The 2006 Annual Meeting of the Southern Branch – American Society of Agronomy was called to order by President Daren Redfearn, Oklahoma State University, at 2:30 pm at the Wyndham Resort in Orlando, Florida. Dr. Redfearn reported that 58 people pre-registered for the meeting with an additional 17 on-site. This marked the first time that credit cards were accepted at registration. Headquarters was instrumental in making pre-registration and credit card registration on-site possible. There were 71 papers presented at the meeting with 12 students participating in the poster competition and 8 students participating in the oral competition.

Dr. Mary Collins, University of Florida, and President of SSSA welcomed everyone to Florida. She shared some interesting facts about Florida, which included Florida has a net increase of 1000 people/day, the state has two time zones (eastern and central), and Pensacola is located directly south of Chicago.

The minutes from the 2005 Annual Meeting were approved by the membership following a motion by Nathan Slaton and a second by Wayne Ebelhar.

Dr. Redfearn presented the treasurer’s report in the absence of the new treasurer for SB-ASA, Dennis Osborne. Dr. Redfearn elaborated on Dr. Osborne’s background including his unique combination as a soil scientist and an attorney. The report was approved following a motion by Wayne Ebelhar and a second by Nathan Slaton.

In addition to the SSSA President, Mary Collins, other guests included Bonnie Lueck, Development Officer, Agronomic Science Foundation, Susan Chapman, Director of Member Services, American Society of Agronomy, and Steve Fales, CSSA President.

Bonnie Lueck provided a brief description to the membership of the purpose of the Agronomic Science Foundation, which includes raising money for scholarships, fellowships, awards, etc. She also discussed the signature projects for the SSSA, CSSA, and ASA and provided literature to the membership about the projects.

Susan Chapman summarized activities she was involved with including providing more branch outreach, assisting with the planning of branch meetings, which allows scientists to use their knowledge to help develop better programs for the meetings. She reported that rapid changes are underway to increase the value, benefits, and outreach of the society. A related example was the new design of CSA News. Other improvements for the near future are to provide a new membership database, create more web interaction with the new database, and subsequently improve communication between members. Efforts to help streamline paper acceptance are also underway. The member survey will be summarized soon to identify opportunities for members. A salary survey will also be conducted soon. She reminded members that they can volunteer for...
society committees and to also renew their membership. Wayne Ebelhar asked about information for individual chapters to help increase awareness. The response was the society planned to work on the branches first, then focus on the chapters.

Steve Fales also highlighted the achievements of Headquarters. He elaborated more on the signature project of CSSA. Briefly, CSSA wants to sponsor a special symposium at the 2006 National Meeting for B.S. students. Travel expenses will be paid for those students with various activities also planned for them. In addition, a mentor will be established for the students to encourage them to stay involved and continue their affiliation with the society. There will be a selection process for these students, but members were encouraged to identify possible candidates. Dr. Fales also encouraged everyone to attend the 2006 National Meeting and mentioned three important themes: Bioenergy, Global Change, and Environment. Discussions are underway to develop symposium that link each of these themes, because the society’s should be poised to take a leadership role to help solve these problems. He also mentioned that the leadership of the societies has been re-organized and as a result, the positions are true leadership positions.

Mary Collins also reminded the members about the World Congress and reported that SSSA membership was over 6000.

Old Business

Dr. Redfearn reported that the membership had approved a Professional Support Award, but no action had been taken thus far. He stated that he was going to try and make progress in this area.

New Business

Dr. Redfearn discussed the importance of member involvement at the regional and national level. Everyone recognizes the time constraints that limits peoples involvement, but he encouraged everyone to increase communication with other members.

The location for future meetings was also discussed. The upcoming SAAS meetings will be held in Mobile, AL on February 3-7, 2007 and Dallas, TX on February 2-6, 2008. Discussions between SB-ASA leadership and SAAS representatives indicated that SAAS is negotiating with Birmingham and New Orleans for the 2009 meeting with a preference for New Orleans. Potentially, Orlando could host the 2010 meeting again.

Mark Legendre, Secretary, SAAS, indicated that hotels rates for Mobile will be $109/night for single and doubles and $119/night for triples and quads. These rates will be either for the Battlehouse or Riverview Hotels, with one being a new structure and the other having just completed major renovations. A room rate of $99/night has already been established for the Downtown Adams Mark in Dallas.

There was a question about how much money was lost by meeting in San Antonio. In rough numbers, it was reported about $4000. Discussion followed on advantages and disadvantages of a June meeting and the intangibles that SAAS can provide, such as, securing hotel rooms, handling the
publishing of the program, and assisting with meeting rooms. Another point was made about a centralized location (i.e. Biloxi or Mobile) that allows members to travel from the west and east, which usually will enhance participation.

Following this discussion, the membership decided to meet again with SAAS in Mobile for the 2007 meeting following a motion by John Beasley and a second by Wayne Ebelhar.

Mark Legendre made the point that he would like to see the membership decide on meeting with SAAS more than one year in advance. His reasoning was based on the difficult position he was put in on negotiating hotel rooms for a block of people who may or may not attend the meeting. He must be sure and secure enough rooms, but he cannot secure too many rooms that are not filled due to the cost of covering these rooms. No action was taken on where to hold the 2008 meeting at that time.

There were no nominations for Professional Awards.

The winners of the graduate student competitions were announced:
1st Place - Poster: Richard Johnson, University of Tennessee
2nd Place - Poster: Evangelos Gonias, University of Arkansas
3rd Place - Poster: Dexter Watts, Auburn University

1st Place - Oral: Jacque Breman, University of Florida
2nd Place - Oral: Abhishek Srivastava, Western Kentucky University

Following the awards presentations, President Daren Redfearn turned the gavel over to incoming President John Beasley, University of Georgia. Dr. Beasley introduced the new officers:

Past President - Daren Redfearn, Oklahoma State University
President - John Beasley, University of Georgia
Vice President - Kip Balkcom, USDA-ARS National Soil Dynamics Laboratory, Auburn, AL
Secretary - Currently not filled, but people have been contacted about running for the position
Treasurer (3-year term) - Dennis Osborne, North Carolina State University

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Kip Balkcom, Secretary