



PABCJournal

PABC Welcomes New CEO

PABC is pleased to announce the appointment of Kate Maroney as their new

Chief Executive Officer. She will succeed current CEO Ronnie Summers, who is retiring at the end of August.

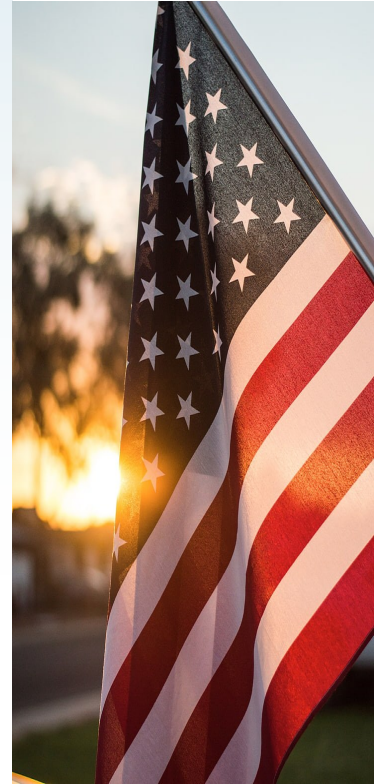


Kate served as the Director of Research for the South Carolina Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee. She recently completed her fifth legislative session working for Chairman Wes Climer and her eleventh session at the South Carolina Senate. Previously, she held positions with the Senate Judiciary and the Senate Banking and Insurance Committees.

Kate worked on Capitol Hill as a Press Secretary for three years and assisted many political campaigns

before settling in Columbia with her husband, Kevin. They have four children and two Labrador retrievers. Additionally, Kate grew up in a 4-H family and was a ten-year 4-H member.

PABC Board Chairman Bryant Sansbury commented, *"Kate is an excellent choice to succeed Ronnie and will perpetuate the success of PABC well into the future."*



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CEO MESSAGE

FROM RONNIE SUMMERS



Well as I pen this message, I am rapidly approaching the end of my tenure at PABC (about 45 more days). During the fall of 2016 when the PABC Search Committee and Board of Directors presented me this opportunity, I was thinking this would be a role that would present a valuable experience. My thinking was absolutely correct! The past eight and a half years at PABC have been an “unreal time in my life”.

After retiring from my first career at the end of 2016, I was able to continue working within the industry that I have been engaged in from the very beginning when I helped my paternal and maternal grandparents and my dad on their farms. Agribusiness, ag and forestry, is definitely in my blood and has been from the beginning. PABC allowed me to continue supporting the industry that I am truly compassionate about in an effort to improve SC ag, forestry and rural communities. Hopefully, the task has been accomplished, and I did not let that group that hired me down.

As the most recent Search Committee proceeded to find the next CEO and I was presented questions concerning PABC, I communicated the message that “if you value SC AgriBusiness and want to see the largest SC Industry thrive this is the job you should desire”. Now that the decision has been finalized and the new PABC CEO is already on board and working, I am confident Kate desires just that.

No doubt, there will be a learning curve in place as leadership transitions, but with focus, hard work, and a desire to make PABC stronger, the next CEO should be positioned to take this fine organization to the next level. No one will be pulling for Kate any stronger than Ronnie Summers. I will assure you of that as one of my true beliefs is you want to leave an organization stronger than when you entered leadership. Kate appears to share that same belief.

What have I enjoyed most as CEO of PABC? That is very easy “the relationships I have gained and retained”. I have been so blessed to work with a great teammate, board, overall membership and close agribusiness associates while representing PABC. SC AgriBusiness consists of the “very best people”, and if someone wants to argue there is an industry with better people in it than SC AgriBusiness, I am absolutely ready to debate that matter all day long.

Thanks so much PABC for the experience of leading an awesome organization. I will assure you I cherished this exceptional opportunity!!!

NEW CEO MESSAGE

FROM KATE MARONEY



I'm excited and honored to introduce myself as the incoming Chief Executive Officer of Palmetto Agribusiness Council. It's a privilege to join an organization that has long stood at the forefront of promoting sustainability and advancement of the agribusiness industry within our beautiful state.

With over 15 years in legislative policy and communications, I'm most proud of my time working at the South Carolina Senate. Most recently, I served as Research Director for the South Carolina Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, where I led research and oversight initiatives on legislation and regulations.

As a ten year 4-H member, I believe agriculture isn't merely a sector of the economy, it's the heartbeat of communities, the foundation of nourishment, and the thread connecting us to the land and to each other. What drew me to the Palmetto Agribusiness Council is its commitment to farmers and its ability to bring so many people to the table—from forestry and livestock to transportation and energy to finance and education—to address issues affecting all sectors of agribusiness. I would be remiss if I didn't mention what also drew me to PABC was Ronnie's contagious cheerfulness and ingenuity.

I've enjoyed meeting many of you, and I look forward to meeting with each one of you in the days to come. Please know I'm eager to learn from you and serve you.

Thank you for the warm welcome.



As part of PABC's continued support of agribusiness organizations, CEO Ronnie Summers and new CEO Kate Maroney presented checks for the SC Sustainable Forestry Teachers Tour, SC Wood Magic Fair and SC Project Learning Tree to Matt Schnabel, SC Forestry Commission; Bo Carson, Teachers Tour Chairman and Cam Crawford, President & CEO of the Forestry Association of SC.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY 22 & 24

**Clemson Corn &
Soybean Field Days**

Pee Dee REC/Edisto REC

Info:

mplumb@clemson.edu

AUG. 7

**PABC Annual
Meeting**

316 Senate Street
Columbia, SC

AUG. 19

**SC Advocates
for Agriculture**

Recognition Reception
Phillips Market Center
West Columbia, SC

SEPT. 9-13

**SC State University
Ag & Land-Grant
Celebration**

NOV. 11-14

**Forestry Association of
South Carolina
Annual Meeting
Hyatt Regency
Greenville, SC**



The 8th annual Congressional Staff Tour took participants to agribusiness operations in the Pee Dee. Top photo left, one of the stops was McLeod Farms in McBee, where Rachel McCormick, and Kemp and Spencer McLeod gave staffers a tour of the farm and provided an overview of their peach operations. In top photo right, Roger Schrum, Vice President of Sonoco in Hartsville, provided a welcome and tour of their facilities. Bottom photo, tour participants prepare to embark for their next tour stop. PABC, along with the SC Department of Agriculture, organized the tour. SC State University PSA was the dinner sponsor and provided a program led by Dr. Louis Whitesides, Vice President and Executive Director.

SCDA ACRE Awards Funding to Agribusiness Entrepreneurs

Thirteen entrepreneurs will share \$200,000 in funding for their agribusiness ventures through the South Carolina Department of Agriculture's Agribusiness Center for Research and Entrepreneurship (ACRE).

Finalists for ACRE's Advanced Entrepreneurship Program were scored by a panel of judges based on their business plans, a five-minute video presentation and a demonstrated history of business success. They are:

- Kindlewood Farms (Colleton County), a diversified produce farm known for tomatoes, will acquire another high tunnel, helping it better serve its Lowcountry restaurant clients.
- Veteran-owned Billue Family Farm (Aiken County) will develop its hay bale business, which serves small farms.
- Relinoca Farms, a veteran-owned Sumter County farm specializing in native landscaping plants, will build a retail and education facility at the family's farm.
- Old McCaskill's Farm, a premier agritourism farm in Sumter County, will develop a line of freeze-dried MRE-style foods grown and processed on the farm.
- Livingston Farms, a sustainable produce farm in Orangeburg County, will build a bathroom facility and procure internet access, allowing the farm to better serve clients.
- Bushels and Bags Farm of Fairfield County, a diversified produce farm serving the Midlands, will use ACRE funds to cover supply costs, including drip irrigation, that will greatly increase organic vegetable production.
- Anderson County flower farm Harvest Moon Farm and Flower will convert an existing yurt to a farm store and add a U-pick flower field to attract visitors.
- J&E Homestead, a fiber mill and farm in Lancaster County, will procure new spinning equipment to better serve fiber clients in the region.
- Roots and Shoots Nursery will expand its Charleston County nursery specializing in native landscaping plants.
- Set In Stone Sustainability Farm (Fairfield County) is developing an agriculture education program to teach food literacy and STEM to schoolchildren.
- Merry Mixon Christmas Tree Farm, a family farm in Chesterfield County, will improve its parking area and entry infrastructure.
- Carolina Bananas, a Charleston County banana grower, will extend its production and sale of cold-hardy banana plants.

Under the leadership of Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers, SCDA founded ACRE in 2018 to help identify and nurture new ideas and businesses in the Palmetto State's agribusiness sector.

"South Carolina's agribusiness entrepreneurs keep finding new ways to surprise and impress me. This year's entrepreneurs are pushing the agribusiness industry forward in so many ways, from developing new crops for the state to serving new clients, including other farms," said ACRE Executive Director Kyle Player. "I'm so glad ACRE can shine a spotlight on these agribusinesses."

In addition to funding research and connecting South Carolina agribusinesses with resources, ACRE also partners with Clemson Cooperative Extension to offer a curriculum program each fall to train and mentor beginning agricultural entrepreneurs and prepare them to seek advanced award funding. To learn more, visit acre-sc.com.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS



Melanie Shull Appointed to SC Conservation Bank Board

Congratulations to PABC member Melanie Shull for her appointment by Governor Henry McMaster to the South Carolina Conservation Bank Board. Melanie is CEO of Shull Ag, which provides conservation planning and technical services for agriculture and forestry.

SYNGENTA OPENS NEW PRODUCTION FACILITY IN ORANGEBURG

A global biosciences company has opened its high-capacity South Carolina facility. Syngenta recently celebrated the grand opening of its new biologicals production facility in Orangeburg. Joined by South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster, Syngenta leaders welcomed state officials, industry professionals and local contractors with a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

A major capital project, the state-of-the-art production facility — positioned to support production of 16,000 tons of plant biostimulants each year — is a nod to the company's deep-rooted history of leadership and long-term investment for farmers, their communities and local economies, a news release stated.

"Farming is vital to this nation and we are strongly committed to American farmers. The new biologicals facility not only underscores a commitment to our footprint and economic development in South Carolina, but also supports farmers all across this great nation," Syngenta CEO Jeff Rowe said in the release. "We remain committed to delivering new and innovative tools to benefit them, and the strong ag industry we serve and depend upon."

The Syngenta facility is located in Orangeburg County and highlights the significance of science, research and technology to the area.

"The opening of this Orangeburg facility is a win for both South Carolina and Syngenta. It reflects the strength of our workforce and the value of our partnerships. We are proud to support a company that is not only innovating in agriculture but investing in our people and our future," McMaster said.

In addition to Rowe and McMaster, speakers at the opening event included Quinn Showalter, head of North America Seedcare and Biologicals for Syngenta and Roberto D'Addario, Syngenta Biologicals plant manager.

"We are proud of our long-standing commitment to farmers, empowering their choices and supporting their freedom to operate," said Showalter. "The Orangeburg facility will continue to connect the supply chain to customers more directly — enhancing our distribution capabilities in the region and meeting growing market demand."

The facility will introduce cutting-edge technologies to produce plant biostimulants, meeting current and future demand for innovative sustainable agriculture solutions in the United States, according to the release.

"Collaboration across Syngenta teams, local contractors and suppliers, and South Carolina authorities was essential in every stage of the site's development," said D'Addario. "By accelerating progress towards a shared goal, we were able to engineer the plant to meet high levels of automation, process control and safety standards that effectively handle production volume, which is expected to nearly double from 2025 to 2028."

The Orangeburg production plant's structures are designed to withstand wind speeds over 180 m.p.h., boosting weather resilience and reducing supply chain risk, the release stated. Equipped with a zero-wastewater plant — allowing for the recovery of process water onsite — the innovative facility also helps reduce impacts on the environment.

Complementary to traditional ag inputs, biologicals are innovative technologies that are either derived from or inspired by nature, the release stated. Biologicals — which include organisms, natural molecules, plant extracts and other bio-based materials — help protect and improve crops and diversify the tools available to farmers to effectively manage production. These products also help improve farming productivity, profit potential and sustainability by protecting and improving plants' resilience to environmental factors.

Sustainable Forestry Tour For Teachers

PABC member Bo Carson, Manager of Wood Procurement with Swiss Krono, explains the use of a prism to Tiffany Nichole Hobart as part of the SC Sustainable Forestry Teachers Tour, which was held in June. Educators visited forestry operations in the state for a first hand look at the importance of the industry and how it impacts the economy, environment, and quality of life. (photo courtesy of the SC Forestry Commission)



Dominion Energy Provides Grants to South Carolina Nonprofits

More than 100 South Carolina-based nonprofits will receive grants from the Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation to support human needs, environmental stewardship, education, and community vitality.

The company this week announced the first round of its shareholder-funded grants for 2025. This year, the foundation awarded approximately \$10 million to [more than 350 nonprofits in six states](#) across the Dominion Energy footprint.

“Dominion Energy South Carolina is proud to be an integral part of the communities we are privileged to serve, and these local nonprofits provide critical programs where we live and work,” said Keller Kissam, President of Dominion Energy South Carolina.

The funding supports a variety of programs and services, including access to healthy meals for seniors, environmental projects, mental health services at community clinics and children’s education programs, among other causes.

The grants are available to organizations in areas where Dominion Energy provides electricity or natural gas or has significant business interests. These include Virginia, South Carolina, northeastern North Carolina, and parts of West Virginia, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.

SCRA Announces New Agriculture IT Member Company

The South Carolina Research Authority took on one new member company that operates in the agriculture IT realm and granted funding to four existing members. Realize Ascent LLC of Charleston is the new member. The Charleston-based information technology startup provides laboratory and in-the-field analysis solutions designed to drive clarity, quality and profitability across agriculture, food and manufacturing supply chains, according to a news release.

Realize Ascent’s services include high-accuracy 3-D scanning, parts trial management, 3-D printing and custom fixtures, and technology partnerships.

All SCRA member companies receive coaching and access to SCRA’s member benefits and startup resources, can apply for grant funding, and can be considered for investment from SCRA’s investment affiliate, SC Launch Inc.

Palmetto AgriBusiness Council

OFFICERS:

Bryant Sansbury, Chairman
Sarah Windham, Past Chair
Lori Anne Carr, Vice Chair
Travis Avant, Secretary/Treasurer

STAFF:

Ronnie Summers, CEO (retiring)
Kate Maroney, New CEO
Sandy Boozer, Executive Assistant

BEST PLACES TO WORK IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Congratulations to several of our PABC member companies that were named the 2025 Best Places to Work in South Carolina by SCBIZ News. They include Central Electric Power Cooperative, Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative and the SC Research Authority. These companies will be recognized at an event August 25 at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center.



Palmetto AgriBusiness Council

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