

Winter Edition

2011

SWCD Ready for 76th Annual Meeting and Election

The Soil and Water Conservation District has set the date for its 76th Annual Meeting and Election. It will be held on Thursday, January 19, 2012 at 6:00 p.m. at the University of Illinois Extension office in Hillsboro.

This year's meeting will include a light supper; chili and sandwiches, cookies and drinks, provided by Trees Forever and followed by a short business meeting and then a program dedicated to educating local landowners about the state side of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). This is a companion program to the Federal Conservation Reserve Program which gives the landowner an opportunity to extend their contract by 15 or 35 years, or to enter into a permanent easement and receive a lump sum payment from the state of Illinois. The program has been successful during its existence in the Illinois River Watershed and was just recently opened up in the Kaskaskia River Watershed. There are still dollars available for more extensions and easements and Trees Forever seeks to educate the eligible landowners on the program's benefits.

We will also be electing three directors to the SWCD board. Anyone attending the meeting who is of legal voting age and owns or occupies land in the District (Montgomery County) may vote.

The meal will be offered free of charge, and reservations can be made by completing and mailing the coupon at the bottom of this page or by calling the local office. We will also be giving away door prizes at the completion of the meeting.

SWCDs Dependent Upon Passage of Gaming Bill

There has been much talk lately of the current bill being held in the Illinois senate which would expand gambling in Illinois. It is currently being called Senate Bill (SB) 1849, or the Gaming Bill. The bill would allow for development of new casinos in Illinois and for installation of slot machines at horse racing tracks. These new endeavors would create much needed revenue for the state of Illinois, and it is also expected to create upwards of 25,000 new jobs. On the last vote in the house, the bill failed to pass. It is currently being held there awaiting a rewrite which will suit the governor along with the house and senate members.

Ag groups around Illinois, particularly, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, are anxiously awaiting this rewrite and the next vote, which should come in February. If signed into law as it stands now, this bill would provide \$12.5 million dollars, appropriated annually, in dedicated funding to the 97 SWCDs in Illinois. This is money the SWCDs desperately need to be able to continue functioning as fully funded, fully staffed entities. Currently, Districts are funded at around \$3 million, the majority of

(Continued on page 4)

Inside this issue:

Annual Meeting Set for January 19	1
Update on the Gaming Bill	1, 4
Tree and Fish Sale Order Form	2
Advertisers	3
NRCS Updates	3
Rental Equipment	4

Annual Meeting Dinner Reservation

Name _____

Phone _____

Number of Guests _____

Please complete this form and mail it to:

Montgomery County SWCD, 1621 Vandalia Rd,
Hillsboro, IL 62049 or call 217-532-3610, ext. 3
before **January 12** to reserve your place at dinner.

DON'T FORGET: FEDERAL AND STATE CREP STILL OPEN

SOIL AND WATER STEWARD

The Newsletter of the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District

Would you rather receive an e-mail copy of our newsletter? I am creating a database of those who would like to receive theirs online. Just send me an e-mail asking me to add your address to the list!

Melissa.cauble@il.nacdn.net

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Farm Credit Services of Illinois

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Conservation Stewardship Program Sign-up

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) 2012 ranking period cut-off date is **January 13, 2012**. Producers interested should submit applications at the NRCS Office. CSP is a conservation program that encourages producers to address resource concerns in a comprehensive manner by doing additional conservation activities while improving, maintaining, and managing existing conservation activities. An annual land use payment is paid for operation-level environmental benefits. The higher operation performance will yield a higher payment. A producer self-screening checklist is available at the NRCS office which could help you determine if CSP is right for you. For more information visit NRCS web site: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmland>

Environmental Quality Incentives Program Sign-up

Applications are being accepted for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) at the NRCS Office. Applications for this program are accepted year round. It is expected that the first batching period, a time when all applications received are processed, will be sometime in January 2012. EQIP provides financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers through contracts up to a maximum term of ten years. Financial assistance is available to help plan and implement conservation practices which address natural resource concerns and for opportunities to improve soil, water, plant, animal, air, and related resources on agricultural land and non-industrial private forestland. Technical assistance is available to assist producers with developing a plan of operation which identifies conservation practices or measures needed to address identified natural resource concerns and implement that plan of operation according to NRCS standards and specifications.

Four major conservation initiatives are being offered in addition to traditional ag-land and forestland. The initiatives are On-Farm Energy Initiative (farm energy audits), Organic Initiative (installing conservation practices for organic production), Seasonal High Tunnel Pilot Initiative (implement high tunnels, steel-framed, polyethylene-covered structures that extend growing seasons in an environmentally safe manner), and Air Quality Initiative (applying conservation measures that mitigate and prevent air quality problems, could include establishing cover crops, planting windbreaks, implementing nutrient management practices). For more information on EQIP visit NRCS National Web site <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip> or contact the NRCS office.

Montgomery County SWCD Board/Staff

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(Continued from page 1)

which is used for health insurance, training and salaries, leaving just under \$1 million state-wide for conservation practices.

SWCDs have typically been funded through the General Revenue Fund as a pass through grant with the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Stable, dedicated funding is something the districts have been in dire need of for the past few years. Many districts are down to half or part time staff because of the recent reductions to operating dollars. Also, the reductions in the amount of cost share dollars coming into the districts means fewer conservation practices are being put on the ground. Montgomery County has been promised its lowest amount of cost share dollars in recent history at only \$22,000 for Fiscal Year 2012.

The Montgomery County SWCD would like to ask for your assistance in contacting legislators to voice your support of passage of the gaming bill. Besides providing new funding for SWCDs and creating new jobs, revenue from this expansion will also be used to supplement other agriculture based entities as 4-H, University of Illinois Extension, county fairs, state historical sites, and others. If you will, please call or visit your legislators and ask them to vote yes in support of conservation, agriculture, and jobs in Illinois by passing this legislation.

For Rent or Sale From MCSWCD:

Turbo Till:	\$5.00 acre & \$50.00 a day
Tree Planter:	\$25.00 per day/free with tree purchase
McFarlane Stalk Chopper:	\$5.00 acre & \$50.00 a day
Silt Fence Plow:	\$35.00 per day
Holcomb Scraper:	\$200.00 per day, 7th day free
Marking Flags:	\$0.08 each/bundle of 100 \$8.00
Filter Fabric:	15'=\$2.25 ft., 3'=\$0.50 ft.

TREE/FISH SALE FORM AVAILABLE
INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER
AND AT WWW.MONTSWCD.COM

Montgomery County SWCD
1621 Vandalia Rd
Hillsboro, IL 62049
(217)532-3610, ext. 3

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