

Policy, awards, election highlight convention

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Wayne Humphreys returned for a second successful motivational talk. Maryland Secretary of Agriculture Hagner Mister brought greetings from the state agency and a local economic development panel brought discussion to conclude the morning.

The afternoon session included an address from Dr. Thomas Fretz, Dean and Director of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Maryland in College Park. Lively debate on state resolutions completed the session.

The spotlight was on numerous award winners during the awards banquet Tuesday evening. Washington County Farm Bureau captured the Silver Bowl as the outstanding county Farm Bureau in 2001. County President Priscilla Harsh of Smithsburg accepted the honor on behalf of her members. To be eligible for the title, county Farm Bureaus must have achieved excellence in nine program areas, including membership, public affairs, national affairs, discussion group, service to members, information, organization and administration, Farm Bureau Women and Young Farmers.

Nine other county Farm Bureaus reaching the nine-star level were Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Calvert, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, St. Mary's and Somerset.

Eight-star plaques were given to leaders from Caroline and Kent counties and seven stars were won by Montgomery and Talbot counties. In the six-star category were Carroll, Dorchester, Howard and Prince George's counties and four stars were achieved by Harford, Queen Anne's and Worcester counties.

The top Farm Bureau Women's group was awarded to Somerset County and Betty Long accepted the honor. Among the group's goals were to have more teachers attend Ag in the Classroom sessions; encourage more women to become directors; recruit young women; attend more local, state and national events to raise issue awareness; develop county committee to work on parades, fair booth and local projects; and increase public awareness of Food Check-Out Day.

The women met quarterly and prior to other scheduled events. The years work included attending the state convention and organizing public appearances, including several parades, for the farm queen and her prince and princess.

Members also attended the Women's Day in Annapolis and worked with local media to promote Food Check-Out Day.

The group also operates the concession stand at the Young Farmers auction. The funds raised will go toward bringing the mobile agriculture unit to Somerset County. At the county's annual meeting, the women provided the programs, decorations, gifts, door prizes, appetizers as well as set up and clean up. They also assisted with a special meeting to work on meeting membership goals.

The Anne Arundel County Young Farmers were named the outstanding Young Farmer group in the state. Several members were involved in leadership development during the past year as they attended the state Young Farmer meetings and events, supported the farm queen in Young Farmer activities and scheduled farmers to work at the State Fair Dairy Bar. The group also sponsored its annual auction that raises funds to provide agricultural scholarships for college students.

The group also provided Christmas dinners to the needy, participated in Young Farmer Day in Annapolis, the Young Farmer Retreat, Young Farmer Picnic and assisted with the State Fair Dairy Bar. They also assisted with Gibson's Safemark open house, attended meetings and picnics and assisted with membership renewals and signed five new members.

Five young Farm Bureau members were awarded \$1,000 scholarships from the organization.

The winners were Joseph D. Bowles Jr., son of Joseph Sr. and Helen Bowles of Leonardtown in St. Mary's County, majoring in biology at St. Mary's College of Maryland; Barbara Schenning, daughter of John and Ann Schenning of Bel Air in Harford County, majoring in animal science at Cornell University; Marcia Kay Nowell, daughter of Daniel and Brenda Nowell of Thurmont in Frederick County, majoring in psychology at Frederick Community College; Michael Patrick Gouge, son of Richard and Cheryl Gouge of Keymar in Frederick County, majoring in biochemistry and molecular biology at Penn State University; and Edward Robinson, son of Franklin and Margaret Robinson of Marydel in Caroline County, majoring in general agriculture at Delaware State University.

The top three Safemark dealers were

also recognized at the banquet. Gibson's Texaco of Lothian in Anne Arundel County was the top-selling dealer for 2001 and Classic Tire Service of Queen Anne's County was the second best. Third place went to Kinnamon's Service of Greensboro in Caroline County.

Jane Smith of Frederick County, organizer of the national-winning Farm Safety 4 Just Kids Chapter, was presented the Distinguished Service to Agriculture award from the organization and Mark Ahalt of Frederick County received the state's Excellence in Crop Advising Award.

Retiring state board members recognized were Herbert Wayson of Anne Arundel County, Roger Schmick of Caroline County, A. Harold Walter of Charles County, Brooks Hamilton of Garrett County, Charles Feaga of Howard County, Ralph Harcum of Wicomico County, Carolyn Lechluder of the Farm Bureau Women and Matt DeBaugh of the Young Farmers.

Newly elected state board members are Robert Chase of Anne Arundel County, George Bradley of Caroline County, Pat Wathen of Charles County, Delmar Yoder of Garrett County, Philip Jones of Howard County, William Kenney of Wicomico County, Karen Callahan of the Farm Bureau Women and Brent Kenney of the Young Farmers.

The final day of the convention brought excitement as the American Farm Bureau Federation Vice President Steve Appel came to the podium. After delivering a positive message on the national initiatives, he opened the floor for questions and comments. Pat Langenfelder gave a wrap-up of activities by the Maryland Friends of Agriculture Fund, which was followed by an address by Robert Worcester, president of the Maryland Business for Responsive Government. The morning wrapped up with the finalization of state resolutions and full adoption of both the state and national resolutions.

Maryland Farm Bureau President Stephen Weber was re-elected to his leadership post and delegates voted for Earl "Buddy" Hance of Port Republic to take over the first vice president role. Rounding out the leadership team is Harry Moreland III of Denton and Michael Wilcom of Monrovia.

Non-Lethal Task Force on Wildlife Close to Final Report

by Jessica Fritz
MFB Assistant Director
of Government Relations

On January 8, 2002, Maryland's Non-Lethal Task Force on Wildlife met for the last time. This task force was created in late 2000 in response to concerns raised by Maryland citizens and state legislators to recommend non-lethal methods of resolving human/wildlife conflicts with a number of species, including deer, resident Canada geese, beaver and others.

The task force was composed of 16 members, including the Department of Natural Resources, the Maryland House of Delegates, the Maryland Senate, the Fund for Animals, the Humane Society of the United States, the American Bird Conservancy, the Maryland Sportsmen's Association, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Wildlife Advisory Commission, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the University of Maryland's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, a state veterinarian, and four members of the general public.

The purpose of the Non-Lethal Task Force was manifold. The task force was to study scientific documentation concerning the effectiveness of wildlife management techniques used by wildlife agencies in the United States and Canada as well as examine the causes of conflicts between the human population and the wildlife population in Maryland. In addition, the task force was to assess current wildlife management policies in Maryland, formulate recommendations regarding the use of non-lethal wildlife management techniques, and formulate recommendations for funding and implementing current and future non-lethal wildlife management initiatives.

Maryland Farm Bureau will provide an update on the findings of the task force when they are available. If you have any questions, call Jessica Fritz at (410) 269-0656.