



PABC Journal



FARMERS TO FOOD BANKS PROGRAM

The Farmers to Food Banks Program, sponsored by the SC Department of Agriculture's Certified SC Grown, in partnership with SC Advocates for Agriculture, has proven to be a great success!

The program:

- Distributed 279,521 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Supported 32 South Carolina famers
- Boosted nine food hubs and distributors
- Strengthened relationships with Feeding America food banks
- Donated 16, 339 free food boxes to SC families

Thanks to all the donors who made this program possible!

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SUMMER 2020

Congressional Staffers Tour South Carolina Agribusiness Operations



PABC Chairman Cam Crawford welcomes tour participants at Taylor's Nursery in Trenton, (owned by the SC Forestry Commission and operated by ArborGen) which kicked off the day's activities.



Chalmers Carr (left) and Lori Anne Carr (right), owners of Titan Farms, hosted the staffers along with Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers at their operations in Ridge Spring.



Fred West, (right), VP with Amick Farms, led the tour at Amick Farms Feed Mill in Monetta.



Cathy Quinn, (left), Director of Marketing and Communications with ArborGen, was on hand to welcome staffers and provide information at Taylor's Nursery.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION WOULD PROTECT AGAINST UNWARRANTED COVID-19 RELATED LAWSUITS

As businesses continue to open back up after closing down due to COVID-19, many are adapting to an entirely new way of conducting operations. As our state's agribusinesses strive to keep the workplaces safe for their employees and customers, they may be at risk of being targets of unwarranted COVID-19 related lawsuits.

PABC joined with the SC Chamber of Commerce and other businesses to encourage legislators to pass legislation that is temporary and targeted to give immunity to employers from lawsuits that are related to COVID-9 claims as long as the employer has followed official public health guidance. The House and Senate both adjourned this summer before debating liability reform. It is hoped that the General Assembly will take up this issue when they return in September.

The safe harbor bill would:

- Provide limited liability protection for businesses, healthcare providers, and educational institutions in any COVID-19 related lawsuit from the start of the pandemic to the end of the pandemic.
- Ensure that employers who have taken steps to keep workplaces safe and follow public health guidelines are protected from liability.

"BE PRO BE PROUD SC" TO LAUNCH THIS FALL

The Associated Industries of South Carolina Foundation (AISCF) consists of five-member organizations that are launching the Be Pro Be Proud SC mobile workshop this Fall to their common goal of: attracting more talent and directing them to skilled-trades careers.

Be Pro Be Proud SC was planned long before the pandemic increased the number of jobs available in "essential" fields like transportation, logistics, utilities, construction and diesel technology. According to the US Labor and Statistics, the number of jobs available in those sectors are projected to increase by as much as 25% in South Carolina over the next 10 years.

PABC members who belong to AISCF are: Carolinas AGC, the Forestry Association of South Carolina, and the SC Trucking Association. The SC Chamber of Commerce and the Home Builders of SC are also members of AISCF. Members of these organizations realized that students must be made aware of the high-paying, skilled-trades jobs available for which training is only a fraction of the cost of a four-year degree.

"The Forestry Association of South Carolina (FASC) is pleased to support Be Pro Be Proud SC in promoting skilled trade careers such as CDL and heavy equipment operators that are critical to the continued success of the wood and paper products industry in our state," commented Cam Crawford, CEO of FASC and also Chairman of the PABC Board.

"Now more than ever, the country is seeing the value of skilled trades," says Leslie Clark, VP of Operations, Carolinas AGC. "The mobile workshop showcases the unlimited options of skilled trade careers and Carolinas AGC is honored to be part of the rollout."

The idea for a mobile skilled-trades workshop comes from the state of Arkansas where the first Be Pro Be Proud project was launched in 2016. South Carolina will be become only the second state in the country to launch a mobile workshop and workforce development project like it.

C. Allen Ard, President & CEO of Ard Trucking Company and SC Trucking Association Board Chairman, commented, "Attracting a steady stream of qualified, entry-level, heavy-duty technicians and drivers has always been a top priority for the supply chain. While cycles come and go and the competition is great, this (Be Pro Be Proud SC) collaborative may be the best strategy for a sustainable pipeline for our sectors going forward."

A custom-designed, military-grade, double-expandable semi trailer will be loaded with hands-on simulators of a variety of skilled trades including welding, truck driving, heavy equipment operation, diesel technician, lineman and more. It will travel throughout the state to schools, fairs, career centers, conventions, government events, military re-entry programs and more.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

WP RAWL CELEBRATES 95 YEARS

Congratulations to WP Rawl on celebrating 95 years in business this year. The company recognized the milestone earlier this year by sponsoring a renovated farming exhibit at the Edventure Children's Museum in Columbia. The exhibit, known as Busy Bee Farm, gives children a hands-on experience to learn about planting, growing and harvesting vegetables.

SC State University 1890 Research & Extension Has Grand Opening for New Facility

The SC State University 1890 Research & Extension held a grand opening for their new Administration and Community facility in July. Dr. Louis Whitesides, Executive Director, led a tour of the 14,000 square foot building, which features six classrooms, each with advanced presentation technology, a leadership conference room, computer lab and administrative offices.

DOMINION ENERGY RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE IN SAFETY

As communities across the nation manage the health and economic impacts of the coronavirus, Dominion Energy has been focused like never before on meeting the needs of their customers safely and reliably. In recognition of Dominion Energy's strong track record for safety, seven of the company's gas businesses recently received the American Gas Association's highest awards for safety performance in 2019, including Dominion Energy South Carolina.

Locally, at Dominion Energy Carolina Gas (DECG), 115 employees received top honors in the Medium Transmission Category, achieving the lowest rate of employees with days away, restricted, or transferred (DART) due to injury. Additionally, DECG was recognized by the American Gas Association for having the Lowest Vehicle Accident Rate among all gas transmission companies.

Wayne Vermullen, General Manager of Dominion Energy Carolina Gas and a PABC Board member, attributes DECG's safety performance to the team culture and daily commitment to safety. "DECG employees have a personal commitment to safety as individuals, for their families, towards one another as colleagues, and to the public through continuous safe and reliable operations," said Mr. Vermullen. "I am so proud of our team for their hard work and dedication, as recognized by the American Gas Association, through not only one, but two awards for safety."

SCRA DEDICATES FUNDING FOR BUSINESSES PROVIDING COVID-19 SOLUTIONS

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the South Carolina Research Authority (SCRA) and its investment affiliate, SC Launch, Inc. have dedicated an additional \$1.5 million in funding to support businesses that are providing coronavirus-related solutions and to help their current portfolio companies continue to meet their financial goals during this time.

"Our mission of fueling South Carolina's innovation economy includes answering the call to help during this COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our current client companies were already providing or developing solutions related to COVID-19 while others quickly pivoted to address the pandemic. We are proud to be able to provide the support necessary to maximize the impact of these solutions," said Bob Quinn, Executive Director of SCRA.

In addition to investing financially, SCRA is also involved in other initiatives to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff members are serving on various taskforces and committees with health systems and economic development organizations. Other SCRA-supported companies are providing solutions to the pandemic including Modjoul, which has developed an employee health screening platform, Humimic Medical and ZVerse, which are producing protective shields, and Vikor Scientific, which is providing respiratory pathogen testing. Lastly, SCRA is sharing COVID-19 resources online and through social media.



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We're on the web
Scagribusiness.org

CEO MESSAGE FROM RONNIE SUMMERS

Folks are just in awe at 2020. Who would have anticipated all the unique and challenging activities observed thus far this year? Agribusiness and rural South Carolina have in no way been exempt from these occurrences.

As would be expected, despite the challenges, our member agribusinesses and those companies that faithfully support agriculture, forestry and rural SC continue to do what they do best "stay focused on the issues at hand and make certain that food, fiber and essential products/services remain available". For this persistence and commitment, each of us should remain grateful.

PABC and each of our member organizations are part of the "essential business structure" required to keep our state, country and world moving forward in a positive way. Your staff is so thankful we are a part of this organization and what it represents. Admittedly, PABC's approach to representing South Carolina agribusiness has changed over the past several months. We have remained engaged in most of the same high priority efforts as the past, but also PABC has been much more active in information distribution through updates and a social media presence. With the reduced ability to meet in face to face settings, Sandy and I (like most of you) have had to adapt, and we presently find ourselves using technology and communication techniques not anticipated even early in 2020. Through these actions, we remain confident we are staying abreast of most critical considerations affecting agribusiness and our associated member organizations.

Back in May our quarterly meeting was held successfully by conference call and it is intended that the August meeting will be approached in a similar manner. Your staff has now activated a "Zoom account", and this will allow for both video and audio capabilities during the upcoming meeting. For those preferring only audio, that is not a problem as you can participate in that manner. Hope remains high that we will be able to return to more traditional meeting methods sooner rather than later, but given the need to social distance and practice safe meeting practices, virtual meetings will be used over the short term until we observe a path to safer in person meetings.

Thank you for your support of SC Agribusiness! Please always remember your staff is here to support your company as it moves forward.

WELCOME NEW PABC MEMBER



Tyler Brown serves as the Program Manager for the Conservation Districts Section of the SCDNR. He will be their representative to PABC.

The South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) – Conservation Districts Section is actively involved in locally-led conservation activities relating to agriculture, forestry and natural resources within the state of South Carolina. There are forty-six local Soil and Water Conservation Districts throughout the state of South Carolina that conform to county boundaries. Each Conservation District has 5 Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners (3 are elected in the general election and 2 are appointed by the SCDNR Board) that serve each respective Conservation District for the promotion of the wise use of soil and water within South Carolina.

The primary mission of the SCDNR – Conservation Districts is to support all 46 Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the 230 Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners. The SCDNR – Conservation Districts Section employs 8 staff, with 4 providing statewide support for Conservation Districts and 4 providing technical assistance support to agricultural producers and forest landowners through USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service Farm Bill Programs in South Carolina. The SCDNR

– Conservation Districts Section is also actively involved in delivering and growing conservation education and outreach programs, such as SC Envirothon. SCDNR – Conservation Districts partners with various groups throughout the state to ensure that agriculture, forestry and the state's natural resources are available for generations to come.