



**NEWS RELEASE**

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**Jackson County Central FFA Member is State Star**

*Minnesota FFA's Top 10 Chapters Named*

MINNEAPOLIS – (April 20, 2021) The Minnesota FFA today named McKenzie Henning of Jackson County Central FFA its 2021 State Star in Agribusiness. Henning was chosen from among the 264 high school agriculture education students receiving the State FFA Degree this year. The 2021 Stars Over Minnesota are sponsored by Compeer Financial Services.

The announcement was part of the organization's 92<sup>nd</sup> Convention with the theme *Worth It*. Convention events are a mix of virtual sessions, live recognition, interactive state competition finals and workshops, as well as in-person convention-in-the-classroom activities.

Henning, daughter of Brad and Ann Henning of Jackson, is Jackson County Central's FFA president and competed in FFA Leadership Development and Career Development Experiences including Creed Speaking, Discussion Meet and Parliamentary Procedure. Her Crops team competed at the National FFA Convention in 2019, and she was recognized by the University of Minnesota with the Norman Borlaug award.

Henning's Supervised Agriculture Experience was as an employee of SureFlex Hybrids, an independent seed corn business in Jackson. Her role there influenced her decision to pursue a career in plant genetics through a biotechnology and agricultural science major at South Dakota State University.

Other state finalists for the award included Selena Corona – Albany FFA Chapter; Eric Gunderson – Grand Rapids FFA Chapter and Jacob Ross – Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted FFA Chapter.

Tuesday's FFA Convention session, sponsored by Enbridge, included honoring the Top Ten FFA Chapters for 2021, each of which earned Superior Chapter awards. Eden Valley-Watkins FFA was named 2021's Premier Chapter. Others among the Top Ten are the Academy for Sciences and Agriculture, Chatfield, Forest Lake, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted, Princeton, Randolph, Redwood Valley, Sleepy Eye and Staples-Motley.

Crookston FFA, Frazee-Vergas FFA and Mora FFA also earned Superior Chapter awards. Gold awards were earned by Dassel-Cokato FFA, Thief River Falls FFA and Tracy Area FFA.

Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) state winners in the categories of Agribusiness Systems, Social Systems, and Power, Structural and Technical Systems were recognized, along with Agriscience Fair awards within each category.

Agribusiness and Social Systems Proficiency awards included:

- Agricultural Education – Jaydon Esteboe, Redwood Valley, sponsored by the Jim Ertl Fund;
- Agricultural Processing – Bryce Sonnek, United South Central, sponsored by the CHS Foundation;
- Agricultural Sales Entrepreneurship – Riley Muenchow, Russell-Tyler-Ruthton, sponsored by Bremer Bank;
- Agricultural Sales Placement – Marissa Johnson, Tracy, sponsored by Peterson Farms;
- Agricultural Services – Natalie Beckendorf, Renville County West, sponsored by Rosen’s Diversified; and
- Service Learning – Charlie Haug, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg, sponsored by the Minnesota Biofuels Association.

Top Proficiency winners in Power, Structural and Technical Systems were:

- Agricultural Mechanics Design and Fabrication – Benjamin Olander, Staples-Motley, sponsored by the John Deere Company;
- Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance Entrepreneurship – Caldyn Huper, United South Central, sponsored by NAPA Auto Parts; and
- Agricultural Mechanics Repair and Maintenance Placement – Karla Schultz, Atwater-Cosmos-Grove City, sponsored by Lynnes Welding Training.

Agriscience Fair Gold awards for Social Systems were given to Karley Hamilton, Waseca; Levi Holtz, Buffalo; and Madilyn Mages, Cedar Mountain.

Power, Structural and Technical Systems Gold awards for the Agriscience Fair went to Chloe Haack, Cleveland; Olivia Noble and Madison Anderson, Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg; and Morgan Langenburg, Academy for Sciences and Agriculture.

In her retiring address titled *The Beauty of the Process*, Laney Swiers of Mahnommen FFA, State FFA Sentinel, told members to experience the little moments that shape them.

“The outcome is amazing, but the process to get there is where the actual growth happens,” she said. “There is something so beautiful about the journey we endure.”

The Minnesota FFA Foundation's Honors Reception included recognition of the 2021 Minnesota FFA Hall of Fame as presented by the Minnesota FFA Alumni Association and Supporters. Those honored were: Wes Anderson, Appleton; Dennis Bjorklund, Victoria; Sarah Dornink, St. Paul; Michael Dove, New Ulm; Mary Hoffmann, Sleepy Eye; Donna Moening, Hayfield; Keith Olander, Staples; Eric Sawatzke, Kensington; and Harmon Wilts, Kerkhoven.

FFA Chapters in schools across Minnesota participated in convention activities today such as hands-on challenges to win an iPad Mini or a Kindle, and downloadable graphics promoting the day’s theme, *YOU are Worth It!*

Workshops offered online included Goal Digger – Planning Your Way to Success and Be-YOU-tiful: Individuality, Authenticity and Professionalism. The online Blue Room provided students with presentations surrounding 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges in agriculture, food and natural resources.

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 (<https://crowd.cc/mnffa2021> or by download from <https://crowd.cc/s/3ZLxW>).

The State FFA Convention is offered in partnership by the Minnesota FFA Association, the Minnesota FFA Foundation and the Minnesota FFA Alumni.

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**Note:** For many awards and events, photos can be obtained by emailing [snewellopitz@gmail.com](mailto:snewellopitz@gmail.com) during convention week, and [itolosky@umn.edu](mailto:itolosky@umn.edu) beginning April 26. Photos of Proficiency winners can be viewed on the Minnesota FFA [Instagram](#) site.

### **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 12,500 members and nearly 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 12,500 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.mnffaoundation.org](http://www.mnffaoundation.org).

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

The Minnesota FFA Alumni Association and Supporters works to support the 12,500 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).