

Update for Members:

We had our latest Directors meeting on December 12, 2023.

Membership and Finances - We have roughly \$5,500 in Cash and Receivables. This is better than expected and a reflection of our 63% growth in membership. Our good finances will give us some choices in how we approach projects.

Annual Meeting and Election review - We were very pleased with the participation of Members as nominees in the election process. Our hats are off to Lance Bennett, Alex Marks and Rick Aspden who were well qualified and willing to serve but were not chosen. We absolutely want Members to be willing to serve. We are also pleased with our current Board and look forward to working together.

We discussed the Annual Meeting, what worked and what didn't. We all appreciated that Donnie Ingram managed our time well. We felt the content of the presentations was relevant and helpful. And, we also appreciated our sponsor, Casa del Rio Collection.



IFAS / FFGT Planning for 2024 - Don Rockwood, Kevin Barley and Dr. Davie have organized a planning meeting for 12/19/23 to plan the scope of work for 2024, farms

available, and to consider our resources. It is becoming clear to us that most farmers with farms at harvest age will want to get the facts on their farm's production. This could result in another 200 acres being available for 2024. The additional data is valuable but this can create its own funding challenge. We have some ideas to discuss on how farmers may cover the cost of gathering the data. In addition we will discuss improvements in the process.

Lynn's Marketing Plans - Lynn informed us of her plans to leave the FBGA as she has a new Marketing job that will be a great opportunity. We all stood and gave her a standing ovation for her great impact on the FBGA.

Lynn is leaving us with a plan, like a business plan, a real marketing plan that will be the perfect guide for her replacement. It includes plans for Membership Renewal, Digital Badges and a Quarterly Newsletter that will highlight members and offer paid ads.

How to Develop Markets... - We discussed our interest in developing the wood markets and ways that we can utilize our funds to help make progress. Kevin Barley told how he and Lynn had taken a market channel, Textiles, and worked on it. What they found was that the various markets that involve fiber have a technical process that can be challenging. It involves using an acid bath which results in fiber slime and then extruding the fiber for the particular uses such as shirts, packaging or paper. The advantage of the paper mills is that they have a never ending demand and bring their own expertise. They also realized that after meetings with Bamcore, Rhizome, National Bamboo and one of our members Chuck Walter, that many of the uses of bamboo have a long timeline before they are seasoned enough. The paper mills can take younger bamboo. In fact if we focus on the sales channels that are the least sensitive on their specifications and age the list narrows down to Paper Mills, Bio Char, Renewable Energy and Bio Plastics.

It is our desire to use our website to develop FBGA as a hub for markets looking for bamboo supply. This is where i expect you will see a lot of efforts in 2024.

Next Meeting - this is scheduled for January 9th at 2:30pm.