



News Release

The Coalition For Agriculture's Future

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Release CAF-2011-1

Coalition For Agriculture's Future Holds Annual Meeting Friday

For Immediate Release
Nampa, Idaho – March 22, 2011

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The Coalition for Agriculture's Future will hold its 2011 annual meeting Friday in Caldwell at which time they will review important 2010 accomplishments and set strategy that will set the group's sights on agricultural land preservation efforts for the year ahead, CAF Chairman George Crookham said today.

The meeting will begin Friday at 1:00 p.m. in the Crookham Company conference room, located at 301 West Warehouse Street in Caldwell and is open to the public.

The Coalition for Agriculture's Future is formed from 30 of the area's largest agribusinesses, financial institutions, ag-related associations and other companies and individuals with agricultural interests in the Treasure Valley. It was formed in 2008 specially to deal with rampant, largely uncontrolled development that consumed huge amounts of historic productive farmland.

"The Coalition achieved some truly major milestones during 2010 in its efforts to protect Idaho's agricultural economy through the preservation of its crucial agricultural lands. But we cannot rest on our laurels, we need to continue those efforts," Crookham said.

Among the Coalition's achievements last year were the start of a total rewrite of Canyon County's planning and zoning ordinances which removed a "planned communities" conditional use permit that allowed developers to drop spot residential developments in the middle of agricultural ground. The practice had been going on for almost two decades in Canyon County. The current recession exposed the negative impacts of the practice and resulted in numbers of unfinished residential developments now occupying historic agriculture land.

"The change, when finalized, will require developers to go through stricter, formal land rezoning procedures before land zoned for agricultural use could be turned into residential subdivisions, a major advancement in efforts to retain the land crucial to Idaho's agricultural economy," Crookham added.

The Coalition also spent months researching and writing legislation designed to strengthen statewide agricultural protections in the Idaho Planning and Land Use Act. One of the changes would require that planning and zoning policies more closely adhere to in place comprehensive plans.

The legislation was introduced in the Idaho Legislature where it was passed unanimously by both the House and Senate and signed by the Governor on March 16. The revised Act takes effect July 1, 2011.

"We are delighted with its success because it serves to protect farm lands everywhere in the state from irresponsible or unscrupulous destruction of lands that serve as the bedrock of Idaho's \$6 Billion agriculture economy that supplies more than 130,000 Idahoans with much needed jobs," Crookham said.

You can learn more about the Coalition at its web site: www.agriculturesfuture.org.