

# Oregon POTATOES NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2019

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OPC hires a new Executive Director

U.S. Trade negotiations with China and Mexico

Want to get involved with Potato Politics?

OPC Mission Statement  
*We make Oregon Potatoes Vital*

POTATOES  
**GOODNESS UNearthED**



## NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

**T**hat the Oregon Potato Commission will hold a public budget hearing at 9:45 am on Tuesday, June 4, 2019. Immediately followed by a public rulemaking hearing. The regular quarterly Commission meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m. These meetings will be held at the

**Oregon Garden Resort  
Trillium Room  
895 W Main St,  
Silverton, OR 97381**

*The purpose of the public budget hearing is to receive testimony and evidence on the proposed budget for operation of the Oregon Potato Commission during fiscal year July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.*

*The purpose of the proposed rulemaking hearing is to receive testimony and evidence on adopting rules required by ORS 192.324(7) regarding public records request procedures.*

*Any person desiring to submit facts or data, orally or in writing, may do so by attending the public hearings or by contacting the Commission Executive Director before the hearing date.*

*Bill Brewer, President, CEO  
Oregon Potato Commission  
9320 SW Barbur Blvd., Suite 130  
Portland, Oregon 97219  
Phone: (503) 239-4763*

*Email: [brewer@oregonspuds.com](mailto:brewer@oregonspuds.com)*

*A copy of the proposed budget and the notice of proposed rulemaking are on the Oregon Potato Commission website [www.oregonspuds.com](http://www.oregonspuds.com) and may be obtained by request to the commission office.*

*The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours before the meeting to the Oregon Potato Commission, 503-239-4763*

## **OPC WELCOMES GARY ROTH AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**G**ary Roth will begin May 1, 2019 as OPC's new Executive Director. He has an extensive track record of collaboration, legislative advocacy and implementing successful domestic and international marketing strategies, resulting in market access and new jobs for Oregon agricultural and food businesses during his 30+ years with the Oregon Department of Agriculture and in the private sector. Roth has served on numerous agricultural and food centric boards, including for the State of Oregon and Governors' offices. He has experience in international business and trade development for agriculture and food products.



“I have known Gary for many years working with him on several international trade projects” said Bill Brewer. “I believe Gary is a very good choice to lead the Oregon Potato Commission and support all Oregon potato growers. He has an effective understanding of Oregon agriculture, international programs, government and marketing. He will bring a lot to the table with the other potato state programs OPC works with and fit-in well with all state and national managers.”

“I am looking forward to representing the Oregon potato industry, building on current strengths of the Commission's programs and aggressively addressing areas of opportunity including potatoes as part of a performance diet and international market access,” Roth said. “Bill Brewer leaves big shoes to fill and a top priority of mine will be to extend and amplify the standards he has set for the Oregon potato industry at the national level.”

“The Oregon Potato Commission is pleased to have Gary Roth on board as our new Executive Director,” says OPC Chairman Mark Ward, “with his past experience and credentials in the agricultural sector, we believe Gary will be a great addition to our organization.”

Roth has spent his entire life in agriculture. He was raised on his family's 300-acre farm in Oregon and graduated magna cum laude from Oregon State University (OSU) and the Honors College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural and Resource Economics. He also earned his graduate certificate in International Agribusiness at the University of Bradford in the United Kingdom.

OPC has a valuable, long-standing relationship with OSU and Roth says he plans to maintain and further enhance that relationship and looks forward to being a liaison between OSU and the potato industry tri-state partners.

“It is a privilege to represent the Oregon potato industry,” commented Roth. “The hard working men and women of the industry deserve and should expect the best from their Commission.” “I look forward to applying my experience from across Oregon agriculture and focusing that experience and drive to achieve a tangible, positive impact for Oregon potatoes.” “It's a great time and opportunity for the industry,” said Roth.

### **OREGON POTATO POLITICS**

**R**ight now there are several openings to represent the Oregon potato industry.

The OPC has two commissioner terms ending June 30, 2019. One is a Public member position and the other is a Blue Mountain Producer position. Both are four year terms . If you are interested in applying please contact the OPC office for an application. The application deadline to serve as a commissioner is May 10, 2019. ODA Director, Alexis Taylor, will review the applications and appoint the most qualified applicant.

Another area Oregon potatoes need representation is on the Potatoes USA Board. Oregon will have five representatives serving the board in 2020 and nominations are being accepted for two of those positions. The deadline is July 1, 2019. You must be a producer to qualify. If

## **U.S. OFFICIALS ARE REPEATEDLY ASKED TO ADDRESS UNFAIR TRADE BARRIERS FACED BY POTATO EXPORTERS**

The following is a timeline of recent activities aimed at getting fresh potato access into international markets.

February 8, 2019 - A letter, drafted by Oregon Representative Kurt Schrader, to President Trump addresses the importance of potato exports and was signed by 25 representatives and 14 senators. It expresses the frustration over the lack of commitment from China to resolve potato trade barriers. Oregon legislators who signed the letter include Representatives Kurt Schrader, Suzanne Bonamici, Peter DeFazio, Greg Walden and Senator Jeff Merkley.

U.S. Potato Exporters have been actively pursuing an equitable agreement to be made between the U.S. and China for years. If access to China's fresh potato market is granted to the United States, it is estimated that China would become a top five market for the U.S. potato industry.

February 26, 2019 - Another letter, this time penned by Senator Ron Wyden, was addressed to Ambassador Gregg Doud, Chief Agricultural Negotiator with the Office of U.S. Trade. This correspondence expressed concern that new trade agreements, that do not include the U.S., are providing trade partners an unfair advantage over American exports and he noted the importance of Oregon's potato exports and the impact they have on Oregon's economy.

Senator Wyden also mentioned the long-standing potato trade barriers with Mexico. He requested an update on the efforts made by the Administration to curtail the retaliatory barriers with both countries.

February 27, 2019 - It was made clear, during a Congressional Trade Hearing, that the Trump administration is working toward a final deal with China that will have strong enforcement provisions.

During the hearing U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer stated that the U.S. should not accept any agreement that doesn't have structural changes and is enforceable. Any initial agreement will require rigorous follow-up.

Lighthizer also stated, "There is no trade program in the U.S. if we don't pass the United States Mexico Canada Agreement (USMCA)." "If it doesn't, you have no credi-

*Unfair Trade Continued*

bility at all with China and you will have no credibility on any deals with your other trading partners."

As of April 1, 2019, President Trump has yet to submit the USMCA deal to Congress for a vote. If no action is taken to eliminate the Mexican retaliatory tariffs, up to \$80 million annually in U.S. frozen fry exports are in jeopardy.

Potato access to China remains one of the goals for negotiators. Many Senators and Congressmen from potato-producing states are watching the talks closely and advocating for full market access.

March 21, 2019 - Trade Representative Lighthizer responded to Representative Schrader's letter, on behalf of President Trump. The Administration recognized the importance of agricultural exports for the U.S. economy. Lighthizer states that China has committed to immediate purchases of U.S. agricultural goods, as well as the removal of phytosanitary and other non-tariff barriers but closes with the statement "We hope that China will take actions to change their unfair trade practices."

March 29, 2019 - U.S. Trade Representative Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Mnuchin were in Beijing solidifying negotiations with China. The President will formally conclude the negotiations with his counterpart President Xi Jinping in the coming weeks.

The agreement is 90 percent done but two major issues are complicating the negotiations; how an agreement will be monitored and enforced and secondly, how many tariffs will be removed and when.

*By Jennifer Fletcher*

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*Oregon Potato Politics continued from page 2*

appointed you will be expected to serve a three year term starting March 1, 2020. Contact Bill Brewer for more details.

Lastly, OPC is looking for nominations to sit on the National Potato Council (NPC). In 2018 there was a 13 percent increase in Oregon potato acres. The total production is estimated at 2.7 Billion pounds. Oregon was officially ranked third in potato production in the nation by USDA ARS. These factors increase Oregon's representation on the NPC to four. The OPC Chairman will review and choose the best nominees. Please contact the OPC office by August 30, 2019 if you want to nominate an NPC representative. (503) 239-4763

*By Jennifer Fletcher*

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**9320 SW Barbur Blvd. Suite 130**  
**Portland, OR 97219-5405**  
**Phone: (503) 239-4763**



*Chairman Mark Ward, Grower At-Large*  
*Vice Chairman Rob Wagstaff, Grower Blue Mtn*  
*Lon Baley, Grower Klamath Basin*  
*Leif Eric Benson, Public Member*  
*Dan Chin, Grower Klamath Basin*  
*Lexi Crawford, Grower At-large*  
*Mike Macy, Grower Central Oregon*  
*Marty Myers, Grower Blue Mtn*  
*Jeff Urbach, Handler Member Blue Mtn*  
*Dan Walchli, Grower Blue Mtn*

**Staff:**

*Bill Brewer, President and CEO*  
*Jennifer Fletcher, Administrative Director*  
*Judy Schwartz, Administrative Assistant*

**Public Notice**  
**Budget Hearing and**  
**Proposed Rulemaking Hearing**

**June 4, 2019**

**9:45 am**

**Oregon Garden Resort**

**Trillium Room**

**895 W. Main St, Silverton, OR 97381**

**Go to [www.oregonspuds.com](http://www.oregonspuds.com) to see fiscal year 2019-2020  
proposed budget and the procedural rules for public  
records requests.**

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