

GREENSBORO ECHO

Voice of Rural America

April 2007
First Edition

For more information,
contact:

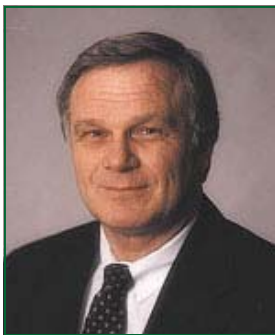
Frank Taylor
601-291-2707

or

ftaylor@bellsouth.net

ANNOUNCEMENT

The WCSHC Field Day is Monday, April 9, 2007 at 4:55 p.m. at the coop farm. David Waide, President, MS Farm Bureau Federation will make a presentation.



SU's Ag-Center Leadership Class Graduation

by Frank Taylor



Southern University Ag-Center's Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute concluded with a graduation ceremony on March 23, at the Jamie L. Whitten Patio in Washington D C. The twenty-two participants received certificates of achievement for completing 200 hundred hours of leadership and business management training spearheaded by Dr. Dawn Mellon Patin and colleagues from other 1890 institutions.

Orlando Trainer, class participant from Missis-

issippi," stated that the Small Farmer Ag Leadership program is helping sustain rural communities and creating a holistic environment for future generations." I am eternally grateful for this opportunity to connect with farmers from ten states and exchange ideals to spur on economic and social change. "As a class, we have established long-term working relationships to help save rural America and develop policies to preserve our natural resources." We visited several 1890's

Land Grant Universities including Southern in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Prairie View in Prairie View, just north of Houston; the University of Arkansas @ Pine Bluff; North Carolina A & T in Greensboro, NC, Alcorn in Lorman, MS, and Historic Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama.

"This experience has broadened my awareness to support our 1890's Land-Grant Universities because of their vital role in disseminating technical information to help small farmers and rural families". Therefore, I am encouraging our political delegation to support legislation and increase funding for 1890's Land Grant Universities. "

I commend, Southern University's AgCenter and staff for allowing farmers an opportunity to bridge gaps between USDA agency, extension service, community based organizations and academia".

"Saving Rural America"

Graduation Activities

Tuesday, March 20th members arrived in Greensboro, North Carolina. Dr. Ray McKinnie of North Carolina A & T University (Aggie Pride) served as host. Members assembled in the hotel's restaurant to discuss graduation plans and partake in a succulent meal.

March 21st, members boarded A-Plus' Charter Bus driven by Lee Austin. We departed at 7:30am for Virginia State University's Research Farm in Petersburg, Va. The class arrived at 10:15am with greetings from the university's administration. We toured catfish ponds, processing plant, greenhouses, and visited the elite goat operation. Virginia State's Research Farm surely leads the nation in connecting farmers and land-owners with emerging information; therefore, we are thankful for the tour of this premier research farm. The leadership class enjoyed a box lunch while in route to Philip Morris, USA manufacturing plant in Richmond, Va. Where we toured the massive facility for two-hour and received a volume of information from tour guides. We re-boarded and traveled to the suburbs of Washington D C for a night of pleasure and rest.

Finally, March 22, the big day - graduation-we arrived in Washington D.C. and met at the National Association of State Colleges and Land Grant Universities (NASULGC), with greetings from Dr. L. Washington Lyons.

He provided an update on farm bill legislation. Several individuals highlighted programs for small farmers and

encouraged each class participant to help influence the 2007's farm bill.

We re-boarded and traveled to the Whitten Building for a delicious lunch and prepared for graduation. The ceremony started at 1:00 pm with Dr. Lyons presiding. Several individual from various agencies stated words of encouragement and emphasized we should work in harmony to "help save rural America". Dr. Mellion Patin summarized the leadership program expressing sincere thanks to USDA for providing funds, supporting agencies, colleagues, 1890's universities, staff, friends and most of all the leadership participants. "She stated this is great day for rural America. We have armed 22 individuals with leadership skills to make different in their respective communities, therefore, we will help save rural America". Frank Taylor gave words of thanks as a class participant. Secretary of Agriculture Mike Johanns delivered the keynote address. "He encouraged members to make a judicious effort to protect their livelihood in agriculture". Members received a certificate of achievement for their successful participation and completing of the leadership training. The ceremony concluded with a reception, networking session with representatives from the various USDA agencies and group pictures.

March 23rd, leadership class visited Capital Hill and was able to watch the senate in session with gallery passes provided by Senator Mary Landrieu's office. We also had an opportunity to visit the historic sites to include the Smithsonian museums.

Dawn Patin-Point of View

One of the great debates of the previous century was whether leaders were made or born. Well, whatever the case, the Small Farmer Agricultural Leadership Institute was very fortunate to have among its ranks, Frank Taylor of the Winston County Self Help Cooperative of Louisville, Mississippi. From the very first session (October 2005) Mr. Taylor distinguished himself from each and every other participant in this training and took charge of the situation and began to work with the other participants building teams. What impressed me the most about Mr. Taylor was his energy, enthusiasm and commitment. After the first session, Mr. Taylor call me to inform me that he had checked and that each one of the participants had made it home to the final destination safely, and that I did not have to worry. This was a huge relief and I was extremely proud that someone decided to appoint themselves caretaker of the group. Frank was the ideal participants for this class. He was always willing to take charge, ask the difficult and thought provoking questions and even lead a discussion when necessary. (Do any of you know Ruby, ask Frank if you don't). Mr. Taylor continued to be the caretaker by spear heading the Reunion activities planned for later this year. It is with much pride that I congratulate Mr. Frank Taylor for his undying appreciation; all of his work and untying efforts in help all of save rural America.

For those of you who have had the opportunity to meet and especially work with Frank, I will say good luck keeping up with him.

Scenes from Southern Leadership Class



"Saving Rural America"