



ILLINOIS FBLA SPRING
NEWSLETTER

SPRING NEWSLETTER

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Southwestern Overview

By: Corbin Robinson Area

The 2016 Southwestern Area Conference was a true success! Kaskaskia College was gracious enough to host Southwestern Area FBLA again. The College provided ample support for the event. Students and advisers were excited to come together for competition, keynote speakers, and networking. Business people from across the area volunteered their time to invest in our members. The day kicked off with our opening session to include greetings remarks from special guests and campaign speeches. The day operated smoothly -- guest speakers included Gary Greer of Belleville, Anitra Dorsey from Americorps, and Laura Huth of Do Good Consulting. On top of the keynote speakers, chapters came together to share what they were doing locally, to compete in preparation for State Conference, and to elect their new Southwestern Area Leadership Team. All in all, it was a great success and I know the Southwestern Area will continue to prosper.

Northern Area Overview

By: Ammar Khan

This year's Northern Area Conference was held on Saturday, January 23 at Warren Township High School. Over 700 members took the opportunity to compete! This was the first year that the Northern Area implemented online testing prior to the conference. In turn, members had more time to attend workshops at the conference. There were four workshop sessions for members to attend. They covered topics ranging from planning your financial future, taking control of your reputation, and even STEM. Our keynote speaker, Mario Feijoo, shared his valuable knowledge about networking and creating a good elevator speech. To raise money for the March of Dimes, chapters participated in a "Dime War" against each other. The winning chapter was Lake Zurich High School! Next year's Northern Area officer team includes Hannah Frier as President, Adriana Feijoo as Vice President, Nathan Ju as Treasurer, Ashwini Deshpande as Secretary, and Shruthi Kondin as Parliamentarian. Our conference this year was a huge success and we can't wait to see what next year has to offer!

Central Northern Area Overview

By: David Ying

Hence the end of the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) Illinois State Leadership Conference (SLC), the National Leadership Conference (NLC) has yet to arrive. Thus, it isn't too late to discuss the running of the Central Northern Area (CNA) Conference. Despite great differences in the size of the conferences themselves, they are similar. With regards to officer elections, open workshops, guest speakers, testing and speaking events, March of Dimes events, and awards ceremonies, the success of the conference is not just dependent on getting through the day, but instead through the organization and ability to remain level-headed in a mass of chaos. However, as area president, in the Illinois Mathematics and Science's (IMSA) first time ever hosting the CNA Conference, it is time to reflect. Primarily, with the help of adviser Mrs. Christine Ahearn from Lincoln-Way East High School, state adviser from St. Teresa High School Mrs. Sandra Bronson, and IMSA's FBLA advisers Ms. Kandyce Baker and Mr. Kevin Lim, IMSA security and facilities, it is with great pleasure that I deem it a successful conference. With help from the area officers Nell Borys, Jennifer Franceschini, and Daniel Hudziak in writing opening and closing session scripts, and speaker Dr. Carl Heine of IMSA, the majority of the conference ran smoothly. In the morning, more than 200 students gathered into IMSA's main auditorium and listened as the area officer team spoke its messages. Following the opening remarks, the area officer campaign speeches were given and students were released to compete in their events. With events ranging from written events to speaking, classrooms were filled and judges ranging from IMSA parents to staff and teachers of other schools were present.

Eastern Area Overview

By: Ben Baker

The Eastern Area Conference was hosted by Richland County High School on Saturday, January 16. More than 80 members, advisers, and guests from 6 schools were in attendance. The schools in attendance were Beecher City, Edwards County, Marshall, Martinsville, Newton, and Richland County. The conference began promptly at 9 a.m. with the first general session being called to order by Eastern Area President Ben Baker. Mr. Larry Bussard, superintendent of Richland County Community Unit #1, and Mr. Chad LeCrone, principal of Richland County High School, each gave welcoming remarks. Illinois FBLA State Parliamentarian Matthew Runyon also brought greetings on behalf of the state officer team. Then the National Anthem was sung by Kaylee Shouse of Richland County High School. The retiring 2015-2016 Eastern Area Officers were then recognized: President Ben Baker, Vice President Molly Walker, Secretary Holly Stallard, and Treasurer Sydney O'Dell. Before the session ended, the candidates for 2016-2017 Eastern Area President gave their campaign speeches. After the session, members dismissed to their respective competitive events. After two sessions of competition, members enjoyed a delicious lunch at the Olney FFA Alumni's annual Pancake Breakfast. After lunch chapters competed in Battle of the Chapters, and delegates cast their votes for president. Then students attended a workshop presentation by Youth Development Educators Leah Miller and Courtney Yost from the University of Illinois Extension. During the second general session, Dalton Veach of Martinsville was installed as the 2016-2017 Eastern Area President. Afterwards, awards were presented to the competitive event winners. Overall the conference was a success and members in the Eastern Area were able to network, compete, and have fun with other members throughout the area.

Western Area Overview

By: Joseph Barlow

On January 29, 2016, the Western Area held their annual regional conference in Macomb, Illinois at Western Illinois University. At this conference, we not only took tests and learn about business and our future educational goals (should we choose to pursue a higher education). We also established long-term, meaningful friendships per the usual for the Western area conference. Not only did many of us go to the Illinois FBLA state conference, we are also proud of those from our region who made it to the National conference in Atlanta, Georgia including Joseph Barlow and Trevor Sandidge. The guest speaker spoke to us about the advantages of being an active member in FBLA in pursuing a higher education and many other aspects. For example, she spoke about how important FBLA was to, not only the youth participating, but for the American nation as a whole. "The youth involved in the FBLA program are just that, the future." She said. "You bright-eyed youth are the hope for tomorrow." She continued to say the FBLA was the best youth organization out there, which was promptly accompanied by screams of agreeance and admiration. This year's Western Area Conference was the most successful I have seen in my three years of participation in FBLA, we learned valuable life skills and lessons, we saw the official offices filled by the new leaders, Sarah Cluff becoming Western Region President, and one of the Illinois state Vice-presidents. These conferences are the reason so many of us are still active in FBLA, and the Western Area Leadership Conference was executed beautifully this year.

Central Area Overview

By: Bradley Rozario

This year's Central Area Conference held at Normal Community High School brought back old faces, but quite a few new ones as well. It sparked a great start to the competitive event season. It was great to see numerous candidates recite their speeches and give their pitch about their possible impact to the Central Area. Candidates represented their schools with great pride and leadership as they took the podium. After networking and campaigning, the officers were elected and voted through by the delegates. The 2016-2017 Officer Team includes: Bradley Rozario as Central Area President, Keerthi Amballa as Vice President, Pranati Bingi as Secretary, and Dotun Taiwo as Treasurer. Congratulations to these newly installed Area officers on their achievements. This year, the Central Area went digital! All written tests were completed on the computer. The Area has been progressing and searching for ways to improve the conference and this is one way we have done so. Along with the technological route, we were also able to provide performance events to the members. This would give feedback to the competitors and revisions before taking on the State Conference and hopefully being prepared to finish in the top ten. Congratulations to all the people who competed at State! Placing or not, you have improved and made yourself more knowledgeable of the business world. And as always, Central Area invites a speaker to inform and inspire the members. This year, we had two speakers. Matt and Ella Kate from State Farm who talked about networking. This was right in line with the theme, Connect. They were able to keep the members on their toes and active during their presentation. Thank you to Matt and Ella Kate for sharing their experience with the Central Area. Overall, it was a successful conference!

Treasurer's Farewell

By: Emily King

It's that time of year again, time for us seniors to say good-bye and leave. Although I have experienced four years of fun with my local chapter and dozens of people from around the country, it is finally time for me to graduate and move on to bigger things. I cannot thank this organization enough for all that it has given me. When I first joined I was an overwhelmed and shy freshman. I met some of my closest friends on the trips, I have learned so many invaluable skills about getting a job, my future career, how to be a leader, how to take initiative, how to work on a deadline and under pressure and so many real world skills. The number of ways that FBLA has positively influenced my life can't possibly be calculated, but it is by far more than anything else I have been a part of. I am specifically thankful to all those who supported my campaigns for area and state Treasurer and for all those who have voted for me. Without the support I received, I would never have been successful. My time as state Treasurer has definitely been an incredible year. I met an incredible group of people and have received an incredible chance to do more for the organization that started me on the path of success. I am more excited than words can express to begin my journey next year at Arizona State University in Barrett the Honors College. I plan on studying Business with a focus on Environmental Sustainability and a minor in Spanish. While I am not sure what exactly I will graduate with and where I what I will do afterwards, I know that as long as I use the skills I have learned in FBLA, I can only go good places. Thank you Illinois State. Thank you Normal Community. Thank you FBLA.

Secretary's Farewell

By: Hannah Frier

I've had a fantastic year and I am grateful for all of the opportunities this organization has given me. Becoming Illinois State Secretary was the best decision I have ever made! It not only helped me overcome my fear of public speaking, but also opened so many doors of opportunities for me. I would like to thank each and every member in the state. Their enthusiasm, motivation, and strong leadership skills helped to make this year amazing. I enjoyed connecting with many of these members at the Summer Leadership Workshop, Area Conferences, and The State Leadership Conference. The connections I've made throughout this organization will last a lifetime! This is a bittersweet moment because I am saying good bye as the Illinois State Secretary, but I look forward to starting another great year as I take on the role of Illinois Northern Area Vice-President.

Parliamentarian's Farewell Runyon

By: Matthew

As we come to the close of yet another school year, I cannot help but look back on the experiences I have had over the past four years of my FBLA involvement. It is hard to believe that the years have passed so quickly, with the next couple months being my final months in our organization. The skills that I have developed and the successes that I have earned are incredible, yet they pale in comparison to the achievements we have made collectively as a state. The opportunities available in FBLA are so far-reaching, and it is difficult for me to see why every school doesn't embrace this organization whole-heartedly. The pinnacle of my FBLA career, though, has been meeting countless new people and forming close friendships. I was just a shy freshman not willing to meet new people up until Summer Leadership Workshop of 2013, where I met the closest friend of my life sitting by the elevators at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. After meeting them, my life took a direct turn for the better, so if they are reading this now, I want to say thank you for being a central part of my life. I've always been a reserved person; I've never been one to speak out much, but instead I would rather listen. If you had told me four years ago that I would be a state officer in FBLA, I would have thought you were crazy. Yet from the moment I joined FBLA, I knew there was something unique about this organization. It made me feel confident, empowered, and ready to take on the challenges of the world facing students like me. After some thought, I decided to run for state office, and that by far has been the best decision I have ever made. After serving two terms on the Executive Council, I hope that my thoughts and actions have had a beneficial impact on every chapter and every member across the state. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity you gave me to serve you. Thank you, my fellow state officers, for helping shape me into the person I am today.

Reporter's Farewell

By: Brennan Sorkin

I am truly grateful to have served as your reporter this past year. It was truly a humbling experience and it made me realize exactly who I am and pushed me to my limits. I made many friends through this organization and I know they will be my friends the rest of my life. The other officers were like family to me and it is sad to see our time come to an end. However, I was honored to pass this leadership role off to the one and only, Adriana Feijoo. I wish next year's state officer team the best of luck! The Illinois FBLA State Leadership Conference will make all your hard work worth it!

President's Letter

By: Spenser Hulsey

As your Illinois FBLA State President from South Central High School in Farina, I am excited to bring greetings on behalf of the state officer team! I anticipate this year will lead to some very great networking opportunities for all of our members, and I encourage you to try to “Connect” with your fellow members as the year progresses! While the school year is coming to a close, your experience in FBLA may just be beginning. For any underclassmen wishing to get the most from FBLA, I recommend attending some of the many workshops and conferences FBLA offers. In Illinois, we offer a unique experience through our Summer Leadership Workshop (SLW). It is held in Springfield and is designed for both members and officers to develop a stronger connection between the levels of leadership. This past summer, we had the honor of hosting both the dynamic Patty Hendrickson and the brilliant Louie Sharp as guest speakers at the event. While here, students had the opportunity to plan chapter calendars, dance, run mock elections, practice leadership skills, and did I mention dance? Students got to practice speaking skills, bond with old friends and make new friends—although not necessarily in that order. There was a record attendance last year, and, as a three-year attendee of the workshop, I encourage you to consider going to get a good start with the 2016-2017 school year! While I am probably not allowed to explicitly tell members to pester their advisers until they allow them to attend, I may strongly suggest it. In addition to SLW, there are three different National Fall Leadership Conferences (NFLC) held throughout the United States. You may have seen the pictures of students in attendance with huge grins and giving thumbs-up to the camera in the Tomorrow's Business Leader, and wonder if those kids are having as much fun as they appeared. I can tell you, first-hand, that it is exactly as much fun as it looks, if not more.

Chapter Highlights

Richland County High School

While it has not yet completed its second year, the Richland County FBLA chapter has already coordinated several activities. In December, the chapter held an etiquette dinner in place of the December chapter meeting. Members in attendance engaged in spirited holiday-themed games, made Christmas cards for residents of the nearby nursing home, and learned about proper dinner etiquette while enjoying a meal. The etiquette lesson was led by the chapter vice-president, Faith Stallard, and the State Vice President, Ben Baker. The next month, Richland County hosted the Eastern Area Conference. In fact, the conference has been held at Richland County for the past two years, ever since the chapter reactivated. This year the area held a March of Dimes fundraiser and a Battle of the Chapters. Overall, it was a very successful conference. Future plans for the Richland County FBLA chapter include attending the State Leadership Conference, holding a food stand for Family Night at the elementary school, and doing seasonal clean-up for Adopt-a-Highway. The chapter is also planning an end-of-the-year party for members.

Coal City FBLA

This year's FBLA group has been very ambitious. We had an amazing turnout at our Haunted Hallway event. Last year was our first time putting on the event and this year it was an even greater success than last year. It's an indoor trick or treating event for small children. Our students and FBLA members worked very hard setting it up and decorating the doors. This year we had more than 1,226 people come out to our indoor event. We will donate \$600 that we raised to the March of Dimes. We will soon be attending the March of Dimes walk for babies. We also had a great turnout at FBLA Regionals. We had a lot of people place in first and second place. We had a few people get 3rd place but it was mostly first and second places.