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ngfa.org/newsletter | ngfa@ngfa.org | Editor: Sarah Gonzalez, NGFA

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NEWS

More than 650 industry members gather in Orlando for NGFA's 128th annual convention

More than 650 industry members gathered in Orlando, Fla., for the NGFA's 128th annual convention on March 17-19. During the event, NGFA distributed several awards to industry volunteers, conducted business meetings of each of its committees and the Board of Directors, and recognized the results of its most recent election.

Photos: [View the full photo album here.](#)

During the convention, several new committees met for the first time after the completion of the restructuring project approved by the Board of Directors last September.

NGFA also welcomed the eleventh class of Committee Apprentice Program (CAP) participants, which includes 36 new apprentices from NGFA member companies.

During the Closing General Session on March 19, NGFA President and CEO Mike Seyfert recognized the results of the latest NGFA election. Ballots were distributed electronically to voting NGFA member companies in February. Results were announced in the March 1 *NGFA Newsletter* and can be [found here](#). **Chris Boerm**, president of global transportation at ADM, is NGFA Chairman, with **Brian Schouvieller** as first vice chair and **Augusto Bassanini**, president and CEO of United Grain Corporation, as second vice chair.

NGFA Awards

During the Opening General Session on March 18, Gary Beachner, president and CEO of Beachner Grain Inc.,

presented the NGFA Distinguished Service Award to **Todd Kemp**, who retired in February after 32 years on NGFA's staff.

"Todd Kemp has been instrumental in the growth and evolution of the Association, having dedicated years of service to the NGFA, including in the role of Treasurer and as liaison for the Finance and Administration Committee, Risk Management Committee, and The National Grain and Feed Foundation," Beachner said.

"We are so glad to welcome him to the convention for the first time as an honored guest. On behalf of the NGFA officers, I'd like to thank Todd for the professionalism, geniality, and resourcefulness he brought to his work throughout his years at the NGFA."

During the Closing General Session on March 19, NGFA Chairman Greg Beck (now the Executive Committee chair and immediate past chairman of the Board) presented an NGFA Service Award to **Eric Wilkey**, president of Arizona Grain, LLC, for his contributions as leader of the Committee Structure Task Force.



"This convention marks the beginning of a new era for NGFA, with many of you participating in new committees for the first time," Beck noted. "This new committee structure is implemented after months

of discussion, analysis, and planning by a select group of dedicated NGFA volunteers. Eric expertly applied his years of service and experience in this Association – including as a member of the Country Elevator Committee, Risk Management Committee, the Board of Directors, Executive Committee and as NGFA chairman from 2018-2020 – to complete this mission that positions NGFA for the future and reflects the breadth of issues our members handle.”

NGFA Second Vice Chair Brian Schouvieller (now First Vice Chair), senior vice president of global grain marketing at CHS, Inc., presented the third annual “Randall C. Gordon Award for Excellence in Industry Service” to **Bo DeLong**, vice president at The DeLong Co., Inc. This award is presented to the NGFA committee member whose exceptional service has contributed greatly to the goals of the grain, feed and processing industry during the year. DeLong significantly contributed to the efforts of the task force assembled to rename the Country Elevator Committee to the Business, Merchandising and Operations Committee.



“The group’s efforts have resulted in a committee name that better reflects its members and the wide range of industry issues they tackle. Bo has contributed in countless ways to the Association in his years of service on the NGFA Board of Directors and Executive Committee, but today we want to highlight and recognize him specifically for his outstanding committee service,” Schouvieller noted.

NGFA Senior Vice President, General Counsel and Secretary Charlie Delacruz presented awards to the NGFA arbitrators that have served over the past year. They include:

- Travis Antonsen, Agtegra Cooperative
- Peter Courteau, Central Farm Service
- Doug Cropp, Premier Cooperative
- Jim Fagerholt, MarKit County Grain LLC
- Mark Hinkle, Bartlett Grain Company LP
- Mike Kilgus, Prairie Central Cooperative, Inc.
- Andrew Riffe, Stratford Grain Co.
- Trent Schairer, Bartlett Grain Company LP
- Jason Selking, CGB Enterprises Inc.

- Will Weathers, Farmers Grain Terminal

Membership Recruitment Awards

NGFA recognized the following leading membership recruiters over the previous year:

- Third Place: Sheryl Wallace, president of North America grain at Cargill
- Second Place: Ryan Warner, rail trading group manager at CGB Enterprises
- First Place: Kayla Burkhart, general manager at Dakota Midland Grain

The leading NGFA-member company in membership recruiting takes home the traditional solid-bronze statue of Ceres, Goddess of the Harvest as the award for most total membership points.

- Ceres, Goddess of the Harvest: Cargill

National Grain and Feed Foundation Golf Tournament sponsored by CoBank

Participants filled the Omni Orlando ChampionsGate International Course with 140 golfers who, along with sponsor partners, helped raise funds for the National Grain and Feed Foundation.

Golf tournament winners include:

- 1st Place Team: Kevin McHugh, Clayton Charles, Dan Suarez, and Todd Wilhelm.
- 2nd Place Team: Dave Ruelle, Bryson Shaw, Joshua Ludington, and Yohei Kuwano.
- Longest Drive: Reid Drenth
- Longest Putt: Justin Cauley
- Closest to the Pin: Josh Ludington

During the convention, Foundation Board of Trustees Chairman Brian Schouvieller highlighted several projects funded by the Foundation, including the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS) student scholarships, Waterways Council Inc. public education campaigns, and grain safety research. He said the Foundation needs donations to fund more safety and agricultural education projects.

“These funds directly facilitate the creation of safety training videos and tools. The Foundation also contributes significantly to helping educate policymakers and the general public on issues important to our industry. These education efforts are crucial to our efforts to support the longevity of the Lower Snake River dams and implement the infrastructure projects we need to stay competitive in a global marketplace,” Schouvieller said.

“Our most recent success story made possible by your donations is our scholarship program for undergraduate and graduate students. Since 2021, the Foundation has partnered with MANRRS to provide three annual scholarships for students pursuing careers in agriculture. Thanks to this program, the foundation has provided more than \$55,000 in scholarships and several scholars already have gone to work at NGFA member companies.”

Foundation donations can be made at ngfa.org/foundation.

Convention Speakers

NGFA Chairman **Greg Beck** on March 19 presented his final Chairman’s Address, during which he provided an overview of the process that led to NGFA’s new committee structure, emphasized the influence of the Committee Apprentice Program (CAP), the new opportunity provided by the CAP Year 2 program, and the importance of being actively involved in the NGFA.

In his opening remarks of the convention, he asked all current and former CAPs and anyone who has participated in an NGFA committee to stand, showcasing that most of the room had actively participated as volunteer industry members in the Association.

“I want to remind all members that your experience, opinions and expertise are invaluable to moving NGFA’s mission forward,” Beck said. “We rely on our members to drive our policy positions, program priorities and training opportunities, as well as to support our esteemed arbitration program, which many consider to be the cornerstone of our Association. This all begins with individuals dedicating time to CAP or committee service.”

The Transportation Open Forum on March 17 included a **Class I rail panel** and an update on the Lower Snake River dams. A summary of the rail panel discussion is available in this [Baking Business article](#). **Anthony Peña**, the government relations manager at the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, provided a detailed look at the events that led to the \$1 billion settlement agreement announced by the Biden administration in December to fund studies that could result in dam breaching. More information about protecting the dams can be found at rivervalues.com.

NGFA launched the Opening General Session on March 18 with **Alan Shaw** (*pictured right*), CEO of Norfolk Southern, who answered several questions from NGFA members about the railroad’s business model and emphasis on long-term growth and customer service priorities. During a Q&A session, NGFA President and CEO Mike Seyfert noted that NGFA shippers/receivers have long had service and reliability concerns related to Precision Scheduled Railroading (PSR) and a focus on quarterly Operating Ratio (OR). He thanked Shaw for the focus that Norfolk Southern has placed on serving customers and rail



shippers/receivers, noting that NGFA members have experienced improvements in service and reliability over the past year. The rail service improvement under Shaw also has allowed NS to provide grain and feed customers more opportunities to use rail transportation, particularly for export.

Administrator of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service **Daniel Whitley** discussed the agency’s [Regional Agricultural Promotion Program](#) and ways NGFA members could benefit, as well as other trade promotion plans at FAS.

Nathan Gonzales, editor and publisher of [Inside Elections](#), returned to NGFA’s convention this election year to provide an entertaining and insightful outlook for the House, Senate and presidential races.

During the Closing General Session on March 19, Scoular CEO **Paul Maass** (*pictured below*) participated in a wide-ranging conversation with NGFA’s Seyfert, covering growth opportunities for the

agricultural supply chain, the influence of AI in agriculture, consumer demand for sustainability measurements, export trends, and more.



Dan Christenson, senior director of government affairs at PepsiCo, closed out the convention with an overview of how PepsiCo sources its crops and ingredients, its plans for a biodiesel program, and water-positive goals in the [PepsiCo Positive program](#).

More posts and photos can be found on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn with #NGFA2024.

Save the date for the 129th annual convention on March 8-10 in Carlsbad, Calif.

CME opens corn review survey

CME Group is conducting a survey to determine whether amendments should be considered for the corn futures contract. The survey contains potential amendments covering delivery territory differentials, listing cycles and tick sizes as they relate to the corn contract. CME Group requests the survey and other feedback on these issues by April 12.

[View the survey here.](#)

CoBank publishes report on soybean crush capacity

In a report entitled “Rapid Expansion of Soybean Crush Capacity Risks Exceeding Growth of Renewable Diesel” published on March 21, CoBank’s Knowledge Exchange Division provided an overview of the soybean crush market.

“The push for renewable diesel is boosting demand for soybean oil as a feedstock. Soybean crush capacity in the U.S. is expected to expand 23 percent over next three years to meet the growing demand. While demand puts upward pressure on soybean prices, U.S. soybean exports will slow and imports will rise, thereby moderating soybean prices.”

One conclusion in the report noted: “In the long term, the risk of overbuilding U.S. soybean crush capacity by undisciplined capital could result in declining margins and the eventual consolidation of weaker players.” [Read the report here.](#)

EVENTS

Register for Stand Up 4 Grain Safety Week, March 25-29

NGFA joins the Grain Elevator and Processing Society (GEAPS), Grain Handling Safety Council (GHSC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to host the annual [Stand Up 4 Grain Safety Week](#) on March 25-29.

Since 2017, the annual Stand Up 4 Grain Week has served to remind agriculture industry employers and workers of the potentially deadly hazards present in confined spaces, including grain engulfment. Stand Up 4 Grain Week will launch at the South Dakota Grain Bin Engulfment Prevention Summit, a hybrid in-person and online event. Topics for the week of free virtual presentations include:

March 25 Kickoff Event: Hosted by the South Dakota Grain Bin Engulfment Prevention Summit in Mitchell, S.D. Safety demonstrations presented by Agtegra Cooperative, Oklahoma State University, OSHA Region 8, Prairie Ag Partners, and South Dakota University Extension OSHA Consultation to showcase key aspects of grain bin safety.

March 26: “Building a Safety Culture” by Brad Bousquet, vice president of safety and compliance, Central Valley Ag Coop.

March 27: “Strains, Sprains, MSDs” by Douglas Clark, CSP, corporate leader for environmental health and safety, Jack Link’s. Also available in Spanish in the afternoon.

March 28: “Ladder Safety” by Aaron Yoder, Ph.D., associate professor, Department of Environmental, Agricultural, and Occupational Health, University of Nebraska Medical Center and Nebraska Extension. Also available in Spanish in the afternoon.

March 29: “Heat and Extreme Temperatures,” by Casey Abel, director of safety, King Ranch, and Ben Avila, president/owner, Provident Safety Consulting Services, Inc. Also available in Spanish in the afternoon.

For more information and to register for the free event, go to standup4grainsafety.org.



Trade Rules Seminar early bird registration ends March 22

NGFA’s [2024 Trade Rules Seminar](#) is May 8-9 at the Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark in St. Louis, Mo. This biennial seminar on trading, trade rules and arbitration provides attendees with a primer on

contracting principles and trading practices to minimize costly trade disputes and contract non-performance.

The early bird registration price expires TODAY, March 22. [Register here](#).

During this popular NGFA event, staff and industry experts use extensive case studies to provide a working knowledge of trade and contracting principles with sessions on:

- Trade rules application, including the grain, feed, barge, secondary rail freight and barge freight trade rules;
- An attorney-led panel discussion on the legal principles of commercial and producer contracting and trading;
- Laws and standards applicable to grain and feed transactions; and
- A primer on NGFA Arbitration including avoiding disputes and use of arbitration when necessary.

The NGFA trade rules govern all financial, mercantile and commercial transactions involving grain. They are dynamic and responsive to current business practices. And they are maintained solely by NGFA.

WATCH: [What is the NGFA Trade Rules Seminar?](#)

SUPPLEMENTS

April 2024 leadership training deadline is March 22

The deadline to register for the April 2024 leadership program hosted by People Spark Consulting is TODAY, **March 22**.

NGFA and People Spark Consulting have partnered to further the mission to provide education and training to members at all levels in the agriculture industry. The [People Spark Leadership Transformation Program](#)® is a year-long course that focuses on practical application of leadership skills and tools. It starts with an 8-week intensive training, followed by 10 months of ongoing support to reinforce and sustain the learned skills. NGFA members receive a bonus private coaching session with their Leadership Transformation Program® registration. New cohorts begin monthly throughout 2024.



[Click here for information](#)! The investment for the 12-month People Spark Leadership Transformation Program® is \$2,500 using reference code: NGFA.

NGFA mourns loss of Marilyn Brouillette

NGFA mourns the loss of Marilyn Strasburger Brouillette, the mother of JoAnn Brouillette, president of Demeter LP and member of the NGFA Board of Directors and a former NGFA Chairman. She was the spouse of the late Don Brouillette, also a former NGFA Chairman.

Marilyn Brouillette, 87, formerly of Fowler, Indiana, passed away peacefully at her residence in West Lafayette, Indiana on March 17. Family and friends may call at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Fowler,

from 3-7 p.m. EST on March 22 and from 9-10:00 a.m. on March 23, which immediately precedes the Funeral Mass at 10 a.m. Interment will follow at St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery in Dunnington, Indiana.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to The Marilyn Brouillette Scholarship Fund at Marian University or the Benton County Catholic School Educational Trust. More information about memorial gifts and the formal obituary [can be found here](#).

Extra Supplements

NGFA in the news:

Baking Business: [The rail industry is chugging along post pandemic](#)

Feed & Grain: [Stand Up 4 Grain Safety Week kick-off in Mitchell, South Dakota](#)

BNN Bloomberg: [Agriculture Groups Seek \\$900 Million in US Aid to Recoup Markets](#)

World Grain: [Nearly \\$400 million cut from USACE budget](#)

Other news:

Agri-Pulse: [CFIUS, intellectual property theft discussed in House Ag China hearing](#) *(log in)*

ABC News: [US farms are increasingly reliant on contract workers who are acutely exposed to climate extremes](#)

Reuters: [EU to impose tariffs on Russian grain imports, sources say](#)

NGFA | 1400 Crystal Drive | Suite 260 | Arlington | VA | 22202



