



The National Organization of
Professional Black NRCS Employees
12th Annual Training Conference

The Daily Link

Thursday, December 16, 2004

Western Diversity—Many Faces, Many Dreams, One Vision—Conservation

Today at a Glance—

Thursday, December 16, 2004

Continental Breakfast	6:00 a.m. – 7:15 a.m.
General Session.....	7:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
Concurrent Sessions.....	9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Lunch.....	12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions.....	1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
General Session.....	3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Exhibits/Posters Breakdown	2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
The Store Opens	5:00 p.m.
Banquet	6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Mixer	9:00 p.m.

Things to Remember:

- ✓ **Check Message Board** located in front of the Sacramento Room.
- ✓ Support the NOPBNRCSE—visit the **Organization Store** in Ballroom D
- ✓ **MILITARY LIST:** If you know of any Organization member who is on active duty in the military at Afghanistan or Iraq, please put their name and state on the **NOPBNRCSE MILITARY LIST** posted on the message board.

Going Once. Going Twice. Sold !

The Organization's First **LIVE** Auction was a Roaring Success!

The Live Auction committee sponsored a 3 hour **LIVE** auction to raise funds for The Organization's Historically Black Colleges and Universities' (HBC&U) scholarship program. Over 150 eager bidders competed for the 78 items donated by The Organization's chapters. Ed Thompson, a member of The Organization, and a certified auctioneer, served as the auctioneer. The event was great fun, full of great prices, for a great cause. Everyone enjoyed the bidding, and the committee happily met its financial goals.

The Live Auction committee sends a hardy 'Thank You' to The Organization's members for the outstanding support. The success of the **LIVE**

auction demonstrates another opportunity for exciting fund raising within The Organization.

Small Farmers are Award Worthy



The Small Farmer Awards Luncheon highlighted 3 small farmers who are making large contributions to agriculture and their communities. The First Place award went to Mr. and Mrs. Harrison McCallop of Fontana, Kansas. Second Place went to Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Thomas of Florida, and 3rd Place went to Mr. Frank Taylor of Mississippi. Each entrant's presentation showed remarkable operations and commitments to sustaining the land, ingenuity, and making a difference in their communities.

'You must spend to live, but, you must invest to grow'.

Session: **Financial Planning**

Lester L. Holmes, Financial Planning Consultant from Smith Barney Citigroup, discussed the advantages of investments vs. savings, and the various methods of developing wealth. He stressed that it is not wise to use credit cards as cash reserves, in lieu of setting aside savings for emergencies. Most financial experts advise a 3 to 6 month emergency cash reserve.

Various investment instruments were discussed, and there was interest in laddered Certificates of Deposit (CDs). *Laddered* Certificates of Deposit (CDs) mature on a periodic basis (i.e. monthly). This approach involves buying a series of CDs with varying maturity, spread out like rungs in a 'ladder'. When the shortest term CD matures the proceeds are used to buy another CD for maximum maturity. Although interest rates fluctuate, the benefits of averaging are realized as the money is reinvested.

He noted, "You must spend to live, but, you must invest to grow".

Headquarters Talks Progress and Changes for the Future
 General Session – Wednesday, December 15, 2004 at 9:30 A.M



Richard Coombe, Regional Assistant Chief for the East, notes that NRCS employs approximately 1,100 African-Americans, and that NRCS is one of the most effective and respected agencies in the government. Coombe accepted the Organization's award for Chief Bruce Knight.

Dwight Holman, Deputy Chief of Management spoke about the Information Technology Convergence process. The new Information Technology Service (ITS) is now operational. He discussed the technical support structure and noted that the Help Desk telephone contact number is 1-800-457-3642.

Ken Tootle of the Operations Oversight Management Division discussed the NRCS Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART). Kittle noted that we must be accountable to our customers, partners, the public, and oversight government agencies. The Program Assessment Rating Tool provides a mechanism for monitoring, planning and management of all programs, to assist us to spend funds more efficiently.

Merlin Bartz, NRCS Regional Assistant Chief for the Central Region, discussed President Bush's *Management Agenda*. He noted several strategic management initiatives, including competitive sourcing and improved financial performance. He mentioned that as the Farm Bill provides challenges to the agricultural community, NRCS continues to be a leader and maps out the future in this field.

Announcement: Tour Participants

- Meet at 8:00 AM, Friday Dec 17th in the Doubletree Hotel lobby.
- Dress Warmly
- Lunch and Water on the Buses

- Return around 3:30 PM
- A few seats (4) are available

Job Announcements

NRCS Idaho is recruiting for the positions of Assistant State Conservationist for Technology, State Conservation Engineer, State Administrative Officer, and Area Conservationist. Interested persons may contact Terry Cosby, Idaho Deputy State Conservationist

Do YOU Know These African American "FIRSTS"?

1982	Garland Lipscomb	First African American NRCS State Soil Scientist (Pennsylvania)
1979	Plater Campbell	First African American NRCS State Conservationist (New York)
1978	Lawrence Clark	First NRCS Environmental Specialist
1977	Lloyd Wright	First African American NRCS State Resource Conservationist (New York)
1975	Bill Hunt	First African American NRCS Assistant State Conservationist (Pennsylvania)
1973	Jim Tatum	First African American NRCS Area Conservationist (New Mexico)
1969	Jim Hughes	First African American NRCS District Conservationist