

National FFA Convention to Move to Louisville in 1999

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The National FFA Organization announced that it will move its national convention from Kansas City, Mo., to Louisville, Ky., beginning with the 72nd National FFA Convention in 1999.

Drawing nearly 40,000 guests currently and expected to top 50,000 by the year 2000, the convention has an estimated economic impact of \$20 million annually.

FFA signed a seven-year contract with Louisville. The November convention, which has been held in Kansas City's Municipal Auditorium since FFA was founded in 1928, will be held in the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center.

The announcement capped a six-month search for the best site to accommodate the convention's growth and enable FFA to expand the premier educational experience to more of its 450,000 members. Louisville, Indianapolis, and

Kansas City were finalists in the search, conducted by FFA with assistance from Smith Bucklin & Associates. Criteria included an arena that would seat at least 20,000, sufficient and affordable hotel rooms close to the convention site, and adequate facilities for convention activities.

"Taking all the criteria into consideration, Louisville provided the best overall opportunities for the national FFA convention in the future," said Larry D. Case, national FFA adviser and chairman of the National FFA board of directors. "Kansas City has been a warm, generous host, and we thank its citizens and businesses for 68 years of support. However, the convention has outgrown its current facilities, and attendance keeps rising. Looking to the future, we needed a new facility that could better accommodate our current and growing audience. We look forward to forming the same

relationships in Louisville as we have had in Kansas City."

The convention will be Louisville's largest. "We are very proud to host this premier youth event," said Ronald L. Scott, president and CEO of the Louisville and Jefferson County Convention & Visitors Bureau. "It is impossible to overestimate the importance of this convention coming to our community. Considering today's hotel rates, the annual spending would total \$100 million over the five-year period. With even a modest increase in hotel rates, the convention will have a larger local economic impact than any other single convention booked to date. The bid's success is the result of an aggressive and creative team effort led by the State Fair Board and the bureau, state, county and city governments, and the general and agribusiness communities."

The national convention, the culmination of a year's activities

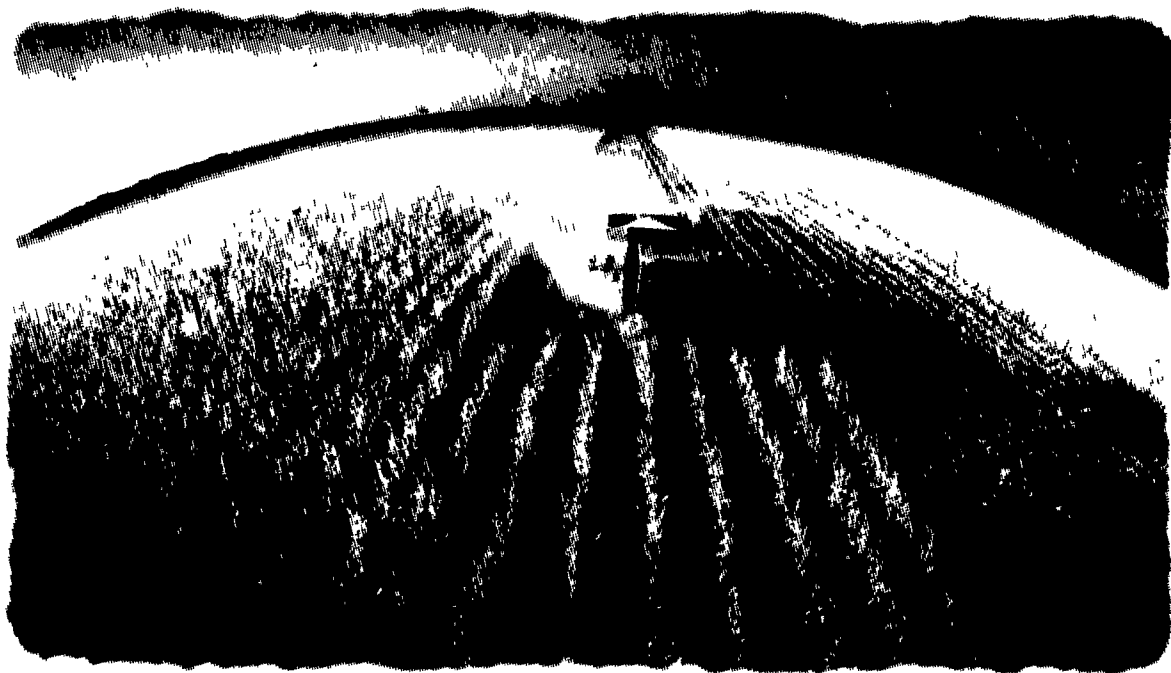
for FFA members, is an opportunity for recognition, business, elections and celebration. Delegates from each state discuss topics affecting the national organization and elect a new team of national officers. Exceptional members and supporters receive awards for their achievement and commitment to the FFA. Students compete in finals rounds of several events, including speaking and parliamentary procedure competitions. Educational and motivational speakers provide opportunities for personal growth and leadership development. Hundreds of exhibitors provide information about education and career possibilities at the concurrent FFA National Agricultural Career Show.

The national FFA officers, a team of six students who lead and represent their fellow members, help plan and implement the con-


vention and other activities. This year's team played an even greater role in the convention by voting with the National FFA Board of Directors on the new location.


"It is an honor to be a national officer during a year with such impact," said Seth Derner, national FFA president. "We considered this decision very carefully as we visited the proposed cities, talked to members and imagined a convention in each different location. My first national FFA convention had a tremendous impact on my decision to continue in FFA. I want more members to have the opportunity to meet FFA members from all over the country, learn more about themselves through development workshops, discover the opportunities in agriculture and FFA, and see the scope of the national FFA organization. It's an incredible experience."

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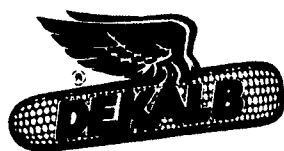


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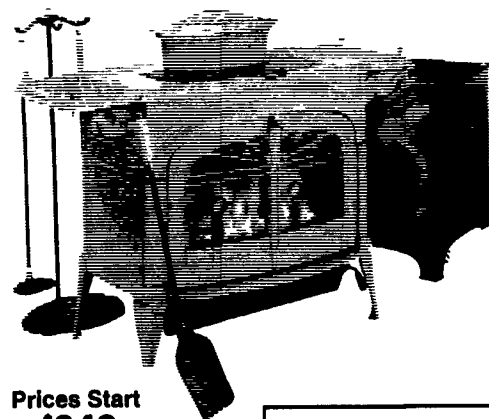
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