



Link Appointed to Council by Secretary Brancel

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MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary Ben Brancel has appointed Patrick Link to the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council. Link will serve as an agribusiness representative and begin his service at the Council’s next meeting on April 26 in Wausau.

Link grew up in rural Northern Wisconsin and worked on a cranberry farm for his father. He is currently the Senior Vice President – Marketplace Strategies for Badgerland Financial. Previously he spent 18 years with Wells Fargo Bank working his way up from a Branch and District Manager to a Regional President with that company. Link served as a commissioned United States Army Officer achieving the rank of Captain.

Link received two degrees from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in business, and he is presently working to complete a Masters of Business Administration from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Link also serves on the board of directors for the Wisconsin 4-H Foundation.

The Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council was created by Wisconsin Act 223. The mission of the Council is to attract, develop and retain the premium workforce required to grow Wisconsin’s agricultural industry, food and natural resources systems. Appointees to the Council work together to recommend policies and initiatives, encourage youth to pursue related careers, facilitate public and private partnerships, recruit qualified workers and offer professional development.

Other recent appointments to the Council include Maggie Bishop and Tom Thieding.

Bishop serves at the Executive Director for Trees for Tomorrow, Wisconsin’s only accredited natural resources specialty school in Eagle River. Before taking this leadership position, she was a teacher at the school. Prior to her service at Trees of Tomorrow, Bishop was a program coordinator at the Point Beach Nuclear Plant & Energy Center educating students and the general public about nuclear energy. She grew up on a farm in Manitowoc County. Bishop received a degree in human development with a teaching certificate.

Bishop is a member of the Communications Committee for the Great Lakes Timber Professional Association. Bishop was appointed to the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council by DATCP Secretary Brancel in October. She is the environmental stewardship interest representative on the Council.

Thieding is the Communications Director for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC). Prior to joining WEDC, he was Director of Marketing Services for Rural Mutual Insurance Company in Madison. He was the Executive Director of Public Relations for the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation for 16 years. Prior to that, he was Press Secretary and Legislative Assistant to former U.S. Representative Steve Gunderson. He started his professional career as news director for a radio station in Platteville.

Thieding was a co-founder of the Wisconsin Agrosecurity Resource Network. He has served on the Wisconsin State Fair Agriculture Committee, Wisconsin 4-H Foundation board of directors and Leadership Wisconsin board of directors. Thieding was appointed to the Council by WEDC CEO Paul Jadin in December.

For more on the Wisconsin Agricultural Education and Workforce Development Council, visit wiaglink.org.

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