



Florence County School District Three

NEWS RELEASE

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FLORENCE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT THREE, CLEMSON UNIVERSITY TO UNVEIL RESEARCH PROJECT

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LAKE CITY, SC – The fruit of a year-long research project will come to bear when Florence County School District Three and Clemson University unveil displays and a DVD documenting the project.

The research project will be on display at the Lake City Community Museum on Thursday, September 7, beginning at 7 p.m. The public is invited.

“The Rise and Fall of Tobacco in the Lake City Market Area Project” is the first research project of its type, according to Dale Layfield, Clemson University professor in the Biological Sciences Department.

Through “The Rise and Fall of Tobacco in the Lake City Market Area” research project, Florence Three students and Clemson University professors helped preserve the history and record the impact of growing tobacco in South Carolina. Students spent the school year learning from tobacco experts, including Clemson Extension agents, farmers, auctioneers, tobacco laborers, healthcare professionals, warehousemen and many others.

Layfield, along with Karen Hall, lecturer in Biological Sciences, and Barbara Speziale, associate dean for Academic Outreach and Summer Academic Programs and professor in Biological Sciences, guided teachers and students through the research process.

The information gathered from interviews and other research was compiled to create displays depicting various aspects of the tobacco market as well as an interactive DVD, which is much like a virtual field trip, developed by Florence Three students and teachers. The displays and DVD encompass the pros and cons of tobacco in the area – from its economic impact to the health issues resulting from its use. The DVD can be used statewide, or around the nation, as a basis for others researching tobacco and its impact.

“We have forgotten to tell our children about our roots,” said Dr. Patricia Chandler, Florence Three’s director of instruction. “Students have little agriculture interaction, although there are still many farmers in the area. We don’t want to lose that history,”

Chandler said. “We studied the good, the bad and the ugly of tobacco. We studied the culture, history and economics of the crop,” she said.

Students working on the project set out to answer questions such as “What happens to tobacco farmers after the quota buyout?”, “Will scientists find other uses for the tobacco plant?” and “If farmers know that tobacco is bad for people, why do they grow it?”.

All areas of school curriculum were incorporated into the research project, such as English/language arts, social studies, science, music, math and art. “Multiple objectives are met through this project, as it stimulates interest in the math and sciences while fostering a respect for the community’s agricultural heritage,” said Layfield. “At the same time, we will review alternative economic opportunities that agricultural producers will pursue.”

“This research project has been a tremendous learning opportunity for our students and teachers,” said Beth M. Wright, Florence Three superintendent. “It served as a vehicle for them to learn from many points of view how tobacco affected this area, both positively and negatively. Clemson University has been a wonderful partner in this project and we look forward to future projects together.”

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