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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **SD FFA Star Partners Help Fund New Generation of Student Leadership**

The South Dakota FFA actively engages South Dakota's youth in agriculture and has done so for more than 90 years. The SD FFA Foundation's Star Partner Program joins the efforts of SD businesses and organizations with FFA's mission of developing premier leadership, personal growth and career success for youth involved in agriculture education. The Foundation welcomes a growing list of supporters that value South Dakota FFA and agriculture education at the local and state levels and commit to funding at a high level:

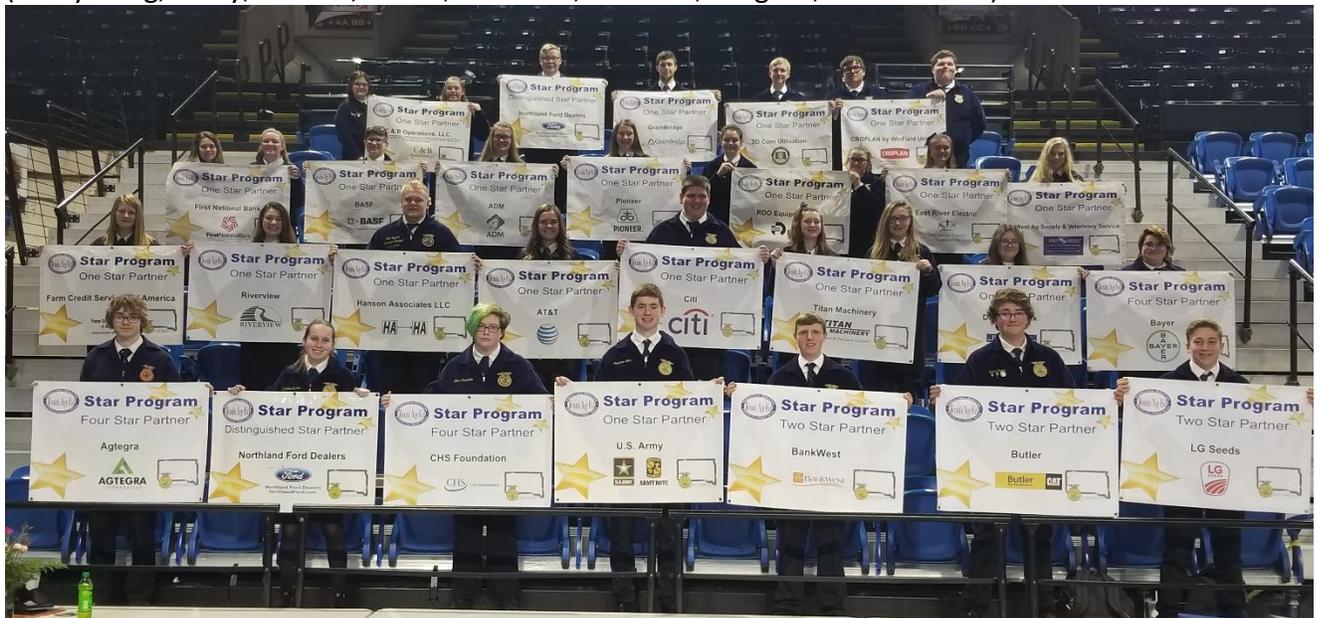
#### **Distinguished Star Partners – Twin City Region Northland Ford Dealers**

**4 Star Partners –CHS Foundation and Bayer**

**3 Star Partners - Agtegra**

**2 Star Partners – BankWest and Butler Machinery**

**1 Star Partners – ADM Benson Quinn; AT&T, BASF, Citi; Croplan by Winfield United; Dacotah Bank; East River Electric; Farm Credit Services of Americas; The First National Bank in Sioux Falls; GrainBridge; Hanson Associates LLC; Midwest Ag & Veterinary Service; Riverview, LLP; Pioneer; RDO Equipment (Aberdeen; Webster, Redfield; Sioux Falls; Rapid City); SD Corn Utilization Council; Titan Machinery, US Army/ Army ROTC; and C & B Operations, LLC (Gettysburg; Selby; Roscoe; Miller; Freeman; Yankton; Wagner; and Mitchell).**



“The need to build partnerships in support of local and state agricultural education programs continues to grow,” said Gerri Ann Eide, Executive Director of the South Dakota FFA Foundation. “We understand the ag economy is tight right now and it is inspiring to see companies and individuals stepping up! Our Star Partners are leading by example, committing financially to meet the needs of our students who are our future leaders and employees. These partners have committed to helping provide quality leadership training for our FFA members, creating a pipeline of employee development for the production, business, and science sectors of the SD agriculture industry.”

The Star Partner Program support provides resources for the South Dakota FFA Association, South Dakota FFA Alumni, South Dakota Association of Agricultural Educators, South Dakota FFA Foundation, post-secondary agricultural events, the South Dakota Center of Farm/Ranch Management and agricultural education at South Dakota State University.

“It’s a win-win partnership as all levels of our agriculture education programs receive valuable support to prepare future employees for agricultural careers and develop skills to provide leadership for their local communities, while at the same time businesses and organizations receive year-long recognition for their partnership.” says Eide. In the past fiscal year, SD FFA Star Partners made the following possible:

- Leadership training, curriculum supplies & breakfast with legislators for fifty district FFA officers
- Agriculture education Winter Professional Development conference for 90 ag teachers
- New Teacher Academy, mentoring new teachers and ag ed majors on curriculum, working with stakeholders, and FFA
- Two college student experienced international exchange developing a foundational understanding of global agricultural, including a cultural and personal perspective. Experience was shared with community and campus groups.
- Awards for Ideas Unlimited contest, encouraging teachers to share innovative teaching ideas
- Three issues of the SD FFA New Era newsletter
- 8 college students attended the SD Career and Technical Student Organization Legislative Day, learning about state government procedures
- Ag Ed college students toured top SD Ag Ed programs & ag industries
- One college student attended National Ag Day in Washington, D.C. They learned different ways to advocate for agriculture, and shared personal stories about agriculture with legislators and decision makers.
- Three college students traveled to Belize over spring break to share agriculture education ideas, techniques and to help serve by building items to improve access to basic human needs like water.
- One college student presented agricultural leadership workshops to students in Illinois.
- SD FFA Alumni meeting encouraged development of local alumni programs
- Scholarships to incoming and upper-class Agriculture majors encouraged needed industry professionals

- Parliamentary Procedure Professional Development provided teachers help with classroom instruction and running business meetings for FFA and professional organizations.
- SDAAE Conference –outstanding member, program, and new teachers awards; banquet, educational tours
- New teacher workshop for teachers with 1-3 years of experience and student teachers
- 45 beginning teachers at SDAAE conference received food science themed instructional resource materials and lab supplies.
- FFA Alumni networking gathering at the SD State Fair
- Teach Ag day activities & reception; campus Ag Ed student professional development
- FFA Ag Adventure Center activities and interactive exhibits at the state fair to advocate for modern agriculture and provided hands on learning activities and handouts for individuals attending the SD State Fair. Over 280,000 people attended in 2017 with our building being the buzz at the fair
- Financial support for the SD FFA Convention, State Leadership Career Development Events, Summer Leadership Retreats, and all activities and events for the SD's 6,000 high school Agriculture Food and Natural Resources students.
- 1 college student served as a digital media specialist at the National FFA Convention
- Travel scholarships for state champion teams to compete at National FFA Convention
- 316 FFA members received FFA jackets of their own
- Ag Ed Student teachers received scholarships to assist with professional development
- State FFA officers visited all 90 local Agriculture Food and Natural Resource programs/FFA chapters providing leadership programming
- Support for postsecondary student to travel on international experience to China
- FFA Alumni networking event held at State Leadership Career Development events
- "Be an Ag Teacher" workshops hosted by SDSU AgEd majors for high school students
- Over 500 students connected with industry at the State Leadership Career Carnival

For a complete listing of South Dakota FFA Foundation Star Partners or more information, visit [www.sdffafoundation.org](http://www.sdffafoundation.org).

The South Dakota FFA Foundation partners with individuals and businesses to provide resources that promote and enhance premier leadership, personal growth and career success for South Dakota youth in Agricultural Education. For more information about the South Dakota FFA Foundation, contact executive director Gerri Ann Eide at 605-765-4865 or visit us on the web at [www.sdffafoundation.org](http://www.sdffafoundation.org).

**Photo Caption:** SD FFA members attend the SD FFA State FFA Convention, sponsored in part by the SD FFA Star Partners.