

Pathways To The Future

Special Edition 2008



At left, guests attending the dedication of the Alabama 4-H Environmental Science Education Center gather on the balcony of the building. Above, 4-H'er Ethan Parker releases one of four red-tailed hawks as a symbol to the center's commitment to nature.

Alabama 4-H Seizes Golden Opportunity with LEED Environmental Education Center

More than 250 people gathered at the Alabama 4-H Center in late November as Alabama 4-H opened the first planned gold-certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) environmental education building in the eastern United States. The facility sets a new standard in teaching Alabama's children about being environmentally responsible and energy efficient.

U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby joined in the Nov. 26 dedication for the \$5 million Alabama 4-H Environmental Science Education Center.

The 17,500-square-foot facility offers Alabama's school children, 4-H youth, business leaders and others the opportunity to learn about the environment in a way not currently offered in Alabama.

Shelby congratulated 4-H on the new facility, saying 4-H has similar goals to his own for strengthening Alabama's universities in the areas of science, mathematics and engineering. "This new facility fits right in to my commitment, working on environmentally sound science projects.

"This is tax dollars well spent, this is individual personal dollars well spent," Shelby told the crowd. "This facility will instill in our youth the challenge of the future, and that is energy. How we meet this challenge will be something future generations will solve, and a facility like this will cultivate the minds of our youth. This facility will make a difference."

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U.S. Sen. Richard Shelby shows his framed "County Agent" print by Norman Rockwell. Board chairman Jack Odle is standing in the background.



Alabama 4-H State Council members pose in the building's foyer. They include, from left, Lindsey Phillips, Ethan Parker, Salora Wright, Stephanie Stanford, 4-H REA and council advisor Kim Graham, and Candice Harvey.

"This is a special day in the life of Alabama 4-H," said Jack Odle, chairman of the Alabama 4-H Club Foundation, the fund-raising arm of Alabama 4-H. "This facility is an investment in the future of our great state and in our children."

"As we celebrate today, each of you should know that there is an Alabama child that will grow and develop into an adult. And, as an adult, they will remember what you've done here today. He or she will know what a dedicated group of individuals can do and they will have learned a great lesson, something each of you has already learned," Odle said. "And that is that there is no greater accomplishment a person can make in society than to make a positive impression in the life of a child."

Sharon Anderson, special consultant with the National 4-H Council, said that nationally, 4-H involves 6.5 million youth focusing on three main areas: science, engineering and technology; healthy lifestyles; and citizenship and leadership. "This facility is right on target in all three program areas and by far, Alabama is leading the nation."

"It is incredible what you've done here and you are truly making the best better," Anderson said.



Alabama 4-H employee Earnestine Cooper-Jones greets Miss Bertha Jones, who served 4-Hers statewide for 38 years and is a member of the National 4-H Hall of Honor.

Robert Jennings, president of Alabama A&M University, told the group that as the land-grant urban partner in the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, urban youth will also gain valuable use of this new center. "Urban programs can also take advantage of 4-H centers and environmental centers and the education that will be offered here," Jennings said. "Whether you live in the city, a suburb or on a farm, we feel the effects of a changing environment and learning how to protect natural

resources based on sound science is something all of us must take advantage of."

Ethan Parker, state 4-H Council member from St. Clair County, said, this is a great day. "We have a great facility and we are grateful for it. It is a merger between nature and technology and because of that, it will revolutionize the way people will be taught and make them better stewards of the environment."

"Through our educational programs and with this new facility, 4-H is making a significant commitment to the youth of our state," Odle said. "We would not be able to achieve this without the support of the donors – corporations, foundations and individuals who have joined with us to build this learning center and to endow 4-H programs. We thank them."

A highlight of the day was the release of four red-tailed hawks by the Southeastern Raptor Rehabilitation Center, part of Auburn University's College of Veterinary Medicine. The release is symbolic of 4-H's commitment to the environment.

The LEED Green Building rating system is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings established by the U.S. Green Building Council. LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality.

The building was designed by Davis Architects of Birmingham and constructed by B.L. Harbert International, also of Birmingham.

The heritage of Alabama 4-H has also been captured in the building's commitment to sustainability. Alabama 4-H was founded nearly 100 years ago as a way to teach parents modern methods of farming. While parents were resistant to change, county agents learned that their children were eager to learn newfound technology, so agents taught children, who, in turn, took the new information to parents.

The facility was built with funds raised by the Campaign for Alabama 4-H through the Alabama 4-H Club Foundation, Inc. More than 700 corporations, foundations, organizations and individuals have supported the Campaign for Alabama 4-H giving \$5.7 million to date. Funds from the campaign also support a \$2 million, 20-room addition to the hotel lodge space at the 4-H Center and the endowment of 4-H programs statewide.



Sharon Anderson, right, of National 4-H Council is welcomed by Alabama 4-H Club Foundation Board Members Tommy Paulk, left, and Doug Rigney, center.

Alabama 4-H'ers Win Wildlife National Title Again

A team of Coosa County 4-H'ers defended the state's national title at the National Wildlife Evaluation Contest, beating Utah 4-H'ers on their home turf. Anna Vines, Treavor Abrams, Elijah Phillips and Samuel Cordner won the contest held recently in Cedar City, Utah.

No state has won the national title more times than Alabama. The state's wildlife teams have won top honors eight times in the contest's 18-year history.

Team members also earned individual honors. Anna Vines was the overall high scoring individual. Teammates Elijah Phillips and Samuel Cordner placed fourth and ninth respectively.

"We are thrilled that our young people won the national title for a second straight year," said Emily Kling, a 4-H youth development specialist with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. "But this program is more than about winning. It offers young people the chance to develop skills they will use as adults.

Some former participants now work in natural resources while others use what they learned to better manage their own woodland property."

Roger Vines, Coosa County Extension coordinator and a team coach, says the competition was challenging. "Our team members had to study really hard to learn an entirely new habitat that is so different from Alabama," said Vines.

"The Utah and Texas teams, which placed second and third, had the advantage of being on familiar ground. I'm incredibly proud of the time and effort the team put into preparing for both the state and national contests."

Kristy Abrams joined Vines in coaching and preparing the team for both the state and national contest.

In the National 4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program, youth learn the feeding habits and habitats of a variety of animals. They also learned to identify different wildlife foods and determined which animals prefer which foods. Young people must read aerial photographs and rate the photos as the best habitat for different species.

Young people interested in learning more about the Alabama 4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation program can contact their county Extension office for additional information.



Pictured left to right are Roger Vines, coach; team members Treavor Abrams, Anna Vines, Samuel Cordner and Elijah Phillips



B.L. Harbert International Holds Sporting Clays Classic to Benefit Alabama 4-H

Alabama 4-H, with corporate sponsor B.L. Harbert International, held the first Sporting Clays Classic last fall to benefit Alabama 4-H at Selwood Farm near Childersburg.

The event made more than \$20,000 to support youth programs, and 60 shooters had a great time and supported the state's largest youth development organization.

"B.L. Harbert is glad to partner with Alabama 4-H in this first-time event," said Ben Patrick, vice president of B.L. Harbert, an international construction company based in Birmingham.

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Pathways To The Future

is published quarterly by the Alabama 4-H Club Foundation, Inc., and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.



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Sporting Clays— continued from page 3

Patrick said after working with 4-H on the construction of the Alabama 4-H Environmental Science Education Center, the company wanted to support 4-H. "We feel like this event will be a great partnership and we are pleased to be longtime sponsors of the classic."

The sporting clays tournament had morning and afternoon shotgun start times and awarded prizes to the top shooters.

The shooters were treated to a lunch sponsored by a donation from the Alabama Egg and Poultry Association. Prizes, which were donated by companies, organizations and individuals statewide, were awarded to a number of shooters,

B.L. Harbert International is the contractor for the Alabama 4-H Environmental Science Education Center, a 17,500-square-foot facility that the first planned gold certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) commissioned environmental education building in the Southeast and will be an example of sustainable awareness nationally.

Selwood Farm became home to Alabama's first sporting clays course in 1990. Their fully automated sporting clays course is challenging and fun and meets the needs of all levels of shooters. For more information about Selwood, go to www.selwoodfarm.com.



4-H'ers pose with an AU cheerleader

Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities Celebrate 4-H Day

The campuses of Alabama A&M and Auburn universities welcomed hundreds of Alabama 4-H'ers last fall for 4-H Day. Youth were treated to football games at both campuses, and to support a service project, were asked to bring 19 cents to support World Hunger. More than \$414 was collected at both campuses.

More than 750 4-H'ers and adult volunteers attended 4-H Day at AU's Homecoming. Auburn's Athletic Department donated the tickets to 4-H'ers and adult volunteers.

Alabama 4-H'ers brought more than 840 pounds of food to AU as a donation to the Food Bank of East Alabama and collected \$214.49.

"This is one of the largest, if not the largest, turnout for a 4-H event in Alabama, and we are thankful for the generosity of Auburn University Athletics and Alabama A&M Athletics and other sponsors who made the events successful," said Lamar Nichols, assistant director for 4-H and Youth Development with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

"For many of our 4-H'ers, this was the first time they've attended a sporting event at a major college, and they enjoyed the experience to the fullest," he said. "They also had a great time fellowshiping and making friends with 4-H'ers from around the state."

Extension 4-H employees and members of the Alabama Association of Extension 4-H Agents coordinated both events.



4-H'ers collect donations at A&M's football game.



4-H'ers attending the first Alabama 4-H Junior Leadership Conference gather at the 4-H Center's chapel.

Junior Leadership Conference Offers New Opportunities

Younger Alabama 4-H members participating in state-wide events during the first Alabama 4-H Junior Leadership Conference got a taste of the excitement that older members enjoy.

About 70 young people from 16 counties participated in 2 days of leadership and team building activities held at the Alabama 4-H Center.

Joy Maxwell, a regional 4-H agent with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, says the conference was a first for many of the participants. "This event was for 4-H'ers between 9 and 13," she says. "It was the first statewide event for most of them.

"We want to give this age group a chance to develop confidence as well as build friendships beyond their own communities," says Maxwell.



4-H'ers had an opportunity to show off their talents by creating and performing their own version of the hit "High School Musical." The youngsters developed their own works and choreography for their skits and performed them on the last day of the conference.

"You know that the program is on target when both adults and young people praise it."

Nancy Alexander, an Extension 4-H and youth development specialist, says this particular age group has special challenges. "They are learning to think more abstractly as well as learning independence," says Alexander. "They benefit from activities where they can develop problem-solving skills as well as ones that foster creative thinking."

The young people worked in teams in a variety of activities, including producing their own musical drama based loosely on the Disney hit, "High School Musical." They also created story books as a service project benefiting literacy efforts in Bibb County.

State 4-H Council members and senior 4-H'ers along with adult volunteers and Extension professionals coordinated the program.

Maxwell says the conference earned high marks from both young people and adult volunteers.

"You know that the program is on target when both adults and young people praise it," she says. "The young people had a lot of fun and the adults saw the life skills being developed through those fun activities."



Former Alabama 4-H'er Teaching Others Interfaith Diplomacy and Peacemaking

In 1995, when Darrell Ezell joined 4-H in Madison County as a 15-year-old, he wasn't thinking that it would prepare him for a career in international diplomacy and public service. But it did!

"4-H gave me a chance. It started me off in the right direction toward public service. I was involved in many projects in 4-H but my favorite was public speaking."

He began competing in informative public speaking and later moved into oratorical public speaking, now called persuasive public speaking.

"Strangely enough, I never won awards in 4-H but I learned valuable lessons from my 4-H experiences and the people I met."

"Strangely enough, I never won awards in 4-H but I learned valuable lessons from my 4-H experiences and the people I met, including my agent Walter Harris, other 4-H'ers from around the state, from the various competitions and from judges' comments."

After graduating from Lee High School in Huntsville, Ezell completed a Bachelor of Arts in psychology from Alabama A&M University and a Master of Arts degree in systematic theology and ethics from Union Theological Seminary-Columbia University.

Today, at age 28, he is a third-year doctoral student in interreligious relations and diplomacy at the Graduate Institute for Theology and Religion at University of Birmingham in England. He is currently researching interreligious relations and diplomacy and alternative techniques to traditional peacemaking. His doctoral dissertation is entitled: "The Role of Interfaith Dialogue in 21st Century Diplomacy."

Ezell recently completed an internship as a foreign affairs researcher with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Organization Affairs, where he worked with U.S. ambassadors, senior level diplomats and others to promote international security and peacekeeping initiatives. He got the opportunity to experience first hand efforts in peacekeeping, diplomacy, policy making and the workings of the United Nations. Ezell says the highlight of the internship was working with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

After his internship, he began a research practicum in conjunction with the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service and the William J. Clinton Foundation. One of the objectives of the practicum was to develop a master-level course drawn from his doctoral dissertation outline entitled, "Interfaith Diplomacy as a Form of Public Service." Another objective involved pursuing a scholarly work plan on fostering international religious reconciliation.

Ezell encourages all 4-H'ers to consider two important factors while participating in 4-H – sacrifice and choices. "Sacrifice includes being dedicated to spend whatever time and effort is needed to make your projects and yourselves the best they can be, not to win awards but to learn all you can from the 4-H experience."

Choice goes along with sacrifice. Life is filled with choices - both good and bad.

"Make the good choice to let your experiences in 4-H teach you how to turn 'I can't's' into other great possibilities. Remember, as a 4-H'er, you are an ambassador for your family, club, community, county, state, nation and world. The choices you make today may not only affect your life and future but also the life and future of others."

Have a Story Idea?

Do you have a story idea for Pathways? Do you know a 4-H'er who has achieved an honor and want others across Alabama to know about it? The Alabama 4-H Club Foundation, Inc. is the nonprofit fund-raising arm of Alabama 4-H. The Foundation seeks to recognize youth for their achievements. Send your story ideas to Janet McCoy, Extension Program Coordinator III, at mccoyjl@aces.edu, or call (334) 844-7690.

4-H Volunteer Leaders Participate in Multistate Forum



Alabama volunteer leaders and 4-H agents joined a large multistate forum on 4-H volunteerism.

Twenty-six Alabama volunteer leaders, regional agents and state 4-H staffers recently attended the 38th annual Southern Regional Volunteer Forum at the 4-H Rock Eagle Center in Eatonton, Ga. The Alabama delegation joined more than 650 4-H volunteer leaders from 13 Southeastern states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands at the forum.

Representing Alabama 4-H were Nancy Alexander, Patricia Bryant, Donald and Kathey Claborn, Karen Engelman, Candie Glover, Kim Good, Betty Gottler, Addie Green, Harriett Hall, Walter Harris, Cheryl Holbrook, Lindsay Kimbro, Cynthia Knowlton, Natasha Marable, Joy Maxwell, Jan Mims, Nekia Moore, Carolyn Moseley, David Perry, Christyn Sells, James Shropshire, Debra Stabler, Shirley Walker, Dorothy Washington and Kristen Wilson.

Volunteers and agents attended workshops and listened to motivational speakers that gave them opportunities to use and apply their youth development knowledge. Now, they will be sharing their newly acquired knowledge, skills and revived excitement with other volunteers as they serve youth and families in their communities.



Lee County 4-H volunteer leaders Deborah and Steve Stabler enjoy looking at one of the many exhibits Kentucky 4-H leaders put together to showcase their state.

“The Rock Eagle forum is always a wonderful learning opportunity for 4-H volunteers, Extension 4-H agents and state staff,” said Nancy Alexander, Extension specialist for 4-H volunteerism. “It also provides our Alabama delegation a chance to get to know other volunteers and learn what other states are doing. The Alabama delegation was awesome! We all enjoyed the moments shared, the stories told and the things learned during the week.”

Kentucky was this year’s host state and used the theme “Simply the Best.” The four-day forum also featured a Kentucky showcase evening, highlighting commodities, tourist attractions and cultural aspects unique to Kentucky.

“This is ‘Simply the Best’ learning opportunity for volunteers and a way to further develop leadership as participants go back to their county with other volunteers to expand efforts and opportunities for youth,” said Ray Durbin, Kentucky volunteer chair of the event this year.

The forum is conducted by the Cooperative Extension Services of the state land-grant universities in the Southern states, the National 4-H Council and the Cooperative State, Research, Education, and Extension Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. Some of the funding this year came from businesses and sponsors in Kentucky.

Volunteers from Louisiana, next year’s host, are already discussing plans for 2008, “4-H: A Flavor for All Seasons.” Alabama will be the host in 2009.



This picture of the Alabama 4-H Environmental Science Education Center and observation deck shows its beauty. The goal of Alabama 4-H is to use the facility, through its design, construction and operation, to teach children about environmental responsibility and energy efficiency.



Thank you for your support of the Alabama 4-H Annual Fund!

If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Alexander, Alabama 4-H Club Foundation, Inc.
226 Duncan Hall, Auburn University, AL 36849-5612 Phone: (334) 844-2219 Fax: (334) 844-7201



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