

Oregon Farm Bureau Federation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Bill Austin honored with the Farm Bureau Memorial Award

At the 2007 Oregon Farm Bureau 75th Anniversary State Convention in Pendleton, Dec. 4-6, OFB President Barry Bushue honored William (Bill) Austin of Douglas County Farm Bureau with a Memorial Award, for having made a significant difference to the Farm Bureau organization and agriculture during his lifetime. The award was accepted on behalf of Austin, who passed away in September, by friend and former Douglas County Farm Bureau President Rick Epp.

Austin was born just south of Roseburg on January 26, 1933. At Roseburg High School, he was a member of FFA (Future Farmers of America) and obtained the "American Farmer" degree. He graduated with the class of 1951.

In 1952, Austin earned his private pilots license and bought his first airplane. In 1956, he joined the Army and became a helicopter mechanic in the 6th Airborne Division, stationed in Japan.

"Bill's real interest was agriculture, and he raised hay and cattle until his health forced him to retire," said OFB President Barry Bushue.

Starting in about 2000, Austin became very involved in Farm Bureau at the state and county levels because of his passion for protecting farmland from gravel mining companies. He served on the state OFB Land Use Advisory Committee and the OFB Aggregate Committee, making countless trips to Salem for meetings and to testify and lobby at the legislature on behalf of saving farmland from the destruction caused by gravel pits.

"Austin spent endless hours researching to prepare for a battle against a large gravel company that wanted to open a new mine on prime agricultural land in Douglas County," said Bushue. "His efforts resulted in one of the few victories farmers have won over gravel mining companies."

Said former Douglas County Farm Bureau President Rick Epp, "Bill Austin was a man with high standards based on principle and respect. We have lost a valuable and remarkable man."

Austin passed away on September 9, 2007. He is survived by his wife Dorothy, two children, and two grandsons.

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Editors: Attached is a high-resolution digital photo of the award presentation. Left is former Douglas County Farm Bureau President Rick Epp and right is OFB President Barry Bushue.

* Note: "Farm Bureau" is a registered trademark; please capitalize in all cases.

Other 2007 Farm Bureau members honored at the OFB state convention:

Paul Kovash of Benton County was inducted as the 18th member of the **OFB Hall of Fame** to recognize and thank him for his decades of volunteer leadership and efforts on behalf of Farm Bureau at the state and county level and for the betterment of the entire Oregon agriculture industry.

Daryl Hawes of Baker County was inducted as the 19th member of the **OFB Hall of Fame** to recognize and thank him for his decades of volunteer leadership and efforts on behalf of Farm Bureau at the state and county level and for the betterment of the entire Oregon agriculture industry.

Don Schellenberg, OFB Associate Director of Governmental Affairs, was honored with the **President's Award**, in recognition of his tireless service, leadership, dedication, and advocacy for Farm Bureau members and the Oregon agriculture industry.

Paul Thorp of Polk County received a **Top Hand Award** for his efforts in Farm Bureau and for promoting agriculture education and safety at the county and state level.

Gary Harris of Jefferson County was given a **Distinguished Service Award** for his years of excellent work, particularly in tax and land use issues, on behalf of Oregon agriculture.

Bernie Faber of Marion County received a **Service to Agriculture Award** for his passionate commitment to advancing the agriculture industry and furthering the interests of Oregon's farming and ranching families.

Mickey Killingsworth of Jefferson County was honored with the **Outstanding County Farm Bureau Secretary Award** for her volunteer work and commitment to the Jefferson County Farm Bureau.

Press releases and photos of all honorees are available.

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Oregon Farm Bureau celebrated its 75th Anniversary at its 2007 State Convention, which took place Dec. 4-6, at the Pendleton Convention Center in Pendleton. In 1932, the organization was founded by a group of agricultural producers during a meeting at a farmhouse in nearby Pilot Rock. Farm Bureau's first state office was established soon afterward in Pendleton.

Today, Farm Bureau is organized in all 36 Oregon counties and has more than 8,000 member families that are professionally engaged in agriculture. Barry Bushue, an east Multnomah County berry and nursery stock producer, is OFB's 15th president. Bushue was elected to a fifth two-year term as president at the 2007 State Convention.

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