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Five Honored with Heritage Awards

LAS VEGAS, NV — December 8, 2014 — Today at the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE) 124th Annual Convention, Heritage Awards sponsored by Haas & Wilkerson Insurance were presented to five exceptional individuals in the field of fair management, according to IAFE President and CEO Jim Tucker. The convention is taking place Dec. 7-11, at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas, Nev.

Carol Porter of Haas & Wilkerson Insurance announced and presented the awards to the recipients, who were nominated by their fairs' staffs. The awards recognize the achievements of outstanding volunteer fair managers. Each winner received a plaque and \$1,000, and each fair nominating the winners received \$500. The nominees were required to have at least 10 years of fair management experience and could receive no more than \$2,500 remuneration annually for serving in the position. The nominees' fairs were also required to be current members of IAFE.

The 2014 IAFE Heritage Award winners are Richard Elthorp of the Herkimer County Fair, Frankfort, N.Y.; Jill Hardesty of the Fisher Community Fair, Fisher, Ill.; Steve Rogers of the Buffalo County Fair in Kearney, Neb.; Joe Scapanski of the Benton County Agricultural Society, Sauk Rapids, Minn.; and Wally Wichmann of the Lyon County Fair in Marshall, Minn.

Elthorp began serving the fair in 1973 as the horse show superintendent. In 1981, he became a director. He served as vice president from 1992 to 1999 and has served as president of the fair to this day.

Elthorp has been active with the New York State Association of Agricultural Fairs for more than 20 years. He served as the association's vice president in 2011 and president in 2012. He has served on the Nominating Committee and as District 4 director. Elthorp has attended each IAFE Zone 1 Meeting since 1992 and nearly every IAFE Annual Convention since 2005. He has attended the Consumer Protection Program workshop and has served as a presenter and a panelist at the IAFE Zone 1 meeting.

"I know that if a youth enjoys the experience at the fair, they will return year after year to enjoy the ever changing experience of the fair. The continual growth of agriculture at the fair depends on the youth as they grow into adults," stated Elthorp.

Elthorp is active in the community. He has been a member of the Elks Lodge since 1996. He serves as a member of the Herkimer County Farm Bureau and the Good Samaritan Club.

Ms. Hardesty was the fair secretary for 20 years until she was named fair president in 2012. During her service to the fair, she has kept records of fair business and meetings, has overseen the sale of advertising, and secured sponsorship to cover the cost of the event.

Ms. Hardesty has been an active member of the Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs for the past 23 years. She has served on the association's Zone 5 Planning Committee and as chair of the BINGO Committee. She has

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attended each IAFE Annual Convention since 2005 and IAFE Zone meetings in 2009 and 2012.

“I value the hard work of any organization, but you also need to have a great team and community behind you, as part of that equation to make the event grow and flourish,” stated Ms. Hardesty.

She also volunteers with other organizations in her community. She has served as chair of the Farmer City Heritage Days, as vice chair of the Farmer City 175th Anniversary Celebration, and as director of the Immanuel Lutheran Church Youth Group. She was named a Champaign County “Woman You Should Know” in 2009. In addition, she is a member of the Farmer City Fire Protection District Ladies Auxillary and the Dewitt County/Farmer City Fair Associate Fair Board.

Rogers served as fair president for nine years, as vice president for three years, and has served as secretary for the past six years. He was a member of the Nebraska State Fair Board for 19 years including three years as vice president and one year as president.

Rogers takes on a wide range of responsibilities at the Buffalo County Fair. He is in charge of mutton busting, helps take tickets, helps make sandwiches at a community barbecue each year, and more. When he was on the state fair board, Rogers served on the Finance, Entertainment, and Executive Committees. He has been a member of the Nebraska Association of Fair Managers for 28 years and is currently serving as vice president.

“Fairs bring people and communities together because they entertain, it’s good family fun, and it teaches our youth about agriculture,” stated Rogers.

Rogers is active in the Kearney community. He has been a member of the Elks Lodge for 26 years, the Knights of Columbus Council 1728 for 12 years, and Premier Pork Producers for 10 years. He participated in the Gateway Farm Expo for 10 years including one year as president. He has served on the St. James Church Parish Council, including three years as secretary and one year as president. He has also served as a Salvation Army Bell Ringer for four years.

Scapanski has served the board of the agricultural society for the past 22 years. For three of those years, he served as president of the organization. For 12 years, Scapanski chaired the grandstand committee and is currently active on the livestock, heritage, education, chamber of commerce, and security committees.

Scapanski has been a member of the Minnesota Federation of County Fairs for the past 17 years. He served as District 6 representative for several years before being elected to the Minnesota State Fair Board of Managers. He has attended each IAFE Annual Convention since 2010 and 14 IAFE Zone 4 meetings. He graduated from the IAFE Institute of Fair Management this year.

“The fair is my opportunity to show our guests what’s new in agriculture, to help sustain and keep progressing to feed and clothe the world,” stated Scapanski.

He is active in his community. Scapanski has spent four years on the Benton County Planning and Zoning Farm Assessment Panel and three years on the Benton County Comprehensive Planning Panel. He has traveled to Swaziland on a missionary trip with Heart to Africa and to Europe with the FFA Goodwill “People to People” tour. In addition, Scapanski plants gardens and enjoys teaching about food production.

Wichmann has been involved with the fair for many years. In the early 1970s, he was in charge of booking musical acts at the fair. He joined the fair board in 1992 and recently began serving as the fair board treasurer.

Wichmann has been involved with the Minnesota Federation of County Fairs since 1988 and was elected vice president in 2006 and president in 2008. At the Federation’s annual convention, he regularly serves as a table topic.

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leader or panel introducer. He was District 7 director and has visited 93 of the 95 county fairs in Minnesota. He received the Minnesota Fair Person of the Year award in 2010. Wichmann has attended each IAFE Zone 4 meeting since 1988 and each IAFE Annual Convention since 2010. He currently serves on the IAFE Agriculture Committee.

“I cannot forget the good times and the trying times of the fair business. What a wonderful way to meet people and to find out how many good and sincere people there are in this world,” stated Wichmann.

Wichmann stays active in his community. He served as president of the Lyon County Pork Producers from 1965 to 1970. He has been involved with the Lyon County 4-H and 4-H Leaders Council. He has served St. Peters Lutheran Church including as a treasurer, trustee, and as an elder. He has also been a member of the Minnesota Cattlemen Association for the past 10 years.

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