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TVA AND TENNESSEE FFA EMPOWER NEARLY 400 STUDENTS THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE

COOKEVILLE, TN – The Tennessee FFA Foundation proudly announced strong participation in the 2026 Environmental and Natural Resources (ENR) Career Development Event (CDE), made possible through a grant from the Tennessee Valley Authority’s Reservoir and Community Stewardship Support Program. This program supports environmental education initiatives across the region, helping young leaders explore sustainability-focused career paths.

The 2026 ENR CDE was held on Monday, March 23 in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, during the Tennessee FFA State Convention. A total of 99 teams competed, including 89 teams in the Senior Division and 10 teams in the Junior Division, representing 396 student participants. This marks an increase from 2025, which hosted 81 teams and 322 students.

“The support of TVA’s Reservoir and Community Stewardship Support Program continues to elevate the experience for our members,” said Ryan Inman, Tennessee FFA State Director. “Agriculture and environmental stewardship are inseparable, and this contest gives students the chance to explore that relationship while developing skills for real-world careers.”

“The young people who were recognized during the event will be feeding our nation – and parts of the world – for future generations,” said David Bowling, TVA’s senior vice president, Landowner Task Force. “Their skills and innovation in agriculture are essential to life itself – sustaining every community, every family, every table. It is an honor to support them and long-term farming across this region.”

Thanks to TVA’s continued partnership, Tennessee FFA was able to invest in upgraded contest materials and equipment, helping ensure students had a hands-on, high-quality learning experience. The event also provided opportunities to recognize students’ hard work and growing knowledge of natural resource management.

During the competition, participants completed a written exam, identified 50 items related to environmental equipment and native and invasive species, analyzed a soil profile, and evaluated a waste management scenario. These activities mirror real-world challenges in environmental science and resource conservation, helping prepare students for future roles in environmental and agricultural sectors.

Winning teams were announced on Wednesday, March 25 during the Tennessee FFA State Convention. Top honors in the Senior Division went to the Cocke County FFA Chapter in Newport, Tennessee. Middle Tennessee Ag Academy FFA, based in Lebanon, Tennessee, earned first place in the Junior Division.

The Tennessee FFA Foundation, headquartered in Cookeville on the campus of Tennessee Tech University, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1983. The Foundation supports students and educators involved in agricultural education and FFA across the state. Learn more at www.tnffa.org.

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(Photo caption: FFA members were recognized before thousands of attendees at the Tennessee FFA State Convention for their hard work in the Environmental & Natural Resources Career Development Event. David Bowling, TVA’s Senior Vice President of Safety, Environment and Enterprise Support, presented the award to the winning team.)