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Farm Bureau president addresses national issues

REGION

Discusses labor. trade, regulations

By GEORGE PLAVEN EO Media Group

Driving from Portland to Pendleton on Wednesday, American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall said he was amazed by the change in scenery and even more surprised by the productivity of agriculture among the sand and sagebrush of Eastern

"I thought a desert was a desert, and it wouldn't grow anything even if it had water," said Duvall, a third-generation farmer from Georgia. "But I've seen some beautiful crops right out in the middle of nowhere.'

Duvall arrived Thursday morning at the Pendleton Convention Center to address the Oregon Farm Bureau annual meeting, where he discussed a host of national agricultural issues including farm labor, international trade and what he described as over-regulation by the federal government.

The trip also satisfied Duvall's goal of visiting all 50 states in his first term as president of the American Farm Bureau, which advocates for policies on behalf of farmers nationwide.

'This is a beautiful state, and you should be proud of it," Duvall told the Oregon

The number one issue



Zippy Duvall, American Farm Bureau president, spoke about national agricultural issues including farm labor and international trade Thursday morning during the Oregon Farm Bureau's annual meeting in Pendleton.

facing American agriculture, Duvall said, is labor. When asked later about legislation that would replace H-2A visas with a new H-2C program — which passed the House Judiciary Committee in late October — Duvall said there are still some problems to work out with the proposal, but added that "we want a workable program that not only deals with seasonal workers but yearround workers to bring some stability to our workforce."

Duvall went on to talk

about "burdensome" environmental regulations, though he was pleased with the Trump administration's decision to revoke the contentious Waters of the U.S. rule. Landowners worried that WOTUS would give the Environmental Protection Agency and Army

for farmers and ranchers. While the rule has been scrapped, Duvall said farmers need to keep up the pressure on lawmakers to ensure new

Corps of Engineers regulatory authority over virtually any

waters, creating uncertainty

regulations are clear and workable.

"We all know the other side that opposes us on our effort to rewrite the rule, they're going to be ready to challenge the next rule that comes forward," he said.

previous the Unlike administration, Duvall said current federal leadership is much more receptive to the Farm Bureau's concerns and interests. He praised fellow Georgian Sonny Perdue, President Trump's secretary of agriculture, as someone

who relies on sound science and data to make decisions.

T've got high expectations for him doing the right thing,'

Along with Perdue, Duvall said he has seen plenty of promise from EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt and Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke. Together, Duvall said the three men are committed to putting federal land, timber and grazing back to work for rural America.

Duvall specifically mentioned Zinke's recent proposal to shrink a number of national monuments, including the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument in Southern Oregon.

The bottom line is we want to go back to using common sense," Duvall said. "As they create those monuments, it becomes a huge burden on our farmers and ranchers who have been there for generations, using those federal lands to graze.'

On the trade front, Duvall said renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, has made for some concerns, though he remains confident the right people are in place to minimize the risk to agriculture.

"(President Trump) swings a big stick," Duvall said. "He's a businessman. We probably really know his techniques. We're just scared of who's going to call his

Finally, Duvall said the

Farm Bureau will be shifting its focus next year to the 2018 Farm Bill in Congress. The top priority will be to maintain federal subsidies for crop insurance.

The Farm Bill is not a safety net, Duvall insisted, but rather a food security "Hungry countries

and hungry armies are not very strong," he went on to

Barry Bushue, Oregon Farm Bureau president, said the group was pleased to have Duvall on hand to talk about national agricultural interests. Closer to home, Bushue said they anticipate a fight heading into the 2018 Legislature against the proposed cap-and-invest energy policy, which he said could dramati-

costs for Oregon farmers. "When you're hauling product and you're running equipment, those costs add up," Bushue said.

cally increase fuel and energy

The annual Oregon Farm Bureau meeting is a chance for delegates from each county farm bureau to get together and set their policies for the coming year. The meeting began Tuesday and wrapped up Thursday evening with a reception and banquet.

Duvall said local engagement is critical moving forward, as state and county voices eventually echo their back to Washington, way

"We have people willing to listen now," he said.

Community Christmas tree to be lit Saturday

PENDLETON — The first Pendleton community Christmas tree in quite some time will light up the corner of Court Avenue and Main Street starting this Saturday.

As a part of the Pendleton Holiday Stroll, the Pendleton Downtown Association is holding a tree-lighting ceremony in front of Hamley Steak-

Approached by community member Marcy Willingham about reviving the tradition, association **Executive Director Molly Turner said** the nonprofit teamed up with several local businesses and organizations to purchase a blue spruce pine from a Walla Walla nursery.

Turner said the tree is 12 to 14 feet

The event will be kicked off by local musician Murray Dunlap, who will play Christmas tunes from 4:30 to 5 p.m. At 5 p.m., Pendleton City Councilor Neil Brown will give a short speech before the tree is lit.

After the holiday season is over, Turner said the tree will be relocated to a Pendleton city park.

Dance camp benefits 'Anson Strong'

PENDLETON — The Rhythmic Mode dance team is using its annual winter dance camp as a fundraiser for the Anson Fairbank family.

The Christmas Dance Camp is Saturday from 10-11:15 a.m. Participants of all ages are invited to learn a routine that will be performed during the Pendleton High School girls' basketball game against Wilsonville.

The camp is open to all ages. The cost is \$20 per dancer, which includes a T-shirt. All proceeds will benefit

BRIEFLY



Before being decorated later that evening, the Pendleton community Christmas tree stands in front of Hamley SteakHouse Thursday.

the "Anson Strong" project. The 2-year-old, who is fighting leukemia, is the son of Matt and Adrienne

Fairbank of Pendleton. The performance is at halftime Thursday, Dec. 14 at 7 p.m. at Warberg Court. Dancers need to report at 6:45 p.m.

For more information, contact Debbie at 541-377-0411 or Lora at lora franks@yahoo.com.

Deadline looms for grant applications

The fourth quarter deadline for the Umatilla County Economic and Community Development grant program is Wednesday, Dec. 20.

Revenue for the program is received from Oregon State Lottery funds. Their purpose is to stimulate economic development, promote tourism and support community

development. Both economic development and community development grants can be applied for.

Economic development grants focus on supporting efforts that increase jobs and economic growth. They can include assisting a new business in Umatilla County or existing businesses wishing to grow with success in the county.

The community grants are focused on projects that enhance a community rather than simply being a donation sponsoring an event, cause or activity. The result should be something tangible with lasting value beyond the end of the project.

The committee meets Wednesday, Dec. 27 to review applications. For more information or an application, visit www.co.umatilla.or.us/BCC/ grants.html. For questions, call Commissioner Bill Elfering at 541-276-7111.

PENDLETON

In a three-peat, Round-Up wins large outdoor rodeo of the year

East Oregonian

Pendleton Round-Up is on a roll.

For the third year in a row and fifth time overall, Professional Rodeo Cowbovs Association awarded the Round-Up Association its Outdoor Rodeo Committee of the Year award at its annual awards banquet

Wednesday in Las Vegas.
The Round-Up Board of Directors have become a familiar sight on stage at the banquet, its 17 members and several former members crowding onto the platform, prompting the emcee to remark that they needed to make more room for the 'guys in the red ties.'

'We're going to have to get grandstands to get everyone up here," he said.

If there was a theme to the board members' comments after their victory, it was their appreciation Round-Up volunteers.

'We're really up here receiving this honor on behalf of our volunteers. ... We just wouldn't be able to accomplish this if it wasn't for our volunteers and the committee members and board members before us," said Bill Levy, the recently retired Round-Up president. "That's who really deserves a round of applause.'

In a press release distributed after the event, newly

President Dave echoed Levy's elected O'Neill sentiments.

'We have such dedicated volunteers, staff and loyal supporters," O'Neill said in a statement. "We are very proud to bring this award home to our community."

Chosen by its peers in the PRCA, the Round-Up beat out four other large outdoor rodeos for the prize - Caldwell, Idaho; Chey-Wyoming, Dodge City, Kansas; and Ogden, Utah.

Other Round-Up professionals were also honored at the PRCA banquet. Gary Rempel won Pickup Man of the Year, Justin Rumford won Clown of the Year, Bobby Kerr won Dress Act of the Year and Dusty Tuckness was named Bullfighter

of the Year. Additionally, the board credited some of its newer features like the 1910 Room and new "watering holes" like the Double D Bar. All of these factors combined for the Round-Up to set records in sales for tickets,

retail items and beverages. "It is wonderful to be acknowledged by your peers for excellence," Round-Up Publicity Director Randy Thomas said in a statement. "However, the Round-Up story is one of family and friends who give extravagantly to make our commu-

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nity a better place."







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