

December 2014  
Volume 1, Issue 3

# Georgia Cooperative Council Newsletter 2014

*Cindy Greene Executive Director*

## **Special Interest Articles:**

- Youth Leadership Conference
- Couples Conference
- Annual Meeting

## **NOTES FROM CINDY GREENE**

As 2014 closes I am reminded of the outstanding youth and adults I have had the opportunity to meet and become acquainted with. I have enjoyed extending their friendship through social media such as Twitter and Face Book. It is a joy to see their accomplishments continue throughout the year.

What a challenge each cooperative has to choose outstanding young students and adults for our leadership conferences! I want to thank each cooperative that has sponsored a teen or adult couple this

past year for great choices. They exhibited the desire to return to YOUR local community as a leader in their schools, workplace, church and civic organizations. As I stated last year, "I am proud to be a part of such a special program that invests in the lives of our future."

I would also like to offer my sincere thanks to those that volunteer to make these conferences possible by giving of their time and sharing their knowledge. These conferences would not be possible without Craig Scroggs (USDA), Chipper Jones (Middle

Georgia EMC) and Gale Cutler (Georgia EMC). The success of each of these conferences is built with the dedication of each of these individuals. I cannot thank them enough! Thanks to their organizations for allowing their participation to enrich the program.

As we end 2014 and begin a new year I look forward to 2015 and the new opportunities that it brings. I want to thank everyone for their support and look forward to a great New Year!

## **SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**

Every cooperative has the opportunity to participate in the Georgia Cooperative Council events.

The Council works to support Georgia's future through scholarships and awards to enable higher learning. The Georgia FFA Agricultural Proficiency Award, the 4-H Environmental Science Project and the Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College

(ABAC) Scholarship Award do just that.

The Youth Conference is a tremendous opportunity for approximately 50 Georgia students to learn about what a cooperative is and how they are affected daily by them while enjoying a full week of activities at the Georgia FFA Center in Covington. Most of our member cooperatives send representatives to

work with students one on one.

The Couples' Conference is a multi-state effort to work with couples nominated by their cooperatives to learn more and become member advocates. To learn more about these and the other awards available, please contact me directly at [agdawg@msn.com](mailto:agdawg@msn.com).

*Executive Director Cindy Greene*



*“This conference taught me so much about leadership. I learned more about myself and being part of a team with others. I created new friendships that will last a lifetime and I wish I could do it all over again. It is an amazing experience that I was privileged to be a part of.”*

~ Rebecca Dixon  
2014 camper



## 2014 YOUTH CONFERENCE – LEADERSHIP WEEK

Last July’s camp was a record breaking year, with nearly 60 students attending the Georgia Cooperative Council’s Youth Leadership Conference at the Georgia FFA/FCCLA Center in Covington.

The purpose of the conference is to build and enhance teen leadership skills and for participants to learn the role cooperatives play in the communities they serve. The leadership event is also designed to promote teamwork through a series of exercises, training and presentations.

According to Gale Cutler, chairman of the Georgia Co-op Council board and Public

Relations Coordinator with Georgia Electric Membership Corp., the campers gained firsthand experience with cooperatives and their common goal: to maximize service, rather than profits for their member-owners and contribute to the economic health of their communities.

“It is important that students understand the basics of cooperatives and the principles on which they were founded. “These students are already peer leaders in their community, so we feel a responsibility to teach them about the way cooperatives play a pivotal role in helping their towns and cities grow and prosper,” says Cutler.

During the five-day conference students engaged in activities such as the Congressional Insight Workshop to gain deeper understanding as to why involvement in the political process is vital.

The teens enjoyed a field trip to local cooperatives Godfrey Dairy in Madison and Snapping Shoals EMC in Covington.

Other highlights included personality assessments to teach students how to efficiently work with a range of personalities and “Co-ops 101”, where speakers discussed the cooperative business model, including history, organization, member benefits and current issues.

*Continued next page*



## LEADERSHIP WEEK *cont.*

Students also engaged in outdoor team building activities that included high and low ropes courses as well as other fun camp activities like a camp-sized “slip and slide, group mud course and “the Blob.” (*pictured at right*)

This year’s presenters included:

Farm Credit - Jack McMullan

Georgia EMC - Gale Cutler

NRECA - Lee Howell

Southern States – Steve Krueger

USDA - Craig Scroggs

Walton EMC – Jennifer Broun



## 2014 COUPLES CONFERENCE

The annual multi-state Couples Conference was held Aug. 1-3 at The Ridges Resort and Marina on Lake Chatuge in Hiawassee. Participants included couples from North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.

Georgia couples in attendance (in photo on right) were sponsored by AgGeorgia Farm Credit, AgSouth Farm Credit, Diverse Power, Hart EMC, Ocmulgee EMC, Planters EMC, Rayle EMC, Southern Rivers Energy, Tri-County EMC, Little Ocmulgee EMC, South-west Georgia Farm Credit and Walton EMC.

The multi-state conference is an opportunity to meet new people and create new friendships while learning of the various cooperatives that operate in their everyday lives.

Matt and Brittany Comerford, sponsored by Diverse Power, returned as this year’s host couple. Todd and Kristen Williamson, sponsored by Southwest Georgia Farm Credit, were elected to serve as the host couple for 2015.



## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The 2014 Council was comprised of 52 Cooperatives in Georgia. Membership includes Dairy Farmers of America, Eatonton Cooperative Feed Company, Edison Gin, Georgia EMC Federal Credit Union, Georgia Transmission Corporation, Southern States, Staplcothn Cooperative, AgSouth Farm Credit, AgGeorgia Farm Credit, SW Georgia Farm Credit, AgFirst Farm Credit Bank in Columbia, S.C., and Georgia's 41 Electric Membership Corporations.

## ANNUAL MEETING 2014

The 2014 Annual meeting was held Monday, March 10 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 Frances Edmunds, the meeting was recognition of the individuals that have been presented with Co-op Council Awards for the past year.

Youth Leadership Conference:  
Lana Goitia and Sam Nelson.

Couples Conference:  
Matt and Brittany Comerford, Diverse Power.

Pictures from the two conferences were shown and were very entertaining and informative about the activities at each conference.

Hope Carter and Ben Lastly with Georgia FFA, expressed appreciation from the Georgia FFA for the sponsorship of the Agricultural Communications Proficiency Award and the Marketing CDE team.

Camellia Summerford, winner of the 4-H Environmental Science Project, addressed the group about her project and expressed her appreciation of the recognition.

Kelsea Neill, a student at Abraham Baldwin Agriculture College (ABAC), was awarded the Georgia Cooperative Council Scholarship.

Distinguished Cooperator Awards were presented to Harrell Landreth, Diverse Power; Stan McMikle, StaplCotn, Randy Nichols, McNair, McLemore, Middlebrooks & Co. and Richard West, GEMC Federal Credit Union. Each was given a silver Jefferson Cup.

Other Council Awards for 2014 included \$700 for the Student Enrichment Program at ABAC and a \$1000 donation to the Georgia Junior Livestock Foundation.

Mr. Jack Spruill, Director of Georgia Department of Agriculture Marketing Division, was the featured speaker. He spoke on the Georgia Grown program, a marketing and economic development designed to promote Georgia's locally grown products.

Thank you to all that brought the many door prizes. Many guests and members gladly accepted the great gifts. After adjournment the group enjoyed a catered lunch.



### Upcoming Events for 2015

#### **Georgia Cooperative Council Annual Meeting - March 9, 2015**

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

#### **Cooperative Youth Conference - July 13-17, 2015**

State FFA/FCCLA Center, Covington, Ga.

*Further information and nomination forms will be available Spring 2015.*

#### **2015 Couples Conference – July 31 – Aug 2, 2015**

The Ridges Resort and Marina, Hiawassee, Ga.

*Further information and nomination forms will be available Spring 2015.*