



CAPITOL REVIEW

A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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A Weekly Legislative Report

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LEGISLATOR RETIREE RECOGNITION

Over **125 industry leaders**, legislators and staff at the Capitol joined on Wednesday for lunch in the fourth floor lounge of the House to celebrate the leadership of **14 legislators** who will not be returning to the 2019 Idaho Legislature for a variety of reasons. Those legislators who were recognized included:

Sen. Marv Hagedorn	Rep. Phylis King
Sen. Shawn Keough	Rep. Hy Kloc
Sen. Bob Nonini	Rep. Luke Malek
Sen. Jeff Siddoway	Rep. Kelley Packer
Rep. Maxine Bell	Rep. Christy Perry
Rep. Stephen Hartgen	Rep. Dell Raybould
Rep. Paulette Jordan	Rep. Eric Redman

Commodity, farm organizations, individuals and companies **sponsored the event** coordinated through **Food Producers of Idaho**. Those groups involved in sponsorship included the following:

- Oscar and Clara-Leigh Evans
- Idaho Alfalfa/Clover Seed Growers Association
- Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts
- Idaho Cattle Association
- Idaho Cooperative Council
- Idaho Dairymen's Association
- Idaho Farm Bureau Federation
- Idaho Grain Producers Association
- Idaho Hay and Forage Association
- Idaho Honey Industry Association
- Idaho Onion Growers' Association
- Idaho Sugarbeet Growers Association
- Idaho Water Users Association
- Idaho Weed Control Association
- Idaho-Oregon Fruit and Vegetable Association
- David Lincoln
- Monsanto
- Nezperce Prairie Grass Growers Association
- Northwest Farm Credit Services
- SBS Associates, LLC
- Simplot Company

Each retiring legislator was presented an ag bag full of commodity items and gifts from agriculture

associations to show appreciation for their service to the state. **President Candi Fitch** and **Vice President Stacey Satterlee** presented the ag bags to each of the retirees.

While some legislators are preparing to retire, **over 140 individuals** have filed along with the incumbents for the 105 positions opening in the legislature. The filing deadline of last Friday, March 9, brought a variety of names and backgrounds to the candidate pool. In some districts there is only one person running for a position, while other legislative districts have a large number of candidates vying for one seat. The May 15 Primary will sift out many of the candidates in preparation for the November election. Each candidate was mailed a questionnaire from Food Producers of Idaho asking them to express their position and opinion on three important areas: agriculture/urban issues and the conservation of farmland, labor for agriculture, and transportation needs to move commodities from farm to market and market to consumer.

FOOD SAFETY UPDATE

H537, which moves a number of food safety inspections from the Department of Health and Welfare to the Idaho State Department of Agriculture, passed the Senate 35-0-0. H537 also clarifies that ISDA can set program standards for food safety inspections of facilities that do not go above national standards.

EQUIPMENT DEALERS UPDATE

H526 passed the Senate 35-0-0. H526 amends the **Equipment Dealer Protection Statute** and prohibits equipment suppliers from substantially changing an equipment dealer's competitive circumstances without good cause. H526 also adds security to local equipment dealers so they can predict their competitive circumstances and remain in business. Innovative farm equipment is essential to production agriculture and producers need equipment dealers to stay in business.

PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

H658 passed the House **45-22-3** on Monday. H658 appeared in the Senate Resources and Environment Committee mid-week and the committee voted to send H658 to the amending order to make technical changes in the language. Most of the committee members agreed that changes need to occur to protect landowners and strengthen private property statutes in our state. Several landowners testified that the penalties in the current law do not prompt law enforcement to implement seriously the minuscule fines that have not been updated for many years. Numerous stories from landowners described having **crops destroyed, equipment damaged**, and being ignored when confronting trespassers.

The opposition raised concerns about how the H658 would affect landowners in urban areas and if law enforcement would efficiently respond to complaints. Other questions addressed included whether the legislation would create an uneven threshold for investigative costs and attorney's fees. Testimony from the Sheriffs Association argued that a number of problems could arise for local law enforcement when adjoining landowners in urban areas simply dislike each other. Though these are valid concerns in general, the **proponents of protecting private property** have pointed out that these issues are already problems for law enforcement and the structure of fines and penalties will neither increase nor decrease the frequency of disputes. Many arguments made by the opposition have muddied the waters and are concerns that are addressed in other sections of Code. The crux of the legislation addresses the **increased fines and penalties for trespassers**, and the burdensome requirement for landowners to post every 660 feet. H568 will be amended and voted on in the Senate next week.

PARMA RESEARCH & EXTENSION CENTER

The University of Idaho College of Ag and Life Sciences held a **Visioning Session** last week in **Parma** to discuss the direction for the **Research and Extension Center in Parma**. Faced with some recent and pending retirements, Dean Parrella enlightened the group of over 80 participants from a wide variety of industries, organizations and commodities as to the history and purpose of the Center. Dean Parrella assured that group that **past and pending retirement positions at the Center will be filled**. Those attending addressed three important areas of the Center's future: **1)** what research needs to be conducted to meet the needs of agriculture in the area; **2)** what facilities and faculty needs to be in place to meet those identified needs and **3)** what industry and agribusiness is willing to invest to accomplish some of these goals. Several positions at the center are important to all commodities such as entomologists, weed scientists, plant pathologists, etc., not to mention the importance of research in water, new cropping

systems and efficiencies in production. It was recommended that an industry-wide advisory committee be considered to give direction. The dean heard about the importance of paying people decent salaries, giving them a positive work environment with high-quality equipment and staff that understand farming procedures and that will apply good practices on research plots. It was recommended creating an Idaho agriculture endowment that would allow large and small commodity groups to contribute funds annually to assist in endowing additional chairs for research. The CALS administrative staff plans to take the input from the Visioning Session and begin to lay the groundwork for budgets and direction going forward. Similar Visioning Sessions are planned for the other R and E Centers located around the state.

CHANNEL MAINTENANCE & BANK REPAIR

The Treasure Valley Water Users Association has been working with members of the legislature to obtain appropriations for flood management and agriculture BMP's. On March 14 the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee unanimously passed a \$1 Million appropriation to fund river channel maintenance and bank repair statewide due to the damage caused by 2017 flooding. This funding helps areas of the state such as the Treasure Valley, to remove gravel beds and debris from the river allowing it to flow better and reduce potential flooding. The funding will go to the Idaho Department of Water Resources and be overseen by the Idaho Water Resource Board. Applications for projects would be submitted to the board for a 50/50 match grant for use in 2018.

JFAC also approved an additional one-time funding amount of \$290,000 for fiscal year 2019 to add to an existing baseline of \$500,000 statewide - which the TVWUA accomplished last year - to fund water quality programs for farmers and ranchers to meet best management practices. These funds will go through the DEQ's budget and monies will be given to Basin Advisory Groups (BAGS) who submit projects that are found to reduce pollutants such as phosphorus and sediment. Projects would be submitted for a 40/60 match grant.

Both appropriations have yet to be assigned bill numbers but will have those assignments soon. The TVWUA would like to thank Speaker Bedke, Representative Vander Woude, Representative Dixon, Representative Dayley, Representative Bell, and Senator Bair for their assistance with getting these appropriations approved by JFAC.

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