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***Nebraska Middle School Youth Win
National FCCLA Battle of the Belts Contest and \$5000 Award***

April 8, 2019 Nebraska Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) chapters won a \$5,000 award for their Nebraska FCCLA State Association by placing first in the Battle of the Belts contest, a national competition developed by the Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) and funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to improve seat belt use by middle school students and their families.

The Battle of the Belts contest is an initiative of FCCLA's iBuckleUp weBuckleUp campaign, which highlights the need for drivers and passengers to take responsibility for ensuring that everyone in their car uses their seat belt every trip, every time. The Battle of the Belts contest is intended to empower youth to promote seat belt use among their peers by conducting positive outreach seat belt use campaigns in their communities. Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for young people in the United States, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that 62% of passengers in the 13-15 age group who were killed in traffic crashes were not wearing their seat belts. The FCCLA youth leaders in Nebraska made a positive impact in their communities by engaging in this youth-led outreach.

Nebraska FCCLA chapters began the contest by observing drivers and passengers at their schools and found that a startling average of 26% observed occupants were not wearing a seat belt. Seeing a prevalent danger threatening their peers, youth members decided to take action. Youth then developed outreach campaigns to message to their peers and families why wearing a seatbelt can save lives and prevent injuries. Youth then followed up with by again observing drivers and passengers and found that seat belt usage among their peers and their families had increased by an average of 8%.

Nebraska FCCLA chapters that participated will share their successful campaign strategies at the FCCLA National Leadership Conference in Anaheim, California, June 30 – July 4, where more than 8,000 youth and adults will be in attendance.

For more information about FCCLA or to schedule an interview regarding its Battle of the Belts contest, please contact Janet Ryder at (703) 476-4900 or jryder@fcclainc.org.

About FCCLA

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) is a dynamic and effective national student organization that helps young men and women become leaders and address important personal, family, work, and societal issues through Family and Consumer Sciences education. FCCLA has more than 160,000 members and more than 5,300 chapters from 49 state associations, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

About NHTSA

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) was established by the Highway Safety Act of 1970 and is dedicated to achieving the highest standards of excellence in motor vehicle and highway safety. It works daily to help prevent crashes and their attendant costs, both human and financial. NHTSA's mission is to save lives, prevent injuries and reduce economic costs due to road traffic crashes, through education, research, safety standards and enforcement activity. For more information, visit www.nhtsa.gov and www.safercar.gov.