**MINUTES**

**LOUISIANA CRAWFISH PROMOTION & RESEARCH BOARD**

**May 17th, 2017**

**USGS NATIONAL WETLANDS RESEARCH CENTER**

**700 CAJUNDOME BLVD.**

**LAFAYETTE, LA**

**Call to Order:**

David Savoy called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

**Roll Call:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT** **MEMBERS ABSENT**

David Savoy Jody Meche

Ralph Babin Bill Pizzoloto

Robert Buller Chandra Scarber

Kip Lastraps Wayne Romig

Wylie Jewell Greg Benhard

Greg Faulk

**Declaration of a Quorum:**

David Savoy declared the presence of a quorum with 6 members present and 5 members absent.

**Approval of Minutes:**

The minutes from the January 11th, 2017 Board meeting were read.

**MOTION BY**: Ralph Babin and seconded by Wylie Jewell to approve the minutes from the January 11th, 2017 Board meeting. Motion Carried.

**Collections & Financial Report:**

David Savoy called on Ron Harrell to present the collections and financial reports. He reported to the Board the current condition of accounts.

**MOTION BY:** Ralph Babin seconded by Robert Buller to accept the financial report as presented. Motion Carried.

**Promotion & Research:**

Dr. Stephen Dufreche with the University of Lafayette presented on the Automated Crawfish Peeling Machine project. A prototype has been developed and tested. UL brought the prototype to the meeting and the Board had the opportunity to see how it worked.

Dr. Joshua Vaughan explained to the Board that refinement and advancement of the machine is necessary. Dr. Joshua Vaughan will be the project’s principal investigator and Dr. Mark Zappi and Dr. Stephen Dufreche will be the co-principal investigators. In order to complete the project a 3 year time period is needed. The primary, final deliverable at the conclusion of this project duration is a thoroughly tested reference design with a robust, learning control system. The project timeline will proceed as follows: In the first months of the project, the initial changes to the existing prototype will begin, followed by setup and tuning of the machine vision system. These activities will allow analysis of the shell cutting forces and development of a model of those interactions to be used in tuning of the system. This work will facilitate the development of the impedance controller for an initial milestone of testing at the conclusion of the first year of work. Once this initial iteration of the controller is undergoing testing, the reinforcement learning controller will begin being trained with a target milestone of its first integration into the control scheme scheduled for the midpoint of the project timeline. During the final year of the project, the system will be tested in a production facility, with controller tuning during that time based on its performance in the facility. The final milestone is the delivery of the reference design and supporting documents as the conclusion of the 3-year project.

**Proposed Timeline**

**Tasks**

Initial Modifications to Existing Prototype

Machine Vision Tuning

Experimental Analysis of Shell Cutting Forces

Model Shell Interaction Forces

Refine Visual Identification of Interaction Forces

On-line Training of Control Parameters

Refinement of Vision System

Further Refinement of Process Model and Controller

**Milestones**

Project Start - July 2017

Initial Impedance-controlled Process Testing - July 2018

First Iteration of Reinforcement Learning - Dec 2018

Introduction into Production Facility for Training - June 2019

Delivery of Reference Design - July 2019

**MOTION BY:** Ralph Babin and seconded by Greg Faulk to approve the continuation of the automated crawfish peeling machine project. The total cost of the project is $210,000.00. The Board currently has $135,000.00 in encumbered funds dedicated to this project.  The motion made at the board meeting was to add $75,000.00 to those funds.  Motion Carried.

Avery Davidson next presented to the Board a sponsorship request of $5,000.00 to support the “Feasting on Agriculture” segment featured on *This Week in Louisiana Agriculture*. The sponsorship will include pre and post segment audio bumpers featuring the Board logo and the use of crawfish in segments as often as possible (4 use minimum).

**MOTION BY:** Greg Faulk and seconded by Ralph Babin to approve the sponsorship of the *This Week in Louisiana Agriculture* segment “Feasting on Agriculture” in the amount of $5,000.00. Motion Carried.

Holly Clegg gave the Board an update on her promotional work for the Louisiana crawfish industry. Holly contacted some of the cities that the Board’s billboard campaign were located in and was able to get press releases in: Baytown, Tyler and Winnie. She next discussed the search results for her crawfish related content on Google and YouTube. Despite there being hundreds of thousands of search results, Holly’s recipes appear as some of the top recommendations returned for consumers searching on Google. Consistent with Google, Holly’s crawfish videos are top recommended for people searching for crawfish videos. The interest in crawfish expands beyond Louisiana. Holly’s content drives people to visit crawfish.org evidenced by the #2 top referrer to the site and her content continues to be searched for those landing on the Board’s website. Her plan looking forward is to have premium placements on her social channels, optimizing YouTube videos and content for Google searchability and help to drive awareness of Louisiana crawfish beyond Louisiana.

Next, Donald Dartez presented to the Board the statistics of the Board’s website and where the site is getting its views from by location. He then discussed Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and discussed how it would benefit the Board to use SEO to focus on specific markets. He will attend the next meeting and present a proposal consisting of the benefits and options to go forward with SEO.

An update was given to the Board regarding Dee Scallan’s Crawfish Tales project. She is dropping off the Moby crawfish book to the graphic artist to begin the process of formatting and dropping color into the illustrations. She is excited for the completion of this book and will give another update at the next Board meeting.

The LSU AgCenter has asked the Board to sponsor the 2017 LSU AgMagic event.

**MOTION BY:** Ralph Babin and seconded by Wylie Jewell to approve the sponsorship of the 2017 LSU Ag Magic for $1,500.00. Motion Carried.

**Board Business:**

The Board next discussed the 2017 crawfish season.

**No public comment**

The date for the next Board meeting will be Wednesday, August 16th, 2017 at 1:00 P.M. at the USGS National Wetlands Research Center in Lafayette.

**MOTION BY:** Ralph Babin and seconded by Kip Lastraps to adjourn the meeting. Motion Carried.