

FAPC Specialists Attend Governor's Conference

By Allison Richard

OKLAHOMA CITY – Specialists from the Oklahoma Food and Agricultural Products Research and Technology Center attended the first Governor's Conference on Agricultural & Economic Growth held April 13 and 14 in Oklahoma City.

J. Roy Escoubas, FAPC director; Chuck Willoughby, Corey Stone and Jim Brooks, FAPC business and marketing specialists; and Mandy Gross, FAPC communications specialist were present during the conference.

"The Governor's Conference was a great opportunity for government and industry leaders to come together and discuss the importance of agriculture and economic development," Gross said.

Several government and industry leaders spoke during the conference. One of which was Escoubas.

Escoubas addressed participants during the "Value-Added Agriculture & Economic Growth" breakout session about the services that the FAPC provides.

Escoubas said the FAPC can assist entrepreneurs with services such as economic development, business marketing, food and fiber research and development, food safety, food engineering and quality management.

The FAPC holds various workshops and seminars to educate people about starting a business, including the Basic Training workshop. More than 400 people have graduated from this program.

"The Center has had a direct impact on the economy by creating jobs and revenue," said Escoubas. "FAPC has helped more than 800 companies with more than 1000 projects."

Other speakers during the conference included Terry Peach, secretary and commissioner of agriculture and conference moderator; Scott Meacham, Office of State Finance director; Kathryn Taylor, secretary of commerce and tourism; Roy Peters, Oklahoma Manufacturer's Alliance; Greg Allan, Advance Food Co.; and Bob Funk, Express Personnel; and others.

In addition, Congressman Frank D. Lucas and Gov. Brad Henry gave keynote addresses.

"Agriculture is a priority in my administration," Henry said during his keynote address.

Henry went on to speak about the vision and future for rural Oklahoma. He said commerce can make a difference in rural Oklahoma.

Henry also spoke about ensuring the vitality of the school system and the importance for rural communities to stay connected through telecommunications.

"The bottom line is we must all work together," Henry said. "We can't afford to compete against each other."

Other topics discussed during the conference include quantifying Oklahoma's strengths, weaknesses and barriers; agricultural tourism and maximizing land use; alternative energy and energy resource development; natural resources' role in community development; and identifying public resources and funding.

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