

AgriBusiness Council supports growth of agriculture

By **MATTHEW WEAVER**
Capital Press

Greater Spokane Incorporated's AgriBusiness Council continues to support agriculture through its many public initiatives, the group's chairman says.

Chairman Jay Allert said the council's keystone is the annual Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum.

"The show is doing so well, and that's a reflection of the ag economy to some extent," Allert said.

In June, the council offered its annual "Good Morning Greater Spokane" program, designed to inform business members about the economic role agriculture plays in the region.

In October, members of the business community toured the Washington State University campus in Pullman to learn about the links between the school and agriculture.

"We love people walking away saying, 'I had no idea



Photos by Matthew Weaver/Capital Press

Participants in the Greater Spokane Incorporated tour of the Washington State University campus listen as Ralph Cavalieri, WSU's associate vice president for alternative energy, talks about unmanned aerial vehicle research.

about agriculture," Allert said.

New Greater Spokane Incorporated president Steve Stevens joined the chamber in July, replacing Rich Hadley, who retired in May

after 20 years.

"Steve's support of ag is wonderful. We're just looking forward to what we can do in the future," Allert said.

Allert says Stevens' back-

ground in public policy and a new agenda will serve agriculture well.

In recent years, Allert believes the council has made great gains in reaching out to the larger Spokane community.



Participants in the Greater Spokane Incorporated tour of the Washington State University campus in Pullman listen to WSU research associate Janet Matanguihan Oct. 28. AgriBusiness Council chair Jay Allert, at top left, says the chamber will continue its support for the agricultural industry.


"They realize it's big business and an important part of our economy, regionally, nationally and locally," he said. The council also wants to help agriculture and the business community work together more.

Allert foresees exciting times ahead with the chamber supporting the agriculture industry. He expects "more robust" involvement

with agriculture in public policy and an increase in the number of agribusinesses involved in Greater Spokane Inc.

"It's the business of agriculture," he said. "It's a lifestyle, certainly, but it's a very significant industry. That's our mission — to make sure people realize that and to make sure it stays healthy going forward."

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