

PERSPECTIVE

January 26, 2024

OKFB wins AFBF New Horizon Award, State Awards of Excellence



Oklahoma Farm Bureau President Rodd Moesel (left) receives the 2024 AFBF New Horizon Award from AFBF President Zippy Duvall on January 21 at the 105th annual American Farm Bureau Convention in Salt Lake City.

Oklahoma Farm Bureau was awarded the American Farm Bureau New Horizon Award Sunday, January 21, at the 2024 AFBF Convention in Salt Lake City for OKFB's Capitol Camp youth legislative experience.

The OKFB Capitol Camp is a two-day immersive mock legislative experience started in 2022 for 4-H and FFA members who are high school juniors and seniors that aims to help them understand Oklahoma's legislative branch and the lawmaking process.

The event, held at the Oklahoma State Capitol, is planned again for 2024, and dates and details on how students can apply to be part of the two-day event will be released as soon as event plans are finalized.

The New Horizon Award recognizes one state Farm Bureau in each AFBF membership category for implementing a new program or event. OKFB received the award in AFBF's membership category four, which includes states with a similar number of members.

OKFB was also recognized with four AFBF State Awards of Excellence during the 2024 AFBF Convention. State Farm Bureaus are recognized for outstanding achievement in four possible award areas based on the state's yearly programs, events and activities. OKFB was honored with an award in each of the possible program areas, which includes advocacy, coalitions & partnerships, engagement & outreach and leadership & business development.

OKFB members attend 105th annual AFBF Convention in Salt Lake City



OKFB President Rodd Moesel presents the Oklahoma state flag during the opening general session of the 2024 AFBF Convention in Salt Lake City.

Nearly 70 Oklahoma Farm Bureau members traveled to Salt Lake City for the 105th annual American Farm Bureau Convention.

The meeting is the largest annual gathering of Farm Bureau members in the nation, and included three general sessions, numerous breakout sessions, the 2024 AFBF business meeting, YF&R competitive events, Women's Leadership meetings and more.

Learn more about the OKFB delegation's convention activities in the following pages, and check out our social media channels for even more content.

Lucas recognized with AFBF Distinguished Service Award in Salt Lake City



Rep. Frank Lucas (center) receives the 2024 American Farm Bureau Distinguished Service Award from AFBF President Zippy Duvall (right) and OKFB President Rodd Moesel during the second general session of the 2024 AFBF Convention.



Congressman Frank Lucas (center) visits with OKFB members at a special state reception OKFB hosted for Lucas to celebrate his recognition for years of service to agriculture on the national level with the AFBF Distinguished Service Award.



Watch Lucas' recognition video shown at AFBF

Rep. Lucas was honored at the AFBF Convention with a video showcasing his agricultural ties and policy efforts throughout the decades. Watch the video online by visiting okfb.news/LucasAward24 or scan the QR Code shown.



OKFB members participate in AFBF YF&R competitive events

OKlahoma Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers members competed in the American Farm Bureau YF&R competitive events during the 2024 AFBF Convention in Salt Lake City.

Jake and Kelly Decker of Noble County competed in the YF&R Achievement Award, Meggie Gibbs of Ottawa County competed in the YF&R Excellence in Agriculture event, and Leslie Lewis of Okmulgee County competed in the YF&R Discussion Meet. Each of the contestants prepared their applications and honed their presentations in the months leading up to the AFBF Convention.



Ottawa County Farm Bureau member Meggie Gibbs presents her Young Farmers & Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture Award presentation at the 2024 AFBF Convention on Saturday, Jan. 20. Gibbs shared her agriculture story and her passion for educating her local community members about farming and ranching. The AFBF Excellence in Agriculture Award recognizes agriculturalists who earn the majority of their income from off-farm careers.



Okmulgee County Farm Bureau member Leslie Lewis (right) competes in the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers & Ranchers Discussion Meet opening round on Saturday, Jan. 20. Lewis competed in two rounds of the discussion meet, sharing her ideas and fostering conversations on topics including diversity in agriculture and sustainability in agriculture with fellow young agriculturalists from around the nation.

A road map to the new year at the state Capitol

By Steve Thompson, OKFB vice president of public policy

As we prepare to launch into the 2024 state legislative session, our OKFB Public Policy team is ready to vigorously fight the good fight for agriculture and rural Oklahoma. Several old battles for OKFB members are expected to re-emerge, but exciting new opportunities could also appear on the path ahead.

A cornerstone for OKFB is to always strive for fair treatment of agriculture producers when it comes to taxation. In 2024 we will face efforts to create new ad valorem assessments aimed at funding expansion of emergency fire and medical services. We are concerned these new property taxes would place a disproportionately large share of the financial burden on farm and ranch landowners. OKFB policy – and our advocacy – remains focused on sales tax as the preferred revenue option when funding is needed for services of this type.

In a few fast-growing urban and suburban sectors of our state, conflicts have emerged as new businesses and housing developments were established in unincorporated areas. If these local disputes are resolved at the Capitol by empowering counties statewide to adopt municipal-style zoning for rural land, the unintended consequences to agriculture producers could be significant.

Year after year of drought in our

region has led to increased scrutiny of Oklahoma water resource management regulations. Legislative proposals from the southeastern part of the state are expected to call for complicated new measurement techniques for, and limits on the use of, surface water flowing through creeks and rivers, while bills to require metering of groundwater wells may come from western Oklahoma.

“Workforce development” is a popular buzzword at the Capitol, and there is no better way to positively influence the future quality of Oklahoma employees than to increase participation in agricultural education programs through FFA and 4-H. OKFB will help lead a campaign to increase funding for CareerTech and Oklahoma State University Extension through the legislative appropriations process in order to bolster these invaluable programs.

Our most effective tool to ensure political success on these priorities is the continued active engagement of OKFB members with their legislators. We sincerely encourage you to reach out to your OKFB field representative and set up a visit to the state Capitol for yourself or a group from your county. Our staff can accommodate groups of almost any size, no matter how big or small.

We look forward to a few special upcoming events, including our live weekly Zoom legislative updates every



Friday at noon from February through May, the annual Leadership Conference in Oklahoma City Feb. 13 and our Washington, D.C., Summit the week of April 8-12.

We embark on the 2024 legislative journey with a strategic plan to provide multiple opportunities for OKFB members to insert their voices directly into the lawmaking process.

Our Public Policy team is proud to represent the Farm Bureau brand and greatly appreciates the support we receive from each of you.

This column originally appeared in the Winter 2024 issue of Oklahoma Country magazine.

OKFB WLC members represent Oklahoma at AFBF meeting



Oklahoma Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership Committee members met with fellow Farm Bureau women from around the country during the American Farm Bureau Convention in Salt Lake City.

OKFB WLC members attended the AFBF Women’s Leadership Committee regional caucus, networking events and represented Oklahoma during the AFBF WLC Business meeting. The OKFB WLC also sponsored a table at the AFBF Flapjack Fundraiser.

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County Farm Bureaus share the OKFB story at KNID Agrifest



County Farm Bureau members from around north-central Oklahoma shared the Farm Bureau story with fellow farmers, ranchers and attendees at the 2024 KNID Agrifest held Jan. 12-13 at the Chisholm Trail Expo Center in Enid. The members, along with OKFB staff, shared the value of a Farm Bureau membership along with the programs and events of the organization as they signed up new members and encouraged current OKFB members to participate in the organization's numerous activities.

YF&R high school, collegiate scholarship applications open

Applications are now available on the Oklahoma Farm Bureau website for both the OKFB Young Farmers & Ranchers high school and collegiate scholarships.

The high school scholarship awards nine \$1,000 scholarships – one per OKFB district – to graduating high school seniors from Farm Bureau families planning to study agriculture at an accredited Oklahoma college, university or technical school.

The collegiate scholarship is a \$1,000 scholarship awarded to an Oklahoma Collegiate Farm Bureau member.

Applications with full instructions and details are available online at okfarmbureau.org/applications.