

# PERSPECTIVE

May 5, 2023



## Oklahoma Grassroots

Rural & Ag Business Accelerators

### OKFB, partners launch rural and ag business accelerator programs to foster rural innovation

**O**klahoma Farm Bureau, along with national and state-level partners, is proud to launch the Oklahoma Grassroots Rural and Ag Business Accelerators, a rural economic development initiative designed to spur innovation, diversify opportunities for farmers and create jobs in rural Oklahoma.

The core of the initiative is two separate business development pipelines that will connect rural Oklahoma innovators and ventures with investment and business support, bringing the next generation of Oklahoma ingenuity to life.

The Cultivate Oklahoma agricultural innovation pipeline – powered by national partner AgLaunch Initiative working with Ag Ventures Alliance, a farmer cooperative that invests in ag tech startups – will focus on innovations and technologies that have on-farm or production agriculture applications to provide new opportunities for Oklahoma farmers. Cultivate Oklahoma is a farmer-focused pipeline building a network of innovative farmers to incubate and scale the next generation of agricultural technologies.

The Activate Oklahoma rural innovation pipeline connects rural

entrepreneurs with Oklahoma-based resources through curriculum provided by Oklahoma Small Business Development Centers created to help innovators navigate the business landscape to bring their ideas and technologies to market.

Graduates of the Activate Oklahoma pipeline qualify for an opportunity to pitch their innovation, technology or venture to a panel of investment capital partners for a chance to receive equity investment in their enterprise. Ventures that complete Cultivate Oklahoma have the opportunity to be selected by a panel of Oklahoma farmers and their peers in the farmer network to participate in the national AgLaunch365 accelerator and receive pre-seed-stage equity investment.

Each pipeline features a bootcamp-style program featuring a diverse curriculum that provides businesses with business resources, input from business development experts and mentorship connections. Cultivate Oklahoma programming runs from June to September, and Activate Oklahoma programming is planned to run from June through November, but is subject to change based on programming needs.

To apply, companies must have

operations, investment or impact in Oklahoma and must be located in a community with a population of 50,000 or less.

Applications for the Cultivate Oklahoma and Activate Oklahoma pipelines are open from April 21 through May 19, and participants will be selected no later than June 9. The application is available on the Oklahoma Farm Bureau website at [okfarmbureau.org/accelerator](https://okfarmbureau.org/accelerator).

Oklahoma Grassroots Rural and Ag Business Accelerators program partners include Oklahoma Farm Bureau, AgLaunch, Oklahoma CareerTech, Oklahoma SBDC, Oklahoma i2E, Oklahoma State University's Food and Agricultural Products Center, Noble Research Institute and Cortado Ventures.

The Oklahoma Grassroots Rural and Ag Business Accelerators program is made possible by initial funding from the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology's State of Oklahoma Business Accelerator Program, which is providing a 1:1 match of investment capital for the businesses and operating expenses. Additional investment is expected from other partners.

## OKFB women gather for 2023 OKFB WLC Conference

Oklahoma Farm Bureau women from across the state gathered for the annual Women's Leadership Committee Conference April 21-22 at the POSTOAK Lodge in Tulsa.

The more than 90 attendees had the opportunity attend breakout sessions, complete two community service projects, participate in a silent auction and hear from Lt. Gov. Matt Pinnell's Chief of Staff Kirby Smith and OKFB Executive Director Thad Doye.

Breakout session topics included wills and trusts, dam safety, the WLC Advocacy Program, drought recovery, making life accessible to all Oklahomans, agriculture health and wellness, integrating beef into diets, leadership development and yoga.

Farm Bureau women donated items to be included in the silent auction, which raised more than \$2,600, benefitting the Ronald McDonald House Charities. Members created more than 25 lap

blankets for veterans at the Claremore Veterans Center. Additionally, members packed meals to deliver to seniors in their counties.

Tulsa County Farm Bureau women provided snack bags to attendees welcoming them to Tulsa.

For more information about WLC or to set up a committee in your county, contact OKFB Senior Director of Women's Leadership and Safety Marcia Irvin at (405) 523-2300.



## Washington and Nowata County Farm Bureaus host legislative breakfast April 21



Rep. John Kane answers questions from a Farm Bureau member after the breakfast.



Reps. Judd Strom and John Kane hear about issues members are currently facing.



Rep. Judd Strom visits with a member about legislation affecting his operation.

## Foundation for Agriculture to host annual watermelon challenge for second-grade students

Second-grade teachers can now sign up for the Oklahoma Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture's third-annual Watermelon Challenge.

During the challenge, students learn about growing food and the hard work farmers and ranchers undertake. Students will grow their very own watermelon seed from start to melon for a chance to win prizes.

Schools participating in the challenge will receive 30 watermelon seed packets, an activity book and resources with lessons. After lessons with their

teacher, students and their families are encouraged to plant the watermelon seeds at home.

Watermelon seeds can be planted late-April to mid-May, but the soil temperature must be 70 degrees for the seeds to germinate. To find soil temperatures in your area, visit the Oklahoma Mesonet system.

Oklahoma's state vegetable requires a long growing season of 80 days. After students harvest the melon, they will need to submit a photo of themselves holding it to complete the challenge.

Teachers can sign up their second-grade classroom before May 12 by emailing Holly Carroll at [holly.carroll@aggiving.org](mailto:holly.carroll@aggiving.org) with their school address and contact information. The packets will be sent upon receiving registration information.

OKFB Foundation for Agriculture will select three winners who will each receive a \$100 prize. Submissions should be emailed to Holly Carroll at [holly.carroll@aggiving.org](mailto:holly.carroll@aggiving.org) by Sept. 15 to be considered. For more information, contact Holly Carroll at (405) 523-2300.





# AMPLIFY

FFA COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE 2023

## Applications now open for 2023 FFA Communications Conference hosted by Oklahoma Farm Bureau

**R**egistration is now open for OKFB's third-annual communications conference for Oklahoma FFA members Tuesday, July 25.

OKFB's Amplify FFA Communications Conference will arm students with knowledge of basic communications techniques and concepts in areas including writing, photography, social media and more, all taught by Oklahoma communications professionals.

Opening, lunch and closing sessions will provide students with general communications concepts and ideas

while breakout sessions will provide information on specific communications disciplines that they can use to promote FFA during the upcoming school year.

The conference will be held in Edmond at the Hilton Garden Inn Edmond. A lunch will be provided, and students will have an opportunity to win prizes that will help them tell their FFA chapter's story throughout the upcoming school year.

Because space is limited, the conference will accept students on a first-come, first-served basis, with a

maximum of two students per chapter. The registration cost is \$25 per student.

To sign up, students must register through their agricultural education instructors, who have received an email with conference registration information. Payment via check or purchase order must be submitted no later than Friday, July 7, to secure your registration.

For more information about the Amplify FFA Communications Conference, contact Krista Carroll at (405) 523-2300.

## Grant County Farm Bureau members visit with Reps. Ty Burns and John Pfeiffer at state Capitol visit



Rep. Ty Burns



Rep. John Pfeiffer

## OKFB applauds Gov. Stitt's education funding plan

**O**klahoma Farm Bureau President Rodd Moesel released the following statement on Friday, April 21, in support of Gov. Kevin Stitt's proposed education reform compromise:

"Oklahoma Farm Bureau applauds Gov. Kevin Stitt for creating an education funding proposal that strikes a balance for residents of rural Oklahoma and our urban friends while incorporating key ideas from both the House and Senate

education plans.

"The governor's three main allocation areas are an equitable solution that will help fund rural schools, reward our rural educators for the tremendous job they do while ensuring we can recruit and retain the next generation of Oklahoma teachers, and create a mechanism to provide school choice without removing funding from our rural districts.

"Farm Bureau members fully

understand the importance of education for students all across our state, and we ask the state House and Senate to continue negotiations to find a fair and balanced solution to provide much-needed education funding in Oklahoma. Our rural schools play a pivotal role in energizing and sustaining our rural communities, and we feel this proposal would provide the resources our local schools need to educate our children."

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**Postmaster:**

Send address corrections to:

*Perspective*  
P.O. Box 53332,  
Oklahoma City, OK 73152-3332

**STAFF DIRECTORY**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Thad Doye  
(405) 523-2438

**VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS  
AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Dustin Mielke  
(405) 530-2640

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MEDIA  
RELATIONS AND ADVOCACY  
COMMUNICATIONS**

Rachel Havens  
(405) 523-2346

**COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST**

Rebekah Nash  
(405) 523-2457

**PUBLICATIONS SPECIALIST**

Krista Carroll  
(405) 523-2343

Oklahoma Farm Bureau  
2501 N. Stiles  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105-3126

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## Legislative update: vet bill vetoed, groundwater permitting bill moves forward

**T**he last legislative deadline week ahead of sine die was met with gridlock at 23rd and Lincoln. The major issue affecting nonrelated legislation is the difference of opinion over an education package and tax cuts. The House and the governor have spent most of the session in nearly lockstep on both of those issues while the Senate has had a considerably different opinion.

Last week the governor began vetoing nearly all Senate bills on his desk, issuing a message that he would continue doing so until the Senate threw their support behind his education and tax cut plans. The Senate responded by voting down several of the governor's executive nominations.

Typically, at this point in the legislative session, attention turns toward budget negotiations. However, with current relations between the two chambers and the governor's office, there seems to be no budget in sight.

One bill that was vetoed was HB 2863 by Rep. Kevin Wallace and Sen. Chris Kidd. The bill would have created the Oklahoma State University Veterinary

Medicine Authority, which would have given the College of Veterinary Medicine flexibility and oversight in the funding and operations of the vet school. Gov. Stitt vetoed the bill due to the ability it would have given the authority to make and issue bonds worth up to \$50 million.

HB 2863 passed both chambers with veto-proof majorities, so there is still a possibility that the House and Senate could eventually override the veto.

HB 2053 by Rep. David Hardin and Sen. Brent Howard received Senate approval. The Senate version was amended from the version sent over by the House, so the bill will have to be approved a second time by the House before the governor could consider it.

HB 2053 clarifies who qualifies as an interested party in a groundwater permit application protest. Specifically, those appealing a groundwater permit based solely on the industry or entity applying to use the water are not to be considered an interested party, and such claims would be considered frivolous, opening the protester up to court sanctions.

Both chambers approved modified education packages. The House version models similar ideas as the education plan unveiled recently by Gov. Stitt. The House plan would still send additional funding to school districts across the state and would cap the funds any one school district can receive at \$2 million. Additionally, the House approved an update to their teacher pay raise plan that matches the governor's plan. Instead of a flat raise for all teachers across the state, raises would be between \$2,000 and \$5,000 based on the teacher's years of service. The Senate's version still contains merit-based stipends for teachers, the largest teacher pay raise, and additional per-pupil funding based on the state education funding formula.

It could be an interesting May as we approach the May 26th sine die deadline with broken-down relations at the Capitol, more vetoes expected, and no budget on the horizon.

For an update on weekly happenings at the Capitol, be sure to tune in to Oklahoma Farm Bureau's Weekly Public Policy Update each Friday at noon.