



Volume 10, Number 5

May 10, 2022

WINNEKINS CELEBRATES 10th ANNIVERSARY WITH WRDN – Community responsibility. That is the theme that has guided **Brian Winnekins** through his 30+ year-long career as a farm broadcaster.

What began as an enjoyable hobby and side-job in college grew into a successful and rewarding career for Winnekins as he has served in his many roles at various Wisconsin radio networks.

He is currently the owner of WRDN in Durand, Wisconsin, where he also is the farm broadcaster. Winnekins bought WRDN in 2011 and brought it back on the air.

“I had to start from scratch in 2012. In the coming years, I hope to keep everything going and make progress so I don’t have to do that again,” Winnekins said.

He said he views his role as a farm broadcaster as a responsibility, not a job, and he wants to keep that at the forefront.

“If you’re doing what your community needs, you’ll succeed,” Winnekins said.

Throughout his career, Winnekins has received several honors and recognitions, most recently in 2020, when he was named the NAFB Farm Broadcaster of the Year.



Winnekins said his career has been partially guided by his mentor, **Orion Samuelson**. Years ago, the two worked together on a project to showcase 4-H and FFA students at a small, county-fair livestock show. Winnekins said seeing how Samuelson stepped out of the spotlight and let the students be the main subject was inspiring. This is just one example of how Winnekins lets his community, and the future of agriculture, shine.

When Samuelson was recognized in 2004 as the Farm Broadcaster of the Year, Winnekins was named the NAFB Horizon Award winner. He said that recognition alongside his mentor was one of the proudest moments of his career.

“I still have the picture of the two of us sitting on my desk,” Winnekins said.

Through his many accomplishments, Winnekins has never strayed from his goal of putting his community first. His goal when purchasing WRDN was to serve the farmers and agriculturalists of Durand, and it’s safe to say he has done just that.

MOLINO INDUCTED INTO LOUISIANA AG HALL OF DISTINCTION – Don Molino, farm broadcaster for the Voice of Louisiana Agriculture Network, was recently inducted into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Distinction after decades of service in farm broadcasting.

Molino has been in the broadcasting business since 1964, when he was a senior in high school. He entered farm broadcasting 35 years ago at the Mississippi Agricultural and News Network but was transferred to the Louisiana Agriculture News Network in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, shortly after.

“I’ve been all over the place,” Molino said. “My job has allowed me to travel to some cool places like Cuba, Brazil, and Argentina, as well as much of the U.S.”

While farm broadcasting has taken Molino all over the globe, he says it has an important role to play in local communities.

“To me, local radio is serving the local community, and I think it’s something that we’ve lost over the years,” Molino said. “I think farm broadcasting has allowed local radio to thrive in many communities because they depend on the information we’re providing.”

Molino encourages young people to get a solid education if they want to enter broadcasting as a career.

“Get a liberal education, work on good grammar, and don’t be afraid to start at the very bottom and work your way up,” Molino said.

Throughout his career, Molino has been an active member of NAFB, formerly serving as its national and regional vice president.

“All the men and women in NAFB go out of their way to help other broadcasters,” Molino said.



KIBBLEWHITE ADDRESSES RURAL MENTAL HEALTH – Courtney Kibblewhite, the vice president and co-owner of Northern Ag Network in Montana, is teaming up with the Montana Department of Agriculture on a new program to break the stigma surrounding mental health among farmers and ranchers.

Beyond the Weather is a program that addresses mental health and empowers farmers, ranchers, and rural communities to get beyond the weather, both in their conversations and how they look at themselves.

“In agriculture, the weather is a universal topic we can all talk about and is so important to what we do. It seems to be the first thing we talk about, and sometimes, it’s the only thing we talk about,” Kibblewhite said. “The truth of the matter is there’s a lot more going on in our own minds than what’s based on the weather.”

Through this program, any supporter of agriculture has direct access to free counseling. Another component the organization is involved in is creating an agriculture campaign that brings mental health reality to light and encourages people to either seek help or talk about it with friends, family, and their communities.

“Part of our culture in agriculture is to work hard and get the job done, even if you’re physically or mentally hurt. It’s not that we think we’re too good to ask for help – we’re too tough for it,” Kibblewhite said.

Kibblewhite encourages the rural and agriculture community to seek help and to talk about their mental health.

“We believe your greatest asset isn’t any piece of equipment that is in the shed or a horse in your barn, it is you,” Kibblewhite said.

JAHNKE HONORED BY WISCONSIN ASSOCIATION OF FAIRS – When growing up on a small dairy farm north of Green Bay, Wisconsin, some might consider showing cattle at the county fair the best way to spend your summer vacation off from school. For **Pam Jahnke**, this was exactly the case. It was more than just a competition though, for her, it was a way of life and the catalyst to her entire future.

After attending Oconto High School, Jahnke attended the University of Wisconsin at River Falls. Initially, she had intended on becoming an agriculture attorney, but she found herself in the school’s journalism program, simultaneously double majoring in agriculture and broadcast journalism. She started the first campus radio station, WRFW. The station gained immediate attention; and before long, Jahnke had a team behind her. In her senior year, she received the top national scholarship from the National Association of Farm Broadcasters. If that was not satisfying enough, she then found herself being offered a job on the plane ride home from the awards ceremony.

She started her career as a farm broadcaster. Stationed at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, Jahnke found her voice and discovered that she was doing exactly what she was supposed to be.

In October 1990, Jahnke was offered a position in Menominee, Wisconsin, where she managed an AM radio station. Following various mergers and acquisitions, she moved over to Midwest Family broadcasting, a locally owned group that has several radio stations in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Missouri.



Over the years, Jahnke partnered up with **Jayne Buttke**, the executive director and connection secretary of the Wisconsin Fair Association; together, the two have created multiple projects to help the general public find more ways to engage with their county fairs and tell stories about their experiences.

The Wisconsin Fair Board managed to surprise her with the Friends of the Fair award – highlighting her exceptional work in making county fairs something truly special.



“Anytime that I pick up an award, I don’t care if it’s a big billboard in front of a large audience or if it’s a small award from a local 4-H, it always kind of takes me aback that they’re slowing down their busy lives and all the things that they’ve got going on to recognize me,” Jahnke said. “I consider myself so blessed that my job directly mimics what I would be doing in my personal life.”

WE WANT YOUR NEWS — Send us your stories and photos for future newsletter issues. Contact Erin Nash at erin@nafb.com or phone 816/431-4032, x107. *Airing on the Side of Agriculture* is included in the blog section of *NAFB.com*; for an archive copy of any past issues, go to the *Membership* section and click on *Airing on the Side of Agriculture*.

#

