



## Northwest Region Newsletter Jan. 2011 Edition

### *News/Events*

#### **LSU AgCenter helps Oil City school chosen to represent state in forest exchange box**

Oil City Environmental Magnet School will represent Louisiana at the U.S. Capitol Rotunda in a display of forest exchange boxes recognizing the International Year of Forests. It is filled with publications from the LSU AgCenter.

At a ceremony on Jan. 21, Arbor Day, students learned about forests and filled the box. Ricky Kilpatrick, LSU AgCenter area forester, took part in the program by singing songs about trees. They included "Thank a Tree" and "Let Us Sing to the Trees."

"Oil City will represent the whole state," Kilpatrick said. "You should be proud of yourself. Your school is a model all over this country for environmental education."

The school was chosen by Louisiana's Project Learning Tree (PLT) coordinator.

Oil City holds an annual Arbor Day ceremony, normally planting a tree, but postponing that to next week due to inclement weather, said science teacher Cindy Kilpatrick.

"Your box is going to say, 'I'm from Oil City, La.,' with 49 other boxes," she told the students. "Go home and tell your parents how fortunate we are that we are the school represented."

Seventh graders added material to the box that included the following LSU AgCenter publications: Native Tree Growing Guide, Leaf Key to Common Trees in Louisiana, Louisiana's Primary Forest Products and Louisiana Trees.

Forest exchange boxes from Florida, Hawaii, Indiana, Montana, New Hampshire and New Mexico have already been displayed at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations as representative samples.

The United Nations has received photos from each state's box and photos of students conducting PLT activities for inclusion in a slide show that was played during a reception on Feb. 2 at the Lincoln Center for the United Nations delegates, U.S administration officials and others in conjunction with the United Nations Forum on Forests meeting and launch of 2011 International Year of Forests.

In March all boxes will be on display for the upcoming PLT operating committee meeting in Washington, D.C., and on Capitol Hill for a Congressional briefing on the state of America's forests and the role of environmental education in helping inform the next generation about the value of America's forests.

Requests have come in to display the boxes at other forestry and environmental education events and conferences throughout the country this coming year.

Cindy Kilpatrick's educational program included a slide show on forests. "Take care of the forest," she said. "Use the forest carefully. Think about the forest for your children."

She showed a map of world forests and Kisatchie National Forest in Louisiana. "Forests cover 31 percent of the land area on Earth," Kilpatrick said.

She said forests are home to animals and plant life and that the industry provides jobs, food and wood products.

"Wood products are the No. 1 agricultural product in Louisiana," she said. "When you pass a forest, think how lucky you are that we don't live in a desert."

Kilpatrick discussed the state tree, the bald cypress. "Our tree grows in water," she said. "People are surprised seeing trees grow in water."

Kilpatrick said she was going to add leaves, branches, wood, acorns and a pine cone to the box at the end of the presentation.

Oil City has been featured in Newsweek for its eco-education program. The school has a nature trail, fruit orchard, greenhouse and bird-watching station.

2011 is designated International Year of Forests by the United Nations to promote broader understanding of the importance of forests and to bolster global efforts to promote sustainable forest management and conservation.

**Lincoln Health Foundation awards LSU AgCenter \$25,000**

The Lincoln Health Foundation has awarded the LSU AgCenter \$25,000 to continue the Smart Bodies program and develop three school gardens.

The grant will also encourage youth and parents to start an exercise routine together.

Lincoln Parish School Board will manage the grant while the LSU AgCenter and volunteers will implement the submitted plan to the Lincoln Health Foundation.

Smart Bodies was implemented at Ruston Elementary and Cypress Springs last year. Youth learned the four Organ Wise Guys rule; eat a low-fat, high fiber diet, drink plenty of water and exercise through fun characters, the Organ Wise Guys. Teachers boost their students' cognitive skills by engaging them in 10 minutes of exercise with an academic application. Students were challenged to eat fruits and vegetables at lunch. Student walked through the Body Walk where they participated in hands-on experiences. The Body Walk is a 35- by 45-foot exhibit; students walk in stations: brain, mouth, esophagus, intestine, stomach, heart, bone, muscle, skin and they travel out a cut in the body.

This year three new schools are executing the Smart Bodies program, Alma J. Brown, Hico and Simsboro. The Lincoln Health Foundation has provided educational resources for teachers to implement the program.

With the help of the Lincoln Health Foundation, school gardens will become a reality for Hico, Ruston Elementary and Cypress Springs. The LSU AgCenter is teaming up with the Master Gardeners to teach youth the basic gardening skill and nutrition lessons. Youth will learn where their food comes from, learn about agriculture, responsibilities in caring for living organisms, how to work as a team, healthy food alternatives, and how the garden can tie into literature, math, science and art. Students will learn the nutritional benefits of vegetables and will be getting physical activity working the garden.

The Lincoln Health Foundation goal is to increase the health of Lincoln Parish residents. The Hico walking program is a program that will do just that: get parents and their students moving. Teams will receive a pedometer to help keep up with their steps and help them become aware of the benefits of an exercise program. This program is to encourage students, family members, teachers and the community to participate in a walking program and to reduce their calorie intake by 100 calories a day. All who sign up will receive information on nutrition through an e-newsletter. There will be friendly competition between classrooms to encourage participants to complete the 30-week program. Each month participants will turn in their six-week tracking form; they will record their steps and reduction of calories.

The LSU AgCenter goal is synonymous with the Lincoln Health Foundation, to reduce childhood obesity. The LSU AgCenter is promoting good health and exercise by involving families and youth in hands-on programs.

**Kaplan man named 2010 Outstanding Louisiana Master Farmer**

Christian Richard, who farms 2,000 acres of rice, soybean and crawfish in Kaplan, was named 2010 Outstanding Louisiana Master Farmer and nine newly certified Master Farmers were recognized.

The Louisiana Master Farmer Program is an environmental education program designed to help farmers and ranchers identify and adopt best management practices.

The luncheon took place at the 65th annual meeting of the Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts in Bossier City.

Richard worked as an intern at the LSU AgCenter Rice Research Station as in 2000. He has a degree in agribusiness from the University of Louisiana in Lafayette.

He is a 2005 USA Rice Leadership Development class graduate and was in the LSU Ag Leadership class. Other activities include serving as president of the Louisiana Rice Growers, Vermilion Soil and Water Conservation board member, Vermilion Farm Bureau Federation past executive committee, Indian Bayou Volunteer Fire Department past assistant chief, Vermilion Rotary Club Farmer of the Year and Vermilion Woodmen of the World Environmental Award.

Richard has developed the ability to communicate in French, Spanish and sign language.

Newly certified Master Farmers are Shannon Daboval, Jeff Davis; Charles Fondren and Jamie Howington, Madison; Gene Foster and Jeff Foster, Lincoln; Algy Irvin and Mary Irvin, Lafourche; Norwyn Johnson, Vernon; and Phillip Sneed Jr., Sabine.

The Louisiana Master Farmer Program, which got its start in 2001 as a way for farmers to learn up-to-date, research-based conservation practices in a comprehensive manner. It is a partnership of the LSU AgCenter, Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation, Louisiana Cattlemen's Association, the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry.

All together, 124 farmers have earned Master Farmer status, which means they have not only learned the latest in conservation practices, but they are implementing them on their farms, said Ernest Girouard of the LSU AgCenter and coordinator of the Master Farmer program.

To become a Master Farmer, participants must successfully complete the program's three phases. The first involves classroom instruction on such topics as pesticides, nutrient management, hypoxia and nonpoint-source pollution. The second phase includes tours and field days at model farms. These farms have already implemented some of the practices that Master Farmers are to duplicate.

In the third phase, the farmer must put together a conservation plan and timetable for implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs). The farmer does this in cooperation with the NRCS in Louisiana.

All phases of the program are voluntary, and the farmer determines the length of time to complete each phase, Girouard said.

### **LSU AgCenter offering 15th annual Greenhouse Tomato Seminar**

The public can learn the latest about the greenhouse tomato industry at the LSU AgCenter Red River Research Station's 15th annual Greenhouse Tomato Seminar on Friday, Feb. 25 in Bossier City.

Dr. H.Y. Hanna, an LSU AgCenter researcher at the station, is the presenter.

There is no registration fee for the event, which will last from 1 to 5 p.m.

Among the topics are heating and cooling the greenhouse, varieties for good eating and good yield, producing a good transplant for greenhouse and field production, research tips that produce results, disinfecting the root media before planting and producing a grafted and non-grafted tomato plant from the same seedling.

A tour of the station's greenhouses will be conducted and a special training session on grafting tomato plants will be held.

To register, call (318) 741-7430.

### **Red River Parish holds volunteer lunch**



The Red River Parish LSU AgCenter Cooperative Extension Service recently honored volunteers for their support and help during the Louisiana State Fair.

The attendees were treated to a meal at the Crossroads Connection Cafe. Volunteers who attended were Joyce Moseley, Susan Wilson, Margaret Jones, Cathy Bell, Nancy Nettles, Angela Wilson, Elaine Moore, Tina Salley and Mary Salley.

Bottom row, left to right: Joyce Moseley, Susan Wilson, Margaret Jones, Cathy Bell

Back row, left to right: Nancy Nettles, Angela Wilson, Elaine Moore, Tina Salley and Mary Salley.

### **Natchitoches Parish has Arbor Day event**



The Natchitoches Parish LSU AgCenter in conjunction with the City of Natchitoches held a tree planting for Arbor Day.

Natchitoches has been a Tree City for ten years with the Arbor Day Foundation.

The Green Ambassadors, a service learning team established in 2010 under the direction of 4-H agent Gwen Fontenot, participated in the weeklong celebration as part of their project.

Funded through a \$1,000 grant with the City of Natchitoches and Keep Louisiana Beautiful, the mission of the youth ambassador program is to develop and sponsor projects that will enhance the appearance and quality of the environment in Natchitoches Parish, while teaching youth to be responsible stewards of the environment.

Their first project was the development of the Clean Campus Contest, which encouraged private and public school systems and young people to become involved in helping keep the city and surrounding areas clean. Students in each participating school volunteered their time to pick up litter, plant flowers and greenery and beautify their individual campuses. Participating schools received support and educational supplies. The Green Ambassadors designed and implemented the logistics of the project while keeping with the underlying goal of creating a meaningful environmental change.

The Green Ambassadors awarded their first Clean Campus Award to St. Mary's in the fall. St. Mary's was instrumental in creating a school garden and underwent a \$1.5 million dollar school renovation for much needed repairs. Laura Strahan, 4-H club leader, teacher and parent, spearheaded the clean campus portfolio for the school which earned a \$100 cash award towards future environmental projects.

### **Lincoln Parish news**

Fourteen weeks of parenting classes have been conducted in Jackson and Lincoln parishes.

Parents attended two Children in the Middle classes, 10 Positive Parenting series and three Active Parenting classes, a three-week class for parents of children ages 1 to 4. Parents learned to identify their parenting style, how to encourage their children, different discipline tools, choices and consequences, building the bond with their child, caring for themselves, teaching respect and responsibility. Children in the Middle parents learned

what children reported as being the four reasons they feel they are placed in the middle of their parents' divorce: 1) put downs of the other parent, 2) money matters, 3) children ask to act as a spy, and 4) carrying messages to their parents.

Smart Bodies has been going on in Lincoln and Jackson parishes this school year. Two schools in Jackson Parish are participating in Smart Bodies, Weston and Quitman high schools. Weston High School has 15 teachers and Quitman has 20 teachers implementing Wisercise three times a week. Students said they are enjoying the program. Weston has participated in the Body Walk experience.

In Lincoln Parish three new schools are participating in Smart Bodies, Alma J. Brown, Simsboro High School and Hico. Several teachers at Ruston High School and Cypress Springs School are repeating Smart Bodies this year.

The Master Gardeners and Rafash Brew have volunteered to help three schools start school gardens. Cypress Springs, Ruston Elementary and Hico will be learning about gardening this year. The three schools will be planting winter vegetables.

