

December 2015

Georgia Cooperative Council Newsletter 2015

Cindy Greene Executive Director

Special Interest Articles:

- Message from the Executive Director
- USDA Rural Cooperatives Magazine
- Youth Leadership Conference
- Couples Conference
- Cooperative Month Materials
- Annual Meeting
- 2016 Program Dates

NOTES FROM CINDY GREENE

2015 What a year! Time passes quickly when you are having fun! This past year has provided many tremendous opportunities for educating Georgia students and adults about the Georgia Cooperative Council and its members.

I would like to extend congratulations to Craig Scroggs of the USDA Rural Development, Ex-Officio Board Member, on his recent retirement. Craig is such a valuable member of the board and his continued leadership of both the Youth and Couples Conferences will be long standing. We will always

appreciate his valuable skills and the time he spent with these conferences. Thank you Craig!

Once again the cooperatives did an outstanding job in the selection of the students and adults that attended the conferences. I want to thank each cooperative that has sponsored a teen or adult couple this past year for outstanding choices. These adults and young students are the link to the future of your communities. They are tomorrow's leaders and I know the future is bright and promising with

them leading the way. 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 information about their Cooperatives. It would not be possible to host these events without their assistance. As we welcome 2016, I want to thank everyone for their support and look forward to a great New Year!

USDA COOPERATIVE MAGAZINE

For 82 years, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has published *Rural Cooperatives*, a free, bi-monthly magazine that reports significant achievements by cooperatives and examines the key issues facing them.

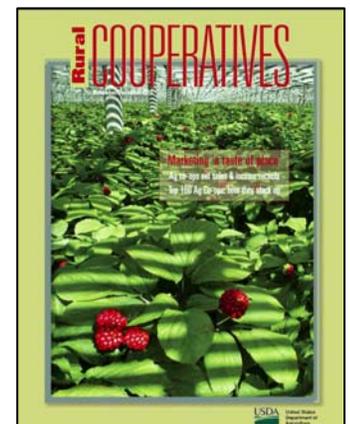
Rural Cooperatives is the nation's leading co-op education journal, offering articles about co-ops and agency co-op research.

To get a web link sent to your e-mail each time a new magazine posts to the web, it only takes a minute to subscribe at: <http://www.rdlist.sc.egov.usda.gov/listserv/mainse rvlet>.

Co-op managers, officers and directors can also request a free hard copy subscription by sending a request to: coopinfo@wdc.usda.gov.

More than a decade of back issues are posted

on the web at: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/publications/rural-cooperatives-magazine>.



2015 Camper quotes ~

"I never thought I could learn as much about leadership in one week as I did this week!"

"I am so glad I got to make new friends and try things I never thought I could do."

"I liked learning more about cooperatives and how they are used in different ways."

"Awesome times, great people, excellent food, unforgettable experience!"



2015 YOUTH CONFERENCE – LEADERSHIP WEEK

What a great 2015 Youth Conference! Fifty seven students from across Georgia participated in a fun and educational filled week at the GA 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 took part in activities and visited with local co-ops to help them understand the common goal of cooperatives; to provide benefits to their members that could not be obtained individually. The students learned that all co-ops are formed to meet the specific objectives of the members, and are structured to adapt to member's changing needs.

"These students are already peer leaders in their community, and we have the responsibility of teaching them how cooperatives play a pivotal role in helping their towns and neighborhoods 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-op 101" presentations, where speakers discussed the cooperative business model, including history, organization, member benefits and current issues.

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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.”

This year’s presenters included:

Farm Credit – Van McCall

Georgia EMC - Gale Cutler

Middle Georgia EMC – Chipper Jones

NRECA - Lee Howell

Southern States – Mark Camp

Stap!Cotn – Jeff McPhail

USDA - Craig Scroggs



2015 COUPLES CONFERENCE

The annual multi-state Couples Conference was held July 31 – Aug 2 at The Ridges Resort and Marina on Lake Chatuge in Hiawassee. Participants included couples from Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

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.

Georgia couples in attendance (in photo on right) were sponsored by AgGeorgia Farm Credit, AgSouth Farm Credit and the following EMCs: Altamaha, Canoochee, Diverse Power, Flint Energies, Irwin, Jackson, Middle Georgia, Ocmulgee, Planters, Rayle, Southern Rivers, Tri-County and Walton EMC.

Todd and Kristen Williamson, sponsored by Southwest Georgia Farm Credit, returned as this year’s host couple. Will and Heather Cabe sponsored by AgGeorgia Farm Credit were elected as the 2016 host couple.



TOOLKIT FOR CO-OP MONTH

October is Co-op Month. Since 1930, co-ops across the United States have taken the opportunity every October to celebrate the cooperative movement's history and economic impact on communities nationwide. The NCBA Co-op Month Communication Toolkit is available and can help you advance this shared goal. Your co-op can use or adapt sample documents to start planning your own Co-op Month celebration for next October. The toolkit includes print-ready posters, sharable social media graphics, sample social media posts and ideas for celebrating Co-op Month. Check out <https://ncba.coop/events/co-opmonth> to see this past year's materials and start planning for 2016!

ANNUAL MEETING 2015

The 2015 Annual meeting was held Monday, March 9 at the Georgia Farm Bureau Federation Headquarters in Macon.

Under the direction of President Gale Cutler, the meeting included recognition of the individuals that have been presented with Co-op Council Awards for the past year.

Youth Leadership Conference:
Jeremy Raiford and Sara Holton

Couples Conference:
Todd and Kristen Williamson

Craig Scroggs shared pictures from the youth conferences.

Valerie Noles with Georgia FFA Foundation, expressed appreciation from the Georgia FFA for the sponsorship of the Agricultural Communications Proficiency Award and the Marketing CDE team.

Francisco Zepeda Spalding County 4-H, winner of the 4-H Environmental Science Project, addressed the group about his project and expressed his appreciation of the recognition.

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

Distinguished Cooperator Awards were presented to Randall Pugh, Tom Kight and Ann Orowski. 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. Van McCall, Education and Outreach Manager, AgSouth Farm Credit, was the speaker for the annual meeting. He gave an informative talk about the AGAware program and its importance to Agriculture.

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



Upcoming Events for 2016

Georgia Cooperative Council Annual Meeting - March 7

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

Cooperative Youth Conference - July 18-22

State FFA/FCCLA Center, Covington, Ga.

Further information and nomination forms will be available Spring 2016.

Couples Conference – July 29 – 31

The Ridges Resort and Marina, Hiawassee, Ga.

Further information and nomination forms will be available Spring 2016.