

September 2, 2015

Dear Fellow Beekeeper and/or MBA member:

As President of the Mississippi Beekeepers Association (MBA), I want to personally invite you to join us at our annual convention on November 6-7, 2015. It will be held at the Ronald E. Whitehead Advanced Technology Center of the Jones County Junior College in Ellisville, MS.

We have an excellent group of speakers slated for both the beginner's workshops and the general sessions. Guest speakers include Dr. Larry Connor, Dr. Clarence Collison, Virginia and Carl Webb, and scientists from the USDA-ARS Honey Bee Lab in Baton Rouge. Local speakers will include the MSU Apiculture program staff and MBA members. Registration forms for MBA membership and for the annual conference have been included in this newsletter. They should be completed and returned ASAP. For beginners and hobby beekeepers, please note that special workshop sessions will be ongoing on Friday afternoon and all day on Saturday.

The schedule for the convention will be different than in recent years. We will hold a Board of Directors meeting on Friday morning (TBA). Afterwards, the convention will begin Friday at noon and continue until 5:30 PM. The banquet dinner will begin at 6:30 PM, and there will be some local entertainment from a comedian during the meal. We will resume the convention on Saturday morning at 8:00 AM, and it will end at 5:00 PM on Saturday. The MBA business meeting will immediately follow the convention. Jeff Harris is still developing the program for the convention, and when it is completed, he will post it on his website.

One of the things to be voted upon are proposed changes to the MBA Constitution. A separate mail-out will be sent to you, and it will contain a copy of the old constitution with proposed changes (e.g. deletions, additions, and re-wording). Please critically read these items before the business meeting.

Hotel accommodations will be at the Best Western Laurel Inn, 309 South 16th Avenue, Laurel, MS 39440. The phone number is (601) 425-4455. Thirty rooms have been reserved: 15 with single king beds and 15 with double beds. The room rate is \$94.95 (including tax), and reservations are held under the name Phillip Wells. The Hampton Inn will be used for overflow if needed. It is located at 1509 Jefferson Street, Laurel, MS 39440, and the phone number is (601) 399-0659.

Please note that the conference pre-registration fee is \$25, and registration at the door will be \$35.00. A separate fee of \$8 will be needed for an optional lunch on Saturday, and another \$25 is needed to pay for the banquet meal on Friday night.

As usual, members are offered reduced subscription rates for the *American Bee Journal* and *Bee Culture*. The *Speedy Bee News* is no longer being published.

Additionally, we are conducting the registration process differently this year. The MBA Secretary/Treasurer will no longer handle the journal renewals. Instead, you should mail the reduced rate forms with your payment directly to the journals. Also, we ask everyone to renew their normal MBA memberships in the months of September-October every year. We do not want renewals streaming through the entire year. So, please, just get into the habit of renewing your MBA membership during September through October of each year.

If you would like to bring a door prize, feel free to do so and note it on your pre-registration form. Just report it at the registration desk as you arrive on Friday. Giving away door prizes is a way to spice up a meeting. We also seek items that could be used in a silent auction. We encourage you to bring items for

the silent auction related to beekeeping (even ones you no longer use but are still in good condition), crafts (paintings, stitch work, etc.), tools (every beekeeper needs tools in the shop), or other interesting/unique items. Silent auction items should be brought in no later than Saturday, Nov. 7 @ 8AM.

Additionally, there will be the Honey and Wax Contest. If you would like to participate, please see the rules for entering and judging standards at the MSUCares website: (<https://blogs.msucares.com/honeybees/files/2014/08/JUDGING-STANDARDS.pdf>). We have asked Virginia Webb to judge the contest this year. This is truly a special judge! Virginia and Carl have won the best honey in several WORLD competitions. Their sourwood honey is truly the best in the world, and they certainly know how to win, even against toughest of competition. It should be delightful to have her provide input on the quality of your honey and wax. Virginia is also very accomplished in producing fine beeswax items, and she will give some guidance on this topic in one of her presentations.

I am looking forward to a very fine meeting, and I hope you can join the fun and festivities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Austin C. Smith", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Austin C. Smith
MBA President