



# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
December 21, 2016

## **Rising Potato Leaders Commit to Improving the Industry** *Potato Industry Leadership Institute Set for Feb. 8-16*

**Washington, D.C.** – The Potato Industry Leadership Institute (PILI) Class of 2017 will bring together 23 potato growers and industry representatives interested in developing their leadership potential to better serve the industry. During the eight-day program, the PILI will offer a broad view of the potato industry across production regions and markets. The program also offers accelerated training on leadership characteristics, team development, communication skills, and effective media relations. Participants will also learn about public policy issues impacting the potato industry and experience first-hand how to deliver their personal stories to Capitol Hill. This annual program is administered by the National Potato Council (NPC) and Potatoes USA, and is generously supported by Syngenta.

This year's training will kick off in Maine with tours of local farms and the processing industry. The program will then move to Washington, D.C., where the focus will turn to skills training and public policy. Travis Meacham of Moses Lake, Wash., attended the 2016 program and will return this year to serve as the 2017 Grower Leader. "I hope to learn even more about the challenges that we are facing and educate others on solutions," he said. "I know we will all come away with communication tools and training that will help our daily lives and also strengthen our involvement in agriculture."

The 2017 class includes: Nathan Bula, Oxford, WI; Sander Dagen, Karstad, MN; Brant Darrington, Declo, ID; Lyla Davis, Monte Vista, CO; Lynn Dickman, Hancock, WI; Lindsey Dodgen, Potatoes USA; David Fedje, Crystal, ND; Scott Fenters, Klamath Falls, OR; Mike Huskinson, Sugar City ID; Russ Kehl, Quincy, WA; Kelly Kuball, Bakersfield CA; Jay LaJoie, Van Buren, ME; Braden Lake, Rupert, ID; Nate Lancaster, Connell, WA; Mike Larson, Rupert, ID; Travis Meacham, Moses Lake, WA; Chad Platt, Kennewick, WA; Suzanne Price, Washington, DC; Jordan Reed, Pasco, WA; Matthew Skogman, Foster City, MI; Jared Smith, Blanca, CO; Paul Streich, Kalispell, MT; Lucas Wysocki, Wisconsin Rapids, WI.

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*The National Potato Council is the advocate for the economic well-being of U.S. potato growers on federal legislative, regulatory, environmental, and trade issues. NPC supports the U.S. potato industry by monitoring issues affecting the strength and viability of the potato industry, influencing regulators and legislators on issues crucial to the industry's long term success, ensuring fair market access for potatoes and potato products, and bringing the unique issues and interests of diverse growing regions in the U.S. together on a national level.*