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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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September 11, 2001

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Scholar-Athlete Applications Now Available In Member Schools, On Internet

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Sept. 11 – Thousands of students voluntarily extend their classroom day by taking part in extra-curricular activities, often improving their academic achievements in the process.

The value that such programs play in the total education of a high school student is highlighted through the Michigan High School Athletic Association's Scholar-Athlete Award, which is in its 11th year of awarding \$1,000 scholarships to 24 top student-athletes from member schools, and which will recognize over 3,000 other outstanding individuals in 2001-02. Since its inception in 1988-89, Farm Bureau has presented over \$250,000 in scholarships through this program.

The Scholar-Athlete Award, underwritten by Farm Bureau Insurance, presents a scholarship in every activity in which the Association sponsors a post-season tournament. The scholarships may be used at the institution of higher learning the recipients attend during the first year at those colleges.

"It is amazing to see the number of young people who are proven achievers in academics and activities," said John E. "Jack" Roberts, executive director of the MHSAA. "At a time when our educational system is coming under fire, the Scholar-Athlete Award is something that proves how important a controlled and regulated athletics program is to the development of a well-rounded person's development."

Students applying for the Scholar-Athlete Award must be graduating during the 2001-02 school year, be carrying an unrounded 3.50 (on a 4.0) grade point average, and have previously won a letter in a varsity sport in which the MHSAA sponsors post-season competition.

Applicants will also be required to show involvement in other school-community activities and submit an essay on the importance of sportsmanship in educational athletics.

Each MHSAA member school will be allowed to nominate one student-athlete in each championship activity, and an individual may be nominated in more than one sport. Applications are available through all MHSAA member schools or through the Services page of the Association's Web Site – **www.mhsaa.com**. Students must submit their applications to their school principals by November 19, 2001. Schools have additional materials to submit with student applications, and each school must submit all of its applications at one time. Individually-mailed applications to the MHSAA office will not be accepted.

A committee composed of school administrators from across the state will select regional and statewide winners.

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2-2-2 – Scholar-Athlete Award Applications Available

Farm Bureau, a long-time supporter of MHSAA activities, also sponsors other educationally-oriented programs. Executive Vice-President Larry W. Thomas notes the company's pleasure with the awards program.

"All of us at Farm Bureau Insurance are proud to reward special, well-rounded young people who have developed both physical and academic skills," Thomas said. "To accomplish both while giving of themselves to their schools and their communities are outstanding traits that must be recognized and rewarded."

The 24 scholarship recipients will be recognized at the MHSAA Boys Basketball Finals at the Breslin Student Events Center in East Lansing on March 23, 2002.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,300 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments, which attract over 1.6 million spectators each year.

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MEDIA ADVISORY – For additional information about Farm Bureau's involvement in this program, contact Luke Schafer at 517/323-7000.

RL02-017

Farm Bureau Insurance is a year-round MHSAA Corporate Partner