MCKIE LOOKING FORWARD TO NATIONAL FFA ROLE

TIFTON--Joel McKie, a sophomore agri-business major at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College who is the newly elected Southern Region Vice President of the National FFA Organization, attributes his interest in agriculture and related issues to growing up on a small family farm in Abbeville.

“At an early age, I became interested in agriculture and agriculture related careers and leadership roles,” McKie, the son of Eddie and Kay O. McKie, said. “In high school, I was able to explore these interests in greater depth when I became involved in FFA. My participation in FFA helped build the foundation for my future.”

During his junior year of high school, McKie served as chapter FFA president. Then, he served at the regional level as the area vice president for Southwest Georgia. As a senior, McKie served as the 2000-01 Georgia FFA Association president. He is also a member of the Wilcox County FFA Chapter.

“Being actively involved in FFA gave me the opportunity to develop my public speaking and leadership skills and meet many influential people,” McKie said. “It also gave me an opportunity to learn about agriculture education and various careers related to agriculture. FFA is like a big family, and I enjoy the camaraderie I share with the other members of this family.”

When McKie came to ABAC in 2001, he continued his participation in FFA at the collegiate level and also became involved in several other activities, including the ABAC Ambassadors, the Student Government Association (SGA), the Baptist Student Union (BSU), and the Honors Program. McKie’s continued interest in FFA led him to seek an elected position within the National FFA Organization. He began this process in May 2002 and was elected southern region vice president in early November.

According to the National FFA Organization, while in office McKie will travel more than 100,000 miles, meet with top leaders in business and industry, visit
approximately 40 states, and participate in an international agricultural experience tour to
Japan. His responsibilities will include developing student workshops, setting board
policy to shape the future of the organization, and promoting agricultural literacy. To
fulfill these responsibilities, McKie will take a one-year leave from his studies.

McKie said he feels honored and humbled to serve FFA members.

“I want to have a positive impact and help young people find their own passion
for agricultural leadership within the industry,” McKie said. “One of the most exciting
experiences for me is to see an FFA member smile because his or her life has been
positively affected by FFA. I would like to find a unique way of serving FFA members in
an effort to help them carve their own path on their journey to becoming agricultural
leaders.”

In the spring of 2004, McKie plans to receive his Associate of Science degree in
Agriculture from ABAC. Then, he will attend the University of Georgia (UGA) and
obtain a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture with an emphasis in agri-business. He
also wants to attend UGA’s College of Law. After receiving his law degree, McKie hopes
to pursue a career within the legal profession in support of agriculture or in public
service.

FFA is a national youth organization of 461,043 student members preparing for
leadership and careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture with 7,308
local chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The organization,
which recently hosted its 75th national convention in Louisville, Ky., strives to make a
positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier
leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. For
additional information about FFA, visit www.ffa.org.

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