

Deb Mazour

From: NCC-Deb <debm@nebr.coop>
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To: Deb Mazour
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Cooperation in Nebraska

a newsletter from the Nebraska Cooperative Council

July 24, 2019

Continuing the Education Mission in Service of Nebraska's Farmer Owned Cooperatives

“The mission of the Nebraska Cooperative Council is to defend, protect and enhance the agricultural cooperative movement through pro-active programs in education, legislation, government affairs, communication, and regulatory issues.”

In fulfillment of its mission, the Nebraska Cooperative Council, in conjunction with the Nebraska Cooperative Council Education Foundation, recently completed its 2018-2019 series of education programs. This year's programs were attended by over 395 persons and focused on cooperative issues ranging from basic Co-ops 101 to how changes in technology will impact Nebraska's farmer owned cooperatives.

Cooperative based education was made available to persons from high school age through efforts with Nebraska's high school ag teachers, to college students in Nebraska's community colleges and those interning with Nebraska cooperatives during the summer of 2019. Offerings were also available to new members of boards of directors through the Director Certification Program as well as to more seasoned members of boards of directors attending the Graduate Director Seminar and Board Leadership Seminar. Cooperative management and employees were offered programs at the

Director/Manager Workshop, Cooperatives For Tomorrow Seminar, and Credit Workshop.

The research conducted as part of the Legacy Initiative underscores the importance of broad based educational efforts supporting the importance of Nebraska's farmer owned cooperatives to the patron owners and rural Nebraska. We are continuing to develop programs to assist Nebraska's farmer owned cooperatives in the education of their respective employees and memberships about the value of farmer ownership of these cooperative enterprises.

The Fund for Excellence continues to support a faculty teaching and extension position, filled by Dr. Greg McKee, at the University of Nebraska College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources. Additionally, the NCC Education Foundation continues its support of undergraduate scholarships at UNL and the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture and in 2019-2020 has added a scholarship at the University of Nebraska-Kearney.

The continued success of the Council's education programming is as a result of the strong support of our local and regional membership including the CHS Foundation Cooperative Education Grants program which supports the Co-ops 101 programming.

Programming Note: As we conclude the current education season, programming is well underway for the Council's 2019-20 education programs. We are excited to be bringing Brett Sciotto, President & CEO of Aimpoint Research, who will be delivering a program on the Farmer of the Future at the Director/Manager Workshop in November in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. Mr. Sciotto has led a multi-year nationwide study, involving interested parties from the farm to the consumer, looking at how farming will change in the next 20 years. This program has been well received by national audiences, and we believe that each member cooperative's senior management and boards of directors should attend and learn about this ground-breaking research and look into the future. That your cooperative will be impacted by these changes is a given. Developing a strategy now to respond to such changes is an opportunity!

Thank you to all who participate in and facilitate NCC education programs and continue this vital mission for the Council. Read on for a look back at the scope of our programming this last year:

Cooperative Intern Retreat

The Council hosted an inaugural Cooperative Intern Retreat on July 18th in Grand Island. The one-day program, attended by 61 interns and 11 co-op staff, was designed for current participants in our Cooperative Members' summer internship programs. The goal for the program was to provide an overview and context of the entire Nebraska cooperative system for participants as they



complete their internship experience with their respective cooperatives.

The day featured a panel of agricultural producers who sit on local cooperative boards addressing what they need from their local cooperative and how the local cooperative can best serve those needs. A local cooperative CEO/GM panel explored the value of farmers earning patronage and holding members equity, of farmers owning and operating cooperative assets, how cooperatives differentiate themselves through member service, and how local cooperatives give back to their respective communities. Finally an interactive panel of representatives of our regional cooperatives discussed the role of the regional cooperatives and their relationship to local cooperatives and ultimate ownership by the farmer stockholder/members of the local cooperatives.

The program was partially funded through the Council's Legacy Initiative. Given the positive response to this program we will continue to develop it and offer it again next summer.



Director Certification Program



Dr. Keri Jacobs from Iowa State University reviews using and understanding financial statements with Phase 3 participants.

In early January, 51 phases of DCP were completed with 18 individuals graduating after having completed all 4 phases of the program. These graduates bring the total number of DCP graduates to 1,665 over the history of the program. DCP is our core program offered annually to help new directors deal with the challenges they face as decision makers and to accelerate the process by which directors become active, effective board members. The training is very important to establish an understanding of the responsibilities of the position.

Cooperatives For Tomorrow Seminar

70 individuals attended CFT on February 6th in Lincoln. Speakers for the program were Mark Zenuk from Tillridge Capital Partners, who addressed market segmentation and expenditures in agribusiness; Kent Langley who addressed blockchain and artificial intelligence; and Chris Paterson of Xarvio, a division of BASF, who addressed new technology impacting production agriculture

Graduate Director Seminar

GDS was held February 7th in Lincoln with 59 directors in attendance. The topic built upon last year's program and provided more insight into understanding the financial position of the co-op and how that relates to future planning. Dr. Keri Jacobs of Iowa State University and Tom Houser of CoBank led the morning session which incorporated situational analysis using financial acumen to analyze situations that boards may encounter as well as assessment of ongoing profitability of the cooperative.

The afternoon session focused on board member communications. As cooperatives continue to grow, it is important that Board members are able to effectively communicate the vision and plans of the cooperative to member patrons. Facilitators Marcus Squier and Mark Smither of Paulsen were not able to attend in person due to weather issues but they provided a shortened video presentation via Skype focused on preparing board members to communicate the strategy and mission of the cooperative to the public. Following it, Rocky provided a summary of the Legacy Project and how cooperatives may incorporate the findings of the Legacy project into their planning.

Board Leadership Seminar

38 board leaders attended BLS which was held in LaVista on February 21st. As in the past, the program was scheduled right before the start of CoBank's Customer Meetings to allow participants to travel "one" time to attend both programs. Evaluations continue to indicate board officers are pleased with this schedule. This year's session featured the "open forum" discussion with Attorney Bill Kutilek and Rocky Weber.



Credit Workshop



Every few years, the Council conducts a Credit Workshop for co-op managers and employees. After receiving several inquiries relating to patron credit accounts and risk management, a Credit Workshop titled *Staying A Step Ahead – Best Practices for Managing Credit Risk Today* was conducted April 23rd in Kearney with 27 co-op employees in attendance. Topics covered in the workshop included liens, the UCC, Central Filing System, collections, and bankruptcy.

We finished the day with an open forum session on “Best Practices” for managing credit risk. This session was highly interactive and allowed participants to share procedures they use in their daily work of managing risk for the cooperative.

Facilitators were Chad Gent, Senior Vice President of Farm Credit Services of America, and Attorneys Bill Kutilek and Andrew Pease from Crosby Guenzel.

YOUTH EDUCATION

Youth education continues to be a high priority of the Council. In order to reach a wide audience, we have worked with UNL, UNK, NCTA, the community colleges, the State Ag Teachers Association, and the Nebraska FFA to reach the youth audience. For the 18/19 fiscal year, this totals 476 teachers and students.

Co-ops 101



Taylor Collins from Farmers Cooperative headquartered in Dorchester, talked with students about job opportunities at co-ops on March 7th at Southeast Community College in Beatrice.

Since 2011 the Council, through a CHS Foundation Cooperative Education Grant, has been offering Co-ops 101 presentations at community colleges, NCTA, UNL, UNK and selected high schools.

During that timeframe, we have provided 115 presentations for 1,977 students throughout the state. These presentations focus on the difference in the various business models and how the cooperative business model serves agriculture in Nebraska. During the presentations we discuss cooperative governance, patronage, equity and representation, and how these differentiate cooperatives from other business models.

During the 2018/19 academic year, to date, we have provided 13 presentations to 228 students at SCC-Beatrice, UNL, CCC-Hastings, UNK, NCTA, CCC-Columbus, and The Career Academy-Early Ag Experience at SCC-Lincoln.

Co-ops 101 for Cooperatives... The Council also offers Co-ops 101 presentations for local cooperatives. We have sessions scheduled with two cooperatives in the coming months. These sessions cover some of the same basic co-op information that the college presentations offer but are customized to meet the needs of the local cooperative. Contact our office if you are interested in this type of programming.

State FFA Cooperative Speaking Contest

The Council continues to annually sponsor the State FFA Cooperative Speaking Competition which provides an incentive for young people to learn more about the cooperative form of business; to develop speaking and communication skills; and to involve local cooperative representatives in the ag education process.

Of the 189 local Nebraska FFA chapters, 61 speakers participated at the district competitions with 24 participating at the state competition. The state competition was held during the State FFA Convention on April 3-5 in Lincoln.

Jocelyn Hamilton from the West Holt FFA Chapter took top honors in the 2019 state competition and received a trophy, first place medal, and check for \$250 from the NCC Education Foundation. [Click here for the full results of the state competition.](#)

For the second consecutive year, the NCC Education Foundation provided additional recognition for FFA cooperative speakers. In addition to the normal ribbons and trophies, the Foundation provided a \$50 cash stipend for each of the twelve district Cooperative Speaking Contest winners. At the state contest, the Foundation provided the medals, trophies, and cash awards of \$250 for 1st place winner, \$125 for 2nd place, and \$75 for 3rd place.

We believe this contest is a wise investment in our youth. Evidence of this is in one of the thank you letters that we received from district winner Elizabeth Hodges from Johnson-Brock FFA. [Click here to read it.](#)

NCCEF Announces Scholarship Recipients

Nine students will receive scholarships from the NCC Education Foundation for the 19/20 academic year. These include seven \$2,500 scholarships at UNL, one \$1,500 scholarship at NCTA, and one \$2,500 scholarship at UNK. [Click here for the 19/20AY recipients.](#) Since its inception in the 1993/94 academic year, we have provided 198 scholarships totaling \$220,600 to deserving students majoring in agribusiness or agricultural economics.



State Ag Teachers Conference

The State Ag Teachers conference was held in Kearney on June 5th with 187 ag teachers in attendance. Ed Woeppel once again provided remarks on behalf of the Council. He discussed career opportunities within cooperatives and the value that cooperatives bring to the state of Nebraska through patronage refunds, equity redemption and support for school and community organizations.

CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

- Thu, Nov 21, 2019 - Annual Meeting, Hall of Fame, and Membership Reception - Holiday Inn, Kearney
- Fri, Nov 22, 2019 - Director/Manager Workshop - Holiday Inn, Kearney
- Tue-Wed, Jan 7-8, 2020 - Director Certification Program - Younes Center, Kearney
- Thu, Feb 6, 2020 - Cooperatives For Tomorrow Seminar - Embassy Suites, Lincoln
- Fri, Feb 7, 2020 - Graduate Director Seminar - Embassy Suites, Lincoln
- Thu, Feb 20, 2020 - Board Leadership Seminar - Embassy Suites, LaVista

CONTACT US

Nebraska Cooperative Council

134 South 13th Street, Suite 503, Lincoln, NE 68508

Phone: 402/475-6555

Rocky Weber, President - rocky@nebr.coop

Ed Woepfel, Education & Program Director - edw@nebr.coop

Glenda Gaston, Office Manager - glendag@nebr.coop

Deb Mazour, Program Coordinator - debm@nebr.coop

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