



NEWS RELEASE

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Rising Stars Trained at 2013 Potato Industry Leadership Institute *Eric Schroeder of Antigo, Wisc., Elected 2014 Grower-Leader*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Twenty potato growers and industry representatives joined together to form the 2013 class of the Potato Industry Leadership Institute (PILI), an annual program jointly administered by the National Potato Council (NPC) and the United States Potato Board (USPB) that identifies and cultivates the next generation of leaders within the industry.



Christopher Wada from Idaho Falls, Idaho, and Megan Mattive from Monte Vista, Colo., participate in PILI media training.

Over Feb. 21-28, PILI participants traveled from all sections of the country to Idaho Falls, Idaho, where they received an overview of the local and national potato industry, including some of the challenges and issues beyond the production sector.

USPB President Tim O'Connor provided attendees with a market and consumer overview and talked about some of the exciting international export opportunities the industry is working to open. Participants then had a chance to tour Wilcox Fresh, a local production and packing facility located in Rexburg, Pleasant Valley Potatoes, a fresh pack shed located in Aberdeen, visit the processing facilities of Lamb Weston and Idahoan Foods, and see potato equipment manufacturing at Spudnik's plant in Blackfoot.

During the second half of the program, Leadership Institute attendees traded in their jeans and boots for suits and ties and flew to Washington, D.C., for sessions on lobbying and media training, and business etiquette. The class also participated in team building exercises, including the Iron "Potato" Chef Competition, where each team was given a pantry list and was challenged to prepare a nutritious, creative, and satisfying meal that included potatoes and chicken in one hour.

Attendees joined in the discussions on public policy taking place at NPC's Potato D.C. Fly-In, where they learned about the legislative and regulatory priorities of the U.S. potato industry. The program finished with a day of lobbying visits with member offices on Capitol Hill, where participants joined their state grower delegations in town for the Fly-In in advocating for policies that will improve the long-term health of the industry.



Remington Kendall (left) from Boise, Idaho, and Blake Thorlund (right) from Greenville, Mich., put finishing touches on their team's Iron "Potato" Chef Competition entry.

Derek Peterson of Wilcox Marketing Group in Rexburg, Idaho, served as the group's Grower-Leader, after being elected by the 2012 Leadership Institute class. The 2013 class elected Eric Schroeder of Schroeder Bros. Farms Inc. in Antigo, Wisc., to serve as the 2014 Grower-Leader.

The Institute is made possible each year through a major sponsorship from Syngenta. For additional photos, visit www.facebook.com/nationalpotatocouncil.



Participants in the 2013 Potato Industry Leadership Institute: (first row, left to right) Jennifer Coombs-Kelly, Elmer, N.J.; Christopher Wada, Idaho Falls, Idaho; Remington Kendall, Boise, Idaho; Blake Thorlund, Greenville, Mich.; Megan Mattive, Monte Vista, Colo.; Randi Hammer, Pasco, Wash.; Tanya Fell, La Salle, Colo.; Derek Peterson (2013 Grower Leader), Rexburg, Idaho; (middle row) Shawn Doyen, Mapleton, Maine; Mike Sitzmann, Tappen, N.D.; Adam Naslund, Cody, Neb.; Ryan Holterhoff, Moses Lake, Wash.; Jennifer Gogan, Houlton, Maine; Kerry Heilig, Moses Lake, Wash.; Michael Wenkel, Dewitt, Mich.; (back row) Jared Clavin, Oakdale, Calif.; Reed Tobol, Ronan, Mont.; Steven Tabet, Mountain Home, Idaho; Klade Williams, Rupert, Idaho; Eric Schroeder, Antigo, Wisc.; Brad Knights, Stevens Point, Wisc.

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.

The mission of the United States Potato Board is to increase demand for potatoes and potato products through an integrated promotion program, thereby providing US producers with expanding markets for their production. For complete information about the programs, ROI results, resources and tools available to all members of the industry through the USPB, please visit www.uspotatoes.com. The United States Potato Board—Maximizing Return on Grower Investment.