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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

By Katibeth Wise

**STATE WINNERS IN THE PREPARED PUBLIC SPEAKING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT EVENT RECOGNIZED AT THE 98<sup>th</sup> GEORGIA FFA STATE CONVENTION**

MACON, Ga. – Winners of the Prepared Public Speaking Leadership Development Event (LDE) were recognized at the 98<sup>th</sup> Georgia FFA State Convention held at the Macon Centreplex on April 22-25, 2026.

In the senior division, Laney Fussel of West Laurens placed first in the individual LDE competition. Madison Wolfe of Pataula Charter placed second, Rueanna Edwards of Villa Rica finished third, and Haley Parsons of North Oconee finished fourth.

In the junior division, Sophie Drummond of Central of Carroll placed first in the individual LDE competition. Lila Gilbert of Central Middle, Kaylee Meis of Hahira Middle, and Ansley Griffeth of Northside Middle finished second, third, and fourth respectively.

CDE and LDE awards are granted to FFA members and teams who have exhibited premier leadership, personal growth, and career success in a variety of competitions. Prepared Public Speaking LDE is designed to enhance the speaking skills of participants by encouraging civic participation and cultivation of a better knowledge of agriculture. Prepared competitors in the Prepared Public Speaking LDE present a speech before a panel of judges and respond to questions from the judges.

The senior division Prepared Public Speaking Leadership Development Event was sponsored at the state level by AgGeorgia Farm Credit & AgSouth Farm Credit. The junior division was sponsored by the Tommy Irvin Endowed Fund.

All winners received a plaque and a cash award. The first place winners received \$100 cash and the senior division winner received \$500 in travel money for the National Convention. Second place individuals received \$50, and third and fourth place individuals received \$25 and \$20, respectively. Additionally, the advisor of the state winning individual received a \$100 cash award.

The National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America, changed its name in 1988 to reflect the growth and diversity of agriculture. There are over 1 Million FFA members nationwide. The Georgia FFA Association has more than 80,000 members, making it the third largest Association in the nation. The FFA makes a

positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success, through agricultural education.

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**Media Contact:** Katibeth Wise, (229) 254-4811, [kwise@gaaged.org](mailto:kwise@gaaged.org)