

## Mississippi Association's 34th Annual Meeting by Frank Taylor



The Mississippi Association of Cooperatives celebrated its 34th Annual Meeting on March 17 & 18, at Lake Tiak O' Khata in Louisville, MS. The Winston County Self-Help Cooperative hosted for this year's celebration. Hubert Nicholson, WCSHC Coop Member and President of the Mississippi Association of Cooperative's Executive Board served as



facilitator.

Registration started approximately at 9:30am in the hotel lobby with

visitors, members and friends renewing friendships and engaging in folklore from last year's event. Winston County Self Help Cooperative prepared an ambitious schedule for the afternoon sessions with a tour of various farms. First stop,

Elegene Nunn's Goat Farm located in Naniah Waiyia, MS. Nunn received 10 Spanish Boer goats through the Federation of Southern Cooperative's Forest Legacy

Program in August of 2005. Additionally, Nunn is an active member of Winston County Self-Help Cooperative. According to Amadou Diop, FSC Goat Specialist,

Nunn is exercising excellent care for



"Bull #113"

the animals and he is a model farmer for others, who are interested start-

ing a goat operation. Nunn should complete "Pass On" of goats by November. The tour moved on with a stop at the cooperative's farm located in Bethel Community. Hubert Nicholson welcomed and elaborated on the farm's operation. The coop presently has 10 heifers at this location preparing for "Pass On" in mid June. Nicholson stated one of Heifer International's cornerstones is to pass on good quality animals. The community pasture system will help achieve this goal. We are working with our local county Extension Agent, Mike Skipper and Chuck Lea, of Natural Resources

Conservation Service to improve our forages. The

tour ended at Frank Taylor's Tree Farm. Taylor planted pine seedlings in January of 2001 with cost share assistance from Mississippi Forestry Commission.

Additionally, Frank is using a forest management plan to help achieve maximum production. Frank encouraged participants to obtain a formal {farm or forest} management plan as a guiding principle to succeed in their farming entities.

The group reassembled at 6:00pm to partake in the Friday Night's Seafood Buffet which included a cupboard of desserts. After dining, the entourage engaged in comedy, conversations, cards, and made final plans for Saturday business session.

Hubert Nicholson called Saturday business session to order at 9:00am with prayer by Rev. Willie Matthews, a welcome was given by Louisville's Mayor Moe Yarbrough

and the occasion from the fabulous Carol Williams. Ben Burkett, MAC's Director stated our organization is moving forward with the strategic plan and assisting victims affected by Hurricane Katrina. Melbah Smith, MAC's Program Director gave an overview of the work plan and a healthy finance report for 2005. Shirley Blakely brought greeting on the behalf of FSC Executive Board and she outlined future events. Sandra Jackson, Winston County 4-H Agent presented on how to build a successful 4-H organization. Roger Jones, Heifer International South Central Project Leader stated HPI donated feed and other supplies to projects affected by Hurricane Katrina. Additionally, South Central Office hired three new employees to assist in the growing workload. A panel discussion occurred on various topics that drew an array of questions from the audience with emphasis on improving farming operations.

James McBride, a

veteran employee of Internal Revenue Service served as luncheon speaker. McBride's presentation focused on knowing the rules and regulations of protecting the family farm assets. The meeting concluded with door prizes and an

auction.

Winston County Self-Help Cooperative would thank each individual for participating and helping us at WCSHC fulfill our mission to Committed to help save rural America.



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## Focus Group Meeting By John Green

On Monday, March 13, 2006, twenty members of Winston County-Self Help met at the Extension Office to discuss local marketing opportunities and challenges.

The focus group was facilitated by professors Anna Kleiner (Southeastern Louisiana University) and John Green (Delta State University) as part of a project through the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program.

In addition to these universities, partners in the project include the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives, Heifer International, Northeast Louisiana Black Farmers and Land Owners Association, and the Morehouse Parish Black Farmers and Land Owners Association. Frank Taylor, Melbah Smith, Emily King, and others provided assistance with organizing and participating this important event.

Meeting attendees discussed their current production and marketing activities and explored the ways they would like to improve them for the future.

Topics ranged from sustainable production to local produce sales and value-added processing and marketing of meat.

The information document through this focus group meeting will be combined with that drawn from other sessions being conducted in communities in Mississippi and Louisiana. This will be used to guide program planning for development and expansion of marketing opportunities for small-scale and limited resource farmers in the region. The goal is to develop a marketing program linking

farmers, consumers and communities. For more information on this effort, please contact Anna Kleiner at 985-549-2006, [AnnaKleiner@selu.edu](mailto:AnnaKleiner@selu.edu) (<mailto:AnnaKleiner@selu.edu>).



## Winston County Self-Help March Activities

March 3, WCSHC member delivered a motivational speech to students at Coahoma Community College in Clarksdale, MS.

March 4-5 member participate in South Rankin County Cooperative's Forest Landowners workshop.

March 5, WCSHC youth participated in Girl scouts Day/ March 6, leadership team meeting.

March 6-8, 8 members participated in the North/South Institute Con-

ference in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

March 11, Estate Planning Workshop in Louisville, MS with 20 participants.

March 13, WCSHC youth participated in a forestry tour of Georgia Pacific Timber Company.

March 13, hosted focus group meeting with 20 participants.

March 17 & 18 hosted the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives 34th Annual Meeting.

March 24, leadership team kick-off program.

March 22-25 one member participated in leadership training at North Carolina A & T University.

March 27-29 11, members participated in Alcorn State University and Mississippi Association of Cooperatives Women in Business/Small Farmers Conference in Vicksburg, MS.

March 29, WCSHC youth worked preparing the spring garden.

Contact Frank Taylor @ 601-346-9850 or [fltaylor@bellsouth.net](mailto:fltaylor@bellsouth.net)

P. O. Box 23813 \* Jackson, MS 39225