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**SD FFA Hosts Legislators**

South Dakota Legislators met with District and State FFA Officers at the 2022 South Dakota FFA Legislative Breakfast Thursday, Jan. 13 in Fort Pierre, S.D. The purpose of the event was to promote the FFA’s mission of premiere leadership, personal growth, and career success by bringing together South Dakota’s governmental leaders with leaders of the South Dakota FFA. The State FFA Officers conducted a breakfast program focusing on the three-part model of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources education which includes classroom instruction, Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) projects and FFA. District FFA officers and advisors took advantage of the opportunity to visit one-on-one with legislators, sharing how local agriculture education programs and FFA provide hands-on, career relevant experience for students. Nearly 50 legislators, plus special guests; Kristie Fiegen, SD Public Utilities Vice Chairperson; Jason Simmons, Chief Financial Officer Dept. of Social Services; Chris Nelson, Chairman Public Utilities Commission; Nathan Sanderson, Exec. Director of SD Retailers Association and Laura Scheibe, Dept of Education Division of College, Career and Student Success Director. Emma Peterson, District Officer from Willow Lake says, “Getting to eat breakfast with the legislators was one of my favorite activities at District Officer Training. I got to meet the Public Utilities Chairperson, Chris Nelson and Senator Brock Greenfield. I talked with them about how FFA impacted their lives and my life. Also, I learned about why they decided to go into their careers and work in government. It was super cool getting to make a name for myself with important people in the state, and they gave me some really helpful tips for my future.”

In addition to the breakfast, the State FFA Officer team facilitated leadership training workshops for the 49 district officers on leadership, agricultural advocacy, Career and Technical Education and FFA. This gave our District FFA Officer teams from our seven districts a chance to get to know each other while attaining valuable leadership skills. “It was a very fun experience, I really enjoyed going to the capital, which I had never been to before. I also enjoyed meeting all other district officers and learning about Agriculture in South Dakota,” district officer Cassandra Twedt from the Beresford FFA Chapter said. Officers also participated in roundtables with Hunter Roberts, Dept. of Ag and Natural Resources Secretary, Michael Bloom and cattle producer from the Pierre area and Matt Dybedahl from Winfield United. Students were able to ask questions and learn about the agriculture industry in South Dakota.

The South Dakota FFA Legislative Breakfast and District Officer Training is sponsored by Citi, SD Association of Cooperatives, SD Bankers Association, SD Farmers Union, SD Association of Agriculture Educators, SD Crop Improvement Association, SD Soybean Processors, LLC, Twin Cities Regional Ford Dealers, Farm Credit Services of America, Agtegra, Bayer, CHS Foundation, BankWest, Butler Machinery Company, ADM Harold, Miller, Tulare, BASF, C&B Operations, Citibank, Croplan by Winfield United, Dacotah Bank, Corteva/Pioneer, East River Electric Cooperative, Hanson & Associations, LLC, Midwest Veterinary Service, RDO Equipment Co. Riverview, LLP, The First National Bank in Sioux Falls, Titan Machinery, Farmers Mutual of Nebraska, Green Thumb Commodities, Christensen Farms, LG Seeds, US Army/Army ROTC, SD Corn Utilization Council.

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Gerri Ann Eide

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