The CENTRL Regional Connections for 2007 ended with a bang. A good time had by all. There was a good turn out, good food and a very informative visit to the Sonoita Vineyards in Elgin, Arizona, near Sierra Vista. As you arrived at the winery, you were reminded how Project CENTRL is a focus on Arizona’s rural people and resources. Well, Sonoita Vineyards and Winery could not have been more rural. If you have not visited that part of the state you need to. It is some of the most beautiful area anywhere, especially during the monsoon. It is so green there! Our host, Fran, mentioned they had around 18 inches of rain this summer. That is kind of normal for them.

(continued on page 7)

Make the Connection in Maricopa…
And Kick Start Your New Year

The Alumni Council and current members of Class XIX are partnering to make this CRC a special opportunity for area alumni to visit with each other, new class members, and to also learn more on the growing community and proud legacy of CENTRL leadership in Maricopa. Mayor Kelly Anderson (III) and Councilman Kelly Haddad (XVII) are among those on hand to help tell the “Maricopa Story” and you will also receive a CENTRL update from current class members and your Alumni Council.

Hope you can join a fun evening and dinner hosted by the Alumni Council.

Please RSVP by 1/21/08 to
Karen Vanderheyden at (520) 316-0909
or at kvander@ag.arizona.edu
Project Centrl recently celebrated 25 years with a Gala event of over 200 individuals that included the graduating class (XVIII), the incoming class (XIX), numerous alumni and many others that have supported the program through their actions and contributions. Reaching such a milestone did not come about by luck or chance.

Looking back at the quality and accomplishments of nearly 500 individuals the program has graduated over the past 25 years is a testament to the steady and comprehensive guidance provided by the CENTRL Board. I have recently had the privilege to work directly with the Board in representing the interests of the Alumni Council. The Board, some of which have served us for nearly two decades, take their task of ensuring the continued growth and improvement of the CENTRL experience very seriously. Under their direction, each successive class has been provided a better and more expansive learning experience than those that preceded them.

Even greater opportunities are in the works for the current class and alumni alike. Just as we have been in the past, our future will be well served by the Board and its assemblage of outstanding individual members that work so hard on our behalf. Consider yourself very fortunate to enjoy the spoils of a 25 year old program rooted in the selfless efforts of the CENTRL Board.

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

- John Quincy Adams

Being a graduate of class XVI was and is an honor and a privilege. Looking several months back, being able to celebrate the CENTRL 25th Anniversary with other members, new and old, is a true testament of how valuable this program is. I am encouraged and impressed by the board and members that are so supportive of this program, I am fortunate that my brother urged me to participate and now his son Robert, jr. is in CENTRL Class XIX. Networking, effective speaking, presentation and more is just a few experiences that is expressed and continued to this day.

Paul Van Hofwegen, Class XVI

The 2008 CENTRL Directory Will Be Mailed Soon!

This year the Alumni Council decided to mail directories to each graduate of Project CENTRL with the hopes that networking will increase and the leadership of rural Arizona will flourish.

Be a leader today!
Agriculture—This award recognizes an individual who has demonstrated strong support for the growth and development of one or more segments of our diverse agriculture industry. This individual has demonstrated significant personal leadership in fostering the success of Agriculture in Arizona.

Dan Thelander, a graduate of Class VII of the Project CENTRL

Public Policy—This award is given to one who has demonstrated effective leadership in public policy formation. The individual may be an elected or appointed official or a volunteer who has given key leadership in the development of responsive public policy which has made a positive impact in rural Arizona.

Eddie Browning, a graduate of Class IV of the Project CENTRL

Community Service—This award recognizes one who has devoted considerable time and energy towards improving the quality of life in their community. This individual demonstrates proven leadership and dedicated service that has been successful in meeting public needs in their community.

Tracy Candalaria, Class XVI,

Natural Resources—This award is given to a visionary leader on Arizona’s land, water, and/or other natural resources. Awarded to one who understands the needs, threats, and opportunities of our natural resources and actively involves a larger and more responsive community on the management of these resources.

Diane Joens, Class XVI

Outstanding Leadership Award—This award recognizes a non-alumnus who has demonstrated strong support and dedicated service to Project CENTRL. This individual has exhibited exceptional character and commitment to furthering the goals of the Project CENTRL mission. Nominations are made by the President of the Alumni Council and the winner is ultimately selected by the entire Council.

Robert Shuler is a shareholder in the law firm of Ryley Carlock & Applewhite.

Executive Outstanding Service Award—The Executive Board provided special recognition to Dr. George Seperich at the Gala in recognition of his outstanding leadership to enhance the global dynamics of CENTRL. George’s strong connections with Mexico and dedicated work in Sonora first brought an International experience to CENTRL in 2006. The Mexico trip is now a regular part of the leadership experience.

George Seperich, CENTRL Board Member

SWEET SIX-TEEN! Members of Class XVI were well represented at the Gala and clearly demonstrated their support to Project CENTRL with a $5,000 class contribution to this year’s fund-raising campaign

Thanks to Julie Murphree (VII) for providing photos

Project CENTRL extends a warm Thank You to the Event Sponsors!
Members of Class XIX have completed three seminars and are off to a great start in their two-year leadership journey. The following are brief highlights of their experiences and the CENTRL Alumni and Board members who have provided leadership during the seminars:

**SEMINAR 1**
**INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT CENTRL - October 18-20, 2007**

Past Alumni Presidents, Ben Cloud (VI) and Gienna McCollum-Cloud (IX) were the featured speakers at the opening dinner session on Thursday. Tim Delaney, Founder of the Center for Leadership, Ethics, and Public Service, concluded the evening session with an inspirational message on the “Noble Cause of Community Trusteeship”. Carrie Hamstra (XII), Mark Clark (XIII), and Paul Brierley (XVI) were panelists and shared their ideas on gaining the most from the CENTRL experience. A brief welcome and highlights of a growing legacy of leadership were provided by CENTRL Board President Dr. Gerry Bohmfalk (VIII), Alumni Council President, Erik Swanson (XVI), and Director of UA Cooperative Extension, Dr. Jim Christenson to conclude the morning session. Heather Walker (II) conducted an interactive workshop on “Putting Emotion to Motion...The Power of the CENTRL Internship”. Added meaning was given to the workshop by having selected members of the graduating class share the best practices followed in completing their internship. Class XVIII members who shared highlights of their successful internship were Jason Rovey, Thea Wilshire, Frances Lechner, and Trent Swanson.

**SEMINAR 2**
**FUNDAMENTALS OF LEADERSHIP - November 15-17, 2007**

Class XIX members started the opening session by sharing with others a personal symbol of leadership. Heather Walker (I) concluded the evening by providing follow-up guidance in selecting, planning and managing the CENTRL internship project. Class members were divided into two groups for concurrent full day workshops on Friday and Saturday. Stephanie Hendrie shared her “Secrets of Exceptional Speaking” course and Karl Peterson (XII) provided many practical tips in “Facilitating and Effective Meeting” during these concurrent sessions.

**SEMINAR 3**
**ARIZONA FARM BUREAU EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS - December 6-8, 2007**

CENTRL Board member, Dr. George Seperich, CENTRL Board Member, and Dean Paul Patterson from the Morrison School of Management and Agribusiness hosted the opening dinner session at the ASU Polytechnic Campus on Thursday. Paul Brierley (XVI), CAC Vice President, brought a warm welcome to start the Arizona Farm Bureau Effective Communications training on Friday morning. Cheryl Goar (IX), CENTRL Board Member, followed with a “Sharpening Your Speaking Skills” workshop while Jim Klinker, CENTRL Board Member, conducted a series of one minute TV Interviews that were held throughout the day. After a brief tour of KTVK-TV, a simulated public hearing exercise was conducted by Joe Sigg. Senator Ken Cheuvront and Representative Rich Crandall were Legislative members serving on the committee. Others assisting were AnnaMarie Knorr, Bas Aja (VI), and Brett Cameron (XVI), CENTRL Board Members. Friday’s dinner and Christmas party were held at Superstition Dairy and hosted by Casey Stechnij (XVII). Julie Murphee (VII) shared a “Writing and Disseminating Information” session to start Saturday’s training. The final session of the training was conducted by the Farm Bureau staff in their live TV studio.
Spotlight on Roger Hooper (V) and The Green Valley Pecan Company

Roger Hooper, third generation Arizona farmer, past Arizona Legislator, and graduate of Project CENTRL Class V is on top of the world in producing and processing pecans. Roger is the Farm Manager for the Santa Cruz Valley Farm Division of the Green Valley Pecan Company, America’s largest integrated producer and processor of pecans. The company is located 15 miles South of Tucson in Sahuarita, Arizona on what was once the Continental Ranch. In 1948, R. Keith Walden bought the Continental Ranch and started the Farmer’s Investment Co. (FICO). Roger and wife Carole made the move from Casa Grande to Sahuarita in 2005. The Santa Cruz Valley Farm operation in Sahuarita includes nearly 110,000 pecan trees on 5,000 acres of farmland. As farm manager, Roger stays on top of FICO’s pecan production, from the orchard operations to the annual harvest. The year round processing plant is a proven performer in delivering high quality nuts in a global marketplace. There is a good chance those nuts you purchased during the recent Holidays from COSTCO or at other large retailers came from The Green Valley Pecan Company. You can also check out a fine assortment of pecan products and gift boxes at the company store in Sahuarita or go on line at: www.greenvalleypecan.com

CENTRL BOARD RETREAT

The New Year and future is bright for Project CENTRL! This resolution has added meaning after a productive strategic planning session was held by the CENTRL Executive Board on January 4-5th on the foothills of the Catalina Mountains in Tucson.

Seventeen “leaders of leaders” devoted two days of visioning, brainstorming, and framing strategies to build on CENTRL’s solid foundation of leadership in Arizona. A rich legacy of leadership is on the grow, thanks to the vision and outstanding service of those serving on CENTRL’s Executive Board.

Project CENTRL Board of Directors

**Officers**  
G. T. Bohmfalk, President  
Linda Vensel, Vice President  
Pat Harrington, Treasurer  
Jim Webb, Secretary  
Erik Swanson, Alumni President  
Everett Rhodes, Director

**Board Members**  
Bas Aja  
Eddie Browning  
Brett Cameron  
Jim Christenson  
Con Englehorn  
Cheryl Goar  
Gail Griffin

**Carrie Hamstra**  
John Hays  
Jim Klinker  
Joe Lane  
Paul Rovey  
George Seperich  
Don Walker  
Heather Walker
The Renewable Energy Impact on Rural Communities . . . .

Ben Cloud, Class VI
Past President, CENTRL Alumni Council

Over the past three years I have focused my time exclusively on the development of the XL Biorefinery in western Arizona. I am serving as President and COO of the company, XL Renewables, Inc. which was formed with fellow CENTRL Alumni, Dennis Corderman (Class XVII) who is Chairman and CEO, and four other individuals.

As a Biorefinery, we are simply co-locating a confined-animal-feeding-operation (CAFO) with biofuels production. In our case, Phase I will produce ethanol, biodiesel and animal feeds from corn. Phase II will use algae biomass as the feedstock. The advantage of this project is the energy island that converts waste streams to power, heat and steam for the project to stabilize energy costs. This will provide a positive impact on La Paz County and practically double the tax base. The recent approval of the Energy Bill and the Farm Bill provide a strong basis for the $260 million investment into the project.

As you can imagine, this type of project requires a tremendous amount of interaction and communication on a number of fronts, including finance and investment, trade conferences and events, engineering, legal, permitting, and meeting some very interesting people. This has given me some insight into evolving technologies and trends that will substantially impact our rural communities that I believe will be of interest to you.

First, we have to face the fact that our worldwide oil supply cannot sustain a growth rate sufficient to meet the growing worldwide demand. This has forced our government to place increasing emphasis on the production of renewable energy to keep our economy stable and reduce our reliance on imported oil.

Practically all of this renewable energy is going to come from rural communities. Specifically, we are going to see a growing number of solar projects, wind projects, and biofuel projects. These benefit rural communities through increased jobs, lease income and taxes for land to locate projects, crop income for growers, processing income requiring all types of support services, and greater prosperity in general. When it comes to motor fuels, I really like the idea of seeing our communities prosper here at home rather than sending our money to the Middle East where our military is required to protect the oil supply and manage (endure) the political turmoil.

At a recent conference, a representative of the National Renewable Energy Laboratory presented his ideal location for all things renewable. It was a map of Arizona. We need to be aware of the growing wave of interest in Arizona as a renewable energy producer. It will impact all of us in some way, both positive and negative.

One opportunity that I believe is going to be significant in Arizona is the production of algae biomass. We have the climate and the land base for this evolving energy source. This takes acreage, however it does not require existing farmland. Algae farms totaling 9.5 million acres could theoretically supply 100% of our motor fuels in the U.S. It is estimated that 200,000 acres could make Arizona self-sufficient in motor fuels, which is not a lot of acres when you consider we have over 200,000 acres of farmland sitting idle in this State.

I believe we will see growth and prosperity in our rural communities as a result of the demand for renewable energy sources. Of course, County leadership will be challenged to strike a balance between economic growth and maintaining a quality lifestyle. I know from experience that it does not matter how “green” or environmentally compatible a project might be, there will be NIMBY’s (not-in-my-back-yard) who will organize and fight any proposal. However, that is democracy in action and it is very precious and should be embraced in the most positive and respectful manner. We do need balance. This growing trend in renewable energy is one area where Project CENTRL graduates have the opportunity to shine bright for our rural communities and State.
As everyone arrived we met upstairs in the “tasting room” to start off. After welcomes, there were self introductions. We had mostly local alumni from Nogales, Sonoita, and Sierra Vista. The best attended class was not even alumni. We had 4 members of our current Class XIX. Fran, our winery host then began with a tasting and some history of the vineyard and winery. The tasting went on all tour. We sampled around 6 different types of wine. It was cool! As we toured the facility, they would bring in another sampling. We learned how the different types of wine are made, aged and stored. It was a small facility, but they put out a lot of wine. The most interesting part, I thought, was that they sell 90 percent of their wine right from the winery as folks drive by to taste, or see the facility. Why is that so amazing? Because this place is out in the middle of, you know, rural Arizona. They do thousands of visits each year by folks from all over the country and the world. It is good to see how rural Arizona can have such an international reach.

The wines were all really good. We had some at lunch and then of course, we purchased some on the way out. We all really liked the relaxed atmosphere, the open time to visit and the things we learned. It sounds like another great Project CENTRL experience. I just want to thank Fran and the Sonoita Vineyards for a great tour and lunch. And I would like to thank all of our alumni and current class members who came to our CRC. We hope to see you in January for our next CRC in Maricopa.
Alumni in Action

Linda Vensel, graduate of Class II, is retiring after 41 years of employment; November 30, 2007 is her last day of work at the AZ Dept. of Agriculture.

While working at Marana High School as a secretary, Linda graduated from the University of Arizona with a Bachelors and Masters Degree. Linda worked in education for 17 years, where she taught Business Education for 11 years at Marana High School, and Accounting at Pima College.

Linda worked in finance for 14 years as an Administrative Supervisor, Loan Analyst, Auditor, and Agriculture Loan Officer, leaving Bank One as an Asst. Vice President when she came to the AZ Department of Agriculture. It is amazing during that time she only worked in two bank buildings but was employed by Valley National Bank, Bank One, First Interstate and Wells Fargo.

Linda began working at the AZ Dept. of Agriculture as a Program Auditor for CFV, which was her favorite job of all time, incorporating her accounting background with production agriculture. For the past 6+ years, she has been ADA’s Procurement Manager. During this time she received her CPPPO and CPPB certifications for procurement as well as receiving a Bachelors Degree in Agriculture. So, after 9 years at the AZ Dept. of Agriculture she is ready to retire.

In the next couple of years, Linda and her husband George will be moving to the Sonoita/Patagonia area where they are building a home. Her husband George is a Vice President, Ag Loan Officer for Capitol Bancorp/Central AZ Bank. So for the next couple of years, Linda will enjoy time to herself and her family while overseeing the building of their new home. As soon as George retires they will head south.

Linda has enjoyed working in the Agriculture Industry and appreciates that the AZ Dept. of Agriculture allowed her to remain active in the various commodity group and agricultural associations.

Associations:
- AZ Cowbelles – Past Pres.
- Tucson Cowbelles – Past Pres.
- National CattleWomen – AZ State Rep./NBCO
- Project CENTRL (Class II & CENTRL Board VP)
- AZ Cattlemen’s Assn. – Legislative Committee
- AZ National Livestock – Board Member
- UofA College of Ag & Life Sciences Alumni Board – Past Pres.
- AZ Hereford Assn.
- Phoenix UofA Alumni Board -Events Committee
- AZ Wool Producers
- ParadiseValley Presbyterian Church, Deacon
- UofA AdvoCats
- 4-H Foundation Board – Past Pres.
- Ag 100 Council – Past Awards Committee
- Maricopa Extension Svcs – Past Board
- UofA Alumni Board - Homecoming Chair 2005 & 2006
- AZ Farm Bureau
- Project CENTRL (Class XVII graduate, Jerald Monahan, has been busy since completing the program. This past summer he attended the 230th Session of the FBI National Academy, located at the Quantico Marine Base in Virginia, along with 287 other law enforcement leaders from around the world. This program was established in 1935 and is known internationally for its academic excellence. Jerald participated in 10 weeks of advanced investigative, management, and fitness training while at the National Academy. The fitness training included a challenge each week, with the final challenge being a 6.2 mile run, the first two miles included a obstacle course. Running that course gives a person a whole new respect for the Marines.

Jerald continues to serve as the Chief Deputy of the Pinal County Sheriff’s Office in Florence, an appointment he received while attending Project CENTRL.

His Project CENTRL internship was to start a youth group/center in a small community within Pinal County called Arizona City. This unincorporated community of about 8,000 people were without any organized activities for the youth and Jerald started a program called “YES”, Youth Engaged in Service. From that core group, the Arizona City Branch of the Boys and Girls Club of the Casa Grande Valley emerged and today serves over 100 youth per day at its center in Arizona City. Jerald continues to serve on the Board of Directors for the Boys and Girls Club of the Casa Grande Valley, a position he accepted when his program merged with them.

Other activities include: Co-chair of the recently created Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team, Commissioner for the Governor’s Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women, and a member of the Committee on the Impact of Domestic Violence and the Courts, a position he was appointed to by the Arizona Supreme Court.

Jerald is also continuing his work towards a Master’s Degree in Leadership with an emphasis on disaster preparedness and crisis management at Grand Canyon University. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Public Safety Administration from Grand Canyon University and an Associate’s degree from Central Arizona College in the Administration of Criminal Justice.

Jerald enjoys spending time with his wife, Shelley, an American Red Cross consultant, and his children, Lisa, Laura and Daniel. He also enjoys very much his grand-children, Alia, age 8, Gwendolyn, age 6, Ashley, age 4, and Gavin, age 3 months. Jerald and Shelley make their home in Casa Grande.
Planty Receives Certified Tourism Ambassador Designation

Rochell Planty (Class XIV), local certified meeting professional recently received the Certified Tourism Ambassador Designation (CTA) in the hospitality industry through the Valley Tourism Ambassadors. Valley tourism leaders from the Valley Convention & Visitors Bureaus Consortium and the Valley Hotel & Resort Association have partnered together to unite the front-line hospitality representatives to better serve our state’s current visitors and to prepare for the future. These groups have become a part of a nation wide certification program. This program is overseen by the Tourism Ambassador Institute. The Valley Tourism Ambassador program has currently certified over 300 local representatives. The program trains and certifies individuals to help enhance the quality of the visitor experience.

As founder of Rockin R Meetings & Events, LLC, Planty has over 16 years of experience in the industry. Her scope of expertise includes public relations; meeting and trade show management, continuing medical education and special events.

Rockin R Meetings & Events, LLC specializes in full service meeting and event management with their own in house audio visual department. They can manage your event from beginning to end or handle specialized areas where you need assistance to ensure your event is successful and unique. Rockin R Meetings & Events, LLC, services Association conferences, corporate meetings, Agriculture Industry meetings and special events, Continuing Medical Education, tradeshow management, golf tournaments, public relations and weddings. For more information about the company visit www.rrmeetings.com.

Sonoran Visual Media video wins Cutting Edge Award

Sonoran Visual Media, LLC, produced a video e-mail that received the Arizona Society of Association Executives Cutting Edge Award for 2007. Video e-mails are an exciting new technology that allow videos to stream in recipients’ e-mail inboxes. The forty-five second video email was produced to promote attendance at the Southwest Landscape and Nursery Expo (SNLE), held recently at The University of Phoenix Stadium.

“We are making the brochure obsolete,” said Sonoran Visual Media president and CEO Neil Schneider. Schneider added that people would much rather watch a video than read text or a brochure. “You Tube has proven that video is all the rage,” Schneider continued.

The winning video e-mail was a collaborative effort between members of the host organization, the Arizona Nursery Association, and members of the expo planning committee. It was shot using green screen technology and produced to match the rock and roll theme of the expo. The video email may be viewed on You Tube, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EfNUPu2yvRo.

Sonoran Visual Media is a full service video production company for the Web, DVD, iPhone, and email. The company also rents a full line of audiovisual equipment for meetings and events.

Photo: From Left: Cheryl Goar, Executive Director of the Arizona Nursery Association, CENTRL Board Member; Neil Schneider (Class XV), President and CEO of Sonoran Visual Media; Cindy Cox of Arizona Wholesale Growers and Carol Ward-Morris of the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association.
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Come join the fun!
CENTRL Regional Connection
January 25
Maricopa
See details inside

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CENTRL Alumni Council

Newsletter Articles
Keep sending your articles, pictures, interesting facts, and stories impacting alumni to Pennee Murphree, Newsletter Reporter

Email: pennee@cox.net