



PABC Journal

Volume 15, Issue 2

Spring 2017

WE HAVE MOVED!

Effective April 14, 2017 the PABC office has relocated to 1901 Main Street, Ste 1450, Columbia, SC

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ROADS BILL STALLS IN SENATE



PABC member Lou Kennedy, CEO of Nephron Pharmaceuticals, speaks at the SC Roads Coalition press conference.

A plan to fix South Carolina's roads and bridges has stalled in the Senate after passing the House. The motion to set the bill for special order did not receive the necessary two-thirds vote, and the bill will remain on hold.

The Senate bill includes a 12-cents gas tax increase to be phased in over six years, which will raise about \$800 million a

year to repair South Carolina's infrastructure.

"This bill provides a sustainable, recurring and dedicated source of transportation funding while placing the shared burden of paying for road improvements on out-of-state motorists," Bill Ross, President of SC Alliance to Fix Our Roads, said.

The Alliance which makes up part of the SC Roads Coalition, which PABC is also a member, held a press conference in February before the House vote encouraging legislators to vote yes on H.3516. Ronnie Summers, CEO of PABC, and PABC members Lou Kennedy, CEO of Nephron Pharmaceutical and Rick Todd, President of the SC Trucking Association, spoke at the press conference.

"For the agribusiness industry, which is reliant on a dependable infrastructure system to get products to market, fixing rural bridges and roads remains a high priority," Mr. Summers commented.

According to SCFOR, South Carolina's highway system is the fourth largest in the nation, and consequently, the state motor fuel user fee is the 49th lowest in the country—second only to Alaska—and has not been increased since 1987.

The proposed revenue from the motor fuel user fee would be accounted for by 30% of out-of-state motorists and cost SC drivers on average \$50—\$60 annually, in contrast to the average \$225 South Carolinians pay annually for driving on poor roads.

TRIP, a national nonprofit transportation group based in Washington, DC, also held a press conference releasing a SC Transportation Report. According to the report, driving on deficient roads costs South Carolinians a total of \$5.4 billion annually in the form of additional vehicle operating costs, congestion delays and traffic crashes.

FREEZING TEMPERATURES DEVASTATE SC PEACH FARMERS

Freezing temperatures in March devastated peach crops with the worst damage in ten years. Strawberries and blueberries were among other crops damaged during the freeze.

Members of the SC Peach Council and other industry representatives met to discuss the severity of the damage to the peach crop, which was in early bloom due to an unseasonably warm winter. Farm-

ers are hopeful to have 10 to 15 percent of their usual crop. Statewide, strawberries have experienced a 15 percent loss. Midlands and Upstate blueberry farmers are reporting significant loss, similar to that of peaches.

"Peaches are a signature SC crop, and this weather anomaly has devastated peach farmers," said Hugh Weathers, SC commissioner of Agriculture. "However, as South

Carolina farmers have shown time and again, they are resilient and with the help of allied-industry partners, they will survive this devastating blow."

The freeze will impact more than just the fruit. Peach farmers are major economic drivers in rural communities and support over 1,500 jobs statewide. SC is the largest peach producing state on the east coast, second only to California, nationally.

SC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SPOTLIGHT ON AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY

The **SC Chamber of Commerce** held an inaugural Spotlight on Agriculture and Forestry in March at the Palmetto Club in Columbia.

Participants with the Chamber included **Palmetto AgriBusiness Council**, the **Forestry Association of**

South Carolina, SC Farm Bureau and the **SC Department of Agriculture**. Sponsors of the event included **AgSouth Farm Credit**, **ArborOne Farm Credit** and **Cox Industries**.

PABC CEO Ronnie Summers commented that the well-attended

event was a great success. "There was strong support for the agricultural and forestry sectors from the attendees," he said. "We appreciate the partnership with the SC Chamber of Commerce in recognizing South Carolina's largest industry— agribusiness."

Chamber President & CEO Ted Pitts said, "We have to work together to improve the climate for agribusiness in the Palmetto State, an industry that means billions of dollars for our economy and hundreds of jobs for South Carolinians."



Dwight Stewart, President -Dwight Stewart & Associates (L) and Cam Crawford, President & CEO, Forestry Association of SC



Ronnie Summers, CEO, PABC (L) and Richard Kizer, Santee Cooper Vice President of Governmental Affairs.



Matt Marechal, Erick Marechal, Principal Agent, Nationwide; Jennifer King, ArborOne Farm Credit Marketing Specialist and Pat Calhoun, CEO, Ag-South Farm Credit.



Harry Ott, SC Farm Bureau President (L) and Charles Wingard, Vice President, WP Rawl.

Poultry and Stay Bills Address Permitting Process Obstacles

House bill H.3929 is in the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. This legislation deals specifically with poultry farms and addresses the obstacles the industry faces in the permitting process.

The SC Poultry Industry annually brings in more than **\$12 billion** to the state, representing more than a quarter of the total impact of South Carolina's agribusiness industry. There are over 800 commercial poultry farms and more than 3,350 poultry houses in

the state.

However, poultry growers are often faced with the uncertainty of the permitting process when building a new poultry house or attempting to expand their current operation. Integrators associated with these grow-out units are dependent upon these essential poultry farms to produce birds and eggs required to sustain their operations and ultimately grow their businesses.

Stay Bill

S.105, the Stay Bill has passed

the Senate and is now in the House (H.3565). This bill would limit the automatic stay in contested cases in the Administrative Law Court. Under current law, a person objecting to a permit can send a letter to the ALJ to object and stop a project. With this legislation, the automatic stay procedure would still be available, but the person objecting would have to show good faith for legitimate grounds for objecting to a project. This would ensure a timely hearing to show cause.

PABC ELECTS 2017 OFFICERS



Randy Brown, Complex Manager with Perdue in Dillon, was re-elected Chairman of the PABC Board.

Chairman Appoints New Executive Committee Members

PABC Chairman Randy Brown announced the appointment of **Kathy Heustess** and **Mikee Johnson** to the Palmetto AgriBusiness Council Executive Committee.

Ms. Heustess is the President and CEO of ArborOne Farm Credit. Mr. Johnson is the President and CEO of Cox Industries.



Kathy Heustess



Mikee Johnson



Fred West, VP of Amick Farms, was elected Vice Chairman of the PABC Board.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

SC Pet Food Solutions in Batesburg has joined PABC at the Board level. The company is a joint venture between Amick Farms and 3D Corporate solutions, which will produce high-quality protein products for premium pet food.

Fred West, VP of Amick Farms, will be their representative on the Board.

Dempsey Wood Prod-

ucts, Inc. is a new PABC Associate Member. **Parker Dempsey, President** of the company, will serve as their representative. The business, located in Orangeburg, manufactures industrial wood products, wood chips and landscaping mulch.

Carolina Peanut, LLC has joined PABC as an Associate member. **Monty Rast, President** of the company,

will be their representative. The business, which is based in Cameron, SC, is a peanut buying point.

Rhonda Campbell, Sustainability Manager with Smithfield, will serve as their new PABC representative. Mrs. Campbell has been with the company for 16 years. She is based out of Smithfield's Warsaw, North Carolina office.



Cam Crawford, President and CEO of the Forestry Association of SC was elected Secretary/Treasurer of the PABC Board.



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OFFICERS

Randy Brown, Chairman
Fred West, Vice Chairman
Cam Crawford, Sec./Treas.

STAFF

Ronnie Summers, CEO
Sandy Boozer, Exec. Assistant

We're on the web
Scagribusiness.com

CEO MESSAGE FROM RONNIE SUMMERS

Time flies when you are enjoying what you do and remain productive! The first quarter of 2017 seems like a blur as it passed so quickly. Your staff has had many matters to address, and "so far, so good" as to the process and progress. Both Sandy and I are strong believers in "teamwork" and working together we have come up with solutions to most critical issues surfacing during the quarter. Again, working as a team, we will be vetting a few issues/ideas with the board of directors over the next few months to make sure the goals and objectives of our Council are met appropriately and as expected.

The idea of physically moving surfaced early in January with the sale of the Meeting Street building, and it has now been resolved albeit with a few surprises. The biggest surprise was having the lease termination date accelerated by about 45 days due to an uncontrollable contractual issue. With the assistance of many, this matter was resolved. On April 14, PABC moved to the Bank of America Tower owned by AgFirst. Our gratitude is extended to the AgFirst leadership for helping make this happen even with the unexpected changes. In addition to our moving to another facility, the goal of visiting and/or contacting our membership is progressing as expected. One of the things your CEO most enjoys is fostering relationships, and to date, about 60 percent of the board has been directly engaged. Visits and contacts with many of our executive and associate level members have also taken place. Several excellent prospects for membership likewise have been contacted, and hopefully this effort will prove fruitful.

As to legislative issues, the Roads bill H3516, Poultry legislation H3929, and Dams bill H3218 have been three significant matters garnering close first quarter attention. Each of these legislative matters are now pending in the statehouse with additional actions required to move the efforts forward.

Thanks to our extended teammates and associates at the SCFB, Forestry Association of SC, SCDA, SC Fix our Roads, SC Poultry Federation and others for the extensive collaboration noted during the first quarter. Updates will continue through periodic emails (blog format) as details relating to our legislative priorities become more evident.

In closing, your staff desires close communication with our membership. Please keep in contact and do not hesitate to offer recommendations as to how PABC can better serve you and your organizations. *Have a tremendous Spring!*



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