

THE WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY AND HOW OF STATE 4-H CONGRESS

What is 4-H Congress?

MISSISSIPPI 4-H CONGRESS is an annual state event designed to supplement our county 4-H programs. This event provides positive leadership and educational opportunities for Senior 4-H members from across the state in an effort to develop these young people to their full potential to become productive citizens and catalysts for positive change to meet the needs of a diverse and changing society.

Congress officially begins on Wednesday morning, May 27 and ends Friday morning, May 29, 2009. The *official delegation* is made up of 4-H members, 4-H volunteer adult leaders, and extension agents/staff who are registered for the entire event. It is expected that all counties will be represented.

This annual event takes place on the campus of Mississippi State University.

Why Attend 4-H Congress?

The *major purposes* of Mississippi 4-H Congress are:

- To perpetuate the reputation of 4-H as a major statewide educational program.
- To improve delegates' knowledge and skills through experiential learning experiences, life skills training, and leadership development opportunities.
- To provide opportunities for delegates to participate in the democratic process through campaigning for and electing State 4-H Officers.
- To provide recreational and social experiences for delegates.
- To select winners in competitive state events.

Who Attends 4-H Congress?

- To provide recognition for project work and competitive accomplishments.

YOUTH DELEGATES – Any 4-H member between the ages of 14 and 19* is eligible to attend 4-H Congress for the following activities:

- **Winners from County contests in Visual Presentations, Judging and Miscellaneous Contests**
- **Leadership Team Activities**
- **Candidacy for State Council Offices**
- **Workshops and Service Projects**

* A 4-Her must be fourteen (14) on January 1, 2009 and must not have had his/her nineteenth birthday by January 1, 2009.

4-H ADULT LEADERS – Each county should bring a minimum of one adult leader for each eight youth members. When recruiting leaders, consider the male/female ratio of your delegations. During Congress, the leader is expected to assist in general supervision of the 4-H delegates and to serve on Congress committees. There is no maximum on the number of leaders a county can bring.

EXTENSION AGENTS/STAFF – The R&E Center Heads will approve travel for Extension Staff.

COLLEGIATE 4-H – **Members of Collegiate 4-H assist contests, workshops and assemblies.**

4-H ALL STARS/ALUMNI - Activities are planned for the 4-H All Stars to give them opportunities for fellowship, service and support of 4-H.

Where Delegates Stay and Eat

HOUSING

County delegations (including any part-time participants) will be housed in residence halls with chaperons from their counties. Room assignments will be based on roommate preferences submitted on the on-line registration by **May 1**.

MSU Dorms will be used for Congress housing. Most rooms have two beds and will be occupied by two persons. In assigning rooms, the 4-H staff will try to accommodate requests, but some shifting may have to be done because of space limitations and other reasons.

Upon arrival, each person will be given a room key and an access card to the dorm assigned. The person to whom a key and card are given is responsible for them. Lost keys and cards will result in the individual and/or the home county being charged a lost key fee of \$80 and lost card fee of \$10.

MEALS

During Congress, meal will be available at the MSU Cafeteria. A meal card for these meals will be included in the Congress registration package.

These meals will include Wednesday Lunch, Wednesday Dinner, Thursday Breakfast, Thursday Lunch, Thursday Dinner and Friday Breakfast.

Please observe the time schedule for eating in the cafeteria, as outlined in the Congress program. These times are by districts.



Recruiting and Registration

RECRUITING

To maintain statewide visibility for the 4-H program and to make the experience cost effective, we encourage each county to bring a delegation to State 4-H Congress. We anticipate great "hands-on" learning opportunities. Keep in mind that this event requires a high degree of physical and mental activity on the part of the delegates.

As you begin your recruitment efforts, please remember that registration is due on **May 1**.

PRE-REGISTRATION - All delegates must

be pre-registered on the web registration form by **May 1, 2009**.

Pre-registration is required!

Registration will be done on-line and will utilize the 4-H Enrollment System for demographic information about the delegates. All delegates - 4-H members, volunteers and staff - must be enrolled on the enrollment system in order to come to Congress.

Full payment of registration fees must be paid by May 1. Changes in contest participation, substitutions and additions can be made until May 10 by e-mail only to Larry Alexander at larrya@ext.msstate.edu

REGISTRATION DURING CONGRESS

Official registration for Congress will take place in the lobby of **Rice Hall** on Wednesday, May 27 from 8:30 am to 11:00 am. One agent or leader from each county must register for the total delegation (including youth, leaders, and agents). To avoid confusion, please do not bring your youth delegates into the registration area. There will be a designated area for youth to gather during this time. Upon completion of the registration process agents will have received county packets, room assignments, name tags, ribbons, programs, parking permits, T-shirts and any additional information or instructions needed.

The registration area will be set up by stations. The registration stations are as follows:

Station 1: Receiving area for posters, photography exhibits, insect collections, etc.

Station 2: Receipts

Station 3: County Packets

Station 3: Receiving area for Health Cards and Codes of Conduct

Station 4: Housing

Station 5: T-shirts

As soon as a county has completed registration, they are expected to move out of the registration area.

EARLY ARRIVALS

Early arrivals may register on **Tuesday afternoon, May 26 from 3:00 pm - 7:00 pm in Bost Building B.** This registration is designed for counties that will be coming early and need housing on Tuesday night. If this applies to your county, please register for 3 nights lodging and pay an additional \$15 for each person. Please note on your

hard-copy registration that you will be coming early.

The 4-H Youth Leadership Team will also be coming in on Tuesday, May 26 for orientation activities. They will need to register on Tuesday afternoon and receive their housing assignments.

The Leadership Team members and their chaperones should be registered on the on-line registration program. If housing is needed for Tuesday night, please register for this, but the cost will not be charged, as it is paid by the State 4-H Department for the Leadership Team members and their chaperones.

REGISTRATION COSTS

FULL-TIME REGISTRATION WILL BE \$90.00/PERSON. Each County should make county registration checks payable to **Mississippi 4-H** to cover ALL fees. Full-time registration fees cover the following:

- ***Dance***
- ***Use of facilities at Mississippi State***
- ***Entertainment and speakers***
- ***Workshops***
- ***Congress T-shirt***
- ***2 night's lodging in the dorm***
- ***6 meals***

Changes in the on-line registration will be accepted until May 10, by sending an e-mail to larrya@ext.msstate.edu. Registration fees will not be adjusted or refunded after May 10, except in cases of extreme emergency, such as illness or death. These cases will be reviewed individually upon a written request to Dr. Holder.

In addition to Congress registration fees, each county should send a separate check for \$5.00 to cover State 4-H Council Dues. This must be paid before county delegates can vote. This fee is automatically added to your county fees.

PART-TIME REGISTRATION

Everyone attending Congress - 4-H members, Volunteers, all Extension Agents, District Staff, and 4-H All Stars must register for Congress. Those not attending full time, should pay a part-time registration fee of \$56.00 to cover the cost of a T-shirt, and a share of the facilities and entertainment costs. Part-time registration is a part of the on-line registration system and applies to District Staff, County Staff with limited assignments, Volunteers, All Stars and Alumni who come for less than 3 days. We discourage 4-H members being registered as part-time. Part-time registration will also include optional lodging for \$15.00 per night and individual meals. These costs will be added to the county total.

Part-time Registration of Youth delegates is not encouraged. We want them to get the total Congress experience

Counties who have delegates who will not need lodging, should still register these delegates as full-time (without lodging) and encourage them to participate in all the activities and meals.

General Delegate Orientation

Agents need to provide delegates with a list of items to bring to Congress. Included in this list should be a pillow, sheets for a single bed or sleeping bag, towels and washcloths, soap, toiletries, necessary clothing, etc. Please note that **LINENS WILL NOT BE PROVIDED**. A blanket may be needed since the air-conditioning in the dorms can get chilly. **Refer to the information sheets on *What to Pack and Dress Code*, found later in this handbook.**

PARKING

The parking situation on campus is critical and may cause some inconvenience during the week. Parking passes will be provided at registration, which allows you to park without being ticketed. However, these parking passes do not need to be abused. Please adhere to the parking regulations. Campus maps will also be provided which show the location of parking lots. The parking passes are available to agents and volunteers who bring cars to campus. **We strongly discourage 4-Hers from driving while on campus. 4-H and the University cannot be responsible for 4-Hers driving their own personal vehicles.** In the event a 4-Her must bring a vehicle to Congress, he or she must park the vehicle when they get to campus and give the keys to the agent. The 4-H member should also travel alone.

SHUTTLE TRANSPORTATION FOR CONTESTS AND WORKSHOPS

Shuttle buses will be provided during the times of contests and workshops on Wednesday afternoon, Thursday morning and Thursday afternoon. The primary purpose will be to provide transportation to the contest. This service is provided as a courtesy to the 4-Hers and it is hoped that they will take advantage of the service. This will eliminate agents having to transport their delegates all over campus. In some cases, 4-Hers will be expected to walk to nearby locations. It is important that they bring all the necessary supplies for their contest to the bus pick-up location.

The buses will load 30 minutes prior to contest and workshops at a location central to both dorms - Rice and Hathorn. The buses will be numbered and color-coded by destination location. After unloading at the contest and workshop locations is completed, the buses will circle the campus to pick up delegates after contests and workshops are finished. The buses will return the delegate to the dorm pick-up location

Adult Responsibilities During Congress

Agents and leaders should monitor the conduct and welfare of their own delegates throughout the day and night. Counties will be billed for any damages incurred in rooms assigned to the county.

Each agent and volunteer leader attending 4-H Congress will also assume certain responsibilities on committees during Congress. The teamwork that everyone portrays in assuming these responsibilities will be reflected in the attitudes of our young people.

Congress is a time to celebrate learning and achievement and to put our best image on display. The agent is expected to meet with the 4-H delegates and adult volunteers as a county group each day. These county meetings provide an opportunity to guide and direct the delegation in all phases of the program.

The scheduling for county meetings is outlined in the Congress agenda, but is flexible for counties to decide. However, county meetings should not be scheduled after curfew times.

It is the responsibility of the agents and adult volunteers to monitor the appropriate dress of delegates at all times.

Some simple courtesies need to be stressed to the 4-Hers. These are found on an information sheet later in this handbook in the section named *SIMPLE COURTESIES*.

Mississippi Showdown

The Mississippi Showdown event will be held at the MSU Sanderson Center from 10:00 pm until 12:00 am on Wednesday night, May 27.

Showdown activities will be a mix of activities, such as basketball, water polo, volleyball; instructional activities, such as aerobics; and board games. Only Basketball and Volleyball will be competitive and these must be pre-registered on the on-line registration form.

The Showdown is one way to live out the 4-H pledge to use our Health to promote better living through physical fitness.

Dr. John Long will be coordinating this event. Detailed information about the Showdown are found later in this handbook.

Service Learning Project

In keeping with the 2009 4-H Congress theme "4-H 100% Green", participants will be encouraged to recycle plastic bottles and aluminum cans while on campus and to take the movement home. According to Waste Management, "one recycled aluminum can save enough energy to power a television or computer for 3 hours, a six-pack of recycled aluminum saves enough energy to drive a car 5 miles, and recycling a one-gallon plastic milk jug will save enough energy to light a 100-watt light bulb for 11 hours". In addition to saving energy, recycling helps reduce the amount of reusable waste in local landfills. By recycling,

4-H Congress participants will learn that going green is easy and fun too!

Recognition of Winners

All First Place winners of the competitive events will be announced at the **FRIDAY MORNING ASSEMBLY**.

First Place winners will be recognized and invited to come to the stage for the presentation of their awards. Winners of each contest will be posted on the Winners' Board in at the dorms following the event. The contestants should check these boards to see if they won an event. The first place winners will have reserved seating in the first few rows of the auditorium on Friday morning.

Others who will receive recognition during the Congress Awards program are as follows:

- The 2009-2010 State Leadership Team
- The 2009 National Conference Delegates
- The Donors who support our 4-H Program

