The 2012 National FFA Convention and Expo was held Oct. 24-27 in Indianapolis, Ind.

Holyoke FFA members Kody Timm, Stefani Razo, Josilyn Lutze and Austin Vieselmeyer, along with chapter advisor Guy Kuntz, took the opportunity to go to the prestigious event. Something that was really interesting was that 56,400 people were registered to attend the convention.

The highlight of the event was watching the creed speaking finalists give the FFA Creed in hopes of winning the National Creed Speaking Contest. It gave the group the opportunity to listen to the four students who gave the creed the best. This also gave them the chance to learn from them and prepare for their own chapter Creed Speaking Contest Nov. 29.

Holyoke FFA members attending the 2012 National FFA Convention and Expo are pictured from left, front row, Stefani Razo and Josilyn Lutze; and back row, Kody Timm and Austin Vieselmeyer.
Not pictured is advisor Guy Kuntz.

There were nine general sessions conducted by the National FFA officers in Bankers Life Fieldhouse. That is where the Indianapolis Pacers basketball team plays. Those sessions were impressive and exciting. The national officers had presentations of sponsors, award presentations, some business and their farewell speeches.

There were also keynote speakers at four of the nine general sessions. They were all very impressive and motivational, but all had a different story that captured the audience in a certain way each time.

The trip to Indianapolis included a very long bus ride. The local members left Holyoke in a charter bus and arrived in Grand Island, Neb. several hours later for the first tour. There they toured the Case Combine Factory for two hours. The workers can manufacture at the most 29 combines a day.

The next stop was in Des Moines, Iowa, for a tour on Tuesday morning, Oct. 23. That morning the group visited the Iowa Science Center and also watched a movie in an I-Max theater.

They left Des Moines shortly after and headed for Chicago, Ill. They arrived late that night but still got to eat supper at the Navy Pier. Wednesday morning the group got up early to tour the Chicago Mercantile Exchange Center. They arrived a little too early and had plenty of time to walk downtown to see the Sears Tower. After the short tour of the Mercantile, they headed toward Indianapolis.

The second opening session was at 8 p.m. There were three opening sessions because of how many people attend the convention.

The career show at the convention is mostly made up of major ag businesses that have small to large booths. There were a few colleges like University of Nebraska, Oklahoma State University and Colorado State University, among quite a few others. At the career show, FFA members can walk around and visit the booths about any time they want and also interact with the people running the booths.

There was the trade show where FFA members can buy all sorts of FFA clothing and tokens to show family and friends. There were also small John Deere and Case stores where they sold shirts, caps and even some model tractors.

The ninth session was one of the highlights of the trip. The Holyoke members were able to see the new 2012-2013 National FFA officers be elected and go through the installation ceremony. Shortly after, they headed home on a 16-hour bus ride to Holyoke.

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