

TACCs 2019 Managers Conference *delivers* on the "Nuts and Bolts" of Leading a Co-op!

TACC held another successful Managers' Conference at the Inn of the Mountain Gods in Ruidoso, New Mexico, July 10-12. Nearly 100 co-op, university, and industry members were represented, and including family; about 175 people attended. A panel of co-op summer interns and 11 speakers spoke during the conference. The Managers' Conference was made possible by 34 sponsors.

State Representative and Chair of the House Ag Committee, **Drew Springer**, of Muenster, kicked off the meeting with results from a recently-held State Legislative Session, highlighting issues impacting ag. **Dr. John Park** from Texas A&M University joined by **Tommy Engelke**, discussed the numerous and various training strategies used at co-ops. **Yani Bunch**, Member Service Manager for the Farmer Veteran Coalition, shared information about how co-ops can use their program to find and hire military veterans. **Gail Faries, CPA**, of D. Williams and Company in Lubbock, provided his annual tax updates.

Codie Wright, Assistant Director and Gallup Certified Strengths Coach from Texas A&M University, lead a collaborative workshop that helped the group identify their strengths and the strengths of others. **Dale Kerstetter**, Environmental and Safety Director for Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers co-op in South Texas, provided important OSHA updates and explained OSHCON.

The conference concluded with an informative presentation by **Dr. John Park** and PhD student, **Diane Friend** discussing co-op director competencies. **Dr. Roel Lopez** gave the group an eye-opening presentation on the impact of land fragmentation in agriculture. Finally, **Craig Brown**, with the National Cotton Council, provided a cotton policy and outlook, and **Dr. Erica Irlbeck** of Texas Tech University, presented the long-awaited results of her study on Millennial buying and decision-making habits.

21st Anniversary of Board Chair Conference --- One for the *books!*

The crowd has been holding steady the past few years with the TACC Board Chair Conference --- July 24-26 --- in Ruidoso, New Mexico at the Inn of the Mountain Gods. This year was no different! Thank you to the 12 sponsors who helped make this conference a success! Surprisingly, six electric co-ops were represented at the meeting!

The meeting started on a high-note with **Bob Keplinger** of ActionCOACH in North Houston. He shared his strategies for leading in low margin environments in which top line revenue, efficient operations, and highly-focused team members are critical ingredients to long-term success.

Celebrated co-op attorney, **Gary McLaren**, of the McLaren Law Firm PLLC, gave his annual presentation on legal pitfalls to avoid as a co-op director. **Dr. John Park** and PhD student, **Diane Friend** from Texas A&M University, discussed the elements of effective co-op board performance, governance, and leadership. Closing out the Board Chair Conference was a panel of **Gary McLaren**, **Dr. John Park**, and **Tony Morton** of PYCO Industries, who led a "how to" discussion on how co-op directors can better manage their manager.

input needed: TACCs 2019 Compensation Survey

Ever since 2001, TACC has conducted an in-depth compensation study every so often of all general managers and key personnel in cooperatives throughout the state. Earlier this month, hard copy survey forms were sent to all local agricultural co-ops in Texas, with a self-addressed stamped envelope **to return the completed forms to co-op CPA Greg Taylor in Lubbock by Friday, August 30th**. Tabulation and analysis of the results will follow shortly thereafter by his office. The every five-year document gets a lot of attention each year it is produced, all in an effort for organizations to stay current.

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2019-2020 TACC Award Applications **DUE!**

It is now time to submit award applications for the Cooperative Ginner of the Year Award and the Cooperator of the Year Award for presentation at the 2020 Joint Cooperative Meeting at the Woodlands Resort in The Woodlands, Texas, March 15-17. The final date applications will be accepted is September 1, 2019. Please contact TACC (512-450-0555) if you have further questions or concerns about the application process.

The Past Three *Cooperator of the Year* Winners:

- 2018 – **Eddie Smith**, Plains Cotton Cooperative Association – Lubbock
- 2017 – **Danny Helms**, Plains Cotton Cooperative Association – Warehouse – Sweetwater
- 2016 – **Rex Ford**, Farmers Cooperative Society – Stamford

The Past Three *Cooperative Ginner of the Year* Winners:

- 2018 – **Ed Landry**, La Feria Co-op Gin Association – La Feria
- 2017 – **David Wied**, New Home Co-op Gin – New Home
- 2016 – **Larry Black**, Central Rolling Plains Co-op – Roscoe

The Results are in on Millennial Farmers' Purchase and Decision-Making Habits *study!*

In January of 2019, TACC hosted the 1st annual Academy of Cooperative Excellence Conference (*a conference resurfaced from the 1984-2004 TACC Young Couples Conference*) to cultivate a new momentum and connect the dots for the next generation of farm families and co-op leaders. During this meeting, TACC employed **Dr. Erica Irlbeck**, Assistant Professor, Agricultural Education and Communications, Texas Tech University in Lubbock, to not only survey the group but to also facilitate a focus group discussion with six of the next-generation farm couples to determine factors they use in their purchasing and decision-making habits. Dr. Irlbeck presented her report at TACC's 2019 Managers' Conference in Ruidoso, NM, July 10-12. You can also check out the results of the report, "Meeting Millennial Farmers' and Rancher's Expectations from Their Cooperatives," at https://texascoop.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/irlbeck_report.pdf.

Summer Interns Making *impacts* at Their Co-ops!

Wrapping up the tenth year of the TACC Summer internship program with another successful class, the 2019 TACC summer co-op interns finished with a trip to the TACC Cooperative Managers' Conference in Ruidoso, New Mexico on July 10-12 and a trip to Austin on August 5-6. During their time in Austin, they were introduced to the legislative and regulatory environment that co-ops and the ag industry face. The interns met with state agencies, toured the State Capitol, experienced a few Austin "dive" restaurants, and played a few rounds at TopGolf! While in Austin, times weren't all fun and games though --- these young adults were faced with a rigorous mock interview to help prepare them for the future and participated in a group exit interview designed to assist TACC with making changes in future programs.

This year's crop of TACC's Summer Co-op Interns included:

- ◇ **Joe Gorman**, a natural resource management senior at Angelo State University from San Angelo interning at Lone Star Farmers Co-op, Mereta
- ◇ **Megan Smedley**, an agribusiness senior at West Texas A&M University from Southern California interning at Calcot, Bakersfield, California
- ◇ **Lexi Smith**, a May 2019 ag economics graduate from Texas Tech University from Nazareth interning at Central Rolling Plains Co-op, Roscoe

We have no doubt we'll see interns from this group continuing employment in the cooperative industry!

Fall Co-op Bookkeepers, Office Managers & Accountants *meeting* Set for Lubbock

The Texas Chapter, National Society of Accountants for Cooperatives (*NSAC*) meet twice a year to update attendees on the latest business and industry regulatory changes for those who work as co-op bookkeepers, office managers, and as accountants. They have set their next meeting for this Fall **Friday, September 27, 2019** at Plains Cotton Cooperative Association offices. TACC will be coordinating the registrations as they have in the past.

People who attend these meetings can capture their annual required CEU credits. **Russ DuBose**, with D. Williams and Company CPA firm in Lubbock (806-785-5982), serves as president of the Texas Chapter. More information will be sent as the meeting approaches.

The Council Announces its October 30-31 South Texas Leadership Conference Back to *corpus christi*

For 23 years, TACC has made a focus to bring an annual one-time school on the nuts and bolts of cooperatives, to South Texas. That date has been set for October 30 – 31 (a *Wednesday / Thursday*) to allow for both the main educational school on that Thursday and, once again, a very popular co-op board chair conference on that Wednesday --- just has been conducted in recent years.

MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!

It will all once again be held at the Omni Hotel on Corpus Christi Bay with noted co-op attorney **Gary McLaren** coming, but in addition, the lunch will include game wardens featured in the highly – popular television series “Lone Star Law”. They will keep the luncheon light with some repeat stories featured on their five-year run with the show. That show alone attracts 90,000,000 viewers.

Again, the conference will include a new approach to understanding the co-op’s financials, board vs CEO roles, the release of the recently – completed co-op compensation study, and will avoid time-consuming lectures. It should make for an interesting time for all co-op directors and management.

Continuing Outreach Visits with Ag's *urban* Counterparts



Although not seen by many unless close to the action in Austin and Washington, in recent years ag commodity groups have made it a huge part of their agenda to reach out to their urban counterparts --- after all, that’s where all the votes are. Just in the last year alone, outreach events by ag commodity groups have been held in the Dallas / Ft. Worth Metroplex and then in Bryan / College Station. Another big one is in the works for the Houston area and specifically the Port of Houston.

Ag and oil / gas industries are clearly the largest import and export - providers to the Port of Houston and as such, ag commodity groups have directed its leadership to pursue that venue. Thus, on October 28 – 29, TACC has coordinated what appears to be an ever – expanding opportunity. Initially, it was simply a private boat tour with the Port’s management along the channel, but now includes Port Commissioners AND a private tour to their container facility (*which is largely used by agriculture*).

The evening before, a get – acquainted reception will be held for the Houston area state legislative delegation.

TACC’s **Tommy Engelke**, who chairs the Texas Ag Council, says, “When an industry, such as what ag is attempting, leaves Austin and reaches out and makes the effort to go visit lawmakers in their own backyard, the effectiveness of that industry increases dramatically ---- it opens the lines of communication and educates far beyond our wildest imagination.”

Former Military Veterans --- A Look at a Potential Labor Force!

What started by accident may have serious potential for co-op members statewide. In July, TACC hosted a representative with Farmer Veteran Coalition to its Co-op Managers’ Conference in Ruidoso, NM. Then in early August the CEO, **Michael O’Gorman**, followed that up with a visit to the TACC office in Austin to further explore employing former military veterans in the ag workforce. The group will host its national convention to Austin on November 17 – 20, 2019.

Many of the veterans want to explore means to enter the ag industry itself, but in recent times there has been a stronger movement to find great careers for these leaders. TACC is examining those options. There are some 1,400 members in Texas alone.

Should your co-op have an interest in employing a military veteran, please contact TACC.

White-out the Stadium with Your *cotton* Best!

In recent times, the hard – earned efforts of the state’s cotton farmers has been recognized at the “Celebrate Cotton” Texas Tech Football game! This year, the Texas Tech Red Raiders will take on the University of Texas at El Paso Miners at Jones AT&T Stadium in Lubbock on Saturday, September, 7th at 7 p.m. Come out and join the numerous cotton vendors and sponsors that will be on display during the game --- this will be our one big chance this Fall to spotlight COTTON!

My Expectations of a Co-op Director?

During the July 10-12, 2019 TACC Co-op Managers' Conference, co-op general managers were asked to write down two answers to the above question on an index card. What follows are the summarized answers from the participants and also eliminating duplication.

1. "Unconditional support" of the general manager in good times and bad.
2. The seriousness of confidentiality in the boardroom. In fact, it can change my willingness for transparency and the way I manage.
3. Taking the necessary steps to be an engaged director.
4. Loyalty to the effort and the co-op is paramount.
5. Having the where-with-all to seek out and learn their role as a director.
6. Initiate management goals, directives, and policy, then get out of my way, but do check on my progress as warranted.
7. To have the mental toughness to drop a sense of independence and replace it with a desire for the fulfillment of the group/the co-op.
8. Have a sincere and genuine interest in vision and strategic thinking.
9. Take an interest in helping the board president/chair in managing other directors and the team.
10. Reach out a compassionate helping hand to the CEO when they are in the middle of a tough decision.
11. Once a decision is reached by the board, support it openly and always, whether you agree with it or not.
12. Create a "want to spirit" within yourself to engage in frequent educational and refresher opportunities.
13. Ask questions when appropriate, but remove yourself from operational and employee-related issues. You only have responsibility over one person and that is the general manager.
14. Do those things to create a "visionary" mindset for the organization rather than an operational one.
15. Frequently remind yourself and create a picture of "What does a leader look like?", then carry yourself in that fashion.
16. To represent and genuinely promote the co-op business model.
17. Look at your role as one "to provide oversight to the co-op."
18. As a director, constantly remember to wear the co-op hat---not ruling on issues that are in the best interest of your farm.
19. Be willing to be "managed" by the board president/chair.
20. As a director, it is expected for you to be the "eyes and ears" to what's happening in the country and convey it to the other appropriate people.
21. Take seriously the urgency and respect necessary for board meeting attendance.
22. In the way you ask questions and support measures in the co-op, let your personality reflect a "team-player" attitude.
23. Although others tend to supply the effort, it is your responsibility to educate yourself about the co-op.
24. Never go into a board meeting unprepared. Make it a point to be so engaged that you enter the room with a higher step in your walk.
25. There should always be a fear of micro-managing as a director, but at the same time, it's also okay and good to ask hard questions about what's going on in the co-op.
26. Because I am CEO, don't give me feedback I want to hear, give me "honest" input.

A copy of this document can be found on the TACC website at <https://tinyurl.com/y6qm7sma>

TACC Gears Up for 2020 Joint Cooperative Meeting, March 15-17 in *new* Location!

In recent years, it has become custom for TACC to secure at least one noted ag economist for its Joint Cooperative Meeting. A blue-chipper has been confirmed for 2020 --- **Dr. Mechel Paggi**, of National Crop Insurance Services, Inc. Dr. Paggi is an Economic Consultant for the National Crop Insurance Services (NCIS). The former Director of the Institute for Food and Agriculture and Associate Dean for Research in the Jordan College of Agriculture at California State University Fresno, began work with NCIS in 2016.

Dr. Paggi served as the Principal Analyst for Agriculture with the Congressional Budget Office (CBO). Before working for CBO, he held the position of Executive Director of the congressionally-mandated Commission on 21st Century Agriculture that provided recommendations to Congress and the Administration for the 2002 Farm Bill.

Prior to his work in Washington, D.C., Dr. Paggi served as a Senior Economist at the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations in Rome, Italy and was a Senior Economist for the American Farm Bureau Federation during the Uruguay Round of international trade negotiations and the negotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement. He began his career as an Assistant Professor for Research and Extension at Texas A&M University.

Dr. Paggi received his B.B.A. in Economics from the McCombs School of Business, University of Texas at Austin, an M.S. in Economics from the University of North Texas, and Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Texas A&M University.

TACC: OUT & ABOUT (since June, 2019)

- ✓ Attended Plains Cotton Cooperative Association Gin Workshop in Ruidoso, New Mexico July 14 – 15.
- ✓ Attended the Cotton Inc. Caucus and Texas Cotton Producers meeting on July 17 in Austin.
- ✓ Hosted TACC's summer co-op interns to Austin and the State Capitol on August 5 – 6.
- ✓ Hosted both the TACC Managers' Conference and TACC Co-op Board Chair Conference in Ruidoso, New Mexico.
- ✓ Assisted in new hires at co-ops throughout the state.
- ✓ Began initial plans to facilitate three strategic plans for co-ops in August/September 2019.
- ✓ Attended a fundraising event for R) State Senator **Dawn Buckingham** of Austin on June 26.
- ✓ Concluded the dues solicitation process for the current fiscal year.
- ✓ Posted daily Facebook posts on TACC Facebook page.
- ✓ Hosted an all-ag commodity (Texas Ag Council) meeting in Austin June 26 and August 14 and chaired an executive committee meeting of this group on August 13.
- ✓ Participated in the Texas Cotton Ginners' Association Summer Membership Meeting in Grapevine on June 24-25.
- ✓ Prepared and sent surveys to local ag cooperatives so as to prepare the every five-year Co-op Compensation Study on co-op personnel on August 1.
- ✓ Hosted a visit of Farmer Veteran Coalition CEO, **Michael O'Gorman**, to TACC's offices on August 7th in an attempt to secure more former military personnel to consider careers in cooperatives.
- ✓ Spoke to the Ag Lead class of the Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association of Texas at the State Capitol on June 21.
- ✓ Coordinated numerous activities for the ag commodity group called Texas Ag Council including arranging for an October 29 tour to the Port of Houston, conducting two membership meetings and facilitating a comprehensive membership survey.
- ✓ Facilitated a 90-minute kick-off group dynamic workshop at a week-long leadership camp of nearly 120 people representing electric cooperatives in East Texas on June 24. This conference was held in Marshall at East Texas Baptist University June 24-28.
- ✓ Assisted the career development center at the Texas Education Agency as they consider adding new classes to the high school vocational agriculture course curriculum.

Will Be:

- ◇ Preparing for the 2019-2020 TACC budget for consideration at the September 5, 2019 Executive Committee Meeting in Lubbock, Texas at Plains Cotton Cooperative Association.
- ◇ Facilitating a strategic plan for Floydada Co-op Gin on August 29-30, along with numerous co-op resources.
- ◇ Confirming speakers for the October 30-31, 2019 South Texas Leadership Conference in Corpus Christi.
- ◇ Coordinating a tour for all ag groups (Texas Ag Council) to visit the Port of Houston on October 29.
- ◇ Conducting a board retreat for two additional co-ops in West Texas in September.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2019

September

2	TACC Labor Day Holiday
5	TACC Executive Committee Meeting – Plains Cotton Cooperative Association – Lubbock
7	Texas Tech University vs University of Texas El Paso Miners Celebrate Cotton weekend - Lubbock
17	Plains Cotton Cooperative Association Annual Meeting - Lubbock
17-19	National Conference of State Co-op Council's Annual Meeting – Ithaca, NY
22-23	Southwest Council of Agribusiness Annual Meeting – Austin
27	Texas Chapter, National Society of Accountants for Cooperatives Annual Meeting – Lubbock

October

30 – 31	TACC South Texas Leadership Conference - Corpus Christi
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November

3	Daylight Savings Time Ends
4-5	TACC Audit
18	PYCO Industries, Inc. Annual Meeting – Lubbock
28-29	TACC Thanksgiving Holidays

December

24-25	TACC Christmas Holidays
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January

1	TACC New Year's Holiday
Jan 31-Feb 1	TACC Academy of Cooperative Excellence Program - Fredericksburg