

THE CHRONICLE

WINTER 2026

HONOR PAST AND PRESENT DAIRY LEADERS. INSPIRE FUTURE DAIRY LEADERS. RECORD DAIRY INDUSTRY HISTORY. PROMOTE THE DAIRY INDUSTRY



President's Message:

The Meaning Behind the Membership

As I was working the National Dairy Shrine booth at World Dairy Expo, a young man inquired, "I received a National Dairy Shrine membership when I graduated college, but what do I do with it?" I felt fortunate that he took the time and courage to ask such an important question. I showed him information about our young professionals webinar. He scanned the QR code to register. I'm not sure if he watched, but I'm sure glad we had something so timely and relevant to share with him as a Dairy Shrine member benefit.

As I take the reigns as National Dairy Shrine President, I am both honored and humbled. When I grew up on my family's Lost-Elm Farm in Berlin, Wisconsin, I loved working with the cows alongside my parents and brothers, but admittedly often spent more time playing with the barn cats than focusing on the task at hand and never dreamed I'd be in this position today.

Since the day I joined the National Dairy Shrine board of directors, it has been a team effort. From our Executive Director Mike Opperman to the board of directors and our committee members, all have had an important hand in the progress seen over the past several years. We remain grounded in our three pillars:

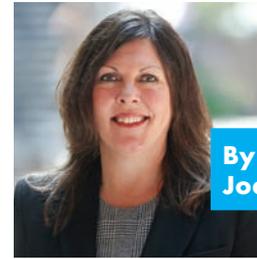
inspiring our future, honoring the past and preserving history. As important as the past is for our organization and our members, it is where we are headed in the future that excites me.

Inspiring Our Future

The Outreach and Events Committees have helped earn Dairy Shrine credibility as the place young professionals can turn for educational and networking opportunities. Our young professionals luncheon at World Dairy Expo has grown to a room-filled crowd buzzing with excitement. We successfully held our first young professional's webinar last fall. We continue to grow our scholarship program. We have more ideas, all in the spirit of inspiring our future, and offering member benefits that keep our young professionals engaged.

Honoring the Past

Our annual Awards Banquet at World Dairy Expo never fails to bring me to tears, listening to the inspiring acceptance speeches of our deserving award winners. These leaders and breeders are the reason many of us got involved or stay involved in the dairy industry. We hold a high level of responsibility to preserve their legacy.



By President,
Jodi Hoynoski

Preserving History

We are at a pivotal time with the National Dairy Shrine Museum, exploring options to modernize the experience while meeting our organizations' mission. It will be a monumental task to ensure that it suits our needs well into the future while preserving our rich history.

Wanted: Committee Members

You may have picked up on the theme that our committees have done a lot of great work and will continue to. From ideas to execution, we owe them a debt of gratitude. And for any of our National Dairy Shrine members that are so inspired, please let us know if you'd like to get involved. We'd love to see a broader base of members involved in our committees. ●

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ON THE COVER

The Jersey heifers are thankful for some hay during these cold winter months. Thank you to Andrea Haines for providing us with this great photo. Find more of her work at alwordandimage.com



National Dairy Shrine is a non-profit organization devoted to maintaining the strength of the dairy industry through recognition, encouragement, promotion, education and preservation of the dairy history of previous generations. Founded in 1949, the National Dairy Shrine has thousands of lifetime members consisting of dairy producers, scientists, students, educators, marketers, sales people, consultants, journalists, cheese makers and other dairy enthusiasts who are passionate about the dairy industry.

Recognizing Dairy Leaders

A core part of the mission of National Dairy Shrine is to honor and recognize those leaders who have made a significant contribution to the dairy industry. The recipients of the National Dairy Shrine awards this year certainly represent individuals you have dedicated their lives to advancing progress in their respective fields.

The recipients once again were honored at the 2025 National Dairy Shrine awards banquet. David Thorbahn, long-time leader at Select Sires, was honored as Guest of Honor. Receiving the Distinguished Dairy Cattle Breeder award was Siemers Holsteins from Newton, Wisconsin. The four Pioneer recipients were Dr. David Selner, a noted genetics researcher, devoted dairy industry enthusiast and former Executive Director of the National Dairy Shrine; Dr. Joe Lineweaver, whose research and applications of embryo transfer technology revolutionized

dairy cattle breeding; Dr. Paul VanRaden and Dr. George Wiggins, whose work collectively at USDA helped guide genetic selection for generations of dairy cattle around the world; and the photographers of AgriGraphics who have captured and promoted images of the finest dairy cattle in the world.

To watch the acceptance speeches of each of these award winners, visit the National Dairy Shrine YouTube channel at <https://bit.ly/2025DSbanquet> or scan the QR code using your mobile device. ●



New Award Recognizes Emerging Leaders

A new award will be available in 2026 that recognizes emerging leaders in the dairy industry. This award will honor people who are 40 years of age or younger who have taken on leadership roles and already made significant contributions in their field. Recipients could include dairy producers, dairy industry professionals, academics, members of the processing industry or anyone involved in a dairy profession.

The process of selecting 2026 recipients is underway. Award nominations are accepted through March 15, 2026 and applications can be found at www.dairyshrine.org/awards.



Tina Larson, National Dairy Shrine President, presents the Guest of Honor award to Dave Thorbahn.



Brothers Paul and Dan Siemers accept the Distinguished Dairy Cattle Award for Siemers Holsteins.



Dr. George Wiggins accepted the Pioneer award on behalf of himself and his associate Dr. Paul VanRaden.



A group of AgriGraphics photographers were on hand to accept their Pioneer award.



Dr. Joe Lineweaver was honored as a Dairy Shrine Pioneer.



Steve Selner accepted the Pioneer award on behalf of his brother, Dr. David Selner.



Scholarships Awarded and New Scholarships Announced at Awards Banquet

More than \$50,000 in scholarships were offered to 41 students from colleges across the country at the 2025 National Dairy Shrine awards banquet. These recipients were selected from the 175 applications received from students at 31 different colleges.

In addition to the scholarships awarded at the event, exciting new information was shared regarding future scholarship opportunities. First, the National Dairy Shrine Board of Directors approved a significant increase in scholarship amounts with the addition of \$500 to each scholarship. This brings the amount of most scholarships to \$1,500, with top recipients in each category receiving \$2,000 and more.

Two new scholarship were also announced. Thanks to a donation from Zoetis, a new scholarship will be awarded to students in their third or fourth year of college enrolled in a pre-vet curriculum. One scholarship in the amount of \$2,500 will be provided.

Select Sires is the sponsor of the second new scholarship, which will be names after Richard Chichester. The scholarship will be provided to college students enrolled in their third or fourth year of college with an explicit interest in the dairy industry. One \$1,500 scholarship will be given, and funds for the scholarship will be provided in part by the sale proceeds of an elite Holstein sire

appropriately names S-S-I Richard Chichester-ET. The scholarship amount of quantity of scholarships may increase over time as funds are added to the account.

In addition to the two new scholarships, one existing scholarship has been renamed. The scholarship awarded to senior students has now been renamed to the Dr. Les Hansen Student Recognition Scholarship, thanks to a generous donation from Dr. Les Hansen. See page 8 for more information).

The scholarship application period will begin on March 1 with applications due on April 15. Applications are available at <https://dairyshrine.org/youth/#scholar>.



Steve Briggs (left) and Corey Geiger (right) presented McKown scholarships to (l to r) Jon Chapman and Chloe Breunig and Klussendorf scholarships to Clancey Krahn, Zachary Johnson, and Allison Foss.



Kildee Scholarship recipients Megan Ratka and Kylie Konyon.



Marshall E. Core Freshman Scholarship recipients Zachary Johnson, Trevor Hath, Isaac Folts, Sophie Griswold and Chloe Breunig.



Marshall E. McCullough scholarship recipient Shelby Swanson.





DMI Education and Communication scholarship recipients Abbygail Schlough, Katie Ketchum, Regan Jackson and Allison Foss



DMI Milk Marketing scholarship recipients Rachel Visser, Jacob Harbaugh, Mary Beth Collette and Clancey Krahn.



Mike Lancaster Sophomore Merit scholarship recipients Brianna Meyer, Kelsey Hardy, Tyler Ratka, Sara Dorshorst and Alexis Hoefs.



Merton Sowerby Junior Merit scholarship recipients Clarissa Ulness, Jenna Gries, Keenan Thygessen, Brady Gille, Rachel Craun and Lauren Breunig.



The recipients of the Student Recognition award are Emory Bewley, Haley Beukema, Sarah Hagenow, and Ben Styer.



Cargill sponsored the Dairy Production scholarships, which were awarded to Irene Nielsen and Caden Carlson



Preserving History: A Journey Toward a Better Experience

The National Dairy Shrine Museum has greeted several hundred thousand people over its 45-year life span. People young and old, with a knowledge of the dairy industry or without, have found their time at the museum to be an educational journey through the history of the dairy industry. Upon completion of their visit they left with a better understanding of how their dairy products are made and an appreciation for the people involved in the process.

As we embark on the museum's next chapter, it's time to evaluate the visitor experience. Times have changed since the museum opened in 1981. The audience that visits the museum has evolved. There are far fewer visitors with an understanding of agriculture, and far more visitors who have no knowledge about how food is produced. Technology has changed as well, with new tools

and resources designed to grow visitor engagement. These changes and more reflect a need to upgrade and enhance what museum visitors see, hear and touch when they visit the museum.

The National Dairy Shrine has embarked on a process to significantly upgrade the museum. Our goal is to enhance the way our story is told and, in so doing, significantly improve visitor experience. We realize that probably 80 percent of the visitors to our museum are uneducated about agriculture. For these individuals we hope to be an educational resource that can provide an understanding of how dairy products are made, with insights into the people who make it happen. For the 20 percent or so of people who are dairy farmers past or present, or who have some affiliation with the dairy industry, we hope to be able to be a steward and celebrant of

the history of the dairy industry.

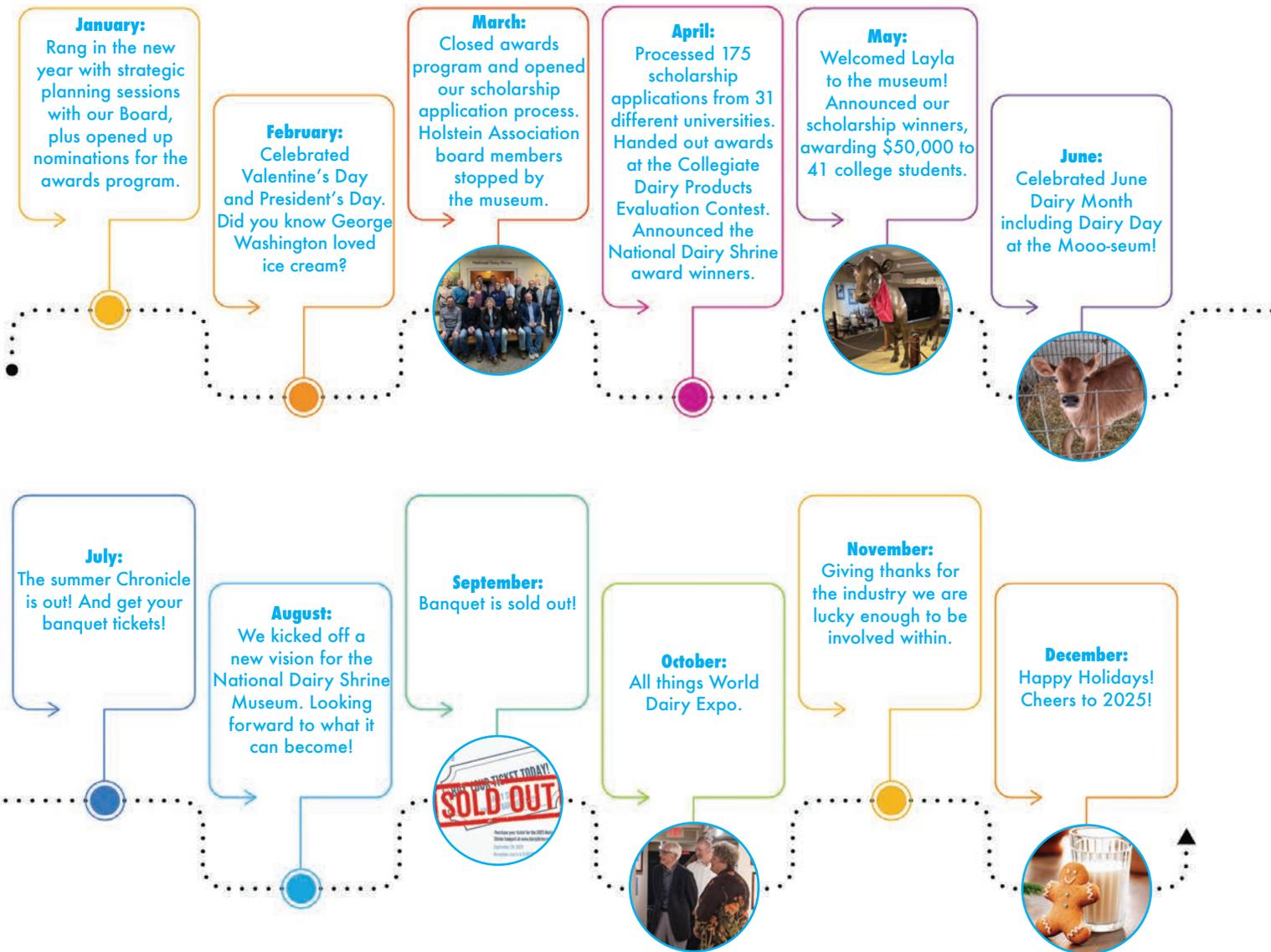
With this in mind, our mission becomes education and preservation. Last year our Board of Directors approved the hiring of a museum consultant to guide us through this endeavor. That consultant has extensive experience working with prominent museums across the country, and is in the process of putting together a plan to help guide this museum renewal.

We are excited for this journey. We will take our time to complete this journey, mostly because we want to make sure it's done right and to the best of our abilities. Watch for updates as plans are developed and renovations begin. If you would like to share thoughts or ideas with us as we embark on this process, please share them with Executive Director Mike Opperman at info@dairyshrine.org.



A look back at 2024

The year 2025 was another great year for National Dairy Shrine. We continued to live our mission of inspiring youth, recognizing leaders and preserving history. Here's a look back at all of the activities and initiatives that happened during our 76th year. ●



Also throughout the year we said goodbye to several prominent industry leaders. We endeavor to keep their memory alive for future generations to understand their impact.



Dr. Les Hansen Contribution Endows Student Recognition Award

In 2025 National Dairy Shrine received a \$100,000 contribution from Dr. Les Hansen, internationally known dairy professor, researcher, genetics expert, judging coach, and advisor to hundreds of University of Minnesota dairy students.

In recognition of this major gift, starting in 2026 Dairy Shrine will rename its top award program for graduating seniors the Dr. Les Hansen Student Recognition Award. This program recognizes seniors with outstanding leadership, activity participation, academic ability and interest in the dairy industry. The highest award winner receives \$2,500, the second \$2,000, and the others will receive \$1,500 each.

The National Dairy Shrine could not be more grateful for Dr. Hansen’s support of Dairy Shrine and it is extremely fitting to rename the senior dairy student award program in his honor. Over the years, 12 students who Dr. Hansen mentored and coached have earned the top student recognition award, including the 2025 winner, Benjamin Styer.

Before his retirement in 2024, Hansen was Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of Minnesota, earning accolades for his ground-breaking research in dairy genetics and ability to inspire excellence among both graduate and undergraduate students. Hansen’s influence has had a ripple effect throughout the industry as his 800-plus former advisees at the University of Minnesota have gone on to their own achievements and dairy leadership roles.

During his 43 years at Minnesota, Hansen focused attention on developing the full potential of every student. To that end, he helped launch the Gopher Dairy Club in 1982, shortly after joining the University of Minnesota faculty. Hansen remains involved in the University of Minnesota dairy program as a volunteer judging team coach and assists with student recruitment.

“The dairy industry has been my life, and Dairy Shrine has always been a part of it,” says Hansen, reflecting on his decision to contribute \$100,000 to the organization. “I’m proud to say that several past and current Dairy Shrine board members are my former students. I know the money will be well used.”

In 2023 Hansen was named Dairy Shrine Guest of Honor, the organization’s top award for dairy industry leadership. He has received many other honors, including the Hoard’s Dairyman Youth Development Award, J.L. Lush Award in Animal Breeding and Genetics, and Minnesota DHIA Distinguished Service Award. ●



Dr. Les Hansen receives recognition for his award from former student and 2025 National Dairy Shrine President Tina Larson.



Former students Ben Styer and Ashley Hagenow provided a heartfelt presentation honoring Dr. Hansen.



National Dairy Shrine Maintains Strong Financial Position

Thanks to a robust stock market and generous donations from Dairy Shrine enthusiasts the National Dairy Shrine remains in strong financial position.

More than 30 years ago visionary individuals endowed an investment fund to provide a financial foundation to National Dairy Shrine. Steadfast adherence to continued growth of the fund has allowed it to grow significantly over time through regular donations and smart investment decisions.

In 2025 the National Dairy Shrine investment fund grew by a substantial 13.8%. This growth was guided by our investment partner Stratview Wealth Management, who has been managing the account since 2024. A small committee of National Dairy Shrine members forms a finance committee that regularly meets with the Stratview investment team to go over results and guide future investment decisions.

While wise investment decisions paired with growth in the stock market has been influential in the positive results of our investment fund in recent months, we know that we cannot always rely on this substantial performance.



Donations from supporters of the National Dairy Shrine are critical to the daily operation of the organization. They are also critical to the successful ongoing realization of the Dairy Shrine mission to inspire youth through scholarships and outreach programs, recognizing the best of dairy leaders and preserving the history of our industry through

the National Dairy Shrine Museum.

If you support the activities of the National Dairy Shrine now and in the future, please consider a donation. We have included a donation form below that can be completed and sent into the Dairy Shrine office. If you would prefer to donate online, you may do so at www.dairyshine.org/donate.

Yes! I would like to pledge to support the mission of National Dairy Shrine!

Our mission pillars:

- Inspire Youth
- Recognize Leaders
- Preserve History

Please mail your check payable to
National Dairy Shrine
P.O. Box 68
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538
Or donate online at
www.campaign75.org

Thank you for your support!

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The donation categories are below:

- ✓ Emerald: \$75 to \$749
- ✓ Ruby: \$750 to \$7,499
- ✓ Sapphire: \$7,500 to \$74,999
- ✓ Diamond: \$75,000 and above

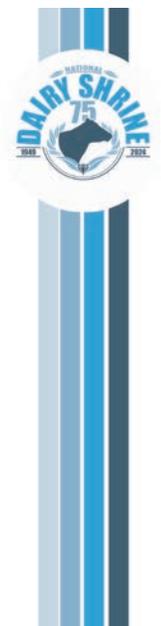
I pledge the following amount:

\$ _____

I will pay:

____ In one payment

____ In equal yearly payments over three years



Outreach Programs Support Young Professionals

A core part of the mission of National Dairy Shrine is to inspire youth who desire to have a career in the dairy industry. While the scholarship program provides important financial support to college students, recent outreach programs offer educational resources to young people beginning their dairy industry career.

The outreach program began in earnest four years ago with a student luncheon hosted on the Monday of World Dairy Expo. While the first year had around 30 students participate, this year the luncheon grew to nearly 100 students and their advisors. For the past two years students have had the opportunity to learn from a panel of industry professionals hosted by Peggy Coffeen, host of the Uplevel Dairy podcast. We look forward to continuing to grow this program to provide students and young professionals with valuable educational opportunities.

To continue to provide educational opportunities to young professionals, a webinar program was started in the fall of 2025. The first webinar offered insights into how to navigate multi-generational challenges in the workplace. Around 40 people participated live in the webinar and another 73 have downloaded the webinar through the National Dairy Shrine YouTube channel. A second webinar was delivered in February 2026 and focused on avoiding burnout in a 24/7 industry. We look forward to providing additional webinars on a quarterly basis this year. ●



It was standing room only at our Young Professionals luncheon.



Board members Ashley Hagenow and Ben Styer promoted an upcoming webinar.



Panel members were Brian Coyne, Kylene Anderson and Amanda Lichtensteiger.



Students had the opportunity to network with industry professionals and their peers.



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