

CO-OP CONNECTIONS



Virginia
Cooperative Council

Newsletter of the Virginia Cooperative Council - "Achieving together what one cannot do alone"

Fall 2022

Delegate Orrock, Seth Diggs earn Council awards

A Spotsylvania County legislator and Southern States sales manager each received awards presented at the Virginia Cooperative Council's Co-op Month celebration, held Sept. 29 at The Place in Glen Allen, Va.

Delegate Robert Orrock, a retired agricultural educator who's represented Virginia's 54th District for more than 33 years, earned the Cooperative Career Leadership Award for his 25 years of contributions to the Virginia Institute on Cooperative Education (VICE).

"Since 1996, Bobby has consistently earned top ratings from our high school attendees," said VCC President Brad Brown. Executive Secretary Mary Howell added, "His dinnertime address is always a highlight of VICE. We hope he'll continue sharing his insights for years to come!"

Young Cooperator Leadership Award recipient Seth Diggs serves as Southern States finance manager for North Carolina, South Carolina & Virginia. Growing up in Mathews County, he was active in 4-H. After Graduating from Virginia Tech in 2015 with an Agribusiness degree, he

Continued on pg. 4



Brad Brown presented Delegate Orrock with the Council's highest award during Co-op Month.

Meet our 2022 Scroggs-Raper Scholarship recipients

Generous donations by Luther Raper and Claude Scroggs to the Virginia Foundation of Cooperation established the Scroggs-Raper Scholarships, awarded since 2013 to students at Virginia's land grant universities and colleges studying topics related to agriculture. This year's eight recipients include five enrolled in Virginia Tech's Department of Agriculture & Applied Economics, one who is attending Virginia State University and two Virginia students who will be completing their agriculture studies at Oklahoma State University.

Jaiden Cain grew up near Harrington, Delaware and is a junior at Virginia Tech. A member of winning FFA teams in agricultural communications (2018) and marketing (2019), she belongs to VT's Dairy Club and volunteers at events that educate others about agriculture and dairy farming.

"Cooperatives keep the balance between producers and consumer, allowing both to benefit from the exchange," she writes, adding, "My goal is to help alter the public's negative perception of agriculture and for more people to understand its key role in everyday life." After graduation, she plans to help on her family's grain farm while pursuing a career in agricultural marketing and communications.



Jaiden Cain

Newlin Humphrey is starting her senior year at Oklahoma State University, majoring in agricultural leadership after transferring from New River Community College in Dublin, Va. As a state FFA officer, she helped with the 2019 Virginia

Continued on pg. 2

Mark your calendars!

- March 2, 2023:
Annual Meeting at Rockingham Co-op in Dayton, followed by a tour of Friendly City Food Cooperative
- March 24-26, 2023:
Virginia Institute on Cooperative Education at Graves Mountain Lodge; applications due Feb. 15, 2023

Scroggs-Raper scholarship recipients, continued

Institute on Cooperative Education, also serving as Youth Development Leader for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southwest Virginia. She writes, "Through my work with the National FFA, I've had incredible opportunities to make to make connections with agricultural industry professionals across the U.S. I plan to complete my undergraduate degree in December and pursue a Master of Science in Agricultural Leadership." Passionate about youth development, public policy and international relations, Newlin hopes to move back to Virginia to start her career.



Newlin Humphrey



Kyle Jacobs

A senior at Virginia State University, agriculture major **Kyle Jacobs** is president of VSU's Entrepreneurship Club and has worked two years as a fraud intake specialist at Capital One.

"About 9% of the world's population - 690 million people - go to bed on an empty stomach each night, and that number has been rising," he writes, stating his goal is working to end world hunger. "Industrialized farming seems like a step in the right direction, but with emphasis on quantity over quality and profit over value, we've seen it disproportionately affect non-developed countries." As a team member in the Thurgood Marshall "The Pitch" App Development competition, Kyle's team developed a plan for an in-home hydroponics system to combat health issues in lower-income communities. He hopes to one day work for a venture capital fund that invests in global development.

Cameron "Moose" Lee is a Virginia Tech junior double majoring in agribusiness and real estate. He works for Virginia Tech's Beef Research Center and serves as a board member and lead herd and forage manager for Meadow Knolls Farm, Inc. in Staunton. Active in Bethel Church ministries, Moose also participates in investment teams for endowment funds and personal portfolios. After graduation, he says he will continue working for Meadow Knolls Corporation and some aspect of the real estate industry. He explains, "My main goal is to assist others and be a light for Christ, bringing financial resources to those who have less."



Cameron Lee



Matt Myers

A 2017 VICE participant and 2019 VICE facilitator, **Matt Myers** is completing his final year of college at Oklahoma State, majoring in agribusiness and pre-law with a minor in philosophy. He is a teaching assistant for two professors and serves as a junior analyst for Community Investing by Students (COINS).

"I have become interested in corporate law as well as estate law," he writes, explaining that he hopes to attend the University of Virginia's Law School. "As a self-supporting student since 2019, support from the Scroggs/Raper Scholarship has freed me to focus more of my time on academics and working."

Claire Seibel's list of achievements is longer than many amass throughout their careers! This past FFA & VICE student leader currently serves in the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets. She plans to graduate summa cum laude in 2023, having maintained a perfect 4.0 grade point average with a majoring in mathematics and minor in applied agricultural economics.

"I plan to work in government or higher education to craft trade and agricultural economic policy," she writes, adding "I believe in the future of agriculture and our nation, and will dedicate my career towards a safer, more secure, more sustainable, brighter future."



Isaac Turpin

A sophomore at Virginia Tech studying international trade & development, **Isaac Turpin** volunteered in Haiti and Greece as part of the Roanoke Rescue Mission. The Floyd County native works up to 30 hours a week as a server, and plans to pursue a career in corporate or government agriculture or international business relations.

"I've experienced the crucial role cooperatives can play in rural, undeveloped areas, providing education, resources and create unity amongst the community," he explains.



Claire Seibel

Continued on pg. 3

VICE participants: where are they now?

This column profiles past attendees of the Virginia Institute for Cooperative Education (VICE), and Scroggs-Raper Scholarship recipients. Please contact VCC at mary.howell@sscoop.com if you'd like to suggest someone to feature in an upcoming issue!



Christy Kerr, 2003 VICE participant.

Christy Huffman Kerr Ag Educator, Fort Defiance High School

What did participating in VICE mean to you? I wanted to learn more about the cooperative business model and how it benefits communities. Coming from a place where cooperatives are a huge part of agricultural businesses, I knew this was important to understand for me to be an integral part of the local agriculture industry.

What is a favorite memory? One of my favorite memories was winning the "Who's Minding The Store" Simulation! I was our store manager for our team, and we did a fantastic job of looking at the reports and determining what to order more of — and we won! This shaped my belief that cooperatives are a grassroots business model that benefits customers by making them members so that they can help make their organization even better.

How did participating in VICE influence your career? VICE opened my eyes to the importance of business in any industry, including agriculture. I decided to pursue an Agricultural and Applied Economics major and am so very glad I did! My major gave me a business foundation that is applicable to agriculture, marketing, production agriculture, and so much more. Now I pass on my knowledge to my students through agriculture classes and one day I hope to be able to offer dual enrollment college courses teaching agribusiness!

Executive Secretary's message: Virginia cooperatives evolve & rebrand



My office space is generously provided by Southern States Cooperative at its headquarters in Richmond. As such, I was invited to take part in a survey to select the logo that Southern States will be using to celebrate its 100th Anniversary in 2023. Be on the lookout for their new logo to make its debut soon!



After expanding to include six locations from Winchester to Charlottesville, Orange-Madison Cooperative recently announced their new name of EverGRO and website www.evergrofs.com.

Our summer newsletter shared the merger of MidAtlantic and AgChoice to form Horizon Farm Credit, with the four-leaf logo both had used now repurposed in their new logo.



Augusta Cooperative has a fresh new logo that Council President Brad Brown shared at our last meeting.

If your co-op has changes in the works, please let us know! It's as simple as messaging via our Facebook page or email mary.howell@sscoop.com.

- Mary Howell

Scroggs-Raper, continued



Ashley Upshaw

Ashley Upshaw is majoring in agribusiness at Virginia Tech. As a college sophomore, this equestrian competes regularly and remains active in FFA. "My whole family is involved with agriculture, and I want to pursue a career similar to my mother's as an agricultural and commercial lender with a local farm credit." She adds, "Cooperatives are making a profound economic on communities across the Commonwealth."

All donations to the Virginia Foundation of Cooperation to help fund Scroggs-Raper Scholarships are tax-deductible.

Co-op Month, continued

he began his career at Colonial Farm Credit (CFC). VCC board member Rachel Shupe, who worked with Diggs at CFC, noted Seth's commitment to training and coaching new employees. "He always goes the extra mile, whether for clients or his co-workers," she said.

The Young Cooperator Award carries a \$500 stipend. "Seth elected to donate his award, with half going to the Colonial Agricultural Education Foundation and half to the Virginia FFA Foundation," Howell explained.

More than 40 representatives of cooperatives and agribusiness from across the Commonwealth attended the Co-op Month breakfast. Virginia Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry Matt Lohr, a longtime friend of the Council, served as keynote speaker.

Secretary Lohr shared impressive agricultural production statistics, with Virginia exporting a record \$4 billion in agricultural products in 2021, and detailed the administration's new controlled environment agriculture initiative.

He closed with a timeless message of the difference each of us can make in the lives of others through small acts of service and kindness in our daily lives.



Council leaders Rachel Shupe and Brad Brown with Seth Diggs, who earned the Council's Young Cooperator Award.

The Council is already making plans to hold next year's Co-op Month celebration October 4-5, 2023 at the Olde Dominion Agricultural Complex near Chatham, Va.

"We'll offer members an opportunity to host booths at our Co-op Expo geared towards high school students, with the Thursday breakfast featuring a great keynote speaker," said Co-op Month Committee Chair Dustin

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