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Georgia farmer elected new AFBF president



Courtesy of Georgia Farm Bureau
Zippy Duvall of Georgia is the American Farm Bureau Federation's new president.

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

ORLANDO, Fla. — Georgia farmer Zippy Duvall is taking the helm of the American Farm Bureau Federation after beating three other contenders for the presidency of the nation's largest agriculture organization.

Delegates from across the U.S. elected Duvall to the top job at the group's 2016 convention in Orlando, Fla., on Jan. 12, making him the 12th president

Complete coverage
of the AFBF on Page 12



in the Farm Bureau's nearly 100-year history and only the fourth Southerner to win the position.

"We're going to talk about how to make this organization, which is already strong, even stronger," Duvall said in his acceptance speech.

Duvall, who raises cattle and poultry and previously served as president of the Georgia

Farm Bureau, replaces longtime AFBF president Bob Stallman, who is retiring after 16 years as the organization's chief.

The campaign for AFBF's presidency began in the summer of 2015, when Stallman announced he would be stepping down from the position, which

pays roughly \$800,000 a year and involves representing U.S. agriculture in policy debates and trade discussions, among other functions.

Since then, Duvall and three other state Farm Bureau candidates — Barry Bushue of Oregon, Kevin Rogers of Arizona and Don Villwock of Indiana — have been traveling the country, trying to persuade state Farm Bureau presidents and other delegates of their qualifications to lead the group.

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WHAT'S NEXT?

With attention focused on problems of rural West, some see opportunity for solutions



Submitted photo
Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., represents Harney County. Although he doesn't support the occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge by protesters, he understands "the underlying frustration and anger at federal land management and loss of economic opportunity."

By ERIC MORTENSON
and MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden didn't have much of an audience Jan. 5 when he stood on the floor of the House of Representatives to talk about the militia takeover of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge headquarters in southeast Oregon. That's how it works; Members of Congress give even their most impassioned floor speeches to empty chairs and a single camera.

But in the days since, attention has turned to Walden's 24-minute description of the area he represents and the "decades of frustration, arrogance and betrayal that has contributed to the mistrust of the federal government."

Judging from more than
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Rick Bowmer/Associated Press
A Dont Tread On Me flag flies at the entrance of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge on Jan. 10 near Burns, Ore. A small, armed group has been occupying the remote national wildlife refuge in Oregon to protest federal land use policies.

While the rest of Oregon grew, Harney County flat-lined

By ERIC MORTENSON
Capital Press

Southeast Oregon's Harney County, the scene of the militia takeover that brought the area national media attention, has been economically stagnant for nearly 40 years.

Residents and elected officials who represent the area say that's the reality at the

root of the area's muted support for the takeover, even as they disavow the militia's tactics.

While the rest of the state increased jobs 74 percent since the late 1970s, the number of jobs in Harney County dropped by 10 percent, according to a study by the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis.

The county has lost 99 percent of its wood products jobs since 1978, dropping from 768 then to six in 2014, analyst Josh Lehner said in a new report.

"Relative to the late 1970s — just before the state went into the severe early '80s recession and timber industry restructuring — the num-

ber of jobs today in Harney County is 10 percent below back then," Lehner said. "Clearly, that is a really long time with essentially no growth."

Harney County residents know that first-hand.

County Judge Steven Grasty said there is a "feeling of despair" in the county due to job losses. Federal and state agencies, primarily the Bureau of Land Management, manage about 75 percent of the land in the county. Those agencies are so locked into process and so fearful of lawsuits from environmental groups that they become paralyzed and do no management at all, Grasty said.

As a result, many residents

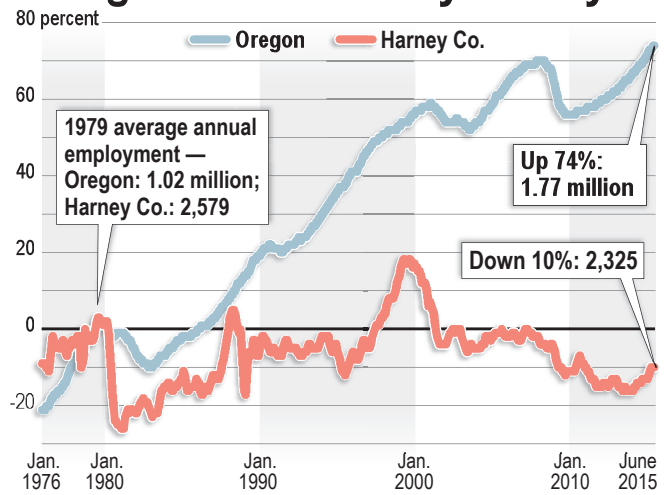
are no longer able to depend on logging, mill or ranching work to sustain themselves.

"We believe the wealth of a nation is based on its natural resources," he said. "We've lost access to natural resources, in particular, timber."

"Our community wants to be good stewards of the land," Grasty said. "When we managed the land it looked better than when the BLM does it. Because of rules and pressure from special interest groups, it forces them to focus on single (wildlife) species and spend their dollars on planning rather than on the ground."

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Employment growth since 1979: Oregon versus Harney County



THIS WEEK IN THE CAPITAL PRESS



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WATER

Idaho pushes for greater recharge funding

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