



The Announcer

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Editor: Cheryl Steinbach
Wisconsin FFA Alumni, Executive Director

2019 Wisconsin FFA Alumni Convention

The Wisconsin FFA Alumni Association 39th convention and annual meeting was held February 8 - 9 at the Stevens Point Holiday Inn and convention center. Nearly 325 FFA Alumni members from across the state of Wisconsin attended this year's event. The convention kicked off Friday morning with the state council quarterly meeting. The early afternoon attendees had the opportunity to participate in a 3-stop tour of O'so Brewing Company, Sunset Point Winery and Great Northern Distilling. The primary festivities kicked off with a social and live auction on Friday night, followed by music from Soggy Prairie band.

Saturday was packed full with an array of activities for FFA alumni members. Members from each of the 10 sections met early in the morning and then joined with other sections, to learn about what is happening at the state level and to plan for future conventions. National FFA Alumni Executive Director Joshua Rusk then shared the many opportunities available through the National FFA Alumni Organization. The Opening Session followed and was full of numerous awards.

Four local chapters were recognized for their reactivation. These included Brillion, Dodgeland, River Valley and West Salem/Bangor. American Family Insurance was recognized as a newly chartered non-traditional chapter.

Oconto Falls FFA Alumni chapter was named the State Website Contest winner and Denmark won the Newsletter competition. The 2018-19 Wisconsin FFA Officer Team played a vital role in the operation of the convention. They were recognized for all being Lifetime members of both the state and national FFA Alumni and the 2017-18 team was honored for being named a 100% State Lifetime Team at the national convention this past fall.

Members heard from the various leaders of the other organizations that are part of Team Ag Ed and were presented the annual financial report and budget during the annual business meeting. The bylaws were amended to align our membership year to the national year and to clarify associate membership and council service. The election for Vice President was also conducted. Nate Zimdars, from Ripon FFA Alumni, was elected to serve the role of Vice President.

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The luncheon guests were all treated to a presentation by Kim Bremmer, creator of Ag Inspirations, a website and speaking venue with a mission to inspire farmers to tell their stories, connect people to where their food comes from and present the great successes of American Agriculture today. After lunch, members had the opportunity to tour one of three places, Feltz Dairy, University of Wisconsin Stevens Point Waste Water Management program or Point Brewery. Numerous workshops were also offered throughout the weekend including Idea Sharing and Networking, Parliamentary Procedure, This is Us...Past, Present and Future, Telling the Story of Agriculture (a continuation of the program with Kim Bremmer, Membership rosters and resources and Growing connections. The Wisconsin FFA State Officer team also presented an inspirational reflections program.

The banquet was full of numerous awards and recognition. Jordan Donnerbauer from Stanley-Boyd was named the Outstanding Agriculture Educator. The Outstanding Young Member Award was presented to Emily Watson from Elkhorn. Chapter support grants were awarded to Baldwin-Woodville, Darlington, Edgerton and Granton.

Weyauwega-Fremont FFA Alumni was named the Outstanding State Chapter in the small division and Waupaca was named Outstanding Chapter in the medium division. Winning the large division was the Sauk Prairie FFA Alumni.

Denmark and Stoughton FFA Alumni chapters both received gold ratings in the National Outstanding Chapter Awards and will have their applications submitted to the national level of competition. Denmark was also recognized as the overall winner in this area.

Outstanding Achievement awards were presented to Don and Barb Quam of Stoughton and Mark Olsen of Denmark. Mark's application scored gold so he will be advancing to National competition.

The Dr. V.O. Martinson Award is given to the FFA Alumni who had the greatest increase in annual membership percentage. Greenwood FFA Alumni is this year's recipient.

The Ann Martinson Award is given to the chapter who has had the greatest increase in lifetime membership. Granton FFA Alumni received that honor this year.

Joe Loritz of Denmark was presented the Team Ag Ed Contributor award for his support of FFA, FFA Alumni and Agriculture Education.

Retiring council members were recognized. They are Kim Scholz, Brian Buchholz, Larry Lader, Ken Natzke and Dan Follendorf. 2018-19 Wisconsin FFA Alumni President Mark Ladsten shared his final address and then turned over the gavel to the newly installed President, Cari Sabel. Photos from the convention can be found at <http://bit.ly/2019WIFFAAlumniStateConventionPhotos>.



Thank You 2019 Wisconsin FFA Alumni Platinum Convention Sponsors!

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The 2018-19 Wisconsin FFA Officers were presented their lifetime memberships at convention.

Meet The New Wisconsin FFA Alumni Vice President



For Nate Zimdars, FFA was a part of his life from a very young age. Attendance of the Ripon FFA Alumni Breakfast on the Farm, the Alumni's annual fundraiser that serves well over 2,000 individuals, was a yearly Father's Day ritual beginning when he was just a baby. Seeing the enjoyment and fulfillment found from the FFA members and Alumni working

that event, he knew that one day he would follow in the footsteps of his Father, Uncle's, and cousins by joining FFA. After all, growing up on his families sheep and poultry hobby farm just down the road from his grandparent's and uncle's dairy farm placed agriculture at the core of his being.

What initially began as an opportunity to indulge in free food at meetings and miss class for field trips turned into something much more—a journey that would take Nate to places he never imagined. While in High School he became very active in his chapter through organizing various events, participating in speaking contests, showing at the county fair, and serving in officer positions including the role of President his senior year.

Nate always craved the opportunity to serve others and deepen his involvement with organizations he loves. During his freshman year of College Nate had an "A-ha" moment, a moment in which he realized that he was not ready to end his time with FFA. He decided to run for State FFA Office where he was elected to serve as the 2012-2013 State FFA Treasurer and Section 6 State Officer. If asked, Nate will tell you that this opportunity was one of the greatest experiences of his life. He traveled across the state inspiring FFA members to explore opportunities in Agriculture and grow in their leadership skills, connecting with agricultural businesses and leaders, and undergoing a radical transformation in his confidence and leadership. Nate's most valuable friendships and unwavering commitment to agriculture stem from this year of service.

Following his State Officer year, Nate received his Associates Degree in History from the University of Wisconsin-Fond du Lac in 2014. He then transferred to the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he studied History and Political Science. Following his senior year at Madison, Nate served as a volunteer for a year with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Young Adult in Global Mission Program in the West African nation of Senegal. There, he worked at a Dairy Cooperative and taught English at a Lutheran Church and Catholic private school.

Since returning from Senegal, Nate has felt a call to return to his roots and devote time and energy to the organizations that have given him so much. He is active with the Ripon FFA Alumni, Fond du Lac County Farm Bureau, Grace Lutheran Church in Ripon, and is on the Board of Directors for the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

Nate's goals for growing the Wisconsin FFA Alumni include:

- Engaging recent High School graduates/FFA members to active involvement in the Alumni.
- Exploring alternate fundraising avenues.
- Enhancing leadership growth opportunities for Alumni members.
- Evaluating how the Alumni can best serve local affiliates through consistent dialogue and honest conversations.

Membership Deadline

This is a reminder that all FFA Alumni rosters are now past due. The actual membership year begins at the national level August 1 and runs through July 31. All annual members are removed from the roster each year and therefore need to be updated annually. Until the roster is submitted by the state and approved by nationals, membership is not valid. Payment must be received in the state office before the rosters are processed. In order to ensure that members receive the full benefits of their membership all year, the membership policy has been amended. All chapters must submit their rosters by December 1, with all payments postmarked by January 2, beginning with the 2019-2020 memberships year. A chapter must also submit current leader contact information in order to remain active .

The 2019-2020 Council

Newly elected council members are excited to serve Wisconsin FFA Alumni members throughout the state. Thanks to our membership for stepping forward to fill our sectional vacancies, as this is the first year in many for a full represented council! They just met and had their first council meeting and retreat. Please feel free to contact them and invite them to your local activities.

Section 1- Dave Clausen, Amery & Jerry Larsen, Unity

Section 2- Brenda Franklin, Baldwin-Woodville & Caleb Green, Stanley-Boyd

Section 3- Derek Trescher & Chris Blank both from Cashton

Section 4- Nick Huffman, Pecatonica & Jacob Stukenberg, Shullsburg

Section 5- Nick Lowe & Jack Ellickson both from Stoughton

Section 6- Matt Damm, Columbus & Bobbi Jo Kunz, Waupun

Section 7- Cindi Freidhof, Colby & Amy Penterman, Thorp

Section 8- Bobbie Jo Montgomery, Waupaca & Grant Staszak, Bonduel

Section 9- Sara Bertram, New Holstein & Terri Wilfert, Mishicot

Section 10- Gene Hetebrueg, Kewaskum & Amy Voigt, Lakeside Lutheran

Vice President- Nate Zimdars, Ripon

President Elect- Rudy Kaderly, Juda

President- Cari Sabel, Chilton

Past President- Mark Ladsten, Sauk Prairie

Executive Director- Cheryl Steinbach



2020 Wisconsin FFA Alumni

Convention Planning Begins

Sections 4, 5 and 10 are busy working to plan and organize the next state FFA Alumni convention. This will be a special convention as it will be the 40th convention. Please mark January 31 - February 1, 2020 on your calendars today. It will be held at the Milwaukee Marriott West in Waukesha. Watch for more details and information in upcoming newsletters.

Vision + Leadership - Reality



Convention 2020
January 31st - February 2nd 2020

Calendar of Events

- June 10-13 - State FFA Convention – Madison
- June 12 - Alumni Council Meeting at Madison
- June 23-27- WAAE's PDC – Lacrosse
- July 1 - Award Applications Due to National FFA Alumni
- July 15 - Wisconsin FFA Foundation Northwest Golf Outing – Eau Claire
- July 16 - Wisconsin FFA Foundation Northeast Golf Outing – DePere
- July 23-25 - Farm Technology Days - Jefferson County
- July 29 - Wisconsin FFA Foundation Southern Golf Outing - Middleton

We strive to be Wisconsin's premier Agriculture Education advocate with FFA Alumni support in every community. We envision our diverse, positive, community committed organization to provide resources to support youth development and leadership.