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Public speaking: the number one fear but not for a few

Two Arapahoe County 4-H members qualify to compete in the annual Western National Roundup Public Speaking Competition, Jan. 7 - 11

Littleton, Colo. --- Public speaking has been hailed as one of the biggest fears people face in their life. While that may be true for many, for some, including teens Rebecca Gaffney and her brother Edwin, it's a gift that will be tested at the upcoming Western National Roundup this week.

As longtime 4-H members, both Rebecca and Edwin, have excelled in various projects and competitions. They each qualified to enter this competition after receiving the Champion Award at the 4-H State Conference last fall.

"4-H gives youth the opportunity to reach their fullest potential," said Arapahoe County Commissioner Pat Noonan. "We are thrilled to have these outstanding teens represent Arapahoe County, and we wish them the best of luck."

Nearly 1,000 people will be coming from around the nation, including 600 youth competing in 15 contests, at the Western National Roundup, January 7-11, at the Renaissance Denver Hotel. The Conference, now in its 89th year, is held annually in early January, coinciding with the National Western Stock Show.

4-H and Future Farmers of America members between the ages of 14 and 19 qualify for the conference either by winning their home state's contest or being chosen as a state delegate. Competitions include horse and livestock judging, horse demonstrations and public speaking, parliamentary procedure, family consumer sciences presentations and bowl, consumer decision making, fashion review, public speaking prepared and impromptu, parliamentary procedure and meats judging. Workshops showcase topics ranging from Global Positioning Systems training to leadership development.

"Participants develop a mastery of their respective subject matters, but more importantly, gain life-long skills," added Noonan. "Public speaking, professionalism and good sportsmanship along with the memories and new friendships will outlast the trophies and ribbons won this coming week."

4-H caters to both urban and rural families and with a plethora of projects to choose from, there's something for everyone. The program's goal is to assist parents in raising children who are healthy, successful adults by partnering with volunteer leaders who organize and conduct hands-on educational experiences. Enrollment is underway.

For more information about Arapahoe County 4-H, call Shaylen Florez at 303-738-7947 or visit www.arapahoeextension.org. For further information about the Western National Roundup, go to www.westernnationalroundup.org/.