

Eric Turpen, #25
TALL XIV
Session 7 Tyler / East Texas
January 18-22, 2016

Monday, January 18, 2016

Tour Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center – Mr. Kevin Proctor

Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center is an impressive fish hatchery, aquarium, community center, and nature trail. Athens, TX is lucky to have a facility like this where residents and guests can come experience nature and learn about different species of wildlife and habitats of the region. The facility has 45 growing ponds where it grows Bass, Channel Cat, and many other species of fish for Texas streams, lakes and reservoirs. 5-6 million largemouth bass are grown at this facility and stocked in Texas Water.

Dinner and Social – Hosted By Mr. Darren Rozell

This was a great opportunity to meet some of the East Texas TALL Alumni and directors. The steak dinner was great, and the fellowship with other ag professionals is always enjoyed. We learned a bit about Mr. Rozell's Sprayer manufacturing business.

Tuesday, January 19, 2016

Tour Scott's Miracle-Gro Plant – Mr. Chad Gulley

This tour was a great opportunity to learn more about the horticulture industry. Scott's Miracle-Gro Plant in Tyler is one of three growing mediums in Texas. They have been in operation for 22 years on a former tire manufacturing campus. The property encompasses 63+ Acres, 200,000 ft² of warehouses, and is unique because much of the property is covered in concrete from the previous manufacturer. The property required an investment of \$10.2 Million of which, \$6.4 million of that is in equipment. The location employs 24 full time personnel and 11 temps.

Much of the soil and products produced here supply Home Depot, Lowes, and 45% of the product goes to Walmart. Twelve loads of materials are delivered every day. It is a huge benefit to have this material able to sit on concrete. There are 1.8 million bags of garden soil in stock right now, and by March they will have to produce another 3 million bags.

Trucks are loaded out on one of the twelve docks in less than 50 minutes. It was interesting to learn that all their rolling stock is leased on a lease program. There is a very impressive coloring line that could color 300 cubic yards of material per hour. All of the bulk product went into four bagging lines.

Welcome, hat fitting and shopping time – Cavender's Boot City

I have been to Cavender's many times shopping. I appreciated getting to learn how they are a domestic company, and give back to areas where their stores are. I appreciated the genericity of them giving us all a hat. I really liked it and will enjoy it.

Tour Lone Star Rose Processing Facility

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I have never been to a rose processing facility, therefore this was an experience. The roses are brought in from Arizona and stored in cool storage until they can be processed by dipping them in wax and putting them in bags. The wax dipping was an interesting way to keep the cut edges from drying out. The soil and bagging line was very interesting as well.

Lunch Sponsored by Lone Star Rose Nursery, Inc., and Rose Industry Overview – Mr. Sam Goldwater, Mr. Ted Conover

A lot of the roses that are packaged in Texas are no longer grown there. Many of the roses come from Arizona. They are brought in on trucks holding 30-50 bushels per load. The product is contracted out to growers for three years in advance, because this is how long it takes to grow them and bring them in. Weather, early freezes, humidity, and pest pressures are just a few of the reasons rose production has declined in East Texas. However, the processing industry is still left in the region. The packers bring in plant stock from out of state, package it, and deliver it.

Texas Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association – Mr. Larry Hand

Mr. Hand is a special ranger with the TSWCRA. The organization was formed in 1877 in Graham Texas to assist ranchers track down cattle thieves. Mr. Hand and other special rangers deal with many issues for members and non-members. It is interesting that they will also assist non-members, however, priority is given to the members. Those issues can vary from cattle thefts, lost cattle, and equipment theft. The investigators work with many other state and local agencies to apprehend the suspects and track down stolen property. They are also responsible for brand inspections at sale barns.

Tour John Soule's Foods – Mr. Tom Ellis

John Soule's Foods is a 40 year old company that began flourishing 20 years ago. It is now the largest food processor in the U.S. for Beef and Chicken Fajitas. The facility is 240,000 ft² of processing area and 33,000 ft² of office space. In 1996 the company was doing \$14mm worth of sales. Today it is over \$500mm in sales. It is an astonishing level of growth. What is most interesting about that growth is that the company was put up for sale in 2011, but during the contract time the company began to boom and they took it off the market. Instead they went on the acquisition trail and bought Proview Foods in Georgia. With that addition the company now also does fully cooked breaded, and grilled chicken. The company employs 600 people in Tyler, and another 600 in Georgia. Fajitas are still a core product of theirs. To make the beef fajitas they use 4 cuts of beef, and purchase 28 mm lbs. of beef.

Social Honoring Tall and BET Awards Recipients – Keynote Speaker – Chancellor John Sharp

This social event was at a very nice country club. It was nice to be able to socialize with many of the people we had met in East Texas as well as other people. Many awards were given away for different things involving people in East Texas. The TALL Class also introduced their selves.

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Brookshire's Grocery Breakfast, Warehouse Tour, and Store Tour – Mr. Scott Reily

We were greeted very early with a nice coffee and pastry breakfast. We then went to view Brookshire's cold storage facility. The grocery chain warehouses and distributes their own products to their 150+ stores. That is a very large grocery chain. It was very interesting to learn how they receive, segregate, store, and ship the huge amounts of products that they receive. The facility was very high tech and energy efficient. They have received some kind of accreditation for being energy efficient. They had their own ripen rooms, and ice production facility. The amount of inside and outside logistics was very impressive.

The store tour was also very interesting. It was interesting to compare their Fresh Store to other similar company's concepts. The store caters to the foodies with many kinds of special and high end foods. I really found it interesting how they have incorporated live music and outside food and beverage. They have made their store an entertainment destination that brings people in and highlights their products. This was the thing that was most different from the other company's concepts that I have seen. The store was clean, and it was interesting to see all the different products they carried, and how they made their own value added products. By having the prepared food areas, they are able to control their inventories and shelf life, and also add value to products that would otherwise expire and be disposed of.

Tour Color Spot Nurseries, Inc. – Mr. Nolan Jeske, Mr. David Newburn

Color Spot Nurseries is an operation on the West Coast and East Texas. It is the largest wholesale nursery in the U.S. Tyler and the satellite areas produce \$51mm annually in sales from their 5.5mm ft² of growing space. In Tyler they are able to turn three crops annually.

Prior to 2015 their potting mix was primarily peat moss, however this product was becoming very inconsistent, and was causing troubles with uniformity in potting mixes. Since then they have found a cheaper and more uniform product in coconut core imported from Sri Lanka. The coconut core is mixed 50-50 with peat moss to produce their potting and starter mix. They are able to pot 300,000 plants per day with this soil. To run all of their local operations they have to employ 500 people at their peak times.

Catfish Lunch at SFA Poultry Research Center – Sponsored by Texas Farm Credit and Nacogdoches Farm Bureau

This lunch was very good. At this stop we were able to hear from several speakers, and to get an idea of Stephen F. Austin University's Poultry and Forestry operations.

SFASU Agriculture Department Overview – Dr. Dale Perritt

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Dr. Perritt gave us a nice overview of SFASU ag departments. We learned about how they are a leader in the forestry industry. The department is also responsible for educating many people in animal science and poultry research.

East Texas Poultry Industry Overview – Dr. David Alders

Dr. Alders' presentation did a great job of giving us an overview of the broiler industry in East Texas and the history of the poultry industry. In the early 1900's many people owned family flocks for egg production and the occasional holiday bird. Then in Delaware in 1923 Mrs. Wilmer began raising chickens to sell. In the 40's the industry began to vertically integrate into farms, feed mills, and processors. In 1952 broilers passed the number of farm chickens. In 1992 chicken consumption surpassed beef with \$9.2b in cash receipts.

It takes 50 days to produce a broiler. Their feed conversion is extraordinary at 1.89:1. It takes about 47 days to grow a nice 6.12 lb. chicken, but there are some chickens being grown into the 9 lb. range. The state with the highest poultry production are all in the SE and are Georgia, Alabama, and Arkansas. It is interesting to note that in 1934 the per capita consumption of chicken was 0.7 lbs., contrasted in 2006 it was 82.7 lbs.

SFA Poultry Center and Research Facilities Tour – Dr. Joey Bray

This was a continuation of Dr. Alders' overview of the poultry industry. We got to see the poultry houses, farm, and composting site. The death loss is managed by composting.

Tour Pilgrim's Pride Processing Facility – Mr. Jeff Middleton

I have been in many beef processing plants, but never a chicken plant. It was interesting to see the fab lines. We did not get on the floor, but viewed the two lines from above. We did not get to see the kill side of the plant. I can understand this from the company's perspective, however it would have been interesting to see how the process is similar and different from other animal processing plants.

Forestry in East Texas – Mr. Wes Moorehead

Mr. Morehead went over many facts and figures about East Texas Forestry. It was interesting to learn about the different products produced, and the different areas within Texas that they come from.

TFA History and Programs – Mr. Ron Hufford

This was a good overview of the Texas Forestry Association, and their roles. He also described the programs that they offered.

Thursday, January 21, 2016

Tour Logging Operation – Mr. Hap Hachtel

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This was an excellent tour. We learned a lot about logging, but also forestry in general. The difference in management cutting and clear cutting was explained. Also how the reforestation was done after a clear cut. The machinery was huge, and was amazing how it could cut a whole tree down and move them around. The trees were cut, then dragged up to a piece of equipment that removed all of the limbs and loaded them on a truck, and then the trucks were sent to the sawmill.

Tour West Fraser Sawmill, Henderson, Texas – Mr. Charley Colvin

The sawmill was very impressive. The sheer amount of 2 x lumber that they produced was amazing. The tour was very cold and very loud, and so I was not able to take very good notes. We spent a lot of time and saw how the logs were brought in, the computer sized and runs algorithms to get the most valuable cut dimensions. It is a very automated process. Once the boards of cut they then are planed and classified. The classified lumber is grouped and bundled. The product is then shipped out to distributors.

Lunch at ArborGen Tree Nursery and Tour Tree Nursery, Bullard, Texas – Mr. Gene Bickerstaff

An overview of ArborGen's operations was given over lunch. The company's headquarters is in Ridgeville SC. They are the global leader in tree improvement and seedling production. They grow many of the seedlings for international paper, MWV, and Rubicon. The germplasm includes over 0 commercial tree species.

The 2015-2016 crop produced 50.4 mm trees. There are an average of 545 trees/ac. On a replanted forest. They produced enough trees this year to plant 2.7 mm acres of forest. The operation has 140 acres with 70 acres of trees in production per year. The target seedling is 10-18 inches tall. The beds are on 6ft. centers. The land for trees is fumigated every year to kill any pests or disease at a cost of \$2,700 per acre. They then plant, water, and spray soil stabilizer to hold the soil together. They plant 25-30 trees per square foot, and 700,000 per acre. It takes lots of water and lots of fertilizer. They cut back the plants twice per year with shredders to keep them growing uniform. Once they are harvested they are stored in refrigerated warehouses. The trees use about 1 gal. of water per tree, or about 2 ac.ft./ year.

SFASU Forestry Department – Dr. Hans Williams

Texas has 12mm acres of Timberland, and 60-70mm acres of forest. Timberland is land that produces logs for forestation. Forest land is actually the timberland and all land that has brush and trees including Mesquite country. SFASU is the only university in TX not in an University Group, and it has the largest forestry group in Texas. Their graduates are very sought after, and have lots of opportunities.

Friday, January 22, 2016

“Character Driven Success” – Ms. Beverly Chiodo, PhD.

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Dr. Chiodo is a very dynamic speaker. She retired after 51 years of teaching, and has a tremendous resume. This was one of my favorite sessions in all of the trips. She gave some very practical steps and wisdom on why character is so important and how to empower people through acknowledging their character traits. Character is the most important skill set a person can have, the rest can be trained.

There are three secrets to teaching or speaking. First, Prepared in the mind, reaches the mind. Second, Prepared in the heart received in the heart. Last, Prepared in life reaches the life of the hearer. Another important point she shared was that a character failure may take years or even a lifetime to overcome. She also said that your habits define your destiny.

Character and recognition is very important to people. People desperately need praise. "What you praise is what you get" so if you praise the good things, people desire to produce those results to get more praise. Character is the real success, achievement is just the by product.

Several things happen when you praise a person's character. They will follow you around, receive energy and become enthusiastic, they will have a desire to make you successful, and they will incorporate that character quality into their lives. Your motives in praising people should always be to honor them, not for manipulation. Flattery is exaggerated praise for personal gain.

There are four steps to recognizing Character. First, name the character quality. Then define the quality, then give a specific example of how they demonstrated it. Lastly, tell the individual how your life has benefited from their action. We should hire, promote, and reward employees on character. When other people hear a person receiving praise, they begin to take stock of their own actions. However, we should always avoid comparing people.

She also went into a lot of discussion about our youth, and how we can be negatively impacting their lives by promoting achievement over character. She also mentioned how us insulating them from struggles is not helping build their character.

This was a great presentation.