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**WILLIAMSON COUNTY YOUTH SHOOTERS WIN STATE COMPETITION:
TO COMPETE IN NATIONAL 4H SHOOTING SPORTS TOURNAMENT IN JUNE IN TEXAS**

FRANKLIN, Tennessee (May 23, 2010) -- Williamson County has some sharp shooters. So sharp, in fact, that their 4-H High School Air Rifle team will be going to the National 4-H Shooting Sports Invitational Tournament in Kerrville, Texas, June 28 to July 1, after winning the state shooting title.

The team, Heather Cox, (age 16), Lauryn Green, (age 17), Ryan Limpus, (age 16), and Zack Masters, (age 15), all members of Williamson County 4-H, won the annual state competition, Saturday, April 17, in Dickson. Their high individual scores in standing, kneeling and prone positions helped them notch a trip to Kerrville, Texas, where they'll compete against the best 4-H shooting athletes from across the nation. Winners of that competition will earn the national championship title and become ambassadors for the youth shooting program.

"We have a great group of young shooting athletes that will represent 4-H, Williamson County and the State of Tennessee well in the national tournament," Barb Stewart, the team's shooting coach said following the win. "4-H Shooting Sports require great skill and concentration, and we're fortunate that all four of these young men and women exhibit this skill in shooting. The statewide win was very gratifying and the competition in Kerrville will test our abilities significantly. We'll spend the next couple of months focused on precision practice and raising money for our trip."

The win follows a similar victory in 2007, when Stewart took another group of 4-H shooters, including her daughter, Holly, to the national competition in South Dakota. It was the first time a shooting team from Tennessee competed at the national championship.

Air rifles fire metallic pellets by means of compressed air or other gas, in contrast to a firearm which ignites gunpowder to fire a bullet.

Captain of Tennessee's championship team is Heather Cox, who has been a 4-H shooter since 2007, when her junior BB team won the state title. She was 2nd high individual in the 2008 4-H State Air Rifle Championship, 5th high individual in 2009, when her team placed 3rd and this year placed 5th high individual overall. Heather is a home school student with Aaron Academy.

Lauryn Green joined the 4-H program in 2008 in shotgun where she competed in the State Scholastic Clay Target Program Championship with her team. This was her first year shooting air rifle and she placed 6th high individual in the state shoot. Lauryn is a home school junior.

This is Ryan Limpus' first year in the 4-H program, but his consistent shooting placed him in the top 10 high individuals in each shooting position and earned him the 7th place high individual overall honors, along with the team's state title. He is a home school student with Aaron Academy.

Rounding out the team is Zack Masters, who is also in his first year with the program. Masters placed in the top 10 high individuals in the prone position to help the team's overall performance. He is a student at Nashville Christian School.

The Williamson County 4-H shooting sports program is young, having begun just four years ago with archery as its main competitive sport. BB gun and shotgun were added in 2006 and air rifle the following year, when the group also began state competitions. That was the year a number of members won individual and team competitions and traveled to the national invitational championship.

The team is coached by state-certified rifle instructors Matt Stewart and Laura Cox, as well as nationally certified rifle instructor Barb Stewart, Matt's wife, who also serves as Williamson County's 4-H Shooting Sports Program Coordinator. Stewart's daughter, Holly, who was team captain of the 2007 State 4-H Champion Air Rifle Team, serves as assistant coach.

The program is funded by grants, tax-deductible donations from businesses/individuals and member efforts in fundraising. The entire budget for the shooting sports program is raised by youths,

parents and instructors. Those interested in becoming a program sponsor can contact Stewart at into4hshooting@yahoo.com

“Each year, 36,000 4-H instructors across the US teach a shooting sport to more than 300,000 boys and girls, helping them learn gun safety, as well as personal discipline, responsibility, teamwork, self-esteem, self-confidence and character,” Stewart said. “It’s a wonderful sport, and Tennessee can be quite proud of these outstanding young men and women who will represent us well in Texas.”

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