

2008 ANNUAL REPORT FOR BOSSIER PARISH LOUISIANA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Ricky Kilpatrick, Area Forestry Agent and Parish Chair

Three hundred fifty-two people attended the 2008 Ark-La-Tex Forestry Forum, representing well over two million acres owned and/or managed in Louisiana, Arkansas and Texas. Participants rated the program very high, giving the meeting an average value of \$2,430 per person, or a total value of \$855,360. Participants listed numerous concepts that they intended to apply to their forestry operations as a result of the forum.

Project Learning Tree continues to be a strong environmental program for Louisiana. From May 1, 2007 through April 30, 2008, the area forestry agent coordinated and conducted 8 PLT workshops for 196 educators. With the help of many volunteer facilitators, over 1,080 educators were trained in 2007. These trained educators will impact thousands of students. Ricky Kilpatrick serves as the co-coordinator and the state steering committee chairman for Louisiana PLT. He has made presentations about the successes of Louisiana's PLT program at four national meetings. In addition to PLT work, Mr. Kilpatrick conducted 12 school or youth activities for over 1,500 youth in the last year.

Mr. Kilpatrick assists each summer with the week-long forestry teachers' tour, which gives a group of teachers a very close look at Louisiana forestry, from planting, managing and growing trees to harvesting and producing many of the forest products. Thirty-eight teachers participated in the 2007 tour. Corporate and private sponsors provide scholarships for each of the teachers to participate. Thirty-one teachers recently completed the 2008 tour.

In September 2007, a deer management seminar was conducted for 44 Bossier Parish landowners, and in October 2007 a seminar addressing control measures for feral hogs generated a lot of interest. About 70 Bossier landowners attended, and many others have contacted the office since the seminar.

Mr. Kilpatrick publishes a quarterly forestry newsletter, *Timber Tales*, that is mailed to almost 300 landowners (hard copy), another 210 via email, and it is posted on the Bossier Parish Extension's website.

Terry Foster, Extension Agent (Family and Consumer Science)

"Turning Points" Parenting Classes – Parenting classes have been taught to the inmates at the Bossier Parish Maximum Security Prison for the past three years. The classes are taught in a 15-week series of one and one half hour segments for each class. The classes are given to assist the inmates who are about to return to their families to prepare them on how to reunite and take back over the parenting role of their children. Each class has a different focus such as rebuilding trust issues, anger, parenting styles, self-esteem, supporting children in school, role models, raising children of character and other issues. Ninety-six moms have been enrolled in the classes since January of 2005. Of the 96 enrolled, 19 (19%) dropped the class after attending 2 classes, 41 (42%) were released or transferred to another prison before completion, and 36(37%) completed the classes in the prison. Four moms have completed the classes after being released. The Bossier Parish Courts, District Attorney's office and the Department of Social Services have recognized this program as a means of completion of parenting classes as a condition of their sentencing or probation/parole.

Parenting of Probationers and Parolees -- The POPP's program was established in 1998 in Bossier Parish to address the needs of the Office of Probation and Parole for Bossier and Caddo parishes to break the cycle of inadequate parenting through education in correct parenting practices and nurturing behaviors for children ages birth to five in Bossier Parish. Due to the success of the birth to 5 year old classes, a desire was expressed by the probation office personnel to establish classes for parents of children ages 5-12 and 13-18. Terry began these classes in 2004. As the coordinator and director of the program, volunteers are trained in the administration of the classes. Since 1998, approximately 407 clients participated in the program. With an average of two children per participant, approximately 814 children's lives in Bossier/Caddo parishes have been affected and changed for the better through this program. The program was established in Caddo Parish with a number of volunteers from the Caddo FCE and Probation and Parole Office who have been trained to teach the classes. The volunteers from Bossier and Caddo rotate on a monthly basis. The Probation and Parole offices in numerous other parishes have requested other FCS (Family and Consumer Sciences) agents to start the POPP's program in their parishes.

Workforce Preparedness --To help probationers and parolees prepare to re-enter the workforce, the Workforce Preparedness classes were developed and implemented by Terry and have been offered on a monthly basis. The participants are taught skills on how to prepare themselves for filling out applications, preparing resumes, personal data sheets, preparing for interviews, grooming habits, how to get along on the job, character in the workplace and much more. This program is also offered on a monthly basis to Step-Up House Inc., a house for veterans or private citizens who are in a drug/alcohol rehabilitation program.

Divorce: Children in the Middle -- Terry is cooperating with the 26th Judicial District Court for Bossier Parish in educating divorcees in proper post-separation communication techniques to reduce stress on the lives of involved children since 1999. Parents are taught to communicate with each other directly instead of through a "messenger" child to eliminate undue stress by involving the child in financial or personal matters between the two divorcees, to avoid "putting down" the other parent in front of the children and not enlisting the child as a "spy" to gain information about the household of the ex-spouse. Terry has enlisted the help of volunteers from the Community Action Pals (formerly homemaker's club) to assist with the classes on a monthly basis. One volunteer assist s with the adult class and one assists with the children's class taught by Jeannie Crnkovic. To assist with implementing this program when Terry is not available due to illness or attending an AgCenter training conference, Terry had herself videotaped while teaching the class so it could be shown to future classes. By doing this and writing an instruction manual to accompany the tape, she is able to use volunteers to implement the class rather than having to reschedule classes that have been scheduled a year in advance. Over 2,400 adults have been reached with this program.

Jump\$tart High School Financial Planning Program -- Terry coordinated the presentation of the Jump\$tart workshop for high school free enterprise teachers through the Caddo and Bossier parish school boards. Terry contacted school board curriculum directors for the Free Enterprise departments and distributed informational brochures for each teacher in the parishes involved. Terry was the host at the scheduled workshop events. The goal of the local AgCenter offices and school boards was to reach 100 local high school teachers during summer break, and twenty area teachers attended in the summer of 2003. Dr. Jeanette Tucker was the instructor for the event. Due to the foundation laid by Terry, Dr. Jeannette Tucker from the Baton Rouge state office was able to contact the Caddo and Bossier parish school boards to present the program again in the summer of 2007. Thirty teachers from the area schools were trained in June of 2007, and 11 teachers were trained in June of this year.

Bossier CAPS (Community Action Pals) and Caddo FCE Clubs -- Terry has done an outstanding job of coordinating and providing leadership to these two organizations of community volunteers. The Bossier CAPS, formerly Homemakers, have stepped out of the box for their community service projects. After the 9/11 attack on our country in 2001 and with Terry's leadership and encouragement, these ladies raised almost \$10,000 in donations for the Firefighter's Widows and Children's Fund in New York by constructing a red, white and blue quilt. A wall hanging version of this quilt was also constructed and donated to the Pentagon. With Terry's leadership, a group of these volunteers made a journey to Washington to present this quilt to the Pentagon in a formal ceremony in the Hall of Fame. This was an exceptional task to accomplish for it is unheard of for the common citizen to make a presentation in the Hall of Fame. This honor has been held for military personnel up until this presentation. This trip was made possible by donations from the community after a television feature story and newspaper article highlighting the construction of the quilts.

After taking over the leadership role for the Caddo FCE clubs in 2002, Terry has enlisted and trained six of these volunteers to teach the POPP's classes at the Caddo/Bossier Probation and Parole office.

The Caddo FCE volunteers and Bossier CAPS were also trained by Terry on Food Safety and how to prepare the 2007 Income Tax Returns for the Stimulus Payment that all 2007 tax filers are entitled to. Not all senior citizens file an income tax return but must do so this year to get their refund of the stimulus payment.

State Fair of Louisiana -- In 1998, Terry served as co-chair in coordinating the LSU AgCenter's Exhibit Building at the State Fair of Louisiana. Terry enthusiastically agreed to take on this responsibility even before her first day on the job in July 1998 to help the LSU AgCenter keep the working relationship with the State Fair. She organized FCS agents to present educational programs in the building in addition to organizing the judging and displaying of the exhibits in the building. From 1999 to 2003 Terry served as the coordinator of all activities in the AgCenter's building. In 2003, due to lack of FCS agents and financial support from the State Fair office, the coordination of the building was turned over the State Fair. Ms. Foster was very implemental in training the new building coordinator and still served in an advisory capacity until 2004. In 2007, the AgCenter came to an agreement with the State Fair of Louisiana to take over the educational programs at the Family Exhibits Building. Terry and her co-worker, Jeannie Crnkovic, agreed to take on the responsibilities of organizing and executing the tasks of coordination of the involvement of this partnership again. The return of the AgCenter to the State Fair of Louisiana was a huge success due to the roles Terry and Jeannie played in this endeavor.

Jeannie Crnkovic, Extension Agent (4-H Youth and Development)

Jeannie Crnkovic is co-coordinator for the Competitive Exhibits Building at the State Fair of Louisiana. She assists with securing volunteers for the 17-day event, assists with the setting up and dismantling of the building, assists with securing the educational displays for the building, assists with the displaying of competitive items, works on the proposed budget and attends numerous meetings with Chris Giordano (CEO of the State Fair of Louisiana). It is estimated that over 10,000 individuals toured the building last year and there were very positive comments given by the general public, extension agents and by members of the State Fair of Louisiana Board of Directors. As a result of this hard work, the AgCenter has entered into a second year contract with the State Fair to coordinate the Competitive Exhibits Building for the 2008 State Fair.

Divorce is prevalent in today's society and affects children as well as the adults in the family. To assist children in dealing with the issues and emotions involved in dealing with divorce, Jeannie and Terry Foster have teamed up to teach the "Divorce: Children in the Middle" classes twice monthly to divorcing parents and their children, ages 8-17. The classes are court mandated in Bossier Parish and our parish is the only parish in the state that offers the children's version of the class. The classes encourage the use of "I" messages as a form of communication to work out situations. Over the past eight years of teaching the class, 90% of the 1,700 participants have stated that they would use "I" messages as a new form of communication with their parents and other individuals that they may be having difficulties with.

Each year in Bossier Parish various community service activities are offered to 4-H'ers. The monthly newsletter, leaders and agents encourage club members to participate in at least three community service activities during the school year. This year 1,042 (a 10% increase over 2006-07) boxes of macaroni and cheese, 1,272 (a 9% increase over 2006-07) letters were written to the military, 95 towels (new item), 192 boxes of fabric softener (new item), 161 boxes of band-aids (new item), 183 boxes of Q-tips (new item), and 1,454 packages of Ramen noodle soup were collected. The towels, fabric softeners, band-aids, Q-tips and soup were all donated to the Shreveport/Bossier Rescue Mission. The macaroni and cheese were donated to the NW Louisiana Food Bank.

Troy Menard, Associate County Agent (4-H and Youth Development)

The monthly focus for the 2007-08 school year was "Healthy Lifestyles." Monthly programs were presented to 4th – 12th graders in Bossier Parish. As a result of club meetings and other activities, the students gained a better understanding of healthy choices. The Bossier Parish Fun Day ended our school year with educational components that the students received a hands-on approach to healthy lifestyles. The school administrators showed a great interest in our program focus by attending monthly club meetings and Fun Day.

Volunteers continue to be a vital part of the Bossier 4-H program. The Bossier 4-H staff continues to recruit, train, evaluate and recognize our leaders in the 4-H program. Volunteer leaders have the opportunity to attend local and regional trainings, along with state training through our state volunteer leader organization.

Bossier 4-H'ers have many opportunities to gain leadership skills during their 4-H career. The Bossier 4-H staff offers parish-wide trainings and encourages 4-H'ers to be involved with many state-wide programs. Bossier Junior Leadership, parish officer training, fashion board, NAILE (North American International Livestock Exposition) New Orleans Educational Trip, 4-H Club Congress are some examples of how our 4-H'ers gained leadership skills in 4-H for the 2007-08 school year.

Community service and service learning is still a major component of the Bossier 4-H program. The Bossier Junior Leadership Club has participated in several service projects. The canine training with the Bossier-Shreveport Fire Department has been a huge success. Members attended monthly training sessions and assisted the firemen with training of the dogs in mock situations such as car wrecks, house fires and missing people in storm damages. Another service learning project is the North Louisiana Developmental Center which is a home for over 300 "special needs" youth and adults. The Junior Leaders notified local school clubs to adopt a cottage and purchase Christmas gifts for the residents. Members collected gifts, money to purchase gifts and wrapped gifts at the center. This was a major project for them and it resulted in 650 gifts. They had a great Christmas!

Community service is also very active in the elementary 4-H clubs. They collected 1042 boxes of macaroni and cheese, 95 towels, 192 boxes of fabric softener, 161 boxes of Band-Aids, 183 boxes of Q-Tips, 1454 boxes of Ramen noodles for the Shreveport/Bossier Rescue Mission, collected \$1,085.60 of pennies for our foundation drive, wrote 1272 letters to our troops and sold \$6,379 of MDA Shamrocks. They are starting off on the right foot towards becoming a productive citizen.

Joe Barrett, County Agent, Outdoor Skills and Shooting Sports Coordinator

The 4-H Nature/WILD Club members fostered a greater appreciation for the outdoors and the role that they can play by increasing their efforts to educate themselves and the community. Monthly programs were created by members and presented at a local business to educate and expose clientele to the importance of conservation. Members created exhibits that were displayed at the Cypress Nature Center promoting 4-H and conservation. They also organized and promoted a bi-parish Christmas tree recycling project to help with coastal erosion. The 4-H members organized and planned two outdoor area festivals. Future plans by the youth included organizing a trip to south Louisiana to explore and learn more about conservation.

The 4-H Outdoor Skills Volunteer Leader program continues to grow in Caddo, Bossier, Red River and Webster parishes. Ten new leaders received level one certification enabling them to teach youth programs. Three leaders received level two training enabling them to train volunteers on a regional and state wide basis. One of the leaders assumed coordination of the volunteer program for the northern half of Louisiana. Two of the other level two volunteer leaders assumed responsibilities for coordinating the area and state contests.

The Outdoor Skills Volunteer Leaders in Red River Parish assumed additional responsibilities in coordinating the outdoor skills program in Red River Parish. They organized a advisory committee, that planned and directed the efforts of the 4-H Outdoor Skills Programs in their parish.

Observations by members of the Shreveport Gun Club, Red Chute Gun Club and other shooting practices there was no accidents or near misses in the 4-H shooting sports program. One hundred percent of the 4-H'ers participating continue to exhibit safe and appropriate behavior in all shooting sports activities.

The Northwest Shotgun League continues to be a huge success for the outdoor skills efforts in Northwest Louisiana. The membership has increased this year by 15%. Members of the Northwest Shotgun League continue to excel in regional and state competition exhibiting a mastery of their project by participating in 7 local events and numerous regional, state and national events. The advisory board decided to offer another program to the members of the league called National Scholastic Trap Program. Of which 24 of the 62 members chose to participate in this first year.

Katherine Ervin, Extension Aide, Southern University-Baton Rouge

Twelve educational workshops and demonstrations were presented to Bossier Parish youth with information on "Character Education." Over 250 youth participated in this program from October 2007 to March 2008. Hands-on activities showing negative and positive behavior of character were provided to students to participate in and take home for further education.

Ten educational sessions were done in family strengthening programs to empower parents to take charge of their health and family members by eating more fruits and vegetables, eating less fat and

getting more physical activity. A survey of each session showed that 90 percent of the parents agreed to practice food safety and to add more fruits and vegetables to their family diets, to cut back on fats, get more physical exercise and no “super sizing” when eating out. Over 800 individuals were reached.

During 2007-08, newsletters were provided to about 430 homes. Topics included healthy eating habits, managing food dollars and family communication.

Twenty-five youth were trained in the YES program. They serve as volunteer leaders in their schools, for VOA, and Boys and Girls Club activities.