

NewsWatch

Texas Farm Bureau achieves excellent rating — five times

THE Texas Farm Bureau scored a perfect five out of five in “awards for excellence,” presented at the American Farm Bureau Federation’s 2007 annual convention in Salt Lake City.

The five categories in the awards for excellence were Education and Agriculture Promotion, Leadership Development, Member Services, Policy Implementation, and Public Relations.

Texas Farm Bureau President

Kenneth Dierschke of San Angelo accepted the awards, which also included a President’s Award, the AFBF’s “best of the best” designation for Member Services. TFB also was selected for a Navigator Award, honoring membership achievement.

As one of the convention highlights, former U.S. Rep. Charlie Stenholm of Texas received the organization’s highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award for lifetime achievement in ser-

vice to agriculture (see adjacent story).

Pete Gipson of Gilmer, Texas, also was recognized for the Farmer Idea Exchange earlier in the convention for his invention designed to inject anti-freeze into tractor tires.

Will and Becky Coward of Gatesville, Texas, were runners-up in the Excellence in Agriculture competition for young Farm Bureau members involved in nonfarm agricultural careers.

Stenholm earns prestigious honor

By EDITH A. CHENAULT

FORMER U.S. Rep. Charles Stenholm has been honored with the Tribute to Leadership Award from Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership alumni.

A native of Ericksdahl, Texas, where he was raised on the family farm near Stamford, Stenholm began his career as a farmer in partnership with his father.

Stenholm earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in agriculture from Texas Tech University, and taught agriculture at Lueders Avoca. In 1965, he was recruited to serve as executive vice president of Rolling Plains Cotton Growers (and at the time, proposed a boll weevil eradication program). He was named general manager of Stamford Electric Cooperative in 1968.

In 1978, Stenholm was elected to the U.S. Congress, served on the House Agriculture Committee for 26 years and was the ranking member of the Democratic Party the last eight years.

James “Jimmie” Powell of Fort McKavett, Texas, vice chairman of the TALL advisory board, says Stenholm deserved the award.

“He has been a very staunch supporter of agricultural programs, and he has done an outstanding job in that respect,” notes Powell, who has known Stenholm since he went to Congress.

Stenholm has “been very good in maintaining stability in agriculture,” Powell notes.

“He’s also kept agriculture in a beneficial, profitable mode. He’s helped the people in agriculture stay in agriculture,” he adds.

Roddy Peeples of Dallas, executive secretary of the TALL advisory board, became acquainted with Stenholm as a co-judge in a FFA public speaking contest in 1964. Peeples, an agricultural broadcaster, says he continued covering Stenholm through his distinguished career.

“There’s no question that he had superior influence” in Congress, Peeples assures. “Everybody respected Charlie Stenholm.”

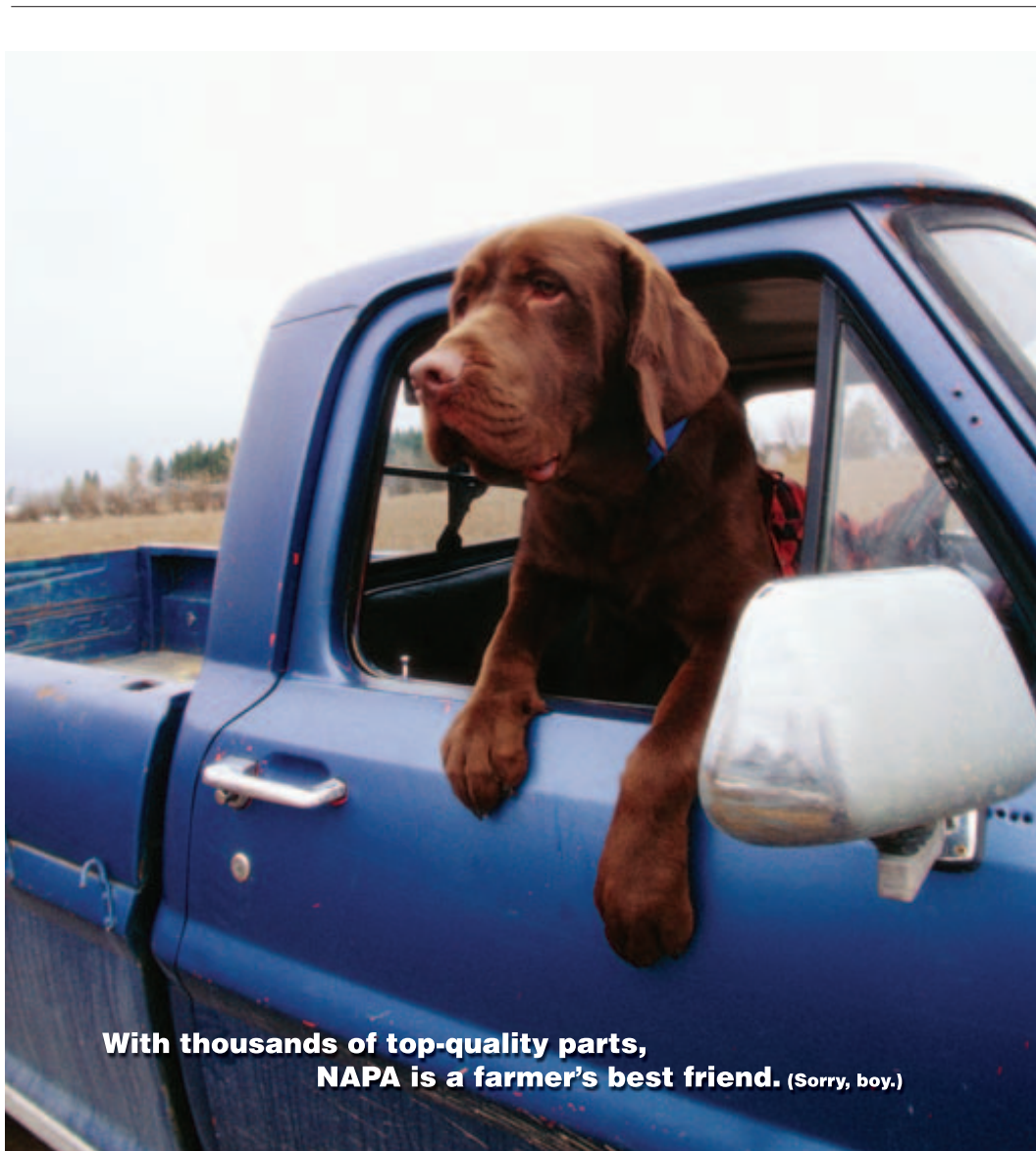
Stenholm’s leadership qualities were evident when he had to build consensus in his position at the cotton growers association, with the Stamford Electric Cooperative and in the U.S. Congress.

“He’s wholly very nice, a fine man and a leader,” Peeples says. “I consider it a privilege to get to know him and call him a friend. There is no doubt that Congressman Stenholm was — and still is — a friend of agriculture,” says Jim Mazurkiewicz, TALL program director, College Station.

“His influence on Texas and U.S. agriculture has made an impact on the world, [which] will benefit from it for years to come.”

More information on the leadership program is available online at TALL.tamu.edu.

Chenault is with Texas A&M Communications, College Station.



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