

News



Fall – 2008



Congressman Adam Putnam Highlights Banquet

Tropical Storm Fay unfortunately dampened the prospects for a very successful Citrus Expo trade show and seminar program scheduled for August 20-21st, but Congressman Adam Putnam lifted attendees' spirits at the 2008 annual Gulf Citrus Expo Banquet, which was held despite the inclement weather and challenging logistics!

The 2008 Citrus Expo Seminar Program, which was condensed from its originally scheduled two-day format, was held September 4th at two locations, the Citrus Research and Education Center at Lake Alfred, and the Southwest Florida Research and Education Center in Immokalee. Several hundred growers, industry leaders and allied industry representatives participated. Gary Cooper, president of Southeast AgNet/*Citrus Industry Magazine*/Citrus Expo, tactfully worked with the UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) to capture the most timely aspects of the seminar program.

This year's banquet featured a video memorial tribute to Mason Smoak, a keynote address by Congressman Putnam, a 60th Anniversary video salute to Florida Citrus Mutual, Florida Department of Citrus highlights and the recognition of "special" industry leaders.

Congressman Adam Putnam, who has been the Florida citrus industry's "go to guy" in Washington, DC, told the audience that despite the economic downturn challenging the nation, "good things" are happening in the nation's Capitol for agricultural "specialty crops."

Focusing on the recent passage of the "Farm Bill," Putnam noted that the new legislation was extremely positive for Florida agriculture as it "institutionalized" a funding source that will benefit the state's "specialty crops" such as citrus. He explained that through the Farm Bill, millions of dollars in "block grants" for research and conservation programs will be made available to producers of fruits and vegetables, beginning this federal fiscal year and for years to come.

The Congressman warned growers of the new wave of "food safety" concerns, citing the recent Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) false implications of "Florida tomatoes" as the source of salmonella contamination, which cost the industry millions. He suggested that the industry continue its "traceability" efforts as a front line defense measure in light of heightened public concerns, and urged the industry to work closer with FDA and other key state and federal agencies to jointly confront food safety issues.

Focusing on Florida agriculture's future leadership, Congressman Putnam told attendees, "Get involved! Join and support your grower organizations! Future agricultural generations will face many new and non-traditional challenges, and your AG associations will be even more important than today."

"Going forward, the next generation of farmers,
continued on page five

GCGA Elects 2008-09 Association Officers

At its 22nd annual meeting on June 4, 2008, at the Dallas Townsend Agricultural Center in LaBelle, FL, the Gulf Citrus Growers Association elected its officers to serve the organization during the 2008-2009 operational year. Elected to lead the association are the following:

President

David Wheeler
Wheeler Farms, Inc.

Vice President

Carey Soud
Soud Family Partnership

Secretary

Wade Timpner
George Austin, Inc.

Treasurer

Callie Walker
English Brothers

Wheeler, a 1986 graduate of the University of Florida's College of Agriculture with a degree in Food and Resource Economics, was re-elected to a fourth consecutive term as president. He began his citrus business career as an owner/operator of a gift fruit operation in Lake Placid. He joined the family's citrus business in 1990 as a grove manager for Wheeler Farms, Inc., a company owning groves in Southwest Florida, the "Ridge" of Highlands and Polk counties and on the east coast of the state. He is now president of Wheeler Farms, Inc.



"Gulf Citrus" Officers 2008-09
(Standing left) Carey Soud, vice president and Wade Timpner, secretary.
(Seated left) David Wheeler, president and Callie Walker, treasurer.

In addition to his leadership in "Gulf Citrus," Wheeler currently serves on the Florida Citrus Commission, representing citrus growers in District 4. He is past president of the Florida Production Managers' Association and a director of the Dundee Citrus Growers Association in Central Florida. Wheeler is a graduate of

the Wedgeworth Leadership Institute for Agriculture and Natural Resources administered through the University of Florida/IFAS.

He spent his formative years in Central Florida, graduating from Winter Haven High School and Polk Community College. He is married (wife Anne Marie) and has three children (David, Jr., Laura and Anna Grace). He is a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Lake Placid.

Carey Soud, elected as GCGA vice president, has served on the association's board for two separate terms, and has over 18 years of professional management experience in the industry here in Southwest Florida. In addition, he is a partner in the family's citrus operations. He served as a District Vice President, treasurer and director for Florida Citrus Mutual, representing the citrus growers in the region. Soud earned a Masters Degree in Business Administration from the University of South Florida, and has recently been promoted to President of First Bank, based in Clewiston, FL.

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association represents citrus growers in Florida's "Gulf" production region including Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee counties. The region accounts for over 25% of the state's total citrus production.

10-Year Associate Members Recognized

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association recognized and thanked seven "Associate Members" of the organization who have supported GCGA for ten years! Gulf Citrus encourages its "grower members" to also "thank" these companies for their support and utilize their goods and services.

Recognized as part of the association's 22nd annual meeting were: **Agri-liance; Barron Collier Partnership & Affiliates; Carden & Associates, Inc.; Custom Citrus Care, Inc.; Louis Dreyfus Citrus, Inc.; Tri-Co. Supply, Inc. and United Agricultural Services of America, Inc.**



Thank You For "Years of Support"!

The leadership of the Gulf Citrus Growers Association truly recognizes the "growing" importance of our organization's "Associate Members" to the success of the association. We thank you for your participation and support of GCGA!

Gulf Citrus Growers Association 2008-2009 Board of Directors

David Wheeler, President
Carey Soud, Vice President
Wade Timpner, Secretary
Callie Walker, Treasurer

Don Barwick
Mark Colbert
Emmett Evans, III
Joe Hilliard, II
John Hoffman
Paul Meador
Mike Murphy
Wayne Simmons
Steve Smith

Ron Hamel

Executive Vice President
gulfcitruscapron@embarqmail.com

www.gulfcitrus.org

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Association Members Elect Board of Directors

At its 22nd annual meeting on June 4, 2008, at the Dallas Townsend Agricultural Center in LaBelle, Florida, the Gulf Citrus Growers Association "officially seated" its 2008-2009 board of directors for the coming season.

The GCGA board was formally seated following the series of annual election meetings in each of the organization's five

counties as outlined in the association's by-laws. The two "at-large" directors were elected through a balloting process among GCGA's grower members.

The newly elected leadership will direct the organization as it works to represent the citrus growing industry in Southwest Florida's "Gulf" production region which includes Charlotte, Collier, Glades,

Hendry and Lee Counties.

The "Gulf Citrus" board members and their respective counties of representation are listed below.

Each of these leaders is a volunteer, and is working on behalf of the collective benefits of all the citrus growers in the region. Please thank and support them during the coming season.



2008-2009 Gulf Citrus Growers Association Board of Directors

(Left to Right) Mike Murphy, Mark Colbert, Ron Hamel, Emmett Evans III, Joe Hilliard II, Paul Meador, Wade Timpner, Callie Walker, Don Barwick, David Wheeler, Steve Smith, Wayne Simmons Carey Soud and John Hoffman.

GCGA 2008-2009 Board of Directors

Charlotte County

Emmett Evans, III
Evans Properties, Inc.

Collier County

John Hoffman
Barron Collier Partnership
Paul Meador
Gulf Citrus Partners LP
Mike Murphy
Cooperative Producers, Inc.

Hendry County

Mark Colbert
Duda Products, Inc.
Joe Hilliard, II
Hilliard Brothers, Inc.
Wayne Simmons
LaBelle Fruit Co. LLC
Steve Smith
Alico, Inc.
Carey Soud
Soud Family Partnership

Glades County

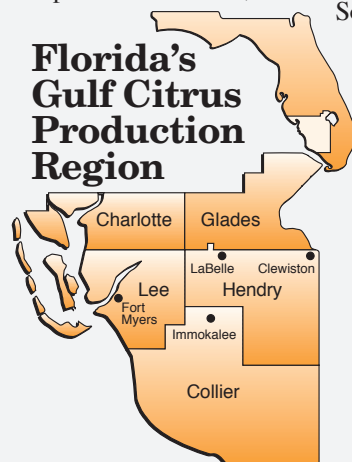
David Wheeler
Wheeler Farms, Inc.

Lee County

Wade Timpner
George Austin, Inc.

At-Large Seats

Don Barwick
Heller Brothers
Packing Corp.
Callie Walker
English Brothers



The Gulf Citrus Growers Association represents citrus growers with thousands of acres of citrus in Southwest Florida's "Gulf" region, which accounts for about 25% of the state's total fruit production. The region's citrus industry generates nearly \$1-billion of total economic impact.



Committee Chairs Appointed to Serve for 2008-2009 Season

GCGA President David Wheeler appointed the following leaders to chair the association's operating committees for the coming year.

Please contact these volunteer leaders for updates and information related to their respective committees.

Associate Member
Sarah Markle

Community Relations
John Hoffman

Governmental Affairs
Joe Hilliard, II

Labor Relations
Mike Murphy

Long Range Policy and Planning
George Austin

Membership
Carey Soud

Production and Research
Mark Colbert

"Gulf Citrus" Conducts 22nd Annual Meeting in LaBelle



President David Wheeler presides at GCGA annual meeting.

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association's 22nd Annual Meeting was held June 4, 2008, at the Dallas Townsend Agricultural Center in LaBelle.

GCGA President David Wheeler welcomed the association's members and guests to the meeting which is an "officially specified" session mandated in the organization's by-laws.

Under the "President's Report" David Wheeler thanked the membership and GCGA staff for their support during the past year. He underscored the excellent leadership and interest of the "grower" members, as well as financial commitments of the "associates" and event sponsors. "GCGA events...like the 'Country Gala' and 'Gulf Classic Tournament' help to keep the association's critical governmental affairs and community relations programs funded and effective on behalf of the citrus/AG industry in the 'Gulf' region," Wheeler noted.

Wheeler reported to the membership that the association's leadership is in "transition" from its past "veterans" to its newer, younger leaders. During this period, he noted the importance and value of the "veteran" leaders to stay involved and work with the new leadership to keep the association properly positioned for continued success. He also informed the members that the GCGA leadership was launching a strategic long-range planning initiative in the Fall of 2008 in efforts to "sustain" the organization.

Callie Walker, GCGA Treasurer, reported that the association's board continues to have an annual review of the organization's financial statements each year by a certified accounting firm, and she invited members to review the reports through the GCGA offices.

Ron Hamel, GCGA executive vice president, recognized and thanked the annual meeting luncheon sponsors Southern Gardens Citrus and Syngenta Crop

Protection. As part of the "Manager's Report," Hamel and Wheeler presented recognition plaques to the associate members marking 10-years of support (see page 2).

FGCU College of Business professors Drs. Howard Finch and Stuart Van Auker were recognized for their dedicated personal leadership to promote the region's "agriculture" as an important part of the community's economic engine.

Mark Colbert, who served as vice president of GCGA from June 2002-2008, was awarded a "Bill North" oil painting of a citrus grove.

Steve Seibert, executive director of the Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida, was "keynote speaker." Seibert, who also served as Secretary of Florida's Department of Community Affairs under Governor Jeb Bush, highlighted the Commission's 2nd annual report and noted that "agriculture" needs to continue to be a very important part of Florida's future! "But," he stressed "the agricultural community needs to get actively engaged in the conversation."

Seibert reported key "recommendations"



Duda's Mark Colbert (right) recognized!

on which the "Commission" will focus: 1) Water for the future needs of all users. 2) Land/Water inter-relationships. 3) Community design and growth into the rural areas. 4) Coordination and cooperation of the various state agencies.

"Most of the state's 'undeveloped' land is in the rural areas and in agriculture," he said. "So your leaders need to be involved."

Foundation Annual Meeting

The GCGA Scholarship Foundation also conducted its annual meeting in conjunction with the "Gulf Citrus" session. Foundation President Norm Todd presided over the meeting, and introduced the other board members: John Hoffman, vice president; Joe English, secretary/treasurer, Callie Walker and David Wheeler.

The membership re-elected Joe English and John Hoffman to three-year terms on the foundation board.

Todd reported that over \$58,000 in student scholarships have been awarded through the program. He recognized the recent recipients and urged attendees to support the effort.

New Employee at GCGA

Bernadette Rashford (Bernie) was recently introduced to the GCGA board of directors as a new "part time" employee for the association.

Her responsibilities will include administrative support of the GCGA's events and member services. She has begun the task of putting together the association's 2009 member directory which will be published during December. In addition, Bernie is working on updates to the GCGA website: www.gulfcitrus.org. She also assisted in the production



of this issue of *Florida Gulf Citrus News*.

Prior to joining GCGA, she worked for WilsonMiller as an information technologist, where she had the responsibilities for updating the company's "intranet," and coordination of its corporate events.

She also was employed by the Hendry County School District in the finance department. While working for WilsonMiller, Bernie assisted Richard Woodruff as a volunteer at GCGA events.

Congressman Putnam Highlights Industry Banquet

continued from page one

growers and ranchers will face not only the challenges with crop production, but increasingly those associated with a growing urban population, including land and water use. Confronting these issues will require greater communications with all sectors of the public like never before," Putnam explained.

"Now is the time to look out to the future, and beyond the immediate crisis and challenge! Future trade deals will be more regional in scope and AG must continue to be at the table. The immigration issue will continue to put more pressure on legal labor sources, and the introduction of mechanical harvesting must be accelerated. And, the environmental issues including water management will intensify," the Congressman noted.

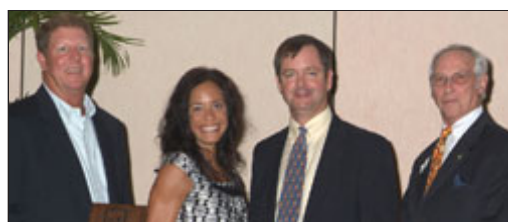
In closing, Congressman Putnam urged the industry to take full advantage of the "specialty crop" provisions in the Farm Bill to invest in the strategic needs important to the future of Florida's producers. "Now is the time to prepare for the future," he said.

Mike Sparks, chief executive officer Florida Citrus Mutual, presented Mutual's 60th Anniversary film which covered the history and accomplishments of the organization.

Ken Keck, executive director of the Florida Department of Citrus, reported on the recent change in the "investment" of Florida citrus grower dollars from the FDOC's traditional marketing programs to production research to confront the immediate threats of the citrus greening and canker diseases. Keck also expressed concerns that the industry cannot allow the demand for Florida's citrus and citrus products to decline to levels that will negatively impact growers' future.

Norm Todd, president of GCGA's Scholarship Foundation, reported that over \$60,000 in scholarships have been awarded to deserving students as part of the association's program. Todd also publicly thanked and recognized Dr. Mongi Zekri of the UF/IFAS, the "Gulf" region's multi-county citrus agent, for his years of dedicated service to Florida's citrus growing industry.

GCGA President David Wheeler and Executive Vice President Ron Hamel presented "special recognition" to leaders contributing to the success of the citrus industry. Recognized for their service as chairs of the GCGA's Associate Member Committee were Robert Murray of Wedgworth's, Inc. and Sarah Markle of Valent USA. State Senator JD Alexander was presented GCGA's "Special Recognition for Outstanding Leadership" award for his service to the industry (see story/photo page 8).



Top: Despite the weather the 2008 banquet was well-attended. **Top Left:** GCGA Secretary Wade Timmer leads tribute to deceased industry leader Mason Smoak. **Top Center:** Dr. Mongi Zekri (left) is honored for his service by GCGA President David Wheeler and Norm Todd. **Top Right:** FDOC Executive Director Ken Keck highlights the department's programs. **Center Left:** Former State Rep. Joe Spratt (left) greets Florida Citrus Commissioner Mike Taylor. **Center Right:** Robert Murray (far left) and Sarah Markle are "officially" recognized for their leadership as "chairs" of GCGA's Associate Member Committee by David Wheeler and Ron Hamel. **Bottom:** UF/IFAS Research Dean Mark McLellan (left) discusses the university's initiatives with Mike Murphy and Hugh English.

Thank You 2008 Banquet Sponsors

Platinum Sponsors

Farm Credit of Central Florida • Farm Credit of South Florida
Farm Credit of Southwest Florida
Florida Department of Citrus & The State of Florida • Southern Gardens Citrus

Gold Sponsors

Alico, Inc. • Barron Collier Partnership-Silver Strand Division
Chemical Dynamics, Inc. • First Bank • Florida Citrus Mutual • MANA
Oswald Trippe and Company, Inc. • Pavese Law Firm • WilsonMiller, Inc.

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Consolidated Citrus Limited Partnership • Dow AgroSciences
DuPont Crop Protection • GOWAN Co. • JBT FoodTech
MacVicar, Federico & Lamb, Inc. • Oakley Groves, Inc.
Pacific Tomato Growers, Ltd. • Plant Food Systems, Inc.
Syngenta Crop Protection • Valent USA

UF/IFAS Southwest Florida HLB Lab Hits 5000 Mark

The HLB Lab located at the UF/IFAS Southwest Florida Research and Education Center (SWFREC) in Immokalee has processed more than 5,000 samples since its opening in February.

The facility represents the state's newest lab dedicated to the Real Time Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) molecular diagnosis of Huanlongbing (HLB), commonly known to growers as citrus greening, a bacterial disease transmitted by the Asian citrus psyllid leafhopper. HLB has spread rapidly since first being discovered in Miami in 2005, and citrus groves throughout south and central Florida are at risk of infection. Growers are attempting efforts to control the spread of HLB by using insecticides; however, there is no known cure for the disease and infected trees ultimately will die.

A huge "thank you" goes out to the growers, elected officials, and other industry representatives for their support



"Greening" Tests Performed

HLB Lab manager Paul Julian preps citrus samples for diagnosis in the PCR machine. The lab processes samples at no charge. (Photo courtesy of UF/IFAS' Julie Carson)

in convincing the state legislature to appropriate the \$250,000 in state funds to get the HLB Lab up and running in Immokalee.

The HLB Lab is operated by manager

Paul Julian, who works under the supervision of SWFREC plant pathologist Dr. Pam Roberts. Julian enlists the assistance of other departmental employees on an as-needed basis to prepare samples for diagnosis, which is the most time-consuming part of the diagnostic process. Once DNA extractions are conducted, samples are analyzed in the PCR machine at the rate of nearly 90 per run. The lab currently accepts samples at no charge, a practice that will continue until the state's allocated funding is depleted. Funding beyond the initial start-up amount currently is being sought.

Growers interested in submitting samples to the HLB Lab can find detailed information on the SWFREC web site at swfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/hlb. The site covers sampling and submission procedures and also includes a Sample Submission Form.

For more information, contact Julian at 239-658-3400 or pjulian@ufl.edu.

Gulf Citrus BMP Report Shows Regional Progress

Citrus growers in the state's southwest "Gulf" production region continued to aggressively enroll in the Florida Department of Agriculture's Gulf Citrus Best Management Practices (BMP) program during the past year according to the latest report issued by UF/IFAS's implementation team. The "Gulf Citrus BMP Manual" was officially adopted and released in February of 2006 by rule under the Florida Watershed Restoration Act. It serves as the regional citrus grower "menu" of practices aimed at enhancing "on farm" water management activities including water quality and conservation of the resource.

The University of Florida IFAS report for the five-county "Gulf" region indicated that as of October 2008, over 88,000 acres have signed up for the program. The recently released (September 2008) Florida Agricultural Statistical Service's "citrus summary" reported that the region currently has 132,939 total acres of citrus. The 88,489 "participating acres" represents 66.6% of the total acreage in the program.

"The cooperative efforts of the UF/IFAS 'team,' the FDACS' Office of Water Policy, the SW Florida Resource Conservation & Development Council, Hendry Soil and Conservation District and the

Gulf Citrus Growers Association are responsible for continuing to move this program into the implementation phase," said Ron Hamel, executive vice president of GCGA. "Representatives of each of these organizations are 'team players' in the Gulf Citrus BMP program, and we are making excellent progress," he added.

The "cost-share" program, which is tied to specific projects and practices, enables growers to take advantage of state funding. For the 2008-09 budget cycle, FDACS has made an additional \$50,000 available for the program. Citrus growers were sent the Gulf Citrus Cost Share booklet, along with an application form.

This information provides the details for participation. To date, about \$500,000 in cost-share funding has been made available to "Gulf" growers for the Citrus BMP effort.

Geovanne Stingen has been serving as the UF/IFAS Best Management Practices (BMP) implementation coordinator since the program was launched. She is making contacts with individual citrus growing operations regarding their participation in the program, as well as providing any assistance with the enrollment process. She can be reached at (863) 634-7830 or (863)993-4846, or by e-mail at stingen@ufl.edu.

Gulf Citrus BMP Progress Report

County	Acres	Number	2008 FASS Census Acres	% of FASS Acres Evaluated
Charlotte	2,984	2	11,991	24.9
Collier	27,762	17	31,596	87.9
Hendry	56,199	41	69,927	80.4
Glades	914	4	9,052	10.1
Lee	630	2	10,373	6.1
Total	88,489	68	132,939	66.6

Source: Citrus Summary 2007-08, Prelim. Sept. 2008. Florida Agricultural Statistical Service.

12th "Gulf Classic" Held at Bonita Bay's Verandah

The Bonita Bay Group's Verandah Club course played "official" host for the 12th Annual "Gulf Classic" Golf Tournament. Held on May 9th, the 2008 "Gulf Classic" featured 32 sponsored teams and outstanding citrus industry-wide support for the event. The annual golf tournament has become one of the Gulf Citrus Growers Association's key "special events" to financially support the association's community and governmental relations programs.

"The GCGA Associate Member Committee had been working with The Bonita Bay Group and the Verandah Club since the course opened to hold the 'Gulf Classic' at their east Ft. Myers facilities," said Ron Hamel, GCGA executive vice president. "This year marked the first time that those 'first class' facilities could host our event within our time frame. We congratulate and thank Bart Cook, the Verandah's head golf pro and Chris Trotter, director of golf, for their special service and attention to detail for this year's event. This year's 'Gulf Classic' was one of the best golf outings we have ever held," said Hamel.

Once again this year, the "Gulf Classic" featured over \$100,000 in "hole-in-one" prizes, as well as six additional individual "special hole" prizes.

This year's "first place" winning team was sponsored by Monsanto and included Mike Prescott, Heath Prescott, Jerry Newlin and Ben Norris. The "second place" team was sponsored by Oswald Trippe and Company, Inc., and featured Scott Pfeiffer, Ben Lane, Adam Piat and Kevin Burns. Coming in "third place" was the Car Two team comprised of John Paul, Mike Halloran, Eddie Rodriguez and Jay Engstrom.

This year's individual winners were as follows: Most Accurate Drive, Mike Whitney; Longest Drive #5, Adam Piat; Longest Drive #10, Craig Hampton; Longest Putt, Ali Pool and Closest To The Pin, Ben Norris.

The 2008 "Gulf Classic" Tournament Committee included: Sarah (Hatton) Markle, Chair, Valent, USA; Ali Pool, Brown and Brown Insurance; Jeff Campbell, Oswald Trippe & Company, Inc.; Julie Forrest, Stallings Crop Insurance Corp.; Robert



Monsanto's Team Takes First Place!

Sarah Markle, tournament chair, presents "first place" awards to the Monsanto foursome. (L to R) Mike Prescott, Heath Prescott, Jerry Newlin, Sarah Markle and Ben Norris.



Excellent Turnout for "Gulf Classic"

Thirty-two teams participated in this year's golf outing. GCGA thanks the players and sponsors for their support of this great event!

Murray, Wedgworth's, Inc.; Sonya Carns, Ag-Tronix, Inc.; Stacy McCullough, Farm Credit of SW Florida; Rachel Walters, Bayer CropScience; Richard Woodruff, WilsonMiller, Inc. and Bernadette Rashford.

The GCGA Associate Member Committee and 13th Annual "Gulf Classic" Golf Tournament Committee are proud to "officially" announce that the 2009 "Gulf Classic" will be held Friday May 15th at the Verandah Club! Please mark your calendars!

2008 Gulf Classic Tournament Sponsors

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association would like to "thank" the "Gulf Classic" sponsors:

Tee-Off Breakfast

Tropicana Products, Inc.

Awards Luncheon

Douglass Fertilizer & Chemical, Inc.
Triangle Chemical Co.
Zenith Insurance

Refreshments

Agraquest
Gulf Citrus Management, Inc.
Helena Chemical Co.
Keyplex

Photography

Stallings Crop Insurance Corp.

Communications

Spectrum Wireless

"Gulf Classic" Hats

Bayer CropScience

Hospitality Sponsors

BASF
Helena Chemical Co.
Wheeler Farms, Inc.

Prizes/Holes

Ag-Tronix, Inc.
ECT
Everglades Farm Equipment
Gulf Citrus Properties, Inc.
Hughes, Snell & Co.
Monsanto
Oakley Groves, Inc.
Pacific Tomato Growers
Steele Truck Center, Inc.

Tees & Greens

Ag-Tronix, Inc.
Agrilience
Agri-Property Consultants, Inc.
BASF
Banana Branch Harvesting

Bryan Paul Citrus, Inc.
Brown and Brown Insurance
Chemtura Corporation
Chemical Containers, Inc.
Chemical Dynamics
Coastal Fertilizer & Supply, Inc.
Creel Tractor Company
Culligan Water
Cutrale Citrus Juices USA, Inc.
DeSoto AutoMall
Dow AgroSciences
Everglades Farm Equipment
Farm Credit of SW Florida
First Bank
Flo-Tec, Inc.
Gulf Citrus Management, Inc.
Heidt & Associates, Inc.
Louis Dreyfus Citrus, Inc.
MANA
Oswald Trippe and Co., Inc.
Peace River Citrus Products, Inc.

RHT Engineering Inc.
Stallings Crop Insurance Corp.
Syngenta
Tris Chapman Campaign
T & M Portable Restrooms
U.P.I.
Valent USA
Wedgworth's, Inc.
Wheeler Bros., Inc.
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Raffle Prizes

Broken Niblick
Dow AgroSciences
Fish Hound Custom Rods
Florida Citrus Mutual
Gulf Citrus Growers Association
ScreenPrint Plus
The Bonita Bay Group
Wedgworth's, Inc.

Senator Alexander Recognized by Gulf Citrus Growers

The Gulf Citrus Growers Association presented its "Special Recognition for Outstanding Leadership" award to Florida State Senator JD Alexander at the 2008 Citrus Expo Banquet in Ft. Myers. Senator Alexander was recognized for his years of service and leadership to the state's citrus and agricultural industries.

"Senator Alexander has truly been our industry's 'point man' during his tenure in the Florida Legislature," said Ron Hamel, executive vice president of GCGA, when making the presentation. "His knowledge of and dedication to Florida's citrus industry has been invaluable as it has fought for its very survival during the past few years. We have been extremely fortunate to have a person most knowledgeable of our industry in strategic legislative leadership positions during these threatening times."

Hamel noted that the Senator had recently secured over \$20-million in citrus disease research funding to combat the canker and "greening" bacterial diseases. And, in addition has sponsored or co-sponsored every key piece of "citrus legislation" over the past 10 years as a member



Thank You Senator Alexander for Your Leadership!

Senator JD Alexander (left) receives GCGA's "Special Recognition for Outstanding Leadership" award as his wife Cindy looks on. Gulf Citrus President David Wheeler (right) and Ron Hamel presented a Bill North original "Florida Oranges" oil painting to the Senator.

of the Florida House of Representatives and the Senate. "Senator Alexander has also worked extremely hard to protect the Citrus Advertising Trust Fund from numerous 'raids' as the state faces revenue shortfalls," Hamel added.

"More specific to SW Florida's citrus growers, Senator Alexander supported the

critical funding for UF/IFAS' 'Emerging Citrus Industry Technologies' initiative which supports the development of efficient mechanical harvesting of citrus for juice processing. And, he also lead the efforts to establish HLB testing facilities at the Southwest Florida Research and Education," noted Hamel

GCGA Leaders Meet with Bill Nelson and Tim Mahoney

Gulf Citrus leaders recently met with Florida Senator Bill Nelson and Congressman Tim Mahoney at two separate meetings in LaBelle. Both Senator Nelson and Congressman Mahoney requested the sessions with the association's leaders to discuss the recently passed Farm Bill, the citrus greening disease, water management and other agricultural issues.

David Wheeler, Mark Wheeler, Mark Colbert, Carey Soud, Steve Smith, Joe

Hilliard, II, Dan Gunter, John R. Alexander, Dallas Townsend, Hugh English, Paul Meador and Ron Hamel participated in the meetings. These GCGA leaders, along with other invited guests, provided input to Nelson and Mahoney from the local perspective.

Through "Gulf Citrus" many county, state and federal agricultural issues are discussed at various events and meetings throughout the year. The association

serves as the local citrus industry "voice" on the key issues impacting the industry.

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