Colorado Corn honored legislators, fellow farmers and an innovator in the ethanol industry during the organization's annual meeting and banquet Tuesday night, Jan. 29, in Loveland. The banquet was highlighted with a presentation by former Denver Broncos all-pro defender Karl Mecklenburg.

For Legislator of the Year, there was a three-way tie. "These legislators distinguished themselves in unique areas for agriculture this year, be it water law, regulatory concerns or agricultural energy-related projects. All three deserve to be honored for their work," public policy chair Rick Palkowitsh said.

From House District 65, which covers Phillips, Sedgwick, Logan and Weld, Rep. Jerry Sonnenberg was named Legislator of the Year for the fourth consecutive year. Sonnenberg shared the distinction with Rep. Randy Fischer and Rep. Jon Becker.

In addition, the public policy committee, in a new award this year, honored a federal legislator. Sen. Michael Bennet was named Federal Legislator of the Year for his work with Farm Bill and immigration policy.

During the business meeting, the Colorado Corn Growers Association elected the following board members:

—From District 5 (Yuma County), Kenneth Helling.

—From District 6 (Washington, Kit Carson and Cheyenne counties), Zack Coryell.

—From District 7 (southeast corner of Colorado), Craig Schenck.

Other awards presented Jan. 29 included:

-—Company of the Year-—Front Range Energy of Windsor. Colorado Corn Market Development Chair Mark Oestman thanked Front Range Energy vice president Dan Sanders for the company's innovation and dedication to the nation's energy independence. "As one of three ethanol plants in Colorado, Front Range Energy has been an excellent partner in Colorado Corn's on-going battle to bust the myths about ethanol," he said.

—Amicus-Friend of Agriculture Award-—Farmers Alliance for Integrated Resources (FAIR) of Boulder County. Colorado Corn board member Chris Wagner praised the group of farmers who came together to ensure that biotechnology would continue to be able to be used on Boulder County-owned open space. He said, the award was "for their initiative and tireless efforts then, and ongoing education efforts in their community now.

—Jean Sirios-President's Award—Byron Weathers of Yuma. CCGA president Doug Melcher presented the award to Weathers, saying, "During his tenure, he has contributed countless hours to the Growers Association on behalf of farmers in Colorado and the agricultural life that he loves."

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