



Contributed photo  
Gathering at the National FFA Convention & Expo are, from left, Grant Union Career Coordinator Kristi Moore, FFA adviser Adam Ineck, FFA members Cinch Anderson, Emilie Updegrave, Ellie Justice, Parker Manitsas, Kori Jo Girvin, Hailey Carter (2017 Grant Union graduate) and chaperones Jennifer Carter and Cori Anderson.



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Prairie City FFA Chapter members and one Dayville Chapter member enjoyed their experience together at the National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis, Indiana. Front row, from left: Denali Twehues (Dayville), Shaelynn Bice, Abby Winegar, Hannah Wall, Haley Pfefferkorn and Maddy Way; back row, Declan Zwegardt, Lane Williams, Lucas McKinley, Abbey Pfefferkorn, Jonathan Lawrence, Levi Burke, Brett Copenhaver and Carson McKay. Chaperones, not pictured, were Mindy Winegar, Ryan Williams and Matt Twehues.

## Local students among 'sea of blue jackets' at National FFA Convention

### 19 Grant County students travel to Indiana convention

By Angel Carpenter  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Nineteen FFA members from three Grant County high schools joined 69,000 other members wearing the trademark blue jackets at the Oct. 24-27 National FFA Convention & Expo in Indianapolis, Indiana, increasing their knowledge of the program.

The national officers chose "Just One" as this year's theme to highlight how each FFA member can make a difference in the world, beginning with just one positive choice or action.

Prairie City FFA chapter vice president Haley Pfefferkorn said 13 of their members attended, along with one member from Dayville School's chapter.

"It really opened up their

eyes to how FFA can help them with life skills, leadership skills and responsibility," she said.

Cinch Anderson, Grant Union's FFA chapter vice president, said it was amazing to see so many FFA members gathered in one spot.

"There is just a sea of blue jackets everywhere," he said, speaking from the convention on Oct. 26.

"It's such a humbling experience to see everyone — it's overwhelming," said Grant Union FFA treasurer Parker Manitsas, who is also Strawberry Mountain District treasurer.

Team building and leadership workshops, personal and professional workshops, including career exploration, were among scheduled activities, along with a Garth Brooks and Ned LeDoux concert.

President Donald Trump delivered a keynote address on the final day.

Pfefferkorn said only 7,000 FFA members could at-

### FFA National Convention theme

Just One. One moment, one encounter, one opportunity is all it takes to radically change the course of our lives. This year, our team has chosen "Just One" as our theme because we recognize the importance of each individual "Just One" step toward growth as we work toward our vision of growing leaders, building communities, and strengthening agriculture. Changing the world sounds like a daunting task at times, yet we believe FFA members can change the world every day by Just One

simple action. Just One embodies the idea that our FFA experiences were powerful because we took Just One chance and stepped out of our comfort zones. We hope to encourage members to take Just One risk. Just One step. Just One moment of courage. We are capable of shaping the future of agriculture, our homes, communities and the United States of America, when we believe in the power of Just One!

— 2017-18 National FFA Officer Team

tend Trump's address because of high security, and although they tried, no one from Grant County received tickets. She said her group viewed the speech via livestream from the FFA Facebook page.

Anderson said although his group was unable to see Trump, he was still impressed.

"I think that's really cool that we have a president that cares about agriculture," An-

derson said. "It's a youth organization, so it's cool that he is going to be addressing the youth on what he's trying to do to help out agriculture."

Grant Union FFA adviser Adam Ineck said he was pleased with the high-caliber presenters and government officials "acknowledging that these are the leaders of the future within agriculture and beyond."

Attending the national event is a "fantastic opportunity," he said. "It's the 'Super Bowl' of our year, for sure."

Five Grant Union FFA members attended, along with the school's Career Coordinator Kristi Moore and 2017 Grant Union graduate Hailey Carter and her mother, Jennifer Carter. Hailey and her twin sister, Jessica Carter, both received American FFA degrees.

"This is the highest degree that can be bestowed upon a member, and they aren't eligible until the second convention after their graduation," Ineck said. "That's six years of record books, and lots of requirements."

Grant Union chapter president Kori Jo Girvin said being at the convention opened their eyes to how many other students participate in FFA.

"Most people get the wrong interpretation of FFA," she said. "Coming to the convention gives me hope that we can actually get a larger chapter."

Some might think FFA is about "students with their cows, plows and sows," Ineck said. "FFA is so much more."

He said the program, deeply rooted in agriculture, has a mission to "make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premiere leadership, personal growth and career success through agriculture education."

Cruise said there are FFA chapters in cities such as Chicago and New York. Students can discover "it still can be for me even though I'm not interested in agriculture," she said.

Prairie City junior Maddy Way, who joined FFA this year, said her favorite workshop had Army veterinarians who talked about how they care for service dogs and horses.

She said attending the national event gave her a greater appreciation of the program.

"It really made me love it," she said. "It made me want to do more in FFA."

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