

Excellence in Ag award recognizes achievements

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

The 2018 Excellence in Agriculture awards will be presented Tuesday during this year's Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum.

The main goal of the award is to recognize achievements in the industry, create awareness of hard work and celebrate innovation, said Tim Cobb, chairman of the selection committee.

The committee considers four criteria: innovation, economic or environmental stewardship, positive impact and industry awareness and outreach.

The selection committee typically receives 12 or more nominations each year. The committee sends applications to nominees and narrows the number to three winners, Cobb said.



Courtesy of Spokane Ag Expo

Randy Suess, left, and Kara Kaelber were last year's recipients of the Excellence in Agriculture award. This year's recipients will be announced Tuesday morning at the Spokane Ag Expo.

Last year's winners were:

- Luke Moore of Garfield, Wash., in the individual youth category.

- Kara Kaelber, education director at the Franklin County Conservation District and co-

ordinator of the Wheat Week program, which explains wheat farming to fourth- and fifth-grade students.

- Retired farmer Randy Suess, who received the Legacy Award for his lifetime commitment to agriculture.

Kaelber said the award showed her the industry supports her program, now in its 11th year.

"I think the ag industry is a thankless industry," she said. "I don't think our producers and the people behind the producers ever get the recognition that they deserve. We're feeding the world and yet most of the time they get criticism."

First aid instructor returns to Expo

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

Mark Lidbeck returns to this year's Spokane Ag Expo and Pacific Northwest Farm Forum to teach first aid.

He occasionally hears from people that the lessons have been helpful on the farm.

"Everybody can benefit from knowing some of these things," he said. "Ideally, if something happens in their life, then it pays off, maybe saves somebody."

His presentation is 3 p.m. Wednesday.

Washington state law requires farmers and ranchers to make sure first aid-trained

personnel are available to provide quick and effective care, and that appropriate medical supplies are readily available, according to the Department of Labor and Industries safety standards for agriculture.

One person has to be certified on every job site, Lidbeck said.

"If they're out working by themselves in the field, that's them, baby," he said with a chuckle.

Lidbeck grew up on a beef and dairy farm in Bellingham. He was active in agriculture and a state officer in FFA.

"I'm an old farm boy myself," he said. "So this is near

and dear to my heart."

Lidbeck became certified as an instructor 40 years ago for the company he worked with at the time. That led to forming his own business.

Lidbeck tries to tailor his presentation to farmers' needs.

"Farmers are really a unique opportunity," he said. "They're always involved in equipment, sometimes they're away from their home site, sometimes alone. It all applies."

Lidbeck also covers cardiopulmonary resuscitation and what to do if someone is choking.

Contact Lidbeck at mark1146@comcast.net.

Career Fair offers opportunities for students

By MATTHEW WEAVER
Capital Press

SPOKANE — Thursday's Career Fair offers students a chance to see the many opportunities that are available and start thinking about their future.

Andy Winnett with the John Deere Tech program, responding on behalf of Pape Machinery, said the two companies work together to train new technicians for the Pape group. The program offers a two-year associate's degree and provides extensive training on John Deere equipment.

Winnett said he's looking

for future technicians who are past the interest stage and have decided that they want to work on the equipment.

He recommends students at the career fair ask such questions as the education they need, how much it costs, what options are available to afford school and whether they will be able to get a job after graduating.

It'll be the first time at the Career Fair for Jim Miller, director of sales and marketing at CHS in Lewiston, Idaho.

Miller said he's looking for students with an agricultural background and planning to further their education

in college or at a trade school.

"We're looking for students who are articulate, can introduce themselves and have an elevator speech — a 30-second introduction on what their background is, what they're excited about, what their future plans are," he said. "We're also looking for someone who can articulate how they can fit into our company."

Miller recommended students do research on the companies that will be attending the Career Fair. They should bring their resume and be willing to follow up with a "Thank-you" phone call or email.

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