



# Angus Youth Participate in 2013 LEAD Conference

NJAA members travel to New Orleans, La., for networking and leadership training.

Story by *Laurin Spraberry*; photos by *Scott Johnson & Laurin Spraberry*, American Angus Association

**A**ngus juniors from 32 different states, Canada and Uruguay took a glimpse into Cajun culture as part of the 2013 Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) conference. More than 170 participants traveled to New Orleans, La., Aug. 1-4 to take part in the annual event sponsored by the Angus Foundation.

Themed “Cajun Livin’ Angus Leadin’,” participants visited Mardi Gras World, the Jackson Square in the French Quarter, and took a ride down the Mississippi River on the historic Steamboat Natchez. The LEAD conference, designed for youth ages 14-21, aims to teach National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members teamwork and leadership skills.

“Overall, I feel that ‘Cajun Livin’ Angus Leadin’ really raised the bar and stepped it up to make sure all of the juniors had a fun weekend from morning to night,” says Kelli Retallick, now-retired National Junior Angus Board (NJAB) member, Glen Haven, Wis.

“I think this is a good opportunity for our juniors to extend their knowledge and focus on different areas of the agriculture industry so they can educate others.”

Throughout the four-day event, the junior board, elected during the 2013 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS), led juniors in team-building activities and presented various leadership workshops. Junior members also heard from various speakers throughout the course of the

► **Above:** A group of more than 170 Leaders Engaged in Angus Development (LEAD) participants experienced the South through a variety of tours, including Tanner Farms in Wiggins, Miss.

weekend. A former NJAB member and now the current host of *Ag Minute*, Kristen Oaks shared with juniors the importance of getting involved in the organization. Motivational speaker Eddie Slowikowski encouraged juniors on their journey to discover the greatness from within, and Amy Gallimore spoke of the importance of being an “all in” type of leader.

A favorite for many, juniors visited the historic Evergreen Plantation, where the popular movie *Django Unchained* was filmed. Participants also took in the area’s nature during a swamp tour.

“My favorite part of LEAD was probably the Cajun Pride Swamp Tour,” says Andrew Livingston of Nokomis, Ill. “I really enjoyed looking at all of the wildlife and hearing the locals talk about how they live and what’s normal to them vs. what’s normal to me and where I come from.”

The LEAD conference also included a trip

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to Tanner Farms in Wiggins, Miss. While there, juniors competed in a friendly judging competition workshop, played games and learned the history of Tanner Farms.

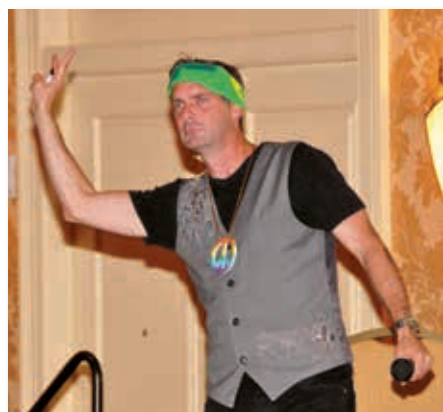
“Countless compliments of appreciation to the Angus Foundation were received from Angus youth attending LEAD in New Orleans,” says Milford Jenkins, Angus Foundation president. “These life-changing personal-growth and leadership-development experiences offered at LEAD for our Angus youth, who will be our Angus breed’s leaders of tomorrow, are only possible, however, because of the generous financial support the Angus Foundation receives from generous Angus breeders, allied industry interests and friends of the Angus breed.”

For more information on the LEAD conference, visit [www.angus.org](http://www.angus.org).



▶ Motivational speaker Eddie Slowikowski brought juniors to their feet during his presentation.

**Editor’s Note:** Laurin Spraberry is the public relations and communications intern.



▶ Slowikowski speaks about his life journey and how to live your life to the fullest.



▶ Juniors participate in icebreakers after arriving in New Orleans, La.



▶ LEAD attendees pose in front of the Mississippi River before touring Mardi Gras World.



▶ The six new members of the National Junior Angus Board, elected in July, made their first appearance together at LEAD.



► LEAD members got a chance to try on Mardi Gras outfits, and learn about New Orleans history and tradition at Mardi Gras World.



► Below: At Mardi Gras World, juniors saw statues from past parade floats.



► Juniors listen as World War II veteran Bert Stolier shares his experiences before they tour the World War II museum in New Orleans.



► Attendees also watched workers hand-carve the iconic characters at Mardi Gras World.



► Above: While at Tanner Farms, juniors learned the importance of cattle evaluation and participated in a cattle judging contest. The highest-scoring juniors received prizes from the NJAA.

► Right: After an educational evening at Tanner Farms, juniors relaxed with games like basketball and volleyball.



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► LEAD attendees pose on the steps of the historical Evergreen plantation, where the popular movie *Django Unchained* was filmed.



► Above: The Evergreen Plantation slave quarters still stand today, silently representing the nation's past.

► Right: Juniors learn the economics of the Evergreen Plantation during the 1800s.



► Above: LEAD participants hit the swamp, where they saw wildlife firsthand and learned about what makes the area unique.

► Below: Chance Hardy, Diamond, Mo., carefully holds a baby alligator while floating on a pontoon in the swamps.





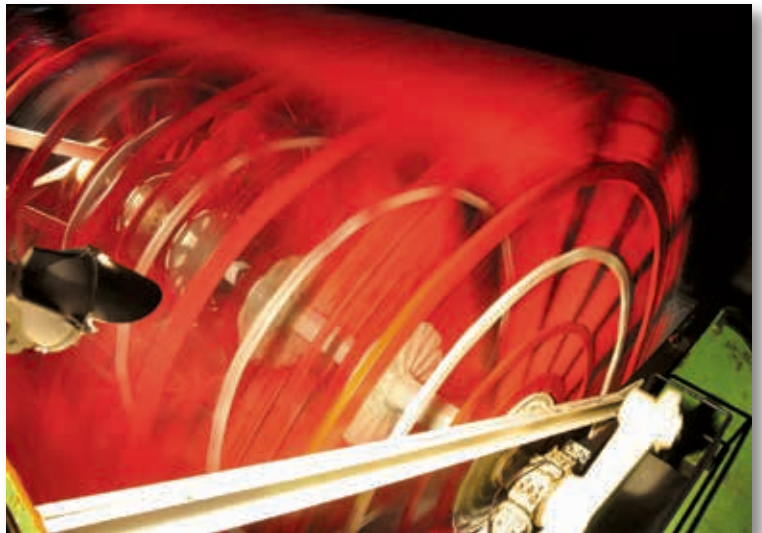
►A group of Angus juniors take a minute for a photo, after learning about Louisiana’s crops and horticulture at the plantation.



►The last night at LEAD included a ride down the Mississippi River on the historic Steamboat Natchez. There, juniors experienced Cajun food and danced the night away.



►Above: Throughout the week, juniors participated in leadership workshops. Attendees worked in teams to create an enclosure for an egg to be dropped. Here, Alex Rogen tests his egg and board members Luke Nord and Cory Watt check the results.



►Steamboats are often recognized by having a paddlewheel. The Steamboat Natchez’ paddlewheel was in use on the LEAD participants’ trip down the Mississippi.



►Right: Most of all, LEAD was full of leadership activities and fun. Jackson Wingert, Ottawa, Kan., participates in a “Singing Bee” contest.