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Steering Committee moves to incorporate Arkansas Women in Agriculture

With the intention of preparing Arkansas women to meet the challenges of an ever-changing agricultural marketplace and rural landscape, a group of individuals drawn from all agricultural interests and aspects met as a Steering Committee to conduct the first statewide conference for Arkansas Women in Agriculture. The first Arkansas Women in Agriculture conference was held in March 2005 and aimed at women involved in all aspects of agriculture from production to marketing or retailing. The conference was a tremendous success with more than 300 in attendance. In response to the overwhelming reception of the conference, the second Arkansas Women in Agriculture Conference was held in the spring of 2006 with over 350 attending.

To better serve the needs of Arkansas women, through the conference and in future avenues relating to Arkansas women in agriculture, the Steering Committee began analysis of advantages to incorporation. After lengthy discussion during a Steering Committee meeting, a motion was unanimously approved to create a non-profit entity for continuation of the organization as the Arkansas Women in Agriculture, Inc.

The following have been elected as the interim board of Arkansas Women in Agriculture, Inc. Board Members are: Northwest Representative-Brenda Vassaur Taylor and Melony Wilson; Northeast Representatives-Tina Gray Teague and Nickie Taul; Southwest Representatives-Vivian Pope & Precious Williams; Southeast Representatives-Martha Manley, Heather Underwood and Kim Freeman; and Members at large-Tamara Walkingstick & Dawn Stidd. Officers elected are: President-Janie Hipp; 1st Vice President-Carla Vaught; 2nd Vice President-Judy LaGrone; Secretary-Shannon Mirus; Treasurer-Carrier Hirmer; and Communications Director-Amy Lyman.

The board has 501c3 nonprofit status recognition underway and will be building an ongoing agenda for activities including the annual conference that will assist all women in the state of Arkansas in improving and sustaining their agricultural operations.

The 2007 Arkansas Women in Agriculture Conference is scheduled for March 8-9 and will be held at the Hot Springs Convention Center. Details will be published at a later time.

For more information and to identify ways to become involved in Arkansas Women in Agriculture, Inc., please contact Janie Hipp at 479-575-6935, Amy Lyman at 501-210-4003 or arwomeninag@gmail.com. visit the Arkansas Women In Agriculture website at www.arwomeninag.org.