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**We have your back
Gardening is not canceled.**

Oregon's nursery, greenhouse, retail and supply chains are open for business.

Our state and governor could have mandated full closures and declared our businesses non-essential. The fact they didn't do this is a credit to the OAN's leadership and its advocacy team. They were the perfect picture of vision, pure effort and high commitment. They knew that failure was not an option, and they delivered.

Our members see and appreciate this outcome, but they did not observe how it came together behind the scenes. We kept pressing, lobbying and informing for several critical, pressure-filled days.

I love March Madness, but not like this. Here's a look inside 72 pivotal hours where we fought to keep our industry running.

In mid-March, as states began implementing stay-in-place orders and the nation was in full flux, the OAN transformed to "COVID mode" and started redirecting our resources. We had to keep employees safe, while helping businesses survive. I knew that to deliver positive outcomes for the industry, I might need to cash in every political chit accumulated during my 15-year tenure at OAN.

Our first task was to address the Oregon Legislature's Joint Committee on Coronavirus Response, which first convened on Wednesday, March 18. At the same time, we knew Gov. Kate Brown was developing a list of businesses to be deemed essential.

We made a strong case that our agricultural sector is critical and must remain open. Oregonians need to work, and gardening is a safe and healthy outlet. We also knew any wave of closures would create an economic crisis to match. We suggested ways the state could mitigate impacts on employers and employees.

Ambiguity can feed an uncontrolled rumor mill, creating its own market destabilization. We urged the state to clear things up, so everyone could stand on solid ground.

Meanwhile, our leadership and communication team created a Coronavirus resource page for the industry to access, which you can find at www.oan.org/coronavirus. We made it public — no member login required. It was no time to hoard information.

At the same time, we saw that decisions were going to be made at the state level. Various green industry associations were providing information about state openings and closures, but there was no one-stop resource pulling it all together.

Cassie Larson, executive director of the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association (MNLA) and I convened a triage group of industry leaders. Out of this was born a guide to the status of every state and province, which you can find at www.nlae.org/covid-19.

As Wednesday turned to Thursday, and we kept frantically providing input to the legislature and governor, we became aware that 22 mayors in the Portland area were looking at imposing their own set of local orders. Since our nursery industry is largely based around Portland and Salem, this was concerning.

I conferred with Dave Dillon at the Oregon Farm Bureau to target these mayors with a message showing that all of agriculture is essential — nurseries included. We explained our members' ability to social distance and stay operational.

As Thursday turned to Friday, our contract lobbyist told us an announcement from the governor was coming as early as the weekend. We were hopeful, but uncertain that our members would still be in business Monday morning.

Late in the evening, Alexis Taylor, director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture, sent a note saying that the governor would be closing many kinds of businesses — but agriculture was not on that list.

Our president, Jim Simnitt, contacted the governor's chief of staff for confirmation. At 1:30 a.m., I got a text from the chief of staff

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Jeff Stone
OAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In Memoriam DONNA KRIEG



The Oregon Association of Nurseries is saddened to share the news that Donna Krieg, founder of Nowlens Bridge Perennials in Molalla, Oregon, passed away Friday, February 28, 2020, due to complications from cancer. She was 72 years old.

Born in Whittier, California, Donna grew up in Sacramento. She moved to Oregon and met her future husband Jim while pursuing a degree in education from Oregon State University. At that time, Jim was drafted into the Army. While he was on leave in the fall of 1967, they got married, and Donna postponed her degree to live with him in Germany for 18 months. They both returned to Oregon to complete their educations once his tour

was over. Together they bought a farm in Marquam, Oregon, in 1972, where she quickly adopted the farm lifestyle and helped her husband raise turkeys.

Donna founded her plant nursery, Nowlens Bridge Perennials in 1998. Her business focused on hardy plant varieties for the Willamette Valley area and concentrated on teaching her customers proper care and maintenance. She as a member of the Cascade Nursery Trail and sold products at Hardy Plant Society and Master Gardeners sales.

Donna was also an active volunteer for the Oregon Turkey Improvement Association and volunteered to give presentations at the Oregon State Fair.

A celebration of life gathering is scheduled for 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Saturday, May 30 at Nowlens Bridge Perennials, 37377 S. Nowlens Bridge Road, Molalla, Oregon. ☺

We have your back (Continued from page 7)

confirming we would be OK.

We have your back

This is a mere fraction and quick peek at a turbulent 72 hours. Our security was far from secure. It was a dicey landing, yet we were resilient.

The OAN has your back — no matter where you reside in the nation or in a Canadian province. We are one. We will keep looking out for you so that you can make the right choices for your employees, your community and your company. ☺



IS THERE MORE GREEN IN THE HOUSE?

Energy upgrades in your greenhouses can yield more than energy savings. They can boost productivity and earn cash incentives from Energy Trust of Oregon, too.



Talk to your greenhouse vendor, or visit www.energytrust.org/ag for more information.

Serving customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas and Avista.

