

PABC Journal



CEO MESSAGE FROM RONNIE SUMMERS

After working on PABC issues as my schedule would allow the last several months of 2016, Sandy Boozer and I are working full-time together as of the beginning of 2017. PABC is fortunate that Sandy's 16 years of experience here at PABC has allowed for essentially all crucial organizational matters to be addressed timely and appropriately over the past several months. Personally, I want to thank her for her strong effort during a trying time.

As our PABC team transitions into place, Sandy and I want to express our gratitude for the opportunity to serve you. Your staff wants to provide assurance that the agribusiness issues and needs within SC are being addressed in a proper manner utilizing collaboration with our members and close associates. As a PABC member, you are encouraged to communicate any matters worthy of PABC attention to our team.

Over the next several months, an effort will be in place to visit and/or contact our present members and new prospects for membership. During this

(cont. on pg 4, see CEO)

TAXES TOP 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Maintain Agribusiness Sales Tax Exemptions/Property Tax Assessments

A House Tax Policy Review Committee is reviewing all tax exemptions. PABC supports maintaining these important sales tax exemptions and property tax assessments for agribusiness.

Highway Infrastructure - Long-term funding for Roads/Bridges

Although a road funding bill was passed in 2016 which allows the use of \$212 million in redirected existing fees and other revenue to bond up to \$2.2 billion in one-time funding through the State Infrastructure Bank, there is still a need for a sustainable and long-term funding mechanism for an efficient highway system.

Surface Water Withdrawal

A bill H.3564- Surface Water Withdrawal Registration was introduced in 2015 but was not passed. This bill would amend the Surface Water Permitting Act of 2010 and place agriculture registrations into a permitting and public appeal situation. Legislation is expected to be introduced in 2017 that would address surface water and groundwater withdrawal regulations. PABC believes that no changes should be made until the completion of the State-wide Assessment of Water Resources and be based on sound science.

Poultry Permitting

Poultry is one of SC's top agribusiness industries. PABC supports a more efficient permitting process (by

regulatory or legislative) which allows this industry to remain competitive and expanding in SC.

Private Property Rights-Eminent Domain

Bill S. 868 (PABC supported as a private property rights issue) was passed by the General Assembly, which prohibits private unregulated companies from having eminent domain authority. A Petroleum Pipeline Study Committee was established to review the issue while a moratorium was put in place to prevent petroleum privately-owned pipeline companies from using eminent domain until the Committee makes a recommendation. PABC supports monitoring the study committee review.

(cont. on pg. 2, see Legislative)

IN MEMORIAM - CATHY BLACKBURN NOVINGER



PABC's first CEO Cathy Blackburn Novinger passed away November 27, 2016 at her home in Cheraw, SC after a heroic battle with ovarian cancer. Born April 7, 1949 in Portsmouth, Ohio, she was the daughter of Leona Collingsworth Blackburn and the late Donald Everett Blackburn.

Mrs. Novinger received her Business Administration Degree from Southeastern Business College and was a graduate of the Edison Electric Institute's Electric Utility Executive Management Program. She moved to her adopted city of Columbia, SC in 1968, where she went to work for SCANA Corporation as a file clerk and rose to Vice President at the early age of 32, retiring as Senior Vice President in 1999. Her career as a Senior Officer and Senior Public Policy Maker for SCANA included roles in economic development, communications, labor relations, governmental affairs, strategic planning, human resources and public relations.

After retiring from SCANA, she was chosen to lead PABC and under her leadership for 16 years, the Council became a unified voice for South Carolina's largest industry of agriculture and forestry.

cont. on pg 4, see Memoriam

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES (cont. from pg. 1)

Business License Fees

Under the current system, businesses pay a unique license fee based on a percentage of the gross income of that business, and cities and towns create multiple classifications for businesses, each with a different tax rate. Support a better integrated system of determining business license fees and a cap on the amount local governments can charge.

Agency Funding

Support funding for the budget requests of the SC Department of Agriculture, SC Forestry Commission and Clemson PSA.

Feral Hog Bill

Feral hogs cause extensive damage to land and crops, as well as carry disease harmful to livestock. Support public and farmer education to address the problems, as well as a bill that deals with issues of trapping and transporting feral hogs.

Dams and Reservoirs Standards

PABC supports insuring that any new dam and pond regulations are reasonable and not burdensome for landowners.

Tort Reform

CDL Employer Protection Act

The CDL Protection Act is currently in the Senate Judiciary Committee. This Act addresses limiting the liability of companies employing Commercial Driver's License holders, contracted or not contracted.

Other Tort Reform Issues – *Workers Compensation, Modify punitive damages claims in Motor Vehicle Crash Cases.*

PABC continues to support civil justice reform.

FEDERAL

Immigration (State/Federal)

For agribusiness to remain profitable and in business, we must have federal immigration reform that allows access to a stable and legal workforce.

Energy Issues

Although PABC has not taken a position on offshore drilling, we work in partnership with the Consumer Energy Alliance to support the exploration of the Atlantic region to find out what energy resources are along South Carolina's coastline. Obtaining an updated oil and gas resource study through seismic testing is critical to ensuring informed decisions related to possible future Atlantic oil and gas development.

ROAD FUNDING BILLS PROPOSED AS NEW SESSION GETS UNDERWAY

As legislators returned to the State House this month, two road funding proposals, one in each chamber, are up for consideration. The House version would increase the gas tax by two cents per year over five years, while the Senate proposal would increase it by four cents over three years.

The Senate bill was pre-filed in December and would increase the motor fuel user fee by 12 cents per gallon, phased in over three years. After full implementation or 28 cents per gallon, the fee would then be adjusted for inflation annually. The bill would also raise the vehicle sales tax from \$300 to \$600 and increase motorist-related fees and fines.

House Majority Leader Gary Simrill, who spoke to the Infrastructure Group at PABC recently, announced that he plans to file a bill similar to the transportation legislation he championed in 2015 that passed the House by a two-thirds vote of 87-20. Rep. Simrill's 2017 transportation proposal would increase the motor fuel user fee by 10 cents per gallon, phased in over five years. The bill will also contain offsetting income tax reductions.

Senator Sean Bennett also spoke to the group and reviewed the Senate version of the bill, saying that this legislation also contains offsetting tax reductions that include changes to the income tax bracket, a one percent cut for business and manufacturing property taxes; and other tax credits.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS►



Cam Crawford

South Carolina Forestry Association President & CEO **Cam Crawford** was appointed to the National Alliance of Forest Owners' Board of Directors for a two-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2017.



Lou Kennedy

The Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce has awarded **Lou Kennedy and Nephron Pharmaceuticals, Inc.** the Yellow Jasmine Award for Innovation. Mrs. Kennedy serves as CEO of Nephron Pharmaceuticals.



Mac Rhodes

Mac Rhodes, President of McLeod Lumber Company, was named as a new Board member for the Forest History Society, a non-profit educational institution located in Durham, NC.

CONGRATULATIONS TO CLEMSON TIGERS NATIONAL CHAMPIONS



Dominion Listed Among America's Best Corporate Citizens in by Forbes Magazine

Dominion has been named by *Forbes* magazine and partner Just Capital as one of the "Just 100" – the best corporate citizens in the United States in 2016.

Thomas F. Farrell II, chairman, president and chief executive officer, said: "Dominion is pleased to be recognized alongside some of the most recognizable – and best – companies in America. We have a mandate from our regulators to serve our customers by keeping the lights on and the gas flowing. But with that mandate for dependable energy comes a responsibility to make good on our promises to investors, protect the environment, treat the best employees anywhere well and give back to the communities we serve."

The company has also received national recognition in recent years for its conservation and environmental efforts, for its commitment to military veteran employees and their families and for its philanthropic programs and employee volunteerism. Dominion is one of the nation's largest producers and transporters of energy, with a portfolio of approximately 26,000 megawatts of generation, 14,400 miles of natural gas transmission, gathering and storage pipeline, and 6,500 miles of electric transmission lines. Dominion operates one of the nation's largest natural gas storage systems with 1 trillion cubic feet of storage capacity and serves more than 6 million utility and retail energy customers.

COMPASS SOUTH JOINS PABC BOARD

PABC welcomes **Travis Lee Avant and Compass South** to the Board of Directors. Mr. Avant is a principal of Compass South. Before founding Compass South Inc. and Compass South Appraisals, he had a successful career as an appraiser and has



Travis Lee Avant

extensive experience appraising rural commercial properties- including timberland, recreational property and farms. He is an Accredited Senior Appraiser with the American Appraisal Society and holds a designation as an ARM-RP- Appraisal Review Management with the American Appraisal Society. **Mr. Avant** has an undergraduate degree from the University of South Carolina and is a graduate of the F.B.I. National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. Prior to his appraisal career, he served as a law enforcement officer, including acting as an investigator for the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division and two terms as Sheriff of Colleton County, South Carolina. Mr. Avant heads the Compass South Appraisals group, which specializes in the valuation of agricultural and timberland properties.

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PABC OFFICERS

**Randy Brown, Chairman
Fred West, Secretary/Treasurer**

STAFF

**Ronald L. Summers, CEO
Sandy Boozer, Executive Assistant**

For more information on joining PABC, please
contact Ronald L. Summers, 803-926-3462.

CEO MESSAGE (cont. from pg. 1)

time frame, a sincere effort will be made to determine through our membership how your PABC team can better serve your needs both from a short term and the long term perspective. Please provide feedback in this regard, as a genuine desire to find additional ways PABC can add value exists. The desire of your PABC staff is to continue to advocate strongly for SC Agribusiness and to promote continued growth within our state's largest industry. Your ideas, suggestions and recommendations are welcomed as we collectively work toward making SC Agribusiness as strong as possible.

MEMORIAM (cont. from pg. 1)

An advocate for improving the quality of life in her community, Mrs. Novinger earned a lifetime of achievements and honors including: the University of South Carolina Honorary Doctorate Degree of Public Service, 2011 Humanitarian of the Year, 2010 Ag Advocate of the Year, 2010 West Metro Chamber Lifetime Achievement Award, 2006 Ambassador of the Year, 1999 Order of the Palmetto and Columbia Metropolitan Magazine's Five Women of the Decade and Midlands Top 25 Influential Leaders.

During her professional career, she served on numerous Boards and Commissions including: Midlands Business Leadership Group, Advocates for Agriculture, SC Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, SC Office of Rural Health Board, USC School of Medicine Partnership Board, SC State Board for Technical & Comprehensive Education (past chair), On the national level, Mrs. Novinger served on the White House Council on Rural America as chair, Southern States Energy Board Utility Advisory Council, and the National Junior Achievement Board.



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