



Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators

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NEWS RELEASE

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WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATORS HIRES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WISCONSIN (September 14, 2015) – Leslie Svacina (Shuler) of Deer Park, Wis., has been named the new executive director for the Wisconsin Association of Agricultural Educators (WAAE), a professional development organization for secondary and post-secondary instructors who teach agricultural-related curriculum.

Svacina replaces outgoing executive director, Bridgett Neu, who is leaving to pursue other opportunities in her local community.

“We are excited to announce our selection for our director position,” said Troy Talford, president of WAAE and Sauk Prairie High School agricultural education instructor. “Leslie will bring a breath of experiences which will allow our organization to remain a visible part of the public education system in Wisconsin. Her 12 years of experience with marketing, website development, and event planning will allow her to hit the ground running for WAAE.”

“My vision for the WAAE is to provide agricultural educators with support and resources to carry out their work as educators and to succeed in their profession,” said Svacina. “Through advocacy, WAAE will continue to strengthen and build awareness of today’s agricultural education programs and the driving force behind them, the teachers, in both local communities and at the state level.”

Svacina has diverse background working in marketing communications, education and corporate giving in higher education, nonprofits and agribusiness settings. Most recently she was an internship coordinator at the University of Minnesota-St. Paul, working with students in the College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resource Sciences. She’s also worked in event planning, marketing, and career and academic advising roles in the UW System. Svacina began her career at CHS, working in marketing communications and with the CHS Foundation. She also served as the communications director for the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council.

Svacina has a bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Marketing Communications from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, a master’s degree in Agribusiness from Kansas State University and a master’s degree in Student Affairs in Higher Education from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. She resides in Deer Park, Wis., with her husband and young son, where she also manages her own farm. A native of Northeastern Wisconsin, Svacina was a Pulaski High School agricultural education student and FFA member, past State FFA Officer and is a Lifetime FFA Alumni Member.

“I am proud to be a product of agricultural education and the FFA,” said Svacina. “I know I would not be where I am today without both of these programs, all under the guidance of my own agricultural education instructors. This is a large reason why I was drawn to work for WAAE.”

Svacina began her role Sept. 1 and will spend the first month working with the outgoing director, Neu, to ensure a smooth leadership transition.

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“On behalf of the WAAE Board of Directors, I would like to extend our gratitude to Bridgett for her 12 years of outstanding service to our Association,” said Talford.

With the new leadership, the WAAE office contact information has also changed to 1956 240th Street, Deer Park, WI 54007, 715-808-9177 and executivedirector@waae.com.

WAAE is the professional association for agricultural educators in Wisconsin. Members include about 300 middle school, high school, technical college, and university educators. The Association’s goals are to achieve high teacher standards through innovative methods in teaching, foster a professional network within the agricultural community, and advocate for the agriculture industry. To learn more about WAAE and agricultural education, visit www.waae.com.

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