

**STRAWBERRY MARKETING BOARD**  
**Minutes for Meeting Held on January 23, 2012**

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 pm by Chairman Chris Olah at the Hammond district office of the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry office located at 47076 North Morrison Blvd, Hammond, LA. Mr. Chris Olah conducted the roll call and announced that a quorum was present.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Commissioner Mike Strain, DVM  
Mrs. Lanelle Arceneaux  
Dr. Regina Bracy  
Mr. William Fletcher  
Mr. Kevin Liuzza  
Mr. Mark Liuzza  
Mr. Eric Morrow  
Mr. Chris Olah  
Mrs. Rhonda Poche'

**MEMBERS NOT PRESENT**

Mrs. Lucy Mike  
Mrs. Heather Robertson

**Guests**

Paul Blair, LDAF Director Strawberry Marketing Board  
Stephen Lechich - Louisiana Radio Network  
Nick Gagliano - Gagliano Group  
Jeanne S. Smith - Louisiana Public Broadcasting  
Lynn Ross - Garrison Advertising  
Owen Weber - Louisiana Radio Network  
Mark Landry - Landry-Poche' Farms  
Michelle Estay - LDAF Director Promotional Research

A few minutes were given to the board members to read over the prior meeting minutes.

**MOTION:** Mr. William Fletcher moved to approve the minutes from the January 6, 2011 meeting as written. Mrs. Lanelle Arceneaux seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Rhonda Poche' mentioned about the passing in July of a board member, Mr. Wayne Howes. Mr. Howes was retired Ag teacher and a well respected member of the community and he will be sadly missed on the Board.

Mr. Paul Blair presented the financial statement and collection reports. A copy of this report is in each of your packets. A question was raised as to the difference in the current availability amount and what was spent, why is it lower. Paul Blair explained that the Board's account is not low and the difference in what is currently in the account and what was spent last year, was the fact that we had received grant money to pay for Country Roads Magazine, Louisiana Cookin' Magazine and Hoffman Media.

Paul mentioned to the board that he would be submitting to Ms. Michelle Estay another proposal for grant money if grant money is available again this year.

**MOTION:** Mr. William Fletcher moved to approve the reports as discussed. Dr. Regina Bracy seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**MOTION:** Mrs. Rhonda Poche' made a motion to make a change to the agenda and allow Ms. Michelle Estay to make a presentation to the board. Mr. Mark Liuzza seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Michelle Estay, director of promotional research for the specialty crop program, to which she applies and writes grants applications for that program. Currently have funds available to assist specific commodities from the

specialty grant crop program. With the way that the seasons have fallen, the funds would best suit the strawberry industry. Mrs. Estay would like to use those funds this year to do something that the Board has not done before. You cannot repeat things that you have already done. Since you have not been able to utilize billboard advertising, I would like to get your input on it and find out which areas you think the media would be best served by these billboards. Understandably the Hammond and Ponchatoula area would not be an area where you would want these billboards, since a market has already been established there. As an industry I need to know what areas you would like to reach and these billboards can go up statewide. There is somewhere about \$30,000 that can be used towards this advertising, but there are agency costs for production involved. These funds cannot be used to duplicate anything that you have already done. Hopefully billboards would give you the visibility that you are looking for. The grant money has to have measurable accountability to show that grant money made a difference in your sales production. A survey will be conducted at the end of season to see if the farmers showed an increase in sales during this time frame. Decisions need to be made on where you would like to see the billboards placed throughout the state. The costs involved will depend on where the billboard locations are and whether or not they are digital or vinyl. The board would like to see billboards in the Lake Charles, Monroe, Shreveport, Lafayette, Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Houma, Grand Isle, Gagliano, Morgan City, New Orleans east areas of the state. Reach further out in the state not locally. The last of February and through out March would be the best times to have the billboards run. Mrs. Estay asked the Board to choose one member that she can go back and forth with to make decisions for the Board for the ad would speed up the process. Mrs. Rhonda Poche' will be the board member that will be the contact with Mrs. Michelle Estay to help narrow down the decision making process. Then it will be sent out to the rest of the Board for their input. This funding will only be spent on the billboards because that is what the grant was written for. Mrs. Estay mentioned the importance of getting the survey questions answered to assist in further grant requests, the surveys can either be in writing or by phone.

Mrs. Estay also has some money available for in store product demonstrations that can be made in different locations throughout the state. She asked the board members to let her know what stores they have in mind that they would like to have these demonstrations done at such as Winn-Dixie, Albertson's, Rouses' small or large stores. If the Board could just provide Mrs. Estay with the names of the stores she will make the contact with the stores for the demonstrations. The measureable for this funding would come directly from the stores sales during the time frame the demonstrations were being conducted. These demonstrations are to draw attention to the fact that strawberries are in season and by letting shoppers sample the product and provide recipe ideas. Mrs. Estay says that there is about \$8,000.00 available for this promotion including advertising expenses. With the funding that is available we will be able to do maybe about forty presentations, depending on the stores, and what is available. Mrs. Lanelle Arceneaux said that the Ponchatoula Strawberry Queen could be made available to be present at these events. Part of the Queen's duties is to promote the strawberry industry. After the scheduling is completed Mrs. Estay with let Mrs. Arceneaux know, so she can get with the Queen to see if her she would be able to attend the demonstrations. Mrs. Estay said she could have possibly between \$8,000.00 to \$9,000.00 available for the demonstrations, depending what the stores are willing to comp and the advertising agency's fees. These demonstrations will be beneficial to the industry.

Mrs. Estay reminded the Board that if they were going to apply for grant assistance this year that the deadline application is May. The release of instruction information and the taking of applications usually begin in March.

The Board was about to begin their discussion of the strawberry promotions aspect of the agenda, when Commissioner Mike Strain, DVM arrived and joined the meeting.

Jeanne S. Smith, with LA Public Broadcasting began her presentation. The Board would be supporting the cooking program s on LPB on Saturdays for a ten week period with a cost of \$3,500.00. A daily cooking block is also available for \$2,250.00. As lagniappe the board would also receive your logo on our website for a full year that would link back to your website. In the LPB Visions guide for television you will also be able to have an "In Good Company" feature article that would be going out statewide and your ads would be running during the prime time for consumption of strawberry season. Production costs are free for all advertising.

Nick Gagliano from The Gagliano Group presented to the Board his advertising and promotion recommendations for television. The productions cost is included in his presentation for a total cost of \$19,905.00. We will be covering the same markets that we hit last year and we do have flexibility in moving things around if you wanted

to remove some areas of coverage and put it somewhere else to cover other areas of the state. The production cost includes updating the commercials to current board members and maybe a pitch made by Commissioner Strain.

Steve Lechich of Louisiana Radio Network made a statewide radio proposal to the Board. The proposal includes a three week statewide radio campaign beginning in March for a cost of \$12,350.00. There are additional bonus commercials included in the proposed packet. As always any announcements made by the Commissioner with his daily talk on the morning show with Don Molino is free. The current commercial that was used last year and Mrs. Heather Robertson's interview with Don Molino was played for the Board in case anyone hadn't heard it. As always production costs are free in case you want to change up the commercial.

Lynn Ross of Garrison Advertising made a presentation on various promotion projects- digital banner ads, radio advertisements, recipe cards and posters. Last year our agency was responsible for getting the monthly reports to the Board regarding the number of hits that your website received. The total cost of our presentation is \$31,827.00, and does not include tax and shipping. The radio would be directly billed from Louisiana Radio Network, taking out that expense of \$12,000, leaving a balance of \$19,827.00, keeping our proposal under the \$20,000.00 cap. The samples on the recipe card and the poster can be changed to feature whatever the Board would like to see on it.

Paul Blair presented to the Board the presentations from Louisiana Cookin' Magazine, a full page ad for \$1,825.00. Country Roads Magazine proposal is for \$2,500.00, which includes a ¼ page ad, website ads and newsletters.

Paul Blair also mentioned to the Board that he is looking for recipes and pictures for the website. Please forward to Patricia or myself and we will get them onto the website.

Paul Blair also mentioned the sponsorships that the Board was able to support last year and would like to do you again this year. FFA - Proficiency Award \$500.00 and LSU - LaYAPP \$300.00 and the tents for the Senate and House breakfast events \$800.00. If any board member would like to attend the breakfasts they are more than welcome to and if any farmer would like to donate strawberries that would also be welcomed.

Paul Blair mentioned Talk Around Town coming out and doing an episode with one of the local farmers and this would be at no additional cost. Commissioner Strain mentioned about his monthly television show Around Town to have local strawberries brought in to promote at no additional cost for the promotion.

**MOTION:** Mrs. Rhonda Poche' made a motion that the Board provide sponsorships to FFA, LSU and the Senate and House breakfast events totaling \$1,600.00. Mr. William Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

The Board had an open discussion on how to spend the funding for this year and how the Louisiana Strawberry Marketing Board and the Ponchatoula Strawberry Festival websites can link to each other. Paul Blair stated that he could get with the Department's IT department to see what it would take to get the two sites to link.

Chairman Chris Olah gave a breakdown as discussed to spend the money as follows:

Louisiana Cookin' Magazine - \$1,825.00  
Garrison Advertising \$2,510.00 - Posters \$800.00, Website \$360.00, Recipe Cards \$1,350.00  
Sponsorships of \$1,600.00 as voted on and approved earlier  
Louisiana Radio Network - \$8,550.00  
Gagliano Group - \$16,230.00  
Louisiana Public Broadcasting - \$4,600.00  
Totaling \$35,315.00

**MOTION:** Dr. Regina Bracy made a motion to accept the presentation made by Mr. Chris Olah. Mr. William Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

## OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Mike Strain, DVM thanked everyone for being present and their assistance in tonight's meeting. Commissioner Strain discussed the current number of members on the Board to which there are fourteen, which is a large board. Does the Board need to reduce the number of members on the Board; do we need a banker or a financial interest board member? It could help to keep from struggling to get a quorum present. When we go into legislative session and we are looking at the Boards and how to make them work a little better. The Board agreed with the Commissioner that a banker and a financial interest are not needed on the Board. That would bring the number of board members down to twelve. Discussion was brought about changing the Chairperson of the Louisiana Strawberry Festival to be someone who is appointed or nominated by the Festival Board to serve on the Louisiana Strawberry Marketing Board. These changes will be worked on by Commissioner Strain's office.

Mrs. Rhonda Poche's brought the issue up about the new labeling law and where does it currently stand. The new law is officially in effect and will be enforced to the best of the Department's employee ability. Roadside vendors must have required paperwork and appropriate signage and labeling. Paul will have Patricia send a copy to each board member and Paul will get with the Department's IT department to have it put on the website for easy access.

Commissioner Strain asked that if each vendor would go ahead and get the final proposal to the Department for processing. The Commissioner provided each vendor with one of his business cards and explained that the contracts would have to first go to Ms. Wanda Ward, our contract person, who will prepare it. And then it will go on to Ms. Tabitha Gray with legal would will review it and then forward it to me for my approval and signature.

Paul Blair will be handling the creative aspect of the posters and he wants to make sure that what goes on the posters is what goes on the billboards for repetition. Mrs. Lanelle Arceneaux will get provide a recipe to be used on the cards and she has already provided Mrs. Estay with her contact information to have the Strawberry Festival Queen present at the product demonstrations.

**MOTION:** Dr. Regina Bracy moved to adjourn. Mrs. Lanelle Arceneaux seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.