



Amberley speaking at the Spokane Interstate Fairgrounds.



Signing autographs after the event.

Amberley Snyder Inspires Our Youth

by Michelle Shell, Marketing Director

Amberley would be arriving at any time. You could feel the anticipation in the air.

Four hundred people packed the AG "A" building at the Spokane Interstate Fairgrounds. Bryant Greutz, who does outside sales and deliveries for our Spokane area Country Stores, emceed the event. Bryant kicked off the evening by thanking everyone for attending and introduced Bailie Welton, our Community Outreach Coordinator/Marketing Assistant.

Bailie described the Country Stores' Youth Rewards Program, then introduced Gabrielle Sweetser, member of the Davenport FFA and grand prize winner of our 2018 Youth of the Year Essay Contest. She also introduced Emma Wilson from Colbert, Washington, member of the North Country 4-H, who won 2nd prize in the essay contest.

Next, Kate McKlosky, the WSU Spokane County Extension 4-H Coordinator, spoke about 4-H and how to get involved with local clubs. Kate, Bryant and Mike Miller from Purina drew raffle tickets for Purina prizes.

Then Bryant introduced our headliner, Amberley Snyder, and the crowd erupted in applause.

Amberley told an amazing story of her courageous journey from being on top of the world at 18 years old with an almost

unbelievable future ahead of her, to a near-death vehicle accident that left her paralyzed from the waist down. She told of her tenacious attitude and the three goals she set from her hospital bed, just days after the accident: walk, ride and rodeo.

Nothing stopped this girl! Within a few months, she was back in the saddle and, within eighteen months of her tragic accident, with a seatbelt on her saddle, she returned to rodeo competition.

Near the middle of her story, Amberley played a video of her early life from a toddler who loved horses to a young equestrian in a wheelchair. The story featured Amberley today competing in rodeo events and caring for her horses at home in the barn. There was not a dry eye in the building.

Amberley wrapped up her speech with questions from the audience. After the Q&A session, she invited the crowd up on stage for pictures.

I am so proud that Skagit Farmers Supply and the Country Stores could be part of such a wonderful, free event for our community.

To learn more about Amberley, check out her website:

<http://www.amberleysnyder.org/amberleysnyder/>

To learn more about the Country Store's Youth Rewards Program, check out our website at: <https://www.countrystore.net/youth/>. 🐾

Mission Statement

To preserve and enhance viability of the local agriculture economy through cooperative profitability.

Vision Statement

To be the premier cooperative in the Pacific Northwest by being:

- The producers' first choice
- The consumers' first choice
- The employees' first choice

Core Values

Customer Commitment
People - Integrity - Performance
Quality - Safety - Community

Directory

Main Office—Burlington
360.757.6053

AFCO Distribution & Milling
800.538.8700

Agronomy—Conway
360.445.5015

Agronomy—Burlington
360.757.7870

Energy—Main Office
360.757.6053

Petroleum & Propane Delivery
360.757.6053 // 888.757.6053
Emergency: 360.209.0310

Country Stores

Farm · Pet · Home

Burlington	360.757.4055
Coeur d'Alene (Idaho)	208.772.2715
Colville	509.684.2232
Freeland	360.331.1970
Mount Vernon	360.424.4207
Oak Harbor	360.675.2277
Oroville	509.560.7088
Sedro Woolley	360.856.6567
Spokane Central	509.534.1412
Spokane North	509.466.1300
Spokane Valley	509.926.6603
Stanwood	360.629.7033
Stevensville (Montana)	406.777.5527



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Youth of the Year

Hello 4-H and FFA friends! Skagit Farmer Supply and Country Stores are pleased to announce Sarah “Gabrielle” Sweetser as the grand prize winner of our 2018 Youth of the Year Essay Contest. Congratulations, Gabrielle!

Gabrielle is a member of the Davenport FFA and submitted an inspiring essay about how her involvement with FFA and agriculture has changed her life forever. She hopes to carry on the tradition.

“I wish I could go to schools and give presentations on agriculture and see the amazement in kids’ eyes when I tell them how their food is made,” wrote Gabrielle. It is our sincere hope that someday Gabrielle can do just that.

For her beautifully crafted essay and inspiring words, Gabrielle will receive a 100% sponsorship of her 2018 FFA project—a

hog—at the Spokane Jr. Livestock Show. We are thrilled to be partnering with her on The Country Store team and can’t wait to share Gabrielle’s success with all of you.

Thanks to everyone who participated in our first essay contest. The Country Store received many amazing and inspiring essays; making it extremely

challenging to pick only one grand prize winner. Consequently, we would like to acknowledge some of our top contenders who will also be receiving prizes for their hard work.

In 2nd place, Emma Wilson, from Colbert, Washington, and a member of North Country 4-H, will be receiving a \$200 gift certificate to The Country Store for her next project.

In 3rd place, Aryana Police, from Mount Vernon, Washington, and a member of both Skagit Valley Homesteaders 4-H and Mount Vernon FFA, will be receiving a \$100 Country Store gift certificate for her next project.

Thank you again for participating in The Country Store’s Youth of the Year Essay Contest. We hope to hear from you again next time around! Our next essay contest will be announced in October 2018. Get ready! The next winner could be you. 🌱

YOUTH OF THE YEAR
Congratulations, Gabrielle Sweetser!
Gabrielle, a member of the Davenport FFA, earned grand prize in our 2018 Youth of the Year essay contest, sharing an inspiring essay about how becoming involved with FFA and agriculture has changed her life.
The Country Store is excited to sponsor Gabrielle's 2018 Spokane Jr. Livestock Show project, a hog, in honor of all her hard work and achievements. Congrats, Gabrielle!

Join us as we recognize Gabrielle at 6:30 p.m. March 1 at the Spokane County Fair & Expo Center, prior to an event with inspirational speaker Amberley Snyder. This event is free and open to the public.

YOUTH REWARDS PROGRAM
Learn by Doing

COUNTRY STORE
FARM · PET · HOME

co-op connection

Spring
2018

Annual Meeting Atmosphere Optimistic



by Tom Boland, General Manager

As I grew up, our family shopped at the local co-op, attended the summer hog roast and usually Dad would drag a few of us kids to the annual meeting. It wasn't high on our list of things to do, and we could never figure out why Mom didn't have to go, but

occasionally Dad would win a case of oil or grease and we'd pick up a couple of extra hats to boot. I guess I haven't strayed too far from my youth!

Skagit Farmers Supply wrapped up its 84th annual producer member meeting on March 14th in an optimistic atmosphere. Our strong results from fiscal 2017 were shared with the membership, and the 2007 stock retirement checks were handed out. Throughout 2017, we saw sales growth in energy, retail, wholesale and at our mill; and strong margins in 2017 overcame higher expenses to give the co-op a record year in earnings and patronage.

You should see some nice checks in the mail this summer as the board has approved 40% of our member earnings to be distributed in cash again this year. It pays to shop at your local co-op.

Despite some headwinds we're wrestling with—like tight labor markets, increased competition and softer margins—we're feeling quite confident at Skagit Farmers Supply. We're almost half way through the 2018 fiscal year, and we're either matching or exceeding those strong sales numbers from fiscal 2017.


We're also confident because we're on the right side of consumer trends. Our members are meeting consumer desire for fresh and healthy food. Despite the increased popularity of renewable energy sources, when major population bases on our



Skagit Farmers Supply board chairman Nels Lagerlund addresses producer members at the annual meeting.

planet get cold, they still need fossil fuels (natural gas, clean coal or, in our case, propane) as a major heat source. In our geography, propane provides a safe, clean and portable source of heat that can efficiently reach from the islands to the foothills. Our stores, our wholesale distribution, and our mill cater to a growing number of people who want to live a more sustainable lifestyle. We're positioned well to meet their needs.

I would like to thank those of you who have given up part of your mornings to join me for breakfast and a conversation about the future of our business. Your feedback is vital to make sure we stay on track with meeting your ever-changing needs. We want to be around in another 84 years!

We wish everyone a safe and productive spring. 

See Olympic Potato Day Meetings on page 3.



Perkes Named Co-op Credit Manager


Skagit Farmers Supply is pleased to announce that Shannon Perkes, our current Credit Supervisor, has accepted the position of Credit Manager with the cooperative. Shannon was promoted from Credit Specialist to Credit Supervisor in 2016. Since then, she has brought great direction to the department by implementing processes and procedures that reflect her philosophy of great customer service.

Shannon's practices of working directly with the customers and creating a team atmosphere in the department have benefitted the entire cooperative. Her team members, Beverly Conn and Ashley Smith, were kept very busy this winter adding several hundred new accounts during the propane season; but they were always available to answer questions during business hours.

As spring planting season starts, Shannon can often be found visiting our producers' farms. She works closely with the agronomy department to make sure that our co-op is meeting the needs of our growers.

Off the job, Shannon enjoys her blended family of nine children and four grandchildren. She keeps very busy outside the office with gardening, camping, boating and fishing.

In March of 2018, Shannon was selected chair for the Western Agricultural Credit Association (WACA). This group, part of the National Association of Credit Management (NACM), includes companies from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Arizona and California.

WACA members meet quarterly and can earn educational credits as they learn about topics relative to current credit industry issues and standards. This has proven to be an excellent tool in servicing our accounts. Skagit Farmers Supply has been a member of NACM since October of 2014 and is very proud that Shannon was honored with this selection by the group's members. 


Parker Earns EMT Certification

Last December, Don Parker, Skagit Farmers Supply Fleet and Safety Manager, successfully passed the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians exam. Don may now practice as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) in Skagit County.

Don's designation as an EMT came after months of training and testing while enrolled in the Skagit County Medic One EMT academy. Classes and training were held Tuesday and Thursday evenings, as well as all day every Saturday from August to December. Don hopes for shifts in the evenings with Aero Skagit Med 7, which is the ALS ambulance service near his home in eastern Skagit County.

Don is also a volunteer firefighter with Skagit County Fire District 10, also located near his home. He is currently enrolled in the Firefighter 1 certification academy offered by his department in conjunction with the state fire academy located in North Bend. Later this year, Don hopes to have earned both the Firefighter 1 and Firefighter Incident Safety Officer Certifications.

"For me, it's about giving back to the members of my community," says Don, a United States Marine Corps veteran. "To be there for them in the times when they absolutely need it the most. That is what it's all about."

Don adds, "I've been blessed with an amazing family, amazing friends, and an amazing employer who all support me in my journey." 




Shannon Perkes with agronomist Dan Adamson at our recent Organic & Sustainable Solutions meeting in Sedro-Woolley.

Attendance Up at Recertification

Attendance was up this year at the grower recertification meetings sponsored by Skagit Farmers Supply and held at McIntyre Hall on the campus of Skagit Valley College. We received positive feedback about the new location and the meeting content.

The February 20 meeting focused on production agriculture, and the February 21 meeting focused on greenhouse, ornamental, nursery, turf and vegetation management.

As always, growers who attended these meetings received credits toward the recertification of their Washington State Department of Agriculture applicator licenses. 



Agronomist David Younquist leads one of the meetings.



Attendees at the Feb. 20 and Feb. 21 grower recertification meetings.

Olympia Potato Day Meetings

Agronomist Charlie Anderson joined several producer-members of Skagit Farmers Supply in hosting senators and representatives at Olympia Potato Day Meetings January 30-31, 2018. “We served 1,600 baked potatoes with everything on them to folks in the capitol building, a time-honored and well-received tradition,” says Charlie of the event sponsored by the Washington State Potato Commission.

Over the two-day event, potato commission teams met with and spoke to 45 senators and representatives, including Sen. Barbara Bailey, Rep. David Hayes, and Rep. Norma Smith from District 10.

Topics of conversation included the Potato Commission’s position on the proposed SB 6529 Pesticide Application

Notification and Gov. Inslee’s Carbon Tax.


“SB 6529 proposed legislation adds the Department of Health to the Department of Agriculture and Labor & Industries in regulating pesticide usage by our growers,” says Charlie, who adds that this duplicate regulation is unnecessary. “The four-day prior notification requirement (in this proposed legislation) would make IPM practices untenable, forcing growers to actually spray more frequently on a prophylactic basis, likely resulting in more drift incidents which are illegal under current EPA regulation.”

“Despite the cut-out exemption for farm and food processor use of fuels,” Charlie says of the proposed carbon tax, “the expected \$.20 per gallon on-road fuel tax would indirectly increase cost in distribution channels for agricultural



Charlie Anderson (left) talks with William Hauck about PerCarb® from BioSafe Systems for his orchard.

finished goods and inputs such as fertilizer and chemicals.” As a result, it is the Washington Potato Commission’s position that, “Any or all of these cost increases imposed at a state level will cripple production agriculture’s ability to compete in the low-margin global marketplace and should not be adopted.”

Charlie added, “Potato Commission members really appreciated the support from Skagit Farmers Supply.” 

5th Annual Truckload Sale a Success

by Danna Darby, Category Manager

January 23rd marked the start of the 5th Annual Truckload Feed Sale for the Country Store retail locations. After the holidays wrap up, our feed mill and distribution warehouses turn up the heat by moving over 50 semi-truck loads of feed, bedding and product into our 13 Country Store locations as we gear up for this yearly event.

Months prior, our AFCO warehouse, our mill management, and our retail buying team start crunching numbers and strategizing on how to best execute the enormous task of moving over 1,000 tons of product out to the Country Stores. See the store list on page 6.

The event started to drive some volume business through January, which is traditionally a quiet, non-sales flyer month for the retail stores. The first Truckload Sale was a hit, and customers were calling for more. Five years later, we are going strong. We're pulling customers from as far as the Canadian border, south Lynnwood and everywhere in-between.

Skagit Farmers Supply LMF and AF feeds were the drivers of this year's event at hot prices that encouraged customers to purchase by the ton. The top-selling feed item was AF Egg Layer Pellets with over 3,400 bags sold in just six days.

Leading up to this event, we had some great pre-orders placed through our outside sales rep Bryant Grenz, based out of our Central Spokane location. These orders totaled over \$24,000. The bulk of these sales were bedding pellets (along with LMF feeds) to some large equestrian complexes in the Spokane area.

This event also opened some new customer business, with the assistance of Harris Statema, LMF Feeds, and Greg Senyitko from our Stanwood Store. Harris and Greg were able to put together a wonderful feed program for a large breeding facility outside of Stanwood. Working hand-in-hand with the farm's veterinary staff, they scheduled monthly deliveries of LMF feeds and bedding pellets.

So, not only has this event grown, but we've also been able to capture new customers who will continue to buy from us in the months and years to come. 🏠



After the holidays each year, our distribution warehouses move over 50 semi-truck loads of feed and bedding into our 13 Country Store locations for this annual event.

