

NCBA President Headlines Virginia Cooperative Council's Annual Meeting

The Frontier Culture Museum again provided a welcoming setting for the **Virginia Cooperative Council (VCC) annual meeting**, held March 7 in Staunton. Membership in this educational organization is open to all types of cooperative businesses, with several active representatives from the Commonwealth's electric, purchasing, banking and marketing cooperatives.

President **J.T. Anderson** of the Farm Credit of the Virginias welcomed attendees, then introduced **Doug O'Brien, President & CEO of the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA) CLUSA International**

O'Brien began by announcing, "We are in the middle of a cooperative moment," then detailed the critical role that cooperatives can play in coming years, **offering job security and economic opportunities** as technology continues to change the workplace. Noting that the U.S. is home to **40,000 cooperative businesses**, he noted several services where the co-op business model shines, including rural broadband, credit unions and home health care. After inviting members to join NCBA's the weekend of Oct. 6-7 for their Co-op Month celebration on the Washington, D.C. Mall, he recognized the VCC for helping develop future co-op leaders through its **Virginia Institute of Cooperative Education (VICE)**.



NCBA President Doug O'Brien details opportunities for cooperative businesses in an ever-changing economy.



From left, 2018-2019 VCC Board, advisors and staff: Dr. Kim Morgan, Ag Econ VT; Laura Jackson, MD & VA Milk Producers Association; LaVeta Nutter, Virginia Dept. of Education; Adam Shiflett, Farm Credit of the Virginias; J.T. Anderson, Farm Credit of the Virginias; Brad Brown, Augusta Cooperative Farm Bureau; Jim Belfield, Colonial Farm Credit; Allen Taylor, Southern States Front Royal Cooperative; Richard Johnstone, VMD Association; Eric Paulson, Virginia State Dairymen's Association; Allen Melton, Virginia Cooperative Council; David Lipscomb, Mecklenburg Electric Cooperative; Jessica Sentelle, MidAtlantic Farm Credit; and Chandler Vaughan, FFA. (Not pictured: Dr. Tonya Price, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist 4-H; Brian Wolfe, Rappahannock Electric Cooperative and Jim Hunsberger, Culpeper Farmer's Cooperative)

Before wrapping up the meeting, VCC advisor **Dr. Kim Morgan** provided an update on current student activities and new faculty joining Virginia Tech's Ag Econ Department in the past year.

"We'll again be able to offer a class about the cooperative business model in our curriculum," she said.

Joining **President J.T. Anderson** as VCC officers for the coming year are **Vice President Eric Paulson** of the Virginia State Dairymen's Association and **Secretary Jessica Sentelle** of MidAtlantic Farm Credit.

VCC welcomes nominations for **outstanding co-op leaders** to recognize as part of their Co-op Month celebration in October, with applications due Sept. 7, 2018 and more information at www.virginia.coop.

- *contributed by Mary Howell, VMD Association PR & Communications Coordinator.*

Based on a sound audit, the **Virginia Foundation of Cooperatives** plans to award worthy students **six \$2,000** at Virginia Tech **and two \$1,000 scholarships** Southside Virginia Community College. The Foundation will also give **three scholarships totaling \$4,500** to top participants at this year's VICE, to be held April 13 – 15 VICE at Graves Mountain Lodge.

"VICE participants will spend an action-packed weekend learning about co-ops in today's society," explained VCC **Executive Secretary Allen Melton**, welcoming students age 16-19 who are interested in attending to contact him at (804) 281-1211 or allen.melton@sscoop.com.