

January 2017

Georgia Cooperative Council Newsletter

Special Interest Articles:

New Website

Youth Leadership
ConferenceCouples
Conference

Annual Meeting

Cindy Greene Executive Director

NOTE FROM CINDY GREENE

Happy New Year! 2016 was a fantastic year for the Georgia Cooperative Council and I am looking forward to 2017! I hope each of you enjoyed family and friends over the holiday season.

A reflection of the 2016 activities for the Council brings many great memories of the youth and adults that I had the privilege to meet and get acquainted. It is a pleasure to share the Cooperative message with folks from across the state. Each student and adult is willing to give their time to become educated about cooperatives and their importance.

I want to thank each Cooperative that sponsored a student or couple this past year. The Council needs each member to sponsor participants to our events in order for us to succeed. I hope that you will begin recruiting today! I will be glad to assist you in any way with ideas to spread the information about our conferences. Please email or give me a call if I may help.

I would also like to express my appreciation to those that provided the programs for the participants. The conferences would not be possible without their assistance: Jamie Cantrell and Karen Hawkins, Dairy Farmers of America; Karen Baxley and Van McCall, Farm Credit Associations; Mark Nofi, GEMC Federal Credit Union; Gale Cutler, Georgia EMC; Chipper Jones, Middle Georgia EMC; Craig Scroggs, USDA Retired; Mark Camp, Southern States; Cullen Lovell and Jeff McPhail, Staplcoth; University of Georgia Dairy; Al Burns, USDA; and Jennifer Broun, Walton EMC.

I am looking forward to 2017 and serving the Georgia Cooperative Council and its members!

NEW GEORGIA CO-OP COUNCIL WEB SITE

A brand new Web site for the Georgia Cooperative Council is now under construction! The site – georgiaco-op.com – is scheduled to be completed by March.

Members will be able to access a calendar of events, photo galleries from past events, nomination forms, awards and sponsorship information and archives of past newsletters. The Web site will also be useful for members to use to promote the youth and adult conferences and obtain promotional press releases for those activities.

Once completed, there will also be a page listing all Council members and a link to their respective Web sites. Additionally, the Council will also be sending out a logo “bug” that members can use on their own Web site to promote their membership and link back to the council’s site.



2016 Camper Quotes

"The 2016 Georgia Cooperative Youth Leadership Conference has been one of the most memorable weeks of my summer."

"We all enjoyed our time here and it opened our eyes to the huge world of co-ops."

"I'm not sure what was better - the people I met, the food I ate, or the things that I learned."

**2016 YOUTH CONFERENCE – LEADERSHIP WEEK**

By Lauren Owens

This past July, nearly 30 teenagers attended the Georgia Cooperative Council's Youth Leadership Conference at the Georgia FFA/FCCLA Center in Covington.

The conference is an opportunity for the youth to further their knowledge of cooperatives and develop crucial leadership skills. Through a series of activities and presentations they were also taught the importance of team work and how to successfully work within a group.

According to Gale Cutler, member of the Georgia Co-op Council board of directors and Senior Public Relations Coordinator at Georgia Electric Membership Corp., attendees leave with a greater awareness of how co-ops operate and the impact co-ops have on their local community and nation.

"These students will likely become leaders within their communities, so we feel a responsibility to teach them the principles upon which cooperatives were founded and operate today and how co-ops differ from other business models," says Cutler.

Not only was this week long conference a learning experience but also a chance for the youth to connect with their fellow peers. "One of their favorite experiences from the week included a field trip to Walton EMC to see their community solar installation and a stop at the UGA Dairy Farm."

Rayle EMC's Director of Member Services, Richard Heard noted, "They hated saying goodbye, but were already sending each other friend requests on Facebook as they were walking out the door. It was great that the conference brought them so close in so short a time."





2016 COUPLES CONFERENCE

By Lauren Owens

2016's Couples Conference was held July 29 – 31 at the Ridges Resort and Marina on Lake Chatuge in Hiawassee.

The conference offers an opportunity for couples to learn about the importance of cooperatives that serve their communities as well as meet new people and explore all that the beautiful North Georgia mountains have to offer.

This year's couples came from Georgia and South Carolina and were sponsored by AgGeorgia Farm Credit, AgSouth Farm Credit, Southwest Georgia Farm Credit and the following EMC's: Carroll, Flint, Georgia, Hart, Little Ocmulgee, Planters, Rayle and Tri-County EMC.

Will and Heather Cabe returned as this year's host couple. Ryan & Tiffany Kessler from Carroll EMC were elected to serve as the host couple for 2017.



ANNUAL MEETING 2016

The 2016 Annual meeting was held Monday, March 6 at the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation Headquarters in Macon.

Co-op Council members from across the state represented their local Cooperatives. Under the direction of President Gale Cutler, the meeting included updates on programs and recognition of the individuals that have been presented with Co-op Council Awards for the past year.

The featured speaker was Paul Wood, Georgia EMC's retired CEO. Attendees at the well-attended meeting also heard from Dr. Lauren Griffeth about the UGA adult leadership program Advancing Georgia's Leaders in Agriculture and Forestry (AGL) and reports from scholarship winners and conference attendees.

Youth Leadership Conference youth staffers Chris Cook and Kellie Smith shared camp experiences. Couple's Conference Host Heather Cabe also spoke to the attendees, talking about what the couples had learned. Both youth and couple's conference representatives thanked the members for sponsoring the events and giving them the opportunity to participate.

Katrina Jones, Executive Director of the Georgia FFA Foundation, expressed appreciation from the Georgia FFA for the sponsorship of the Agricultural Communications Proficiency Award and the Marketing CDE team.

Kelly Childers, Wilcox County 4-H, winner of the Georgia 4-H Environmental Science Project, addressed the group about her project and expressed her appreciation of the recognition.

Other Council Awards included a \$700 donation to the Student Enrichment Program at Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College (ABAC), a \$1,000 scholarship to an ABAC student, and a \$1000 donation to the Georgia Junior Livestock Foundation.

Door prizes were provided by attending members. After adjournment the group enjoyed a catered lunch.



Upcoming Events for 2017

Georgia Cooperative Council Annual Meeting - March 6

Georgia Farm Bureau Headquarters, Macon, Ga. *Begins at 10 AM and concludes with lunch.*

Cooperative Youth Conference - July 17-21

State FFA/FCCLA Center, Covington, Ga.

Further information and nomination forms will be available Spring 2017.

Couples Conference – August 4-6

The Ridges Resort and Marina, Hiawassee, Ga.

Further information and nomination forms will be available Spring 2017.