

NPC Holds 2015 Summer Meeting

By John Keeling, NPC Vice President and CEO

Last week, growers and industry leaders from across the country met in Kalispell, Montana, to discuss public policy and organizational objectives at the National Potato Council's (NPC) 2015 Summer Meeting.

Meeting attendees were able to participate in NPC's Legislative, Environmental, Trade, and Grower and Public Relations Affairs Committee meetings where a wide range of important topics to the grower community were discussed. Among those topics were sustainability initiatives, pollinator health, federal nutrition policy, National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA) funding, truck weight reform, GMO labeling and the U.S. Government trade agenda.

The meetings also included updates from industry partners, including Nasser Dean and Allen Scarborough of Bayer CropScience, Matt Lantz of Bryant Christie, Richard Burrell of ConAgra Foods, Sam Thornton of Sygenta, and Monte Anderson, Erik Gonring and Doug Cole of Simplot.

In addition to committee meetings and legislative updates, attendees received an overview of the state's agricultural issues from John Youngberg, of the Montana Farm Bureau, the story of Montana seed from Dr. Nina Zidack of Montana Seed Potato Certification, the role of honey bee health from Dr. Michelle Flenniken of Montana State University, understanding the global climate from Dr. Vikram Mehta of The Center for Research on the Changing Earth System, and Farm Credit's role in rural communities from Brad Perry of Northwest Farm Credit Services. NPC also had a special guest, U.S. Marine Corps and Navy Reserve Veteran, Sgt. Chuck Lewis, who spoke to the audience on the sacrifices that others have made for the freedoms we enjoy today.

Attendees participated in a silent auction followed by a live auction, which helped raise money for NPC's annual scholarship program that provides \$10,000 in tuition assistance to a high-performing graduate student pursuing an advanced degree that enhances the potato industry.

On the final day of the meeting, attendees took a tour of the Flathead Lake Biological Station, embarked on a two hour Flathead Lake lunch cruise tour, toured NPC President Dan and Jan Lake's Lake Seed Lab and greenhouse facility, and ended the day at the Lake family home in Ronan for a BBQ with local farmers and ranchers.



NPC President Dan Lake at the podium kicking off the 2015 Summer Meeting

“I am proud of how far this organization has come and where it currently sits on the national level. For such a small industry, NPC carries a big stick and grower participation in meetings such as this helps establish and maintain that type of identity,” said Lake.

NPC would like to thank Dan and his wife Jan for hosting this year's event, as well as the generous support of its allied industry sponsors.