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Lincoln County Farm Bureau Wins 2017 Service to Agriculture Award

December 22, 2017, PENDLETON, OREGON: Lincoln County Farm Bureau was presented the 2017 Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) Service to Agriculture Award by OFB President Barry Bushue on December 7 during the 85th OFB Annual Meeting in Pendleton.

“I have the distinct honor to present the 2017 Service to Agriculture Award to a County Farm Bureau that has reinvented and reenergized itself over the past two years,” said OFB President Barry Bushue.

Lincoln County Farm Bureau was a leader in the fight against a countywide ban on aerial spraying, a tool that is safely and responsibly utilized by foresters, farmers, and other professionals to protect the lands under their care.

Lincoln County Ballot Measure 21-177 additionally sought to establish legal rights for nature, such as rocks and trees; supersede state and federal constitutions; and authorize “direct action” enforcement by private citizens — in other words, vigilantism.

“Lincoln County Farm Bureau assumed an active leadership role in defending the rights of its members and protecting the sustainability of local rural communities by publicly opposing this measure,” said Bushue.

Lincoln County Board Member Alan Fujishin said, “It’s great to have our members’ efforts recognized, but I would also point to the fantastic support we’ve received from our local community and allies across the state. We’ve been able to accomplish more, and in a shorter time, with their help.”

The task challenged Farm Bureau member families, both individually and collectively, to support and advocate for sound public policy in Oregon, while simultaneously working to educate the public about real agricultural practices — all within the context of a politically-divisive, emotionally-charged election contest and subsequent legal review.

“These Farm Bureau members demonstrated courage, composure, conviction, and commitment,” said Bushue.

The farmers, ranchers, and foresters gave presentations and public testimony before local industry groups, civic groups, sports groups, retirement communities, senior centers, city councils, and the Lincoln County Commission.
They wrote letters to the editor, provided voter pamphlet statements, gave media interviews, created promotional material, and did door-to-door canvassing.

These Farm Bureau families represented their businesses, the industry, and the organization online through countless, and oftentimes very heated, discussions on social media.

The threat of Measure 21-177 spurred Lincoln County Farm Bureau to action. However, it also helped members recognize the growing chasm between rural and urban residents regarding the value of agriculture, the realities of farming and forestry practices, and the public perception of farmers and foresters.

To better connect with the community, Lincoln County Farm Bureau volunteers partnered with OSU Extension and others to offer a public tour of local farms and forests. Members also worked with OSU Extension to offer public workshops on Pasture & Grazing Management, Timber Management, and Fruit Tree & Berry Pruning.

The County Farm Bureau also assisted the New Lincoln County Fair, participating in a Farm Bureau Booth and supporting rodeo events and 4-H activities. The organization plans to continue to raise the profile of local agriculture and build new relationships within the county.

"Today members in Lincoln County are organized, energized, engaged, and passionate about Farm Bureau. They've experienced what can be accomplished when farmers, ranchers, foresters, and fishermen work together toward a common goal," said Bushue.

“I am proud and honored to recognize Lincoln County Farm Bureau with the 2017 Service to Agriculture Award,” said Bushue.

PHOTO: OFB President Barry Bushue (left) gave the 2017 Service to Agriculture Award to Lincoln County Farm Bureau for its grassroots work fighting an aerial spray ban in that county. From left are Bushue; Lincoln CFB’s Alan Fujishin, Lorissa Fujishin, Cathy Steere, Joe Steere; and OFB EVP Dave Dillon.

See press releases of all awards given at the 2017 OFB Annual Meeting: http://bit.ly/2CXEoMx

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* Note to Editors: “Farm Bureau” is a registered trademark; please capitalize in all cases

Oregon Farm Bureau (OFB) is a grassroots, nonpartisan, nonprofit, general farm organization representing the interests of farming and ranching families in the public and policymaking arenas. First established in Oregon in 1919, Farm Bureau is organized in all 36 counties and has 7,000 farm and ranch family members.

Oregon Farm Bureau President Barry Bushue is a third-generation farmer raising pumpkins, u-pick produce, and flowering baskets at a nearly century-old farm near Boring. He is OFB’s 15th president.