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**State FFA Convention Opens in Minneapolis**

*Session Highlights: Chapter Charters, Hall of Fame, Baleigh Peterson Retiring Address*

MINNEAPOLIS – (April 24, 2022) – Minnesota’s 93rd State FFA Convention kicked off Sunday night at 3M Arena at Mariucci with the theme *Thrive*. The opening session featured award, new chapter charter and FFA Hall of Fame presentations and followed an afternoon of preliminary Leadership Development Events and a reception for FFA alumni.

Retiring State FFA Sentinel Baleigh Peterson gave the first of six retiring addresses from the 2021-2022 officer team, which are scheduled during the course of the convention. Her address was titled *A Place at the Table*.

“Something ... that feels like home to me is a kitchen table,” said Peterson. “It’s a place where I’ve had some of my deepest conversations, heard the best stories and learned some of the most valuable life lessons.”

“Kitchen table moments can happen anywhere. These are the moments that truly matter and ... make us feel most at home,” she said. “Seek out people to invite to your table, laugh with them and share that feeling of home with them ... build tables, not fences.”

**Hall of Fame members inducted, new award for supporter**

The Minnesota FFA Alumni Association inducted eight members into its Hall of Fame. Each has a rich connection to Minnesota FFA and Minnesota agriculture as a whole. They range from members of various boards to instructors at numerous levels.

New Hall of Fame members are:

- Pat Dingels, FFA Foundation Board of Trustees, Redwood Falls;
- Charles Krause, dairy farmer leader, Buffalo;
- Becky Meyer, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture executive director, Vadnais Heights;
- Kerry Lindgren, former ag instructor, Staples;
- Ronald Sommers, former Pioneer sales director, Northfield;
- Dave Swanson, ag instructor, Hawley;
- Erman Ueland, University of Minnesota-Crookston associate professor, Fertile; and
- Stan Vander Kooi, adult farm management instructor, Buffalo.

An inaugural award for advocacy, service and encouragement to FFA, called the Friend of FFA Award, was established and presented to Mary Buschette, who is director of alumni and constituent relations for the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Minnesota. Going forward, the award will bear Buschette's name.

### **FFA Chapter charters signed**

Minnesota FFA recognized 19 chapters that chartered between 2020 and 2022, bringing the number of chapters statewide to more than 200, with about 35,000 students taking food, agriculture and natural resource classes.

Newly chartered chapters include:

- Ellsworth (2020);
- Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton (2020);
- Mankato (2020);
- Pillager (2020);
- ROCORI (2020);
- Bethlehem Academy (2021);
- Cleveland (2021);
- Crookston (2021);
- Faribault (2021);
- Granada-Huntley-East Chain (2021);
- Integrated Arts Academy (2021);
- Isle (2021);
- Park Rapids (2021);
- Willow River (2021);
- Fosston (2022);
- Nevis (2022);
- Norman County East (2022);
- Stephen-Argyle (2022); and
- Minneapolis (2022).

### **FFA chapters win Models of Innovation awards**

Three chapters achieved top honors for FFA Models of Innovation. The award recognizes chapters with innovative activities in each of three divisions: Growing Leaders, Building Communities and Strengthening Agriculture.

The overall winner was Chatfield FFA with their first place in Building Communities. Princeton FFA won in the Growing Leaders category, and Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted was first place in Strengthening Agriculture.

### **Region presidents recognized**

Retiring region FFA presidents were also honored during the opening session. They include:

- Caidyn Johnson, Region I, Fertile-Beltrami;
- Jacob Anderson, Region II, Grand Rapids;
- Rylee Erickson, Region III, Hancock;
- McKayla Carlson-Hughes, Region IV, Braham;
- Natalie Beckendorf, Region V, Renville County West;

- Marissa Johnson, Region VI, Tracy Area;
- Emma Kuball, Region VII, Waterville-Elysian-Morristown; and
- Anne Simpson, Region VIII, Pine Island.

The Minnesota FFA Convention is offered in partnership by the Minnesota FFA Association, the Minnesota FFA Foundation and the Minnesota FFA Alumni. Throughout the convention, content is available on the [Minnesota FFA website](#), the [Minnesota FFA YouTube Channel](#), on the organization's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) pages and on the convention app available on Android and iOS app stores.

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### **About Minnesota FFA**

FFA is a national organization developing students' potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education with more than 700,000 members in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Minnesota FFA Association represents more than 15,000 members and more than 200 high school chapters across the state. Agricultural education engages students through hands-on learning in the classroom, work-based learning opportunities known as Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects and FFA activities.

### **About Minnesota FFA Foundation**

The Minnesota FFA Foundation will be hosting additional events to support the more than 15,000 FFA members across Minnesota. The Minnesota FFA Foundation is incredibly honored to support the Minnesota FFA and thanks its donors and sponsors who make this possible. It is the mission of the Minnesota FFA Foundation to secure strategic partnerships and financial resources that promote and enhance premier leadership, personal growth and career success for Minnesota youth in Agricultural Education. To learn more about supporting Minnesota FFA through the Minnesota FFA Foundation at [www.mnffafoundation.org](http://www.mnffafoundation.org).

### **About Minnesota FFA Alumni and Supporters**

The Minnesota FFA Alumni Association and Supporters works to support the more than 15,000 FFA members, through 72 Alumni and Supporters affiliates across the state. Adult membership is open to anyone interested in supporting and promoting agriculture, agricultural education and FFA at the local, state and national level. One need not have worn the blue jacket to be a member of the FFA Alumni and Supporters, whose mission is to work to secure the promise of Agriculture Education and FFA by creating an environment where people and communities can develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success. Learn more about the Minnesota FFA Alumni Association at [MNFFAAlumni.org](http://MNFFAAlumni.org).

Learn more about the experiences of FFA members and supporters by visiting [MnFFA.org](http://MnFFA.org) and [FFA.org](http://FFA.org).