

Voice of Rural America GREENSBORO ECHO

JUNE 2007 THIRD EDITION

"SAVING RURAL AMERICA"

Frank Taylor, farmer and Chairman of the Winston County Self Help Cooperative encourages campers at Piney Woods School to become tomorrow's agricultural leaders-by Walter Jackson (NRCS) Grassland Specialist



In conjunction with their summer boarding camp program, Piney Woods hosted ten youths from the surrounding community and counties by establishing a two-week Agriculture Leadership Camp from June 17 – June 29, 2007. The proposed program enhanced the development of a partnership between the USDA/NRCS and Pine Woods School. The location of Piney Woods and the land resources available on campus permitted the USDA/NRCS to expand its efforts in working with limited resource farmers. This partnership provided learning opportunities and a base for training farmers, youths and community leaders on practical farming applications

Special efforts were made to

recruit socioeconomically disadvantaged youths from counties in Mississippi. The overall goal of the camp was to introduce youths to careers in agriculture/agribusiness. The ten youths will continue to participate with Piney Woods and volunteer small farmers throughout the year to establish various demonstration vegetable plots. This will allow them to continue to be educated in other agricultural hands on components while giving back to the community.

Frank Taylor, farmer and Chairman of the Winston County Self Help Cooperative, encouraged campers at Piney Woods School to become tomorrow's agricultural leaders. Taylor challenged the future conservationists to understand the environment, protect the natural resources, and to develop a road map of life and follow it. He discussed the environment as an ecosystem of plants, animals, water soil, air and humans. He also emphasized several areas of management needs for small farmers and minorities such as money management, time management and personal development.

Agriculture is and will con-

tinue to be, in the foreseeable future, the largest industry in Mississippi. Mississippi ranks among the top ten states in poultry production, cotton, rice, soybeans, and blueberries. The state leads the nation in production of farm-raised catfish. Agriculture makes a significant contribution to the economy of all 82 Mississippi counties. One-fourth of these counties annual farm production is \$50 million. Agriculture related jobs provide employment for one-fourth of Mississippi's work force.

The increasing population and demand for food worldwide offer a dramatic growth opportunity for Mississippi's farming environment in the State. To claim this prosperous future, dynamic leadership in the agriculture industry is required. This is particularly true in terms of developing and using the knowledge and skills of minorities in developing the agribusiness industry in Mississippi. A vehicle needs to be developed to facilitate minorities' successful participation from high school to the professional level. Taylor's passion for the sustainability of rural America is quickly spreading across Mississippi.

NACD Provides On-Line Training for WCSHC members-by Natalie Twyner



In January 2007, the National Association of Conservation Districts began a new training program for Small and Limited Resource Farmers. Natalie Twyner, a 28-year veteran educator entered into an agreement with NACD to carry forth this much-needed training. The project has touched landowners in Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas.

The purpose of this project is to test the use of on-line resources, and to survey and dialogue with farmers and their constituents. Further, the purpose is to examine and identify farming community weaknesses. NACD and NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service) are looking for ways to improve upon providing and teaching landowners to use and rely on the USDA on-line services to further their development and sources of funding.

On June 22, at the Winston County Public Library,

members from Winston County Self Help Cooperative gathered to participate in the on-line workshop sponsored by NACD. They were exposed to basic computer skills.

Participants were taught how to go to the USDA home page and how to take advantage of the wealth of information found there.

Participants browsed and discovered information that pertained to them locally as well as nationally.

Participants visited their local Conservation Service Center on-line.

Participants were particularly intrigued with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Energy Estimator. The Energy Estimator provides four energy tools (Animal Housing, Irrigation, Nitrogen, Tillage) designed to increase energy awareness in agriculture and to help farmers and ranchers identify where they can reduce their energy costs. The results generated by these tools are estimates based on NRCS models and are illustrative of the magnitude of savings.

According to the evaluations and comments shared at the end of the training session, participants expressed a need for more settings of this type and are looking forward to more workshops in the near future.

BQA Seminar-by staff

Winston County Self Help Cooperative co-sponsored a Beef Quality Assurance Seminar on June 4, 5:55pm at the Louisville Coliseum with more than 28 co-op members participating. Dr. Carla Huston and colleagues from Mississippi State University's School of Veterinary Medicine presented various topics related to animal health and developing a long-term marketing strategy. The Beef Quality Assurance Seminar focused on creating awareness of raising quality heifers to increase each producer income. Several members reflected with enthusiasm the idea of implementing several of the strategies learned from this session. The seminar ended with a delicious meal prepared by the Cattlemen's Association.



WCSHC's Second Quarter Report-by Frank Taylor

Winston County Self Help Cooperative received (A+) for its efforts to help save rural America according to Louisville's Mayor Moe Yarbrough. "WCSHC's members should be commended for their tireless efforts of promoting our natural resources and stimulating leadership in creating a holistic environment". "WCSHC youth group is providing opportunities for our young people to connect with the natural resources and in return,

this process will help reduce juvenile crime and promote good stewardship." Hubert Nicholson, co-op member, said, "We have exceeded our lofty goal of specified activities planned for the second quarter and we are building momentum toward a spectacular finish". We have held eleven business sessions and eight out-reach meetings. Additionally, we have held four meetings related to animal

health. According to Dorothy Harper WCSHC Youth Director, "we have been involved in numerous activities, such as relay for life, Arbor Day, volunteerism and 4-H. We are presently harvesting fresh vegetables from our youth garden". We are planning educational classes focusing on oral communication and writing skills.

For more information, please contact, Frank Taylor at (601) 291-2704 or email: fltaylor@bellsouth.net



"SAVE THE DATE"

Federation of Southern Cooperatives/LAF 40th Year Anniversary to be held on August 16-18, 2007. Contact the Jackson office for more details at 601-354-2750.

June 2007's Activities

- June 1, members participated in grazing a land tour.
- June 4, held co-op bimonthly meeting.
- June 4, held Beef Quality Assurance Workshop-28 members participated.
- June 5, published newsletter.
- June 6, youth harvested Zucchini & Yellow Squash.
- June 7-9, 10 members participated in Heifer International South Central Partner meeting.
- June 16, member participated in HPI's grazing seminar-Lexington, Ms.
- June 18, held co-ops' bi-monthly meeting.
- June 18-19 youth travel to DR. Martin Luther King Center in Atlanta, Ga.
- June 20, 24 youth members participated in 4-H activities and picnic-Noxapater Park.
- June 20, prepared co-ops' pasture for fertilizing.
- June 21, published newsletter.
- June 22, five members received computer training.
- June 22, youth and co-op members participated in relay for life event.
- June 22, members spread ammonia and fertilizer to stimulate forage growth at co-op's pasture.
- June 23, youth harvested cucumbers, green beans, squash, pepper and tomatoes.
- June 25, youth eradicated weeds from garden.
- June 26, youth enrichments class with fifteen participants.
- June 29, held community voices meeting.

North-South Institute Workshop to be held July 17, 2007 at the Winston County Extension office in Louisville, Mississippi at 8:00 a.m. For further details, please contact, Elizabeth Myles at 601-870-2916.

WCSHC will sponsor an adult computer class for adults on July 3, 2007 from 8:30 a.m. -10:30 a.m. at the Winston County Library. For more information, please contact Dorothy Harper at 662-773-8264.