

Sagebrush Connector

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Gaining Ground

Out of all the FFA Chapters in Nevada, one chapter in particular is gaining ground in more ways than one. The Owyee FFA Chapter, which has been in place since the 1950's, has become more and more active and most of that comes from the perseverance and motivation of the advisor and agriculture education teacher, Mr. Ryan Carpenter.

With a goal to encourage more students to become active in the FFA, Carpenter now has a total of 56 students in his program, which is nearly double the students he had when he first arrived nearly five years ago. Today, Carpenter teaches many classes including: Agriculture I, II, III, and IV, Horticulture, Greenhouse Management, Welding I, II and II, Ag Mechanics I and II, Animal Science/Livestock, and Veterinary Medicine. His students are very active and attend most of the conferences offered by the Nevada State FFA Association.

The students actively involved in the Owyee FFA Chapter have a great deal of opportunities. Even though they are in a remote location, being two hours from Elko, Nev, Carpenter says this allows them to become much more self-sufficient. With one greenhouse and another on the way as well as a 120 acre lab farm, students in this program are able to develop skills and gain knowledge through a great deal of hands-on activities. Students using the greenhouses produce sagebrush seedlings for reclamation projects around the area while students using the shop work on equipment.

With goals of expanding the farm by another 40-80 acres and eventually hiring 6-10 students to work full-time in the summer, the program has much to offer the students. Already, Carpenter says, students are proud of what they have accomplished, "Every year the students want to do more with the farm and are really proud of the way it looks. The community has noticed this also and this recognition gives students a great sense of pride." Carpenter also notes that he is most proud of the sense of pride coming from the students and their hard work as well as their accomplishment of winning "Best Dressed Chapter" at State Convention this past year. This sense of accomplishment and pride has given the students something to work toward as they continue their participation in the FFA.

When asked why he choose to become an agriculture education teacher, Carpenter said that his own ag teacher, Mr. Dimick, had encouraged him to become a teacher. His teacher said that what is taught, no matter how much or how little, it will always last. For this reason, Carpenter says he enjoys his profession and chooses to work with his students to create the best educational experience possible.



Pictured above are Owyee agriculture education students welding, working with sagebrush starter plants, and receiving recognition at the end of the year banquet.