

## Costello leaves mark on FFA at national convention in Kentucky

Written by Austin Benson

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He didn't know the opportunities of FFA

"I gave about 80 speeches over the year and I still got nervous because you get that way when you care about something," Costello said. "I spoke from the heart and enjoyed it."

Former Gothenburg 2011 graduate Brennan Costello was a national officer in the FFA, formally known as Future Farmers of America, for the past year.

He retired from his central region vice president position Oct. 31 in front of 14,000 members at the National FFA Convention & Expo in Louisville, KY.

In his final address, Costello said he challenged members of the largest student-led organization in the country to be brave and have a reason for being brave.

"The reason to be brave is for others," Costello said. "Do small things everyday in a brave way. Speak to someone, stand up for something. Don't just do something without a purpose."

He said the theme of the convention was "Ignite" and encouraged students to start a movement and rise to the challenges faced in the agricultural industry.

While serving as the central region vice president, Costello said he travelled to 36 states in about 297 days and talked to more than 130,000 FFA members while at workshops, camps and conventions.

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How did Costello become a national representative?

As a freshman at Gothenburg High School he said he didn't know the opportunities FFA offered but he wanted to learn more about agriculture.

As part of the Gothenburg chapter, Costello was elected state president in 2011 and served until 2012. During this time, he was adding hours of agricultural education, completing supervised ag projects and doing community service projects all for a resume.

"It wasn't until the end of my senior year that I knew I wanted to run for state office," Costello said.

While state FFA president, he was encouraged by mentors to run for national office.

During last year's national convention, Costello was elected to the one-year, central region vice-president term by nine FFA officers.

While in national office, Costello met with industry leaders like officials from John Deere and had the chance to be part of the elite club of national FFA officers.

The FFA has only had 510 national officers and Costello is a part of that group.

"It was a very good year of experience and an incredible opportunity that most 20-year-old students don't get to have," he said.

Costello added that he was glad he shared the experience of the convention with his parents Steve and Becky Costello and his two sisters, Madison and Arleigh.

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Costello will return to classes at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in January.

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