

4-H celebrates year with virtual Achievement Night

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IMPERIAL — While the COVID-19 pandemic abbreviated the 2019-20 program year, Imperial County 4-H didn't let the achievements that its young members collected over the year go unnoticed.

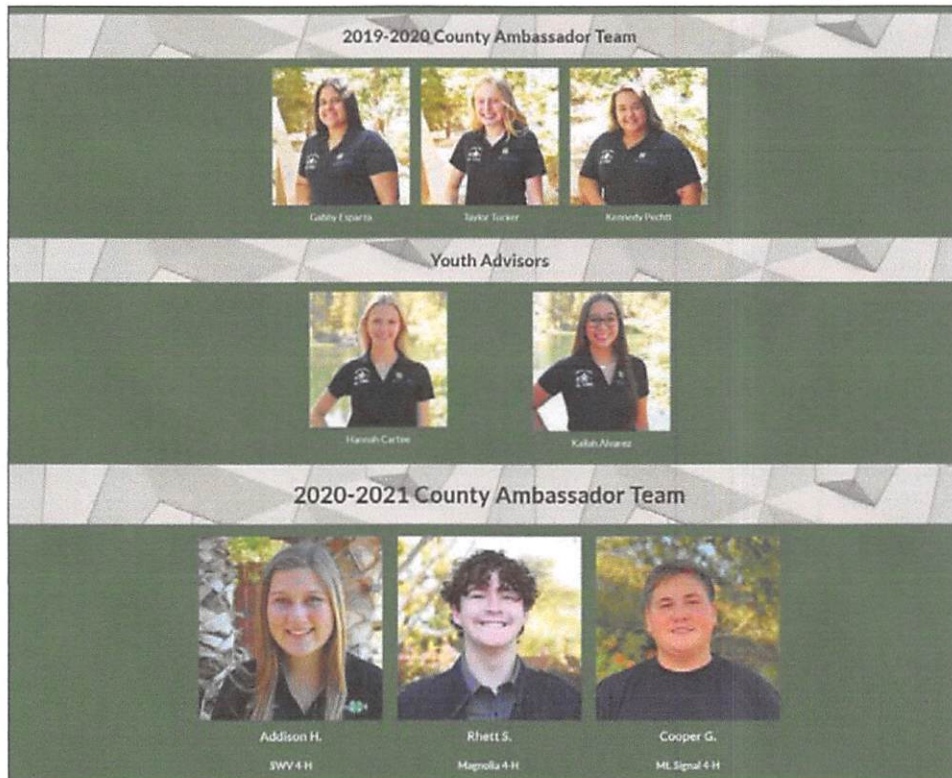
The organization held a virtual 4-H Achievement Night on Tuesday.

The event consisted of the unveiling of a website, which had every achievement and award that the members from the county's 15 4-H clubs earned from this past year.

This was a major departure from the county's traditional Achievement Night.

In years past, the event has been held at a school facility or at the Casa De Mañana building at fairgrounds. It has consisted of club members walking across a stage, receiving medals and shaking hands with a county supervisor (typically Michael Kelley, District 3).

This year's website was



A view of the 2019-20 county All-Star Ambassador Team and the 2020-21 team, which was unveiled during the Imperial County Virtual 4-H Achievement Night on Tuesday. COURTESY PHOTO

intended as a creative substitute for showing off 4-H kids' achievements under unusual circumstances.

All of the awards were given to the community

leaders of each club, so they could later be distributed personally to each member.

The website, www.sites.google.com/view/

ic4-hachievement-night2020, was unveiled at 5:30 p.m. on the Imperial County 4-H page on Facebook.

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This unveiling was around the same date and time the traditional Achievement Night is typically held. The 4-H program year starts on July 1 and ends June 30.

The website followed a sequence similar to the normal Achievement Night banquet. It started off with the Pledge of Allegiance, showcased all the awards and concluded by introducing the 2020-21 All-Star County Ambassador team.

The website was put together by the 2019-20 Ambassador team: Ambassadors Gabby Esparza, Kennedy Pechtl and Taylor Tucker, and Youth Advisors Hannah Cartee and Kailah Alvarez.

No adult advisors were featured speaking on the website. Instead, Esparza, Pechtl, Tucker and Alvarez served as MCs for the virtual Achievement Night.

The 4-H members

could be seen throughout the website in short, pre-recorded video clips they each filmed from inside their homes, providing commentary for each award recipient.

Recipients are presented on the website for the 4-H Club awards, Record Book Judging awards, Primary and Novice Record Book awards, Leader's Council achievement, and special achievement awards.

This year, Star Route 4-H Club and Verde 4-H Club received a Gold Seal award, which signifies that a club exceeded the minimum club charter expectations.

An extensive list of the Star awards (bronze, silver, gold and platinum) recipients is posted.

The Emerald Star Project award, which is a county award for service to the community, went to three different projects:

The first was "Presentation Day Training 101," a collaboration by Philip Minnick, Mia Alvarez, Benjamin Arroyave, Addi-

son Holbrook and Emma Walker.

With all five being experienced speakers and presenters at the state level, they focused their project on showing other 4-H members how to present and essentially enhance their speaking skills.

The second project belonged to 16 4-H members in the Imperial County Young Ambassador Project. It was titled "Fabric to Face Coverings Initiative."

For the project, the group prepared masks and mask kits for local first responders. In total, more than 3,250 face coverings and kits were made and distributed to local first responders, health officials and agencies.

The third project, titled "Cattle Field Day," was put together by Rhett Smelser, of Magnolia 4-H.

Smelser has participated in local feedlot tours since he was 9 years old, so he wanted to put together a county-wide field day.

His project consisted

of organizing Imperial County Cattle Field Day, which was an educational event that took place Jan. 20 for all local 4-H members at Phillips Cattle Co. in El Centro.

The website also has a section that recognizes all the class of 2020 4-H graduating high school seniors. Recipients of the Leaders Council and Mary Harmon scholarships are also on display.

Concluding the website presentation was the naming of the 2020-21 County Ambassador team: Addison Holbrook, of Southwest Valley 4-H; Rhett Smelser, of Magnolia 4-H, and Cooper Grif-fith, of Mt. Signal 4-H.

"Thank you for joining us for this year's Achievement Night!" a message on the website said in conclusion. "While we were unable to celebrate together, we are still extremely proud of everyone's accomplishments! We can't wait to see what next year has in store!"