



Matthew Weaver/Capital Press file

Greater Spokane Incorporated CEO Todd Mielke and AgriBusiness Council chairman Jay Allert talk about their organization's priorities for agriculture.

## AgriBusiness Council continues to evolve

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

Greater Spokane Incorporated is coming off a “transformational” year and will continue to evolve as it speaks for regional agriculture, the leader of the organization’s AgriBusiness Council says.

Council chairman Jay Allert welcomed the arrival of Todd Mielke, GSI’s chief executive officer, who will help advocate for agriculture in Olympia and Washington, D.C.

“That’s very encouraging, rewarding and good for the industry,” Allert said.

The AgriBusiness Council falls under the GSI umbrella. Mielke joined GSI in February 2016.

Mielke told the Capital Press that GSI’s priorities included helping local businesses find applicants for jobs; keeping the public aware of agriculture’s innovations, challenges and opportunities; and addressing increased local regulations.

“We’re dealing with commodities that have worldwide competition, and the slightest amount of regulation that puts them at a competitive disadvantage has extreme ramifications with their ability to compete and be profitable,” Mielke said.

Allert pointed to What’s Upstream billboards funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, which incorrectly condemned agriculture as polluters, as a reason agriculture has to be involved in the process.

“We can’t ever let up, obviously,” he said.

Far West Agribusiness Association executive director Jim Fitzgerald is taking on some of the duties of longtime agriculture advocate Jack Silzel, who represents the agribusiness council on the chamber’s public policy committee.

They are “two great, great resources for agriculture to be representing us,” Allert said.

The Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum remains the organization’s “Cadillac” for showcasing the industry, Allert said.

Allert hopes even more people become involved, building on existing efforts.

“AgriBusiness Council has evolved, and has been evolving for several years,” Allert said. “We have a great position of representing the industry with Washington’s second-largest business organization, so we’re thrilled about that.”

# Photo contest entries capture farm life

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

Photographs capturing the essence of rural life will again be displayed at this year’s Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum.

They are part of the Expo’s annual photo contest.

“This contest celebrates rural life, and we love to see all the moments that make up that life,” said photo contest judge Rajah Bose, a Spokane photographer and co-founder of the photo and video design studio Factory Town. “Whether it’s brilliantly lit, harshly gritty or just simply sweet, there is no better person to find those moments than the ones living it.”

The contest received 75 entries.

In the youth category, winners were:

- First place: Avery Hughes of Newman Lake, Wash., for “What Are You Looking At?”

“We were sure this was a painting at first as it seemed like a perfect composition,” Bose said. “We appreciated the photographer’s ability to get in tight on this image, which yielded a beauty that wouldn’t have been obvious in a wider image. Beautiful texture and color.”

- Second place: Anna Leitz of Spokane, for “Are You My Momma?”

- Third place: Hughes for “Grape Leaf Perspective.”

The Greater Spokane Incorporated’s Choice award went to Leitz’s “Are You My Momma?”

Honorable mention went to Hughes’ “Bovines at Sundown,” Emma Kate Bartels of Spangle, Wash., for “Snazzy Jazzy,” and Leitz for “Team Work.”

Judges were surprised to see fewer entries in the youth category this year, Bose said.

“Even so, there were some great images to choose from,” Bose said. “We love to see photos that show your life and the unique moments you see around you every day. Teachers and parents, this is a fun and edu-



“What Are You Looking At?” by Avery Hughes of Newman Lake, Wash.



“Resistance and Resilience” by Alyx Hanson of Elk, Wash.

“We were sure this was a painting at first as it seemed like a perfect composition.”

photo contest judge Rajah Bose

ational way to capture and tell the stories happening around the ranch, home and surrounding farms.”

Adult winners were:

- First place: Alyx Hanson of Elk, Wash., for “Resistance and Resilience.”

“This image was a universal favorite among the judges,” Bose said. “The emotion was easy to read in the kid’s face, and there was enough context that made the picture quick to understand.”

- Second place: John Bartels of Spangle for “Early Morning Wash Rack Trip.”



“Cold Weather Women” by Ashley Hanson of Elk, Wash.

- Third place: Steve Shining of Spokane for “Dusty Plowing.”

The Director’s Choice Award went to Ashley Hanson of Elk for “Cold Weather Women.”

The Greater Spokane Incorporated’s Choice award went to Sharon Lindsay of Spokane for “Vintage Harvest 2016.”

Honorable mention went to

Ryan Esvelt of Rice, Wash., for “Morning Drive,” Jim Heywood of Chattaroy, Wash., for “Dance of the Harvesters” and Sue Tebow of Moses Lake, Wash. for “My Bulls.”

Bose offered advice for next year’s photographers: “Focus on capturing genuine moments, great light and beautiful composition.”