

Sagehorn receives American FFA Degree

Written by Darci Tomky

Elisa Sagehorn, member of the Holyoke FFA Chapter, recently received the American FFA Degree at the National FFA Convention Saturday, Oct. 24 in Indianapolis, Ind. Earning the degree means Sagehorn is one of a select group of individuals to be recognized for years of academic and professional excellence.

The American FFA Degree is the highest level that can be achieved as an FFA member. It recognizes demonstrated leadership ability and outstanding achievements in agriculture business, production, processing or service programs.

To be eligible, members must have earned and productively invested \$7,500 through a supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program in which they start, own or hold a professional position in an existing agriculture enterprise. Recipients must also make it their mission to demonstrate outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement.

Of 507,763 FFA members nationwide, Sagehorn was one of only 3,299 to be recognized in 2009. Six others from Colorado's Northeast District also received the gold American FFA Degree key with Sagehorn.

On Friday night, all the American Degree recipients attended a banquet to hear words of inspiration from the sponsoring organizations, Andrew McCrea who trains the National Officers and the national FFA advisor Dr. Larry Case who challenged them to continue on their paths of hard work.

Saturday, Sagehorn said the degree recipients gathered to prepare for the "awe-inspiring" ceremony to receive their very own golden American FFA Degree key.

The key is a symbol of so many different things, said Sagehorn. "To every individual it holds a place of remembering hard work, dedication, tradition and all the emotions of their experiences in the ag classroom and the FFA organization."

Besides her own memories and experiences, Sagehorn's key also symbolizes a tradition she carries. "The FFA organization strongly promotes the excellence of agriculture heritage and the traditions that come with it," said Sagehorn. "Through my FFA experience and ag ed experience, I have been able to see a huge amount of amazing heritage from all across the

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country.”

While these individuals are inspiring and noteworthy, Sagehorn said they can't compare to what she has at home. Both her father Keith Sagehorn and her uncle Ray Dean Sagehorn received American FFA Degrees, and Sagehorn said she is continuing on a tradition of morals and standards in her family.

“Beyond even that, my key is a recognition of the passion FFA has inspired me to carry,” she said. “The key is a starting point in my own future as I prepare to inspire youth as an agriculture instructor.”

A 2008 graduate of HHS, Sagehorn served as an executive committee member on the Colorado FFA state officer team for 2008-2009. She is currently studying animal science with a pre-vet focus at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa.

Holyoke FFA chapter attends convention

Nine members from the Holyoke FFA chapter attended the National FFA Convention Oct. 21-24.

In Indianapolis they had the opportunity to hear speakers Mike Rowe from “Dirty Jobs,” Harvey Alston, national FFA officers and others. They also attended workshops on electronic media and service learning as well as a career show.

Apart from the convention, FFA members toured Bluespring Caverns and Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Taking a break from the long bus ride, the Holyoke chapter as well as members from Otis, Akron and Haxtun stopped at the John Deere seeder factory in Moline, Ill. where they watched them build planters.

HHS chapter members attending the convention included Evan Swanson, Amanda Ferguson,

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Emma Adams, Skyler Mayfield, Alyssa Roll, Caleb Kafka, Mariah Struckmeyer, Trae McCallum, Caitlyn Kramer and sponsor Troy Mayfield.