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by Larry A. Quinn



TWO MONTANA NAFB HALL OF FAMERS HONORED – At his Montana Ag Summit on June 1 in Great Falls, MT, U.S. Senator **Steve Daines** honored former three-term U.S. Senator and Farm Broadcaster, the late **Conrad Burns**, by naming a special new award after him. Before about 700 attendees, Senator Daines presented his first-ever *Conrad Burns Ag Technology Award*, saying that throughout his life “Senator Conrad Burns was an advocate for technology to bring connectivity to Montana. This award recognizes Montanans who have sought to advance agriculture through technology.” The first recipient of the new award was another Montana Farm Broadcaster, **Taylor Brown**, the owner of the Northern Ag Network, which was founded by Conrad Burns in 1975. Today, Taylor and his team of NAFB Broadcasters **Russell Nemetz** and **Lane Nordlund** use the latest technology to deliver agricultural programming to 60 radio and 10 TV stations in Montana, Wyoming, and the western Dakotas along with their popular digital platform, www.NorthernAg.Net, that includes a weekly electronic newsletter and various social media.

Senator Steve Daines along with Conrad’s widow, Phyllis Burns, presented the award to Taylor Brown, left.



Taylor Brown was inducted into the NAFB Hall of Fame in 2010. He was chosen Farm Broadcaster of the Year in 1989 and served as NAFB President in 1992. Conrad Burns was named to the NAFB Hall of Fame in 2011.



Northern Ag Network Team shown from left, Taylor Brown, Augie Aga, Russell Nemetz, and Lane Nordland.



Taylor Brown said, “On June 1, those of us who were in Great Falls to hear **Sonny Perdue**, the new U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, received one of the most positive messages I have ever heard. We have posted his entire 17-minute speech on our website, at NorthernAg.NET. For many of my listeners this is the most encouraging 17 minutes they will watch this week. As you watch him speak from his heart, without any notes or script, there is nothing that I would disagree with. Just click on this link to watch what Secretary Perdue said.”

<http://northernag.net/AGNews/AgNewsStories/TabId/657/ArtMID/2927/ArticleID/8190/Perdue-in-Montana.aspx>



BRIAN WINNEKINS RECOGNIZED BY WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE – On June 21, the Wisconsin State Assembly recognized **Brian Winnekins** (WRDN, Durand, WI) for his election to serve as President of the National Association of Farm Broadcasting for the 2016 term. Winnekins owns and operates WRDN, 1430 AM, Reel Country, and his station has worked hard to promote local agriculture, an \$88 billion dollar per year industry in Wisconsin. Brian started his radio career at WKTY (La Crosse, WI) before graduating from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. His first unaccompanied farm radio gig was at WBOG (Tomah, WI). He later worked at WCOW (Sparta, WI) prior to purchasing WRDN (Durand, WI). WRDN reaches more than 6,500 farms in its local listening area with its mission to focus on delivering content that matters to the community and creating an avenue for community awareness. Brian and his organization are very active in the community through involvement with local organizations, school activities, Durand High School sports, local FFA chapters, and churches. Brian has earned numerous awards and recognition during his professional career, including the *NAFB Horizon Award* (recognizing farm broadcasters who are new to the profession), an honorary state degree from the Wisconsin FFA, and he was named a *Friend of the Agent* by the University of Wisconsin-Extension. Also, he has been recognized by multiple local and county FFA, 4-H, and Holstein groups. **Ajit Pai**, Chairperson of the Federal Communications Commission, recognized Brian for his efforts in resurrecting WRDN’s place on the radio dial.



NEIGHBORLY RIVALRY GOES VIRAL – One of the greatest college football rivalries pits Ohio State University against University of Michigan, but NAFB member **Ty Higgins**, farm broadcaster with The Ohio Ag Net (Columbus, OH), recently took that rivalry to a new level. While Ty's neighbor, who is an avid Michigan Wolverines football fan, was out of town in mid-June, Ty decided to do something that would soon go viral on social media. He mowed the iconic "Script Ohio," typically performed on college football Saturdays during Ohio State Buckeyes home games, into his unsuspecting neighbor's back yard. The video of Ty's creativity with his mower was posted to Higgins' Facebook page and has received close to 2.4 Million views and has been shared almost 40,000 times. "At first, this was just something I wanted to do to rib my neighbor a little, and I only videoed it for him to see," TY said. "Turns out that a few more people caught a glimpse of my work." Higgins has been featured on numerous TV and radio stations and was featured in hundreds of articles from Fox News, NBC News and USA Today to name a few. But the highlight of the week was when Higgins was the topic of conversation on ESPN's Sports Center. "Anyone who has ever watched me play any sport, from basketball to corn hole, knows that there is no reason for me to be on Sports Center," Ty said. "I still can't believe that what I did got that much attention. It was a crazy couple of days to say the least." You can check out Higgins' work for yourself on his [Facebook page](#). Also, Ty posted it to [YouTube](#).





RED RIVER FARM NETWORK INTERN – Red River Farm Network (Grand Forks, ND) intern **Emma Maddock** is wrapping up her first month with the network. RRFN received one of the annual internship grants from NAFB, and **Carah Hart** is her mentor. “I have been learning a lot at RRFN, working on a variety of projects within the first few weeks of my internship,” Emma said. “I pitch stories in our morning meetings and then contact farmers and ranchers to conduct interviews. I write those stories for the noon and morning live broadcasts.” Also, she travels with farm broadcaster **Randy Koenen** to report on *Crop Watch*, a weekly program where RRFN talks with farmers about their crops. “My job is to manage the social media portion of that program, including producing at least one Facebook Live broadcast. Learning how to create effective social media posts and captions has been a valuable skill,” she added. One of the most recent events she’s covered for RRFN is the North Dakota State FFA Convention. Later this summer, Emma will report from field days and other events in the Fargo, ND, area. She is a guest writer for the *Northarvest Dry Bean Grower* magazine, too. Emma will be a sophomore at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities this year. She started college at North Dakota State University in Fargo, ND. “I enjoyed my first year at NDSU, but am transferring so I can double major in agricultural communications and marketing, as well as graphic design. I hope to utilize both degrees to someday work for an agricultural marketing or broadcast company.” Maddock is using her

creativity to design logos, graphics and other materials for various RRFN projects. Maddock also enjoys traveling. She's already been to Texas twice this year; first, for the National Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT) conference and then for the NAMA conference where her presentation team took third place for their marketing plan. Emma connected with the Red River Farm Network at an ACT meeting, where farm broadcaster Carah Hart was speaking about a career in farm broadcasting. Maddock job-shadowed at RRFN in December. "We're glad to have Emma on the team with us this summer," said Hart. "She's got a passion for agriculture, a natural curiosity to ask good questions and is very creative in graphic design." While Maddock wasn't raised on a farm, agriculture and the National FFA Organization are a big part of her life. Her mother, **Tamra Maddock**, is the director of the North Dakota FFA Foundation. Her father, **Robert Maddock**, is an animal science professor at NDSU. "I have developed a love for agriculture by growing up within a family that represents many different parts of the industry," said Maddock. Maddock will attend the NAFB annual convention in Kansas City. In the meantime, you can connect with her by [sending a LinkedIn request](#).



65-YEAR MEMBER OF NAFB – Keith Kirkpatrick, who at 92 still broadcasts a weekly program on WHO (Des Moines, IA), marks his 65th year as an NAFB member this year. He attended his first NAFB convention in Chicago in 1952. His first of many committee assignments was Resolutions. Keith was chosen as Farm Broadcaster of the Year in 1971 and was elected NAFB President in 1968. He was inducted into the NAFB Hall of Fame in 2003. For many years, he was a member of the NAFB Sales and Marketing Board, and he served as vice president of the NAFB Foundation for several years. He is a Lifetime Broadcast Council member. **Mr. & Mrs. Merle J. Kirkpatrick** lived on an Iowa farm near Washta in northwest Iowa when Keith was born in 1925. That's where he and his two younger brothers grew up. Keith was 12 when the family left the farm. After one term at Sheldon Junior College, he worked in a south San Francisco Packing Plant, on a California dairy farm and a prune ranch before joining the Army Infantry. Soldier Keith served 18 months in the Philippines and then returned to Sheldon Junior College. That's where he met his wife, **Arby**. They were married in 1950.



Keith Kirkpatrick, right, conducts an interview in his early radio years. Keith's first radio job was as a newsman at WSUI (Iowa City, IA), when he transferred to the University of Iowa. Graduating mid-year 1951 with a radio journalism degree, Keith landed as **Herb Plambeck's** assistant at WHO (Des Moines, IA). Television

dominated Keith's life from 1954 to 1957. The experience convinced him that radio was the way to go. Keith led WHO's long-time participation in Conservation Field Days, county, state and national plowing matches and many Com Belt Field Days. Personnel changed many times in the WHO farm department, but Keith and **Lee Kline**, who came aboard in '54, were always in the picture. In 1970, Herb Plambeck resigned to be assistant to Secretary of Agriculture **Cliff Hardin** and Keith was appointed WHO farm director. Keith earned the NAFB Oscar in Agriculture in 1971. His hobbies have included hunting and fishing since boyhood. He is an honored outdoor writer. For many years, he has hosted the *Sportsman's Notebook* on WHO. With his hunting buddy, **Don Muhm**, he published the book, *Iowans Outdoors*. When Keith retired as WHO farm director at the end of 1990, his friends and associates presented him with a Browning Over-Under shotgun. Today, Keith continues to host *Sportsman's Notebook*, a Sunday morning program that airs from 8:05 to 8:30 a.m. on WHO Radio. He's arranging a late September trip to Minnesota's Lake of the Woods for his listeners. Keith notes that "71 people have signed up for a bus that has 75 seats." He admits, "My outdoor show is kind of fun!"



Carmen Darland, Keith's daughter, and Keith talk with two of his hunting buddies.

WE WANT YOUR NEWS – Send us your stories and photos for future newsletter issues. Contact me at larryaquinn@outlook.com or call me at **703-819-6532**. *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 **Membership** and click on **Airing on the Side of Agriculture**.