Greetings to all! We have completed another successful semester and school year. During May, we had a rush of awards ceremonies, banquets, presentations, and other academic activities. Congratulations to all our graduates. We are truly blessed to have such great students in both our undergraduate and graduate programs.

Blake Jackson, one of our undergraduate students, certainly was successful in receiving both Truman and Udall Scholarships. We are very proud of Blake’s accomplishments. It is interesting to note his academic advisor is Shannon Ferrell, another graduate of our department and a Truman Scholar as well.

Please note the list of 23 seniors who achieved a 3.5 grade point average or higher. This is an impressive body of work academically, and these students are to be congratulated!

We appreciate all our donors who support departmental scholarships. Read about three new scholarships in this issue.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Ag Econ News and we look forward to seeing you during future events and activities. Be sure to mark November 4, 2011 (Rural Economic Conference in Stillwater) and November 5, 2011 (Aggie-X tailgate prior to home football game) on your calendars.

**Ag econ student Blake Jackson receives both Truman and Udall Scholar awards**

Ag econ junior Blake Jackson, an agribusiness: pre-law major from Hartshorne, has received two of America’s top scholarships, the Harry S. Truman Scholarship and the Morris K. Udall and Stuart L. Udall Scholarship.

Blake is the first Oklahoma State University student to receive both scholarships in the same year. He is the 16th OSU student selected for the Truman honor, which goes to college juniors with exceptional leadership potential who are committed to careers in government.

The Udall scholarship is awarded to students who are studying environment-related fields or who are of Native American descent and are pursuing fields related to health care or tribal public policy. Blake is the 13th OSU student to receive this scholarship.

“I feel extremely blessed to be the recipient of both these awards,” Blake said.

After graduation, Blake plans to attend law school and concentrate his studies on environmental and Native American law.

Blake advises students considering applying for these two scholarships “to go for it. You never truly know what you are capable of until you try. I would have never known I was capable of achieving it unless I applied.”

**Jamie Andrews is Udall Finalist**

Ag econ student Jamie Andrews, an agribusiness: pre-law senior from Edmond, was selected as a finalist for the Morris K. Udall and Stuart L. Udall Scholarship.

**Blake Jackson (center) is pictured with (left to right) State Senator Jim Halligan, State Representative Cory Williams, State Senator Mike Schultz, State Senator Richard Lerblance, State Senator Eddie Fields, and State Representative Lee Denney at the Oklahoma State Capitol building where he was notified about his scholarship awards in a surprise announcement.**
Twenty-three seniors achieve 3.5 GPA or higher

Twenty-three graduating ag econ seniors were recognized at the banquet for Outstanding Academic Achievement for achieving a GPA of 3.5 or higher.

- Paul Barbour
- Aaron Coffey (agricultural economics, Stillwater)
- Laura Conley (agricultural economics, Liberty Township, Ohio)
- Brittany Declue (agricultural economics, Pratt, Kansas)
- Lindsey Forshee (agribusiness, Pratt, Kansas)
- Sarah Fry
- Brette Gollihare (agricultural economics, Kellyville)
- Haley Hayton (agribusiness, Billings)
- Laura Hatcher (agricultural economics, Dudley, Georgia)
- Will Osborn (agribusiness, Tuttle)
- Seth Menefee (agricultural economics, Lake Arthur, NM)
- Cole Lamson (agricultural economics, International Ag Marketing, Skiatook)
- Cody Ott
- Courtney Pinkerton (agricultural economics, Watonga)
- Justin Plunk (agricultural economics, PVM, Norman)
- Ryan Ramseyer
- Johnna Rushin
- Coby Smith (agribusiness, Guthrie)
- Paula Smithheisler
- Whitney Walta (agricultural economics, finance, Kingfisher)
- Alice White (agribusiness, Belvue, Kansas)
- Alex Yauk (agricultural economics, Buffalo)

Top Seniors

Wyatt Swinford (agribusiness: pre-law, Okema) and Jeremy Bennett (environmental science/agricultural economics, Yukon) were recognized as two of the 2010-2011 Outstanding Seniors of OSU (selected by the OSU Alumni Association).

Wyatt, shown at left, was also the 2009 OSU Homecoming King, and he served as mascot Pistol Pete for the 2010-2011 school year.

Jeremy was also named the 2010-2011 Paul and Mary Hummer Outstanding [ag] Senior Award recipient at the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) Scholarship and Awards Banquet. Jeremy is seen at right with CASNR Dean Robert Whitson, also receiving the Dean Le Crone Award for outstanding seniors.

Wyatt and Jeremy had previously been selected as two of the OSU...
Banquet (Continued from page 2)
economics, Wichita, Kansas), and Paula Smithheisler (International AG Marketing, Tonkawa).
Paula Smithheisler also received the 2009-2010 Outstanding Senior Award from the Western Agricultural Economics Association.
Sarah Fry also received the All-Around Senior - Campus Wide Activities and Academic Achievement - James S. Plaxico Award.
In addition, Sarah Fry and Paula Smithheisler were recognized as winners of the CASNR Dean LeCrone Award for outstanding seniors.
The Outstanding Senior - Scholastic Achievement Citation recipient was Ryan Ramseym.
Mike Willingham, (agribusiness, Broken Bow) received the Oklahoma Chapter of American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers Award for Outstanding Appraiser, the L.A. Parcher Award. Jason Becker (agribusiness, Turpin) received the chapter’s E.E. Huff Award for Outstanding Farm Manager.

New Scholarship Donors
Three new scholarships were provided by donors at the banquet this year.
Ken and Kathy Starks presented the Ken and Kathy Starks Endowed Scholarship in Agricultural Economics.
The Diane and Gerald Doeksen Rural Development Scholarship was presented by Dr. and Mrs. Gerald and Diane Doeksen.
The Dr. John W. Goodwin Endowed Agricultural Economics Scholarship, was presented by Dr. Jim Plaxico, Mrs. Phoebe Goodwin, Dennis Slagell, Paul Schulte, and Scott Sewell.

Aggie-X Awards
Aggie-X Awards were presented at the banquet to Brent Schoelen (agribusiness education, McKinney, Texas) and Jady Lollis (agribusiness economics, Kingston) as Outstanding New Members; Robert Parrish (agribusiness, Hunter) and Andrew Greer (agribusiness, Tulsa) as Outstanding Current Members; and Paula Smithheisler as Outstanding Senior Member.
Jady Lollis, Robert Parrish, Andrew Greer, and Brent Schoelen also received Aggie-X 2011-2012 Scholarships along with Trindle Brueggen (agribusiness, Okarche).

FFA State Officer
Brandon Baumgarten, agribusiness student from Oiltown, was recently elected state FFA secretary at the FFA State Conference.

FFA National Winner
Josh Lippoldt, agricultural economics freshman from Kingfisher was a member of the National Livestock Evaluation Team that won first place at the 2010 National FFA Convention in Indianapolis.
Honor societies select ag econ students

Phi Kappa Phi
Blake Jackson, Ryan Ramseyer, and Sarah Shepherd (agricultural economics, Clinton) were inducted and initiated into the Oklahoma State University Chapter of the Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi for 2010-2011.

This year, Haley Baumgardner (agribusiness, Carrier) and Randi Williams (agribusiness, Spiro) were selected as members.

Founded in 1897, Phi Kappa Phi is the oldest and most selective honor society for top-ranking students from all academic disciplines.

Blue Key Honor Society
Paul Barbour, Seth Menefee and Ryan Ramseyer were all selected for membership into the Blue Key Honor Society.

Blue Key Honor Society is a premier honor society that recognizes college students at senior institutions of higher education for balanced and all-around excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service.

Mortar Board
Five ag econ students were recently honored for their exceptional achievements in scholarship, leadership, and service to the community by initiation in the Achafoa chapter of Mortar Board: Katleyn Kohlbeck (agribusiness marketing and animal science business, Bozeman, Montana); Haley Baumgardner, Carly Schnaithman (agribusiness and marketing, Garber); Blake Jackson, and Randy Gordon (agribusiness: pre-law, Seiling).

Mortar Board is a national honor society for college students that recognizes qualities of superior scholastic ability, outstanding and continual leadership, and dedicated service to the college or university community.

Ag econ Honors College students present thesis projects

Paula Smithhausler, Sarah Fry, and Ryan Ramseyer all completed the OSU Honors College program and received Honors College hoods during a special ceremony this spring.

To complete the Honors College program, students are required to prepare an undergraduate thesis. Paula, Sara, and Ryan recently presented synopses of their theses to members of the ag econ department. Ryan’s thesis was titled “Integrating Linear Programming into the AGEC 4213 Curriculum: A Textbook Chapter and Case Study”. Paula’s thesis concerned “The Future of the Family Farm: A Whole Farm Management Plan.” Sarah Fry’s thesis covered “Equine Atrial Fibrillation.”
President’s Letter

Hello, my name is Makayla Krick, and I will be serving as the 2011-2012 Aggie-X President. The newly elected officer team is as follows: Laura Padgett, Educational Vice President; Robert Parrish, Administrative Vice President; Trindle Brueggen, Assistant Administrative Vice President; Andrew Greer, Secretary/Reporter; and Jady Lollis, Treasurer. Our Senior Advisor next year will be Dr. Derrell Peel, and Dr. Brian Whitacre will serve as the new Junior Advisor. While this is an executive team of all new officers with the exception of myself, I feel that we will be able to continue Aggie-X traditions and hopefully start a few new ones. In the last year, Aggie-X continued to be active not only in CASNR, but across the university as well. The club raised enough money to continue scholarship support to the administrative officer positions as well as four club member scholarships. Aggie-X participated in flag football, volleyball, and softball with a great effort, making it to the playoffs in all three sports. Aggie-X also put on a bake sale to buy school supplies for a school in Southeast Asia. The funds raised were used to purchase things like pens, pencils, and paper. Last year we had our second annual Aggie-X tailgate, which turned out to be a huge success even with the surprise of a morning game. This year, we are excited to have our third annual Aggie-X tailgate on November 5, 2011. Aggie-X invites all alumni, faculty, and staff to the tailgate and cookout three hours before kickoff. As in past years, we will hold the tailgate on the northeast side of Ag Hall. Please feel free to contact me at (405) 742 7770 or at makayla.krick@okstate.edu if you should have any questions about the tailgate or the club in general.

2011-2012 Aggie-X Officers: (left to right) Trindle Brueggen, Assistant Administrative Vice President; Laura Padgett, Educational Vice President; Jady Lollis, Treasurer; Makayla Krick, President; Robert Parrish, Administrative Vice President; Andrew Greer, Secretary/Reporter; and Dr. Derrell Peel, Senior Advisor. Not pictured is Dr. Brian Whitacre, Junior Advisor.

Dr. Derrell Peel, Aggie X 2011-2012 Senior Advisor, prepares pancakes for the 2010 tailgate breakfast prior to the Baylor football game assisted by Charlie Slough, Aggie-X 2010-2011 administrative vice president, while students Jeremy McCasland (left), 2010-2011 Aggie-X Secretary/Reporter, and Cole Lamson enjoy their morning coffees.

Faculty, staff, alumni, emerti, and students and their families enjoyed the Aggie-X Tailgate breakfast. This year’s tailgate will be November 5, three hours prior to the football game.
Graduating students

A special hooding ceremony was held in Ag Hall in May to honor these students who have completed their degrees.

Spring 2011 PhD:
- In Bae Ji, South Korea
- Byoung-hoon Lee, Korea
- Samarth Shah, India

Summer 2011 PhD:
- Jong San Choi, South Korea
- Chaowana Phetcharat, Thailand
- Emmanuel Tumusiime, Uganda

Spring 2011 MS:
- Max Corbin, Hobart, OK
- Steve Gilliland, Stillwater, OK
- Will Robertson, Ketchum, OK
- Eyosiyas Tegegne, Ethiopia
- Tyler Klain, Ruso, North Dakota
- Rock André, Haiti
- Carra Crow, Coyle, OK
- Galen Williams, Fairland, OK
- Rupak Lohani, Nepal

Summer 2011 MS:
- Matt Padgett, Stillwater, OK
- JoDee Schmidt, Coyle, OK
- Folakemi Sobowale, Nigeria
- Vonesili Saysana, Laos

Summer 2011 MAg:
- Hanna Lawson, Carney, OK
- Michael Reilley, Stillwater, OK

GSA Spring Picnic

On Saturday, April 16, the Agricultural Economics Graduate Student Association (GSA) hosted its annual Spring Picnic. Graduate students, faculty, and staff teamed up for food, fun, and fellowship at Couch Park in Stillwater. Many thanks to Tyler Klain, GSA Social Chair, for organizing this event. We look forward to seeing everyone next Fall!

Brenna Ellison, GSA President 2010-2011

Brian Williams, ag econ PhD student, prepares to throw a Frisbee at the GSA Spring Picnic in Couch Park in April.

Thesis and dissertation topics

Spring 2011
Theses:
- Tyler Klain - Value of Country of Origin Labeling Information for Beef and Pork in the United States
- Eyosiyas Tegegne - Rural Direct And Counter-Cyclical Payments And Their Impact In A Rural-Urban Perspective (A Case In Oklahoma)
- Carra Crow - Improving Consumer Participation In Local Food Markets: A Case Study of Oklahoma Farmers’ Markets
- Rock André - Aid Relief Values In Haiti After The Earthquake: Haitians' Preferences For Food And Other Basic Commodities
- Will Robertson - Small Manufacturer Strategic Decision Making Assistant Tool (SMSDM): A Case Study of a Small Oklahoma Manufacturer

Galens Williams - An Analysis Of Premiums From A Certified Preconditioning Program
- Michael Reilley - Essays on Recreational Demand for Trout Fishing on the Lower Mountain Fork River and Municipal Water Conservation
- Steve Gilliland - Creative Component - Water Pricing In Oklahoma: A Creative Component To Assess Three Water Cases

Dissertations:
- Samarth Shah - Essays on Liquidity Costs in Futures and Options Markets
- In Bae Ji - Three Essays On Market Power In The U.S. Cattle Procurement Market
- Byoung-hoon Lee - Improved Methods of Estimating Construction Costs of Agricultural Facilities & Forecasting of Wheat Yield and Quality Conditional on Weather Information

MAg -Internship Report
- Melissa Bowers - Economics In Insurance: A Professional Experience With Farmers Insurance Group
Graduate students celebrate after hooding ceremony

See list of graduates on page 6.

Matt Padgett receives his masters hood from Dr. Larry Sanders.

Rock Andre after receiving his masters hood from Dr. Shida Henneberry.

Samarth Shah receives his doctoral hood from Dr. Wade Brorsen.

Max Corbin is congratulated by Dr. Mike Woods after receiving his masters hood.
Faculty News

**Henneberrry wins study abroad award**

Dr. Shida Henneberrry, ag econ professor, (shown at right) has received the 2010-2011 Outstanding Faculty Study Abroad Leader Award. This annual award signifies special recognition by the OSU Outreach Council and is bestowed on a faculty member who has made a contribution to the internationalization of OSU by providing a significant study abroad experience to OSU students.

OSU Campus Life initiated the award in 2008 to be included in the President’s Leadership Recognition Ceremony.

Award winners are recognized for demonstrating a commitment to providing an international experience for OSU students; developing a study abroad program that has served the OSU community, has provided a significant international experience, and has had an impact beyond the winner’s department or college; and for developing a program that serves as a model for other faculty study abroad program leaders and program developers.

“Dr. Henneberrry,” said Dr. Mike Woods, ag econ department head, “has developed several study abroad courses including destinations like China (including Tibet), Costa Rica, and Argentina (including Patagonia). Students consistently indicate experiences they have on these study abroad courses have greatly impacted their perspective on the world. Dr. Henneberrry is a leader among our faculty in encouraging significant international experiences for our students.”

**Brian Whitacre receives Bonnie Teater Community Development Early Career Achievement Award from SRDC**

Brian Whitacre, ag econ assistant professor, was recently awarded the 2011 Bonnie Teater Community Development Early Career Achievement Award for his work in strengthening the understanding and application of broadband and e-commerce for small businesses and rural local governments and improving access to advancing community healthcare.

The award, sponsored by the Southern Rural Development Center in Mississippi, honors “the work of a ‘rising star’ who has already achieved great things in his early career in community development.”

According to the award announcement, “In an effort to respond to community problems and concerns expressed by local citizens of Oklahoma, Whitacre has developed innovative extension programs that are designed to address two key concerns in rural areas. His genuine concern with improving the quality of life for rural business owners and residents... along with his impressive track record of publishing high quality journal articles... makes it most fitting that Dr. Brian Whitacre be honored... as a recipient of the 2011... award.”

Mitch Renkow, a professor at North Carolina State University says that Whitacre has “an enviable record that clearly indidcates a vigorous, resourceful, and multi-faceted approach to meeting the demands for information on various aspects of rural community economic development on behalf of the citizens of Oklahoma.”

According to Dr. Mike Woods, ag econ department head, “In only its fourth year of existence, the website and e-commerce program has been presented to nearly 1,000 small business owners in Oklahoma.”

Dr. Bo Beaulieu, Director of the Southern Rural Development Center, traveled to Stillwater to present the award to Brian in a special ceremony held in Ag Hall. Dr. Bealieu then gave a short presentation on the center’s programs and activities.

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Faculty News

Faculty members receive OSU awards

Three ag econ faculty members were honored at the University Awards Convocation last fall.

Dr. Dan Tilley, professor, (below right) and Dr. Rodney Holcomb, professor, (below center) received the Merrick Award, presented to faculty members who are judged to bring their students a better understanding and appreciation of the American economic system.

Dr. Mike Dicks (below left), professor, was presented with the International Education Faculty Excellence Award.

Winners of this award are faculty members who have distinguished themselves by integrating an international perspective into teaching, research, and/or outreach.

Faculty honored at Spring Banquet

At the scholarships and awards banquet, the Aggie-X Club announced the outstanding teacher and adviser recipients.

Ken Starks received the outstanding teacher award, and Dr. Art Stoecker received the outstanding advisor award.

Department members win JAAE awards

Dr. Francis Epplin, (right) ag econ professor, and Dr. Wade Brorsen, ag econ Regents Professor, are two of the winners of the Outstanding Journal Article Award at the Southern Agriculture Economics Association Annual Meeting in Corpus Christi. Other authors of the article, “Optimal Grazing Termination Date for Dual-Purpose Winter Wheat Production,” Journal of Agricultural & Applied Economics, are Karen Taylor, 2007 PhD ag econ graduate now at Farm Credit Canada, Brian Fieser, former OSU graduate student, and Gerald Horn, OSU.

Dr. Francis Epplin, (right) and Andrew Griffith, ag econ PhD student, are two of the winners of the second place award in the Selected Poster Competition at the Southern Agriculture Economics Association Annual Meeting in Corpus Christi. Other winners for the poster, “Switchgrass Monocultures versus Diverse Mixtures of Grasses and Forbs to Produce Biomass Feedstock,” which hangs on the wall in the background, are Samuel Fuhlendorf, OSU, and Robert Gillen, Kansas State University.

C-FARE activities involve faculty

Several ag econ faculty members are involved with C-FARE (Council on Food, Agricultural, and Resource Economics), a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the application of economics to food, agricultural, and resource issues at the national level.

Damona Doye, Regents Professor, is currently serving as Chair of the Board of Directors. Jayson Lusk, professor, recently spoke at a briefing to 80 Congressional staff and stakeholders about his research on food choices made by consumers.

Dr. Woods, department head, is chair of the Blue Ribbon Panel on economic opportunities in rural communities.

According to Damona, C-FARE activities can greatly benefit the department and potentially involve other faculty members. She states, “C-FARE’s aim through its various forms of outreach is to help inform public policy discussions with economic research and to help advance our nation’s science.”

C-FARE activities include briefing Congressional staff, expanding opportunities for federal grant funding to economists, encouraging generations of future applied economists, and many more.
CASNR names ag econ alumni Shannon Ferrell and Chris Stephens as first Early Achievement Award Recipients

Shannon Ferrell
Shannon is a native of Leedey, Oklahoma, where he says his love of agriculture and passion for teaching began. As a young person, he was involved in the 4-H Youth Development Program. He served as 4-H state president and received the State 4-H Hall of Fame Award.

As an undergraduate agribusiness major, Shannon was a Truman Scholar and a CASNR outstanding senior. After receiving his master’s degree in agricultural economics, he attended law school at Oklahoma City University, graduating summa cum laude.

He practiced law for McKinney and Stringer and then moved to Hall Estil Hardwick Gable Golden and Nelson as a founding member of their environmental practice group.

In fall 2007, Shannon says he found his dream job as a member of the agricultural economics faculty. In addition to teaching, Shannon also facilitates a variety of extension programs. He has been very active in wind research.

Shannon’s love of students and teaching is demonstrated through creative instruction strategies including using contemporary music, rap lyrics, and Red Sox baseball.

Chris Stephens
Chris grew up in Chickasha, Oklahoma, where he was a FFA member and southwest district vice president of Oklahoma FFA. While seeking his undergraduate degree in agricultural economics with minors in finance and political science, Chris served as a CASNR ambassador and was active in multiple student clubs.

Chris was a Truman Scholar and the first OSU student to receive the British Marshall Scholarship. He was selected as the 1999 Outstanding Senior male by the OSU Alumni Association, and the 1999 CASNR Outstanding Senior.

In 1999, Chris went to England where he earned his Master of Philosophy degree in land economy from the University of Cambridge and a Master of Science in comparative social policy from the University of Oxford.

After graduating from the Yale Law School, Chris worked as a law clerk to Judge Robert H. Henry of the U.S. Court of Appeal for the Tenth Circuit and at the Oklahoma City law firm of Crowe and Dunlevy.

He is currently the Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Oklahoma. He serves as president of the Oklahoma City chapter of the Federal Bar Association and is an active member of the Oklahoma Bar Association of Oklahoma City.

Mike Woods, ag econ department head, said, “The CASNR Alumni Association has honored two of our graduates with the inaugural Early Achievement Award.”

“Shannon Ferrell has rejoined our department and is doing a great job with both teaching and extension efforts.”

“Chris Stephens is establishing a significant career as Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Western District Court of Oklahoma.”

“Both Shannon and Chris were Truman Scholars (among many other honors) and are true role models for our students.”
Barry Bessinger graduated from OSU in 1978 with an agricultural economics degree. He currently works for Chisholm Trail Farm Credit in Watonga as a Vice President/Branch Manager. He has worked for Farm Credit for 26 years.

“The best part of my job is my customers, I love all of my customers,” he says. “All we do is ag loans. My favorite thing to do in my job is appraising land.”

Barry has many happy memories of his time at OSU.

“My education at OSU and specifically my degree in ag econ, farm and ranch management option, has really impacted me in more ways than I can describe. When I enrolled at OSU in 1974, I began as an ag ed major because I thought I wanted to be an ag teacher.”

“Well, Dr. Terry enrolled me in Dr. John Goodwin’s 1114 ag econ class my second semester. We had just gone through the terrible cattle wreck of 1973 and the Russian wheat scare about that time, and I got to thinking, I need to figure out the economics of agriculture, so I changed to ag econ with Dr. Goodwin as my advisor.”

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“Dr. Goodwin left after my sophomore year, and I got a new guy for my advisor, none other than Dr. Joe Williams! Well, the timing was just right to take both of his farm and ranch classes, and I learned a lot that I use every day now. I get to see Dr. Joe quite often, and I’m proud of our relationship; it is all good! As far as any of my past OSU connections, he is at the top of my list.”

“I was very active in Aggie-X. It was the best club on campus at the time in my opinion. We had a lot of fun hawking cokes at home football games and going on some great spring break trips with the money we raised. I also recall each fall attending the ag econ picnic. It was a great time to spend with the department in a relaxed social atmosphere.”

“But, the best event that occurred related to Aggie-X is the fact that I met my wife there! I was a senior, and Dana was a sophomore (majoring in Horticulture). Because Aggie-X was the best club as I stated above, Dana decided to join and I was the Education VP. Well, we just hit it off, maybe because we were both from Western Oklahoma (she’s from Cordell).”

Anyway, it worked out and we’ve been married nearly 33 years now!

Barry continues his story:

“My first job was with Natural Gas Pipeline Company of America, in Houston, as a landman, at a whopping salary of $13,000 per year.”

“I guess one thing I didn’t learn anywhere previous to this is what a beneficiary is. My first day at work I’m signing up the paper work, and the lady asked me who did I want for my beneficiary? Well I have no idea what this word means, and I’m scratching my head, and then my new boss says, you probably want your folks don’t you? I still didn’t understand the question, so I just said yea, that sounds good. Well I found out real quick after that what the word beneficiary means, and I didn’t have Google either! I’ve since passed this story along to just about every OSU student I can.”

(Continued on page 13)
Kyle Hughbanks graduated from OSU in 1990 with an agricultural economics degree with an international marketing option. He is currently President & C.E.O., Director of The Central National Bank of Alva, BancCentral Financial Services.

Kyle is responsible for all aspects of community banking. He says he must be able to effectively interact and communicate with a wide range of people including customers, employees, regulators, shareholders, and auditors.

Kyle considers the most positive and challenging aspect of his position to be the numerous roles that he must fulfill on a daily basis, and the speed with which he must change gears in doing so. In addition, he considers it very important for the public to understand that community banking adds to the core strength of our state and region, and that it is not the same as Wall Street Banking that is so frequently reported on by the media.

"I could discuss all day," Kyle states, "the positive role our [ag econ] department and numerous individuals have had in my life. Clubs such as Aggie-X and the National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA), to name a few, were a shaping force."

"Dr. Dan and Betty Badger ‘adopted’ me and so many others. Their lasting effect was powerful. I came to OSU on scholarship without knowing anyone. I would not have stayed without the encouragement and friendship that they provided."

"I went through an unfortunate phase where I thought that my own ‘wise and wonderful’ parents didn’t know anything, but I would listen to the Badger’s. Little did I know that my parent’s and the Badger’s were talking behind my back. How great it was to have people who cared!"

“The development and expansion of critical thinking and analyzing information to make an informed decision is so fundamental to ag econ and was undoubtedly the cornerstone that enabled me to be successful during my college experience and in my chosen profession.”

“The educational nurturing and teaching as well as the personal component was the total package that makes our [ag econ] department so special, and truly sets us apart.”

“I would tell any current student to carefully study what they believe their true interests are, and find a career to match. The financial component is not what they should focus on. Every career is challenging, and it has been proven numerous times the only way that anyone can stay focused and excel is to be doing what they truly love and believe in.”

“A few honors that I received at OSU include Top 10 Senior in the ag econ department, the college of agriculture, and the university.”

Presently, Kyle is affiliated with the CASNR Alumni Association as Vice Chairman, with his church, and many local civic and community groups. He is also Director of Rural Enterprises, Inc. in Durant. REI is an economic development organization focused on helping Oklahoma grow with positive, high impact projects that was founded by Wes Watkins.

In addition, Kyle serves as Chairman of the Bill Johnson Correctional Facility Community Advisory Committee for Alva.

Kyle’s family includes his wife of 16 years, Trina Hughbanks, who is a Doctor of Optometry, and his three children: Ridge(13), Sabrina (12), and Savannah (10). He says he stays very engaged with the kid’s activities, including all their sports, church activities, and music lessons.

In addition to his job and all his other activities, Kyle says, “We have our family farm where we primarily produce wheat, cattle, and alfalfa.” He calls it his “Work Release Program.”
Indonesian ag econ alumnus Harry Azhar Azis visits OSU

Harry Azhar Azis, Co-Chairman Committee XI of Indonesian Parliament, and a PhD graduate of the ag econ department in 2000, recently visited OSU and spoke with faculty and students about his experiences in the Indonesian parliament.

He talked about dealing with the increasing demands of the people and how he negotiates with government ministries in charge of economic policies. He also shared key problems still facing Indonesia since adopting a democratic system in 1999.

The parliament Committee XI consists of finance, banking, and development planning. His duties include supervising the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Planning, Banking, Stock Exchange and Insurance Industries, the Supreme Auditor Office and the Bureau of Statistics. Dr. Azis has previously served as co-chairman and then chairman of the parliament Budget Committee.

Dr. Azis is in his second term as a member of Indonesia's parliament, where he represents the Riau Islands district. He says that the power of knowledge and his background as an economist assists him with his job by helping him make good decisions that will benefit the people of his country.

Dr. Dan Tilley states that Dr. Azis was politically active even as an undergraduate student in Indonesia. He says, “Other Indonesian students understood then that he would be a leader in Indonesia in the future. His career path, “ Dr. Tilley continues, “has taken the direction that you might have forecast that it would because of his political activism while he was in school.”

“One interesting thing about Azis,” says Dr. Tilley, “is how successfully he uses FaceBook to communicate with his constituents and supporters. He has also been featured on the covers of many magazines in Indonesia and has been the subject of many newscasts.” He states that one of the primary reasons for Dr. Azis’ success is that “he thinks before he talks. He is always very conscious of the impact of his words.”

Dr. Tilley believes that Dr. Azis “really represents our department well.”

Bessinger (Continued from page 11)

“I absolutely hated living in Houston (coming from the little town of Mt. View), and moved to a couple of different towns in North Texas before eventually getting an offer to work for Western Production Credit Association in Guymon in 1980. I loved the panhandle and working in Guymon (we actually lived in Goodwell), but an opening occurred in Watonga in 1985 and I was hired to my present position.”

“I like Watonga because it’s close to home, OKC, and OSU. I have two sons who graduated from Watonga.”

“Jay, my youngest, I’m proud to say, graduated with a degree in agribusiness in May 2010. He also completed 9 hours toward his masters, but accepted a job from Chesapeake in December as a landman, a very similar path to my own. “

“My oldest son Travis has had many struggles in his life, beginning on the day he was born. He was born on July 21, 1982, and his due date was November 4, so he came in 3 ½ months early at 1 lb and 7 ½ oz. He spent the first year in the hospital before we brought him home and he had a total of 17 surgeries, mostly related to his lungs and breathing problems. Travis now works at Mountain Country Foods in Okeene and is a new parent to our first grandson Kamden.”

“I’m at the age now that I’m eligible to retire, but I like my job so much I think I’ll just keep on doing what I’m doing for a few more years. Dana and I still attend all of OSU’s home football games with a big bunch of fellow alums, have tons of fun at our tailgates, and have attended about all of the recent bowl games in driving distance.”
OSU ag econ department now has Facebook and Twitter pages

In addition to our website at http://www.agecon.okstate.edu, the agricultural economics department has a new Facebook site. Go to http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Oklahoma-State-University-Department-of-Agricultural-Economics/155458387839281, click “like” to add this new site to your Facebook favorites.

Also follow the department on twitter@OSUAgecon (http://twitter.com/OSUAgecon#).

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service website can be accessed at http://www.agecon.okstate.edu/extension/.

Faculty hosts holiday luncheon

Ag econ Emeriti Gordon Sloggett (left) and Jim Plaxico (former department head) talk at the 2010 Ag Econ holiday luncheon.

Over 100 attended the 2010 Ag Econ Rural Economic Outlook Conference

The 2010 Ag Econ Rural Economic Outlook Conference last fall attracted over 100 participants including members of the finance community and agricultural and rural representatives from industry and government from Oklahoma and beyond.

Keynote speakers Neil Conklin from the Farm Foundation, Jason Henderson from the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City, and Chris Peterson from Michigan State University were well received as were several members of the OSU agricultural economics department.

This year’s conference will be held November 4 at the ConocoPhillips OSU Alumni Center.

Mark your calendars to attend this years Ag Econ Rural Economic Conference scheduled for November 4, 2011 in Stillwater.