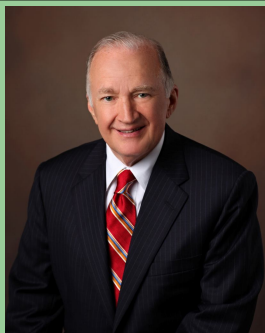


PABC Journal

A Publication of Palmetto AgriBusiness Council



JACK SHULER NAMED NEW PABC PRESIDENT

Jack Shuler, retired CEO and President of ArborOne, has been named the new President of PABC.

Shuler began his career with Farm Credit in 1974 as a loan officer trainee with the Palmetto Production Credit Association in Aiken. He has served as branch manager, Chief Credit Officer and President of various associations in South Carolina and Georgia, before joining ArborOne in Florence.

Shuler has been involved in various local, state and national agricultural and Farm Credit activities. He serves as co-chair of the Rural Resource Coalition SC, chair of the Agribusiness Economic Development Coordinating Council, a board member of the SC Chamber of Commerce. He is a former chairman and founding member of
(cont. on pg. 2)

NEW COMMERCE POSITION WILL FOCUS ON AGRIBUSINESS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Agribusiness economic development will be the focus of a new job position at the SC Department of Commerce (DOC), in partnership with the SC Department of Agriculture.

Earlier this year, PABC expanded its mission to add economic development and supported securing funding for an FTE for Commerce in partnership with the SC Department of Agriculture. As part of this initiative, PABC formed the Agribusiness Economic Development Coordinating Council.

Bob Battle, Chairman of PABC, commented that establishing this position will make a significant impact on our rural areas. "Before, there has not been a specific function in Commerce to focus on agribusiness to create jobs and raise per capita income," Battle said. "It makes sense to grow and expand our State's largest industry— agribusiness which drives the economies in our rural counties."

The new agribusiness project manager will be part of

the DOC's Global Business Development team. They will focus exclusively on agribusiness recruitment and retention.

Hugh Weathers, Commissioner of Agriculture, said that a focused agribusiness recruitment effort is vital to the 50 by 20 strategic plan to increase the economic impact of this industry to \$50 billion by 2020. "The partnership between the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Commerce is a real beginning to a coordinated agribusiness recruitment effort

using the combined resources of our agencies and private individuals and organizations," Weathers said.

According to Chairman Battle all of the agribusiness industries will benefit from this concentrated effort of recruitment and expansion. "In addition to the 50 by 20 plan, the forestry industry has developed the 20 by 15 strategic plan to increase their economic contribution to \$20 billion by 2015." he said.

(cont. on pg. 2)

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING VITAL FOR AGRIBUSINESS EXPANSION

The economic significance of insufficient funding of South Carolina's infrastructure is evident as our aging highway system continues to deteriorate, negatively impacting our state's agribusiness industry.

According to the South Carolina Department of Transportation, (SCDOT), nearly one-third of SC's primary and interstate highways are in poor or mediocre condition with approximately half of the state's secondary roads considered to be in this failing condition. One out of every five bridges in the state is considered deficient.

Investing in our infrastructure is directly tied to sustaining South Carolina's agribusiness. We must be able to transport our products to market to stay in business, as well as have prospects for expansion. Allowing our industry to remain competitive is key to protecting existing jobs and creating new employment opportunities. If Congress

(cont. on pg. 2)

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING VITAL TO AG EXPANSION

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Investing in our infrastructure is directly tied to sustaining South Carolina's agribusiness. We must be able to transport our products to market to stay in business, as well as have prospects for expansion. Allowing our industry to remain competitive is key to protecting existing jobs and creating new employment opportunities. If Congress continues to offer short-term funding for our highways, instead of reauthorizing a five-year transportation bill, we will continue to see job losses. According to the Associated General Contractors of America, companies who do highway construction have seen large job losses because long term planning has slowed. TRIP, a national highway research group, contends that \$1 billion in federal highway spending creates 28,000 jobs.

The state's deteriorating roads and bridges are also impacting business at the Port of Charleston. Many of South Carolina's agribusinesses have been utilizing the ports of Savannah and

(cont. on page 4)

2012 Agribusiness Initiative

Comprehensive Tax Reform

Overhaul the state's tax code and replace it with a tax strategy that is competitive to create long-term economic prosperity that includes maintaining agribusiness property tax assessments and sales tax exemptions:

- Unemployment Insurance loan repayments to the federal government should be offset with tax relief provided to employers.
- Reform the business license fee structure so rates are competitive and allow companies to grow, while standardization, complexity and appeals across localities should also be considered.

SC Department of Agriculture Funding

- Agribusiness Economic Development funding (recurring) - work with the SC Department of Commerce to ensure that the agribusiness industry sector is properly recruited and developed.
- Support recurring marketing and promotion funding.

SC Forestry Commission Funding

- Support funding for fire equipment and FTEs.

Prescribed Burn

Support legislation that strengthens liability protection for private landowners by adding "gross negligence" language in cases revolving smoke-related lawsuits.

Environmental Issues

Restore balance to the Pollution Control Act by correcting the Smith Land Company Ruling from the SC Supreme Court, which gives regulatory authority to DHEC over isolated wetlands and opens up the right to private action lawsuits.

Animal Welfare

Pass proactive legislation that allows farms to seek damages for property destruction (i.e. protest groups destroying property on poultry farms, etc.)

Clemson PSA

Support funding for Clemson PSA budget.

FEDERAL ISSUES

Port Expansion

Continue Port expansion, including harbor deepening projects.

Highway Funding

Weight limits on trucks cannot be increased due to poor conditions of roads and bridges.

- Get Congress to reauthorize Transportation bill to fund infrastructure.
- Explore SC's donor state status, so SC receives more of its fair share of federal gas tax revenues.

Immigration

Regulatory agencies are passing new requirements on labor that have not been legislated. Encourage Congress to take responsibility for immigration, instead of allowing regulatory agencies to pass governing rules (ex.: H2B & H2A wages increased by USDOL substantially over federal minimum wage; NLRB—union activity (lawsuit against Boeing).

WIRELESS MERGER HOLDS PROMISE FOR SC AGRIBUSINESS

The proposed AT&T and T-Mobile merger could offer substantial benefits to U.S. agribusinesses, according to state and industry leaders. The merger, now pending before the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), would expand wireless broadband coverage to an estimated 97 percent of Americans.

"While communications and agribusiness might at first seem unrelated, the reality is that access to advanced communications is absolutely vital to the success and sustainability of one of this country's, and South Carolina's, most important economic engines," PABC Chairman Bob Battle told the FCC in May.

In his letter, Chairman Battle cited the "vital" link between communications capabilities and the agribusiness industry's viability. And he urged the FCC to act without delay. "Advanced communications technology touches every aspect of agribusiness," he said.

"The proposed AT&T/T-Mobile merger will be a boon to agribusiness throughout the Palmetto State by driving rapid expansion of fourth generation broadband service." Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers is also a public proponent of the merger. He outlined his support in an article entitled "Farmers need high-speed Internet access" which was published in the *Orangeburg Times and Democrat* on August 22. "Any farmer nowadays will tell you that critical information... must be very timely, or it can impact the bottom line as much as improperly calibrating a fertilizer spreader," wrote Commissioner Weathers.

"And timely information in 2011 and beyond is not over the telephone or the local parts store counter – it's via high-speed Internet access." Commissioner Weathers added that broadband facilitates communication among farmers, suppliers and purchasers, enabling streamlined operations. He also noted the merger could fill accessibility gaps in rural South Carolina and increase the range of 4G LTE coverage.

Value to Agribusiness

AT&T estimates that with the additional spectrum, resources and economies of scale which the merger would bring, deployment of next-generation broadband would reach 55 million more Americans than under current plans, including 1.2 million South Carolinians. This expanded deployment would cover an additional one million square miles with mobile broadband in seven years.

"The proposed merger of AT&T and T-Mobile USA is the fastest, most efficient way to build out a next-generation mobile broadband network," said Pamela Lackey, President of AT&T South Carolina and a member of the Palmetto AgriBusiness Council Board. "This will be good for consumers because it will deliver a better wireless experience, while also making cutting-edge technology available across the state, from the largest cities to small towns and rural communities." In addition to aiding communications, which support day-to-day operations in agribusiness enterprises, the 4G LTE network will give farmers and agribusiness professionals access to real-time information. Such access could support better-informed decision

making, Lackey said. "South Carolinians who make their living in the forestry and agriculture industries face many unknowns, including weather disruptions and market fluctuations," she said. "Dependable broadband, like what the merged AT&T and T-Mobile will offer, is a reliable tool that can help these men and women do their jobs more successfully."

Because the combined provider's network would be able to utilize spectrum more efficiently, agribusinesses may also find it easier to use GPS applications, make data-rich uploads and downloads quickly, or simply carry on an interrupted phone conversation. Spectrum is the set of radio frequencies, allocated by the federal government, which connect so many devices in today's world, from cell phones to GPS units, baby monitors and garage door openers.

In addition, the merged company would benefit from a substantially increased number of cell sites. AT&T has said the number of towers it would gain upon completion of the merger represents approximately eight years' of new site construction. The merged carrier's expanded network would equip agribusinesses to expand their market reach, appealing to new customer bases and connecting to a larger web of farmers' markets, grocery stores, restaurants and other purchasers, which can be tracked online.

Effect on the Economy

On the larger scale, a broadband-empowered agribusiness industry has significant implications for the economy. Gross products from agribusi-

ness in the U.S. nearly reached nearly \$424 billion in 2010, and the industry provides a total economic impact of \$33.9 billion per year for the state, according to the South Carolina Department of Agriculture. It also supports nearly 200,000 jobs in the state and returns nearly 80 percent of every dollar earned back into the state's economy.

Agriculture and forestry's contributions are particularly significant in light of the nation's economic struggles. South Carolina's unemployment rate is currently 11 percent, while the national average holds steady at 9 percent.

A recent study by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) found that the \$8 billion additional investment which AT&T has said it will make nationwide to expand LTE service would create 55,000 to 96,000 new jobs, including those directly associate with the communications industry and indirect jobs with other companies. In addition, AT&T announced in August its plan to repatriate 5,000 jobs from overseas once the merger was approved.

Effect on Rural Quality of Life

Beyond direct economic impact, greater broadband accessibility offers benefits for agribusiness communities and rural states at large. Farming families often fall into the nearly one-third of rural homes that lack broadband. With the expansion offered by AT&T and T-Mobile's 4G LTE network, rural

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OUR MISSION

The mission of PABC is to define a common agenda for agribusiness and to advance that agenda aggressively in support of every component of the diverse agribusiness community. The Council shall function (through an Economic Development advisory committee) as the statewide economic development entity of South Carolina's agribusiness industry.

PABC OFFICERS

Bob Battle, President
Edgar Woods, Past President
Ronnie Summers, Vice-President
Tom McTeer, Secretary Treasurer

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Michael Brennan
President, BB&T
PABC Board of Directors

Roger Schrum
Vice President, Community Affairs
Sonoco
PABC Annual Member

Transportation (cont. from page 1)

continues to offer short-term funding for our highways, instead of reauthorizing a five-year transportation bill, we will continue to see job losses. According to the Associated General Contractors of America, companies who do highway construction have seen large job losses because long term planning has slowed. TRIP, a national highway research group, contends that \$1 billion in federal highway spending creates 28,000 jobs.

The state's deteriorating roads and bridges are also impacting business at the Port of Charleston. Many of South Carolina's agribusinesses have been utilizing the ports of Savannah and Norfolk, because weight limits in those states are

more lenient. In fact, 10 over-the-road trucks in some states can do the work of 12 trucks in SC. This is just one example of how agribusiness in SC, along with other key industries, are placed at a competitive disadvantage to other states, due to lack of funding the basic essentials such as a viable and safe infrastructure.

Agribusiness continues to be a vital industry in our rural communities, many times the only available economic asset that can provide jobs, increase revenue and improve our per capita income. By creating new export opportunities, the agribusiness industry is positioned to participate in the international marketplace and become globally

competitive- factors that are essential in increasing the economic contribution of our industry. A plan to meet the transportation needs of agribusiness is a critical first step toward this goal.

New Commerce Position

(cont. from pg. 1)
Secretary of Commerce Bobby Hitt said, "One of the things I've been focused on is bringing our economic development partners together in a more unified fashion to help recruit investment and jobs. The partnership with Agribusiness builds on those efforts, and brings resources of that agency to bear on our continuing economic development efforts."

President (cont. from pg. 1)

PABC and a member and past chair of the SC Poultry Federation.

A Clemson University graduate with a BS degree in Animal Science, Shuler is a graduate of the Graduate School of Banking at Louisiana State University and is also a graduate of the banking school at Georgia Southern University.

PABC Chairman Bob Battle commented that Shuler will be an asset to the organization in his new role as President. "Mr. Shuler's extensive financial and agribusiness background will prove beneficial to PABC as we develop strategic economic development initiatives to advance business growth and expansion of the state's collective agribusiness industries," Battle said.

A native of the Providence community in Orangeburg County, Shuler and his wife, Susan reside in Columbia and have two children, daughter Bess and son Marshall.