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Commissioner Leonhardt Applauds Growth in FFA Program

Charleston, WV - In response to the announcement of FFA participation reaching an all-time high in West Virginia, Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt released the following statement:

“Jason Hughes and our agriculture teachers have done a tremendous job recruiting and training our future farmers. It is evident West Virginia contains the home-grown talent needed to expand our agricultural industries. In addition to inspiring the next generation of producers, FFA programs teach invaluable life skills to our students. Those involved in FFA learn everything from leadership to public speaking. No matter their career path, these students benefit from being a member of a West Virginia FFA chapter.”

As FFA programs continue to see growth, Commissioner Leonhardt plans advocate for additional funds needed to fully repair and upgrade the Cedar Lakes Conference Center.

“The annual FFA convention showcases the importance of the Cedar Lakes to our state. As FFA membership has increased, the program has outgrown the facilities. To ensure the conference center continues to serve future generations as official home of the West Virginia FFA, we hope to work with the Governor and our Legislature to find additional funds. We will save the state money by making necessary upgrades now.”

Commissioner Leonhardt’s goal is to have the center become self-sufficient and remove the need for additional general revenue appropriations. Leonhardt believes Cedar Lakes can play a vital role in growing West Virginia’s agriculture industries.

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“Eating from a safe, affordable and abundant food supply is important to the state’s economy and the personal health of our citizens. The Cedar Lakes facilities will be critical to our mission of increasing access to fresh, healthy foods.”

There are currently 68 high schools and 10 middle schools with FFA chapters. Total membership is at 5,360 students.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.

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