

THE ORGANIZATION OF PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES
OF THE
US DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



April 2017

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Important Dates

- USDA Employee Resource Day
April 20th
Whitten Patio 1
1:30-1:30
- Bring Your Sons and Daughters to Work Day
April 27th
Whitten Patio 11-2
- Unsung Hero Award Ceremony May 4th
- Whiten Patio 11-1

Please visit www.OPEDA.org for regular updates and additional OPEDA and USDA event information.



Message From: President, Ed Dickerhoof

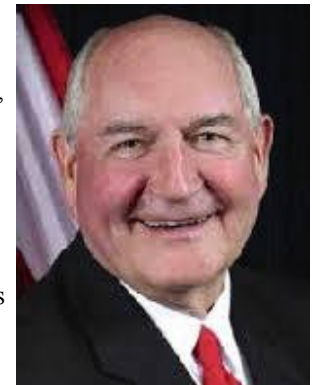
As we go to press, former Governor of Georgia, Mr. George Ervin “Sonny” Purdue III, has been nominated by President Trump to be the next Secretary of Agriculture. During my professional USDA career, I lived and worked for more than a 10 years in the State of Georgia. Agriculture and forestry combined, ranks as the number one industry in Georgia.

Highlights of Governor Sonny Purdue’s career include: An earned DMV Degree from the University of Georgia’s School of Veterinary Medicine, Service as a Captain in the U.S. Air Force, Experience as a veterinarian and in agriculture business, Election to the Georgia House of Representatives, Election to the Georgia Senate for several terms, Election as Georgia Governor for two terms.

There are almost 900,000 acres of National Forest land in Georgia dispersed across 26 counties under the management of The Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest. These forests are becoming increasingly important as watersheds in the State of Georgia as the population continues to grow rapidly, and vital water supplies are complicated by frequent droughts.

Since 1990, the population of Georgia has grown by more than 50 percent, and is expected to continue growth at a fast pace. This has been in large part due to new job opportunities—including the agriculture/forestry sector-- as well as, complimentary infrastructure expansion.

Governor Sonny Purdue’s education and experiences in meeting Georgia’s challenges should easily transfer to the national level with outstanding leadership by the next Secretary of Agriculture.



Sonny Purdue III

President Proclaims March 21 as
National Agriculture Day

The President of the United States of America applauded farmers as he proclaimed March 21 National Agriculture Day, describing our nation’s farmers as “endlessly innovative,” as well as being determined, self-reliant and a critical component to the nation’s future. The proclamation reads, ““The agriculture sector of the United States is endlessly innovative. It continuously builds on its centuries of progress through advances in science, research, technology, safety, production, and marketing to meet the demands of changing consumer needs and complex world markets. The agriculture sector provides jobs across our Nation, not just for farmers and ranchers, but for foresters, scientists, processors, shippers, firefighters, police, and retailers.”, “America's farmers and ranchers help feed the world, fuel our Nation's economy, and lead global markets in output and productivity. The efficiency of American agriculture has provided this country with abundance our ancestors could not have imagined.”

Visit www.opeda.org to read the proclamation in its entirety.

2017-2018 OPEDA Peterson & Stefani Scholarship

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2016 Campaign Leadership Team

USDA, CFC Campaign Chair,
Secretary Thomas Vilsack

USDA, CFC Campaign Vice-
Chair, Dr. Gregory L. Parham

CFC Campaign Manager,
Peggy Javery

CFC Deputy Campaign
Manager, Iris Roseboro

Communication and Event
Coordinators, Sharlene De-
skins, Ronald Mcleod, Marian
Romero and Scott Whittington

Financial Operations Special-
ists, Tina Kooyman, Veronica
Paz and Teresa Pickett Wade

Administrative Support Spe-
cialists, Desmond Boykin
Irayia Shaw Antoinette Wills



**Choose your cause and
show some love today.**

OPEDA is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2017-2018 school year. OPEDA members in good standing and their family members attending college (including graduate school) are eligible to apply. OPEDA places a high premium on education and believes that its scholarships will have a valuable give-back in the future. The scholarships awarded are in honor of exemplary service to OPEDA, the USDA, and our country.

In 1989 the Organization of Professional Employees of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (OPEDA) established the John W. Peterson Scholarship in recognition of Mr. Peterson's dedicated service as the 24th President of OPEDA. Subsequently in 2009, OPEDA also started the Steven "Tom" Stefani Scholarship to honor Mr. Stefani's heroic service and ultimate sacrifice in Afghanistan. Tom Stefani, a U.S. Forest Service Range Conservationist was serving on a voluntary assignment in Afghanistan when he was killed in an explosion that impacted his convoy.

All required documents must be received or postmarked no later than June 30, 2017.

For scholarship forms and further information please visit www.OPEDA.org,

The USDA Raises 1.4 million in the 2016 Combined Federal Campaign

The Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is a 55-year Federal workplace giving tradition that has raised more than \$8 billion for charitable organizations. It is one of the largest workplace giving campaigns in the world. The funds raised each fall through this campaign help neighbors in need around the corner, across the nation and throughout the world. The CFC theme this year was "Show Some Love". Through the contributions of civilian and military Federal employees, the campaign raised more than \$47 million in 2016 for participating local, national and international charities. The United States of Agriculture raised 1.4 million.

The finale event took place March 03, 2017 at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., and was attended by Federal employees who served as leaders throughout the campaign. Government departments and agencies that implemented innovative and effective techniques to raise funds were recognized for their work and awarded at various levels.

OPEDA would like to thank all contributors and the USDA campaign leadership team.

OPEDA Spotlight: Teresa Pickett Wade



OPEDA would like to recognize Teresa Pickett-Wade for the exemplary service to the USDA, OPEDA, and her community. Teresa serves OPEDA and its members as Membership VP and Region 7 Council Member. In addition to her role with OPEDA Teresa serves as Staff Assistant in the Office of Risk Assessment Cost Benefit Analysis (ORACBA), as the Office of the Chief Economist Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, and the Veterans Special Emphasis Manager.

Teresa has been an active member of the Organization of Professional Employees of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (OPEDA) National Board for several years; she was elected in 2007 as Region 7 Council Member and appointed Vice- President of Membership. She has become a lifetime member of Blacks In Government (BIG) as well as a lifetime member of Federally Employed Women (FEW) organization. Teresa has Associate and Bachelor Degrees in Management. Thank you Teresa for all that you have done for OPEDA and the USDA!

Legislation and Other Matters

During the first months of the new federal administration, OPEDA has been waiting and watching with everyone else. As of this writing, our Secretary of Agriculture has not yet been confirmed, but we look forward to the swearing in of a new Secretary before you receive the summer OPEDA newsletter.

In the meantime, OPEDA has been attending the Fed-Postal Coalition meetings. In March the Coalition paid particular attention to the VA/OGR hearings, the HS government affairs committee meeting on federal management, the SCRUB Act, the CPI-E Act of 2017 (HR1251), the Paid Parental Leave bills (HR 1022 and S-362), the Merit Act (HR 559) and the Federal Adjustment of Income Rates (FAIR) Act (HR (757 and S-255). The coalition also was interested in the DOL Fiduciary Rule.

U.S. Representative Jason Chaffetz (R-UT) introduced the Tax Accountability Act of 2017, HR 396. The proposed legislation would not permit an individual with a federal tax liability to work for the federal government. This proposed legislation was referred to the House committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

H.R. 20, the Government by the People Act of 2017 was introduced by Rep. John Sarbanes (D-MD). This legislation would provide a tax credit for campaign finance contributions and government matching contributions. The bill was referred to several committees.

OPEDA members can communicate, if they so desire, with appropriate members of Congress concerning these bills and other matters. To obtain more detailed information a bill can be researched at www.congress.gov. This website, as well as www.govhack.org will enable individuals to obtain information or the members of Congress that represent them.

Employed OPEDA members should make such communication on the employees own time, using the employees own equipment and supplies. No government facilities (telephone, computer, etc.) or supplies should ever be used for any personal communications with members of Congress. As federal employees, OPEDA members should have received training in the content of the Hatch Act, which spells out appropriate behavior in this regard.

Employees may find particularly interesting the membership of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, chaired by Jason Chaffetz (UT-3) and with Elija Cummings (MD-7) as the Ranking Member.

Unsung Hero Award Nominations

Celebrated the first week of May since 1985, Public Service Recognition Week has been a time for the USDA's employee organization (OPEDA) in partnership with the USDA and Departmental Management to recognize the dedication and service of the USDA employees through the Unsung Hero Award Program. USDA employees (managers, supervisors, or peers) were invited to submit nominations for individuals who have demonstrated a high level of service to the public directly related to the employee's duties. These nominations are reviewed by an independent committee established by OPEDA and USDA and final selections are made. We thank all USDA mission areas and agencies for being active partners in this annual award program. We welcome you to join us in celebrating the many contributions of the USDA's employees on the Whitten Patio, Washington D.C. on May 4th. Please visit www.OPEDA.org for ceremony updates.

OPEDA members are encouraged to invite their colleagues to join!

Refer 5 new members and OPEDA will waive your 2017 member dues.





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*The Organization of Professional Employees
 of the US Department of Agriculture*

Thank you for reading the OPEDA
 Newsletter. Your comments and
 contributions are welcome.

Please contact us: phone-202.720.4898
 email- OPEDA@dm.usda.gov
 web-www.opeda.org

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 South Building, 1400 Independence Ave.,
 S.W. Washington DC 20250



ACROSS THE U.S. AND IN D.C.

MAY 7, 2017

**PUBLIC SERVICE CHARITY
 5K RUN/WALK**

www.feea.org/5K



FEEA is the official charity of
 the Public Service 5K Run/Walk

Opportunity for Retirees, Stay Active Within the USDA-



Join OPEDA's mission
 to enhance the effec-
 tiveness of USDA's
 employees in the per-
 formance of their du-

ties. OPEDA is looking for part time volunteers to assist in pur-
 suing the legislative, member services, and professional devel-
 opment needs of the Organization. Duties may include: prepar-
 ing documentation to support the needs of the organization,
 helping to recruit new members, and developing and implement-
 ing new plans and programs to support members. This is an op-
 portunity for retirees to stay active within the USDA, and to
 support the Organization and its employees.

Location: OPEDA National Office, Room 1212, USDA South Building,
 14th and Independence Ave., Washington DC These are not paid posi-
 tions. Volunteers enjoy flexible schedules and choose their area of ser-
 vice. OPEDA will reimburse commuting costs to/from Washington,
 DC, and for local travel to attend meetings. If you are interested in
 membership or volunteering, please contact Dana Manning, Director of
 Communications, at OPEDA@dm.usda.gov