



# TACC NEWSLETTER

## TEXAS AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE COUNCIL

1210 San Antonio Street; Suite 101  
Austin, Texas 78701  
512-450-0555 - Phone  
512-450-0655 - Fax  
[www.texas.coop](http://www.texas.coop)

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Lubbock, Texas

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Ropes Farmers Co-op Gin  
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### STAFF

**Tommy Engelke**

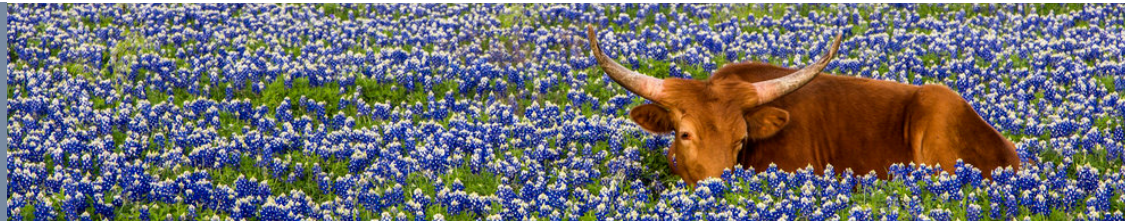
Executive Vice President

**Christy Lewis**

Director of Administration and  
Member Services

**Jessica Minter**

Administration and  
Communications Assistant



## TACC Annual Joint Cooperative Meeting --- Cowboy Style!



Cooperative managers, board of directors, employees, associate members & family will soon be taking on Frisco for the March 13-15, 2022 TACC Joint Cooperative Meeting at the Omni Frisco Hotel—on the campus of the Dallas Cowboys headquarters and practice facility! Several incredible keynote speakers are set to present, and breakout sessions have expanded this year. Our first keynote is **Rob Fox**, director of CoBank's Knowledge Exchange division, who uses his 25+ years of experience in a wide array of agriculture-related roles to lead market and industry research in the agricultural and infrastructure sectors affecting the rural economy. **Drew Pearson**, or perhaps better known as "Mr. Clutch," is a former Dallas Cowboy and 1970's NFL Hall of Famer whose life has made him a strong businessman, rich with personal experience and wise advice. He'll be sharing with the group what he has learned about leadership & teamwork.

Four breakout sessions will be held on two days, led by five excellent presenters. Executive Vice President of the Nebraska Co-op Council, **Rocky Weber**, is joining to present their association's "Legacy Project," looking at demographic changes in cooperatives across the country. **Greg Taylor**, co-op CPA and tax expert with D. Williams & Company, has a special presentation on audit cases and updates to tax rules. The second day of breakouts will feature **Todd Miller**, CEO of Head Honchos, an H-2A and H-4 Visa processor, and **Kelley Green**, Director of Technical Services for the Texas Cotton Ginners Association, who will be updating the group on OSHA procedures and navigating H-2A work visa programs. Co-op attorney, **Gary McLaren**, will be presenting the "Legal News Hour," giving updates on happenings in the co-op legal world of importance to members.

This is a meeting for the whole family—complete with a "Murder Mystery Texas" spouses' program, golf tournament, and the final TACC silent auction! We encourage you to register and attend this exciting annual meeting. Details can be found on our website at [www.texas.coop/meetings/tacc-jcm/](http://www.texas.coop/meetings/tacc-jcm/). If you have any questions, or require assistance, please contact our office at (512) 450-0555 or [jessica@texas.coop](mailto:jessica@texas.coop).

## Intern Recruitment Transitions to Interview Process

Over the past several months, TACC's **Tommy Engelke** and **Jessica Minter** have driven to ag universities across Texas, presenting the co-op business model and recruiting candidates for the 2022 Summer Co-op Internship Program. There are now six state universities the council works with: Angelo State University, Tarleton State University, Texas A&M University, Texas Tech University, West Texas A&M University, and our newest opportunity, Texas A&M University-Kingsville! This internship program has been a fantastic way for students to gain experience & knowledge in the agricultural cooperative industry, and for co-ops to vet these interns as potential employees.

So far, 20 applicants, from a variety of backgrounds, colleges and majors, have submitted their materials and will be interviewed in the coming weeks. While the pandemic may have brought about some unpleasant changes, the accessibility of an increased reliance on technology has afforded TACC the opportunity to move interviews to the Zoom video conferencing platform—allowing co-op general managers & employees, university leaders and TACC to interview from a central place even though hundreds of miles separate the group. If you have an interest in assisting in the interview process, no matter your rank in the co-op or if the co-op needs an intern or not, please let our office know! Like any good relationship, the road has to run both ways, and putting effort into recruiting and interviewing students leads to excellent co-op interns. We look forward to officially meeting the students and finding both parties a perfect match for the summer!





## FFA Farm Boy Rises to Stardom in the Political Arena ---- He Did It His Way

Often times we stare in awe at celebrities and political figures as they speak and we ponder, how did they get to such greatness and all the mystery behind attaining such a global reach and impact on people lives. At 6:45 a.m., Monday, March 14, 2022 you will have the opportunity to witness such a gentleman. He's just a simple man, leading a Christian life, in a small country town in Northeast Texas, and later attaining three degrees in education from then East Texas State University in Commerce. He furthered that simple life by becoming an ag teacher, like so many of us do, but others witnessed that certain spark of exceptional leadership to where he was later drafted to become superintendent of schools, all the while having a small cattle operation near Clarksville, Texas.

People who know **Gary VanDeaver** know him to be a care free man, leading a simple life, staying out of the way of others, becoming active in his local church, and later again being drafted to greater things ---- like serving on the county Farm Bureau Board of Directors. People seem to gravitate to those type of exceptional personalities! VanDeaver will speak at the Joint Cooperative Meeting TACC – PAC Breakfast on March 14th. No, he is not the Governor. No, he is not a movie star. No, he is not a showman. He is Gary VanDeaver, respected public servant, AND a very good one at that! A week ago, he was elected to his fifth two-year term as a Republican State Representative representing four counties in far Northeast Texas.



Come hear him speak about his recent election, how to get involved the right way, education, legislative, and rural trends on the horizon, and how to develop your own career path to advocacy. A rare find when it comes to politicians!

## Meeting Recap --- Fulfilling Training Obligations & Establishing a Strategic Culture

### Farm Store Summit

TACC's 2022 year kicked off in a momentous way with the Farm Store Summit held January 13-14 in Fredericksburg, Texas. In the midst of labor shortages and population shifts, fantastic ideas and strategies were discussed in the roundtable session to combat issues facing cooperative farm supply stores. **Tom Boland**, CEO of Skagit Farmers Supply, Burlington, Washington, explained to the group how his co-op used expansion to reduce risk and drive profits. Highlighting the importance of training employees in the farm store, **Dr. Clark Springfield**, an economist and professor at Texas A&M University, used research data to show an increased focus on training can result in a 40% higher return to shareholders and a 44% return on investment. CEO of BIG Consulting, **Kent Schultz**, demonstrated the benefits of using technology to track and analyze data for real world decisions. Finishing the meeting, **Bruce Vernon**, CEO of The Equity, a co-op in Effingham, Illinois, told the story of how he spearheaded a group of nine co-ops in consolidating their purchasing power into one unit.

### Cooperative Board Chairmen's Conference

This was the inaugural year for a combined Cooperative Board Chairmen's Conference, joining board members from across the state in the central location of Fredericksburg on January 19-21, 2022. As the agricultural landscape continues to shift and demand more compliance from producers and agribusiness alike, it's important the co-op board chairman receives training not only to keep them fresh & their head in the game, but also to arm them with the tools to have an attitude & mindset of thinking strategically and be able to incorporate this culture into the boardroom. CPA and co-op tax wizard, **Greg Taylor**, kicked off the meeting with a dive into TACC's most recent Co-op Compensation Study and explained how co-op boards can most effectively utilize and apply the information. Coming to explain TACC's newest management tool – Predictive Indexing – and the multitude of ways it can be used was Texas A&M University professor and Roy B. Davis Co-op Chair, **Dr. John Park**, and TACC's own **Tommy Engelke** and **Christy Lewis**. The co-op lawyer for the state of Texas, **Gary McLaren**, made an appearance to give legal updates that co-op board chairmen should be aware of. Dr. Park and Tommy Engelke then teamed up to discuss various training methods, and presented a particular opportunity that's expanding access to online director training. Last but not least, **Dr. Thomas Field**, a director and professor at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, hit on the main message of the meeting, how to instill a strategic culture into the co-op boardroom.

### Texas Academy in Cooperative Excellence (A.C.E.)

Another new twist this year came in the form of a new partnership with Capital Farm Credit to recruit members and share knowledge at the January 28-30, 2022 Texas Academy in Cooperative Excellence (A.C.E.), held in Fredericksburg and sponsored by the regional cotton cooperatives. With around 30 couples, there were over 60 attendees at this meeting representing numerous co-ops! Each year this meeting focuses on connecting the dots between young producer couples and the co-op—displaying the services and goods co-ops offer to aid producers, and the benefits of being involved in the co-op. Manager of Leader Development at Land O' Lakes, **Paul Hansen**, explained ways producers can navigate change and expand their thinking & business even during tough times. **Dr. John Park**, Roy B. Davis Chair at Texas A&M University, TACC CEO, **Tommy Engelke**, and co-op lawyer, **Gary McLaren**, explained the history & business model of cooperatives to the group.

Co-op CPA, **Greg Taylor**, offered the group a look at co-ops from a tax point of view, before joining McLaren, Dr. Park, **Clint Cryer**, Senior VP of lending & Relationship Management at Capital Farm Credit, and **Chris Martinez**, a past participant turned General Manager at La Feria Co-op Gin & Supply, for a panel answering FAQs and audience questions about the co-op business. Co-op board presidents, **John Malazzo**, of Capital Farm Credit, and **Brian Teeple**, of Floydada Co-op Gins, told their stories of how they found, got involved in, and eventually took leadership positions in the co-op.





## Meeting Recap (Continued)

### Texas Academy in Cooperative Excellence (A.C.E.) (Continued)

Regional cotton cooperative CEOs, **Robert Lacy**, PYCO Industries, **Robert Swize**, Gulf Compress, and **Eric Wanjura**, Farmers Cooperative Compress, joined CoBank Relationship Manager, **Chris Looney**, for a group presentation explaining their role in the industry and answering attendee's questions. McLaren finished the day with his signature presentation on wills & testaments.

The last day had two energizing speakers to fire-up attendees and send them home with practical improvement and involvement ideas. **Kevin Brinkley**, CEO of Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, gave a look at the immediate and long-term effects of marketing & demographic changes on the industry. Hansen came back to complete the meeting with an excellent presentation and collaborative session on being advocates for the agriculture and cooperative industries.

### Director Development Program



Back to TACC's regularly scheduled program... the 2022 Director Development Program hosted 35 co-op directors to the annual training event, held in Lubbock, Texas on February 15th & by Zoom on the 17th. The meeting kicked off with CPA and co-op tax specialist, **Greg Taylor**, giving a look at taxes & audit trends and changes. **Leslie Hilton**, Vice President of Board Governance & Development at FCCS in Greenwood Village, Colorado, led a 2-hour workshop on staying strategic and incorporating those methods into the culture of the co-op board. Texas A&M University professor and Roy B. David Co-op Chair, **Dr. John Park**, and TACC Executive Vice President, **Tommy Engelke**, displayed TACC's new Predictive Indexing tool and how it can be used to build board cohesion. Lubbock regional cotton cooperative CEOs, **Kevin Brinkley** with Plains Cotton Cooperative Association, **Robert Lacy** with PYCO Industries, Inc., and **Eric Wanjura** at Farmers Cooperative Compress, convened for a panel to discuss challenges that co-ops currently or will face in business. Dr. Park, who is working to build a database of online training modules for Texas co-ops, employees and the board, presented his ideas on bringing a fresh taste to board education. Ending the conference with a bang was co-op lawyer extraordinaire, **Gary McLaren**, who updated the group on legal happenings in the co-op world of interest to co-op directors.

### Texas Chapter, National Society of Accountants for Cooperatives



TACC recently assisted in another one of those statewide conferences designed for co-op office managers, bookkeepers and CPAs. The latest one was held at the Hyatt Regency Lost Pines near Bastrop and attracted about 30 participants. The Council also made a presentation on the ramifications of the forthcoming March 1 Statewide Primary Election as it applies to rural Texas. Traditionally, TACC posts notices for this group and coordinates registration for the two meetings they hold annually --- once in South Texas and once in Lubbock. The meeting is called the Texas Chapter, National Society of Accountants for Cooperatives. The current president is **Russ DuBose** of the D. Williams CPA firm in Lubbock.



CEO **Myles Ramsey** and the board of Petersburg Co-op Gin joined in TACC membership recently. The operation is one of the largest and most efficient gins in West Texas. They can be reached at P. O. Box 40, Petersburg, 79250 or (806) 667-3731. Their leadership is active in numerous cotton and ag circles in the Texas Panhandle.



TACCs **Tommy Engelke** and **Jessica Minter** made three separate presentations at the recent State FFA Advocacy program held at the State Capitol on February 23rd, where nearly 140 FFA students and ag teachers assembled to get a better handle on the "how-to's" of advocacy at school, at the dinner table, in club organizations, around town, on social media, etc. One of the presentations was on "What Do You Say After You Say Hello" and another was on "Pardon Me, But Your Image Is Showing", regarding branding yourself in front of public figures. One last session was on "Navigating the Minefields."

### Candid Snapshots ...



Texas co-op cotton ginners still seems to steal the show in national cotton - related events. Recently, TACC Past President **Curtis Stewart**, General Manager of Spade Co-op in Spade, Texas, chaired the National Cotton Ginner meetings held at the National Cotton Council Convention in Houston on February 11 - 13 AND at the same meeting TACC Past President **Larry Black**, General Manager of Central Rolling Plains Co-op in Roscoe, was elected third vice president, which means he will rotate up over the next three years and eventually become president of the National Cotton Ginners Association.



With the results of the March 1 Statewide Primary Election, TACC prepared a three - page paper outlining the impact on rural Texas. It was distributed statewide and generated several calls. TACC - PAC will also be involved in at least eight of the numerous runoff races that will be held statewide on Tuesday, May 24, 2022.





## TACC Social Media Continues to Hit the Right Notes



Since December 2016, TACC has made an effort to post daily to Facebook and weekly to LinkedIn to keep members engaged and updated on happenings in the agriculture, cooperative and legislative worlds. Here are several top posts recently shared to TACC's Facebook and LinkedIn pages:



### Facebook



TACC's **Tommy Engelke** enjoys engaging in some form of management or strategic conversation with others. Upon telling Plains Cotton Cooperative Association CEO **Kevin Brinkley** at a meeting on December 14 in Lubbock about his unusual approach to goal – setting instead of using the traditional A, B, or C priorities, Tommy mentioned his being “Must Do, Should Do, or Would Like to Do.” He says this makes goal – setting much more appetizing, realistic, and achievable. To which Kevin responded, “I'd add a fourth regarding goal – setting ----- Stop Doing! In short, Kevin was saying occasionally companies need to abandon some things that no longer provide VALUE!



You think you'll never have influence regarding a political situation? You might think again. Just ask co-op attorney **Gary McLaren** of Lubbock, Texas. He recently submitted an angle to attorneys on the OSHA mandate case that was recently heard before the US Supreme Court. Later, he received two responses from the attorneys thanking him for an issue he raised regarding the case. See---we all can have an impact in the political direction of our city, county, state or nation!



TACC's new advocacy directive, 'We No Longer Have a Choice' really hit home even more so, when a story leaked out on February 16th and sent to vocational agriculture teachers nationwide that the “National Career Clusters” group was mounting an initiative to eliminate the word “Agriculture” from the ‘Career Technical Education’ framework. The board – approved initiative cited that the new name would be ‘Food, Living Systems, and Natural Resources’ to reflect modernization & becoming learner – centric in an evolving needs economy. This absurdity woke a sleeping giant! The group received over 3,500 responses and over 10,000 individual comments to this initiative and as a result... “have decided to suspend the initiative and instead direct their efforts in a new direction.”



### LinkedIn



Last month, we presented some “Symptoms of an Ineffective Board,” but maybe your board isn't ineffective and just needs some new life and drive toward new goals. Below are five characteristics of an excellent board. The Roy B. Davis Cooperative Chair at Texas A&M University, **Dr. John Park**, developed a document to expand on each facet, and provide ways to implement each in your own board.

- Represent both the members and the cooperative.
- Provide an example of personal and organizational integrity.
- Promote accountability among board members and to the membership.
- Develop a culture of continual learning.
- Establish a vision and strategy to guide management.



Civic participation is always important, but the upcoming March 1, 2022 Primary Election highlights the need for agriculturalists to make their voices heard from the start. As agriculture continues to experience, “we no longer have a choice” whether or not to be politically involved! Early voting this year will be held from Monday, February 14 to Friday, February 25. TACC has been reviewing candidates and the TACC-PAC will be making significant contributions in the primary elections important to Texas ag & co-ops.



This week will be a busy one for TACC's **Tommy Engelke** and **Jessica Minter** as they make three campus visits to ag universities – Tarleton State University, Angelo State University, and Texas A&M University – in an effort to recruit students for the 2022 Summer Co-op Internship Program. This is an opportunity for ag majors at Texas universities to work behind the scenes in an agribusiness, gaining an advantageous insight into a career in ag, and experiencing the benefits of a career in cooperatives. Next week TACC will be at Texas Tech University, continuing recruiting and teaching the co-op business model to a class of ag economics students.





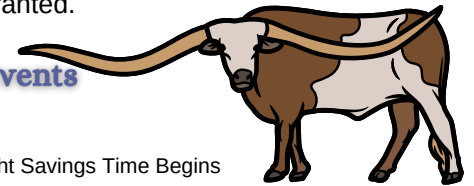


### Out and About (Since December 13, 2021):

- Held the December 14 TACC Executive Committee meeting at PYCO Industries in Lubbock.
- Finished conducting annual dues solicitation.
- Initiated the process to elect new Division Officers for the TACC Executive Committee.
- Continued the Fundraiser February campaign to raise funds for TACC-PAC.
- Attended the December 16 fundraiser event to support incumbent Governor **Greg Abbott**.
- Worked to recruit participants and finalized the programs for the Farm Store Summit, Cooperative Board Chairmen's Conference, Academy in Cooperative Excellence, and Director Development Programs in January and February.
- Continued TACC's daily Facebook posts.
- Participated in periodic meetings of the 65-member group of ag associations receiving updates and legislative priorities for state regulatory, legislative, and university leaders.
- Visited with nearly 1,000 students at six agricultural universities in Texas over the past several months and posted to online job boards in an effort to recruit interns for the summer program.
- Continued TACC's daily Facebook posts since December 2016, and weekly LinkedIn posts since July 2020.
- Finalized all speakers and activities for the March 13-15, 2022 TACC Joint Cooperative Meeting in Frisco.
- Presented at the February 22-23 Texas FFA Day and Texas FFA LEAD Program events.
- Distributed results of the 2020 Compensation Study to members.
- Coordinated registration for and presented at the Texas Chapter, National Society of Accountants for Cooperatives meeting on February 17.
- Assisted in several co-op employee placements.
- Participated in the Texas Ag Council's candidate forum February 25-27.
- Attended the February 16 Cotton Regional Co-op Board Meeting in Lubbock.
- Made numerous TACC-PAC contributions to those ag-friendly candidates in the March 1, 2022 Primary Election --- many in person.
- Selected and ordered PAC awards for 2022 to be leather-style journal for those giving \$100 & not associated with a particular category, and a large hourglass for those attaining the \$1,000 Charlie Award level.

### Will Be:

- Hosting the 2022 Joint Cooperative Meeting on March 13-15 in Frisco, Texas.
- Conducting multiple days of intern interviews to select this summer's co-op interns.
- Attending the March 30 - April 1, 2022 Texas Cotton Ginners' Trust Gin Show & Annual Meeting.
- Participating in the CoBank customer meeting in Bastrop on March 28.
- Making additional TACC-PAC contributions in at least eight Statewide Primary Election Runoff races.
- Preparing to host a TACC summer intern.
- Hosting a TACC Executive Committee Meeting in May.
- Preparing the program for the July 13-15 TACC Co-op Managers Conference in Ruidoso, NM.
- Securing job placements in co-ops.
- Developing economic footprint placemats, daily Facebook posts & weekly LinkedIn papers.
- Making Predictive Indexing presentations to co-ops & directors as warranted.



### Calendar of Events

#### March

- 13 Daylight Savings Time Begins
- 13-15 TACC Joint Cooperative Meeting, Omni Frisco Hotel, Frisco**
- 25-27 Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Convention & Expo, Ft. Worth
- 28-29 CoBank Customer Meeting, Bastrop
- 30-April 1 Texas Cotton Ginners' Association Gin Show & Annual Meeting, Lubbock

#### April

- 15 Good Friday Holiday**
- 20-22 Texas Grain & Feed Association Annual Meeting, Corpus Christi

#### May

- 24-25 Texas A&M Gin Engineering & Mechanization Chair Advisory Council Meeting, College Station
- 30 Memorial Day Holiday**

#### June

- 9-10 Plains Cotton Cooperative Association Gin Workshop, San Antonio
- 26-28 Texas Cotton Ginners Association Summer Meeting, Horseshoe Bay

#### July

- 4 Independence Day Holiday**
- 13-15 TACC Cooperative Managers' Conference, Ruidoso, NM**

#### September

- 5 Labor Day Holiday**
- 7-8 TACC Board Meeting, Lubbock**

#### November

- 9-10 TACC South Texas Cooperative Leadership Conference, Corpus Christi**

