Country Financial for their longstanding support to this youth development organization. Not only is Country paying for all of the advisor’s registration fees at the 2020 Illinois FFA State Convention, but they are also sponsors of the Alumni Conference, the American Degree Dinner and the PAS Conference.
The team also visited with representatives from GROWMARK in Bloomington. While there, the team met with GROWMARK CEO Jim Spradlin, Vice President of Human Resources and Strategy Officer Ann Kafer, and Youth and Cooperative Education Specialist Karen Jones. These company representatives provided a wealth of knowledge to the Major State Officers. We discussed their history with GROWMARK and learned about future employment opportunities with the company. The team also expressed their gratitude for all that GROWMARK does to support Illinois FFA. GROWMARK is one of the four fleet vehicle sponsors. This sponsorship covers the cost of gas, vehicle maintenance and providing the Major State Officers with reliable transportation around the state. The company is also a sponsor of PAS and Alumni Conference.

An additional company that the group was able to tour was ADM in Decatur. They were able to meet with Vice President of State Government Relations Greg Webb and additional associates who are affiliated with agriculture and FFA. Throughout the meeting, the team gained the perspective about how large the ADM corporation truly is and how many people it takes to make the company successful. The State Officers were also able to present their chapter banquet speeches for the first time to the employees. The employees provided helpful feedback, tips and tricks on how to perfect them before heading out on the road. While ADM is a friend and supporter of Illinois FFA they are also the main sponsor of the Ag. Legislative Day seminar.

The State Officer team is grateful for the opportunity to thank Illinois FFA supporters and learn more about those that support them. Their support enables Illinois Association FFA to connect with young people across the state. It is because of the incredible support of companies like this, that this organization can continue to grow future leaders of our state, nation and world.
BUSINESS & INDUSTRY:
TYSON FOODS AND MASCHOFFS
By: Lane Harvey

The state officer team has spent the past couple of weeks visiting many businesses across Illinois. The first stop on the business and industry visit tour was Tyson Foods in Downers Grove, Ill. This is one of Tyson’s many development facilities. Their main headquarters is located in Springdale, Ark. During the visit, the Majors met with scientists, taste testers and leadership teams to learn about the company and its structure. Tyson also gave a tour of their facility. The Majors learned about the food production process that Tyson implements from packaging and testing to production. This trip was such an amazing experience and we definitely learned a ton from our time at Tyson Foods. There is so much more to them than just chicken nuggets!

Another business the State Officer Team visited was Maschoff’s in Carlyle, Ill., on the complete opposite side of the state! Maschoff’s hosted the team, sharing knowledge regarding the swine industry in Illinois and across the United States. Maschoff’s CEO, Dr. Bradley Wolter, and the Maschoff family met with the Major State Officers to discuss their company values and how that influences their production practices. Before leaving, Maschoff’s gave the team the opportunity to have a windshield tour of the swine production facility. One thing that was evident when meeting with the Maschhoffs, was how much they truly stood by their company slogan: “Progressive Farming. Family Style.” They stand by this and embody it in their business transactions and in the agricultural community. Although their company and business has grown tremendously since it’s original two barn operation, they have not lost sight of what got them to where they are today. We are very thankful for Maschoffs allowing us to visit and for their sponsorship to the Illinois FFA’s Home and Community Development Proficiency award area last year!

Business and Industry visits are an opportunity for Majors to engage and thank the incredible professionals and companies who continuously shape the agricultural industry. Illinois Association FFA is grateful to have the leadership and guidance of professionals in agriculture who share their experiences and opportunities with state officers and members alike.