



June 2012



From the President

Drenda Williams

Recently on Memorial Day, we honored those men and women who sacrificed their lives while serving our country and I want to thank them and their loved ones for their commitment to our freedom as fellow Americans. I can only hope that each and every one of us will enjoy the approaching summer months by spending time with family and friends.

Our membership continues to grow. If you haven't joined The Organization yet, I encourage you to take advantage of membership benefits. Our mentoring program will launch soon, Executive Board Election nominations are under way, and our 2012 Outreach and Ag Education Expo is coming up in late fall.

The NOPBNRCSE continues to establish lasting partnerships. We are finalizing our Memorandum of Understanding with NRCS and partnering with Minority Landowner Magazine and the USDA/NRCS Outreach and Advocacy Division. The Farm Turn-Around Team was kicked off this month and as the lead of the Technical Assistance Team, The Organization will be hosting the electronic landowner request form on its website. The Team is excited about the assistance it can provide to landowners looking to improve their operation. For more information on the Farm Turn-Around Team, visit www.thenopbnrcse.org/NCFTT.

We are in the final stages of securing a location for the 2012 Outreach and Ag Education Expo. Once this information is announced, we will provide information on housing accommodations. This Expo will include landowner workshops, a town hall meeting, and professional development opportunities for attendees. There will be an annual business meeting held for paid members.

I encourage everyone to read the MN Chapter article which showcases the great things its members are doing. I would like other chapters to submit articles as well. This not only recognizes your chapter's successes, but inspires chapters that are looking for new ideas and activities to support of The Organization's mission.

Please note we have secured our permanent web address. Our new website is www.TheNOPBNRCSE.org; however www.nopbnrcse.memberlodge.org can still be used as well. The Organization continues to advance technologically and would like to thank the Communications Committee for its hard work in keeping the website updated and distributing communication to members.

Again, I have an open door policy in regards to Organization activities as well as member questions and/or concerns. I would like to thank all of the individuals that have reached out to me. Feel free to contact me anytime.

Drenda Williams

President NOPBNRCSE

Executive Board– Call for Nominations

The Nominating Committee of The Organization invites your input for the nomination of its national officers to be installed in December 2012 as stated in Article VIII Section 2: Election Process of the Constitution. Nominations must be postmarked no later than **July 31, 2012**.

Membership dues must be current to participate in The Organization's election process.



For complete details and the nomination form, please visit www.thenopnrcse.org/elections. You must be logged in to the 'Members Only' section to access the nomination form.

"Ain't No Stopping us Now-- We're on the Move!"

Through determined effort, persistence, and membership commitment, the Minnesota Chapter continues to do big things for and on behalf of The Organization. The winning combination that consistently works for them is member teamwork and volunteerism.

Consistent with The Organization, they also share the following priorities: (a) member professionalism, (b) education and training, (c) mentoring, and (d) preparing future generations of agricultural and natural resources conservation professionals. The 2011 Chapter Accomplishments report reflects that they believe the future is NOW and no time can be wasted in accelerating and helping present and potential NRCS and Organization members prepare for it.

A few of the MN Chapter's 2011 and present highlighted accomplishments include:

1. Awarding Ag & Natural Resources scholarships totaling \$10,000 this year and over \$36,000 over the last seven years to students at Prairie View A&M University. This is a partnership effort between the 1890 USDA Liaison and Payne family in Texas on behalf of Greg Payne. Payne passed away suddenly in 2003; he was a MN NRCS employee and Lifetime member of The Organization.
2. Held an annual NRCS summer student and Chapter members networking picnic. Plans are underway to have a 2012 networking picnic for Wisconsin and Minnesota NRCS summer students.
3. Prepared the 2012 Black History Month Quiz distributed to all Organization members.
4. Taking the lead and currently preparing a state-by-state and national report for The Organization and NRCS documenting the historical "first" permanent full-time Black male and female employees to hold key SCS/ NRCS technical and leadership positions.
5. Working closely with Wisconsin MN Chapter members to establish a joint MN-WI Chapter of The Organization.

These are only a few of the many activities completed by the MN chapter. Up there in North Country they are proud to tell you their Chapter mantra continues to be **"ain't no stopping us now-- we're on the move"**.



MN's annual student and chapter members' summer picnic.

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

The NOPBNRCSE would like to encourage every member to participate in the 2012 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). As members of The Organization, this is our chance to communicate how we feel about cultural transformation and diversity as an employee. We want to ensure the Secretary supports our employee Organizations and their initiatives because we still have a role in the USDA's cultural transformation effort.

The survey was sent from [Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey-AG \[evag@opm.gov\]](mailto:evag@opm.gov) and was entitled "2012 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey" in the subject line.

Please complete the survey today. Deadline is June 11, 2012.

2012 Farmer of the Year Nomination

Deadline is June 8

Minority Landowner Magazine will publish its 4th Annual "Farmers of the Year" issue this summer. This issue will feature minority "Farmers of the Year" as formally or informally selected by universities, community-based organizations, USDA agencies, and state agriculture and forestry agencies.

Please share this notice with those who would like to submit a farmer, rancher or forest landowner for this recognition. Your company or organization is invited to select a minority Farmer of the Year and share his or her story with others across the country through this special issue.

The 2010 Farmers of the Year cover was a Florida farmer. In 2011 the cover featured urban agriculture in St. Louis. Will your farmer be on our cover for 2012?

The deadline is approaching soon. All submissions must be received no later than **June 8, 2012**. For more information, contact Victor L. Harris of Minority Landowner Magazine at 919-215-1632 or ccpublishing@earthlink.net.

Employee Spotlight



Willie R. Rawls, Lifetime Member of The Organization is recognized for contributing 42 years of service with SCS & NRCS. Rawls currently serves as a Financial Management Specialist in the Management Services Division (Fiscal Operations) at NHQ.

Mr. Willie R. Rawls—we congratulate you!!

NOPBNRCSE Regional Teleconferences Rescheduled

The NOPBNRCSE Regional teleconferences will be rescheduled for some time in the fall. Please contact your Regional Representative with agenda items.



Farmers Fight-Stand Up Video

Recently on the Texas A&M University campus, students in various agricultural organizations stood up for agriculture. The *Farmers Fight Advocacy Day* is a new advocacy movement dedicated to promoting agricultural awareness to the students who attend Texas A&M University. It has hit social media and is now reaching the masses. This movement promotes a positive, educated understanding of American agriculture with a goal of increasing people's understanding of how important ag is to our country, economy, and way of life.

Click on the image to view the Farmers Fight – Stand Up Video 



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Questions or comments? E-mail the Communications Chair at: news.nopbnrcse@gmail.com.
