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by Larry A. Quinn



**ROOK ANCHORS AGWEEK TV** – Farm broadcaster **Michelle Rook** is no stranger to farm television. It has been a part of her career since college. “I had the opportunity to do some television reporting for Ag Communications while I was a student at South Dakota State University. Since that time, I have always been doing some form of television reporting or on-air work, in tandem with my job in radio,” she says. She has had every experience in television serving as an editor, producer, anchor, meteorologist and reporter. Rook will be using those skills as the new anchor of *AgWeek TV*, a weekly syndicated farm television program seen on stations in South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Nebraska and Canada. The show includes a variety of national and regional ag news, markets and weather. She started her new duties on April 30, in addition to remaining the Managing Farm Director and market reporter at WNAX Radio in Yankton, SD. Michelle has worked as a freelance reporter for *AgWeek TV* for the past year and a half and writes for *AgWeek* magazine, so the transition has been an easy one. “It was a logical move for me. It is a real pleasure to work on an award-winning show with such a great team of television

professionals. Plus, I love showing and telling the story of the agricultural industry in this region," she said. Michelle also continues as a regional reporter for syndicated *AgDay* and *U.S. Farm Report* television programs. Plus, she has her own video and communication business which includes consumer TV segments that help to tell the positive story of agriculture to the public. In addition, she produces commercials and long format videos for agriculture and other businesses. She has served as a meteorologist for KTIV-TV and KMEG-TV in Sioux City, IA, and KSFY-TV in Sioux Falls. She started out producing and hosting a weekly market program on South Dakota Public Television and followed that by producing and anchoring *Today's Ag*, a weekly 30-minute ag news program on KELO-TV in Sioux Falls and KOTA-TV in Rapid City. Michelle is a past NAFB President, Farm Broadcaster of the Year and NAFB Horizon Award Winner. In 2015, she won the *Doan* for her excellence in ag reporting. Michelle grew up on a dairy and diversified crop farm in eastern South Dakota and was a state FFA officer and 4-H member.



**MARSHALL NAMED NRRA CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER** – **Tim Marshall** has been named Chief Operating Officer of the Nebraska Rural Radio Association, according to NRRA General Manager **Craig Larson**. "Tim has been with the company for nearly five years and has done an excellent job leading KRVN. Now, we're asking him to oversee some of the day-to-day operations within the company," Craig said. The NRRA is the only farmer and rancher owned radio group in the country. Along with flagship station KRVN (Lexington, NE), other stations include KNEB (Scottsbluff, NE), KTIC (West Point, NE), KAMI (Cozad, NE), and KAWL/Max County (York, NE). Tim said, "I look forward to helping the company in any way that I can. Working for KRVN and the Nebraska Rural Radio Association is a privilege, and I appreciate the professionals that I work with every day." Marshall is a native of Eddyville and has worked in radio for nearly 40 years. Before joining

KRVN, he worked in the Lincoln, Omaha and Kearney/Grand Island markets. In recent years, the NRRA has expanded its reach, adding network affiliates in Chadron, Nebraska City, Beatrice, Fairbury, Sidney and Omaha. "Our mission has always been to serve agriculture," Larson said. "By having affiliate stations carry our ag programming, we're able to reach even more producers and consumers." One of the latest projects for the NRRA has been the addition of broadcast studios at Innovation Campus in Lincoln. Marshall said it's important that the company keep expanding into new platforms. "We are very excited about the direction of our company," Tim said. "We want to find more ways to present content to our audience and advertisers via video, apps and social media along with providing a great on-air product."



<b>TOP STORIES</b> >	<b>Conaway Seeks Immediate Farm Bill Vote After Immigration</b> >	<h2 style="margin: 0;">Conaway Seeks Immediate Farm Bill Vote After Immigration</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">In the recent farm bill debate in Congress, all of the Democrats and about 30 conservative Republicans voted against the legislation. The drama ended with a motion to reconsider. House Agriculture Committee Chairman Michael Conaway says that means the very...</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #c00000; color: white; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"><b>READ MORE</b></p>	<b>Latest RRFN Podcasts</b>
<b>LATEST NEWS</b>	<b>Disappointment with Dayton Veto</b>		<p><b>Country Morning</b> ▶ Thursday, May 24th, 2018</p> <p><b>Agriculture Today</b> ▶ Thursday, May 24th, 2018</p> <p><b>Market Analysis</b> ▶ Thursday, May 24th, 2018</p> <p><b>Weather</b> ▶ PM Weather Thursday, May 24th, 2018</p> <p><b>This Week In Agriculture</b> ▶ Friday, May 18th, 2018</p>
<b>MARKETS</b>	<b>New Opportunities with Proposed NDSU Ag Center</b>		
<b>AG BUSINESS</b>	<b>Planting Wraps Up Near Cottonwood, MN</b>		
<b>CROPS</b>	<b>Legislation Introduced to Address ELD and HOS Regs</b>		
<b>LIVESTOCK</b>	<b>MN Tax Bill Vetoed</b>		
<b>POLICY</b>	<b>An Interesting Path Forward for Farm Bill</b>		
	<b>All Top Stories</b>		

**RED RIVER FARM NETWORK WEBSITE GETS UPDATE** – The Red River Farm Network has a redesigned website focused on the original reporting of the [RRFN team of agricultural journalists](#). The updated [www.rrfn.com](http://www.rrfn.com) has a clean design and improved functionality. The site features news for farmers, ranchers and agricultural stakeholders. In addition, RRFN news stories can now be easily shared through social media, e-mail and more. “One month into the relaunch and the response is very positive,” said **Don Wick**, president, Red River Farm Network. “The updated website complements our on-air news, delivering information that impacts the bottom line for our farmers and ranchers.” The responsive website design is user-friendly on a variety of devices including personal computer, tablet or smartphone. In addition, it is easy to find news reports and podcasts with the new mobile version. The site also offers online access to radio stations carrying RRFN programming. For additional information, contact the Red River Farm Network at 701-795-1315 or [don@rrfn.com](mailto:don@rrfn.com). Digital advertising options are available.

**NAB ANNOUNCES SERVICE TO AMERICA AWARD WINNERS** – The [National Association of Broadcasters Education Foundation](#) (NABEF) has announced winners of the 2018 [Celebration of Service to America Awards](#), recognizing outstanding community service by local broadcasters. Winners will be honored at the Celebration of Service to America dinner on June 12 at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium in Washington, DC. “Local broadcasters play a crucial role in informing, supporting and strengthening communities across our country,” said NABEF President **Marcellus Alexander**. “This year’s winners represent the ethos of broadcasting and the industry’s

unwavering commitment to public service. We look forward to honoring these outstanding stations in the nation's capital." Now in its 20th year, the award program has established [new categories](#) based on market size. Farm Director **Rob Winters** (WOWO, Ft. Wayne, IN) reports that his station will receive the *Service to Community Award for Radio – Medium Market* for WOWO's annual *Penny Pitch* campaign, which has been providing grants to individuals and not-for-profit organizations serving Northeast Indiana since 1948. The initiative aims to help those who are either disadvantaged or physically handicapped by supporting charities that have a similar mission. In 2017, the campaign raised more than \$200,000 for *The Shepherd's House*, which provides temporary housing for homeless military veterans living with addictions. *The Shepherd's House* recently had its federal funding reduced, but the station generated enough money to keep the facility open for nearly six more months. Rob said the *Penny Pitch* event is held annually around the holidays. "We have had additional donations come in after the event, so we're somewhere close to \$240,000 at this point. It's a full staff effort over a two-month period where we pump gas on cold fall evenings and the gas station owner donates 10 cents of every gallon sold. Listeners who drop in are very generous and donate several hundred dollars at those events. Our relationship with the local hockey team affords us a couple of *Penny Pitch* nights at home games where the whole staff stands at the entrances with *Penny Pitch* buckets to accept donations." Rob emphasized, "The big connection to farm broadcasting on WOWO is that *Penny Pitch* was the original invention of former world famous WOWO Farm Director **Jay Gould**. Back in the late '40s, he was touched by a local story about a boy who needed a special typewriter because of a physical infirmity. Jay figured if the community would simply drive by one of our busiest downtown street corners and pitch their pennies in the barrel, we could raise enough to provide the typewriter. It worked way beyond anyone's imagination and now these many years later we have a *Penny Pitch* board that takes submissions each year and chooses one as the annual recipient of *Penny Pitch*."



**Rob Winters and his staff on the final night of the telethon after they had raised more than \$200,000 for Shepherd's House.**

**RFDRN CELEBRATES ITS 50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY – Rita Frazer** (RFD Radio Network, Bloomington, IL) said, “As I prepare to celebrate my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, I am honored to have the opportunity to share a few highlights from the RFD Radio Network’s (RFDRN) 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.” She explains, “The celebration included special features in our monthly newsletter that shared stories about the broadcasters that built the network. Farm broadcasters like **Dick Helton** and **Art Sechrest** broke in the microphones at the network, making way for farm voices like **Max Armstrong**. Armstrong grew up on an Indiana farm before heading to Purdue University. While in college he started his radio career working part-time at WASK (Lafayette, IN), WRAY (Princeton, IN), and WVMC (Mount Carmel, IL). He graduated in the spring of 1975 and accepted his first full-time radio job at RFDRN in the summer of 1975. Max went on to serve at WGN-AM in Chicago for many years. **Alan Jarand** joined the RFDRN in the late 1970s and was the voice of the network until he retired in early 2017. Alan served as the network director during the major growth stages of RFDRN. Under his leadership the network affiliate number rose from 16 to 80. “Jarand’s smooth voice and broadcast skills helped establish the RFDRN as the No. 1 ag radio network in Illinois,” Rita said. **RFDRN also is saluting 50-year partnerships with 16 affiliates that were part of the inaugural class of stations when it began five decades ago. Those affiliates include:**



- **Aurora: WBIG-AM 1280**
- **Bloomington: WJBC-AM 1230 FM 93.7**
- **Clinton: WHOW-AM 1520 FM 92.3**
- **Dekalb: WLBK-AM 1360 FM 98.9**
- **Freeport: WFRL-AM 1570**
- **Galesburg: WGIL-AM 1400 FM 93.7**
- **Jacksonville: WLDS-AM 1180**
- **Kewanee: WKEI-AM 1450 FM 104.3**
- **Litchfield: WSMI-AM 1540 FM 106.1**
- **Morris: WCSJ-AM 1550**
- **Mt. Vernon: WMIX-AM 940 FM 94.1**
- **Murphysboro: WINI-AM 1420**
- **Olney: WLVN-AM 740 and WSEI-FM 92.9**
- **Sterling: WSDR-AM 1240**
- **Watseka: WGFA-AM 1360 and FM 94.1**

Today these stations remain loyal affiliates and have been joined by nearly 70 other stations that serve local communities by providing agricultural programming for their listeners.



“DeLoss Jahnke and I are honored to be the farm broadcasters at the helm in Bloomington for the RFD Radio Network. We take pride in our work and strive to provide relevant and timely content,” Rita emphasized. Rita is serving as 2018 Vice President of NAFB.



**AG CENTRAL RADIO NETWORK IS ON THE AIR** – Mick Kjar reports that the Ag Central Radio Network is on the air. This network covers North and South Dakota and adjacent areas of western Minnesota. “It’s a little different than your normal or traditional radio network. Yes, we do farm news; in fact, nine three-minute reports and nine 90-second reports daily,” he said. “But stations can carry these as they fit into their programming, and not at a regular ‘hit time’ as is usually done on a radio network.” Mick adds, “The same format for weather programming is offered, with five longer version weather analysis programs and hourly 30-second weather forecasts 24 hours a day, and again, stations air the weather programs when it fits into their programming.” Ag Central also offers hourly regional newscasts which air at six minutes past the hour and hourly ag market reports which air at 40 minutes past the hour.



NAFB Farm Directors for Ag Central are (right to left) **Mick Kjar**, **Shawna Olson** and **Juli Mauch**. Mick and Shawna, in addition to being NAFB Farm Directors, are also meteorologists. Ag Central is carried on more than 20 stations in the upper Midwest and growing. When launching the network at the end of May, Ag Central gave away a Honda Pioneer 4x4 side-by-side for use on the farm. A veteran broadcaster, Mick has been on radio in the Midwest for 43 years. From 1988 to 2015, he was host for *Mick in the Morning* on *Valley News Live* television in Fargo, ND, serving as their farm director and meteorologist for NBC and CBS affiliates in Fargo for 27 years. Mick says he got into weather forecasting to provide farmers with an accurate three-day forecast, but he’s still working on that. Since 2008, his show *Farm Talk* has been on Ag News 890 (KQLX, Lisbon, ND) and is now carried by a number of stations across North and South Dakota. Mick’s favorite

things to do include woodworking and spending time in the garden growing vegetables and flowers and going to farm shows to visit with farmers and agri-business companies. Raised on a beef cattle and grain farm in the Sheyenne Valley grasslands of southeast North Dakota, Mick spent his youth growing up around cows and corn. Although farming has always been a part of his life, listening to the tractor radio while cultivating corn on a tractor with a steel seat got Mick interested in a career in broadcasting. After graduating from Wyndmere, ND, high school in 1968 and a few years at Concordia College and North Dakota State University, he headed off to radio school in 1972 and has been on the radio since then.

**WE WANT YOUR NEWS** – Send us your stories and photos for future newsletter issues. Contact me at [larryquinn@outlook.com](mailto:larryquinn@outlook.com) or call me at **703-819-6532**. *Airing on the Side of Agriculture* is included in the blog section of [NAFB.com](http://NAFB.com). For an archive copy of any past issues, go to **Membership** and click on ***Airing on the Side of Agriculture***.