



MINUTES

Monthly MVG Meeting Thursday – June 11, 2009 8:00 AM – 8:00 AM TBG

Beth Fausey called the meeting to order at 8:03 am

Attendance: (26)

- Joe Perlaky, Bill Dearing, Dick Bostdorff, Scott Leisner, Theresa Hoen, Bob Hoen, Tom Wardell, Beth Fausey, Josh Miller, Bob Hornak, Walt Krueger, Jeff Creque, Wade Smith, Paula Ross, Sandy Knitz, Don Schmidlin, Charles Krause, Ujesh Vora, Katie Bibish, Lara Rump, Jonathan Frantz, Lynn Biltz, Kellie Paige, Michelle Jones, Luis Canas and Neil Reid.

Committee Reports:

Business – Walt Krueger

- Energy
 - Walt reported 10 growers have completed questionnaire showing interest in electric program. Others interested may still fill out a questionnaire.
 - Joe mentioned the electric program is very different than the gas program. Whereas the gas program requires constant price vigilance and hedge purchasing execution throughout the year, the electric program is a fixed savings over a 2 year period. Bids come out periodically. Everyone will be notified via email for future sign up opportunities.
 - The Natural Gas Program had unique challenges this past heating season. In addition to juggling the effect speculative investors created by skewing market values, the growers collectively used 48% less gas than the previous year. As you recall in May of 08, the Advisory Committee recommended that 90% of 07-08 usage be purchased for the 08-09. Unfortunately, this unprecedented year resulted in a surplus which had to be sold back to the supplier for less. We have since modified our purchase policy to no more than 75% of expected use in the future. The Gas Advisory Committee meets July 2 to evaluate the 09-10 heating season.
 - For the first time, revenue from the gas program has shown its valuable use. This year's Marketing program was 100% prepaid by revenue generated by the gas program. Why is that so important? Couple of reasons.

1. It allowed MVGA to purchase advertizing at non-profit rates. As long as MVGA paid the entire advertising invoice, we received reduced non-profit rates which were passed directly to the growers. If the growers were billed individually, this would not be possible. In addition, this prompted MVGA to set up their accounts payable and receivable accounts. That's why the growers received an advertising invoice from MVGA...not the carrier.

- 2009 - Board of Directors

Dick Bostdorff
2010

Jeff Creque
2011

Bill Dearing
2010

Bob Dennis
2010

Beth Fausey
2011

Diane Hill
2009

Theresa Hoen
2011

Tony Keil
2009

Walt Krueger
2011

Kirk Mizerek
2010

Neil Reid
2011

Tom Wardell
2009

Kathy Wenz
2009

Terms Expire End of
Year Indicated

2. Because of this flexibility, MVGA was able to serve as our own marketing agent saving 10-15%. Again, this was passed on to the 12 participating growers.
3. Overall, it allowed MVGA to "invest" in the growers and the NW Ohio cluster concept by orchestrating a co-op purchasing strategy. MVGA spent a portion of the gas program cash flow to offset the growers advertising portion by 25%.

In conclusion, this was the first time the retail growers in NW Ohio were able to pool their resources which included ad costs & discount a \$5 off a \$25 purchase or greater coupon through both metro and suburban marketing campaigns. Participation included the Toledo Blade, Bowling Green Sentinel Tribune and the Swanton Expository. Results from this effort will be discussed in detail at our next meeting on July 9th.

- Recycling
 - Paula reported that Mondo will be picking up sometime next week. They will call beforehand. We are still investigating other opportunities.
- Energy Grants
 - Results of Energy Audit – Two growers applied for heater replacements (1 for propane the other natural gas). One grower applied for a 10kw wind turbine.

Education – Beth Fausey

- Beth presented a "Value Added Producer Grant" opportunity for individuals as well as our organization can apply for.
- Wade Smith & Jeff Creque recommended we submit an organizational grant application.
- Bill Dearing motioned that our focus be on marketing-based efforts which will benefit the whole organization.

Finance – Diane Hill

- Joe reported an approximate \$9,000 balance in checking account. Monies received from the Gas Program provided the organization with useable cash flow. We have about \$11,000 in receivables outstanding.

Government/Public Relations

- Dick Bostdorff reported on the upcoming ONLA Annual meeting in January. There will be legislative planning opportunities. He also reminded everyone about MVG's September Annual Meeting.

Marketing - Tom Wardell

- Tom reported his committee is evaluating last spring's marketing efforts. Serenity is gathering customer coupon and comment data from each participation grower.
- This information will assist in planning for next year's Marketing Campaign.

Membership

- Joe Perlaky, Bill Dearing and Dick Bostdorff will be meeting today to plan membership committee strategies.

Other Business

- 1000 Victory Garden Challenge - Paula informed the group about the "1000 Victory Garden Challenge" campaign sponsored by Rep. Marcy Kaptur and other organizations. It is a NW Ohio community awareness initiative to "battle hunger one garden at a time."
- Native Program - Kellie Paige, Manager of the Nature Conservancy reports the retail pilot program includes three locations around Lucas County. Each was supplied with educational brochures and banners. Jan Hunter supplied plants.

A significant planting effort at the Lucas County Court House is being planned to create community awareness of how native and floriculture plants can be used effectively in urban settings.

The next Native Working group program meeting will be June 17th at 1:00 @ Kitty Todd

Presentations

A brief demonstration and explanation of our new Interactive Survey software by Beth Fausey concluded with our first electronic "live" survey. Everyone enjoyed the immediate anonymous responses and graph results depiction.

- Michelle Jones and Luis Canas gave a floriculture overview of current/future research projects being conducted at the Wooster, Ohio location. Much of the focus considered biological and chemical challenges within our industry. It was suggested the MVG website be linked to the USDA-ARS site in Wooster.

Meeting Adjourned: 10:07

Respectfully Submitted,

Theresa Hoen

The next meeting is July 09, 2009
8:00 am
Toledo Botanical Gardens