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The TVMA Board met on February 17, 2009 at the TxDot Headquarters in Austin from 9-12. At that meeting numerous changes and improvements were discussed to better serve those involved in Vegetation Management and related fields. First and foremost the board will seek membership input on projects and plans for 2009. The board discussed the need for providing regional recertification training for vegetation management employees. Surveys will be sent to members and potential members asking for input about CEU training geared toward the Vegetation Management Industry in different regions of the state.

TVMA is now a member of Texas Ag Council, a group that meets weekly during the legislative session. Texas Ag Council serves as a forum for organizations whose purpose is to promote discussion of political, legislative and regulatory issues. The intent is to give TVMA even more voice in legislation that affects the industry and makes TVMA more available as a source of information to state agencies and legislators.

Of course, a major portion of the business involved the 2009 Annual Conference at Emerald Beach on October 5-7, 2009 in Corpus Christi. Speakers have to be contacted early to maintain the quality of presenters. Please let Rob Brooks or John Mason know if you have any suggestions for topics or presenters. Outside demonstrations, classes, training, testing, and of course, food and fun will be on the agenda again. Become a sponsor or supporter and take advantage of the networking possibilities. Mark your calendars now for early October.

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Presidential Update

Howdy! I'd like to take a few moments to bring you up to speed on what's going on in your organization and why it's more important than ever to be a member and participate in what's going on.

It's been an interesting few weeks already as we began 2009. Everyone is getting geared up for spray season; getting contracts lined up, crews trained, and product, equipment and crews in place to take advantage of every opportunity to get as much done as possible in the time that we have.

I'm proud to let you know that your leadership isn't wasting any time either. While we all work in the same industry as you and are doing a lot of the same things you are, we have been working diligently to get the 2009 conference together, host local training meetings and setting the groundwork to grow our organization and keep us informed and up to date on the things that affect our industry and you our members.

As you are well aware we have a new administration and majority party in our country and the potential is there for more stringent environmental regulations which could make things more difficult for our industry. Therefore in an effort to keep us on the forefront of things that might affect our industry and put us in a better position to be a resource to our legislators that vote on these things, we have made the decision to apply to be a member of the Ag Council with Donnie Dippel of CHB as our representative. Donnie meets with the council every Wednesday the legislature is in session to review pending legislation, keep us informed about what's going on, and to provide input to lawmakers on our behalf. I am proud to announce that our application was accepted, as this will provide more recognition to our organization and help to keep your voices heard by our lawmakers on things that affect our industry.

John is working diligently on the 09 conference and we would gladly accept any input you have regarding speakers or topics that you would like to hear about at the conference. Remember this is your conference and if there's something you would like then let us know.

Additionally, I would like to once again welcome any members to attend any of our board meetings. In this issue there should be a listing of dates and locations for each one being held this year. If you're curious about what goes on, or want to speak out on something come by and sit a spell.

While I realize many in our industry have already served, there are quite a few well qualified folks out there sitting on the sidelines who would make great board members. Consider serving. We welcome new blood and new ideas and we will only be a viable organization long-term if YOU participate. So think about it and give one of us a call or come by a board meeting to check out what it's all about. It really doesn't take that much time, and it has been very gratifying to me knowing that I'm helping out our industry.

Our strength is measured in numbers, so we have started a campaign to contact old members as well as to recruit new ones. Our most valuable asset in this campaign is you, so encourage a colleague or customer to join TVMA.

Finally, I'd like to close by reminding you if you're a member that has college age kids have them apply for the Craig Johnson Family TVMA Leadership award. I know there are several of you out there, (I won't name anyone) but in these economic times and with the rising cost of tuition I'm glad our organization can give one more thing back to its members.

I hope this note finds everyone doing well, and I wish you a safe and prosperous spray season.

Sincerely,
Rob

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Kay Dippel, Editor
CHB Consulting, Inc.
145 West Travis
La Grange, TX 78945
979-968-5602
FAX 979-968-5624

2009 CRAIG JOHNSON FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP (CJFS)

The TVMA Board of Directors recently established a scholarship to recognize and support an outstanding student (child or spouse) of a member or a member of the Texas Vegetation Management Association. This scholarship was named the Craig Johnson Family Scholarship in recognition of long term TVMA member Craig Johnson and all the support that he and his family have provided to the TVMA.

The **CJFS** is a \$2,000.00 scholarship that is intended to promote education and leadership within our organization. But, unlike other scholarship opportunities offered by the TVMA, this scholarship does **not** require the applicant's field of study be related to vegetation management. This scholarship is designed to benefit an eligible member of TVMA or that member's eligible student child or spouse regardless of his or her major field of study.

To be considered for this scholarship, an applicant must be entering his or her freshman year at a college or university or already be an undergraduate student at a college or university. Applicants who have previously earned a B.A., B.S., or equivalent undergraduate degree are **not** eligible for this award. The applicant must be enrolled as an undergraduate in the September immediately following the semester in which the scholarship was awarded.

The deadline for submitting your application is April 1, 2009. If you are interested in applying for the CJFS, please go to the TVMA web site at www.tvma.net and download the application form and related information. If you want to apply and you do not have access to the internet, please call Stan Jones at (713) 924-6929 and I will fax a copy to you. Thank you for your interest and I look forward to receiving you application.

Remember, TVMA also awards three other \$2000.00 scholarships. Again go online or contact Stan Jones for applications. Take advantage of these generous programs.

TDA Visits with the TVMA Board

Jimmy Bush, Assistant Commissioner for Pesticide Programs with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), attended the February board meeting to answer TVMA's licensing questions. In the last legislative session the Structural Pest Control Board (SPCB) was moved under the jurisdiction of TDA. The present law requires some right-of-way applicators to be licensed with SPCB and some with TDA. The TVMA Board asked Assistant Commissioner Bush to consider moving all right-of-way applicators under the jurisdiction of TDA. This would clear up the confusion of when one needs to be licensed with SPCB or TDA. It would also help having recertification courses approved by one agency. Assistant Commissioner Bush said that at the present time TDA is working on its computer programs to bring SPCB applicators into TDA's licensing data bases. He could make no promises but was favorable to the TVMA's recommendation that right-of-way applicators be under the TDA umbrella. The TVMA Board felt this change would be positive for right-of-way applicators

39th Annual Vegetation Management Conference

The 2-day Vegetation Management Conference was another huge success. Texas Vegetation Management Association (TVMA) and the Harris County Office of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service teamed up again to provide a 5-hour pesticide applicator recertification training to over 285 participants on January 21 and 22, 2009 in Baytown, Texas and Houston, Texas. This is the largest number for Harris County since this program began.

Clientele questionnaires indicated that the quality of speakers and educational value of the program were exceptionally high. Topics and speakers at the program are as follows:

Drift Minimization – Dr. Mark Matocha
Feral Hogs of Texas – Dr. Jim Cathey
Herbicide Mode of Action – Dr. Paul Baumann
Risk Assessment of Pesticides – Dr. Michael Hare
Termite Infestation of Trees – Dr. Paul Nester

Texas AgriLife Extension Service will continue to provide quality programming and educational opportunities for the citizens of Harris County, including the annual Vegetation Management Conference.

We are proud to be partnered with the Texas Vegetation Management Association and look forward to many years of working together.

Consider Service with TVMA

In the June issue of the *Clip* we will publish the board positions that will need to be filled at the Convention in October. Consider an even more active participation in the Texas Vegetation Management Association by offering to fill one of those positions and bring new ideas to the table. Several committee positions also need to be filled and help is welcome from the membership by all of the committee chairs. Your input is what will continue to make TVMA stronger and help it continue to serve its membership. Just contact President Rob Brooks, Rick Bennett, the Nominating Committee Chair, or any board member and let them know your willingness to serve.

Also contemplate a nominee for TVMA's highest award, the Lifetime Achievement Award. This award recognizes those individuals who have made significant contributions to the vegetation management industry in Texas and will be present during the annual conference. Go online at TVMA.net to read biographies of past winners. Again contact any board member with your nominations. This is a fantastic way to honor outstanding members.

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Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee

The Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee (TISCC) was established to help prevent, control, and manage invasive species infestations in the state. A variety of invasive species negatively impact water availability, water quality, outdoor recreation opportunities, agricultural crops, ecosystem health, and human health resources. An invasive species is defined as a species that is non-native to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

The TISCC membership is made up of eight state agencies that are currently engaged in and have interdependent interest in coordinating the flow of information, avoiding duplication of effort, and increasing public awareness regarding the economic and environmental impacts of invasive species. The TISCC is chaired by Dr. Earl Chilton with Texas Parks and Wildlife. The membership consists of: Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas AgriLife Extension, Texas Soil and Water Conservation Board, Texas Forest Service, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Department of Transportation, and Texas Water Developmental Board.

There is also an advisory group made up of experts and representatives from non-governmental groups, private industry, and federal, state, tribal and local entities that will provide advice, information, written materials and oral presentation to TISCC. This group is chaired by Donnie Dippel and composed of the following groups: United States Department of Agriculture, Texas BASS Federation, BASF, Houston Advanced Research Center, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Nature Conservancy of Texas, Northeast Texas Municipal Water District, Sabine River Authority-Texas, San Jacinto River Authority, SePro Corporation, Sierra Club, Texas Ag Industries Association, Texas Aquatic Plant Management Society, Texas Farm Bureau, Texas Forestry Association, Texas Nursery and Landscape Association, Texas Tech University, and Texas Wildlife Association.

At the present time TISCC is working on establishing one of the member agencies to create a position to handle funding issues and distribution of the funds. They are also working on finding funding for control projects, establishing a web site to get information on invasive species to the public.

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The board will meet again on May 5th in Bryan and August 4th in Corpus Christi. At the May 5th meeting the board plans to do a strategic planning session to establish future goals for TVMA. Members are welcome to attend or may contact any board member with concerns or compliments. Go to TVMA.net or see the board members listed in this publication for contact information.

Save
~ Oct. 5 - 7, 2009 ~
TVMA Annual Meeting
Holiday Inn Emerald Beach
Corpus Christi

TVMA 2008-2009 Leadership

Officers

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President

Rob Brooks
Dow AgroSciences
P O Box 968
China, TX 77613
409-752-7267
jrbrooks@dow.com

Vice President

John Mason
Tx. Dept. of Transportation
125 E 11th. St.
Austin, TX 78701
512-416-3081
jmason@dot.state.tx.us

Secretary

Scott Dunham
Becker-Underwood
1977 County Rd. 116
Bedias, TX 77831
979-255-3980
scott.dunham@beckerunderwood.com

Treasurer

Myron Rabalais
DuPont
21839 Blossombrook Lane
Katy, TX 77450
281-828-1109
myron.j.rabalais@usa.dupont.com

Immediate Past President

Rick Bennett
Helena Chemical Co.
4211 Clochester Ct.
College Station, TX 77845
979-268-5206
bennetr@helenachemical.com

Board of Directors

Tee Cotten
Progressive Solutions LLC
805 Oak Creek Court
Ennis, TX 75119
903-262-5827
teecotten@aol.com

Don Fields
AEP
1519 W. Calton Rd.
Laredo, TX 78041
956-721-3178
dfields@aep.com

Doug Foster
TX.-NM. Power Company
P O Box 433
Clifton, TX 76634
254-292-2393
douglas.foster@tnmp.com

Thomas Crosby
Coastal Spray Co.
P O Box 3227
Pasadena, TX 77501
713-473-1191
thomascrosby@coastal spray.com

Kevin Patton
AEP
P O Box 2121
Corpus Christi, TX 79401
361-881-5394
kbpatt@aep.com

Larry Mauldin
Red River Specialties
P O Box 226
Harper, TX 78631
830-864-5363
larry.mauldin@rrsi.com

Ken Draper
Wright Tree Service
7925 Thompson Pkwy
Abilene, TX 79606
325-669-8902
kdraper@wrighttree.com

Steve Prather
Tx. Dept. of Transportation
150 E. Riverside Dr.
Austin, TX 78704
512-416-3197
sprather@dot.state.tx.us

Layne Fields
Chemical Weed Control
107 Prairie Lane
Weatherford, TX 76087
214-505-3147
chemweed1@yahoo.com

Standing Committee Chairs

Historical	Bruce Moore
Parliamentarian	TXU Electric
Ron Held	Delivery
Programs	611 E. Tyler
John Mason	Athens, TX 75751
	903-677-6213
	bmore@txued.com

Internal Audit
Ron Held
Houston Spraying &
Supply
1327 Judiway
Houston, TX 77067
713-868-0598

Membership	Scott Dunham
Scholarship	Stan Jones
	Red River Specialties
	713-924-6929

Training	Kevin Patton
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Special Committee Chairs

Advisory	Rick Bennett
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Budget	Myron Rabalais
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Nomination	Rick Bennett
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Legislative	CHB Consulting, Inc.
	145 W. Travis
	La Grange, TX 78945

Web Master	Paul Northcutt
	Northcutt Communications
	6402 Betty Cook Dr.
	Austin, TX 78723
	512-933-9930
	pnorth@sbcglobal.net



TVMA
145 West Travis
La Grange, TX 78945

October 5 - 7
TVMA Annual Conference
Holiday Inn Emerald Beach
Corpus Christi

August 4
TVMA Board Meeting
Holiday Inn Emerald Beach
Corpus Christi

May 5
TVMA Board Meeting
Bryan Extension Office

CALENDAR OF EVENTS