

Two Yosemite FFA alumni earn national degrees

By Alex Plumb - Special to the Sierra Star

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Heather Plumb and Kim Youman, former members of the Yosemite FFA chapter, recently received the American FFA (Future Farmers of America) Degree.

Earning the degree sets Plumb and Youman apart as members of a select group to be recognized for years of academic and professional excellence.

This honor was presented on Oct. 29, at the 78th National FFA Convention, in Louisville, Ky.

The American FFA Degree recognizes demonstrated leadership ability and outstanding achievements in agricultural business, production, processing or service programs.

To be eligible, members must have earned and productively invested \$7,500 through a supervised agricultural experience (SAE) program in which they start, own or hold a professional position in an existing agricultural enterprise.

Recipients also must make it their mission to demonstrate outstanding leadership abilities and community involvement.

Each award winner receives a gold American FFA Degree key, certificate and wallet ID card.

Of the 476,732 FFA members nationwide, Heather Plumb and Kim Youman were two of more than 2,900 to be recognized in 2005.

The degree recognition program is sponsored by BASF, Case IH, The Farm Credit System and Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc., as a special project of the Nation FFA foundation.

A national organization, FFA is composed of members preparing for leadership and careers in science, business and technology of agriculture with 7,223 local chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

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

A group from the Yosemite FFA chapter, with some parents, traveled to Louisville for the convention.

These students went to capture the excitement as more than 53,000 FFA members, advisors and guests packed the Freedom Hall of the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center.

Theme of this year's convention was "Living to Serve," a slogan that couldn't be more fitting for the Yosemite chapter members, dedicated to serving their communities and their country.

Local members attending were Karen Boortz, Jessica Gambriel, Rachel Olsten, Alex Plumb, Kaitlin Simms, Robert Zimmerman and Brad Bessey, their adviser. Castin Ecklund was elected to go as a California delegate by the Eastern Fresno Madera Section.

Parents that went were Ryan and Lori Plumb and Cari Simms, who helped chaperone the members.

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The group went to represent the local chapter as well as to show support for the two YHS alumni.

A 2004 graduate, Heather Plumb is attending Colorado State University.

Kim Youman, a 2003 graduate, attends Fresno Community College. Both are continuing their education in the field of agriculture.

Information about American FFA: www.ffa.org.

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