

**agInnovation- West  
Fall Business Meeting Agenda  
Wednesday, September 17  
Central Time Zone**

<b>Sheraton Westport Chalet Room TBD 2:15 PM – 8:00 PM</b>				
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Time (min)</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
1	2:15-2:20	Call to Order, Welcome, Introductions	Donkin	-
2	2:20-2:21	Approval of Business Meeting Agenda	Donkin	1
3	2:21-2:22	Approval of 2025 Summer Meeting Minutes	Donkin	2-5
4	2:22-2:25	August Bank Statement	Kelly	6
5	2:25-2:30	Chair's Interim Actions & Executive Committee Report	Donkin	7
6	2:30-2:40	Discussion of Adaptive Roots Presentation	Donkin	8-12
7	2:40-2:50	USDA Reorganization Letter	Donkin	13-15
8	2:50-3:10	Alliance for Western Excellence	Donkin	TBD
9	3:10-3:20	Hot Topics Proposal	Hess	16-17
10	3:20-3:40	Preparation for agInnovation Business Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research Innovation Awards and W525</li> <li>• Investment Account</li> <li>• Bayer Tour</li> </ul>	Hess Pritsos Hess	18-23 24 25-26 27-31
11	3:40-4:20	Membership Check-in Are Members Dealing with Challenges? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greatest challenge within your State/Territory</li> <li>• Greatest challenge dealing with the federal government</li> </ul> Any opportunities worth sharing?	All	-
12	4:20-4:30	Upcoming Meetings	Donkin/Olival/Kelly/Hess	32-33
13	4:30-4:40	Other Items from Members	All	-
14	4:40-4:45	Changing of the Guard	Hess/Donkin	-
15	4:45	Adjourn	All	-
16	4:45-5:45	Time for Refreshing	All	-
17	5:45-6:00	Walk to Dinner	All	-
18	6:00-8:00	agInnovation-West Dinner Westport Social, 910 W Port Plaza	All	-

**Item 3.0**

**Agenda Item: 2025 Summer Business Meeting Minutes**

**Presenter: Shawn Donkin for Jodie Anderson**

**Action: Approval**

**agInnovation-West Summer Business Meeting**

**June 26, 2025**

**Marian Rochelle Gateway Center**

**Ballroom B/C**

**Laramie, WY**

**Attendance:** Shawn Donkin, Paul Johnson, Gene Kelly, Eric Webster, Chris Pritsos, Frank Camacho, Manjo Nair, Glenda Humiston, Lara Prihodko, Scot Hulbert, Leslie Edgar, Jodie Anderson, Darrin Boss, Sreekala Bajwa, and Bret Hess

**1. Call to Order, Welcome, Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by Shawn at 2:11 pm MT. Shawn welcomed members to the summer business meeting then asked each person to introduce themselves since there were new members joining for their first time.

**2. Business Meeting Agenda**

Shawn asked for additions to the agenda. Bret asked to incorporate information that he has recently received. Shawn asked for a motion to approve the agenda with the updated information. Leslie moved to accept with the updates, Glenda seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**3. Spring Business Meeting Minutes**

Shawn noted that the spring business meeting minutes submitted by Jodie were included as the first agenda brief. Chris moved to accept the minutes as presented, Frank seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

**4. Officers and Committee Nominations**

Bret explained that all nominations will be pulled into one motion and a vote will be taken at the end of his presentation of the nominees. He started by explaining that the executive committee members with one-year appointments agreed to be nominated for a second term, with the exception of Greg Cuomo. Glenda has accepted a nomination to replace Greg as a member at large. Jodie and Gene have one more year left on their appointments to the executive committee. a second term for the executive committee.

There may be a need replace David Gang on the Western IPM Center Advisory Committee. Gene nominated Troy Bauder, Associate Director at CSU. Bret will follow up with Matt Bauer regarding the possible change in members representing agInnovation- West.

With Greg's departure from Utah State, there will be a need to fill a spot on the agInnovation Science and Technology Committee. Lara Prihodko, Assistant Director at NMSU agreed to

accept a nomination. Lara will take over after Matt Yost fills in for Greg at the STC meeting on July 1.

agInnovation is seeking nominations for a representative to serve on the Communication Marketing Committee. Frank expressed interest and will let Bret know if he wishes to be nominated.

There is an opening on the Lead 21 Board. Darrin Boss, Associate Director at MSU agreed to accept a nomination.

Bret was nominated to serve as Chair of NCFAR's Research and Outreach Committee. The membership encouraged Bret to accept the role.

Bret called for additional nominations from the floor. Following none, nominations were closed and the members passed the slate of nominations unanimously.

## **5. Treasurer's Report**

Gene reported that the AR report shows \$115,942.64 in outstanding invoices, which includes \$949.95 to the NE for SWAG, \$22,968.83 for WRDC Tribal Sponsorships, \$3,151.26 in NERAOC reimbursement from WRDC and WEDA for their separate meetings, and \$88,872.60 in assessment invoices. Idaho has already paid and Nevada is an in-kind contribution.

There was \$31,645.87 in revenue generated for the summer meeting. The event sponsorship is reflective of the invoice for WRDC's tribal sponsorship and NERAOC generated \$447,567.11 in income. The \$47,764 in revenue reflects the transfer of IYRP funds into the main account.

Total revenue is \$665,804.02.

On the expenses, Bret and Jenn are in the process of registering as new vendors under agInnovation-West and pay an annual fee of \$12 to the State of Hawai'i. We paid an annual subscription to Survey Monkey of \$276.00. Association swag increased to cover the cost of the jacket given away at NERAOC. We have made some prepayment for the summer meeting in Laramie and NERAOC expenses were \$389,536.19. The guest Travel and Meetings reflects the tribal travel reimbursements for NERAOC. Bret had an additional \$600 registration for APLU and additional travel expenses.

Total expenses are \$467,584.74 and the association's current bank balance is \$253,309.15.

This balance does not account for passing along \$66,764.60 in carry over funds.

Bret mentioned that the name change has caused some hiccups with assessment payments.

Gene asked for questions and after hearing none, Darrin moved to accept the treasurer's report as present. Leslie seconded the motions and the motion passed unanimously.

## **6. Chair's Interim Actions & Executive Committee Report**

Shawn reviewed the actions listed in the agenda brief and asked if the members had questions. Hearing no questions, Shawn asked for a motion to approve the report. Chris moved, Lara seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

## **7. MRC Report and AA Openings**

Bret highlighted a few items included in the agenda brief. There were two projects in need of attention. W5177: Enhancing the Competitiveness and Value of U.S. Beef needs to decide if the committee wants to be cross-disciplinary or have the meat and animal scientists break away and only continue with those scientific endeavors. WERA1024: Sustainable Management of Free-roaming Equid Populations on Designated Western U.S. Landscapes seems to be getting back on track but a follow-up review next year is necessary to ensure that the committee is still making progress.

Regarding AA opening, there is a need to fill AA positions vacated by Walter's retirement. Luckily, Paul (USU) has served as AA on projects so there are only a couple open with Greg's departure. Email Bret if you know of anyone who would like to serve as AA on any of the open projects. Department heads could serve. Scot's replacement will serve as the advisor for the National Plant Germplasm Coordinating Committee because WSU receives the Off-The-Top funding to support the regional plant germplasm center.

## **8. Upcoming Meetings**

Bret reminded the members that next summer's joint meeting will be in Hawai'i June 22-25.

The 2025 Joint agInnovation and Extension meeting will be September 15-18. It is anticipated to be in St. Louis, but no contracts have been signed.

The Spring 2026 will be virtual as the executive committee decided not to join WEDA and to save on travel expenses.

The 2026 agInnovation National Meeting will be September 21-25 in Grand Junction, CO.

## **9. agInnovation Capacity Funds Talking Points**

Shawn pointed out that the talking points were included as a brief on page 15 of the meeting packet. Let Bret know if you have any suggestions.

## **10. Membership check-ins**

Bret inquired about how institutions are managing the request related to biosecurity and gain of function research. Gene noted that CSU is working through VPR Office. Scot and Shawn both mentioned they are working with ARS and the VPR Office.

Jodie explain the information that was described in the memo regarding the Golden Pillars of Science. The memo essentially outlines what scientists already know about science.

Bret asked if ARS is telling folks to switch NACAs to cooperative agreements. Shawn said Yes and Leslie said it is not official but that it is coming.

Bret indicated that intel from LBA was NIFA is reviewing grants again and no new RFAs have been released yet.

Jodie thanked Eric for his service. Attendees recognized Eric on his impending retirement with a round of applause.

Sreekla asked when you lose funding, how is everyone in the colleges managing it? Gene noted that CSU is switching personnel to short-term contracts (3-months).

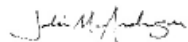
Shawn asked if the executive committee should put another all-call check-in on the calendar for the end of the summer. The membership indicated that the check ins are helpful and agreed to the executive committee identifying a date for the next regional check in.

Glenda inquired about the LBA call-ins, especially since there is one scheduled on Monday, June 30 that she is not able to attend. Those who joined the previous call noted that it was worth their time.

## **11. Call for Adjournment**

Shawn called for a motion to adjourn. Eric made the motion, Leslie seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:26 pm MT.

The minutes were recorded and respectfully submitted by Jodie Anderson, Secretary.





Item 4.0  
 Agenda Item: August Bank Statement  
 Presenter: Gene Kelly  
 Action: For Information



Date 8/29/25 Page 1  
 Primary Account 2200003382849

AGINNOVATION WEST  
 EXPERIMENT STATION DIRECTORS  
 5890 BRITANIA DR  
 RENO NV 89523-2274

\*\*\*\*\* CHECKING ACCOUNTS \*\*\*\*\*

Account Title: AGINNOVATION WEST  
 EXPERIMENT STATION DIRECTORS

TOTALLY FREE BUSINESS CHECKING		Number of Enclosures	6
Account Number	2200003382849	Statement Dates	8/01/25 thru 9/01/25
Previous Balance	208,089.23	Days in the statement period	32
5 Deposits/Credits	38,627.81	Average Ledger	198,944.42
4 Checks/Debits	46,637.32	Average Collected	198,944.42
Service Charge	.00		
Interest Paid	.00		
Ending Balance	200,079.72		

-----		ACTIVITY IN DATE ORDER		-----	
Date	Description	Withdrawals	Deposits	Balance	
8/04	CHECK 1291	26,614.37-	.00	181,474.86	
8/07	DDA Regular Deposit	.00	1,875.00	183,349.86	
8/07	CHECK 1290	2,846.25-	.00	180,503.61	
8/11	DDA Regular Deposit	.00	7,345.81	187,849.42	
8/11	University of ID EDI PYMNTS	.00	22,968.83	210,818.25	
	CTX 0588529				
	091000013500622				
	ISA*00* *00*				
	*ZZ*UIDA *ZZ*WELLS				
	FARGO *250808*1632*U*00401*				
8/14	NORTHERN MARIANA PAYMENT	.00	1,200.00	212,018.25	
	CCD 0057181				
	121405018834044				
8/18	CAPITAL ONE ONLINE PMT	2,432.70-	.00	209,585.55	
	CCD CA0B4FF0624628E				
	056073614838963				
8/19	CHECK 1292	14,744.00-	.00	194,841.55	
8/22	DDA Regular Deposit	.00	5,238.17	200,079.72	

-----		SUMMARY BY CHECK NUMBER				-----	
Date	Check No	Amount	Date	Check No	Amount		
8/07	1290	2,846.25	8/14	1291	26,614.37		

\* Denotes missing check numbers

## Item 5.0

### Agenda Item: Chair's Interim Actions and Executive Committee Report

Presenter: Shawn Donkin

Action: Approval

#### Chair's Interim Actions and Executive Committee's Report

Secretary Anderson signed the agreement to host agInnovation- West at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Scheduled and hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> members virtual check in.

Evaluated the direction of the [2025-2035 Land Grant University Roadmap](#) and contributed to the World Café facilitated by Adaptive Roots at the BAA Leadership Meeting.

Considered feedback and contributed to the Alliance for Western Excellence document, also known as the Western Agenda 2.0.

Decided not to have agInnovation- West respond to USDA regarding the department's reorganization plan.

Encouraged the region's BLC members to comment on the agInnovation response to USDA regarding the department's reorganization plan.

Supported the development of a regional proposal to participate in the "*Cultivating Solutions: A Homecoming Celebration of Land-Grant Universities*" event to be hosted by APLU.

Approved the agenda for the fall business meeting.

**7.16.25 BAA Leadership Meeting: World Cafe Response Summary**

**Overall Value of the Roadmap**

- **Unified vision & voice** –across Extension, Research, and Teaching
- **Strategic & intentional** – More focused, organized, and future-oriented than past efforts; provides a long-term advocacy framework.
- **Clear communication tool** – Offers relatable, audience-specific messaging, talking points, and one-pagers that resonate with policymakers, stakeholders, advocacy groups, and the public.
- **Broad relevance** – Connects to societal issues (urban and rural), aligns with federal priorities, and demonstrates tangible public impacts and return on investment.
- **Foundation for action** – Guides advocacy, fundraising, and engagement efforts; helps set priorities, strategy, and vision.

**What Works Well**

- **Integration** – Showcases combined impacts of Research, Extension, and Teaching.
- **Six pillars** – Covers shared priorities, workforce development, and public needs; adaptable to different audiences (though possibly too broad).
- **Impact-driven approach** – Emphasizes solutions, outcomes, and the risks of inaction; shifts tone from “asking for funding” to “solving problems.”
- **Credible & inclusive** – Developed with broad input; reflects academic expertise and stakeholder engagement.
- **Storytelling power** – Frames work in terms of societal challenges, public impact, and success stories, making the land-grant role more relatable (more than just “kids, cows, sows, and plows”).

**Who we need to engage to advance our advocacy goals**

- **Federal legislators & staffers** – Need tailored messaging for both policymakers and their aides.
- **State & local policymakers** – Governors, legislators, city councils, county commissioners, tribal leaders.

- **USDA NIFA & other federal agencies** – Plus PCAST and agencies tied to Roadmap pillars.
- **CARET members & alumni** – Including youth/“mini CARETs” and engaged advocates.
- **Commodity boards & farm organizations** – Farm Bureau, commodity groups, 4-H, NASDA.
- **Industry partners** – Agriculture, food, natural resources, plus related sectors like health, tech, and logistics.
- **University leadership & communicators** – Land-grant and non-land-grant, plus government relations teams.
- **Educators & youth organizations** – K–12 teachers (esp. ag educators), Master Gardeners, early-career employees.
- **Media & influencers** – Ag magazines, TV/radio, effective communicators, celebrity champions.
- **Broader public & voters** – Especially urban audiences and those not currently engaged.

### **Gaps & Overlooked Elements**

- **Underrepresented partners** – Non-land-grant universities, tribal colleges (and elders), accrediting agencies, faith-based groups, chambers of commerce, local/regional/national foundations, and cross-sector agencies (CDC, NIH, NSF, NASA, HHS, state departments of health/environment).
- **Youth engagement beyond 4-H** – Broader youth development, inclusion of FFA (including collegiate chapters), Ag Future of America, and “future business leaders.”
- **Industry & community connections** – Stronger ties with commodity groups, local economic development, industry leaders, NGOs, and community organizations (urban and rural).
- **Public awareness gap** – Most voters, farmers, and urban audiences don’t know how LGUs benefit them; need to connect food, research, and community impact.
- **Assumptions to challenge** –
  - That people understand the LGU mission or the link between research, extension, and teaching.

- That students are prepared and interested in ag careers.
- That audiences will read the full roadmap.
- That current messaging fits all audiences.

### **Messaging & Strategy Needs**

- **Workforce development** – Needs to be stronger, woven through all pillars, and connected to community development.
- **Tailored messaging** – Customize by audience; avoid one-size-fits-all. Focus on 2–3 clear points per conversation.
- **Evidence & metrics** – Define measurable goals, indicators, ROI, and risks of inaction; show number of people impacted.
- **Compelling narrative** – Urgent, solution-oriented, relatable beyond ag; avoid jargon; use stakeholder language and values.
- **Storytelling channels** – Social media (guided by student input), podcasts, short videos, fairs, media clips; mobilize communicators and influencers.
- **Integration & alignment** – Coordinate with other roadmaps (e.g., Ag Experiment Stations, Forbes Tate communication plan), CARET efforts, and advocacy groups.
- **Broader framing** – Position LGUs as solving big societal problems, not just ag issues; connect pillars to core messages.
- **Branding & visibility** – System-wide branding, clear taglines, external-facing focus, use of influencers.

### **Additional Considerations**

- Address misinformation and declining credibility of academia.
- Ensure inclusion of end-users and beneficiaries in planning.
- Engage institutional government/external affairs offices.
- Balance capacity vs. competitive funding conversations.
- Leverage artificial intelligence and emerging tech in outreach.

## **Keys to Success for Achieving Advocacy Goals**

### **1. Unified & Inclusive Approach**

- Work together across all land-grant sectors; ensure buy-in from all stakeholders (farmers, non-farmers, public, industry, policymakers).
- Keep people engaged and “at the table” over time, including younger generations and student influencers.
- Identify and empower champions—both internal and external—including government allies beyond Congress (Administration, OMB, GAO).

### **2. Clear, Simple, and Flexible Messaging**

- Develop a strong, consistent overarching message—short, clear, and memorable—with flexibility for state and audience-specific tailoring.
- Ensure messaging resonates with diverse audiences (urban, rural, decision-makers, general public).
- Step away from outdated narratives and rebrand land-grant universities for modern relevance.
- Focus on solutions to problems each audience cares about; use hopeful, forward-looking framing.

### **3. Strategic Communication & Storytelling**

- Prioritize target audiences and understand who influences them (e.g., staffers, influencers, media).
- Use impactful stories and clear examples to demonstrate relevance and value.
- Test messages for clarity and impact before wide use.
- Engage communication professionals to craft and deliver the right language, headlines, and visuals.

### **4. Evidence & Impact**

- Quantify impacts with common metrics; communicate results clearly and consistently.

- Show return on investment and the cost/risk of inaction.
- Package data with compelling stories to make it relatable.

### **5. Forward-Looking, Adaptive Strategy**

- Anticipate changes in political leadership and adapt messaging accordingly.
- Maintain regular outreach to cabinet-level offices, the White House, and other key decision-making bodies.
- Act with urgency—timely action is critical to maintaining momentum and relevance.
- Break out of zero-sum thinking; emphasize shared benefits.

## Item 7.0

### Agenda Item: USDA Reorganization Response

Presenter: Shawn Donkin

#### Action: Discussion

The Honorable Secretary Rollins  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Dear Secretary Rollins,

On behalf of [agInnovation](#), representing the Land-Grant University agricultural research system, we thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the proposed actions for the Department of Agriculture Reorganization, outlined in Secretary Memorandum SM 1078-015.

Since its founding, USDA—“The People’s Department”—has partnered with Land-grant institutions to advance agricultural science and deliver results that directly benefit farmers, ranchers, rural communities, and all Americans. Together, in partnership with USDA, we work every day to put farmers first by:

- Equipping farmers and ranchers with the science and innovation adapted to local conditions necessary to be efficient, productive, profitable, and globally competitive;
- Strengthen biosecurity to combat animal and plant diseases;
- Manage our lands, water and forests sustainably; and
- Ensure a safe, abundant, and nutritious food supply for all Americans

We commend the Administration’s commitment to improving effectiveness, accountability, enhanced services, reduced bureaucracy, and cost savings for all Americans. These goals align directly with our shared mission to ensure that American agriculture remains globally competitive, resilient, and a leader in feeding the world.

We also express our gratitude for the unprecedented investment in agricultural research infrastructure included in H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBA)—\$1.25 billion over nine years for land-grant university agricultural research facilities. This historic funding will drive innovation and help ensure that U.S. farmers and ranchers remain globally competitive for generations. This investment is especially critical and timely as other leading agricultural producers—China, the European Union, India, and Brazil—are rapidly increasing their support for agricultural research.

With shared goals in mind, we respectfully offer the following recommendations:

#### **National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA):**

NIFA’s leadership in implementing the OBBA research facilities program is essential to its success. Current staffing levels are sufficient to launch and manage this program effectively. To maximize continuity and streamline institutional processes, we recommend retaining much the current USDA-NIFA workforce whenever possible. With this in mind, a phased transition would?? to relocation may safeguard program momentum, minimize disruptions, and build a strong, experienced NIFA workforce at hub locations in the future.

#### **Agricultural Research Service (ARS):**

ARS Area Office staff play a vital role in managing cooperative agreements and MOUs with land-grant universities—responsibilities that from our perspective cannot be easily assumed by the Office of National Programs. We strongly recommend that the activities of area offices are retained and are located in close geographic proximity to the research programs regardless of location of ARS central office. The ARS scientists and administrators are indispensable partners to LGUs in addressing the nation’s most pressing food, agriculture, health, and natural resource

challenges. By leveraging our shared expertise and resources we amplify the effectiveness and efficiency of the U.S. agricultural research enterprise - driving greater innovation, impact, and responsiveness to national and regional challenges and strengthening our ability to serve farmers and ranchers.

**Biotechnology Regulatory Services (BRS):**

The work of BRS within USDA’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is vital to Land-grant researchers developing agricultural innovations. Maintaining BRS staff in the National Capital Region (NCR) ensures continuity with their regulatory counterparts at FDA and EPA—essential partners in the Coordinated Framework for the Regulation of Biotechnology. For this small but strategically important office, we recommend that BRS staff remain in the NCR to maintain seamless stakeholder and interagency coordination.

**Broader Considerations Across USDA Agencies:**

- **Safeguard and Leverage USDA Expertise:** Retain the critical scientific and programmatic expertise of USDA staff—vital to Land-grant university partnerships across NIFA, ARS, FS, NRCS, AMS, and other agencies—by providing flexible options for employees with regard to work location as needed. Preserving this expertise positions USDA to accelerate innovation and deliver greater value to U.S. agriculture.
- **Sustain and Strengthen Program Capacity:** Ensure program continuity and long-term strength by adopting a phased transition with structured mentorship. This approach not only maintains capacity during reorganization but also builds a new generation of USDA staff who are guided by experienced mentors, securing institutional knowledge for the future.
- **Enhance Research Partnerships through Shared Facility Support:** Support land-grant universities in accommodating both current and relocated USDA ARS and other federal scientists. This approach strengthens hubs of collaboration, maximizes the impact of federal–university partnerships, and accelerates the research breakthroughs essential for keeping U.S. farmers and ranchers globally competitive, Americans healthy, and rural communities thriving.
- **Proximity to Stakeholders:** In our opinion the proposed locations for USDA hubs may limit the agency’s ability to effectively meet stakeholder needs across all dimensions of agriculture—particularly for farmers and ranchers in the Northeast and Pacific Northwest. These regions are home to a wide range of specialty crops and farming systems that are essential to the vitality of U.S. agriculture. We respectfully encourage the agency to consider establishing additional hubs in these areas to expand the geographic reach and better serve all of US agriculture.

In conclusion, we support the Administration’s vision for a modern, effective, and accountable USDA. Our recommendations are intended to strengthen the Department’s ability to deliver on its mission while safeguarding against unintended disruptions in partnerships and programs that serve farmers, ranchers, and all Americans.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this important process. We stand ready to work to ensure that USDA’s reorganization strengthens the enduring partnership between USDA and the Land-Grant University system and continues to deliver unmatched value to U.S. agriculture and the public.

Respectfully,

*Jose Toledo's suggested edit to include: We wholeheartedly commend the administration's commitment to reducing waste and enhancing operational efficiency. These efforts are especially commendable when the resulting savings are strategically reinvested in U.S. agriculture—bolstering research, extension services, forestry, and other essential programs. Such investments are critical to reaffirming our global leadership and ensuring that America remains at the forefront of agricultural innovation, outpacing nations that have aggressively sought to challenge our position.*

## Item 9.0

### Agenda Item: Hot Topics Proposal

**Presenter: Bret Hess**

**Action: Send Impacts**

Dear Doug and Andrea,

Thank you for inviting the Western Region to participate in the first-ever "*Cultivating Solutions: A Homecoming Celebration of Land-Grant Universities*" on November 5, 2025, in our nation's capital.

Collaborating, the agInnovation-West and Western Extension Directors are excited to showcase how crucial capacity funding is to our institutions and to our ability to meet unprecedented challenges that the Western U.S. is facing across our vast, complex rural and urban landscapes. The depth and breadth of these programs reach everyone, from

the most vulnerable to the most prosperous. We look forward to highlighting the impacts our Pacific Islander institutions are achieving at our mainland Land-Grant Universities.

As Washington State University was invited to participate in this event, if selected, we will work with them to complement whatever program they choose to highlight.

Western Research and Extension Collaborative Proposal:

- Title of project: Hot Topics: Western Regional Research and Extension Educational Programs
- Names of presenter(s): Bret Hess, agInnovation-West ED, and Doreen Hauser-Lindstrom, WEDA ED, and possibly one Western Research Director and one Western Extension Director.
- Specify - (3) integrated research and Extension.
- Brief description: Impacts from the Western regional states and territories will be shared across four categories: innovative agricultural advancements, resilient food systems, stewardship of natural resources, and community health and vitality, all working together to cultivate a prosperous future for generations to come. Additionally, we will highlight several specific research and Extension projects that showcase the uniqueness of the West, such as the Biocontrol of Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle in the Pacific Islands, an AI technology project, and the 4-H Youth Development Program.
- Topical area: innovative agricultural advancements, resilient food systems, stewardship of natural resources, and community health and vitality.
- How does (or will) the project deliver critical and cost-effective solutions? Each topical area will feature impacts and cost-effective solutions identified by Institutions from their Impact Reports on the NIDB portal and NIMSS reports. Handouts will be provided along with 4-H promotional pins and materials. A regional banner will be created to highlight the two associations and their members across the West.
- Funding: specify the capacity lines and other sources of funding. Hatch Act and Smith-Lever funding will be highlighted with each project.

Thank you for organizing this important event to highlight the importance of capacity funding for our institutions, communities, and individuals in the Western Region. We look forward to being part of this exciting event.

Sincerely,

## **APLU Public Affairs Requests Research Stories**

In light of growing questions surrounding the importance of federal research funding, APLU is working to highlight the critical research taking place across our member institutions. As part of this effort, we are collecting compelling examples of work that demonstrate the societal impact of research and discovery at public universities. We plan to feature selected examples across a range of communications channels including our A Public Voice newsletter, website, and social media platforms.

We are particularly seeking submissions in the following focus areas:

- Health, medicine, and wellness
- National security research
- Agricultural research
- Technology and innovation
- Workforce development
- Community engagement

If your institution has impactful work to share in any of these areas, we encourage you to submit examples via [this form](#). If you have any questions, please contact Rachel Storey, Senior Associate, Public Affairs, at [rstorey@aplu.org](mailto:rstorey@aplu.org).

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# 2026 Excellence in Agricultural Research Innovation Award Nominations: Early, Mid-Career, and Life-Time Career Categories

## Purpose and Overview

The Agricultural Research Innovation Award of Excellence is given to researchers who strive in their research career to achieve benchmarks reflective of excellence. These benchmarks include, but are not limited to, demonstration of high impact of research within their discipline; a sustained record of scholarly productivity, including funding, publications, and patents; commitment to accessibility; professional recognition of research excellence through local, regional, national, and/or international awards and honors; and demonstrated ability to inspire and lead effective collaborations; and foster development of other scientists, including postdoctoral researchers, graduate students, and undergraduate students.

## Who is Eligible?

The nominee must be an active researcher employed by a land-grant university with research representing a major portion of their effort as of the deadline of the nomination.

For the early career researcher award:

- Nominee must be at the Assistant level professorial rank equivalent (tenure or non-tenure track).

For the mid-career researcher award:

- Nominee must be at the associate level professor rank equivalent (tenure or non-tenure track) with no more than 10 total years of experience post promotion.

For the life-time career researcher award:

- Nominee must be at the professor rank equivalent (tenure or non-tenure track) with experience beyond the associate level.

Nominees must hold a valid Hatch or Evans-Allen project and/or participate on a multistate committee supported by Hatch Multistate or Evans-Allen funds at the time of nomination. Administrative professionals serving in agInnovation leadership positions are not eligible.

## Honorees

Regional – Five awards are granted to regional competitors.

National – One awardee selected by the agInnovation Science and Technology Committee from the pool of the regional honorees.



agInnovation will provide regional honorees a four-year Silver-level membership with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and a cash award of \$500. The National winner will receive an additional \$500 cash award from agInnovation. The five honorees in each category will be recognized during the Awards Program at the Annual Meeting of agInnovation in September. The national award winner will be invited to accept their additional cash award and an award plaque at the agInnovation annual meeting. Travel reimbursement for the national honorees will be provided by agInnovation. Regional award winners may also be invited to receive their cash award at the agInnovation annual meeting, but travel reimbursement shall be the responsibility of the respective regional associations or the winner's home institution. Summaries of each regional honoree's excellent work will be released to the national news media and published in the agInnovation Awards Program as well as in the *Food and Agricultural Sciences Excellence in College and University Awards Program: A Community of Scholars Honoring Excellence* by APLU.

### **Process**

Nominations open after the APLU annual meeting in November. Nominations may be submitted to the offices of respective [regional associations](#) by a nominee, supervisor, or peer and **must have the written endorsement and verification of the nominee's eligibility by the respective State Agricultural Experiment Station Director or 1890 Agricultural Research Director**. Each agInnovation institution is permitted to submit one nomination per year.

Committees formed by the [regional associations](#) will use eligibility and criteria described below to score nominations in the first round. Winners of each regional competition will be automatically considered for the national award. Regional award winners will have an opportunity to revise their nomination based on feedback from the regional committees. **The deadline for regional associations to submit nominations to the agInnovation Science and Technology Committee (STC) is 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on May 1.**

The second and final round of scoring to select a national winner is conducted by the agInnovation Science and Technology Committee (STC) during June and July. All will be invited to attend the agInnovation Awards Ceremony in September. Nominations are to be prepared to match the evaluation criteria indicated below, including a CV, not to exceed 10 pages, that highlights the evaluation criteria.

National award recipients are not eligible for renomination. Regional award honorees may be renominated for the national award after receiving the regional award. However, regional award honorees shall only receive one regional monetary award and one award plaque. Renominations for the national award may be revised before submission by the regional association on May 1. Regional associations shall determine which nominations will be advanced for the national award competition.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

**Relevance of the research to one or more of the agInnovation Grand Challenges is required otherwise the nomination will be disqualified from the national competition.**



### **Early Career Award:**

- Demonstrated high impact of research, described by the following (1000 words or less). **Weight –60%**
  - Explain the translation, adoption, and/or impact (or potential impact on policy, environment, economic benefits, productivity and/or efficiency) of the research program on US agriculture following the format of the national impacts database (landgrantimpacts.org) (30%).
  - Document the ability to foster science collaborations and participate as an active member or leader of interdisciplinary teams (20%).
  - Mentorship and increasing accessibility to research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral scientists, and other early career scientists (10%).
- Recognized excellence in one’s field of expertise (500 words or less). **Weight – 40%**
  - Detailed grant funding history, including the nominee's specific role in each project (e.g., principal investigator, co-PI, collaborator). (15%)
  - Robust publication record and invitations to publish (10%).
  - Contributions as a scientific expert on panels or committees and invitations to present research at national and international conferences (10%).
  - Recognition through professional awards and other notable achievements (5%).

### **Mid-Career Award:**

- Demonstrated high impact of research, described by the following (1000 words or less). **Weight – 60%**
  - Explain the translation, adoption, and/or impact (or potential impact on policy, environment, economic benefits, productivity and/or efficiency) of the research program on US agriculture following the format of the national impacts database (landgrantimpacts.org) (30%).
  - Document the ability to inspire and lead effective science collaborations, including interdisciplinary teams (20%).
  - Demonstrated effectiveness in fostering the development of other scientists, including postdoctoral scientists and other early career scientists, graduate students, and undergraduate students. (10%).
- Recognized excellence in one’s field of expertise (500 words or less). **Weight – 40%**
  - Detailed grant funding history, including the nominee's specific role in each project (e.g., principal investigator, co-PI, collaborator). (15%)
  - Robust publication record and invitations to publish (10%).
  - Contributions as a scientific expert on panels or committees and invitations to present research at national and international conferences (10%).
  - Recognition through professional awards and other notable achievements (5%).



**Life-Time Career Award:**

- Demonstrated high impact of research, described by the following (1000 words or less). **Weight - 60%**
  - Explain the translation, adoption, and/or impact (or potential impact on policy, environment, economic benefits, productivity and/or efficiency) of the research program on US agriculture following the format of the national impacts database (landgrantimpacts.org) (30%).
  - Document the ability to inspire and lead effective science collaborations, including interdisciplinary teams (20%).
  - Demonstrated effectiveness in fostering the development of other scientists, including mentoring early- and mid-career scientists, postdoctoral scientists, and, graduate students, and undergraduate students. (10%).
- Recognized excellence in one's field of expertise (500 words or less). **Weight - 40%**
  - Detailed grant funding history, including the nominee's specific role in each project (e.g., principal investigator, co-PI, collaborator). (15%)
  - Robust publication record and invitations to publish (10%).
  - Contributions as a scientific expert on panels or committees and invitations to present research at national and international conferences (10%).
  - Recognition through professional awards and other notable achievements (5%).



## Limitations

- Incomplete nominations or nominations that exceed the word limits may not be reviewed.
- No more than one nomination by an agInnovation member institution is considered for each award category.
- Only nominations submitted per the instructions provided by the deadline will be considered.

## Timeline

- December – Announcement sent to Directors and Administrators, by agInnovation Chair.
- February 28 – Nominations due at Offices of the Executive Directors
- March – Nominations reviewed by regional committees and recommendations submitted to regional associations.
- March/April – Regional associations approve regional nominations at Spring meetings.
- April - Regional associations provide feedback to nominator and nominee and provide an opportunity to revise their nomination prior to the final submission
- May 1 – Associations submit final regional nominations to STC via the regional association supporting STC (**pdf or word document**)
- June/July –STC Committee reviews regional nominations and selects the national winner.
- July/August– STC Executive Vice-chair collects information from regional associations, secures photographs, and submits materials to agInnovation and APLU for booklet and program script.
- September – National winner presentation at agInnovation meeting
- November – National award announced at APLU Meeting

## Where to Begin

Use the nomination format indicated on the following page.

## Contact

Please contact your regional association office if there are questions:

Lisa Williamson, ARD <lmwilliamson1@ncat.edu>  
Chris Hamilton, North Central < christina.hamilton@wisc.edu>  
David Leibovitz, Northeast <david\_leibovitz@uri.edu>  
Cindy Morley, South <cmorley@uark.edu>  
Jennifer Horton, West <jennhorton@unr.edu>



**Nomination Format**

(The nomination should be a very concise summary and must be in this format.)

**Nominating Region:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Award Category:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominator:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominee Name E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominee Institution and Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominee E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ARD or SAES Director:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nomination Summary** (the following and should not exceed 1500 words; refer to the above for additional details within each award category):

- Demonstrated high impact of research, described by the following (1000 words or less). **Weight – 60%**
  - Explain the translation, adoption, and/or impact (or potential impact on policy, environment, economic benefits, productivity and/or efficiency) of the research program on US agriculture following the format of the national impacts database (landgrantimpacts.org) (30%).
  - Effective collaborations (20%).
  - Development of other scientists (10%).
- Recognized excellence in one’s field of expertise (500 words or less). **Weight – 40%**
  - Detailed grant funding history (15%).
  - Robust publication record and invitations to publish (10%).
  - Contributions as a scientific expert (10%).
  - Recognition through professional awards and other notable achievements (5%)

Please use single-spaced, Times Roman 12 point and one-inch margins.

Include a CV, not to exceed 10 pages, that highlights the evaluation criteria.

Regions may utilize other information in selecting their nominee. The final regional nomination should be submitted by email to the Offices of the regional Executive Directors, by **c.o.b. February 28, 20XX:**

Lisa Williamson, ARD <lmwilliamson1@ncat.edu>  
Chris Hamilton, North Central <christina.hamilton@wisc.edu>  
David Leibovitz, Northeast <david\_leibovitz@uri.edu>  
Cindy Morley, South <cmorley@uark.edu>  
Jennifer Horton, West <jennhorton@unr.edu>

## Item 10.2 Agenda Item: W525 Presenter: Bret Hess Action: Enlist experts

# W525: Evaluation of Outcomes-Driven, Aspirational Goals to Achieve National Food Security

Status: Draft Project

Duration

Admin Advisors:

NIFA Reps:

10/01/2025 to 09/30/2027

[\[Bret Hess\]](#)

## Non-Technical Summary

Achieving national food security requires strategic investment in Land-Grant University (LGU) research, education, and Extension. Experts will refine the aspirational goal: "Produce 95% of our food domestically, increase local/regional farm net incomes by 20%, and reduce food waste by 50%." This goal will guide future investments in agricultural and food sciences.

## Statement of Issues and Justification

The U.S. faces declining public investment in agricultural research, threatening food security and global competitiveness. LGUs are uniquely positioned to lead innovation through integrated research, education, and Extension missions. A 10-year platform with bold goals and science outcomes has been developed to address these challenges.

A Rapid Response Multistate Committee will:

- Validate and/or revise the aspirational goal.
- Evaluate and recommend science strategies.
- Develop materials to demonstrate public value and return on investment.

## Types of Activities

- Virtual meetings to review goals, strategies, and ROI.
- Utilize shared files for feedback and materials.

## Objectives

1. Promote innovation across the agricultural continuum and advance strategies for regionally focused agriculture.
2. Enhance sustainability by conducting cost-benefit, life cycle, environmental impact, and social cost-benefit analyses to assess improvements in local, regional, national, and international food systems and implement the results.
3. Reduce waste by repurposing agricultural byproducts, extending product shelf life, implementing sustainable packaging, and educating stakeholders to minimize waste from field to retailer, thereby enhancing food security.
4. Adapt to change by developing and deploying technologies and innovations that address environmental shifts and the evolving agricultural labor force.
5. Identify innovative agronomic practices that enhance nitrogen use efficiency, soil fertility, structure, and resilience, while deepening our understanding of soil composition and processes.
6. Reduce barriers to collaboration among farmers, land managers, communities, researchers, and policymakers to increase engagement and accelerate the adoption of grassroots innovations for adaptation and resilience.
7. Develop infrastructure and response plans to improve the resiliency of rural and urban communities.
8. Apply gene-editing techniques to create climate-resilient crops and livestock (e.g., improved water use efficiency, drought tolerance, heat tolerance), and develop feeds to reduce methane emissions from livestock.
9. Promote water-efficient, flood- and drought-resilient agricultural systems by advancing best practices, tools, and Extension programs for improving crop and livestock productivity and water conservation, reuse, and quality.
10. Collaborate with communities and public officials to develop strategies addressing water accessibility challenges.

## Expected Outputs, Outcomes and/or Impacts

- Strategic investment in agricultural and food sciences.
- Training the next generation of agricultural professionals.

## Literature Cited

## Land Grant Participating States/Institutions

## Non Land Grant Participating States/Institutions

## Item 10.3

### Agenda Item: Investment Account

Presenter: Chris Pritsos

Action: Discussion



### Agenda Brief from agInnovation 501(c)(3)

Date: September 18, 2025

Subject: TD Wealth Investment Account

#### Background

agInnovation oversees three accounts:

- **5800 Account (APLU):** operating (assessment funds)
- **Chase for Business (501c3):** operating (transfers from 5800 Account)
- **TD Wealth Account (APLU):** endowment (pre-2020 carryover funds)

Endowment objectives:

- **6% return, 4% annual drawdown, preservation of corpus, and reliable access to assets.**

#### Challenges with TD Wealth

- agInnovation is **not a signatory** on the account.
- **Liquidity delays:** withdrawals may take up to a month.
- **Structural limits:** banking laws prevent direct transfers to Chase for Business.
- **Restricted oversight:** account is passively managed with limited engagement.

#### Engagement with JP Morgan

- Initiated through Chase, agInnovation's banking partner.
- Multiple consultations with JP Morgan advisors.
- Strong alignment with nonprofit investment and philanthropic management needs.

#### Case for Transfer

##### Similarities

- Fees: ~1%
- No guaranteed returns (our goal remains 6% return / 4% drawdown).

##### Advantages with JP Morgan

- **Active, research-driven investment strategy** with broad asset access.
- **Dedicated relationship manager** with ongoing reviews and rebalancing.
- **Improved access:** agInnovation owns the account; 3-day liquidity.
- **Integrated services:** investment, banking, trust, and philanthropy under one institution.
- **Local support** available.

## Next Steps

1. **Socialize proposal** within agInnovation (501(c)(3), Finance Committee, Executive Committee, APLU, committee chairs, agInnovation).
  2. **Vote for approval**
    - 30-day notice, electronic referendum.
    - Requires 2/3 majority.
-

**Item 10.4**  
**Agenda Item: Bayer Tour**  
**Presenter: Bret Hess**  
**Action: For Information**



**September 18<sup>th</sup> , 2025**  
**AgInnovation Tour**  
Bayer Host: Phil Taylor

**We look forward to welcoming you for the Agriculture Research and Development Tour /Chesterfield experience!**

**U.S. Corporate Security, US Special Compliance & Asset Protection, & Safety Requirements:**

- Please note all approved Tour guests over the age of 18 (minimum age requirement is 12 years of age) are required to comply with the Visible Badge Policy and produce a **government form of identification** at check-in.
- You must be **pre-registered** (see Tour Guest List below) to be granted admission to the tour. We cannot honor substitutions or name changes.
- Because the tour includes stops in growth chambers and greenhouses, **flat and closed-toe shoes are required for every tour**. In addition, long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks are required only **for entry** into the growth chamber.

Please note, compliance with our safety obligations, meaning **those wearing open-toed or high-heeled shoes, will not be allowed to take the tour**. Those opting to not wear long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and socks will be allowed to take the tour and given sight into the growth chamber but will be asked not to enter.

**Tour Attendees:**

Marikis Alvarez  
Richard Avery  
Clyde Bagley  
Vagner Benedito  
Eric Bishop-von Wettberg  
Olga Bolden-Tiller  
Angela Burkham  
Frank Camacho  
Shawn Donkin  
Lamin Drammeh  
Leslie Edgar  
Gerald Fankhauser, Jr  
Bret Hess  
Ronald Howell, Jr.  
Glenda Humiston  
Jennifer Hunter



**September 18<sup>th</sup> , 2025**  
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Shibu Jose  
Eugene Kelly  
Christopher Kitalong  
Rachael Leon Guerrero  
Steven Lommel  
Christopher Mathis, Jr.  
Erdogan Memili  
Christopher Morley  
Cindy Morley  
Desmond Mortley  
Manoj Nair  
Tsakani Ngomane  
Kevin Olival  
Chris Pritsos  
Scott Senseman  
Cynthia Sides  
Nathan Slaton  
Harshavardhan  
Thippareddi  
Alton Thompson  
Gary Thompson  
Jose Toledo  
Garlen Wesson  
Johnnie Westbrook  
Kang Xia

**Day of Tour Guidelines:**

- Please arrive no earlier than 15 minutes before your designated tour start time. Groups that arrive to the lobby up to 45 minutes late will receive an abbreviated tour within the scheduled tour time but will still end at the original scheduled time. The tour will be cancelled for groups arriving in AA Lobby later than 45 minutes past the tour start time.
- Upon arrival, all individuals must check-in and **adults must provide a government issued photo identification**, such as a driver's license, non-driver's license, or passport. Individuals who are unable to meet minimum tour requirements will not be admitted to any site. Individuals not admitted may be escorted from the site.



**September 18<sup>th</sup> , 2025**  
**AgInnovation Tour**  
 Bayer Host: Phil Taylor

- Tour guides will communicate site specific requirements for cell phone use and photo policies.
- The St. Louis sites prohibit tobacco use and other smoking products on company property and leased buildings including: outdoor areas such as grounds; parking lots; company and personal vehicles; walkways and roadways. Employees, contractors, visitors, and all other individuals must leave the site premises if they choose to use tobacco or other smoking products.
- All tour participants must remain with the tour guide. Failure to remain with the guide or to follow safety requirements as communicated by your guide will result in the suspension of the tour.
- The Tour Program follows U.S. Corporate Security’s directive on site closures and late starts. When the site is closed, for instance in the case of inclement weather, all tours will be canceled.
- Please keep in mind that tours are walking intensive (stairs, ramps, walkways): casual, light weight clothing is recommended. Please make sure you are adequately hydrated prior to arrival.

**Agenda:**

<b>Thursday, September 18<sup>th</sup> , 2025</b>	
<b>12:45 PM</b>	<b>Arrive at Bayer Crop Science Division, Chesterfield Village (CV), located at 700 Chesterfield Parkway West, Chesterfield, Missouri 63017. Enter at AA Building Lobby (636-737-7100) Please see Arrival Instructions below.</b>
<b>1:00 – 2:45 PM</b>	<b>Chesterfield Tour #CV 01072. Kevin Rust, Liesa Cerny, Richard Leimgruber, tour guides, will greet guests in the gallery and escort for a walking tour of the research facilities.</b>
<b>2:45 PM</b>	<b>Depart Bayer – AA lobby. Visitor badges must be returned to AA lobby upon completion of the visit</b>



September 18<sup>th</sup> , 2025  
AgInnovation Tour  
Bayer Host: Phil Taylor

### Arrival Instructions to Chesterfield Village (CV)

We do not recommend using GPS as some systems contain inaccurate location coordinates for this site. **If using GPS, please manually enter the address 700 Chesterfield Parkway W, Chesterfield, MO 63017**

Please stop at the farthest left lane of the security station and let the officer know you are there for a tour.

- Security will provide directions for visitor parking or current bus/shuttle drop off and staging areas.
- All visitors (except St. Louis area Bayer and Contract employees) can access visitor parking. **See the diagram that shows the traffic flow route.** All St. Louis area Bayer and Contract employees should park in employee parking located on three levels of the garage.
- Attendees enter at **AA Lobby**.

### Maps/Directions to Chesterfield Village (CV)

#### **From I-270 or I-64/40:**

From I 270 take I- 64/40 west to Exit 20, Chesterfield Parkway. Turn Right (north) and cross over Olive Blvd. Research facility will be on your Right approximately 1/2-mile past Olive Blvd (you will cross over Hilltown Village Center and will pass by Homewood Suites). Look for the Bayer Crop Science Division sign.

#### **From the St. Charles area:**

After crossing Daniel Boone/ Missouri River Bridge take Exit 19A Chesterfield Parkway. Turn left onto Wild Horse Creek Road. Turn left onto Chesterfield Parkway West. Continue straight on Chesterfield Parkway West for approximately 0.5-mile, 3rd traffic light after turning on to Chesterfield Parkway and Bayer Crop Science will be on your left.



September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
AgInnovation Tour  
Bayer Host: Phil Taylor



**EMPLOYEE PARKING**

**VISITOR PARKING**

**Employee Parking:** The sidewalk system from Level 1 of the parking garage is open. The sidewalk gives a safe, at-grade access to AA lobby from the parking lot. **Visitor Parking: The Visitor Parking Lot is open.**

**Key Contact:**

Raquel Cafazza / [raquel.cafazza.ext@bayer.com](mailto:raquel.cafazza.ext@bayer.com) / 314 – 610-5246

Item 12.2  
Agenda Item: WRJSM  
Presenter: Kevin Olival  
Action: Fore Information



# WESTERN REGION JOINT SUMMER MEETING

# 2026

## SAVE THE DATES!

CURRENTLY SCHEDULED

## JUNE 22-25

## IN HAWAII

LOCATION / HOTEL TBD (COMING SOON!)

PROUDLY HOSTED BY:



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA  
COLLEGE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE  
AND HUMAN RESILIENCE

INQUIRIES? CONTACT: [TRANC@HAWAII.EDU](mailto:TRANC@HAWAII.EDU)



**Item 12.3**  
**Agenda Item: agInnovation**  
**Presenter: Gene Kelly**  
**Action: Discussion**

FALL MEETING 2026

**agInnovation**  
science that feeds the world



**SAVE**  
*The*  
**DATE**

**SEPT 21-25**

**GRAND  
JUNCTION  
COLORADO**

033