



**WISCONSIN FFA
ALUMNI AND SUPPORTERS**

The Announcer

March 2025

**Editor: Tari Costello
Wisconsin FFA Alumni, Executive Director**

State Council Members Prepare for the Year Ahead

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.” Pablo Picasso

Members of the State Council met in Green Bay on March 14-15 to prepare and plan for the year ahead. The team began the Officer Training by participating in a variety of team-building events that encouraged the group to step out of their comfort zones to accomplish tasks. This was followed by an update to the Officer Manuals.

The March Council Meeting started at 9:00 on Saturday morning. Team members worked diligently to work through a full agenda including the selection of the committees that members wanted to serve on for the upcoming year. Committees met to set goals and scheduled additional meeting dates. The Committees, Chairs and Secretaries are identified below. Please reach out to any of these individuals with questions.

Awards Committee: Chair-Missy Steffes, Secretary - Terri Wilfert

Business Operations Committee: Chair-Chris Blank, Secretary - Brook Woodbury

Marketing Committee: Chair-Nick Lowe, Secretary - Mary Gundrum

Executive Committee: Chair-Terri Wilfert

Finance Committee: Chair-Nick Lowe, Secretary-Chris Blank

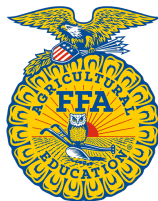
Fundraising Committee: Chair-Jim Schneider, Secretary-Chris Blank

Membership Committee: Chair-William Litzer

Program Development Committee: Chair-Nicole Wallander, Secretary-Jim Schneider

Resolutions and Bylaws Committee: Chair-Missy Steffes, Secretary-Jim Schneider

Statewide Convention Committee: Chair-Dan Follendorf



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Wisconsin FFA Alumni & Supporters Convention

The 45th annual convention of the Wisconsin FFA Alumni & Supporters organization was held February 7– 8, 2025 at the Holiday Inn and Convention Center in Stevens Point. The theme of the convention, “Engage - Transform - Empower,” focused on networking, sharing resources and trainings, while also having fun.

More than 300 FFA Alumni members and guests from across the state of Wisconsin attended this year’s event. The convention kicked off Friday with a state council meeting, followed by optional tours of Food + Farm Exploration Center, Stevens Point Brewery and Great Northern Distillery. “Make and Take” options for guests, included a leather craft item or a painting session. The Friday evening events included a dinner buffet and auction, and Brew Pub Trivia.

Saturday included business meetings and a wide variety of workshops. The election for Vice President was conducted and Missy Steffes of the New Holstein FFA Alumni & Supporters chapter was elected. The remaining executive team was also forwarded to their new positions, electing Nick Lowe from Stoughton as President, Chris Blank from Cashton as President-Elect and Terri Wilfert from Mishicot, as Past-President. There were six different resolutions passed.

The 2024-25 Wisconsin FFA Officer Team played a vital role in the operation of the convention. They helped with section meeting delegate registration, auctions, business meeting and election processes and they presented a very moving reflections program and two different workshops. The 2024-25 team was also recognized for all being lifetime members, of both the state and National FFA Alumni & Supporters and last year’s 2023-24 team was honored for being named a 100% State Lifetime Team at the national convention this past fall.

The annual awards banquet program included the recognition of numerous award winners. The list of those recognized included:

- ◇ Teachers honored with Outstanding Agriculture Educator Awards, earning a certificate, cash prize, and a copy of the book “A Thread of Blue Corduroy” by Dr. Larry Case, donated by Larry Lader. Those recognized included Joseph Heimbuch, New Holstein; Walter Taylor, Oconto Falls; Hallie Rehn, Oconto Falls; Dan Robinson, Lomira, Paige Peterson, Lomira; Mariah Markhardt, Oconto Falls, Troy Talford, Sauk Prairie; Kim Houser, Wisconsin Heights; Lori Rowe, Tigerton; Zeth Engel, DeForest; Mary Handrich, Denmark was named the state winning educator.
- ◇ The Outstanding Young Member Award recognizes the efforts of members who are 35 or younger. Nominated for this award were Taylor and Evan Ensign of Colby, Mark Ladsten of Sauk Prairie, and Nicole Laabs of Denmark. The state winner was Julia Schlimgen of DeForest.
- ◇ The Public Relations award recognizes the efforts of a chapter to promote their activities and mission, utilizing various forms of media. Elkhorn FFA Alumni & Supporters was chosen as the state winner, followed by 2nd place Granton, 3rd place Sauk Prairie, and tied for 4th place were Denmark and Stoughton.
- ◇ Shell Lake FFA Alumni & Supporters was named the Outstanding State Chapter in the small division, followed by Lomira in 2nd place. Winning the large division was the New Holstein FFA Alumni & Supporters, followed by Oconto Falls 2nd, Bonduel 3rd, and Sauk Prairie 4th.
- ◇ The National Outstanding Chapter Award was won by Elkhorn, followed by 2nd place Granton, 3rd place Denmark, and 4th place Stoughton. All four chapters will have their applications submitted for national competition.

Convention Continued

- ◇ Outstanding Achievement award was presented to Karen Schultz of Denmark. She will have her application forwarded on to national competition as the state winner.
- ◇ The Dr. V.O. and Ann Martinson Award is given to the FFA Alumni who had the greatest increase in lifetime members. Denmark FFA Alumni & Supporters is this year's recipient.
- ◇ Cheryl Steinbach, former Executive Director of the Wisconsin FFA Alumni & Supporters was honored with a video of memories, moment of silence and presented posthumously with a Distinguished Contributor award. Kathy Hartmann-Breunig, retiring WAAE Executive Director was recognized with a Distinguished Contributor award for her service, support and commitment to Wisconsin FFA Alumni & Supporters Association.
- ◇ Retiring council members were recognized. They are Derek Trescher, Cashton; Dave Clausen, Amery; Mason Gukenberger, Marshfield, Bobbi Jo Montgomery, Waupaca.
- ◇ The highlight of the evening's banquet were our keynote speakers, Eric Hansotia, Chairman, President & CEO of AGCO Corporation, and Mary Schreiber, National FFA Central Region Vice-President.

Another auction Saturday night resulted in a very successful fundraising program. Convention proceeds help support leadership development and educational programs and activities for FFA members throughout the state.

Next year's convention has been set for February 20-21, 2026 at the Marriot in Middleton.



2026 Convention

Be sure to mark your calendars and plan to attend the 46th annual Wisconsin FFA Alumni & Supporters convention Feb. 20-21, 2026. This convention is being planned by sections 4,5, and 10.



Don't Forget About Grants

We are once again offering grant opportunities for local Alumni chapters to assist with programs and projects. National FFA also offers additional grants. To find the applications, go to our website at <https://wisconsinaged.org/alumni/awards-and-grants/>

It's Tax Time

Chapters are reminded that you are required to file your taxes if you are registered as a 501(c)3 organization. If you made less than \$ 50,000, you simply need to file a 990 N form online.

If you do not file this form for 3 consecutive years, you will lose your tax exempt status.



Current Council Members

- President - Nick Lowe, Stoughton
 President Elect - Chris Blank, Cashton
 Vice President - Missy Steffes, New Holstein
 Past President - Terri Wilfert, Mishicot
 Section 1* – Todd Coons, Shell Lake
 Section 2 - David Meyer, Hudson & Agnes Buttke, Cadott
 Section 3* - Jaydon Lietzau, Sparta
 Section 4 - Rick Bockhop, Platteville & Nick Huffman, Pecatonica
 Section 5 - Dan Ziegler, New Glarus & Jerry Wendt, Stoughton
 Section 6 - Matt Damm, Columbus & Brooke Woodbury, Baraboo
 Section 7 - William Litzer, Edgar & Kimberly Kaiser, Auburndale
 Section 8 – Mark Kunde, Winneconne & Stacy Boettcher, Weyauwega-Fremont
 Section 9 - Nicole Wallander, Kiel & Kathy Schmidt, Brillion
 Section 10 - Jim Schneider, Campbellsport & Mary Gundrum, Mayville
 *seeking a sectional representative

Washington Leadership Scholarships

Each year Wisconsin FFA Alumni receives leadership dollars from the National FFA. These dollars are generated through interest earned on lifetime member-

ship investments and are then distributed to chapters or state associations based on the number of lifetime members they have.

Wisconsin has nearly 5500 lifetime members, so the funds that we receive are significant. These funds must be used to provide leadership opportunities to FFA members. Our monies are used to help support scholarships so that FFA members can attend the Washington Leadership Conference during the summer. In order to apply, students must have an active local FFA Alumni chapter.

We are excited to announce that we have selected 14 FFA members to each receive a \$ 750 scholarship. Congratulations to the following students:

- Darby Trent, Amery
- Beverly Brewer, Clinton
- Madison Meyer, Colby
- Lucy Ehlen, Elkhorn
- Liv Lucas, Greenwood
- Danika Neuhaus, Kiel
- Abigail Elmhurst, Manawa
- Eli Bell, New Richmond
- Elizabeth Zimmerman, Osseo-Fairchild
- Gavin Sowieja-Kayhart, Owen-Withee
- Jenna Posbrig, Pulaski
- Abigail Dey, Seymour
- Brent Abramczak, Thorp
- Vada Brown, Tomah

Corn Maze Contest

The Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Council is partnering with Wisconsin FFA Alumni & Supporters, and the Wisconsin FFA for a Corn Maze Cut-Out Contest. FFA members and Alumni have the opportunity to work together to create a promotional cut-out to be featured in a state corn maze this fall. The goal is to support Wisconsin family farms during Wisconsin's Fall Agricultural Tourism Season. The theme for 2025 is "Agricultural Tourism grows Wisconsin's rural communities. Visit Wisconsin, America's Agricultural Tourism Destination". Watch for details being released soon!



Wisconsin FFA Foundation Golf Outings

The Wisconsin FFA Foundation has asked us to share that they are once again hosting two golf outings this summer to raise funds for the Wisconsin FFA Association. Mark your calendars for these events!



For more information:

Visit <https://wisconsinaged.org/foundation-events>



Calendar of Events

(see <https://www.wisconsinaged.org/alumni-events> for updates)

- March 22** -Baraboo FFA Alumni 8-Pin Tap Tournament- Two time options - Bowling at 5 or 7 at Thunderbird Lanes in Baraboo. Door prizes, silent auction, raffles and 50/50 each shift
- March 22** - Evansville FFA Alumni Bus Trip - 11:30
- March 23** - 35th Annual Thorp FFA Alumni Toy Show 9:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m. @ Thorp HS
- March 27** - Section 8 Spring Meeting, Marion Northwinds Banquet Hall in Marion. Doors open at 6:00, meal at 6:45
- March 28** - FFA Day with the Milwaukee Bucks
- April 5** - Edgerton FFA Alumni & Supporters Casino Night 6:00-10:00 p.m. Tri-County Community Center
- April 12** - Mishicot FFA Alumni Trivia Night \$100/team of 8. 6-8 p.m. kkoepfel@mishicot.k12.wi.us
- April 19** - 31st Annual East Troy FFA Alumni Consignment Auction @ East Troy HS
- April 22** - Last day to register for Elkhorn FFA Alumni Cookie Decorating Class <https://tinyurl.com/AgCookieClass2025>
- April 25** - Kewaskum FFA Alumni Drive-Thru Fish Fry 4:00-6:30 @ KHS Greenhouse; \$20/meal
- April 26** - Elkhorn FFA Alumni Agricultural Cookie Decorating class. 10 a.m. - noon. Must pre-register by April 22.
- April 27** -Seymour FFA Alumni Annual Consignment Auction @ Outagamie County Fairgrounds 9:00 a.m.
- June 7** - Campbellsport FFA Alumni Tractor & Truck Pull @ FDL County Fairgrounds 6:00p.m.
- June 14** - Lodi FFA Alumni Truck and Tractor Pull @ Lodi Fairgrounds
- July 14** - Wisconsin FFA Foundation Northern Golf Outing, Wild Ridge Golf Course, Eau Claire
- July 21** - Wisconsin FFA Foundation Southern Golf Outing, Pleasant View Golf House, Middleton
- October 11** - Watertown FFA Alumni Concert by One Car Pile-Up at Turner Hall in Watertown

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