



Virginia Cooperative Council

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VIRGINIA COOPERATIVE COUNCIL'S OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

Spring 2016

Another “VICE”-filled weekend at Graves Mountain Lodge

By Norm Hyde

Laughter and youthful giggles, dancing in the evening and intense interpersonal action were all featured April 1-3 at the “VICE” workshop at Graves Mountain Lodge. But of course this wasn't some hormone-crazed teenage party, just the annual Virginia Institute of Cooperative Education. Thirty-one high school students and 10 student leader participants spent the weekend learning how cooperatives work, practicing team leadership skills and competing for scholarships and the chance to attend the National Institute of Cooperative Education July 23-27 at Virginia Tech.

“Once again we used the Purdue Farm Supply Business Management Game to introduce the students to cooperative business principles,” said Allen Melton, Virginia Cooperative Council executive secretary. “The students had to ‘run a business,’ complete with making decisions on personnel, credit plans, inventory, profit and loss and net worth.”

“We’ve found this game to be a very good tool for the students. It’s the same one they use at the NICE



Team-building exercises helped students get to know each other and leaders to feel out how their team would work together.

conference and year after year our winners tell us they are extremely well-prepared for the national competition,” Melton said. One student noted VICE was already helping him with a college business class. The business skills he picked up at the conference allowed him to understand the terms his Virginia Tech professor was using.

Adam Shiflett with Farm Credit of the Virginias and Eric Stogdale, agriculture education instructor with Fort Defiance High School, presented the simulation game. Dr. Kim Morgan, Assistant Professor and Kohl Junior Faculty Fellow with the Virginia Tech Dept. of Agriculture and Applied Economics shared with the students how to work with people with different characteristics than themselves.

The next generation of farm leadership was well represented at the conference. Virginia state FFA officers Chandler Vaughan, Mary Ott, Cailin Orgen, Emily Moyers, and John-Robert Helsley all attended.

“It was particularly gratifying to see all the FFA



Del. Bobby Orrock gave a presentation that always gets positive responses from students.

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officers,” Melton said. “Cooperatives are an important part of our farm economy as well as all of our society, so learning how they work will give them a big boost in their own careers, in or out of agriculture.”

This year’s VICE winners who earned a scholarship to attend the National Institute of Cooperative Education are Anna Foley, Theresa Seibel, Kaleb Marshall, Austin Zicafoose, Brooke Fletcher, and Ryan Sensabaugh.

Alternates for the NICE conference are Mason Sowers, John-Robert Hensley, Simon Liggett, Seth Campbell, Davis Fenster, and Kelly Orgen. Since additional scholarship money is available, this year the alternates will be invited to attend NICE as well.



Virginia Delegates to the National Institute of Cooperative Education (L to R) Ryan Sensabaugh, Brooke Fletcher, Austin Zicafoose, Kaleb Marshall, Theresa Seibel and Anna Foley



Alternates for the National Institute of Cooperative Education (L to R) Alternates are Kelly Orgen, Davis Fenster, Seth Campbell, Simon Liggett, John-Robert Hensley and Mason Sowers



It was a non-stop weekend of VICE-filled activity for the students

New officers elected, VCC council expands scholarship offerings

By Mary Howell, manager of member and public relations for the VA/MD/DE Association of Electric Cooperatives

Perched on a hillside in Madison County, Graves Mountain Lodge again provided a scenic setting for the Virginia Cooperative Council's Annual Meeting March 2. Membership in this educational organization is open to all types of cooperative businesses.

Following hot apple cider and breakfast treats by a toasty fire, board members and guests enjoyed a keynote address by Northern Neck Electric Cooperative President & CEO Greg White about the history and ever-evolving services provided by Virginia's electric distribution cooperatives and Old Dominion Electric Cooperative, power supplier to many of them. Next, Professor Kim Morgan of Virginia Tech's Kohl Centre shared recent activities to support co-op education.

Based on a sound audit report and a successful year of managing the Virginia Foundation of Cooperatives, outgoing VCC President Jim Belfield of Colonial Farm Credit announced that the Foundation will award eight



President Jim Belfield and Exec. Secretary Allen Melton gave the financial report.

Scroggs/ Luther Raper scholarships of \$2,000 each at this year's Virginia Tech Ag Econ/NAMA banquet to worthy students.

The Foundation also provided three scholarships totaling \$4,500 to top participants at the Virginia Institute for Cooperative Education (VICE), held April 1-3 at Graves Mountain Lodge. The event was open to high school students ages 16-19.

"VICE participants spent an action-packed weekend learning about the cooperative business model and the key roles co-ops play in today's society," Belfield said. While the 2016 VICE conference was held in April, if you know of a high-school student age 16 to 18 who would benefit from the annual workshop and competition in 2017 contact VCC Executive Secretary Allen Melton at (804) 281-1211.

VCC is also seeking nominations for outstanding co-op leaders to recognize as part of their Co-op Month celebration in October, with applications due Sept. 1. You can read more about that event at www.virginia.coop.

New officers for the VCC board are President Matt Lohr of Farm Credit of the Virginias, Vice President J.T. Anderson of Farm Credit of the Virginias, and Secretary Eric Paulson of the Virginia State Dairymen's Association.



From left, the 2016-2017 VCC Board: Allen Melton of Southern States Cooperative; Carl Privett of the MD & VA Milk Producers Association, Karen Swecker of MidAtlantic Farm Credit, Allen Taylor of Southern States Cooperative, Jim Belfield of Colonial Farm Credit, Jimmy Graves of Graves Mountain Lodge, Justin Cruise of Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, Richard Johnstone of the VMD Association of Electric Cooperatives, David Lipscomb of Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative and Eric Holter of Augusta Cooperative.

Additional Scholarships announced at annual VCC meeting



Northern Neck Electric Cooperative President & CEO Greg White talked about the history of electricity distribution cooperatives at the annual VCC meeting March 2. (see story on pg. 3)



Dr. Kim Morgan with Virginia Tech's Kohl Centre discussed on-going ag-econ research projects at the annual VCC meeting March 2. (see story on pg. 3)