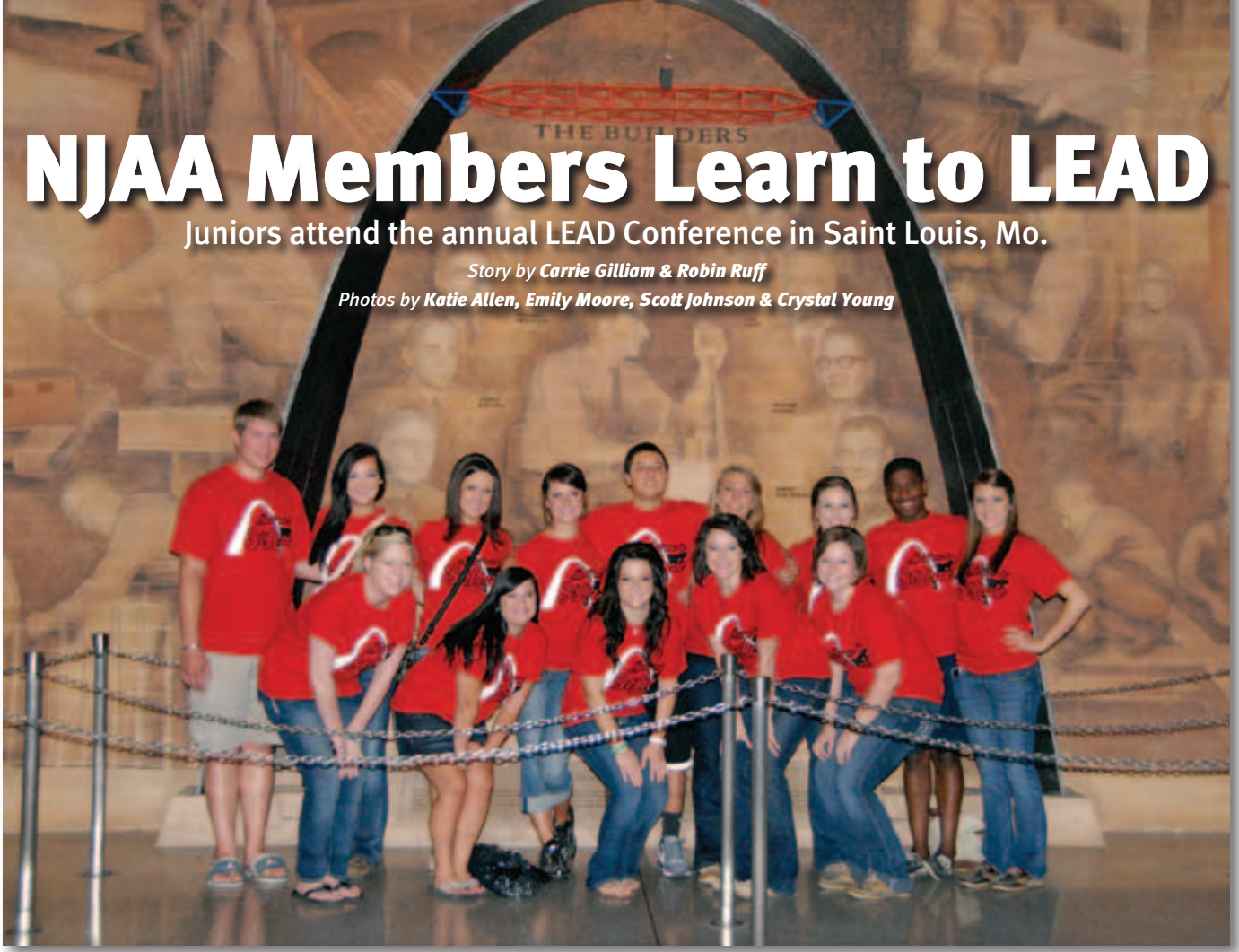


NJAA Members Learn to LEAD

Juniors attend the annual LEAD Conference in Saint Louis, Mo.

Story by *Carrie Gilliam & Robin Ruff*

Photos by *Katie Allen, Emily Moore, Scott Johnson & Crystal Young*



The 2011 Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) Conference, themed “Meat Me in St. Louie,” Aug. 4-7 in Saint Louis, Mo., brought together 144 Angus juniors from 33 states and Canada.

The leadership conference, sponsored by the Angus Foundation, is designed for youth ages 14-21 to participate in team-building and leadership activities organized by the National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) Board of Directors.

“Each year at the LEAD Conference it amazes me to watch these kids grow into young adults, and this year was no exception,” says Robin Ruff, American Angus Association director of junior activities. “The juniors developed teamwork and leadership skills in Saint Louis that they will use for the rest of their lives.”

The junior board, elected during the 2011 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), started the conference with activities that taught LEAD participants the importance of working in teams, while providing the opportunity to meet other attendees.

Additional skill-building workshops provided by the junior board included *Angus Jeopardy*, an Angus-themed trivia game; *Are You Hired or Fired*, résumé building and thank-you writing; *Defend It and End It*, video

commercials produced to defend the beef industry; and *Are You More Than a Showman*, industry questions themed after the *Are You Smarter than a 5th Grader?* television series.

Professional speaker and best-selling author Justin Lookadoo of McKinney, Texas, returned to LEAD Conference by popular demand. In his second appearance at LEAD, Lookadoo addressed participants and created a human twister game to teach juniors teamwork skills.

Agricultural speaker and host of *Cattlemen to Cattlemen*, Kevin Ochsner challenged juniors to model their lives like an auction — to raise their hands and make decisions. Kevin also touched on the importance of building lifelong friendships through NJAA involvement and participation in leadership conferences such as LEAD.

Team-building facilitator Crystal Warnock asked participants why it is important for the

American Angus Association and the beef industry to use teamwork. Juniors then solved this question with a brainstorming session and built a human squeeze chute in teams.

The conference included extensive tours of the Purina Research Farm, Gray Summit, Mo.; and Sydenstricker Genetics, Mexico, Mo.

While at Purina, juniors toured various livestock research facilities and participated in interactive workshops for body condition scoring, cattle metabolism, cattle feeding, ruminant nutrition and equine studies — all while hearing from top livestock industry professionals.

Sydenstricker Genetics hosted the NJAA youth at their John Deere location and Angus farm. The tour included a chuck wagon meal and entertainment provided by cowboy poet Del Shields.

While at the Sydenstricker Empire Club, Certified Angus Beef LLC Assistant Vice President Mark McCully educated juniors on how to become better advocates for agriculture and the beef industry. He encouraged youth to share agriculture’s positive stories.

LEAD attendees visited the Museum of

► **Above:** NJAA members toured the Museum of Westward Expansion at the Gateway Arch.

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► Sydney Thummel, Sheridan, Mo., participated in one of the minute-to-win-it games during icebreakers Thursday afternoon.



► Kate Livingston, Dover, Pa., and Evan Woodbury, Quenemo, Kan., jump on one leg through Hula Hoops® during a relay race.



► Alisha Nord, Wolverton, Minn., traveled by tricycle down and back during an icebreaker relay.



► **Left:** The six newly elected junior board members conducted a team-building workshop. Here, participants are in a beach ball pass race using only their feet.



► **Right:** Attendees participated in a team-building activity in which they had to flip the tarp over with everyone remaining on top of the tarp.



► **Left and above:** The NJAA Board of Directors have fun while conducting the LEAD Conference.



► Kevin Ochsner, Colo., challenged the LEAD attendees to make important decisions in life and to stand up for agriculture.



► **Above:** Attendees listen to Purina personnel speak about the Purina Research Center.



► **Right:** Justin Lookadoo, McKinney, Texas, had youth participate in a human twister game.

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Westward Expansion and took the journey to the top of the Gateway Arch, where they looked over the Mississippi River and the city of Saint Louis.

In accordance with the baseball-themed leadership conference, attendees then traveled to Saint Louis Cardinals-Busch Stadium. NJAA youth ate a baseball-themed lunch in the Champions Club, received a behind-the-scenes tour of the stadium, and

had a few minutes to tour dugouts and take pictures on the famous baseball field.

LEAD attendees then let their imaginations run wild at the Saint Louis City Museum. There, juniors were able to climb, crawl and feel their way through a playground of recycled materials. As a highlight of the conference, junior members enjoyed numerous exhibits featuring a variety of entertaining obstacles.

The LEAD Conference is offered on an annual basis, and the Angus Foundation sponsors the event. For more information about LEAD, contact the NJAA at 816-383-5100 or visit www.angus.org/njaa.

For more information about Angus cattle and the American Angus Association's programs and services, visit www.angus.org.



► LEAD attendees pose for a picture at the Sydenstricker John Deere Store in Mexico, Mo.



► Above: Attendees look through Sydenstricker Genetics cattle.

► Below: Emily Moore, junior activities intern, and Kelli Retallick, Glen Haven, Wis., prepare to enjoy a meal that was prepared on a chuck wagon.



► Attendees toured the Plant Science Center in Mexico, Mo.



► Ben Eggers explained the Sydenstricker Genetics operation.



► Eddie Sydenstricker welcomed LEAD attendees to Mexico.



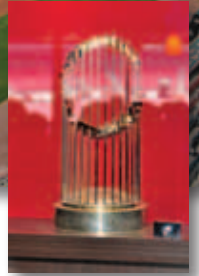
► Left: LEAD attendees traveled to the top of the Gateway Arch, where they overlooked Saint Louis and the Mississippi River.



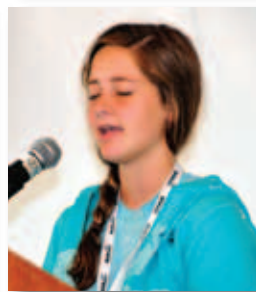
► Left and above: Cory Watt, Iva, S.C., peeks through the window to see the city of Saint Louis from 630 ft. above.



► NJAA enthusiasts visited the Saint Louis Cardinals-Busch Stadium, where they ate lunch in the Champions Club and participated in a behind-the-scenes tour of the stadium.



► Attendees enjoyed their time at the Saint Louis City Museum where they climbed, crawled and felt their way through a playground of recycled materials.



► Above: Abbey Gretsch, Crawford, Ga., led the group in prayer during the Sunday morning devotional.



► Left: Juniors line-dance at the Saturday night social.

► Daniel McFarland, Keithville, La., plays *Amazing Grace* on his violin.