



RI Farm Bureau

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NEWSLETTER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>New Officers</i>	3
<i>Resolutions</i>	3
<i>Benefits</i>	4
<i>Potatoes</i>	4
<i>Annual Meeting</i>	4
<i>RhodeMap</i>	5
<i>Farm to School</i>	7
<i>Food Day</i>	7

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WRIGHT ELECTED PRESIDENT SALISBURY ELECTED VICE PRESIDENT

For the first time in 40 years RI Farm Bureau has a new president. Henry B. Wright, III of West Greenwich was unanimously elected president at the RI Farm Bureau Annual Meeting on November 20. Wright replaces Bill Stamp, Jr. who had served as president since 1974, the longest serving president of a state farm bureau in the country.



Henry B. Wright, III Wayne Salisbury

Wayne Salisbury of Scituate was elected vice president. He replaced Tyler Young who had served as vice president for the last 20 years, the longest serving vice president in Farm Bureau country.

Two new Board members were elected. They are Joe Polseno of Cranston and Kevin Breene of West Greenwich. Re-elected to the Board were, Vinny Confreda, Peter Gavitt and Richard Schartner.

The delegation also approved 18 Resolutions, most of which had been approved in previous years.

One of the new resolutions will try to reverse a sales tax that was introduced in 2004 which imposed a sales tax on seeds. Prior to 2004 there was no sales tax on seeds or plants that were used for food production. Seeds and plants used for ornamental crops was taxed, but when the state adopted the Uniform Sales Tax Program it included all seeds and plants as taxable.

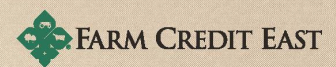
We hope to reverse that in the next session of the General Assembly. If food is not taxed why should plants and seeds used for food production be taxed?

BYE BYE HOLIDAY TREE

At last Governor Chafee is calling it a Christmas tree. But, he had Secretary of State Mollis do the honor of lighting the Christmas tree. A picture of the tree is on the right.



State House Christmas Tree



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NEW OFFICERS

As stated on page one, for the first time in 40 years RI Farm Bureau has a new president. At its Annual Meeting in West Warwick on Thursday November 20, the RI Farm Bureau members present unanimously elected Henry Wright of West Greenwich as its president.

Wright farms 330 acres in Kent and Washington Counties. He raises corn, hay and beef cattle. He also sells seeds for several seed companies including T.A. Seeds. Additionally, he does a lot of custom farming specializing in no till seeding for corn and forage crops. He has been a member of the RI Farm Bureau Board of Directors for 24 years and has been a member of the RI Farm Bureau for 44 years.

Wayne Salisbury of Scituate was elected vice president. Salisbury owns a farm in Johnston, RI where he specializes in Pick Your Own Strawberries, raises raspberries and a wide range of vegetables. Salisbury Farm was the first farm in New England to have a corn maze. The farm, established in the 1800's offers a wide range of activities and services for everyone to enjoy. During the fall they also offer free hay rides on the weekends. Families, businesses or organizations, and other groups enjoy the pavilion area which is available for rent. Salisbury has been secretary of RI Farm Bureau for the past 2 years and a member of the Board for the past 10 years. He joined the RI Farm Bureau in 1989.

Five farmers were elected to the RI Farm Bureau Board of Directors. Vinny Confreda (Cranston), the largest vegetable farmer in RI; Richard Schartner (Exeter), raises fruits and vegetables; and Peter Gavitt (Slocum), a turf farmer were re-elected. Kevin Breene (West Greenwich), a dairy farmer; and Joe Polseno (Cranston), orchards, were elected for the first time.

The members also voted to approve 18 resolutions which will determine the policies the Board will follow in 2015.

At the December Board meeting, Stook MacDonald was elected Secretary.

HIGHLIGHTS OF RESOLUTIONS PASSED

Several new resolutions were passed this year at the Annual Meeting. Recently the RI Farm Bureau found out that the Division of Taxation was issuing Non-Agricultural Farm Equipment Tax Exempt Certificates to horse farmers. Non-Agricultural Farm Equipment ?!? Because the certificates were Non-Agricultural, the horse farmers could not get a farm plate at the registry. Apparently this had been going on for four years. RI Farm Bureau protested and with the help of Ken Ayars persuaded the Division of Taxation that this was illegal. However, we wondered how they could change a law or rule without going to the public. We have a resolution that would require any agency to send notices to organizations whose members might be affected by a change in rules. For instance in the case above the Division of Taxation would have to send a letter to RI Farm Bureau and let them know about the rule change.

Recently a farmer tried to pay for a permit with cash. The Health Dept. would not accept the cash or a check. He needed to use a credit card and pay a fee for using the card. Look at any "dollar" bill (\$1, \$5, \$10, \$20 etc.). There is a statement on the bill that states " THIS NOTE IS LEGAL TENDER FOR ALL DEBTS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE." It is against federal law not to accept cash for payment. We will try to remedy this situation with some common sense talk. If that doesn't work, we will go to the General Assembly.

Some banks charge egregious fees for returned checks including WIC Checks and Senior Vouchers. The Checks and Vouchers are worth \$5 each. If they are returned to the bank for one reason or other some banks charge fees of up to \$30. We will introduce legislation that states a bank cannot charge a fee greater than the amount of the check.

See page one for a resolution on Sales Tax.

Other resolutions included providing free vet service for 4-H students, strengthening the Division of Ag, renewable energy, management of bids for state property, long term wildlife damage permits, allowing the use of a crossbow when you have a wildlife damage permit for your own property, impact statements on agriculture for proposed new local ordinances, support of all agriculture in the US, exempting farmers from water boiler restrictions, maintaining the viability of agriculture, and opposing the Food Safety and Modernization Act.

BENEFITS

Don't forget your benefits! You can easily save the cost of your dues by taking advantage of our numerous discount programs.

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SUPERIOR PLUS

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AND

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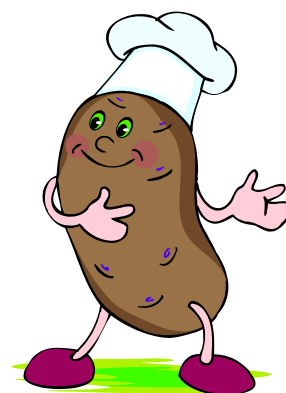
300,000 COMPANIES
NATIONWIDE!

CALL RI FARM BUREAU TO SEE HOW YOU CAN ACCESS THESE BENEFITS.

CONGRESS ADDS POTATOES FOR LOW INCOME INDIVIDUALS

It's another political victory for the popular potato. For the first time, low-income recipients would be able to pay for potatoes with government-subsidized vouchers issued by the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program.

The potato provision is part of the massive spending bill just approved by Congress. White potatoes have been excluded from WIC since fruits and vegetables were first allowed under the program in 2009. It's not that white potatoes themselves aren't nutritious, but they're often used to make French fries, which are usually fried or baked in unhealthy fats and oils. The Institute of Medicine had recommended that they be excluded, saying WIC recipients already eat enough white potatoes.



NO FARMERS NO FOOD

MORE PROTECTION FOR FRUIT, VEGGIE & OTHER SPECIALTY CROPS

Greater protection is now available from the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for crops that traditionally have been ineligible for federal crop insurance. The new options, created by the 2014 farm bill, provide

greater coverage for losses when natural disasters affect specialty crops such as vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, floriculture, ornamental nursery, aquaculture, turf grass, ginseng, honey, syrup and energy crops.

RHODEMAP (ARTICLE STARTS ON PAGE 5)

local economic development plan in place.

The 2008 act considers that a "government entity" can utilize eminent domain powers if there is a larger plan in place for the area ... a plan like a RhodeMap RI growth center plan. The law also specifies other exceptions when eminent domain powers may be used. Given the entities involved in developing the RhodeMap RI plan, there are four potential government entities that could exploit this eminent domain exception to infringe on the property rights of land owners and seize their land: The federal government, the State of RI, the Urban Development Agency created by RhodeMap and local governments.

In summary, RI Farm Bureau opposes certain policies in this plan that could potentially take farmland by eminent domain and create growth centers.

We do support a policy within the plan that treats agriculture as a necessary industry for growing the economy. In previous plans, agriculture was not mentioned.

RHODEMAP TO DISASTER

You may have heard there are a lot of groups in RI, including the RI Farm Bureau, who are opposed to certain aspects of the economic development plan by the RI Division of Planning (RIDP) entitled RhodeMap RI. Why are we against it? The short answer is that a lot of it is not an economic development plan at all, but is really a social engineering project.

For more than 3 years the RIDP has been working on RhodeMap RI, a long term economic development plan meant to help guide efforts to improve the state's economy. The process is partly funded by the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The document, which is nearly 200 pages long, did not get much notice until the plan was released in September, igniting a firestorm of controversy.

Critics of the plan denounced it as a thinly disguised blueprint for social engineering. If it is implemented, they say, local communities will be forced to cede authority to the federal government on issues such as affordable housing and land use, and individual property rights will be under threat.

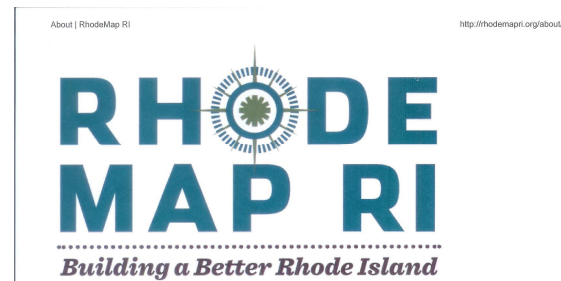
Supporters say it is a well crafted plan, a comprehensive guide that will improve the state's economy.

The debate grew so heated at one meeting a shouting match broke out, with charges of racism and bigotry hurled. Some people have called the plan unconstitutional.

One of the main opponents of the plan is Mike Stenhouse the CEO of the RI Center for Freedom and Prosperity. Stenhouse said his interpretation of the plan is that in the case of the Poppasquash neighborhood in Bristol, RI, HUD would rule that it is patently unfair and socially unjust that wealthy people can live in an exclusive neighborhood. Stenhouse stated that in HUD's view even a quarter acre lot (single family zoning) may very well be discriminatory and perpetuate segregation.

Stenhouse gets this idea from what he says is the policy in HUD's plans that calls for changes in zoning laws to allow construction of subsidized and other affordable housing to bring more low-income minorities into more affluent communities.

HUD rules clearly say that it is illegal for communities to enact zoning and other ordinances, that in effect, exclude low income housing, minority and other protected groups. In 2006, the Anti-Discrimination Center, a fair housing advocacy group,




sued Westchester County, NY in federal court, arguing that the county had defrauded the taxpayers by accepting \$50 million in HUD grant money while failing to remove barriers to fair housing as required by law. The group won the case and Westchester had to spend \$50 million to build or acquire 750 affordable housing units.

HUD has ruled that any town that has less than 3% minorities is discriminatory and needs to build more affordable housing which is usually multi-family houses or apartments. Thus if towns like Burrillville, Little Compton and Portsmouth as well as other towns, want HUD funds, they would have to build multi-family homes.

The plan recommends the establishment of growth centers, where people can live, walk to work and walk to shopping. Units would have housing on the upper floors and shops on the bottom floors. It has been suggested the area near Bryant College in Smithfield might be a good place to put one of these urban centers.

With language that appears to have been custom-written for RhodeMap RI, a 2008 law, when combined with the controversial RhodeMap RI plan, may actually throw open the door for aggressive eminent domain property seizures by the government in order to construct "growth centers" as the plan envisions, according to a policy brief by the Center.

In 2008, in response to the momentous *Kelo v. City of New London* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that allowed local governments to seize property from one private person and give it to another, a law was passed to stop potential abuse in the Ocean State. However, the law specifically allows for eminent domain exceptions when there is a (continued on page 4)



BEST WISHES FOR A JOYOUS HOLIDAY SEASON!

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CHARTWELLS CELEBRATES RI GROWN WITH A HARVEST FESTIVAL ALL MONTH LONG!

Students in East Bay schools are enjoying an annual cafeteria event designed to celebrate the bounty of Rhode Island's harvest. Each year in November, Chartwells rolls out the red carpet for students in each of the districts they serve, setting up a beautiful buffet line loaded with a Thanksgiving themed meal. Diners are treated to service by Executive Chef Jeff Simbro. Silver chafing dishes contain a fabulous meal of turkey with all the fixins. Mashed potatoes from Young Family Farm, apples from Steere Orchard and sweet butternut from Quonset View Farm accompany a display piled high with decorative corn, squash and flowers. On November 13 at Hugh Cole Elementary School in Warren, Chartwells Food Service Director Kim Orr hosted the biggest Harvest Festival meal ever. Almost 700 students were treated to a special event in the cafeteria, and Hugh Cole 5th graders were on hand to assist. A team of chef helpers, acting as "Veggie Ambassadors", worked with Farm to School's Chef Kim to offer samples of a locally grown turnip and carrot. The 5th grade Veggie Ambassadors taste tested the new recipe, and unanimously declared the side dish "Awesome"! Then they put on their chef hats, loaded their trays and went out among the diners to pass out samples. Each brave student that tried the new veggies was given an "RI Grown" sticker. The 5th graders suspected that some kids may have only tried the vegetables because they wanted a sticker, but once the sample was tasted it was tough to resist. The simple preparation of steamed Macomber turnip and diced carrot seasoned with salt, pepper and butter was so popular that some students tasted six times! Harvest meals will continue through November with lucky diners in Middletown and Portsmouth scheduled to enjoy a buffet next week.

FOOD DAY

Here at Farm Fresh RI we consider every day Food Day, but on October 24 the rest of the country joins us in a celebration of healthy, affordable and sustainably produced food. Food Day is designed to bring consumer awareness to the policies that dictate what ends up on our plates. The Farm to School project works to encourage policies that promote local foods in schools. When school food purchasers support local farms, the economy benefits and kids learn where their food comes from while eating the freshest, most nutritious food around. All these great things came together in schools from Lincoln to South Kingstown on Food Day. Cafeteria's across the state participated by offering delicious RI Grown foods in the school meal. In South Kingstown, Narragansett Creamery joined students at the High School to honor the day with a sweet, creamy treat. From Woonsocket to Barrington, kids crunched juicy RI Grown apples at the same time during the Great RI Apple Crunch! Even the Dept. of Education Child Nutrition Office crunched along, for a total of 23,742 registered Apple Crunch participants. Farm to School Coordinator Kimberly Clark joined Providence fire fighters and Sodexo at the Carl Lauro School to crunch with over 300 elementary students. Farm Fresh RI is proud to support all of the sustainable local purchasing relationships between Rhode Island schools and farmers. Thank you all for a delicious Food Day!

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