



NEWS RELEASE

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Funded by the soybean checkoff

Date: December 11, 2015

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Soy Transportation Coalition reelects officers, tours Panama Canal during annual meeting

Ankeny, Iowa— The Soy Transportation Coalition (STC) reelected its officers and visited one of the most consequential links in the agricultural logistics chain during the organization’s annual meeting December 2nd and 3rd in Panama.

Approximately 100 U.S. soybean farmers and staff members of soybean associations participated in the annual meeting and later toured the Panama Canal and received an update on the canal’s expansion from officials from the Panama Canal Authority.

During the annual meeting, Scott Gauslow of Colfax, North Dakota, was reelected chairman of the STC. Gauslow grows soybeans and corn on his farm with his wife, Jessica, and their three children. He has been a board member of the Soy Transportation Coalition since the organization’s inception in 2007 and served as the STC vice chairman in 2013-2014. Gauslow recently served as chairman of the North Dakota Soybean Council.

“I look forward to continuing to serve as chairman of the Soy Transportation Coalition,” said Gauslow. “If U.S. soybean farmers truly want to remain the leading supplier in the global marketplace, we need to have a transportation system that can deliver our growing supply to a growing customer demand. I am pleased to be a part of such an organization that focuses on the modes of transportation farmers rely on to be profitable in a competitive industry.”

Gerry Hayden of Calhoun, Kentucky, was reelected vice chairman. Serving as the STC secretary-treasurer from 2013-2014, Gerry and his wife, Judy, raise cattle and grow soybeans, corn, wheat, and hay. Gerry and Judy have two children and three grandchildren. A past chairman of the Kentucky Soybean Association, Hayden currently serves on the board of directors of the American Soybean Association.

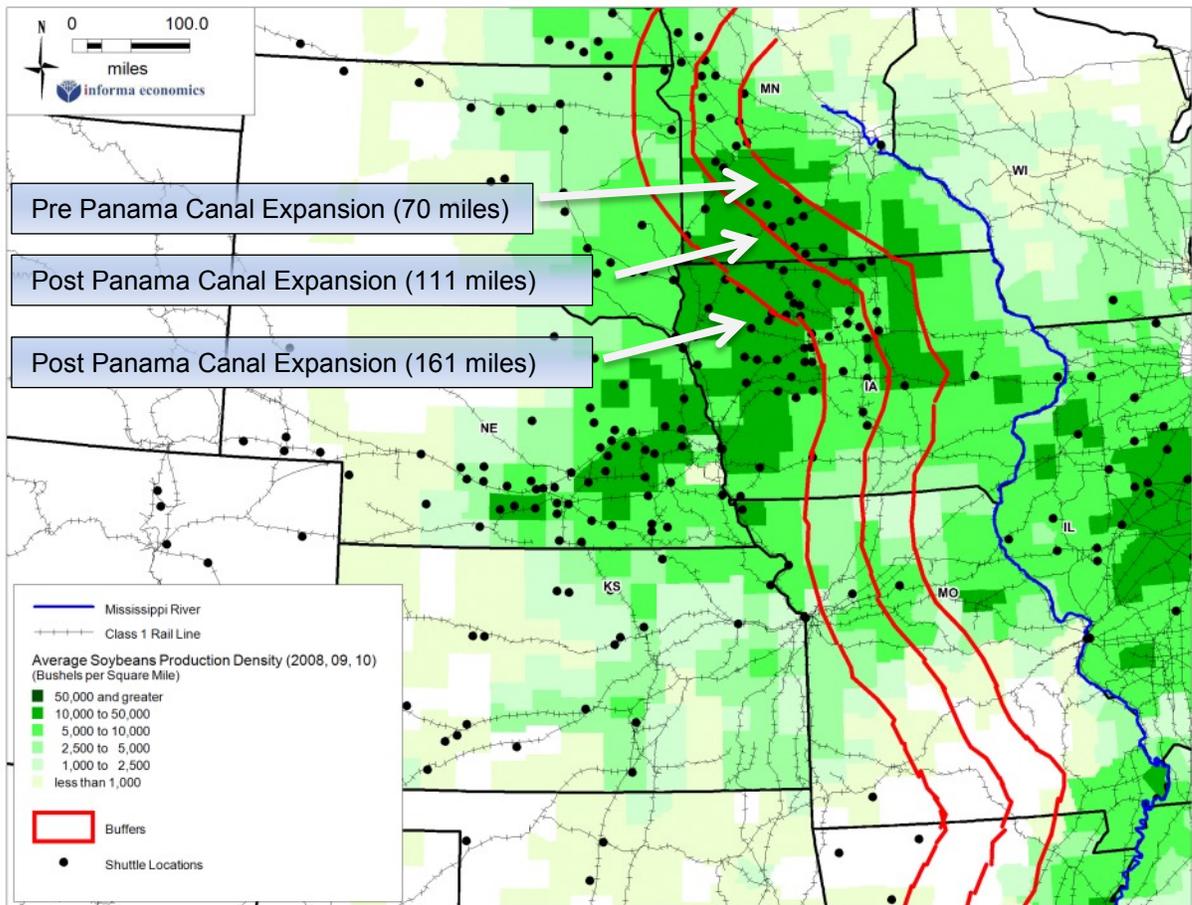
Mike Bellar of Howard, Kansas, was reelected secretary-treasurer. Mike and his wife, Peggy, have five kids and raise soybeans, corn, wheat, and swine. Mike is also a director on the Kansas Soybean Commission.

While in Panama, the group toured the current canal locks on both the Atlantic and Pacific side of the country. In addition, participants were able to view the new expanded canal locks that are scheduled to be open for use in April of 2016.

“It is incumbent upon farmers to not only be knowledgeable of and passionate about the supply and demand side of their industry. Farmers must also be knowledgeable of and passionate about the transportation system that allows supply to connect with demand,” explains Mike Steenhoek, executive director of the Soy Transportation Coalition. “The Panama Canal – both the current and future expanded canal – is an important artery that allows the U.S. soybean industry to be so competitive in the international marketplace. Farmers need to understand this key link in our logistics chain, which will hopefully serve to increase our resolve and motivation to demand that our nation appropriately invests in our own transportation system. If we fail to make these investments in our ports, inland waterways, railroads, and roads and bridges, the expanded Panama Canal will truly be a missed opportunity.”

Approximately 600 million bushels of U.S. soybeans annually transit the Panama Canal – the number one U.S. agricultural commodity utilizing the canal. Recent analysis – funded by the soybean checkoff – examined the impact of the Panama Canal expansion on U.S. agriculture. The analysis highlighted that one of the immediate beneficiaries of the expansion will be bulk commodities, like agricultural products.

The below map from the report highlights how sizable areas of the country could experience greater access to the efficiencies of barge transportation subsequent to the Panama Canal expansion. According to the research, the draw area to the nation’s major navigable waterways could expand from 70 miles to 161 miles. As a result, there will be increased areas of the country that will be able to avail themselves of the inland waterway system. The demand for barge loading facilities along the country’s major rivers will likely increase. The 111 mile line would be the expanded draw area from loading a "Panamax" vessel to a 45 foot draft in Southern Louisiana. The 161 mile line denotes loading a small "Capesize" vessel to a 45 foot draft.



To access the Panama Canal report or to learn more about the STC, visit its web site at www.soytransportation.org.

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Established in 2007, the Soy Transportation Coalition is comprised of thirteen state soybean boards, the American Soybean Association, and the United Soybean Board. The goal of the organization is to position the soybean industry to benefit from a transportation system that delivers cost effective, reliable, and competitive service.