



For Immediate Release:

June 21, 2007

4-H Celebrates and Reviews 105-Year History of Educating and Engaging American Youth
National 4-H Curriculum Summit Addresses Future Educational Direction of Organization

CHEVY CHASE, Md.— For the first time in its 105-year history, the 4-H youth development organization took an in-depth look at how it meets the educational and developmental needs of our nation’s young people through hands-on learning experiences during the National 4-H Curriculum Summit just held at the National 4-H Youth Conference Center in Chevy Chase, Md.

Co-sponsored by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) National 4-H Headquarters at USDA, their private partner National 4-H Council and the Cooperative Extension System, the National 4-H Curriculum Summit was called to strengthen and revitalize the oldest youth development organization’s curriculum process. During the Summit, participants examined strategies to successfully develop high-quality and forward-looking curricula that speaks to the interests and needs of 21st century youth.

David Hardesty, President of West Virginia University—one of the nation’s 106 land-grant universities that serve as the research and curriculum development foundation of 4-H—addressed attendees on the “importance and timeliness of charting a new course in providing research-based, university-developed curriculum that excites and engages today’s young people and prepares them for the challenges they and our nation will face tomorrow.”

Ron Ottinger, President of the Noyce Foundation—established by Intel founder Bob Noyce and a major supporter of 4-H Science, Engineering & Technology programming—challenged attendees to “not stand pat in your historical success, but rather to boldly move forward in preparing the nation’s next generation of leaders in science, engineering and technology.”

Lacey Martin, 4-H youth member from North Carolina, attributed her plans to pursue biological science to her participation in 4-H. Using personal examples of growing up using 4-H curriculum, including her latest work with the 4-H Electricity project, Lacey encouraged the Summit attendees to “meet the ongoing challenge of the changing times and apply them to the 4-H curriculum.”

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Attendees, which included 4-H youth and land-grant university leaders from across the country, provided feedback to improve upon future 4-H curriculum. Information collected during the course of the Summit will be posted at www.4-hcurriculum.org shortly.

Next steps include gathering a small workgroup to address the jury review process—identified as a high priority by participants—as well as outlining the national priorities for developing future curriculum which will continue to reach youth through a variety of delivery modes including 4-H camps, 4-H Afterschool and within 4-H community clubs. The Summit concluded as the first step toward reshaping the nation’s oldest youth development organization’s curriculum and programming for youth.

“This is a historic moment for 4-H,” stated Jan Seitz, associate dean and director of University of Delaware’s Cooperative Extension and National 4-H Council Trustee. “We’ve come together to make a prodigious difference in young people’s lives. The Summit wasn’t the ending, but rather the jump start to our commitment to strengthening and moving forward the 4-H movement.”

4-H is a community of more than 6.5 million young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship and life skills. 4-H is led by CSREES National 4-H Headquarters at USDA, the nation’s 106 land-grant universities and colleges and the National 4-H Council.