

Courage, clout and commitment

Membership matters. Throughout the history of our nation's nursery and greenhouse industry, growers, retailers and allied suppliers have gathered their collective strength to make a better industry and market conditions.

While many point to the decline of such relationships and associations in general, I believe that agriculture remains a stronger field when we are all together.

The nursery association world — regardless of whether you are in Maryland, Ohio, Florida, Texas, or nestled up north in the Pacific Northwest — has one goal: serving you.

I am fortunate to lead an association in Oregon that is forward thinking, business focused, and relentlessly dedicated to the betterment of the membership.

During the Great Recession, while many teetered on the knife's edge of surviving, the OAN worked to keep markets open, both nationally and regionally. We engaged with our members to reinvent ourselves, with the goal of creating long-term success.

And politically? We stayed on our toes and top of our game. We played a critical role in shaping policies for a more positive impact on every member, in every corner of the state and region.

The industry's success is due to your commitment

OAN has worked to give you tangible, financial and marketing reasons to be part of your association. But frankly the success and future of the nursery industry is you, the member. You are very important, no matter how big or small of an impact you make.

Your company's commitment to OAN membership helps make our industry stronger, and we are so grateful for your continued support.

Without you, and all of our membership combined, we would not have an organization that dutifully strives to advance our industry and help grow successful businesses like yours. Together, we make a difference.

In this past year your support through membership enabled us to accomplish many great things.

We secured passage of a landmark water supply bill.

We fought extremely hard for the Oregon Driver's Card.

The Plant Something campaign continued to highlight retailers and sales to the general public.

The online Nursery Guide stood out in a world where Internet searches are becoming a bigger part of the wholesale business. In 2014, the site had 32 percent more visits and 63 percent more pageviews than it did during a very successful 2013.

We laid the foundation for reimagining the iconic Farwest Show — a process that continues into this year and beyond. Last year, we added Equipment Innovation Day. This year, we have full-time sales teams to bring growers, retailers and suppliers together for the largest show in the West. In addition, we're excited about our eye-popping "Far From Ordinary" campaign. We hope it will get even more qualified buyers into the aisles.

Moving forward into the future

Looking ahead to 2015, we plan to work even harder to protect and expand the positive advancement of our industry and aim to provide the following tools for your success:

Advocacy — Your voice is heard when it comes to government issues. The OAN speaks out on crucial issues you face such as workforce, regulation, taxation, industry research, plant health and more. Leaders on both sides of the aisle respect the OAN's issue-oriented approach. When our association speaks, they listen. When you seek solutions to issues, you wield tremendous clout in our state and national capitol.

Savings — The OAN strives to provide members with cost-effective health and dental insurance programs, discounted fuel, the Legal Access benefit, Trucks to Trade Shows program and other benefits that save you money. Go on to the OAN website

and use the member savings calculator — you will see that your membership gets paid for quite quickly!

Visibility — Showcasing your company is important. We aim to provide the best marketing channels for you to do so. As the OAN grows, so does the Farwest Show, the online and print Nursery Guide, *Digger* magazine and the Retail Nurseries and Garden Centers Guide — all places for you to be seen.

Knowledge and Networking — The OAN recognizes how important it is to create opportunities for you to learn and connect. Through the Farwest Show Seminars, chapter gatherings, the annual convention, Duffers Classic golf tournament, and publications you'll find many ways to grow yourself and your business.



By Jeff Stone
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Changing with the membership

Every year I meet with my association management counterparts throughout the nation and Canada to talk about new ways of serving the members we work for. We all appreciate your courage to create a business and grow the best plants in the world. Without that, we would be nowhere.

Your commitment to the nursery industry sets you apart. That commitment is hard to quantify, but it makes a tremendous impact. Your presence and your input ensure that the association has clout. In today's world of cut-throat politics and business competition, being the voice of reason helps us cut through the noise. Members are a huge part of that, helping decision makers see our hopes, fears, dilemmas and challenges.

None of what the OAN does would be possible without you and your participation. Spring is booming and time is short. Take a moment and evaluate the importance of your association. Renew your membership and help us work together for a stronger industry. ©

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Stone'.