Born to be a farmer
Larry Paul Harris wins TFC’S 2016 Cooperative Spirit Award

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Co-op community bands together after deadly wildfires and tornadoes - p. 5
Rick Hearn of White House rehabilitates Clydesdale horses - p. 28
Historic Jonesborough’s Eureka Inn offers unique lodging - p. 34

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Rural ruin
Co-op community bands together to help those affected by deadly wildfires and tornadoes.

Unprecedented quality
High standards help TFC feed mills “bag” an alliance with Cargill minerals.

Looking ‘inside’ TFC
Annual meeting gives Co-op leaders a chance to learn more about their business in 2016.

Riding to the rescue
Rehabilitating two Clydesdale horses has been a tall order for Rick Hearn of White House.

Past meets present
Located in Tennessee’s oldest town, Jonesborough’s Eureka Inn offers unique lodging.

Born to be a farmer
Henderson County’s Larry Paul Harris is this year’s winner of the James B. Walker Cooperative Spirit Award, Tennessee Farmers Cooperative’s highest honor. The presentation of the award was a highlight of TFC’s 2016 annual meeting Nov. 27 and 28 at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville. Other special coverage on pages 17-27 includes financial reports, selection of a new board chairman and vice chairman, election of new directors, presentation of 4-H and FFA donations, and recognition of Co-op Certified Directors and scholarship recipients.

ON THE COVER: Former TFC director Larry Paul Harris is the 2016 James B. Walker Cooperative Spirit Award winner. The First Farmers Co-op member raises row crops and cattle on his family farm in Henderson County.

TenneScene

As I Was Saying
Jerry Kirk honors the Smoky Mountain spirit in wake of devastating wildfires.

Our Country Churches
Shannettee Methodist Church in Wayne County.

New at Co-op
Learn about four new products available at your hometown store.

Neighborly Advice
Winter supplements for beef cattle.

What’s cookin’?
Beat winter's chill with a warm bowl of soup.

Every Farmer Has A Story
Meet Larry Cadle, who is making his mark as a pawn shop owner, musician, and farmer.
As I Was Saying

So sad to see Smokies burn, then smolder

As I Was Saying
— and that was always special!

Daddy would drive us over the mountain to visit the Cherokee Indian reservation in North Carolina

— that was always special! Though I was raised Southern Baptist in my hometown of Whitesburg, my paternal grandmother,

Ma Kirk, lived with our family and attended the Methodist church in our small town. I went often with Ma Kirk to “her church,” and, as a pre-teen, began attending a wonderful week-long summer camp with a group of friends at a camp (really rustic) Methodist summer camp in Gatlinburg. I don’t recall the name of the camp, but it was a great place to be in the hot summer.

A mountain stream flowed through it, and water in the designated swimming area was teeth-chattering cold! A real highlight of the camp, though, was the one evening when we were allowed to walk as a group — well chaperoned, of course — down to the town’s beckoning parkway and its featured attractions: gift shops, cotton candy, souvenirs, candied apples.

That’s the Smoky Mountain spirit!

Indeed, I was blessed to be born and raised an hour’s drive from Gatlinburg

and the attractions that made the Smokies our country’s most visited national park. It wasn’t that unusual for Mama and Daddy to pack up our car on a Saturday morning and take brother Wayne and me on an enjoyable “trip to Gatlinburg.” We’d spend plenty of time in the gift shops along the quaint town’s main drag, maybe buy a souvenir, and then drive through the park and have a picnic. And, of course, we kept a running count of how many black bears we saw in a single outing, and if we had enough time, Daddy would drive us over the mountain to visit the Cherokee Indian reservation in North Carolina — and that was always special!

While attending the University of Tennessee in Knoxville in the late 1950s and early 60s I was able to visit Gatlinburg and the Smokies quite often, and now I’m blessed to have a wife who loves those places as much as I. In fact, for 13 years in the late 1980s and through the 90s, Jane and I took our son, Chris, to spend Thanksgiving and the weekend that followed in Gatlinburg. While still in elementary school, Chris dubbed our annual excursion to the Smokies as “our own Thanksgiving tradition.” We always stayed at the Edgewater Hotel on River Road, which runs parallel to Gatlinburg’s downtown parkway and ate Thanksgiving dinner at the wonderful Applewood Farmhouse and Grill in Pigeon Forge.

On Friday, Dec. 9, 11 days after the dreadful wildfire disaster did its damage, Gatlinburg and the nation’s most-visited national park reopened to an anxious public that probably didn’t know what to expect. Officials released some details of the devastating damage. Besides the 14 people who died, 2,460 buildings were damaged or destroyed — 1,137 in Gatlinburg, 18 in Pigeon Forge, and 1,305 in other parts of Sevier County.

The next day, Nashville’s daily newspaper, The Tennessean, ran a wonderful above-the-fold article titled simply “WELCOME BACK” that showed happy folks visiting downtown Gatlinburg, a South Carolina mother and her two young daughters looking out over the city from the Space Needle, and a sign on a road into Gatlinburg flushing a meaningful message: “Mountain Tough.” That’s the Smoky Mountain spirit!

Our Country Churches

Shannettee Methodist Church in Wayne County

The roots of this historic church trace back to 1876 when the first place of worship was established in an old grist mill by the Rev. Samuel Smith and his family. It was located near where the present church, built in 1968, stands. Shannettee has always been known as a “singing church,” says Gene Calton of Collinwood. “We used James D. Vaughan songbooks until they died out, and we still use shaped-note books.” Gene says singing remains a mainstay at the historic church. “We still have many good singers and quartets,” he adds. “They are well liked.”
Rural ruin

Co-op community bands together to help those in East Tennessee’s affected by deadly wildfires, tornado

By Chris Villines

The confluence of two late-November events — numerous wildfires fueled by drought and wind and a tornado that impacted seven counties — added up to widespread rural ruin across Tennessee.

East Tennessee was hit the hardest. In Sevier County alone, fires that started Nov. 23 quickly spread throughout the Smoky Mountains and engulfed some 17,000 acres, claimed 14 lives, injured more than 175 others, and damaged or destroyed more than 2,400 homes and businesses in the area. Officials are calling it Tennessee’s worst fire in more than a century, adding to what had already been a busy season for firefighters across the state. Some 1,427 forest fires burned more than 44,000 acres in 2016.

As if the wildfires weren’t enough, an intense storm system roared through Southeast Tennessee on the night of Nov. 29 and the early morning hours of Nov. 30, spawning tornadoes that produced winds of up to 140 miles per hour and resulted in four deaths: two in Polk County and two in Meigs County.

The combined disasters forced Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam to issue a state of emergency through Jan. 31 and an executive order to help those recovering.

“The citizens affected by the wildfires and severe storms have already been through so much, we want to make it easier for them to receive the care and services they need as they begin to pick up the pieces and rebuild their lives,” Haslam said in a news release announcing the order. “The state is doing and will continue to do everything we can to support the victims and survivors of these devastating disasters.”

Echoing the sentiments of the governor, the Co-op system took an active role in helping its neighbors, farmer members, and employees touched by these tragedies. Co-ops in the affected areas and beyond showed their support by volunteering time, donating goods and services, and raising funds to assist those in need.

“From a personal and Co-op standpoint, we just wanted to be able to help in any way possible,” said Clint Hodges, general manager of Sevier Co-op community bands together to help those in East Tennessee’s affected by deadly wildfires, tornado.

The charred remains of the iconic Gatlinburg Welcome Center sign serve as a dramatic visual representation of how devastating the recent wildfires were to the area.

News brief

Cattle Industry Convention, NCBA Trade Show returns to Nashville Feb. 1-3

A huge trade show along with three full days of educational sessions, forums, panel discussions, awards ceremonies, entertainment, and social events will highlight the 120th annual Cattle Industry Convention to be held on Wednesday, Feb. 1, through Friday, Feb. 3, at Gaylord Opryland Hotel and Resort in Nashville. Advanced registration is open until Jan. 4.

As it has in the past, TFC will exhibit at the NCBA (National Cattlemen’s Beef Association) Trade Show to be held in conjunction with the conference.

Convention participants will hear from industry leaders, gather insight on industry trends, and enjoy outings at the Country Music Hall of Fame as well as the famous Grand Ole Opry.

The 24th Annual Cattlemen’s College, featuring a range of timely topics, will run from 7 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (including lunch) on Wednesday, Feb. 1. The first general session of the Cattle Industry Convention itself will follow at 2 p.m. Keynote speaker is Dr. Beck Weathers, survivor of the 1996 Mount Everest tragedy and inspiration for the major motion picture, “Everest.”

Events for Thursday, Feb. 2 include a CattleFax Outlook Seminar from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m., a BQA Producer Forum from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., an NCBA D.C. Issues Update from 12:30 to 2 p.m., and a Checkoff Programs Update from 2 to 4 p.m.

The agenda on Friday, Feb. 3, begins with a Best of Beef Awards Breakfast followed by the second general session at 9:30.

For additional information or to register for the convention, visit www.beefusa.com.
Rural ruin
(continued from page 5)
Farmers Cooperative. “We’re not just a business that sells things to people — we’re part of the community. Your heart pours out for these folks who may have lost everything.”

As the fires raged, Sevier Farmers Co-op fuel trucks sprang into action to deliver gas and diesel fuel to emergency vehicles since area gas stations were off limits. The Co-op supplied crews with fuel, oil, and chains for the many chainsaws being put to use in fire-fighting as well as rescue and recovery efforts. The Co-op also placed a bin at the entrance to its Sevierville store for donations of shovels, rakes, work gloves, and other supplies to help the area’s cleanup and restoration crews.

For livestock and pets displaced by the wildfires, Co-op assisted the Sevier County Humane Association — which had to evacuate its own location — with an emergency shelter at the Sevier County Fairgrounds. The Co-op provided feed, crates, and panels, and employees volunteered time to help move supplies.

“People from all over were bringing in donations,” said Gary Hicks, one of the Sevier Farmers employees who volunteered. “I saw people who drove in from South Carolina, Kentucky, and North Carolina. It was great to see such an outpouring from folks. I’ve lived in this area all my life, and you want to do all you can to help those who lost their houses, jobs, everything.”

To the south of the wildfires, the tornadoes that ravaged parts of the area in the wee morning hours of Nov. 30 were especially harmful in Athens, where AgCentral Farmers Cooperative is headquartered, and in Polk County, where 10 Pilgrim’s poultry houses were destroyed, killing 26,400 chicks. Several livestock operations in the area were left without power.

The EF-2 level twister that tore a path of destruction along Highway 307 in Athens hit close to home for the Co-op. The dairy of longtime AgCentral member Blan Dougherty and wife Kathy was heavily damaged, forcing them to move their 120-head herd to other farms and leaving them to contemplate their future in the business.

“I’ve started the process of selling the milking cows and will reassess the situation to see if it’s feasible to start up again with what we have left over,” said Blan. “It’s been tough — very tough — but every day the sun shines a little brighter. The support from the community, other dairy farmers, our family, our congregation at Mt. Harmony Baptist Church, and the Co-op has just been overwhelming. It won’t be easy, but hopefully we’ll get through this. It’s a life-changer, but not a life-ender!”

Perhaps the most harrowing story of survival was that of AgCentral Farm Center Feed Mill Supervisor Greg Newman and his family, who are lucky to be alive after their Athens home was destroyed by the twister. Greg, wife April, and children Amber, Natalie Grace, Brooklyn, and Jacob were huddled together inside one of the home’s bathrooms when the storm hit.

“The tornado picked the house up from the foundation and sent it rolling down a hill with us all bouncing around inside,” said Greg. “We were all battered and beat up, and I spent four hours cutting trees to clear the road just so we could get to the hospital. But by the grace of God, we all made it. God still has a purpose for my family, and that’s why He didn’t take us during the tornado.”

Greg added that the abundance of support for the Newman family since the tornado has been “amazing.”

“People I’ve never met and may never see again have come forward to help,” he said. “The vice mayor of Athens donated a house for us to live in until we can rebuild. And I can’t say enough about the generosity and graciousness of the Co-op community. Co-ops from all around have taken up donations for us, from clothes to supplies to money. We feel so blessed.”

And from the family’s tragic circumstances came joy. Later in the morning of the tornado, daughter Amber underwent a C-section and gave birth to Avianna Amerih Jade Moore, who weighed in at a healthy 6 pounds, 10 ounces. The baby girl will go by the name of Ava.

“I was nice to have a bit of good news in the face of utter devastation,” said AgCentral Chief Executive Officer John Walker. “This tornado has resulted in a big outpouring of care from the entire community, not just the Co-op. It’s been a wonderful thing to witness.”
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“Like” Tennessee Farmers Cooperative
The Tennessee Pork Producers Association (TPPA) is starting the new year with an array of activities that includes its 2017 annual meeting on Tuesday, Jan. 17, at the Tennessee Livestock Center on the campus of Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro.

TPPA Executive Vice President Phyllis Ferguson stresses that all Tennessee producers who pay into the Pork Checkoff are encouraged to attend the meeting, which begins at 2:30 p.m. It is being held in conjunction with the Farm Animal Care Coalition of Tennessee (FACCT) annual meeting at the Grove at Williamson Place, 3250 Wilkinson Pike in Murfreesboro.

Ferguson lists these as featured appearances, activities, and events associated with the TPPA meeting:

- Greg Peterson, who farms with his brothers and parents near Assaria, Kansas. He will perform from 3:45-4:30 p.m. at the Grove on Tuesday. The Peterson Brothers are popular YouTube artists who specialize in farm song parodies. “This is a presentation our agriculture audience will not want to miss!” says Ferguson.
- Taste of Elegance Chefs’ Competition, also on Tuesday. A panel of judges will choose Tennessee’s participant in the national competition at the Napa Valley Culinary Institute in California. This pork promotion highlights new ways for chefs to include pork cuts on the menus of America’s restaurants.
- Activities for youth in the market hog project. The State Junior Market Hog Show begins with state showmanship competition on Tuesday at the Tennessee Livestock Center on the campus of Middle Tennessee State University. Youth are also encouraged to participate in the photography pork promotion “just-for-fun” contests. Additional information is available at state and county 4-H offices or www.animalscience.ag.utk.edu (look under swine project for complete photography contest guidelines).
- An informal pork industry trade show on Tuesday and Wednesday at the Tennessee Livestock Center (activities begin at 8 a.m.) “Everyone is invited to come and watch the Junior Market Hog Show and visit with those involved in Tennessee’s pork industry,” Ferguson says. “More than 800 hogs have been entered in the show, and more than 300 youth from across the state are scheduled to attend.”

Big beef field day is Jan. 7 at UT Martin

A comprehensive Advancing Beef Field Day, sponsored by Co-op and other agriculture-related organizations across the state, will be held on Saturday, Jan. 7, at the University of Tennessee Martin’s Ned McWherter Agricultural Complex.

Planned and staged by UT’s Institute of Agriculture and Tennessee State University, the field day program will feature an array of topics, including “Better Nutrition = Better Cattle,” by Biozyme’s Ben Neale; “Industry 101” by Tennessee Department of Agriculture animal health specialist Kathy Moore; “Breeding Soudess Exam (BSE) Do’s and Don’ts” by Dr. Jason Roberts, a veterinarian and associate professor of animal science; and “Generational Nutrition” by Zinpro representative Jacob Sparkman. Freeze-branding demonstrations will be conducted throughout the morning, along with drawings for an array of door prizes.

The McWherter complex is located at 111 Moody Street in Martin.
In an unprecedented partnership, Tennessee Farmers Cooperative is manufacturing minerals for Cargill, an international producer and distributor of agricultural products and the largest privately held corporation in the U.S.

In 2015, instead of constructing a new feed mill in the region to serve its expanding Southeast customer base, Cargill chose to work with TFC’s three feed mills to manufacture and distribute the $120-billion company’s proprietary national brand of cattle minerals.

“TFC is the first outside manufacturer we have ever allowed to produce our Right Now® Mineral,” says Greg Docter, strategic account manager for Cargill Animal Nutrition’s U.S. Beef Team. “That alone says a tremendous amount about the quality of TFC’s feed mill facilities and products.”

TFC is manufacturing Right Now Mineral, Cattle Grazers® and NutreBeef® minerals for distribution by Cargill throughout the Southeast. The Right Now Mineral is also offered at participating TFC member Co-op locations.

While our Co-op brand offering, we feel, is second to none in terms of value, efficiency, and effectiveness, we know there are some folks who are loyal to national brands,” explains Dr. Paul Davis, manager of TFC’s Feed and Animal Health Division. “We saw this partnership as an opportunity to give those customers an option while shopping at their member Co-op stores.”

Clarksville livestock producer David Poole, left, takes a break during his daily rounds to visit with Tom Biggar, manager of Robertson Cheatham Farmers Cooperative’s Ashland City location. David purchases his Right Now Minerals at Tom’s store.

It’s a choice producer David Poole of Clarksville says he’s pleased Co-op is offering. The first-generation farmer, who raises 160 Angus-cross cows on 400 acres of leased land in Montgomery County, says he began six years ago using the Right Now minerals year-round to supplement his cattle’s diet of forage and hay.

“It’s really convenient that Co-op is willing to carry this product,” says the full-time farmer and member of Robertson Cheatham Farmers Cooperative. “When I found out Co-op was manufacturing it, too, it made me proud to know a big brand like that would put so much trust in my Co-op system.”

Davis, stressing that Co-op customers should equate this recent partnership as a report card with highest marks for TFC’s feed mills, says “The fact that Cargill has never let anyone else but their own mills manufacture their mineral line shows that our feed mills are up to par with theirs.”

Since 2007, each of TFC’s three feed mills — Tenco in East Tennessee, LaVergne in Middle Tennessee, and
Jackson in West Tennessee — have maintained the prestigious “Safe Feed/Safe Food” designation from the American Feed Industry Association (AFIA), the world’s largest organization devoted exclusively to representing the animal feed industry and its suppliers.

Established in 2004, the Safe Feed/Safe Food Certification Program is a voluntary, third-party-certified initiative designed for feed mills and feed- and ingredient-related facilities in the U.S. and Canada. The program establishes comprehensive standards of excellence that go beyond existing regulations to maximize food and feed safety.

In fact, before 2010, TFC mills were Tennessee’s only full-line feed manufacturing facilities designated as Safe Feed/Safe Food.

Davis explains that Safe Feed/ Safe Food compliance is determined by a third-party company that performs an annual external audit. Every TFC feed mill procedure is included — from pest control to traceability documentation to biosecurity measures. In addition to this audit, quality assurance specialists at each of TFC’s three mills inspect one another’s facilities regularly.

“This is a self-audit among the three plants,” Davis says. “Whatever we are doing at LaVergne, we’re doing at the other TFC feed mill locations. We all have the same procedures and GMPs [good manufacturing practices].”

That commitment to high quality standards was recognized on a national level in 2013 when AFIA presented TFC’s Tenco facility with the prestigious Feed Mill of the Year Award. The Tenco mill was chosen from more than 130 facilities across the country, including those operated by some of the biggest feed manufacturers. Currently, LaVergne’s facility is a finalist for the 2016 Feed Mill of the Year.

Naturally, when Cargill began looking to partner with a mineral manufacturing facility in the Southeast, explains Docter, Tennessee Farmers topped its list.

“We had two criteria: shared values and quality facilities,” he says. “Through our discussions with TFC, we knew they had some parallel values in terms of customer service, commitment to success, and quality assurance.”

Once shared values were apparent, the Cargill team began the quality assurance process with TFC’s three mills — each exceeding the multi-billion-dollar company’s high standards for its national brand.

“We felt very comfortable with the TFC facilities, the way they do business, food safety procedures — these things matched us to a ‘T,’” says Docter. “And then there are TFC’s people, who have a similar mindset to Cargill’s team members. We’re proud to associate with them.”

Davis says the joint effort has been well received as he watches a steady stream of bagged Cargill’s products roll through the production lines of the LaVergne facility, where they’ll be stacked on pallets for shipment. In this instance, the old adage, “It’s an honor just to be chosen,” rings true for TFC, he says.

“The process of establishing this partnership just reiterates what our feed customers have always known,” says Davis. “Co-op really does offer it all — world-class facilities, regional formulations, and hometown service.”

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The Polytin Calf Catcher weighs approximately 350 pounds, measures 4-feet-by-6-feet, and has 8 inches of ground clearance. You open the spring-loaded gates by pulling a rope while seated on an ATV or UTV. The gates are opened by stepping on a latch that is located near the ATV operator’s right foot. All the hardware, components, and assembly instructions to mount on a standard ATV are included (HVH001). An extended hitch design (HVH002) is required for two-person UTV applications such as a Mule, Ranger, or Gator.

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Does your feeding program have your herd prepared for the upcoming calving season? Intelligent decisions now can have a significant impact on the health of newborn calves, the amount of milk produced by their mother, and how soon the cow breeds back after calving.

Cow-calf operations in the Southeast are based on forages, and at this time of year producers generally rely on harvested hay for the majority of the herd’s diet. This hay must be of adequate quantity and quality to meet the nutrient requirements of brood cows at various stages of production. For spring-calving herds, winter feeding coincides with the last third of gestation and early lactation. Cows at these stages of production require a considerably higher level of nutrition than dry cows in early gestation. If these nutrient needs are not met, cows tend to calve in poor body condition, give birth to smaller, weaker calves, and take longer to breed back than those calving in good condition.

Even though beef cattle are uniquely designed to process large quantities of roughage, there are limitations. Forage that is overmature at cutting, combined with poor harvest and storage conditions, can result in a winter hay supply with less-than-desirable protein and energy. Such deficiencies also decrease the digestibility of the forage, limiting the amount of hay a cow can eat. Since both consumption and nutrient content of such forages are low, supplementation may be necessary. The challenge is then knowing which supplement to use and how to use it.

The first step in the decision-making process is determining the nutritive value of the hay supply. Forage testing is available from various sources and can serve as a basis for logical decisions about supplementation. A basic forage analysis will offer information about protein and energy levels present and allow producers to rank hay from various fields and cuttings according to their relative feeding value. Highest-quality hays can then be reserved for lactating cows, heifers, and thin cows.

In most cases, energy will likely be the most deficient nutrient and can be most effectively provided by pellets or cubes formulated specifically as forage supplements. Such products are designed to be high in energy yet low in starch so that they enhance rather than impair forage digestion. Feeding rates will be determined by the quality of hay being fed, and the supplement should be hand-fed daily to reduce variations in the rumen environment.

If daily hand-feeding is impractical, self-feed tubs or liquid feeds can be other options. Though not intended to directly supply energy to the animal, they stimulate rumen microbes so that more pounds of forage can be digested, increasing nutrient intake. Due to their relatively low consumption rates, tubs and liquid feeds are generally not designed to compensate for large nutrient deficiencies.

With winter feeding expenses making up a sizeable portion of the annual cost of maintaining a beef cow, producers should implement nutritional programs that provide the greatest return on their investment. Correcting nutrient deficiencies with supplementation can significantly impact a farm’s bottom line. Visit with your Co-op experts to design a winter feeding program that meets your specific needs.
Looking ‘inside’ TFC

Annual meeting gives Co-op leaders a chance to learn more about their business in 2016 and beyond

There was “So Much More Inside” Nov. 27 at Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville, as attendees of the Tennessee Farmers Cooperative Business Showcase at the 2016 Co-op Annual Meeting visit with each other and representatives from TFC’s product and service departments at informational display tables. The event also included viewings of the wide array of vintage tools collected by Allied Seed retiree and former Co-op manager Bill Bracy as well as the centerpiece attraction — the 40-foot-long, 6-foot-wide “American Dream” model farm constructed by Colby Counce and Chase Long, Lawrence Farmers Cooperative members who were featured in the December 2016 issue of the Tennessee Cooperator.

By Allison Morgan, Photos by Sarah Geyer and Chris Villines

There was “so much more inside” Tennessee Farmers Cooperative’s 2016 annual meeting than just financial reports.

The two-day gathering on Sunday, Nov. 27, and Monday, Nov. 28, gave the Co-op system’s member-owners a chance to learn more about the business they’ve helped build and see how leaders are working to ensure its viability for the future.

“As our meeting theme reflects, there’s so much more inside our stores than just products on the shelves,” said TFC Board Chairman Johnny Brady, speaking to nearly 700 member Co-op directors, managers, and special guests at Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center in Nashville. “There’s research, knowledge, technology, and commitment to quality. There’s loyalty, leadership, and local ownership. There’s history and heritage as the state’s premier farm supply organization.”

An informal welcome reception kicked off events on Sunday afternoon, giving guests an opportunity to browse informative and eye-catching displays in the TFC Business Showcase and interact with employees from all areas of the company. Folks flocked to see the centerpiece of the show, a 40-foot-long, 6-foot-wide model farm built and displayed by Lawrence Farmers Cooperative members Colby Counce and Chase Long. Also returning was a popular exhibit of antique tools and artifacts from the collection of Bill Bracy of Murfreesboro, retiree of Allied Seed and a former Co-op manager.

Business activities were conducted during Monday’s agenda, which was abbreviated this year to end after lunch. Highlights of TFC’s 2016 fiscal year, which ended July 31, were shared by Chief Financial Officer Shannon Huff during the business breakfast. He reported con-
solidated sales of $614 million with a net margin of $24.2 million and more than $19 million returned to member Co-ops through a combination of cash patronage, member programs, and retirement of allocated reserves.

Though all product departments were profitable in 2016, he said, sales were down $77 million from last year, primarily due to lower prices for fertilizer and declining farm markets. Fertilizer sales accounted for $39 million of the decrease even though tonnage increased by 62,000. Fuel gallons sold and the price per gallon also decreased, but feed tonnage had its first increase in the last five years.

“We all faced uncertainty with weather and the lack of rain, tighter wholesale and retail markets, commodity prices and a new political environment,” said Huff. “Our cooperative is well positioned to meet difficulties, but we can make it better. That is our challenge each year.”

To illustrate just how fast the industry is changing, Chief Operations Officer Jim McWherter kicked off his departmental reports by listing some major agribusiness mergers and acquisitions, including Dow and DuPont, Bayer and Monsanto, ChemChina and Syngenta, Agrium and Potash Corp, Winfield and United Suppliers, and Merial and Boehringer-Ingelheim.

“All of these mergers and/or acquisitions are looking to enhance operating efficiencies needed to compete in a world market while absorbing the costs of researching and developing products and getting government approval for them,” said McWherter. “As this year’s annual meeting theme states, there is so much more inside here than just a few paragraphs in a newspaper. These mergers are changing the face of agribusiness in the world. It is crucially important that we keep the inside track either through a direct relationship or through a trusted partner.”

Continuing his presentation, McWherter described successes in TFC’s product departments this past year, including the launch of the Incompass agronomy technology program, increased sales of Co-op Cattle Minerals, outstanding performance by the Hardware Department, a more than 10-percent increase in sales in the Home, Lawn, Specialty Department, and positive earnings by the Tires, Batteries, Accessories and Fuel and Ag Equipment departments.

“Our success is not only built on people who are willing to be innovators or do whatever is needed to get the job done,” said McWherter. “Our success is deeper than that. It’s a reflection of what is on the inside. It’s the people who believe in the Co-op system and value the farmers they serve.”

In their messages to the membership, Chairman Brady and Chief Executive Officer Bart Krisle focused on efforts to unify the cooperative system in the face of a changing agricultural environment. An evolution of the recommendations made in 2014 by the System Study Team, this strategy proposes that member Co-ops and TFC merge into one, unified retail cooperative that is farmer-owned, farmer-controlled, and governed by an elected board of directors.

“We’ve already presented the proposal firsthand to 50 of our 55 member Co-ops and hope to meet with all of them in the near future,” Krisle said. “We’ve seen both positive and negative reactions. On several occasions, we’ve had managers and boards say they can clearly see the value enhancement to the farmer. They recognize that changes happening with our farmers and the industry will likely continue and financial challenges some of our members face won’t easily go away.”

A unified cooperative would improve utilization of existing assets, inventory efficiencies, procurement leverage, profitability, and marketing strategy, Krisle explained. To illustrate these advantages, Brady shared a recent conversation with a 30-year-old row-crop farmer. “This young man told me he spreads fertilizer with a buggy because the Co-op he’s a loyal member of doesn’t have a spreader truck or tender truck,” Brady said. “Not too far up the road, there’s another Co-op that has both. In a unified Co-op, assets like these trucks can be utilized to benefit this farmer and others who lacked these services before. And the days of getting one price from Co-op A and a different price from Co-op B will be a thing of the past. We’ll all
be diving into the same pool, so to speak, but still reaping the advantages of allocations and patronage.”

Emphasizing that the unification proposal is a “work in progress,” both Brady and Krisle asked Co-op leaders to keep an open mind and help provide input as plans move forward.

“My message to you today is this: Let’s keep talking,” Krisle said. “Between the annual meeting and spring, we’d like to have additional meetings with each member Co-op board to further discuss the unification proposal. Let’s work together to find solutions to the challenges and hurdles and issues. As a system, let’s enhance the value to the farmer, take advantage of efficiencies we believe are there, and be the most effective farm supply provider in existence.”

To conclude the business meeting, former NBA player Mark Eaton reiterated the importance of working together during his keynote presentation. The 7-foot-4 speaker shared “The Four Commitments of a Winning Team” that helped him transform from a 21-year-old auto mechanic who couldn’t play basketball to an All-Star who played with the Utah Jazz from 1982 to 1993:

1. Know your job — “To position yourself for success, focus on your strengths, the things you do well. When you learn to honor your role on the team, you allow others to honor theirs.”
2. Do what you are asked to do — “If you want to win today, let go of what you think works and really listen to what others are asking for. This takes you from useful to invaluable.”
3. Make people look good — “One of the most important keys to success is to provide other people with recognition. Nothing alienates your teammates faster than hogging the ball. The better you make others look, the better you look to them.”
4. Protect others — “On the court, my teammates knew they could take a risk because they knew I had their back. If you want to be invaluable, be the person people can count on. Create an environment of safety and freedom that supports innovation.”

Relating these principles to current challenges faced by the Co-op system, Eaton encouraged annual meeting attendees to put the commitments to work in their lives and their businesses.

“In the world of professional sports, if you don’t have teamwork, you are out of the game,” Eaton said. “It’s not a luxury; it’s what you do. If you want to win and show everybody there is more inside, you need teamwork. You need to end the internal competition. On a sports team, when everyone is playing for himself, that spells failure immediately. In business, it’s just a matter of time before the same thing happens.”

(continued from page 19)
Three re-elected to TFC board

Three current Tennessee Farmers Cooperative directors were elected to new three-year terms Nov. 28 during TFC’s annual meeting in Nashville.

Tim Luckey

Tim Luckey of Humboldt, Stephen Philpott of Shelbyville, and Johnny Brady of Riceville were each nominated by their respective zone caucus delegates, and their elections were then ratified by the membership during the event’s business session.

Luckey, a member of Gibson Farmers Cooperative for more than 40 years, has served on its board for 12 years and as an officer for four years. During last year’s annual meeting, he was elected to fill the remaining year of service for Richard Jameson in Zone 1 and now begins his first regular-election term.

“I am thankful for the opportunity to serve the farmers in Zone 1,” says the fifth-generation farmer. “I’ll represent them to the best of my abilities.”

Luckey raises corn, soybeans, wheat, and cotton with sons Clay and Grant on the family’s 4,500-acre farm between Humboldt and Medina. He and his wife of 41 years, Susan, also have a daughter, Holly, and seven grandchildren: Camryn, 15; Avery, 13; Brayden, 12; Ansleigh, 7; Allie Grace, 7; and Lucy Nell, 18 months; and R.J., born Dec. 9.

Stephen Philpott

Philpott begins his second consecutive three-year term. He previously served seven years on the board and was chairman in 2008. He is also a 40-year member of Bedford Moore Farmers Cooperative, serving on its board for 12 years.

Besides running his Bedford County dairy operation on land farmed by his family since 1838, the sixth-generation producer also raises 230 acres of row crops, including corn silage, wheat, hay, and soybeans, along with nearly 300 acres of permanent pasture and hay fields for his 55-head beef herd.

“I continue to be humbled by the confidence my fellow farmers in Zone 2 place in me by re-electing me to another term,” says Philpott. “I pledge my best effort as we consider what our system needs to look like for the next generation.”

Philpott and wife Elaine attend First Baptist Church in Shelbyville and have three children: Benji, 37, who owns Wayside Consulting and Technologies in Shelbyville; Jason, 35, who works for Eastman Chemical in Kingsport; and Josh, 30, who is a musician in Seattle. The Philpotts also have four grandchildren: Whitney, 8; Jack, 6; Frank, 5; and Clara, 2. Another grandson, to be named Sam, is due in March.

Brady begins his third three-year term representing Zone 3 on TFC’s board. In 2016, he served as chairman, following two years as vice chairman. Prior to joining TFC’s board in 2011, he served seven years as director of Valley Farmers Cooperative and later AgCentral Farmers Cooperative.

“I’d like to express my appreciation to the membership for re-electing me,” he says. “My hope, as we continue to investigate avenues that can strengthen all of us, is those involved will be open-minded, diligent, and committed to seeking out the best options to keep our Co-op system viable for the future.”

Brady operates a 100-head Jersey dairy farm on 500 acres in McMinn County, where he also raises registered Angus cattle, Bermudagrass hay, and silage corn.

He and wife Cathy are longtime members of Mt. Harmony Baptist Church and have three children — Steven and wife Brandy; Scott; and Shelly and husband Taylor; and three grandchildren, Cade, 11; Noah, 10; and Nate, 7.

Nixon is chairman, Thompson is vice chair

Kenneth Nixon of Carthage, last year’s vice chairman of the Tennessee Cooperative Board of Directors, has been elected chairman for 2017. Mark Thompson of Cumberland Gap is the new vice chairman.

The officers — Nixon from Zone 2 and Thompson from Zone 3 — were elected by fellow directors at a reorganizational session of the board Nov. 28 after TFC’s annual meeting in Nashville.

Nixon has 29 years of combined service on TFC’s board and has served as chairman three times, most recently in 2014. He raises burley tobacco, row crops, and beef cattle on his 375-acre Smith County farm.

“I am so moved and honored by the confidence placed in me by this board,” he says. “I realize we have important decisions to make, and I look forward to being a part of that process.”

Nixon and his wife, Linda, an antique dealer and certified appraiser, are members of South Carthage Missionary Baptist Church and have three children — Mike, Stacy, and Joey — and five grandchildren — David, 27; Ryan, 21; Dylan, 16; Tristan, 15; and Bredin, 3 months.

Thompson begins his final year of a three-year term after having previously served on the board from 1998 to 2005, including two stints as chairman. He runs a cow/calf operation and grows alfalfa, corn, tobacco, and pumpkins on 1,100 acres in Claiborne County.

“I appreciate the board’s vote of trust in me,” he says. “And I will do my best to help Kenneth lead the board in the changing times ahead of us.”

Thompson, a member of Claiborne Farmers Cooperative since 1977, has served 18 years on its board of directors, holding offices of vice chairman, chairman, and secretary. He is also on the board of the Claiborne Livestock Association and the Claiborne County Agricultural Committee.

He and wife Mary, technology supervisor for Claiborne County Schools, have two sons who farm with him: Lee, 26, and Cody, 24, a recent graduate of Virginia Tech University. The Thomsons attend Arthur United Methodist Church in Cumberland Gap.
All-time high

FFA, 4-H receive largest donations to date from record-setting sales of 16th commemorative Co-op knife

Story by Sarah Geyer, photo by Chris Villines

Tennessee Farmers Cooperative’s highly popular 4-H/FFA Case pocketknife series set another record in sales with its 16th commemorative collector’s item.

More than 3,600 of the 2016 knives were sold, raising an all-time high of $36,200 split equally between the state’s 4-H and FFA Foundations. This year’s tally increases TFC’s total contributions through the program to nearly $350,000 since the program began in 2001.

Interest increases with each release of this collector’s item, explains Mark Morton, manager for TFC’s Home, Lawn, and Specialty (HLS) Department, which means determining a quantity each year for the piece’s one-time-only production can be a challenge.

“This year, with input from our HLS managers committee and with the support from all of our member managers statewide, we based the quantity of these limited-edition knives on member Co-op presales,” explains Morton. “With this change, 500 more knives were produced this year as compared to last year. This quantity appears to more closely mirror the demand, allowing more people to purchase and ultimately support 4-H and FFA with larger contributions.”

Mackenzie Clark of Henderson County, state FFA president, and Ethan Harvill of Fentress County, state 4-H Council president, accepted the checks on behalf of their respective organizations.

“On behalf of the Tennessee FFA association and its members, I would like to sincerely thank you for your donation,” Clark said during the check presentation ceremony. “In the final line of the FFA creed, it states, ‘I believe that American agriculture can and will hold true to the best traditions of our national life.’ Because you show your commitment to upholding this tradition through this annual donation, we are able to continue upholding the tradition, too.”

Harvill, who joined 4-H as a fourth-grader with no farming experience, thanked the audience for supporting his worthwhile organization.

“Without supporters like TFC and Case,” he said, “I wouldn’t have had opportunities to actively participate in the 4-H program, which has helped to shape me into the person I am today.”

As part of the annual meeting luncheon, Johnny Brady, TFC board chairman, presented the checks along with Maury Ford, vice president of sales operations with W.R. Case & Sons Cutlery Company, Ford addressed the crowd, thanking the Co-op system for its continued support.

“I want to thank you for allowing Case to be one of your partners used to raise money for 4-H and FFA,” he said. “Since the program’s inception, we’ve produced more than 40,000 knives for this commemorative series, and I can’t think of anything that makes Case more proud than to be associated with Co-op and its support of these student organizations.”

According to Chance Martin, the program administrator and the product manager for the HLS department, this year’s limited-edition collector’s item features a Trapper design with a custom Co-op shield. The bolsters of the knife are embossed with the 4-H and FFA logos, while the blades feature Co-op and Case logos along with “2016.” The knife has an etched bone handle with 4-H and FFA logos. The annual knife is packaged in a full-color, exclusive Co-op/4-H/FFA box.

“I enjoy working with Case because their product quality is top shelf and I appreciate their partnership with the program,” says Martin. “I am proud that we can offer a product that is 100-percent made in the U.S.”

Check with your local Co-op for availability.

Among the 2016 Co-op 4-H/FFA Case pocketknife’s eye-catching features are a Trapper design with custom Co-op shield and blades with the Case and Co-op logos.
Tennessee Farmers Cooperative congratulates the following member directors who completed the Certified Director Program in 2016. The program requires a minimum level of continuing education for board members related to the agriculture industry and best business practices.

**Bedford Moore Farmers Co-op**
- Fred Moody
- David Wright
- Tony White
- Rex Whorton
- Maury Wood
- Perry Nash
- Patrick Stout

**Dickson Farmers Co-op**
- Anthony Allen
- Kevin Northcutt
- Michael Boddie
- Michael Bell
- A.P. Bouldin
- Larry Flatt
- Todd Hutchins
- Pat Hutton
- Marvin Lusk
- Phillip Pelham
- Tim Wilcher

**Coffee Farmers Co-op**
- Derek Gernt
- Tim Criswell
- Cory Collier
- William Campbell
- Fentress Farmers Co-op
- Russ Uselton
- Cole Reagan
- David W. Matlock
- Ronald J. Kimbro
- Beth Dawson
- Benjie Daniel
- Ted Alsup
- Melinda Forbes
- Kevin Harvey
- Chris James
- Debbie Joines
- Mack Moss
- Pal Neal
- Chris Thompson

**Tipton Farmers Co-op**
- Jerry King
- Barry Stone
- Coy Taylor
- Russ Uselton
- Cole Reagan
- David W. Matlock
- Ronald J. Kimbro
- Beth Dawson
- Benjie Daniel
- Ted Alsup
- Melinda Forbes
- Kevin Harvey
- Chris James
- Debbie Joines
- Mack Moss
- Pal Neal
- Chris Thompson

**Marshall Farmers Co-op**
- Will Gold
- Nathan Johnson
- Ken Jordan
- Tant Mason
- Tommy Roberson
- Wayne Moss
- Steve Medlin
- Jeff Yarbrough
- Mike Spann
- Steven Gribble
- Steve Hawkins
- William Miller
- Mike Roberts

**McCurtain Farmers Co-op**
- Lewis Hanks
-sey McDaniel
- Wayne Greenwell
- Paul Gribble
- Steve Hawkins
- William Miller
- Mike Roberts

**Tipton Farmers Co-op**
- Tim Bishop
- Jason Cherry
- Jeff Douglas
- John Allen Moore
- Dale Robbins
- Ronald White
- Guy Williams
- Henry Farmers Co-op
- Jerry Bomar
- Ricky Chandler
- Tim Hammond
- Grant Norwood
- Dan Parker
- Todd Rose
- Gary Story
- Jamey Tosh
- Scott Whitby
- Humphreys Farmers Co-op
- Damon Brown
- Claude Callicott
- Tommy Cowell
- Greg Davis
- Wayne Grinnett
- Lee Rushon
- Jeff Spann
- Lincoln Farmers Co-op
- Randy Ashby
- Hugh Dickey
- Phil Dunivan
- Dale Gleghorn
- Charlie Joe
- David Kidd
- Richard Lyon
- Gary Phillips
- Kevin Steelman
- Macon Trousdale
- Farmers Co-op
- Bill Allen
- Wayne Anderson
- Larry Cato
- Scott Cochran
- Jimmy Fishburn
- Kenny Martin
- Stanley Miller
- Andy Morgan
- Dewey Swindle
- Marshall Farmers Co-op
- Will Gold
- Nathan Johnson
- Ken Jordan
- Tant Mason
- Tommy Roberson
- Wayne Moss
- Steve Medlin
- Jeff Yarbrough
- Mike Spann
- Steven Gribble
- Steve Hawkins
- William Miller
- Mike Roberts

**Washington Farmers Co-op**
- Tommy Roberson
- Terry Mason
- Ken Jordan
- Nathan Johnson
- Will Gold
- Nathan Johnson
- Ken Jordan
- Tant Mason
- Tommy Roberson
- Wayne Moss
- Steve Medlin
- Jeff Yarbrough
- Mike Spann
- Steven Gribble
- Steve Hawkins
- William Miller
- Mike Roberts

**Macon Trousdale**
- Farmers Co-op
- Bill Allen
- Wayne Anderson
- Larry Cato
- Scott Cochran
- Jimmy Fishburn
- Kenny Martin
- Stanley Miller
- Andy Morgan
- Dewey Swindle
- Marshall Farmers Co-op
- Will Gold
- Nathan Johnson
- Ken Jordan
- Tant Mason
- Tommy Roberson
- Wayne Moss
- Steve Medlin
- Jeff Yarbrough
- Mike Spann
- Steven Gribble
- Steve Hawkins
- William Miller
- Mike Roberts

**Macon Trousdale**
- Farmers Co-op
- Bill Allen
- Wayne Anderson
- Larry Cato
- Scott Cochran
- Jimmy Fishburn
- Kenny Martin
- Stanley Miller
- Andy Morgan
- Dewey Swindle
- Marshall Farmers Co-op
- Will Gold
- Nathan Johnson
- Ken Jordan
- Tant Mason
- Tommy Roberson
- Wayne Moss
- Steve Medlin
- Jeff Yarbrough
- Mike Spann
- Steven Gribble
- Steve Hawkins
- William Miller
- Mike Roberts

**Tipton Farmers Co-op**
- Robert Baskin
- Clay Kelley
- David McDaniel
- Larry Rice
- Ray Sned
- Bill Sumrow, Jr.
- Warren Farmers Co-op
Tennessee Farmers Cooperative

2016 Annual Meeting

Born to be a farmer

Larry Paul Harris wins TFC’s 2016 Cooperative Spirit Award

By Jerry Kirk

Judy Harris laughed as she related how her husband, Larry Paul, kept telling his first-grade teacher at Christian Chapel School in Henderson County “over and over again” that when he grew up he wanted to be “a farmer like my dad and a song leader like Uncle Luther.”

That was back in the mid-1950s, and six-plus decades have validated just how prophetic young Larry Paul’s ambitious aims were. Indeed, he and his father, Paul, farmed very successfully, side by side, for years, and Larry Paul and Judy together have received state and national recognition for their agricultural achievements.

And yes, Larry Paul became a song leader “like Uncle Luther.” For half a century, he has led singing at Christian Chapel Church of Christ where he grew up and generations of Harrises have worshipped. “And I’m still doing it,” he says.

But now, Larry Paul says being chosen by Tennessee Farmers Cooperative to receive its highest honor — the James B. Walker Cooperative Spirit Award — for 2016 is a highlight of his life.

“I would like to say thank you to the ones who are responsible for this,” an emotional Larry Paul said in accepting the award during TFC’s 2016 annual meeting Nov. 28 at Opryland Gaylord Resort and Convention Center in Nashville. “It’s very humbling to be put in the same category as some of the folks who have received this honor before me, and I’ll always treasure this memory.”

He then happily introduced his entire family: Judy, their three daughters, Dana, Paula, and Jenny, their husbands (each of whom farms with the Harrises in Henderson County) and their seven grandchildren.

Larry Paul gave special credit to the late John L. Roberts, a fellow Henderson County farmer who encouraged him to become a Co-op leader on the state level.

Mr. Roberts served on TFC’s board for seven years (1977-83) and was president in 1980. Then, in 1983, he was the first person to carry the title of chairman. Larry Paul would follow in his footsteps, serving on the TFC board for nearly two decades.

“I appreciate the time I have spent with you [as a member of the Co-op board],” Larry Paul assured the annual meeting luncheon audience. “I cherish each and every one of you and the time I’ve been able to spend with you … and I guarantee you that as long as I can, I’ll be involved in agriculture.”

He received a standing ovation from an appreciative annual meeting luncheon audience.

Larry Paul is the 18th recipient of the Cooperative Spirit Award given each year “to an individual whose contributions have had a positive and enduring impact on Tennessee’s farmers, our state’s agriculture, and our cooperative system.”

In presenting the 2016 award, TFC Chief Executive Office Bart Krisle said that in the 15 years he’s “had the privilege” of working with Larry Paul, two things he’s learned from the newest Walker Award recipient stand out. “One, this man can use humor to diffuse a situation that was really tense and, at the same time, make a point as well as anybody I’ve ever met. The other is that you hear a lot about work/life balance, but this man is God, family, work. I never saw him vary in keeping things in order.”

“Keeping things in order is indeed a way of life for Larry Paul Harris and his family. He and Judy farm some 1,000 acres of productive farmland near Wildersville, raising corn, soybeans, and wheat and running a cattle operation that includes 100 mama cows.”

Larry Paul’s rich farming heritage is one he cherishes. He was born March 3, 1949, to the late Paul and Pauline and grew up on the farm that still sustains three generations of the family.

Christian Chapel School, where Larry Paul attended first and second grades, once stood near the church the family still attends. He was bussed to Beaver School for third through fifth grades, and his last three years in elementary school were spent at Pin Oak.

At Lexington High School, Larry Paul excelled academically, laying a firm foundation for a career in agriculture. He was actively involved in many different organizations and activities, FFA. As valedictorian of the 156-member senior class of 1967, Larry Paul addressed a huge commencement audience, challenging himself and fellow graduates to “reflect on the sacrifices our parents and others have made to give us this education and look ahead to the horizons of the future, determined to make it even better than anything we have known.”

With an unwavering ambition to someday join his father as a partner in the family farming operation, it was a challenge Larry Paul obviously took to heart when he headed off to college to earn an associate of arts degree from Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson in 1969. Then, it was on to the University of Tennessee at Martin where he received a bachelor’s degree in ag education in 1971 and minored in animal science.

It was at UT Martin, too, that Larry Paul met pretty Judith Fay Aldridge of Trenton, who, unbeknownst to him, had told her parents repeatedly over the years that she would “never marry a farmer!”

“Oh, yeah, she told her mother, ’I do NOT want to marry a farmer; I do not want to even date a farmer,’” Larry Paul said, adding with a sly grin, “She did eat her words. Her dad raised cotton, and I think that was one of the reasons she didn’t want to marry a farmer, with all the hard work and all.”

“We had cows, too, but you couldn’t ever do anything,” Judy countered. “Cows would get out as soon as you left the house. It was always something.”

Larry Paul and Judy were married Dec. 17, 1971, in a moving ceremony at the Church of Christ in Trenton, and the enterprising young couple wasted no time in making their marks in their respective professions as they worked their way back toward the treasured Harris family farm. Along the way, Larry Paul worked at First National Bank in Lexington for a couple of years, taught vocational agriculture at Clarksville High School, and farmed on the side with his dad. Judy, meanwhile, was making her mark in education.
as a teacher at Pin Oak School and a guidance counselor at Jackson Christian School.

It was in 1978 that they made their monumental move back to the family farm. Larry Paul and his father became partners in the diversified operation. The son took a leading role as his dad, whom he described as a “hog man,” focused on the swine phase of their family farm. Paul had started raising hogs years before, and when the two teamed up, good things happened. The result was a thriving farrow-to-finish enterprise that would ultimately have between 125 and 150 sows and rank with the best anywhere.

In fact, Larry Paul was chosen Tennessee’s National Pork All-American in 1992 and in that year was also named to the American Farm Bureau Swine Advisory Committee.

After the death of his father in 1997, Larry Paul — with Judy’s help — continued the swine operation until the economy, supply-and-demand fluctuations, and other factors prompted the Harrises to exit the hog business and increase their row crop acreage — a move the whole family embraced.

And, as it did with his parents, Co-op has played a major role in helping Larry Paul and Judy realize their dreams as farmers. Larry Paul has vivid memories of what impressed him most about his earliest visits to the local Henderson Farmers Co-op in Lexington.

“I was probably 5 or 6 years old, and when the Co-op had its annual meeting at the old National Guard Armory, Daddy would take me,” Larry Paul recalled. They always had ice cream sandwiches. I didn’t get many of those otherwise, so they were always a special treat.”

He also remembers going with his father to pick up Co-op feed when it came in colored sacks. “Mother always wanted to get a certain color to match something in a quilt she was making,” the son said.

Larry Paul’s first real involvement with Co-op came when he was a freshman in high school in 1963. “Every year, our local Co-op would take two FFA members to TFC’s annual meeting in Nashville,” he said, “and that year I was chosen to go. Sandy McDaniel, a senior, also went, and we stayed at the Hermitage Hotel, attended the annual meeting at the War Memorial Building, and ate steak at the old Cross Keys Restaurant.”

Of course, teenager Larry Paul had no way of knowing 53 years ago that he was on his way to becoming a highly successful farmer and one of the most dedicated members and capable leaders Tennessee’s cooperative system has ever known.

And it’s no wonder, considering that Larry Paul doesn’t mince words when he talks about Co-op loyalty.

“Co-op itself has been a part of my family as long as I can remember,” said. “Daddy was a Co-op fellow, and I feel like he did. It means something to me that ours is a system in which I have ownership and a say. It’s not church, but it’s sort of like a family to me in that it’s interested in my farming operation.”

Larry Paul served on TFC’s board continually from 1997 to 2015 and was chairman twice — in 2004 and 2015. He also racked up an impressive record as a director of his local Co-op for more than 25 years, first at Henderson-Chester Farmers Cooperative and later at First Farmers, which was formed when operations of four West Tennessee cooperatives were consolidated.

Our Cooperative Spirit Award winner admitted that one reason he embraced returning for his final term on the board was to ensure that Co-op keeps up with technology.

“My dad would say, Son, if you spent as much time working as you spend trying to get out of work, we could get something done around here,” Larry Paul said with a laugh. “I was always trying to find an easier way to do anything. That’s where the story starts, but I have always been fascinated with new technologies and new equipment. I’ve always wanted to make sure Co-op kept up with technology in order to best serve the needs of farmers and other customers. Technology changes every day, and you’d better keep up, or you’ll be behind.”

As for how Co-op is keeping up, Larry Paul said, “We’re doing pretty good now. I fully believe we need to keep up with what’s going on.”

And then, as he sat at the dining room table in the comfortable brick home he and Judy built on the Harris family farm in 1977, Larry Paul struggled a bit to put into words what it really means to farm some of the land we still farm, and my grandkids are the eighth generation involved in it now,” He mentioned, too, that his great-grandfather fought and died in the Civil War.

After stressing a couple of times that he loves the farm because it’s home to the entire family, Larry Paul said, “Sometimes, at the end of the day, there’s a feeling of accomplishment. When you sit here after having worked hard and see a pretty field of corn, it’s an accomplishment. Of course, you had the help of God most of all, and you had a lot of people helping you, but there’s still an inner peace and a feeling of happiness. It’s something you get that has nothing to do with. To have your family around you is a real plus … pride, pure pride!”
Tennessee Farmers Cooperative proudly salutes recipients of the 2016-17 Co-op Scholarships. These young people represent the best and the brightest in the future of Tennessee agriculture, and many of the recipients are already making valuable contributions to our cooperative system as employees of local Co-ops and even as full-time farmers.

TFC offers 32 scholarships — each worth $2,000 — to qualified agriculture students at six state universities: UT Knoxville, UT Martin, Tennessee Tech, Middle Tennessee State University, Tennessee State University, and Austin Peay. Applicants must be from families of Co-op members and satisfy the requirements established by Tennessee Farmers Cooperative. Contact your local university for more information.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Rachel Elrod
Unionville

Wilson Love
McMinnville

Andrew Pryor
Maryville

Leah Kathryn Steele
Charlotte

Justin T. Young
Nashville

TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Brittaney Hogan
Centerville

TENNESSEE TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

Dylan Belcher
Hartsville

Dillon Maynard
Bloomington Springs

Leah Piper
Carthage

Jordan Teague
Speedwell

Raegan Vickers
McMinnville

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT MARTIN

Tristen Heath
Avent
Somerville

Shalyn Brown
Trenton

Grant McEwen
Trenton

Hannah Moore
Columbia

Hank Pedigo
Medina

Sam Savage
Mt. Pleasant

UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT KNOXVILLE

Kristen Nicole Brown
Cookeville

Susan Cowley
Fayetteville

Katlyn Hardin
Lexington

Charles Harrison
Philadelphia

Tyler Millsaps
Philadelphia

Grace Ottinger
Greeneville

McKenna Pierce
Burns

Colton Smith
Bethel Springs

John Robert Snoddy
Kelso

Samantha Taylor
Lewisburg

Micah Willis
Hillsboro

For more information, see us online at www.ourcoop.com.
For the first time since its inception over 25 years ago the Tennessee Farmers Cooperative Scholarship Program made major modifications this year.

The first major revision is an increase in the scholarship amount — from $1,500 per year to $2,000. Also, two more institutions have been added to the program’s designated roster: Austin Peay State University in Clarksville and Tennessee State University in Nashville.

“TFC decided to open the program up to students from Austin Peay and Tennessee State because, over the years, many of our new hires, key industry supporters, as well as farmers we serve are graduates from these institutions too,” explains Keith Harrison, TFC’s marketing manager. “It just made sense for us to support their ag departments and students.”

As for increasing the monetary amount, Harrison notes, the move was made to reflect the ever-rising cost of college tuition. The topic had often been discussed over the years, he adds.

“With the addition of two universities to the program, this year seemed like the perfect time to also raise our dollar investment for each student,” he explains.

Austin Peay and Tennessee State join Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, University of Tennessee in Knoxville and University of Tennessee in Martin in awarding Co-op scholarships. TFC offers a total of 32 each year.

To be eligible for a TFC scholarship, students must maintain a grade point average of 2.5 or higher in a university’s ag department major. The recipient’s family must be a member of a member Co-op in the TFC system. Although freshmen are eligible, preference is given to upperclassmen first.

Scholarship recipients are chosen through the university, often selected by the agriculture department’s scholarship committee. Contact the university for more information about the application process — apsu.edu/agriculture; mtsu.edu/programs/agribusiness; tntech.edu/aghs; tnstate.edu/agriculture; ag.tennessee.edu/casnr; or utm.edu/departments/caas.

Many of Tennessee’s ag industry leaders have benefitted from Co-op Scholarships. Below, two former recipients, Ryan Hensley and Gina (Locke) Stewart, share how the scholarships impacted their lives.

**Ryan Hensley**  
**Class of 2009 and 2011**  
**University of Tennessee, Knoxville**  
Received bachelor of science degree in agricultural economics and business and master of science in agricultural economics  
**Executive Director, Tennessee 4-H Club Foundation, Inc., since 2011**  
Oversees the day to day operations of the foundation and works to strengthen its support of Tennessee 4-H. The foundation provides over $1,500,000 each year to 4-H programs across the state.

“I am very thankful to the members of Tennessee Farmers Cooperative for investing in my education. I come from a large family; there were always two or three of us Hensleys in college at the same time. Our parents were certainly willing to help, but the cost for our education largely fell to us. Without the support of scholarships, I would not have been able to finish my undergraduate degree without student loans.”

**Gina (Locke) Stewart**  
**Class of 2015**  
**University of Tennessee, Martin**  
Received bachelor of science degrees in animal science and ag communications  
Currently pursuing master of science in curriculum and instruction  
**Educator, Fayetteville City High School since July 2015**  
Teaches dual credit ag business, small animal care, and organizational leadership and communications. Also serves as FFA advisor at the high school.

“I would not be where I am today without the support I received from the Co-op. Without that scholarship as well as others, I would not have been able to go to college. Getting an education is imperative — it has helped me get to the next step, which for me includes getting my masters. Here I am, a kid raised on a farm who learned production ag in college on the Co-op’s dime, and now I’m teaching students about agriculture (and the cooperative system). Your investment in the future is worthwhile and working, and I’m proof of that.”
Whether appearing in always-popular Super Bowl commercials, pulling flashy carriages, or starring in the show ring, Clydesdale horses often live with celebrity status as iconic, majestic draft horses.

But the condition of the Clydesdales that Rick Hearn went to purchase in September 2015 was anything but grand. “They were literally just walking skeletons,” Rick says. “You could see their hips, shoulders, and every single rib. The horses were obviously sick.”

The White House construction company owner knew he had a rescue situation on his hands. Although he had little experience with horses, Rick had always dreamed of owning a Clydesdale and found two advertised at a good price on a farm just south of Lexington, Kentucky. He realized why when he got there.

“The guy didn’t know what he had,” Rick says. “They were his sister’s horses. He told me she had a mental breakdown, and he was trying to take care of them. He knew less about horses than me. The second I walked up to them, they just nuzzled me and weren’t skittish at all. I didn’t care what we had to do; I knew we had to get them out of there. I was afraid they weren’t going to make it if we didn’t.”

Rick loaded the gentle giants — 12-year-old Max and 10-year-old Angus — on his trailer and headed straight for his veterinarian, John O’Brien in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Standing an impressive 19 hands high, Max weighed only 1,600 pounds, which was about 500-600 pounds underweight, the veterinarian estimated. The slightly shorter Angus, at 17 hands tall, was in better condition but still slightly underweight.

“Dr. O’Brien felt like bad teeth was 99 percent of the problem,” Rick explains. “He put him on vitamin boosters, and then we had Dr. Matthew Lovell out of Gallatin work on their teeth. Our farrier, Jimmy Whitaker, also worked on getting their hooves back in shape. They weren’t abused or anything. I think they were put out in the field and forgotten.”

Nutrition was the next concern. Admitting he wasn’t sure what to feed the Clydesdales, Rick simply gave them a sweet feed for the first couple of weeks until he met Megan Crawford,
By Allison Jenkins

Rick’s nephew, Adam Camacho, pours the Clydesdales a helping of Co-op Pinnacle 1400, which was recommended by Davidson Farmers Cooperative’s equine specialist, Megan Crawford. The feed is formulated to help the horses maintain a healthy weight.

At his rural six-acre property in Kentucky, Rick Hearn has been the beneficiary of the advice of a most likely unexperienced but excellently placed source — his daughter, Adeline Rose, born in 1998 and married her wife, Campbell, Kentucky, he stayed in the area after his discharge and joined the U.S. Army and served two years. Stationed at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, he stayed in the area after his discharge in 1998 and married his wife, Sondra. They have a 5-year-old son, Rick, and an 18-month-old daughter, Adeline Rose.

Since they’ve been in Rick’s care, the condition of the Clydesdales has improved so much that he thinks nothing of hopping on Max’s back for a ride around the pasture. Well, hop isn’t exactly the right word — more like climb onto the enormous equine from a wooden platform built especially for that purpose. Angus is still a bit fearful of riders, but Max is incredibly docile, despite his colossal size. Rick will even let his young son ride him.

Max and his constant companion, Angus, are practically inseparable, says Rick, who even had to load them on the trailer at the same time. Both were drastically underweight when he brought them home but are now flourishing on the Hearn farm.

Proper nutrition was especially important in this case, she adds, because the Clydesdales are so large and were in such poor body condition. Max eats five 1.5-pound scoops of Pinnacle 1400 in the morning and five scoops in the evening, with Angus consuming up to two scoops daily in the winter to complement a primary diet of grass and hay. Both horses started showing signs of improvement in the first two weeks, Rick says.

This started putting the weight back on when we switched to the Pinnacle 1400,” Rick says. “The Co-op has helped us tremendously. Everybody gives opinions, but we needed somebody like Megan who knows what she’s doing. To find someone with experience who will listen to you, that’s nice.

For more information on Co-op’s Pinnacle line of horse feeds, contact the equine experts at your local Co-op or visit www.co-opfeeds.com.
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Soup’s on!

Ward off winter’s chill with these warm recipes

January 2017 winning recipe

**Taco Soup**

**What you will need:**
- 1 pound ground beef (or ground turkey)
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
- 1 (16-ounce) can chili beans
- 1 (16-ounce) can kidney beans
- 1 (16-ounce) can white hominy
- 1 (16-ounce) can stewed tomatoes
- 1 can Rotel tomatoes
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1 package dry taco mix
- 1 package dry ranch salad dressing mix

**Directions:**

Lightly brown meat, onion, and pepper in large pan. Drain and reserve liquid from beans, hominy, and tomatoes. In a soup pot, combine beans, hominy, and tomatoes with meat mixture. Add enough water to reserved liquid to make 2 cups. Cook for about 20 minutes and add taco mix and ranch salad dressing; stir and simmer for another 20 minutes and serve.

Dorothy Warren, Old Hickory, Dickson Farmers Cooperative

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**Corn and Shrimp Chowder**

4 ounces bacon
1 onion, chopped
¼ cup celery and tops, chopped
2 tablespoons green pepper, chopped
2 tablespoons carrot, finely diced
½ bay leaf, crumbled
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
2 cups chicken broth
2 cups potato, diced
1 (17-ounce) can cream-style corn
1 cup evaporated milk, undiluted
1 pound salad shrimp, frozen
Salt, pepper, chopped parsley flakes, paprika, to taste
In a large kettle, cook bacon until browned and crisp. Remove bacon and pour off all but 1 1/2 tablespoons fat (if needed, add oil of your choice). Add next five ingredients and cook five minutes; blend in flour.

Add chicken broth and potatoes; bring to a boil. Simmer, covered, for 15 minutes. Add corn, milk, and shrimp; heat well. Season with salt and pepper. Add crumbled bacon and serve with a garnish of parsley and paprika.

Yield: 1 1/2 quarts.

Carol Perrigman
Lewisburg
Marshall Farmers Cooperative

Chicken Pot Pie Soup with Puff Pastry Dippers

2 sheets frozen puff pastry, thawed per package instructions
1 egg, beaten
4 chicken breast halves or 2 cups leftover cooked chicken
Ground pepper and salt, to taste
2 tablespoons cooking oil
1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1 quart (4 cups) heavy cream
4 teaspoons chicken base (or per the package instructions for 1 cup water)
1 cup water (for dissolving chicken base)
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1/2 small yellow onion, minced
1 cup frozen green peas, cooked
1 cup chopped, cooked carrots
Pinch (about 1/4 teaspoon) fresh grated nutmeg, optional

Preheat oven to 350°. Cut each sheet of thawed puff pastry into 1-inch strips and place on a large cookie sheet. Brush egg onto the pastry strips (for browning). Bake for 10 minutes or until dough has risen and turned light golden brown. Remove from oven and set aside until ready to serve.

Dissolve chicken base into 1 quart of water; stir until dissolved. Slowly add flour, stirring until it reaches the consistency of peanut butter but remains golden, not brown, like a roux. Slowly add cream and continue stirring. Add chicken base (to taste), and garlic; stir until thickened. Add peas, carrots, nutmeg (optional), and cubed chicken. Remove from heat and thin to your desired consistency. Serve with puff pastry sticks.

Stacey Hicks
Camden
Benton Farmers Cooperative

Slow-Cooker Broccoli Cheese Soup

1 pound frozen broccoli florets
1 medium onion, diced
2 carrots, finely chopped
5 cups low-sodium chicken broth
2 cups cream of celery soup
1/2 teaspoon seasoned salt
1/2 teaspoon salt (or more to taste)
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/2 pounds Velveeta cheese
2 cups grated sharp Cheddar cheese
Add broccoli, onion, carrots, chicken broth, cream of celery soup, seasoned salt, salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper to a slow cooker. Stir, then cover and cook on high for four hours.

After four hours, use an immersion blender or masher to puree 1/2 of the soup (if you use a regular blender, blend only 1 cup at a time and use extreme caution). Add cheeses. Turn the slow cooker to low, cover, and cook for 15 minutes longer.

Stir to melt and mix in the cheese. Add more salt and pepper as needed. Serve warm.

Jean Owens
Cumberland Gap
Clairolle Farmers Cooperative

Peanut Soup

1 cup raw, blanched peanuts
2 cups water
1 pound chicken (or other meat)
10 cups water
2 teaspoons salt
1 clove garlic, chopped
4 medium potatoes, diced
2 carrots, chopped
1 small onion, chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
2 or 3 chicken bouillon cubes
1/2 cup noodles or broken spaghetti
1 cup green peas
1 tablespoon sugar
1 can Rotel tomatoes
4-5 cups water
Dash hot sauce or red pepper flakes
Egg noodles, optional
Heat a small amount of vegetable oil in Dutch oven or large soup pot and brown the sausage or kielbasa and chopped onions until onions are tender.
Add remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Simmer for 30 to 45 minutes. This can also be prepared and cooked in slow cooker on low for 3-4 hours.

Note: Substitute tomato juice for part of the water for a heartier soup. Serve with cornbread.

June Kemp
Cottage Grove
Henry Farmers Cooperative

Pumpkin Soup

1/4 cup butter
1/2 cup chopped onions
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
3 cups chicken broth
2 cups half-and-half
1/4 cup apple cider, optional
Salt and pepper to taste
Sauté onions in butter until transparent. Blend in spices and broth. Bring to a boil. Stir in puree and half-and-half. Reduce heat and cook until soup is heated through (but not boiling), stirring occasionally. Blend in apple cider, if desired. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.

Janice Duncan
Gallatin
Summer Farmers Cooperative

Irish potatoes in March

We know it’s a stretch, but we’re thinking of St. Patrick’s Day coming up March 17, “What’s cookin’?” is asking readers to dig up their favorite recipes using Irish potatoes. And yes, we know that they aren’t really from Ireland, but as Tennesseans who like to mash, fry, bake, scallop, and use those white-fleshed staples any way we can, we’re looking for an array of new recipes.

So send us your favorite Irish potato recipe for our March “What’s Cookin’?” column. Each person submitting a recipe chosen for publication will receive $5 and a special certificate.

Monday, Feb. 6, is the deadline for your Irish potatoes recipes. Don’t forget: Only recipes with complete, easy-to-follow instructions will be considered for publication. Several recipes are disqualified each month because they do not contain all the information needed to prepare the dishes successfully. Recipes featured in “What’s cookin’?” are not independently tested, so we must depend on the accuracy of the cooks sending them. Always use safe food-handling, preparation, and cooking procedures.

Send entries to: Recipes, Tennessee Cooperator, P.O. Box 3003, LaVergne, TN 37086. You can submit more than one recipe in the same envelope. You can also e-mail them to: pcampbell@ourcoop.com. Be sure to include your name, address, telephone number, and the Co-op with which you do business. Recipes that appear in the “What’s cookin’?” column will also be published on our website at www.ourcoop.com.

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mid the rush-and-hustle that defines much of 21st century travel, the owners and innkeepers of Jonesborough’s Historic Eureka Inn have a message:

Slow down. Leave your worries at the door. Soak up the relaxation and tranquility of a stay at the storied Washington County landmark that sits in the heart of Tennessee’s oldest town, famous for its International Storytelling Festival held each October.

Innkeepers Blake and Kate-lyn Yarbrough took the reins of the lovingly preserved Eureka in 2014. The husband-and-wife duo, each of whom grew up in the area and brought hospital-ity backgrounds to the table, say they still pinch themselves at the opportunity to welcome guests to this destination that was constructed in 1797 as a private residence by Robert and Harriett Mitchell. The home had two other owners before Peter Miller and wife Angeline opened what was then called the Eureka Hotel in 1900.

“We named the rooms either after their historic uses or previous owners,” he explains. “Guests have the unique opportunity to become part of the attraction by actually staying in these rooms while learning the stories behind them.”

Each of the inn’s 13 uniquely decorated rooms creates a captivating blend of past and present. While furnished in a style befitting its 19th- and early 20th-century history, the spacious, quiet accommodations include such modern conveniences as private baths, free Wi-Fi, cable television, and central heat and air. Many of the rooms even have the original hardwood floors.

“We named the rooms either after their historic uses or previous owners,” he explains. “Guests have the unique opportunity to become part of the attraction by actually staying in these rooms while learning the stories behind them.”

Each room in the inn has its own story behind it, Blake says. “We want visitors to take their time, learn the history of Eureka and Jonesborough, and let us take care of them as much as we can.”

Located in Tennessee’s oldest town, Historic Eureka Inn welcomes guests to deliver ‘the Jonesborough experience’

Traffic flows along Main Street in downtown Jonesborough, which is home to the Historic Eureka Inn. Originally built in 1797 as a private residence, the property was transformed into a hotel in 1900. Today, the 13-room inn offers guests modern conveniences combined with the style of yesteryear to create a unique, memorable experience.

ABOVE: In this circa 1900 photo, Peter Miller stands outside the newly christened Eureka Hotel, which he and wife Harriet purchased from the previous owner, Laura Gosnell, to offer hospitality to travelers and business people. The Millers operated Eureka until 1910, when J.R. Russell acquired it from them and added luxuries such as a bathtub with hot and cold running water. (Photo courtesy of the Historic Eureka Inn)  LEFT: Part of the charm of the inn are the antique fixtures located throughout the building, such as this bell that guests can ring upon their arrival. A cozy fireplace welcomes visitors in the nearby reception area.
them. We believe this gives the Eureka a point of distinction.”

For example, there’s The Jury Room, which was added to the original structure in 1851 when William Henry Maxwell purchased the property. The Jonesborough courthouse, located a block down Main Street, would use this room to sequester a jury of 12 men and a guard. The practice went on for some 50 years during a time when only men could serve on a jury.

There’s also The Sample Room, which ties in to the area’s rich agricultural history. “In this room, farmers could bring in samples of their wares and rent the room independent from the rest of the hotel,” says Bill. “They would set up in that room and entertain guests to view and purchase crops or other goods. Or they could use that room to just rest and relax. The farming aspect is a very important part of not only Eureka’s heritage but Jonesborough’s as a whole.”

Katelyn says it’s this kind of dedication to preserving the Eureka’s background that helped fuel the Yarbroughs’ desire to become the innkeepers. “We’ve both always had a fascination with the history of this place and this town and consider ourselves nerds in that aspect,” she laughs. “Modern is fine, and it’s good to have a forward-thinking approach, but there are a lot of folks like us who have a great appreciation for a ‘throwback,’ if you will. The Eureka adds to the character of Jonesborough, and I think it would be missed if it weren’t here.”

The Yarbroughs also pamper Eureka guests with food. Each stay comes with a complimentary cooked-to-order breakfast prepared by Katelyn and Blake and served in the inn’s dining room that was added two years ago. Some dishes even incorporate ingredients the couple grows in a garden behind the inn.

The commitment to preparing fresh, high-quality food doesn’t go unnoticed by guests. “The breakfast here is delicious,” says Martha Hobson of Oak Ridge, an inn guest accompanied by her husband, David. “Blake and Katelyn do a fabulous job, and they’re so nice, too. This is our second stay here. We love the convenience to the Storytelling Center and everything else in downtown Jonesborough. We’ll definitely be back.”

Their first stay at Eureka will certainly be memorable for John Reeves and Wanda Countiss of Wise, Virginia, who got engaged during their visit in early December. “It made this place suddenly very special for us,” says John. “We loved the good people and good food. We’ll come back again to celebrate the occasion and will tell our friends about Eureka.”

Bill says the inn’s convenient location in Jonesborough allows guests like John and Wanda ample opportunity to explore the historic town and the surrounding area. “There’s so much to do in our town, but you can also use the Eureka as your headquarters, and within an hour or two drive there are incredible mountains, fishing opportunities, state parks, museums, and other historic areas,” he adds. “You could stay at the Eureka for a week and not run out of things to do.”

Beyond the comfortable rooms and flavorful breakfasts, the inn features scenic porches and an area out back that boasts a flower-filled courtyard and creekside gazebo. With its blend of history, rustic charm and modern touches, the Eureka Inn is poised to attract more visitors to take in “the Jonesborough experience” for years to come, says Blake and Katelyn.

“It’s more than just a job; it’s a way of life,” Blake says. “Our hope, and that of Bill, is that we can take over ownership of the inn in the near future. We’d love nothing better, because Eureka means a lot to us, and the people who stay here do, too. We’re excited about what the future holds.”

For more information about Eureka Inn and to make a reservation, visit www.eurekajonesborough.com or call 423-913-6100.
If you’re planning to grow fruits, vegetables, or nuts for direct marketing, University of Tennessee Extension is announcing a new round of Farmers Market Boot Camps to be held at six locations across the state this month and next to help you get started.

“We want to give farmers the information they need to wisely choose what crops to grow and how to successfully grow them,” says Annette Wszelaki, an Extension vegetable production specialist. “These workshops will help growers build foundations for their marketing plans.”

Hal Pepper, a financial specialist with the UT Center for Profitable Agriculture, adds that the sessions will cover the basics of building production and marketing budgets.

Here’s the workshop lineup: Dickson, Tuesday, Jan. 24; Dyersburg, Wednesday, Jan. 25; Bolivar, Thursday, Jan. 26; Cookeville, Tuesday, Jan. 31; Chattanooga, Wednesday, Feb. 1; and Knoxville, Thursday, Feb. 2. Check-in at each workshop begins at 9 a.m. local time, and sessions run from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Sessions will be taught by Wszelaki and Pepper along with colleagues Dave Lockwood, Extension fruit and nut production specialist, and Margarita Velandia, a UT agricultural resource economist specializing in niche marketing. Topics will include “Making the Most of Your Vegetable Crops for Marketing,” “Challenges and Opportunities in the Production and Marketing of Fruit and Nut Crops; Recordkeeping Tools for Small Fruit and Vegetable Farms, and Using Your Records to Develop Enterprise Budgets.”

Registration is $20, which includes lunch, and preregistration is required at least five business days prior to each workshop. Because space is limited, advance registration is encouraged. To preregister, visit tiny.utk.edu/fmbootcamp2017.

For more information about the workshops, visit the Center for Profitable Agriculture: ag.tennessee.edu/cpa (look for a link under the “educational events” menu) or contact Hal Pepper at 931-486-2777 or hal.pepper@utk.edu.

In a nutshell, UT offers unusual workshops

The Tennessee Cattlemen’s Association (TCA), in conjunction with the Tennessee Dairy Producers Association and Tennessee Sheep Producers Association annual meetings, will hold its yearly convention and trade show Jan. 13-14 in Murfreesboro.

The event, held at the Embassy Suites Hotel, begins on Friday, Jan. 13 at 8 a.m. with a brief welcome followed by three morning “Cow College” sessions led by experts from Virginia Tech University and the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA). Tennessee Farmers Cooperative and other vendors will exhibit new products, services, and technology at the trade show from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

During Friday’s awards luncheon, deserving youth will be given scholarships by TCA and its industry partners, and Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam will also be recognized for his contributions to agriculture.

In addition to more Cow College sessions and the trade show, Saturday’s lineup will include a Youth Leadership Day where Tennessee FFA chapters will participate in a half-day learning opportunity. Students will hear from industry experts on animal agriculture, agricultural issues, and social media in the agriculture industry. A buffet lunch at 12:30 will round out the activities.

For more information, visit www.tncattle.org.
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A
other day is coming to a close at East End Pawn Shop, the Middlesboro, Ky., establishment Larry Cadle has run since 1980. But before driving through the Cumberland Gap Tunnel to his home and farm in Harrogate, Tenn., Larry shows one last item.

This one, however, is definite
not for sale.

After carefully removing it from the shop’s vault, Larry gently cradles a rare, mint-condi
tion Gibson mandolin made in 1924 — March 24, 1924, to be exact, as indicated by its crafts
man’s signature.

“I’ve been collecting mandolins and fiddles for years,” says the cattleman and longtime
member of Claiborne Farmers Cooperative. “I guess you could say I’m sort of a histo
rian of bluegrass instruments. One of my mandolins was presented to Bill Monroe at the Grand Ole Opry.”

Larry Cadle strums a mandolin inside his East End Pawn Shop in Middlesboro, Ky. The Claiborne Farmers Cooperative member is also proficient at playing fiddle and guitar.

If not for a bold decision Larry made nearly 37 years ago, this moment would never have taken place. There would be no East End, which is one of Ken
tucky’s largest pawn shops. No Antique & Modern Jewelry, a retail business operated out of the same downtown Middlesboro building by his daughter, Susannah. No Shylock’s Pawn, which son Isaac owns and operates.

“Starting in 1968, I was a teacher and coach for 12 years at Forge Ridge in Harrogate back when they had a high school,” says Larry, whose wife of 46 years, Cecile, is a retired teacher. “Early on, I was bringing home about $395 a month. I wanted to go deer-hunting, but I couldn’t afford to buy a rifle, so I started trading guns and other stuff on the weekends at the local flea market. When I realized I could make more

money trading than my teacher salary, I quit teaching and got into the pawn shop business.”

Though guns and am
munition are the consistent top-sellers at East End, Larry has seen his business evolve through the years as technol
ogy has advanced.

“We’ve always taken guns, jewelry, gold, and silver, and now there are all types of electronics coming in,” he says, noting that East End also boasts the state’s sixth-largest archery department. “Like you see on the reality TV pawn shop shows, you never

know what kind of stuff might come through the door each day. Ebay has been a big help to us in helping price items because you can find something similar, see what it’s selling for, and know what you can get for it.”

The nearly four decades of operating this thriving business have afforded Larry the opportu

nity to delve more into his favori
te off-the-clock activities: farm

ing and performing bluegrass music. The versatile musician is proficient at playing guitar and mandolin as well as fiddle — the instrument for which he’s best

known across the industry.

Whether as a solo artist who’s released three CDs of “fiddle tunes” or as part of the Clinch River Bluegrass/Dark Ridge band, Larry has been a fixture on the region’s bluegrass music scene for 30 years. The band has performed in countless events throughout the area, includ

ing the annual Tennessee Fall Homecoming at the Museum of Appalachia in Clinton where it shared the bill with such blue
glass legends as Jimmy Martin and Ralph Stanley.

“I picked the guitar a little in high school, then right before I opened the pawn shop I got interested in playing the fiddle after reading the history of it,” recalls Larry, whose great-uncle, the late Rufus Shoffner, was a musician and is a member of the Rockabilliy Hall of Fame. “There’s just a lot of mystique behind the fiddle, so I went to

Farming has remained a constant in Larry’s life, and these days he finds pleasure in raising hay and registered Ang
gus beef cattle on the picture

postcard 400-acre farm where the Cadles reside.

“It can be hard work some
times, but I don’t mind it, and I like having the solitude,” he says. “We mostly sell our breed

ing stock straight off the farm. Rarely do we take anything to the market. It’s the commercial market that’s buying my bulls. They get hybrid vigor by breeding a full-stock bull to a mixed-breed cow. They can raise a stronger calf that way.”

Larry credits his local Co-op, Claiborne Farmers Cooperative in New Tazewell, for the products, service, and expertise that help him effectively run a beef cattle operation. The Co-op, in turn, benefitted from Larry’s ex

pertise as a business owner when he was elected to the Claiborne Farmers Board of Directors. He recently came off the board after serving two three-year terms.

“It’s been great to be part of a group of farmers who come together to support their local Co-op and make it profitable so it can benefit the farmer

members,” Larry says. “We’ve been conservative, and that’s been good because it’s helped our profitability. You’ve got to ap

proach the Co-op the way you do farming. You can’t throw money away. You can’t go out and buy that new tractor every year.

“I’ve enjoyed my time on the board and getting to know other farmers from different parts of the county.”

As for his own road ahead, Larry, who turned 70 in De

cember, plans on continuing his active mix of business, bluegrass, and bulls.

“I’ve stayed healthy, and that allows me to do basically what I want to,” he says. “It’s a good life.”

To purchase Larry’s CDs, call him at 865-585-6141 or East End Pawn Shop at 606-248-7898.
Every Farmer Has A Story

If he’s not at the pawn shop he established in 1980, you’ll find Larry at home with wife Cecile at their 400-acre farm in Harrogate, where their 90-head registered Angus herd also resides. The couple, who have been married for 46 years and are both former educators, moved here from neighboring Speedwell in 1996.
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