

Northwest Oklahoma leaders join international agricultural summit



Becky McCray gives a plenary presentation on rural development at International Ag Chairs Summit. She shared the Idea Friendly Method for small towns to be more open to new ideas in this rapidly changing world.
Photo by Peyton Johnson

Northwest Oklahoma was well-represented at the 2025 International State Legislative Ag Chairs Summit in Des Moines, Iowa. Senator Roland Pederson from Burlington, Senator Casey Murdock from Felt, and Becky McCray of SaveYour.Town from Hopeton participated in the summit organized by the State Ag and Rural Leaders, SARL.us

The summit, known for its non-partisan approach, brought together elected officials from U.S. states and Canadian provinces to collaborate on pressing issues affecting agriculture and rural communities.

Becky McCray presented the plenary session on Rural Development, showcasing her “Idea Friendly Method” for helping small towns be more open to new ideas.

The agenda featured a diverse range of topics, including rural healthcare solutions, water quality, infrastructure improvements, carbon sequestration, artificial intelligence in agriculture, and

challenges facing the animal industry.

The summit offered attendees the opportunity to engage in various breakout sessions covering crucial subjects such as state water plans, solar and agriculture, carbon farming, emerging diseases, and rural mental health. Additionally, a unique “speed dating” session allowed legislators to quickly learn about state-specific legislation on topics ranging from foreign ownership and drone regulations to food labeling and growing rural veterinarians.

Site visits to prominent agricultural institutions and companies, including Iowa State University’s Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, Bayer, Corteva, John Deere, and Kemin provided attendees with firsthand insights into cutting-edge agricultural technologies and practices.

The combined population of Pederson’s, Murdock’s and McCray’s hometowns is fewer than 300 people, giving them their authentic rural perspective and dedication to small-town advocacy.

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Representing northwest Oklahoma at the International State Ag Chairs Summit in Des Moines, Iowa, are, from left: Senator Roland Pederson from Burlington, Becky McCray of SaveYour.Town from Hopeton, and Senator Casey Murdock from Felt. McCray presented the plenary session on Rural Development. *Photo by Savonne Caughey.*

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