

Convention Proceedings

95th Annual State FFA Convention Montana FFA Association



**Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana**

State Officers

Jordan Leach, President
Conrad

Reagan Long, 1st Vice President
Shields Valley

Romulus Hiner, 2nd Vice President
Wheatland

Emma Lou Slivka, Secretary
Winifred

Sierra Mauland, Treasurer
Big Timber

Grace Mosher, Reporter
Shepherd

Ryan Bal, Sentinel
Park City

Grace McPherson, Parliamentarian
Fairview

Special Guests

Caroline Groth – National FFA Vice-President

Greg Gianforte – Governor of Montana



State Staff

Jim Rose, State Advisor

FFA Foundation

Curt Robbins - Foundation Director
Columbus

Mark Sinnard – President
Wilsall

Belinda Darlinton - Secretary
Great Falls

Kody Farkell – Director
Conrad

Jay Meyer - Director
Stevensville

Mike Tuszynski - Alumni President
Broadview

Sierra Mauland - State Treasurer, Big Timber

Alumni Association

Mike Tuszynski, President
Broadview
Ken Johnson, Vice-President
Conrad
Kristie Rutledge, Secretary
Big Sandy
Kristen Swenson, Treasurer
Manhattan
Ken Johnson, Glacier District Rep.
Conrad
Sherri Idler, Big Muddy District Rep.
Sheridan, Judith Basin District Rep.
Denton
Sandy Evenson, Western District Rep.
Kalispell

Mike Tuszynski, Southeastern District Rep.
Broadview
Mike Tuszynski, Southern District Rep.
Broadview
Open - Eastern District Rep.
Kristen Swenson, Southwestern District Rep.
Manhattan
Open – Milk River District Rep.
Kristen Swenson, Yellowstone District Rep.
Manhattan
Matt McKamey, ALC Director
Cascade
Jim Rose, State Advisor
Bozeman



Convention Facts

Approximately 2100 members and guests attended this year's convention.

Career Development Events (CDE) Results

Agriscience Fair Winners:

- Cooper and Claire Murnin – Shepherd, Animal Systems
- Lukas Rost - Baker, Plant Systems
- Grace Gunderson - Baker, Social Systems
- Kinzey Clark - Missoula, Environmental/Natural Resource Systems
- Joel Standley and Joselyn England – Missoula, Food Science Systems

Agriculture Communications

1. Corvallis
2. Joliet
3. Carter County

Agriculture Issues

1. Roundup
2. Shelby
3. Victor

Agricultural Sales CDE

1. Belgrade
2. Missoula
3. Baker
4. Plentywood
5. Huntley Project

Ag Sales Individuals

1. Wyatt Johannes – Huntley Project
2. Cole Waldusky - Conrad
3. Max Hawkins – Huntley Project
4. Taylor Dreitz -Belgrade
5. Teigen Hackett - Stevensville
6. Kinzey Clark - Missoula
7. Kiley Buchnowski - Plentywood
8. Micah French - Plentywood
9. Savannah Emens – Three Forks
10. Alexa Smejja - Belgrade

Agricultural Technology & Mechanical Systems CDE

1. Havre
2. Fergus
3. Beaverhead
4. Fort Benton
5. Big Timber

ATMS Individuals

1. Logan Yeager - Choteau
2. Samuel Barta - Fergus
3. Asher Burch - Beaverhead
4. Jayden Thomas – Big Timber
5. Severin Heimbigner – Big Sandy
6. Royce Reum - Havre
7. Thomas Stott - Fairfield
8. Taylor Dreitz - Belgrade
9. Austin Gatch - Cascade
10. Rowan Wilson - Bainville

Agronomy CDE

1. Stevensville
2. Shields Valley
3. Joliet
4. Missoula
5. Kalispell

Agronomy Individuals

1. Katie Harris - Joliet
2. Teigen Hackett - Stevensville
3. Amanda Willis – Shields Valley
4. Asha Jerke – Shields Valley
5. AJ Sharkey - Missoula
6. Kassidie Rock – Shields Valley
7. Joel Standley - Missoula
8. Kyra Desjarlais - Stevensville
9. Alexa Smejja - Belgrade
10. Aaron Connors - Kalispell

Creed Speaking CDE

1. Chelise Stone - Geraldine
2. Hadlee Shobe - Fergus
3. Taylee Hahne – Park City
4. Amelia Johnson - Plentywood

Jr. Creed Speaking CDE

1. Natalie DelCamp – Huntley Project
2. Layla Dice – Miles City
3. Emily Toombs - Roundup
4. Tre Butcher - Cascade

Conduct of Meetings LDE

1. Miles City
2. Fergus
3. Cascade
4. Baker

ENR

1. Corvallis
2. Belgrade
3. Fergus of Lewistown
4. Fairfield
5. Lima

ENR Individuals

1. Kamber Bender - Fairfield
2. Hasalyn Schairer - Corvallis
3. Autumn Benson - Corvallis
4. Emma Bernhardt -
5. Kade Oblander – Huntley Project
6. Savannah Nelson -
7. Hayden Gremaux -
8. Colter Dowdy -
9. Alex Mazurie -
10. Rowen Bailey -

Employment Skills

1. Kennedy Lyson - Baker
2. Morgan Bisel - Corvallis
3. Russel Lang - Roundup
4. Jadyn Kitzmann - Billings
5. Badger Hoppe - Gardiner

Extemporaneous Speaking LDE

1. Johanna DeMars - Winifred
2. Claire Murnin - Shepherd
3. Autumn Benson - Corvallis
4. Riley Jones – Miles City

Farm Business Management CDE

1. Big Timber
2. Kalispell
3. Belgrade
4. Missoula
5. Broadus

FBM Individuals

1. Sophie Banzet - Kalispell
2. Paige Wertheimer – Big Timber
3. Nick Fletcher - Kalispell
4. Alexa Smeija - Belgrade
5. Rainee Komrosky – Havre
6. Nathan Laubach – Big Timber
7. Reaglan Kelly – Park City
8. Odin Max – Hot Springs
9. Emma Paugh – Big Timber
10. Aaron Connors - Kalispell

Floriculture

1. Missoula
2. Frenchtown
3. Corvallis
4. Havre
5. Shields Valley

Floriculture Individuals

1. Keagan Merrit - Missoula
2. Emma Horn - Joliet
3. Collin Yoshimura - Missoula
4. Haven Kowski - Gardiner
5. Ivory West - Missoula
6. Alysa Lloyd - Frenchtown
7. Hasalyn Schairer - Corvallis
8. Callie Bebee - Havre
9. Macy Witt – Park City
10. Alanna Puett - Joliet

Food Science CDE

1. Missoula
2. Shields Valley
3. Corvallis
4. Belgrade
5. Park City

Food Science Individuals

1. Keagan Merrit - Missoula
2. Joel Standley - Missoula
3. Tangia Bumgarner - Corvallis
4. Kaylee Reid - Belgrade
5. Odin Max – Hot Springs
6. Morgan Bisel - Corvallis
7. Eliza Tureck - Stanford
8. Asha Jerke – Shields Valley
9. Reaglan Kelly – Park City
10. George Smith – Twin Bridges

Forestry CDE

1. Fergus of Lewistown
2. Three Forks
3. Belgrade
4. Missoula
5. Frenchtown

Forestry Individuals

1. Samuel Barta - Fergus
2. Corbin Lewellen – Three Forks
3. Jacob Dykstra - Fergus
4. AJ Sharkey - Missoula
5. Jesse Green - Fergus
6. Hayden Gremaux - Fergus
7. Rylee Smith – Three Forks
8. Emma Bernhardt - Belgrade
9. Tucker Gainan – Mission Valley
10. Severin Heimbigner – Big Sandy

Horse Evaluation CDE

1. Beaverhead (Dillon)
2. Miles City
3. Joliet
4. Simms
5. Whitehall

Horse Evaluation Individuals

1. Ainsley Hobley – Carter County
2. Winona Wagoner - Beaverhead
3. Aspen Smart - Belgrade
4. Kenzi Kountz - Whitehall
5. Marae Smail – Twin Bridges
6. Liv Landa - Broadus
7. Tessa Johnson - Beaverhead
8. Melodie Starman – Fort Benton
9. Bailey Seaholm – Grass Range
10. Harleigh Donnelly - Joliet

Livestock Evaluation CDE

1. Kalispell
2. Big Timber
3. Fergus of Lewistown
4. Broadwater
5. Beaverhead

Livestock Evaluation Individuals

1. Nathan Long - Fergus
2. Tierrah Rigby - Drummond
3. Joselyn Haubaker - Kalispell
4. Liz Moke - Hysham
5. Charlee Shaw – Roundup
6. Emily Hall - Kalispell
7. Tresten Rein – Big Timber
8. Sujatha Bay - Frenchtown
9. Harley Gilleard – Stevensville
10. Spencer Braaten - Broadwater

Marketing Plan

1. Corvallis
2. Shields Valley
3. Havre
4. Drummond
5. Denton

Meats Evaluation CDE

1. Missoula
2. Big Timber
3. Frenchtown
4. Kalispell
5. Fergus of Lewistown

Meats Evaluation Individuals

1. Emma Paugh – Big Timber
2. Paige Wertheimer – Big Timber
3. Joel Standley - Missoula
4. Leah Nelson -
5. Joselyn England –
6. Trevor Halverson – Big Timber
7. Hailey Gallagher -
8. TJ Eslinger -
9. Nick Fletcher - Kalispell
10. Aspen Courtney -

Parliamentary Procedure LDE

1. Kalispell
2. Belgrade
3. Cascade
4. Shepherd

Poultry Evaluation Teams

1. Whitehall
2. Fergus of Lewistown
3. Belt
4. Hobson
5. Missoula

Poultry Evaluation Individuals

1. Stockton Stroh - Fergus
2. Zane Downey - Whitehall
3. Nathan Long - Fergus
4. Wyatt Hess – Park City
5. Collin Yoshimura - Missoula
6. Alex Long - Fergus
7. Eric Brummond - Fergus
8. Hannah Frazier - Whitehall
9. Jady Frank - Hobson
10. Addisyn Gray - Whitehall

Prepared Speaking LDE

1. Claire Murnin - Shepherd
2. Kylee Finn - Cascade

3. Johanna DeMars - Winifred
4. Halle Brown -

Vet Science CDE

1. Beaverhead
2. Kalispell
3. Frenchtown
4. Fergus of Lewistown
5. Cascade

Vet Science Individuals

1. Katie Johnson - Beaverhead
2. Sam George - Beaverhead
3. Ivory West - Missoula
4. Taylor Yecny - Beaverhead
5. Shelby Bergman - Kalispell
6. Savanna Freitas - Beaverhead
7. Collin Yoshimura - Missoula
8. Kylee Finn – Cascade
9. Josie Garrard - Frenchtown
10. Alysa Lloyd - Frenchtown

Team Sweepstakes Winner

1. Missoula
2. Big Timber
3. Beaverhead

Individual Sweepstakes Winners

1. Joel Standley - Missoula
2. Cole Waldusky - Conrad
3. Lane Hess – Park City

State Talent Contest

1. Cassidy Shelvan - Missoula
2. Nick McAllister – Hot Springs
3. Teigen Hackett - Stevensville

Star Chapter – GOLD AWARDS

1. Beaverhead - **STAR**
2. Wibaux
3. Conrad
4. Gardiner
5. Baker

Star Greenhand

Big Muddy: Felixe Becker - Culbertson
Eastern; Jensina Kleinsasser – Miles City
S.E: Maci Millar – Big Horn
S.W: Leneva Miller - Beaverhead
Western: Brecken Bishop - Corvallis
Glacier: Janae Roberts – Sweetgrass Hills
Southern: Mallory Pelton – Stillwater Valley
***Judith Basin: Chelise Stone - Geraldine**
Yellowstone: Greeley Kleinsasser – Big Timber
Milk River: Bryce Elliot - Chinook

Star in Agricultural Placement

STAR Autumn Benson - Corvallis

Star in Agribusiness

STAR Russel Lang - Roundup

Star Farmer

STAR Kennedy Lyson - Baker

Hall of Chapters

1. Hot Springs
2. Chinook
3. Gardiner

American Indian Presentation

1. Gardiner

Reporter Event

1. Kara Christensen – Hot Springs
2. Halle Brown - Baker
3. Piper Davis - Belgrade

Secretary's Book

1. Ivory West - Missoula
2. Kaitlyn Noyes - Broadwater
3. Mikeyla Shigaki – Ruby Valley

Scrapbook

1. Sidney
2. Fairview
3. Conrad

Treasurers Book

1. Quinn Gilman – Ruby Valley
2. Adi Elverud - Richey
3. Aiden Kitto - Broadwater

BOMC Awards

1. Richey
2. Fromberg
3. Denton

Scholarships Awarded

LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS:

Pat Cavey ALC Scholarships:

Kara Christensen – Hot Springs
Liz Moke – Hysham
Zane Mager – Judith Gap

Brad King ALC Scholarship:

Maisie Barrus – Hysham
Adelaide Meyer - Stevensville

Montana FFA Foundation WLC Scholarships:

Lexi Lunceford – Deer Lodge

Doris Robinson WLC Scholarships:

Charlie Leonard – Stevensville
Katelyn Pope - Stevensville

Sam Cornthwaite Memorial WLC Scholarship:

Abby Begger – Wibaux
Echo Saunders – Gardiner
Ashlynn Varner – Wibaux
Samantha Roberts - Hysham

Montana FFA Alumni WLC Scholarships:

Claire Murnin - Shepherd

Irene Andres Memorial National FFA Convention Scholarship:

Badger Hoppe - Gardiner

Holt Family and John Bliss National FFA Convention Scholarship:

Jo Hopf – Hysham
Hailey Wold - Plentywood

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS:

AMTOPP (*Association of Montana Turf, Ornamental, and Pest Professionals*) Scholarship:

Maya Roginske - Joliet

Stockman Bank Next Generation Scholarships:

Holden Stepper – Park City
Emily Barcus – Corvallis

Dr. Max L. Amberson Scholarship:

Morgan Anderson – Big Timber
Rylee Swartz – Big Timber

Vern Dahlstrom Memorial Scholarship:

Summit Browning - Gardiner

Murdoch's Scholarship:

Guilty Browning – Big Timber

MABA/MGEA Scholarship:

Alecia Gonzaelz – Three Forks
Ethan Bay - Kalispell

Blue Shows Through Scholarship

Evan Heupel - Kalispell

Trails West Bank Scholarship

Tyeson Gravenhof – Roundup
Emily Coles - Roundup

Servant Leadership Scholarship

Enzo Corean – Grass Range

John J. Kozlowski Memorial Scholarship

Layne Johnson – Plentywood
Olivia Collins - Joliet

Luther Family Scholarship

Jordyn Greene - Kalispell

Leave a Legacy Scholarships:

Chloe	Gullikson	Fairview
Abigail	Curtis	Ruby Valley
Brianna	Olstad	Shepherd
Cadee	Hess	Park City
Bree	Swanson	Chinook
Nolan	Forseth	Fairfield
Logan	Lahaug	Mission Valley
Marcus	Mader	Broadus
Sierra	Boggio	Red Lodge
Jake	Chulyak	Big Timber
Lance	Rutledge	Big Sandy
Gunnar	Cayko	Fairview
Marley	Seely	Huntley Project
Torin	Cecrle	Chinook
Courtney	Hofman	Lambert
RyLee	Mix	Hinsdale
Mattie	Gasvoda	Big Sandy
Jenny	Harris	Joliet
Anthony	Hernandez	Little Big Horn
Jesse	Isaacs	Miles City
Shea	Ostberg	Fairfield
Morgan	Friede	Chinook
Reatta	Wood	Forsyth
Kate	Kovanda	Columbus
Josie	Uski	Hot Springs
Ryan	Bal	Park City
Tandy	Planichak	Stillwater Valley

Big Muddy Legacy Scholarship

Layne Meek – Richey

SAE Grants

Alexa	Smieja	Belgarde
Holly	Vranish	Belgrade High School
Kylie	Fontaine	Missoula
Leah	Nelson	Missoula
Aviah	Flug	Corvallis
Katie	Jackson	Corvallis
Autumn	Benson	Corvallis High School
Emily	Barcus	Corvallis High School
McKenzie	Weis	Corvallis High School
Ava	Wilcox	Corvallis High School
Molly	Miller	Fromberg
Landon	Burleigh	Grass Range High School
Enzo	Corean	Grass Range Public school
Ivory	West	Missoula
Guildy	Browning	Big Timber
Whitney	Bugli	Victor

CDE Scholarships

ATMS – Isaac Cantlon – Mission Valley
Agronomy – Ethan Bay - Kalispell
FAM – Ethan Bay - Kalispell
Meats – Shaun Billingsley
Livestock – Coleton Sherman – Mission Valley
Ag Sales – Sophie Banzet – Kalispell
Prepared Speaking-Carly Friedrich-Plentywood
Extemp Speaking – Rylee Glimm – Kalispell
Horse – Brock Boyer – Big Horn (Hardin)
Ag Comm – Abby Begger - Wibaux

Star Greenhand – Riley Jones – Miles City

Most Inspirational FFA Member

Jordan Leach - CJI

State Officer Nominating Committee

Luke LaLiberty (Facilitator), Matt McKamey (Facilitator), Leah Graf (Facilitator).

Austin Mapston - Billings, Tyler Wiltgen - Billings, Kendra Heiken - Billings, Lauren Chase - Billings, Cindy Luoma - Luther, Klayton Lohr – Shelby.

Student members: Aubry Kirschten – Baker,

Officers Selected: **Jordan Leach - Conrad** - President; **Reagan Long – Shields Valley** 1st Vice President; **Romulus Hiner - Harlowton** - 2nd Vice President; **Emma Lou Slivka- Winifred** - Secretary; **Grace Mosher – Shepherd – Reporter**; **Sierra Mauland - Big Timber** - Treasurer; **Ryan Bal – Park City** - Sentinel; and **Grace McPherson - Fairview** - Parliamentarian.

Proficiency Award Winners

Claire Murnin – Shepherd – Agriculture Education

Joel Warneke – Winifred – Ag Mechanics Repair and Maintenance

Mackenzie Hogenson – Shields Valley – Agriculture Service

Lane Botts – Huntley Project – Beef Production Entrepreneurship

Leah Nelson - Missoula – Diversified Livestock Production

Echo Saunders – Gardiner – Environmental Science and Natural Resource Mgmt.

Addison Sant - Frenchtown – Equine Science

Grace Fritz – Missoula - Goat Production

James Malchow – Shepherd - Poultry

Savannah Kostecki - Stevensville - Sheep Production

Tel Holland - Beaverhead - Swine Production

Reagan Long – Shields Valley – Turf Grass Management

State FFA Degree (184)

Loren	Lane	Augusta
Hallie	Iverson	Bainville
Logan	Josephson	Bainville
Madison	Butori	Baker
Jessica	Stark	Baker
Samantha	Anderson	Beaverhead
Andrew	Egan	Beaverhead
William	Ellis	Beaverhead
Clinton	Ford	Beaverhead
Faye	Holland	Beaverhead
Katie	Johnson	Beaverhead
Bridger	Kemph	Beaverhead
Kaydyn	Nelson	Beaverhead
Clancy	Setzer	Beaverhead
Alexander	Tatarka	Belgrade
Ella	Young	Belgrade
Samuel	Cox	Big Sandy
Eli	Dixon	Big Sandy
Kaden	Pursley	Big Sandy
Conner	Sibra	Big Sandy
Cooper	Taylor	Big Sandy
Christian	Winderl	Big Sandy
Mason	Gallagher	Big Timber
Sierra	Mauland	Big Timber
Mollie	Ruth	Big Timber
Weston	Sondeno	Big Timber
Maria	Mader	Broadus
Mikayla	Kraft	Broadwater
Aislinn	Handy	Chinook
Wylee	Simenson	Chinook
Tate	Spidahl	Clarksfork
Lydia	Hulsey	Columbus
Breauna	Erickson	Conrad
Trey	Kinamon	Conrad
Jordan	Leach	Conrad
Tabitha	Vermulm	Conrad
Justiz	Daricek-Johnson	Corvallis

Katie	Jackson	Corvallis
Corbin	Kirkland	Corvallis
Lino	Ponce-Juarez	Corvallis
Emelia	Schairer	Corvallis
Lawren	Weidow	Corvallis
Kylie	Bergum	Culbertson
Carson	Solem	Culbertson
Addisyn	Chapa	Custer
Trent	Kuntz	Custer
Jake	Snively	Custer
Jenna	Brown	Dawson
Shelby	Gobbs	Dawson
Connley	Hoagland	Dawson
Tayler	Wolf	Dawson
Kaycee	Corbin	Deer Lodge
Emmett	Banner	Fairfield
Kaylie	Bender	Fairfield
Shane	Donnelly	Fairfield
Wyatt	Murphy	Fairfield
Madelena	Preston	Fairfield
Kyona	Yeager	Fairfield
Allison	Jensen	Fairview
Grace	McPherson	Fairview
Allie	Uecker	Fergus
Cort	Fraker	Forsyth
Breelynn	McCaffree	Forsyth
Payne	Reilly	Forsyth
Kara	Loyd	Frenchtown
Jaeleigh	Davidson	Froid
Missouri	Kalal	Froid
Cian	Logan	Froid
Kaylee	Olson	Froid
Madison	Birrer	Fromberg
Madison	Reynolds	Fromberg
Echo	Saunders	Gardiner
Alexa	Woods	Gardiner
Payson	Dickinson	Geraldine
Tyler	McOmber	Geraldine

Sienna	Stone	Geraldine
Landon	Burleigh	Grass Range
Reinhard	Bold	Havre
Ida	Hencz	Havre
Clara	Holland	Havre
Landon	Molitor	Havre
Shyla	Solomon	Havre
Walker	Albus	Hinsdale
Andrew	Boucher	Hinsdale
Coy	Bowman	Hinsdale
Zora	Holt	Hinsdale
Lauryn	Aldridge	Hot Springs
Clint	Lien	Hot Springs
Michael	Marrinan	Hot Springs
Sydney	Wilson	Hot Springs
Lane	Botts	Huntley Project
Ryan	Fox	Huntley Project
Bo	Ledesma	Huntley Project
Tanner	Stott	Huntley Project
Willa	Tauer	Huntley Project
Tyrel	Twitchell	Huntley Project
Frank	Weigum	Huntley Project
Andrea	Hopf	Hysham
Samantha	Roberts	Hysham
Tamra	Taber	Hysham
Stefan	Shoemaker	Joliet
Shelby	Sticka	Joliet
Goddy	Bandola	Judith Gap
Zane	Mager	Judith Gap
Brady	Boll	Kalispell
Kinzey	Davis	Kalispell
Bryce	Dorsett	Kalispell
Bradley	Fields	Kalispell
Kate	Ford	Kalispell
Rylee	Glimm	Kalispell
Kyla	Hays	Kalispell
Rachel	Kurth	Kalispell
Gavin	Mailman	Kalispell
Lauryn	Siderius	Kalispell
Beth	Young	Kalispell
Lauren	Prevost	Lambert

Sage	Spinner	Lambert
Alyssa	Robertus	Laurel
Kali	Lindvold	Miles City
Ian	Zook	Miles City
Tanner	Bergh	Mission Valley
Hannah	Fussell	Mission Valley
Coleton	Sherman	Mission Valley
Fortino	Silva	Mission Valley
Dorthy	Webster	Mission Valley
Wilson	Bordner	Missoula
Dane	Geraldson	Missoula
Laynie	Jensen	Missoula
Miley	Weston	Missoula
Alaina	Willhite	Missoula
Katelyn	Frost	Park
Megan	Otis	Park
Hayden	Lane	Plevna
Rylee	Cotrell	Red Lodge
Magdalena	Eaton	Red Lodge
Danica	Tucker	Red Lodge
Josh	Sponheim	Richey
Weston	Austin	Roundup
Russ	Lang	Roundup
Ty	Pierce	Roundup
Lily	Vickers	Roundup
Alizae	Howard	Roy
Meghan	Mosby	Roy
Gunnar	Decker	Ruby Valley
Chase	Lutgen	Ruby Valley
Koy	McDougal	Ruby Valley
Louella	Voegeli	Ruby Valley
Kate	Anderson	Shepherd
Kaydin	Kumpula	Shepherd
Ella	Lane	Shepherd
Skylar	MacGillivray	Shepherd
James	Malchow	Shepherd
Grace	Mosher	Shepherd
Maya	Niles	Shepherd
Ian	Danielson	Shields Valley
Myles	Fehlman	Shields Valley
Mackinze	Hogenson	Shields Valley

Kyle	Jerke	Shields Valley
Reagan	Long	Shields Valley
Brooklyn	Kirby	Simms
Reese	VonBergen	Stanford
Tanna	Bailey	Stevensville
Selwyn	Hackett	Stevensville
Kamryn	Jones	Stevensville
Savannah	Kostecki	Stevensville
Sidney	McCasland	Stevensville
Katelyn	Pope	Stevensville
Quinn	Rahl	Stevensville
Noah	Tan	Stevensville
LeAnn	Wandler	Stevensville
Hattie	Baver	Stillwater Valley

Dillon	Ferster	Stillwater Valley
Abigail	Jeffery	Stillwater Valley
Shayla	Russell	Stillwater Valley
Keagan	Sandlin	Stillwater Valley
Layne	Smith	Twin Bridges
Taylor	McKinley	Victor
Desirae	Neider	Victor
Romulus	Hiner	Wheatland
Piper	Ward	Wheatland
Abby	Begger	Wibaux
Ashlynn	Varner	Wibaux
Emma Lou	Slivka	Winifred
Joel	Warneke	Winifred

2023 American FFA Degrees

Honorary State FFA Degree

Mike and Pam Chulyak – Big Timber
 Joylynn Petrosky - Billings
 Kellan Standley - Bainville
 Chase Rose - Bozeman

Distinguished Service Award

Ryan's Trophies - Manhattan

DELEGATE BUSINESS

Friend of the Foundation Award

Scott Aspenlider – Billings

Lee Boyer Lifetime Achievement Award

Kristen Swenson

Bill Jimmerson Forever Blue Legacy Award

Milford Wearley - Choteau

State Convention Sponsors

Tractor & Equipment Company	Sibanye Stillwater
Opportunity Bank of Montana	Tri-State Truck & Equipment
AgriSompo North America	Wichman Ag Supply
Bank of the Rockies	Montana Seed Growers Association
Montana Agribusiness Association	AgriSompo North America
Tractor & Equipment Company	Mark and Joan Sinnard
Wichman Ag Supply	Peter Nelson Charitable Trust
MSU College of Agriculture	Montana Farmers Union
Montana Department of Agriculture	AgriStudios
Marias River Livestock Association	Ann Newhouse
Montana Seed Growers Association	Northwest Farm Credit Services
Montana Pork Producers	Montana Range Days
MaxAg of Montana	Miles Community College
Montana Grain Growers Association	Montana Farm Bureau Foundation
Montana Seed Growers Association	Reach Higher Montana
Montana Seed Trade Association	Stockman Bank
Simplot	BNSF
Stockman Bank	Montana Army National Guard
General Distributing	Northwest Farm Credit Services

Local Bounti
Pioneer Meats
Montana Game Wardens Association
Opportunity Bank of Montana
Bravera Bank
Montana Contractors Association
Hubbard Feeds
Native American Agricultural Fund
Neal Family
Northern Livestock Video Auction
Colleen Barnard
Native American Agriculture Fund
McDonalds Montana
Cat Workwear
Western Ag Network
Montana Valley Irrigation
Friesen Nutrition
Farrington Insurance
Stockman Bank
Ag West Farm Credit
ABS Global
Pioneer Meats
Collegiate FFA of MSU

MSU Collegiate Young Farmers & Ranchers
Northern Ag Network
NutraLix
Montana Speciality Mills
Alpha Gamma Rho
Montana Timber Legacy Foundation
Jay & Lyle Armstrong
Curt Robbins
Kristen Swenson
Montana Farm Bureau Foundation
Farmers Union Insurance
Montana Meat Processors Association
Cottonwood Animal Health
Montana Livestock Ag Credit
Sustainable Oils
Farm Bureau Financial Dillon
406 Agronomy
Bitterroot Stockgrowers
Western Livestock Auction
Hoven Equipment
North 40 Outfitters
EF Educational Tours
Northwestern Energy
Great Falls Tourism

2022-2023 STATE OFFICER RETIRING ADDRESSES



Anthony Hernandez – Little Big Horn *State Parliamentarian*

What do we know about this guy? Yes, we may know him as a leader of the American civil rights movement. We also know he was confident, bold, and peaceful. He was a trailblazer and a pioneer who lived his life to make the world a better place for the next generation

Now, what about this guy? This man needs no introduction. He's a brilliant inventor and businessman who made computer nerds... cool. Though he struggled with his leadership skill early on in his career, Jobs persevered and found his way back to the top, eventually, he became the very recognizable face of Apple.

Yes, while we may know these people as leaders or business professionals, many of us also know them as trailblazers. When we call someone a trailblazer it means that they are the first person to do something or someone who pioneers a new path or approach in a particular field or area. Let me introduce you to two FFA trailblazers.

Tori North Piegan, an alumni of the Little Big Horn FFA embodies what it means to be a true trailblazer. She was the first to run for state office and the first to get her American FFA degree from my chapter. In all honesty. If it weren't for her, I could not see myself on this stage sharing my story. She leads by example and inspires people with her selflessness and dedication to serving others. From being a pioneer for the Little Big Horn FFA to being the Assistant Athletic Director at Lodge Grass High School, she never hesitates to lend a hand or voice to those who need it most.

It was Tori's trailblazing that led me to the National FFA Washington leadership Conference. Where I Had the chance to be another FFA trailblazer, Maria Martinez former state officer from the New York FFA association, and at the time Maria served as a WLC facilitator. On the first day of the conference, she approached me and initiated a conversation like we had been friends forever. The simple act of reaching out continues to impact me to this day because of an act of kindness. At the end of the conference, I realized that Maria is an inspiration to me and many others in her life. She showed me that our strengths and weaknesses are not limitations, but tools we can use to better others. By using her unique abilities, she made a difference in the lives of many people and left a lasting impact on the members who attended WLC.

You see you don't have to be someone who reinvents the wheel to be considered a trailblazer, instead, you can be a person who is admired, original, creative, and one who strives to make the world a better place. Maria knows her strengths and weaknesses and uses them to help uplift others. Tori lives her life by the FFA motto; Living to serve. She serves others because she sees how others can make the world a better place.

These people are trailblazers, they're individuals who have the courage to push boundaries and pave the way for others to follow. They are visionaries who see beyond the status quo and imagine a world that is better. Trailblazers inspire us to take action, break out of our comfort zones, and strive for excellence in everything we do. However, as trailblazers, we may run into roadblocks that hinder our progress and make it difficult to move forward. These obstacles can take many forms, such as a lack of resources, or unforeseen challenges. But just as trailblazers have done before, we too can find ways to overcome challenges and continue on our path.

During my very first year in FFA, way back in the stone age, I got the chance to compete in the Horse Evaluation CDE. This was only my second or third competition in FFA so I planned to take it seriously. My teammates and I arrived at the arena ready for the long day of judging those horses. I liked this CDE. It was quiet and no attention was on me. I loved it. That was until I had to give reasons for my horse evaluations. I was freaking out. I didn't realize that this CDE required any speaking. I was so nervous that I had to speak in front of this random judge. I refused to give reasons. In fact, I ended up not giving reasons. No big deal right? A few hours later, my teammate and I are at the awards ceremony. To my surprise, our young horse evaluation team took 2nd place. (*pause*) But it turns out the difference between 2nd and 1st place was one single point. This means if I had gone up to the judge and given my reasons, our team would've taken 1st place.

Despite my advisor's occasional reminders of a past event, I view it as a valuable learning experience. With the help of my advisor Mr. Neal, I channeled this experience into competing in various speaking events, starting with the creed and working my way up to prepared public speaking. Eventually, speaking in front of you guys, and I don't think I'm freaking out right now (this is a self-deprecating joke (laugh)). The lesson I learned from this experience is that by transforming obstacles into opportunities, we can gain insights into how to navigate challenges.

Drawing inspiration and guidance from trailblazers who have gone before us is essential to our success as leaders. By learning from their experiences and insights, we can gain valuable knowledge and avoid roadblocks. However, as we continue to blaze our own trails, it's essential to remember that each of us has a unique journey to follow. Our paths may not be the same as those who have come before us, and that's okay. We must embrace our own journey and the challenges that come with it. For some of us, the fact that we are here at the state convention is the start of a trial. We must take this opportunity to push ourselves to new heights and blaze our own paths toward success.

Perhaps this is your first state FFA convention ... Blaze your trail. Perhaps, you competed in an LDE but didn't make it to the finals ... blaze your trail. Perhaps, you're a state officer candidate waiting to hear the results ... blaze your trail (long pause). Each and every one of you in these seats is on a path to greatness. But trailblazing is not just about achieving success. It is about embracing challenges, learning from failures, and persevering in the face of adversity. It is about being willing to take risks and try new things, even when the path is unclear. As we move forward into the next chapter of our lives, I challenge each of you to be a trailblazer. Take what you have learned during your time in the FFA and use it to make a positive impact in your school, communities, chapter, family, and in the world. Be brave, be bold, and be willing to take risks. And remember that even when the journey is difficult, you are never alone. You have the support of your fellow FFA members, as well as the inspiration and wisdom of the trailblazers who have come before you.

So What trails are you going through? Or maybe perhaps what trail are you walking down? Who blazed those trails for you? And how will you widen them for others?
I will leave you with the words of a trailblazing American poet *Robert Frost*.

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—*

*I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*



Kyelynn Coombe - Joliet *State Sentinel*

Earlier this year, I went thrift shopping with a couple of my friends in Powell. I had never been thrift store shopping before but let me tell you it's a steal. As we walked into the store, I wandered through a whole bunch of clothes but as I got to the back of the store there was a home goods section. I had just moved into my dorm, so I needed some decorations to spice up my little jail cell. As I was scanning the first set of shelves, there was a little square, white wooden sign sitting on the top shelf. Written on the sign was a set of bold cursive words reading, "Dreams don't work unless YOU DO". I didn't even have to think twice, and I grabbed it, I knew I was buying that sign. Better yet, the sticker on the back said it was only 6 dollars.

Sometimes we get so busy with all the things we are involved with it feels like we are running 100 miles per hour and we have reached the limit. An example of this takes me back to conditioning in volleyball practice. Your coach keeps blowing her whistle repeatedly and you're stuck sprinting from line to line and push up after push up and you just feel dead, numb, and extremely tired. Although, what you don't know is that there is a whole other gust of wind and energy within you, you just can't feel it. When you work hard, and push yourself to dig deep down and reach that gust of wind and push yourself to keep going...that dream that you have been dreaming will come true. That dream of beating the rivalry team since your freshman year and receiving that state championship with your teammates...will come true. I don't mean just working hard in sports and in practice, but I mean working hard at everything you do in life. You know what you are dreaming, and you can tell people what your dreams may be, but until you are focused and determined to put in time, the work, and the effort, that dream is just an idea. That sign I found was a good reminder for me, and I know words are easy for me to sit up here and toss around but just like this sign says, Dreams don't work unless YOU DO. One day your dreams will come true.

As I look across this room, I see a lot of ambitious dreamers, who are gonna become professional athletes, the world's next best agronomist, and so much more. But let me ask you guys one thing... when you reach that point and your dreams come true, what are you gonna do? "When the dreams you're dreamin' come to you, When the work you put in is realized, let yourself feel the pride but, always stay humble and kind". No one states it better than Tim McGraw in his song humble and kind. I really wanted to sing that part for you guys but on the other hand I also wanted you to stay and listen to what I have to say. There are a lot of successful people out there, and not all of them are humble about their successes. You, on the other hand, can be. I encourage each one of you to be humble every day. The joy, happiness, and pride you feel after accomplishing something big in your life...take those feelings and move on. Move on to something even bigger and better like your next goal or dream. Now... confidence is key...but there is a difference between being confident and humble and being confident and arrogant. That spotlight is like the big ol sun in the sky. Feels great once you get under it, but stand there too long and you're going to get burnt. "Let yourself feel the pride but always stay humble and kind".

"Hold the door, say please, say thank you. Don't steal, don't cheat, and don't lie. I know you got mountains to climb but, always stay humble and kind". Tim McGraw once again nails it right on point. It reminds

me and takes me back to the golden rule...treat others the way you want to be treated. Being kind is also forgiving. Tim also sings, "Don't hold a grudge or a chip and here's why, bitterness keeps you from flying' always stay humble and kind". Everyone makes mistakes in life and that is alright. If you hold onto what someone did or what someone said, you will be stuck in a rut and will go nowhere. Forgive others, and most importantly don't forget... to forgive yourself as well. A little bit can go a long way, so even the biggest grin sent someone's way, might just make their day. It's crazy but kindness is not just in your words and actions, it's also...who you are. People remember what you say and what you do, as well as how you make them feel. So, remember to be encouraging, kind, forgiving, and courteous to everyone.

There are two people that come to my mind when I think of a hardworking, humble, and kind person. These two people go by the names Summit Browning and ShayLe Stewart. Summit Browning is a member from the Gardiner chapter who I met on an Ag tour earlier this past summer. Summit and his ag sales team competed at Nationals in October, and they placed 7th while Summit placed 3rd overall. He was super humble about his own and teams' accomplishments. Also, a fun fact about Summit is that he has his own coffee business on the side. I think coffee is disgusting (HAHA), but that's neat. ShayLe Stewart is a woman I have admired ever since I was little. Her picture hangs high on the classroom wall as she was a leader in our chapter and in the community. I thankfully get to work with her to this day as she is a livestock market analyst for DTN. One of the most desirable characteristics she has is that she is always humble and kind.

Montana FFA... dreams don't work unless YOU DO. Thank you, for letting me spend an amazing year with some of the humblest and kindest people I have ever met. I encourage all of you to work your hardest, and to always stay humble and kind. Thank you!



Mackenzie Serrano - Roundup

State Reporter

By a show of hands, who has been told by someone else this may be a teacher, parent, classmate, coach "You can't"?

How many of you have thought to yourself "You are not good enough, you can't?"

BE VULNERABLE!

Look at how many people in this audience have the same thoughts as you. The feeling like you just don't belong or that you can't do something is common. In brutal honesty, we all have the naysayers who make us feel like we can't and we deal with self-doubt. It's not the obstacle that defines us but rather how we handle the obstacles that makes the greatest impact.

Now we are going to take a trip back in time, 7th grade me.

I was on top of the world, I had just moved to the high school building, I was in with the cool kids. NOTHING could ever go wrong. I came home from school on a typical day, had a snack, fed the animals and waited patiently for my mom to come home so we could have dinner. We knew she was going to be late as the first quarter had just passed and that meant parent teacher conferences. I didn't tend to get in trouble and was

always academically ahead. My mom got home made dinner, and at the Serrano household dinner is not only a time to eat but to talk about the day. She had told Sheldon what his teachers said but never really mentioned what mine had. We all finished eating and I just thought she was not going to tell me, which I thought was extremely weird. She waited for my brother to leave the table and then began to start talking about how I was doing in all my classes but one, she paused and then started in.

Now in 7th grade Mackenzie's mind I couldn't think of a single reason why my teachers would be disappointed in me. I was living my BEST life.

She began to talk about how well I was doing in this subject and how proud of how well I was doing in school, but then she paused. My mind started racing. She started, "One of your teacher's expressed concerns about you not being involved in sports and how that could make things hard for you socially. Even if it is Cross County, by joining a team sport it will help you learn to be part of a team and that was a great way for you to interact with your classmates". My mom informed the teacher that she didn't have to concern herself with my activities because I participated in activities outside of school. My mom felt I was getting plenty of opportunities to work on my social skills. One suggestion my mom had for the teacher is that when I was an 8th grader, I could join FFA and that would be something more in my wheelhouse. The teacher proceeded to tell my mom that she would not recommend FFA for me to join as the teacher felt that was only for students who wanted to cause problems and there were not opportunities for me there." How could I be behind socially, I have friends, and not just friends, COOL friends. I was in 4-H I knew people from all over, how could I be socially behind?

For years one person's words, that she probably does not even remember saying, stuck with me and weighed on my shoulders heavily. Her doubt and disbelief would come back to haunt me during times of self-doubt or struggle. Sometimes I would wonder if I was doing the right thing. Was I doing what was best for me? Or should I just listen to those words she said and start something new. This came to be the truest my Sr year of high school when Roundup FFA was without an ag teacher. In my heart I knew I had the ability to be resilient. I could accomplish great things, but self-doubt has a habit of coming back around. Montana FFA I cannot begin to tell you how glad I am that my mom did not listen to that teacher and let me learn to follow my own path. Instead of letting her words affect me for the rest of my life, I chose to take every opportunity possible, and prove to her and myself that she was wrong and that I was going to be successful in my unlimited journey.

Let's take a step back and look at a "famous individual in this room" who has had her fair share of obstacles set in her path, yet displays resilience daily. Some of you may know her as your advisor, friend, or mentor, but I simply know her as the woman who showed me that ANYONE truly has the ability to overcome ANY obstacle set in front of you. Let me share the story of Mrs. Lindsey Harper. Mrs. Harper is the Lockwood FFA Advisor and I was fortunate enough to have her as my advisor in Roundup.

Mrs. Harper is resilient. Just 90 days after marrying the love of her life, Cody Harper, he was diagnosed with Esophageal cancer. On July 5th 2019 the Roundup Community lost Cody after a courageous battle against cancer. November 7th 2021, just two years after losing Cody, Mrs. Harper was in a car accident that very easily could have taken her life. Since then, she has been fighting the battle to walk day after day. She decided to keep going day by day step by step holding resiliency.

That day in Jr. high when I was told FFA wasn't the right path for me it felt like the end world, but it didn't slow me down. The challenges that Mrs. Harper has faced are difficult for any of us to imagine, but she keeps positively impacting others.

APPLICATION

Some of you sitting in these seats may be wondering how you are going to overcome the obstacles set in your path. Growing up in a lower-income community I watched first-hand how these obstacles could be things like finding your next meal or what kind of clothes you wear.

OPTION ONE: Believe what the naysayers have said around you, let their opinions define who you are and watch your passion and opportunity die or

OPTION TWO: Be relentless in your pursuit of what you are passionate about. Dig deep and find the inner strength I know each and every one of you holds. Overcome the obstacles set in front of you no matter what that may be.

Just like I did after being told FFA wasn't the right path by me, and Mrs. Harper continues to model every day. Don't be afraid to take the road less traveled road because the destination is was worth the walk. Reach out to alumni members or find someone in your community who is willing to help a team once a week, become competitive, and enjoy your success.

Montana FFA only those who risk taking the road less traveled can possibly find out how far that road may lead.



Riley Larson - Conrad *State Treasurer*

Six letters, two words.... "What If?" At some point in time, we have all uttered these two words.

Thomas Edison said "I never once failed at making a light bulb, I just found 2,774 ways not to make one."

Imagine if this is all we had to light this room. Several lanterns with the flickering light of a small flame. Edison is known for inventing the light bulb. But *what if* Thomas Edison wouldn't have tried for the 2,775th time when making it. Taking one more chance we now have light because Edison never gave up on "what if."

Simone Biles, a gymnast I'm sure almost every one of you has heard of. While at the U.S. National Gymnastics Championships, Biles attempted a "Triple double" which is two somersaults and three twists on floor, a move that had never been landed by a woman in competition. Although she initially landed it, she stumbled and fell to her knees. Just two days later, Simone landed the move which won her the championship, made history and this move was named the Biles 2. *What if* she would have given up and not tried that move again? She took a risk and it paid off.

Simone Biles once said: "I'd rather regret the risk that didn't work out than the chances I didn't take at all."

Let's go back to 2018, my freshman year and my first-time attending State Convention. I was in awe of everything I was surrounded by and I was astonished by the state officer team and their messages. Since then, I dreamed of becoming a state FFA officer! I looked up to state officers all through my high school years and I even submitted my application to run for a State FFA Office at the end of my senior year. But then I received a call with an offer to cheerlead on scholarship and play softball at Dawson Community College. I had to make a really tough decision. Play 2 sports I loved in college, or chase my dream of running for State Office. I thought long and hard about this decision, one side was fulfilling my life goal of playing sports in college on scholarship, and the other was to make an impact on members like past state officers did on me. What should I do? Due to the scholarship, I decided to commit to Dawson Community College and withdrew my application to run for state office. So, I moved to Glendive and started my college journey.

Throughout my year at Dawson, the thought of running for state office never left my mind. Thinking about how my life could have been so different, the opportunities I could have had, the members I could have met. I knew either way I would regret not playing sports or not running for a State Office. But I never thought the regret would haunt me like it did.

Fast forward to February 9th, 2022. My softball team and I were doing a community service activity helping set up chairs and tables for a trade show when Morgan VanDyke from the Dawson FFA chapter approached me and introduced herself. Although she already knew me and I knew of her, it was only from a 1-inch square on zoom calls during Covid. I shook her hand and we began talking. Several minutes into our conversation, she asked me if I was going to run for a State FFA Office. I shook my head and said "no, I just don't think it's possible at this point in my life." As we continued on with our conversation, I began to really think, "Wait, I'm not going to college in Glendive next year or playing sports anymore.....*What if!*" I left that evening and went back to my house. My head became consumed with the thought of running for State Office. "What If?... No, it's too late, applications are due in 5 days." I tried to go to sleep but I couldn't stop thinking about the possibility.

I knew if I didn't run, I would have a void for the rest of my life. I had to think, "can I live the rest of my life knowing I never tried? I knew that I could NOT do that, this had been my dream since freshman year of high school, and I couldn't just give up on it without trying.

So, the next morning I asked a professor and my coach to write me a recommendation letter, I reached out to my FFA advisor, and I started my application. I told my coaches "I would be missing the games that weekend" and thankfully they were not too mad and told me to chase my dreams. Not knowing if the mail would get my application to Bozeman on time, I decided I would hand deliver it to Linfield Hall to ensure it was turned in on time. So, Sunday morning, I hopped in my car, which I wasn't completely sure would make the 6-hour drive to Bozeman. But I went out on a whim, I said "*what if?*" I took a chance to follow my dream and it paid off.

You see, we live our everyday lives and get so used to the routine that we sometimes forget to try something new, to take a risk, to chase our dreams. And that usually comes down to one thing.... Fear. The fear of stepping out of your comfort zone. Everyone here is scared of something. Don't act tough, I see you all out there saying "no, I'm not scared of anything."

And you might not be scared of a physical thing, but maybe you are scared to be out of place, or not fit in... I used to be consumed by this fear. But, if you let it, that fear will ruin your life. You will never go after what you want or what makes you happy because you are so worried about pleasing others. So shake that fear and pursue what YOU want. Other's opinions don't matter.

What if today was the only day you have left? Would you be worried about what others think of you? I hope not, because you deserve to live the life YOU want!

Think, can you confidently say you have no regrets?
Did you make the most of this crazy thing called life? Can you live with the regret of not going after your dreams?

It's time to stop saying it's too late, and start saying "what if".

You can give up, you can stop putting in the work, you can say you aren't good enough... but you will NEVER know until you try? "What if" you could do it!!

Take action and go after what you want. There are NO LIMITS to your dreams. Montana FFA, “WHAT IF?”



Jaylea Lunceford – Mission Valley State Secretary

Where were you on August 13th, 2015? Maybe you were working or hanging out with friends or family. For my family, we were at the hospital in Billings Montana. It was not a tragic event that brought us here, but it was one moment my family will always remember. It consisted of long hours sitting in chairs playing card games with my older brother and having to pace back and forth due to excitement.

On this day we were given a gift, so small and fragile, my little brother Dexter was born. If you asked us at that moment in time if we knew how much we would learn, laugh, and love this bundle of joy, we wouldn't even come close to being correct.

Now, Dexter is a not-so-little bundle of joy these days. 7 years old can be a tough age, but boy does this kid have an attitude that I strive for. One event in which I saw Dexter doing great, even though I thought he would struggle, was during the Alumni Leadership Camp or ALC this past summer. He would play games by himself then the next second he would be throwing a ball or dancing the macarena with members twice his age. I was so proud of him and how he handled the chaos. Dad probably did too because he slept the whole way back. During this week I learned that being a ray of sunshine, finding joy in the little things, and having a positive outlook on life is what I like to call the “Dexter Mentality”.

This was first introduced to me by the leader of the Orange Traffic Cones, Coleton Young at ALC. His pep talks about how this mentality is something that I should carry through my year and stick with me. I also realized that there are a lot of people that have this sort of mentality.

Miley Dixon, from the Plentywood FFA chapter, was one person that I became fast friends with during ALC. During our free time, I noticed a seat next to Miley and I took it. After a while, I found out that she is an amazing artist. And as the weirdo I am I asked her to draw me something. I left her my book and left her to work. After minutes of me bouncing around and talking to some other members, I came back to a very focused Miley. She had drawn the lodge at the camp in all its glory. I couldn't believe that in just a couple of minutes, she took a building that I saw as a place with good food and air conditioning and turned it into something extraordinary. I thought that Miley's ability to notice something that most of us had taken for granted was incredible. That's when I noticed Miley truly has the Dexter Mentality.

Further through this year, I was at our Annual Fusion Summit Conference where students either gain experience in interviews for future careers or are preparing to run for a state office. It was the last morning and we were waiting for the final events to begin in one of the ballrooms. I walked in and talked amongst some members then found myself sitting at a table with a few of the gentlemen. At first, I had no clue what I was getting myself into until I tried what they were doing. They had a cup, not empty, but half full with *milk*. They then had some Gatorade lids and were trying to flip them into the cup. After a couple of tries and a couple of hits to the face, we finally stopped. The game was a little silly, yet we had a lot of fun and enjoyed the amusement and the company. You may also think it was messy, but we never actually got it into the cup. Even though *their* lid-flip skills are awful these 6 people made a Monday type of morning a lot of fun. They were *my* rays of sunshine at that moment, and I couldn't be more thankful. Evan, Gunnar, Isaac, Owen, Dillon, and Keller all have the Dexter mentality.

Throughout this year and my entire life, my family has been there every step of the way. Unfortunately, I always got "stuck" with my older brother, Cole, during all family events. Even though I do give him grief and will never let him forget how he tricked me into doing his chores as kids, I still admire how Cole goes through life. Cole would like to fly planes for a living, even though his Top Gun Maverick-type flying may not go over so well with the family. He is an adrenaline junkie and will tell you everything there is to know about the plane that's way off in the distance. He may seem like he has life completely figured out but he is the biggest goofball I have ever met. When I first moved to Bozeman, Cole was driving me around to show me the town. I had absolutely no clue where I was, but I knew I was safe with him. Until one of his favorite songs came on and the steering wheel turned into a full drum set. I thought we were done for. But as the older brother he is, he stopped and straightened out, and watched me try to unglue myself from the seat. I promise that we do love each other, we just show it as every brother and sister would. Cole has made my life better by showing me his point of view. He has been a great role model with his passion for his future, his relationship with his awesome girlfriend Mary, and his love for his family. He has a positive outlook on life and is a positive aspect to those around him. Cole has and is a creator of the Dexter mentality.

After a while, Dexter's mentality became very common, I started to see bits in pieces in most people and sometimes in the most random places. Like, my walk-in song that's titled Lightning Does the Work by Chad Brock. This song was my Uncle Ramey's walk-in song for his RA when he was a state officer. Way back in 2000 when he actually had hair. But it not only is a great car jam, it has a quote that I love. He says, "You can sit there in the dark cussing at the night when you can just reach out your hand and turn on the light." Life can be full of struggles and hardships. But why would you only go through the motions in life when you have so much good around you? Why give up on a day that hasn't even started? You can't, you have to keep going. Tragedies and blessings can strike at any moment, whether your car breaks down in the Starbucks parking lot going from ALC to Range Days you might just have some awesome teammates to jump your car. No matter what, there will always be someone there to pick you up and support you. Find those people that will help you reach in and turn on the light. Find your ray of sunshine. Find joy in the little things. For me my team is *my* ray of sunshine, my family is my joy, and everyone here is the positive aspect of my life. I challenge you to find all these things and create a mentality that will push you to greater things. In the words of Chad Brock, "there is No Limit in this life

to how far you can get, but if you're going all the way you have to break a sweat." Montana FFA thank you so much for an amazing year, I have enjoyed every part of it. I hope you find your Dexter mentality and reach in and turn on *your* light.



Phillip Prewett – Park City *State 2nd Vice President*

A woman by the name of Brene Brown once said “Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage which in reality it’s also the birthplace of innovation, creativity and change.” This quote could be understood a million different ways but, in my mind, it describes the very thing I was scared of throughout middle school and high school. I want to ensure everyone walks away from tonight's session with the mindset of “I’m going to step in front of my fears before they step in front of me.” Becoming vulnerable and removing that face you put on before you walk out the door in morning creates a life of people who know you for you! Don’t be scared to show your true face and the Real You, for many of us here living under the Big Sky vulnerability is often seen as a weakness. We live in a state that prizes strength, independence, and self-reliance. We are taught from an early age to pull ourselves up by the bootstraps, put on a brave face, and never let anyone see our weaknesses. However, through this year of service I

learned that when faced with everyday issues and challenges. I don’t have to be the goofy, chuckle head right Mr. Rose, that I am often seen as. I have found that I can be vulnerable with my team, coworkers and close friends, and it’s not as daunting of a task as I originally thought. I have come to realize that vulnerability is not a weakness, but rather a strength. It takes courage to be vulnerable, to open up to someone else, and share our fears, insecurities, and struggles. Vulnerability is the key to business relations, friendships, and serving others. It allows us to connect on a deeper level, when we are vulnerable it allows others to see us as truly us, Imperfect, flawed, and truly human.

I want everyone to step back in time with me, we are going back to freshman year of high school where a shorter, not so great looking Phillip stood. There I was standing in the ag classroom on my very first day and I knew I had to smile and crack a few jokes to get Ms. Hanson’s frown turned upside down. Before I knew it Ms. Hanson had started a conversation all about how I should join FFA and find my place in the organization. So, let’s fast forward a few years, to the 2nd month of senior year, I was faced with a question. “Phillip, what do you think about running for a State Office position?” I had given it some thought and asked Ms. Hanson what do I need to get there, and she told me, “You can’t cut yourself short on an amazing opportunity, and only you have the ability to control how others view you, now’s the time to decide what you want be known for.” That right there is what made me realize I had been putting this mask and hiding in plain sight before I went to school, work, and before I talked with others. I always had to crack the jokes and make light of situations that really had seemed like a never-ending problem. In 2020 my dad was rushed to the hospital due to an infection that was in his bloodstream and there was a very good chance that I might lose the one person I had looked up to more than anything. While my dad was in the hospital I felt like I was drowning like I had to bucket water out of a sinking ship, until I had the chance to talk with someone who throughout my life had embodied vulnerability in his own way “Skip King” while talking to him one night he revealed to me that he was scared for my dad and my family and told me “it’s okay to be scared” and those five words have stuck with me every day of my life when it comes to stressful situations. “It’s okay to be scared”

One day I had shown up again to my Ag class and Ms. Hanson pulled me aside and said she noticed my grades had started to slip and asked if everything was okay, Now Ms. Hanson could have come to me with disappointment or anger but instead she invited vulnerability into the conversation that one question ripped my mask off and had led tears to fall. That one question made becoming vulnerable a safe place. I no longer had to smile and laugh - I was able to show that there was genuine worry and concern going on in my life. At that moment I realized I had to take off my mask and become vulnerable with the people around me, and show them who I truly am.

That day in Ag class led me to finding the need to share with my friends and it showed how much my friends that had truly become family really cared and supported me, a couple really good examples of these people are my best friends Holden Stepper, Adam Baker, and the Lowell Family who all during that time offered to help around my family's farm so I could focus on the problems on hand. Holden, Adam, Ms. Hanson, and the Lowell's are all great examples of why taking off your mask is so important to healthy living.

Before committing to running for a state office I attended the fusion summit, where we were faced with different types of interviews and questions. This allowed me to become open with my feelings and thoughts, it shed light on how removing the mask can truly make someone express themselves in a way that didn't seem possible before. This was the first time I actually expressed my true self in front of people I didn't even know. As many of you leave the session tonight and go back to your lives and the rest of the state convention, I hope that many of you are more willing to step outside your comfort zone and take your mask off. Take your mask off when you walk into your contests or meet new people, Montana FFA invite Vulnerability into your life, and conversations. We truly have no idea of the lasting impact we leave on those around us. Montana FFA thank you for this year of service and you truly have No Limits to the Vulnerability you can share and No Limits to the lasting impact you have throughout the rest of the week at the 93rd Annual Montana FFA State convention.



Olivia Collins - Joliet ***State 1st Vice President***

To many of you this might just be a huge pickle jar that once held a LOT of pickles. Not much is special about it right? I mean it still has the brand sticker on it...but for right now let's use this pickle jar to represent us.

Think back to when you first started FFA, maybe that's this year or years ago. Were you that shy seventh or eighth grader or were you ready to take on the world at that age?

Now when I first joined FFA at Joliet high school in the eighth grade I didn't even know what this organization entailed. Neither of my parents had ever participated in it and I was doubtful. I thought to myself "Wait, I don't raise animals and I don't live on a farm...I wonder if this is the right place for me." I had no huge interests or passions at the time and definitely didn't know what I wanted to be involved in in high school. It was then that one of my classmates in

the Ag room pulled me aside and said, "We are going to do Conduct of Chapter Meetings and we need a full team so you are going to Ag Expo."

At that point I was just this empty pickle jar, plain, clear, with my options open as to what to do with it or myself. Often-times we need to deal with the hand we're dealt. I didn't grow up in an ag production family and had no previous intentions of even joining FFA however I came to the realization that all of us start out as nothing more than a "boring" pickle jar, it is up to us to decide how we want to design our lives and work with this vase we are all given.

Moving on to my freshman and sophomore year in FFA I had realized that this organization held potential for me. Reflecting on that time I still had no idea what my passions were. At that time I didn't like sports, I was involved in class activities and such but I had no deeper purpose. I needed to lay the foundation in order to create something with this pickle jar. I tried agronomy, creed speaking, extemporaneous speaking, conduct of chapter meetings, parliamentary procedure, ag communications, and employment skills. These were all fine and dandy and I was still happy with my effort and accomplishments in these.

But it wasn't until spring of freshman year when I had a student teacher named Lauren Taylor. She got a few of us young ones to start practicing this competition called floriculture. I had already tried multiple competitions in FFA but I didn't know this one just might change my life. I had practiced and practiced and our team ended up getting 10th place that year. "Wow, I thought to myself that was really fun and considering that we are all just freshmen I think we did a pretty good job!"

It was then that I began filling that opening in my pickle jar, setting the base by trying new things that interest me. In FFA you're going to try new things but this is also true in high school, you're probably going to try sports, clubs, and different extracurriculars. Don't be afraid to start creating that base for yourself. Chances are none of us are going to start out as a rockstar in floriculture, livestock, or even football. But it is essential that we try several things as we begin to start working towards something great.

There I'm done with my arrangement, ahhh I love the greenness so beautiful...

uhhh no... all we've done is lay the base there are a lot more steps in floral arranging Olivia...

But I've tried new things and found something that interests me...

No honey we've got a lot more work to do, keep going...

Ahh that's right...

Well, this base is all one color. I should probably add something to it.

There... I mean if I just put all of my effort into floriculture, I am sure to succeed in it.

Not quite, let's take this out.

For me at this point if I wanted to be considered successful, I needed to put in the steps to make that happen.

My first job was at a flower shop and then later I worked at a greenhouse. Through these SAE experiences I absorbed so much knowledge that I wanted to bring back to my floriculture team. Unfortunately, we had to wait until junior year to start filling in the gaps because of Covid. But as we started to practice and learn from each other and my advisor, that is when each one of us found what we are good at and what we enjoy the most. We worked as a team and that contributed to so many other skills rather than the physical aspect. It taught me leadership and it taught me teamwork.

Slowly I started to fill in these gaps and add a little bit of color and it clicked that this might be what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

Look at this solid foundation we built with leatherleaf and filler flowers but there's something missing...

Our focal flowers...I like to think of these flowers as what we are known for or our passions or our successes.

As I place these in notice how they stand straight up or stay where I put them exactly. This is because there is that foundation to support it.

My experiences and skills that I have learned along the way have allowed me to showcase what I love to do the most, floral design.

You may be asking but Olivia why don't we just stick in the focal flowers at the beginning and call it day. You will never find your deeper meaning or passion if you jump to only using focal flowers or try to be the best at everything you do. It is simply too costly. These flowers cost more than anything else in this arrangement. We can't be the best at sports, FFA, BPA, band, etc. It is simply too costly to try and be the best at everything. We don't have the money or time to be only focal flowers.

But we do need to find our value flowers.

Values are also costly, and managing our time between our family, friends, school, hobbies, and extracurriculars can be a lot, but it is a matter of choosing. I personally value friendships, I value family, I value education, and I value this organization but to have each of these in my life I need to arrange the focal flowers correctly.

Many of you are probably thinking to yourself right now but what if I don't have a passion but I'm involved in so many activities. Keep searching, keep digging, and keep working because that is the only way to know. If you like football or volleyball, what do you like about it? Is it the leadership? Is it the teamwork aspect? Is it the athletic part? Think about what that might be and it will hopefully lead you in the right direction towards your future career.

Maybe your passion isn't something physical, maybe it's internal. Maybe your passion or greatest skill is your empathy for others for example. Build on that and become a guidance counselor, a nurse, a veterinarian, or an ag teacher that betters the youth of tomorrow. The possibilities are endless when you truly try new things and get to know yourself. You have to find your passion before you can impact others with your beauty.

Now FFA might be your base, filler, or focal portion.... or all three... but you won't know which one until you try. For me these steps all come together as I establish my goals, one of which is to own my own floral company. This all just goes to show how long it can take to create something beautiful and there's nothing wrong with that.

Remember this pickle jar that this arrangement is in? You probably forgot because it's not about your container or where you come from, it's what you're going to put in it. People aren't going to notice your imperfections or the fact that I'm using a pickle jar as a vase. They're going to notice what's flowing out of it and what you yourself have to offer.

As I stand before you today, I am happy with how my arrangement is being created but that does not mean the design and the focus can't change in the future.

Mom, Dad, Grace, Mr. Massar, Mr. Rose, and my teammates this arrangement is for you. It represents my years in FFA and each and every one of you who were apart of creating this arrangement at this stage in my life. Thank you from the bottom of my pickle jar.

Montana FFA members, it is your time to assemble your own arrangement. Regardless of your container, and no matter what your base consists of you can start trying different fillers and then select those focal flowers that will make your arrangement unique and fulfilling.

Montana FFA how will you design your passion



Brighton Lane – Huntley Project *State President*

As I come on this stage for the last time, I can't help but think back to 1 year ago.

I was in the circle off to the right of the stage with the candidates. We heard Anthony Hernandez, Kyelynn Coombe, Mackenzie Serrano, Riley Larson, Jaylea Lunceford, Phillip Prewett, Olivia Collins. Having heard these 7 names called introducing the new team of officers and now there was only one left to be announced. The feeling? It was indescribable. The anticipation... The nervousness... The anxiety and apprehension. Seconds seemed to turn to minutes; minutes turned to hours before I finally heard. "And your 2022 – 2023 Montana FFA State President, from the Huntley Project FFA Chapter, Brighton Lane."

Suddenly my anticipation, and nervousness switched to excitement, elation, and joy as I ran to the stage....

Then, boom, the moment my foot hit the stage, it all left me, and I suddenly felt it... that all too familiar feeling of dread, anxiety, doubt.

All I could think of was the F-word. I recall clearly how I suddenly went from the highest high to being consumed by the F-word. No, not the f-bomb. The other F-word. One that I think is even more nasty. FEAR. The overwhelming emotion I felt once I was on this stage was fear. The fear of failure.

You see I hadn't even been fitted for my association jacket, introduced myself to my teammates, or even officially been installed as a state officer and already I was terrified of saying the wrong thing, doing the wrong thing, making the wrong move. So much so that I was paralyzed and worried I had made a mistake...worried it was more than I could handle.... worried I wasn't good enough...

Growing up many that knew me in school knew me as a perfectionist. I was driven to try and get whatever I was doing as close to perfect as I could. That meant starting class projects weeks before they were due. Writing and reworking reports over and over. In the show barn I was a bit controlling, some might even say I was a bit of a dictator. I had a very particular way things needed to be done. Looking back, no doubt I wasn't the nicest sister to have in the barn or at the show.

Those that would be quick to label me, labeled me as an overachiever, obsessive, a try hard, and a perfectionist. But the reality is, that the driving force behind my efforts wasn't the possibility of successes, but the fear of falling short. Of failing. that I would fall short because I hadn't done enough. Every night when I laid down for bed, I had a nagging notion/fear that I hadn't done enough and because of that, I would not succeed.

You see I have had this feeling my whole life. My whole life I have been petrified of failure, so scared to do something wrong and to fail that I would refuse to even speak the truth and say what I wanted for fear of not accomplishing that and letting those around me down. I let this fear control my life I let it dictate what I did and

more importantly what I didn't do, what I said and everything in my life because, in my mind, I had to be perfect there was no other option. We all have fears or molds that we are trying to fit into and struggle with. Identifying and breaking through them is the first step to becoming our most authentic and happiest selves.

Identifying and breaking those can be a daunting process. I know that I had no clue where to start until my dad gave me a nickname and a piece of advice that has stuck with me. Before we get into that; however, I need to tell you all a little bit about myself.

Now those of you that know my family and I you know that we show pigs. It's a huge part of our lives and we take it very seriously, often times pig shows count as our vacations: seriously. Since we spent our entire summer partaking in this activity it's natural that I wanted to be good. Now those of you who know us also know that I have a pesky little brother who just happened to be an absolute natural at showing pigs, from the first time he picked up a whip he was kicking my behind in showing pigs. For me....it wasn't so natural. I did alright, but it seems I inevitably always fell short and usually ended up getting close, but ultimately losing. I became known as segunda from my father. Now some of you might be thinking, aww that's so nice your dad has a cute little nickname for you.

No. Segunda means second in Spanish. My dad literally called me second place for years and the horrible thing is he was right. It seemed the best I could ever do was second. Time after time show after show, I was second. Always right there but never good enough to grasp victory. This wasn't even just in showing pigs, but this seemed to repeat itself in everything I competed in. Showing pigs. Showing cattle. Speaking competitions.

Besides giving me that wonderful nickname that I still can't live down, my dad reassured me that if I just kept working and trying to improve, the success would come. And when it did, it would be so much sweeter because of all the times I fell short. And he was right. After staying with it and continuing to compete on the tanbark showing, things just started to click.

This is where I began to understand that fear and failure are simply steps on the path to success. Failing is something each and every one of us has faced repeatedly and will continue to face. Everyone in this building has failed at a test or quiz. Failed at a new sport or activity. Failed to complete a project. Failed your friends and family and even failed yourself. These failures can get into your head and make you feel worthless and hopeless, if you allow them. But the reality is, these failures are truly just stepping stones. They are stepping stones leading to our ultimate successes. Without my setbacks and failures, I would not be standing here today speaking to the greatest youth organization in the state of Montana. Now I'm not up here telling you all that I am perfect and that the fear of failure is something I don't experience at all anymore, fear is still a strong influence in my life, and it continues to impact me. Like this week I have been petrified of messing something up and failing all of you. However, I am learning to recognize it for what it is. A fleeting emotion that can be harnessed and used as a motivator.

While writing this speech I was brought back to a quote that I heard in a podcast. "Don't shy away from risks. Growth doesn't typically share the same space as comfort." Think about that simple phrase: "growth typically doesn't share the same space as comfort".

This part of the quote reminds me of Anthony's speech earlier where he talked about how he didn't like public speaking and being in front of crowds, yet he forced himself in that uncomfortable situation and look at how much he grew. He just gave a killer retiring address all because he wasn't afraid to be uncomfortable and take risks.

Theodore Roosevelt perfectly encapsulates my thoughts,

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Montana FFA, I challenge you to be the man or woman in the arena. Be the doer of deeds. Strive valiantly. Don't be afraid to fail because there is no effort without error and shortcoming. Fail while daring greatly. I challenge you to push the boundaries. Face your fears but don't focus on them. Unleash your potential and create a life with no limits, by changing your perspective from allowing fear to dictate your behavior to putting fear in the backseat and taking charge of your own life.

Montana FFA, be the man or the woman in the arena and create a life with no limits.